

Decolonising Performance Philosophies

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In this co-authored essay, we reflect on how our respective research interests in Latin America have led us to engage with epistemologies of the global South. In your engagement with our writing, we hope you become curious about how critical theory emerges from these spaces, places and practices. While we do not believe that the work these thinkers and practitioners do is exclusive to the significance of thinking and doing, we do contend that their work deserves the same critical attention as those thinkers and doers whose names are probably more frequently scattered throughout this volume and in standard reference works on performance and philosophy. If you have further interest in this topic we provide a list of readings as a cursory introduction to decolonial thinking.

Sitting with Sylvia: Reflections on the Significance of Sylvia Wynter

There exists a well-circulated photo of Sylvia Wynter. She sits, presumably at her office, with some papers and a pen in her hand. Caught in the act of reading, editing, and perhaps even writing, Wynter turns away from the papers and looks squarely at the camera. Her hair a gorgeous Afro crown, her glasses resting on her nose, amplifying her eyes, looking at us. Perhaps the photographer purposely caught her in media res. In our selfie-saturated image culture, perhaps Wynter, like many black radical intellectuals and artists, was ahead of her time. What if she directed the angle, the action, the image of her? Then again, given her vehement critique against Western liberalism's concepts of the "human" and by extension the self, maybe not. Let us suppose, then, that this image is asking for us to have an encounter. What does it mean to encounter and subsequently sit with Sylvia Wynter?

Human geography scholar Katharine McKittrick poetically comments that, "any engagement with Sylvia Wynter demands openness."¹ Her edited volume *Beyond Human As Praxis* invites scholars from a variety of disciplines to sit and think with Wynter and subsequently write their respective essays. Wynter's significant contributions to scholarship are far beyond the scope of

this short introduction. Like McKittrick, I have been open to Wynter's effects on my own thinking since I first encountered her work as a critical dance studies graduate student. One of my professors encouraged us to think alongside Wynter and even asked us to expand on her notion of deciphering practices (reference). To develop a practice of deciphering, per Wynter's suggestions, means to think about how particular modes of aesthetics (sound, film, performance, or any artistic 'object') develop into cultural imaginaries and the specific rules ascribed to those imaginaries. For Wynter, these rules should not, or rather, must not stand in for universals, but rather they reveal the processes through which they are developed in the first place. Wynter above all else advocates for an abolishment of the universal, opting instead for the specificities that make respective existences in the world knowable (reference). But, the question persists. How do we know at all, and for our purposes, how do we get to know Wynter in this short encounter?

This writing here will not be a hagiography of Wynter. To do that would risk crystallizing her work and all that it continues to offer scholars who aspire to reframe and expand discourses about humanity², aesthetics,³ decoloniality⁴, or feminism⁵. As a poet, essayist, novelist, philosopher and scholar, Wynter has worn many hats. She is also known as an actor, dancer, playwright, short story writer and translator. As a black Caribbean woman, her many roles evidence the inventiveness of black diasporic identity and the multiplicity of roles women of colour have to play in order to be valorised beyond the representational limits bestowed upon us because of coloniality and modernity. In a famous essay "No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues," Wynter draws from public police reports in Los Angeles that consistently use the term "N.H.I", no humans

involved, to refer to the murder of black males from economically disenfranchised poor areas of the city. The question concerning the humanity denied to black men (and (poor) people of colour) and the historical and philosophical rationale for this denial become the crux of this epistolary essay that moves through thinkers such as Martiniquais philosopher Frantz Fanon, Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, French thinker Michel Foucault, and Eritrean anthropologist Asmarom Legesse, to name a few. This radical global, epistemological awareness enables Wynter to piece together an argument that ultimately holds us all accountable for “misrecognition in human kinship.” (reference) Knowledge must be rewritten, she states. She advocated this to her own faculty in 1984, but it fell on deaf ears. Knowledge must be written. The different places from which we know must be identified and valorised. The way we think about knowledge must mutate, shift, and we must develop tools of language, discernment and deciphering in order to begin to understand.

