Towards decolonizing encounters with social movements’ decolonizing knowledges and practices

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Introduction

This paper takes various analyses of modernity as a point of departure in order to explore possibilities for decolonizing encounters with social movements’ decolonizing knowledges and practices. To this end, the paper seeks to establish a conversation between two novel frameworks for the critical analysis of modernity: actor-network theory (ANT), and the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality perspective (MCD). My contentions are, first, that both ANT and MCD contribute in specific ways to de-colonial thinking and practice; second, that despite differences and tensions between the two frameworks they are largely complementary and have much to offer each other; and third, that the set of inquiries broached by these frameworks, when mutually reconfigured as ANT/MCD, offer a set of enabling, concrete, and perhaps unique contributions to thinking about modernity, ethnography, and the relation between academic knowledge and political practice. The paper is also written in the context of the growing field of the anthropology of social movements, although this will remain largely in the background and will not be discussed as such in the paper.

My own up-close encounter with both ANT and MCD took place somewhat simultaneously upon beginning my graduate studies in Anthropology at UNC-CH. I found the two frameworks to be making important contributions to the project of decolonizing knowledges and practices within the social sciences and providing hopeful terms of engagement with social movements. While I found both to be of considerable relevance for my research interests, I came across hardly any work that draws upon both frameworks and that makes use of the insights that each provides.

Part I of the paper looks first at actor-network theory, highlighting what I call ethnography of ontological encounters. I then go on to present some of the main aspects of the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program, this time highlighting the different understandings of modernity offered by this framework. In Part II, I set the two frameworks into dialogue, including a discussion of the implications for ethnography and for decolonizing the academy. I finally state what I believe are remaining problems within both frameworks from the perspective of a decolonial project, and suggest ways in which these