Without being reductive, one of Wynter’s main philosophical concerns is to un-do the supremacy of the Western concept of the human. Wynter conceptualizes this in two terms--Man1 and Man2—where Man1 emerges from the Renaissance imaginary and Man2 from the Enlightenment imaginary. These two terms explain the ‘humanity’ of the human (see Wynter 2003). If Man1 and Man2 were ways of describing oneself to those who invented it, then these terms automatically dismiss any difference to that image in the **mirror**. Racism and sexism emerge as natural correlates to these constructions. To begin to think decolonially about the concept of humanity, is to see the machinations of the advent of the concept. In other words, and in performative

metaphoric language, we have to be willing to see that which went on (and continues to go on) backstage: namely

For the remainder of this section, let us turn to Wynter's call for a deciphering practice that is "part of the attempt to move beyond our present 'human sciences' to that of a new science of human 'forms of life' and their correlated modes of the aesthetic: to move beyond what Adorno defined in the wake of Auschwitz as that 'evil' which still haunts human existence as the 'world's own unfreedom.'"⁶ Similar to how critical dance studies asks us to think about how particular sets of choreographed choices function within a piece, a deciphering practice requires a careful inquiry into the rules that dictate a particular aesthetic practice. She explains, "rather than seeking to 'rhetorically demystify', a deciphering turn seeks to decipher *what* the process of rhetorical mystification *does*. It seeks to identify not what the texts and their signifying practices can be interpreted to *mean* but what they can be deciphered to do, and it also seeks to evaluate the 'illocutionary force' and procedures with which they do what they do."⁷ This is a helpful framing, for example, for (white) performance and museum curators who often struggle to find aesthetically appropriate language for artistic work by black, brown or indigenous artists. Of course, the first port of call should be to consult with artists, philosophers, and writers familiar with or from those spaces from which the art emerges, but as a practice, deciphering involves the long, laborious, dedicated, ethical engagement with work by another "human." Wynter's calling out of *ontocentrism*⁸ necessarily returns us to shift the conversation from *what* we know, to *how* we come to know what we know. She elaborates, "the ways in which each culture-specific normal subject *knows* and *feels* about its social

reality should in no instance be taken as any *index* of what the empirical reality of our social universe *is*.”⁹ – is the emphasis original here?

Wynter’s radical proposition of a deciphering practice emerged before the post-human turn in the humanities in the 00s, before the buzz of the term decolonial since XXXX. We could partner Wynter alongside Rosi Bradiotti in our attempts to rethink the world around us; but whilst posthumanism is a Eurocentric critique, Wynter’s main concern would be to think about what posthumanism means beyond European intellectual thought. Wynter goes on to further posit the idea of the ‘demonic’ as a framework to think about posthumanism (reference). To function within the demonic is to act without knowing the outcome. It requires a rethinking of time, an embracing of uncertainty, and a disregard for linearity. And most importantly, it requires geo-political contextualisation.

In 2018, Wynter was honoured by her alma mater, King’s College in three ways. In June, they hosted a two-day conference “Genres of the Human: On Sylvia Wynter,” the first ever conference about this influential thinker in the United Kingdom. Later, the college added her profile to their Hall of Fame, and in October, ninety-year old Wynter will receive an honorary doctorate. Wynter already has the award the Order of Jamaica in 2010 for her contribution to education, history and culture. Her scholarship has become indispensable for those seeking to expand the important fields of critical race studies, postcolonial and decolonial studies. African American Studies scholar Alexander Weheliye was the keynote of *Genres of the Human* conference and his concept of “humanity otherwise” relies on his own encounters with Wynter’s work and his desire to expose the limitations of discourses about biopolitics (Foucault) and

bare life (Agamben). Weheliye's "humanity otherwise"¹⁰ exists as stubbornly persistent forms of life whose abjection subtends the master categories of legitimate and legible humanity (white supremacist, propertied, heteropatriarchal)—but which constitute, through that very abjection, fugitive practices of alternative human being.¹¹ It is these different "genres of humanity" as Wynter would call them, that offer different forms of cognition necessary for the endurance of 'humanity' today, still riddled with intersectional problems of space (e.g., forced, violent migrations, environmental catastrophes), place (e.g., social justice, (g)local economic issues, ethnic cleansing wars), and time (e.g., precarity, labour, transitional justice). Sitting with Sylvia is not necessarily a comfortable respite from a world dominated by European modernity, but it challenges us to develop new options from which to think, heal, share, act and effect change.

While this previous section articulated a philosophical practice of 'deciphering,' this next section examines how an Afro-Colombian choreographer engages in a type of 'deciphering practice' for the marginalized indigenous and Afro-Colombian citizens of a Colombia in transition from civil war to 'post-conflict.'

Thinking, healing and sharing: Sankofa DanzAfro's *Fecha Límite*

To write this section on decoloniality and performance has been a little difficult. It seems more important to speak about what is going on in the place from where I write than about performance or decoloniality itself. Currently, there are protests from labour and student groups fighting for the right to live with dignity. There are also a myriad of political issues that impede artists and academics from having a professional life or exercising basic rights. We must look beyond the model of the Western proscenium stage and actually look at,

and make connections with, the geopolitics of the stage itself. This is why the decolonial option to think about performance is fundamental.

In order to align decoloniality and performance philosophy, an understanding of capitalist modernity from the 15th century onwards is necessary. European modernity installed a “the colonial matrix of power” integrating multiple hierarchies and classifications of superiority/inferiority, development/underdevelopment and civilization/barbarism.¹² (page number missing. Please place in footnote). Peruvian philosopher Anibal Quijano situates corporeality as a decisive plane where colonial relationships of power materialise the three modalities of collegiality: being, knowledge and power.¹³ But rather than just outlining the main ideas that constitute the core work of *the collective* modernity/coloniality/decoloniality, I want to draw attention to the spaces where a decolonial practice emerges, and to enable the body-thinkers to speak.

We dance to have a voice.

This is what Colombian choreographer Rafael Palacios states when questioned about his work with his Afro-contemporary dance company, Sankofa **Danzafro**. Sankofa means to “return to the root»; more than a word it is an African philosophy from the Akan people in Ghana. This concept is part of a broader and complex system of thinking that insists on the necessity of knowing the past as a condition of understanding the present and projecting the future (reference). Sankofa Danzafro enacts this exact philosophy. After twenty-one years of solid and continuous work, the company is exemplary for its pedagogic projects, and commitment to connecting Afro-Colombian

communities with the past, in order to understand the present and prepare for the future.¹⁴

Working in a country where racism and classism are as prevalent as in most of Latin America, Sankofa's artistic work intertwines resistance and re-making. It resists ways of being stereotyped while it remakes ways to understand contemporary dance from the topos of black diasporic memory. It offers new ways of being and feeling, especially for its Afro-Colombian dancers, and it reconfigures blackness into Colombian-ness amidst histories of erasure and inequality thereby re-creating new possibilities of existence.

Sankofa's most recent work, *Fecha Límite* (which can be translated as Deadline or Expiration Date), was created in 2017 in a residency at the Museo de Antioquia in Medellín. Using Afro-Colombian dance traditions from the Pacific region, this performance is a reflection on land, spirituality and identity and the histories of dispossession and inequality experienced by Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities.

In suit and tie, a masked dancer prowls the stage. This dragon-faced man moves around and then disappears. Dancers enter stage-left. Four men and one woman carry *bateas*¹⁵ on their heads. Even though the style of their dresses are inspired by the ones used in traditional dances from the Colombian Pacific coast, they are not the usual colourful and celebratory ones. These are black and mournful.

Ritual, solemn and in mourning, the movements are a play in contradictions. Using repertory of traditional celebratory dances and Afro-contemporary technique, they combine joy and sorrow, rage and power to

create spaces to re-claim and re-exist. They seem to relish the joy of being together and the physical joy of being in their bodies. This is not taken for granted in communities plagued by conflict and bodies regulated by many external forces. The movements are powerful, frenetic yet contained, an aesthetic contradiction that allows a connection between the rage against belonging to a country that historically has offered little space or representation for Afro-diasporic and indigenous communities, and the choreographic power of using space to symbolize their claims for space on the land.

The dancers begin with the *bateas* on their heads, but these slowly transition from prop to an extension of their bodies, materialising those bodies from Colombia's Pacific region where the search for gold in the rivers is an everyday necessity. In their publicity material to sell the piece to foreign audiences, *Fecha Límite* is described as:

a portrait of the daily struggle of the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities to maintain and rebuild traditions and legacy in a society shaped by epistemicide. It is a call to action: the time of inequality is over. Now is the time for finding solutions, for rebuilding social fabric, for protecting Afro Colombian and Indigenous communities from the rain of illegalities and injustice.¹⁶

This 'call to action' becomes their performance philosophy.

Todo el que nace se va a morir

Solo un alma tengo

La quiero salvar

Déjalo llorar

All who are born will die,

I only have a soul,

I want to save it.

Let him cry.

Lyrics from a song performed on stage articulate a need to mourn. The stage design features a sky decorated with bullets as if stars, creating a sense of urgency, of emergency (using both meanings of the word): practices and subjects that emerge out of the context of violence.¹⁷ The choreography allows its dancers and its (Afro-Colombian and/or indigenous) audiences a way to find joy and reclaim their land and identity in a context that for centuries denies the communities their citizenship (a full political, cultural and economical citizenship). As such, *Fecha Límite* exists as an emancipatory performance practice.

The work of Rafael Palacios with Sankofa **DanzAfro**, his mentorship of other groups such as *Jovenes Creadores del Chocó* (Young Creators from Chocó), and with other processes of dance education in many territories of the Pacific region can be understood as a diasporic epistemology, a space of enunciation that, following the *sankofa* philosophy, connects and processes the past, to understand the present and to project the future. Here the colonial wounds enacted by patriarchy and racism (and made materially evident throughout the paramilitary crisis) are put at the forefront of his choreographic exploration.¹⁸ Palacios highlights the cultural and personal experiences of racialized subjects, and either the witnessing of or participation in the

performance allows for some processing of the pain and suffering of those oppressed by colonial legacies and systems of coloniality. Most importantly, Palacios' work emphasises the possibility of knowledge production from a decolonial perspective, and the creation of new possibilities of existence.

In Sankofa's *Fecha Límite*, the colonial wound and its healing process is posited in the entanglements of contemporary black subjects among the exoticizing logics and other 'epistemic traps'¹⁹ that Western aesthetics assigns to black bodies. The ability to open safe spaces, sites of enunciation and self determining practices that claim citizenship, rights and empower participation in society. At one point in the piece, the dancers wave the Colombian flag incessantly. An almost overdetermined signification of citizenship takes on new meaning when it is an Afro-Colombian body demanding recognition and affiliation with that flag and all of its colonial, violent, and delegitimising histories.

Todo el que nace se va a morir

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This circling back to the words repeated in the song during the performance of *Fecha Límite* acts as a constant reminder to the audience that we have to let him/them cry, because this is a safe space where affect has political potential. And it is precisely in this safe space that the 'colonial wound' can be unveiled, made present and experienced fully - not as something to be kept hidden, in shame or lament, but to be shared communally. This sharing opens possibilities for healing through 'counter-poetics' (to use a term proposed

by Wynter) that challenge hegemonic structures of being in the world through artistic form.²⁰ Performance here is a tool to resist, re-create and re-make the spaces of colonial domination from unacknowledged and unrecognised realms. In his own way, choreographer Palacios is offering up a way to begin healing the colonial wound especially for Afro Colombian communities, but not specifically so. His is an expansive pedagogical-performative-philosophical project whose scope aligns it to, in the case of *Fecha Limite*, the political potential of affect, especially for communities who have not been afforded the opportunity to feel or express the full potential of their subjectivity.

[new paragraph?] It was a small space inside the Museo de Antioquia where I first saw this performance. There were about sixty people present. Yet, the transferral of energy and affect was palpable. The irony of this moment rests in the fact that this particular museum has played a significant part in constructing a cultural history of the state of Antioquia as solely *mestizo* (a mix of Spanish and indigenous ancestry). In effect, they have erased the history of blackness as constitutive of Antioquia. Yet, there in a small corner was Sankofa DanzAfro asserting their physicality, presence, creativity, subjectivity and power. The geopolitics of performance enables these tactical counter-poetics to counter modernity as a “machine that generates alterities in the name of reason and humanism, while at the same time excludes from its imaginary hybridity, multiplicity, ambiguity and the contingency of concrete ways of life.”²¹ Perhaps the expiration date that *Fecha Limite* signals is a future conjunction of space and time when marginalised citizenry will be afforded equality and have their knowledge valued for its ability to generate alternative spaces for existing

in the world. In the meantime, we wait for performances by artists in the global south to continue to question and undo the darker side of modernity.

Moving from the safe space generated by a Colombian choreographer for the Afro-Colombian community of his ancestry to the conceptualizing of space by Brazilian choreographer Wagner Schwartz who uses Brazilian geographer Milton Santos to make sense of his own place in the contemporary dance world, this last section continues the exploration of how deciphering practices establish new geographic frontiers from which to create corporeal, spatial, and affective philosophies of performance that, in their questioning of modernity, are often censored by governments in the southern hemispheres. Ironically, the deciphering practice here turns on itself to privilege a politics of respectability that emerged from colonial bourgeois value systems. The colonial wound is deep, yet we must tend to it.

Geopolitics of Space and Censorship

In 2006, Brazilian contemporary choreographer Wagner Schwartz published a text in which he discusses the conceptualization of his performance *Wagner Ribot Pina Miranda Xavier Le Schwartz Transobjeto (2005)*, and the process of applying for a production grant, all while traveling to Europe for the first time. Schwartz came to realise that the relevance of his work, and the likelihood of receiving funding from Brazil depended on his acknowledgment of European artists such as Xavier Le Roy, even if Le Roy might never come to know him. *Schwartz* wrote,

I understood the set of relations that would make up my new project. According to Milton Santos, we live in a world that demands a discourse towards the intelligence of things and actions. Space is globalized, but it isn't *mondial* [worldly], except for in a metaphoric way. All places are worldly, but there is no worldwide space. In reality, people and places are globalized. The only worldwide dimension is the market.²²

In this excerpt, Schwartz references the work of the Afro-Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1926-2001), namely “1992: a redescoberta da Natureza” (1992)²³ and *Por Uma Outra Globalização: do pensamento único à consciência universal* (2000).²⁴

For Santos, geography is an epistemology of existence. He proposes we consider space as an intertwined set of systems of objects and actions mediated by techniques. More importantly, his work thinks “outside the box” of Western modernity, and his culminating work on globalization offers three senses for that concept: globalization as a *fable* (the world as a constructed reality, as the globalizing agents want us to believe); as *perversity* (the world as it is and, especially, how it is felt across the Global South); and as *possibility* (the world as it could be), which might emerge from “philosophies produced on the various continents, to the detriment of European rationalism,”²⁵ from which I include, for example, the Amerindian concept of *buen vivir* (to live in plenitude). Above all, for Santos, the perversity of today’s globalization, especially its structural organization around capital and competition, “kills the notion of solidarity, returns mankind to a primitive form of individualism and, as if we were to backslide into wild animals, reduces the notions of public and private morality to almost nothing.”²⁶

Schwartz took these three concepts, in general, and the relationship between capitalism and “primitivism/wilderness”, in particular, and used them to critically reflect on his funding application, which called for a brief description and a video excerpt. It is worthwhile noting that, in Brazil, 95% of all arts and culture funding initiatives are managed by the private sector, via tax-exemption laws, with the intent of advancing their brand-name.²⁷ In his funding application,

Schwartz echoed Santos and concluded that “[g]lobalization, therefore, is first and foremost: fantasy (in this section Schwartz wrote 15 lines of text), for the transference is nothing but a promise, and perversity (in this section, Schwartz offered a five minute video recording of the work), due to the practice of competitiveness.”²⁸ Over time, Schwartz developed an excerpt of *Transobjeto*, based on *Bichos* (Animals/Things, circa 1960s) by counter-cultural artist Lygia Clark, into a stand-alone solo titled *La Bête* (*The Animal*, in French).

Bichos is a series of sculptures made of aluminium plates connected through hinges that evoke the idea of a backbone. Originally, it was designed to be handled and played with. In today’s art market, each piece can cost up to two million dollars and, ironically, Clark’s “animals” are often displayed under glass cases as static objects rather than kinetic puzzles with multiple possibilities of forms and movements (add references). By contrast, Schwartz’s performance seeks to restore Clark’s original concept of art-making as an interactive process and, subsequently, question the commodification of the art world, which overvalues objects as investments and despises artists as disposable labour force.

La Bête begins with Schwartz laying down, naked, playing with a small replica of one of Clark’s *Bichos*. After a few minutes, he asks the audience: “Do you want to try?” As a volunteer arises, the performer assumes the position of the “animal/thing” to be manipulated. Although Schwartz is present in flesh and blood, this simple gesture places him in a vulnerable position of otherness. The performer is - albeit metaphorically – dehumanized. In a review titled “La Bête and the barbarism of these dark times,”²⁹ dance scholar Helena Katz notes that Schwartz’s choreography pushes the physicality of his body “to the edge of

discomfort, imbalance and pain,” hence making this vulnerability visible to the naked eye. Resonating with Santos, Katz concludes that, “it becomes very clear that this is how things present themselves today: One can do to the other whatever one wishes. *La Bête* makes us realize that we are the ones moving barbarism forward.”³⁰

For the past decade, Schwartz’s work has gained wider recognition and, in 2017, he was invited to perform *La Bête* at the opening of the exhibition *35th Panorama da Arte Brasileira*, at the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM). The following day, a video containing a short fragment of Schwartz’s performance – depicting a moment when a mother and daughter touch his passive naked body (arms and feet, to be precise) – went viral. Whilst the opening of the exhibition was limited to invited guests and the “nudity content” of the performance was clearly signaled, Schwartz suffered a series of virtual attacks and accusations of paedophilia, with an arsenal of memes and fake news fed by socialbots. The assaults were spearheaded by alt-right organizations and political parties connected to Brazil’s agro-business, the pro-gun movement, and neo-Pentecostal religions, collectively known by the anachronism BBB (meaning Cattle, Bullet, and Bible). The exhibition’s curator and the child’s parent, choreographer Elisabete Finger, were similarly attacked and, in the following days, a furious mob invaded the museum and lashed out at its state employees.³¹

The hostile reactions against “the naked man in the museum,” as the episode came to be known on social media, clearly reveals the on-going perversity of globalization - especially what Santos calls the tyranny of information, whereby "what is transmitted to the majority of humanity is, in fact,

manipulated information that, instead of clarifying, confuses.”³² Far from an isolated case, in 2017 alt-right groups stirred up a series of public attacks against arts and humanities, commonly associated with the Left, framing them as contemporary “axis of evil.”³³

Back in 1992, Santos had already noted that the most dramatic trait of our times is the role that fear and fantasy play in our quotidian life.³⁴ This mixture of fear and fantasy, a recipe arguably deployed in the United States military campaign in search for “weapons of mass-destruction” post-9/11 as well as the media coverage of its last election and the Brexit vote in the UK, fit the underlying score of the alt-right attacks in Brazil. The proliferation of fake news, with its stimulation of hate and suppression of solidarity, coupled with the historical dismantling of critical thinking via cuts on basic education have pushed disenfranchised segments of the population to support and even applaud their own oppression. In the end, the perversion of globalization in this case lies not only in the strategic manipulation of information to produce scapegoats – or a fake “axis of evil” - but also the distorted appropriation of dissident grass-root tactics, especially the democratized use of technology and means of communication such as social media, to turn the masses into decentralized agents of oppression. In March of 2018, Schwartz confessed in an interview to *Estado de Sao Paulo* newspaper that “[o]nce the images of “La Bête” went viral and virtual lynching started, my body became ill. It is impossible to speak at the moment when you are tortured.” He further concludes that, “[t]he “fake news” transforms the haters’ will into an image, and in the online life they experience a desire for violence, and the feeling of hatred flows through offline

life, creating a sense of fear and insecurity in the public space. And, strangely enough, I felt the mourning of seeing my own body dead on the screen.”

In the following year, Wagner Schwartz collaborated with other attacked artists on the creation of *Dominio Público* (*Public Domain*, 2018): a play that departs from the lore around Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* to address both their freedom of expression and the political appropriation of their images. “To perform again is to return to live,” Schwartz indicates. “It is to be able to look at violence with a certain distance, that only art allows us to do. It is to leave the trauma and go to the act, to return to the spaces that produce reflection instead of confusion.”(2018) Putting theory into practice, more importantly, the stories retold by each artist vivify Santos’ understanding of the geopolitics of civil space as an intertwined set of systems objects (e.g. works of art) and actions (e.g. construction of discourses/narratives) mediated by techniques, especially those that decontextualize images and ascribe them new meanings. With the *Mona Lisa* in the background, the monologues problematize both the “fable” and the “perverse” sense of (globalized) modernity and its (neoliberal) reality. Meanwhile, by superimposing the stories *lived* by the artists on stage, this performative response gestures towards globalization as a *possibility*, as Santos envisioned, centred on humans rather than money; solidarity rather than competition.

These three essays were written in solidarity with one another and our commitment to highlight people, places and practices that theorise and articulate. In using words, bodies, movements and aesthetics, these people, places and practices consider the world beyond the limits of European modernity. We hope to point your attention towards this new ‘ground’ notably imagined by Sylvia Wynter and advocated for in her intellectual endeavours, for it is one that will ‘be of a new science of human discourse, of human ‘life’ beyond the ‘master discourse’ of our governing ‘privileged text’ and its sub/versions.’³⁵ We remain hopeful in future intersectional explorations of epistemological

differences and how, in those precious differences, alternative modes of existence can arise to rescue us all from 'the dark side of modernity.'

For Further Reading

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² Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation: An Argument." *New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257-337.

³ Wynter, Sylvia. "Rethinking "Aesthetics": Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice" in Mbye B. Cham, ed., *Ex-iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992.

⁴ Wynter, Sylvia. "No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues." *Forum NHI: Knowledge for the 21st Century* 1, no.1 (1994): 42-71; and Wynter "Unsettling the Coloniality of Bein" (2003).

⁵ Wynter, Sylvia. "Afterword: "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's 'Woman'" in *Out of the Kumbia: Caribbean Women and Literature*, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido, 355-72. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990.

⁶ Wynter, "Rethinking Aesthetics," 240.

⁷ Wynter, "Rethinking Aesthetics," 266-67.

⁸ Ontocentrism is the idea that the human pre-exists the complex of signifying practices and discursive systems by means of which it is instituted as such a subject or mode of being. (Rethinking Aesthetics, 270).

⁹ Wynter, "Rethinking Aesthetics," 271.

¹⁰ Weheliye, Alexander. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, 6.

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- ¹¹ Annie Menzel. "And the Flesh Shall Set You Free: Weheliye's Habeas Viscus." *Theory & Event* 19, no 1. (2016) <https://muse.jhu.edu/> accessed October 7, 2018).
- ¹² Castro-Gómez, S. (2007). "Michel Foucault y la Colonialidad del Poder". En: *Tabula Rasa*, 6, 153-172.
- ¹³ Quijano, A. (2000). "Colonialidad de poder y clasificación social". *Journal of world-systems research*, 6 (2), 342-386.
- ¹⁴ Sankofa DanzAfro Website «<http://sankofadanzaafro.com/site/#!/sankofa/>» Accessed 2 September 2018
- ¹⁵ Shallow pan used gold panning, a manual technique of gold mining.
- ¹⁶ Association of Performing Arts Professionals website. «<https://www.apap365.org/Conference/Programs-and-Events/Special-Events/UP-NEXT/UP-NEXT-2019-Participants>» Accessed 4 September 2018
- ¹⁷ Since 1948's *La Violencia*, Colombia has been plagued with an over 50 year civil war pitting conservative and liberal ideologies against one another. Exacerbated by the drug wars of the 1980s, the violence became pathological during the 1990s. A consortium of paramilitaries, guerrilla groups like the FARC, and state funded military interventions plagued the country with mass murders, forced displacements, human rights abuses, among other collateral damages from armed conflict. In 2016, then President Juan Manuel Santos signed a Peace Agreement with the FARC technically ending the armed conflict and ushering in an era of 'post-conflict' reconciliation and peace. For more information on Colombia's 20th century history please consult Maria McFarland Sanchez-Moreno's *There Are No Dead Here: A Story of Murder and Denial in Colombia* (2018).
- ¹⁸ For further elaboration on the concept of the colonial wound please consult Vazquez, Rolando, and Walter Mignolo. "Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings." *Social Text Online* 15 (2013).
- ¹⁹ This is an expression used by Walter Mignolo in an interview by Gaztambide-Fernández, Rubén. "Decolonial options and artistic/aestheSic entanglements: An interview with Walter Mignolo." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3.1 (2014).
- ²⁰ Eudell, Demetrius, and Carolyn Allen. "Sylvia Winter: a transculturist rethinking modernity." *Journal of West Indian Literature*, vol. 10, no. 1/2, 2001, pp. 1–7. *JSTOR*, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23019776.

²¹ Castro-Gómez, S. (2000). “Ciencias sociales, violencia epistémica y el problema de la “invención del otro”. En: E. Lander (Ed.), *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales*. Perspectivas Latinoamericanas. Buenos Aires: CLACSO. **Page number?**

²² Schwartz, Wagner. “WAGNER RIBOT PINA MIRANDA XAVIER LE SCHWARTZ TRANSOBJETO.” (2006) Available @ <https://www.wagnerschwartz.com/transobjeto-1>.
Entendi quais seriam as relações que iriam compor meu novo projeto. Segundo Milton Santos, vivemos em um mundo exigente de um discurso para a inteligência das coisas e das ações. O espaço se globaliza, mas não é mundial, senão como metáfora. Todos os lugares são mundiais, mas não há espaço mundial. Quem se globaliza mesmo são as pessoas e os lugares. A única dimensão mundial é o mercado.

²³ Santos, Milton “1992: a redescoberta da Natureza.” *Revista Estudos Avançados*, 6:14, 1992, 95-106. 100
Original in Portuguese: “Vivemos em um mundo exigente de um discurso, necessário à inteligência das coisas e das ações. É um discurso dos objetos, indispensável ao seu uso, e um discurso das ações, indispensável à sua legitimação. Mas ambos esses discursos são, freqüentemente, tão artificiais como as coisas que explicam e tão enviesados como as ações que ensinam”

²⁴ This book has been translated to English in 2017 as *Toward an Other Globalization: From the Single Thought to Universal Conscience*.

²⁵ Santos, Milton. *Por Uma Outra Globalização: do pensamento único à consciência universal*, **(publisher details)**, 2000. 100.

²⁶ Ibid., 65.

²⁷ Rosa, Cristina F. *Swing Nation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

²⁸ Schwartz, 2006. Original in Portuguese, “Globalização, portanto, é antes de tudo: fantasia (15 linhas do texto), porque a transferência não passa de uma promessa, e perversidade (5 minutos do trabalho em vídeo), pela prática da competitividade.”

²⁹ Schwartz, 2015. Original in Portuguese “La Bête’ e a bárbarie desses tempos sombrios.”

³⁰ Schwartz, 2015.

³¹ For a comprehensive list of articles regarding the political appropriation of *La Bête*, see Schwartz’s online Dossier, available @ <https://www.wagnerschwartz.com/dossier> and for an extended bibliography on the political appropriation of *La Bête* on the media, and its repercussion across peer-review journals, books and catalogues, see <<<https://www.wagnerschwartz.com/dossier>>>

³² Santos 2000, 39.

³³ Examples includes a) Jo Clifford's play *O Evangelho Segundo Jesus, A Rainha do Céu* (*The Gospel According to Jesus, Queen of Heaven*, 2017), closed down for Jesus was played by Renata Carvalho, a transsexual actress; c) Santander Cultural's exhibition *Queermuseu – Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art* in Curitiba, closed following protests alleging promotion of paedophilia, zoophilia and blasphemy and, most ironically, c) a petition to ban the US philosopher Judith Butler from coming to Brazil and presenting at the conference *The Ends of Democracy* in São Paulo. During the event, protesters gathered in front of the venue, whereby they burned an effigy depicting Butler as the witch of "gender ideology."

³⁴ Santos 1992, 101. "There have always been times of fear. But this is a time of permanent and pervasive fear. Fantasy has always populated the minds of men. But now, industrialized, it invades every moment and every corner of existence at the service of the market and of power and, together with fear, constitutes an essential part of our model of life."

³⁵ Wynter 1990, 366.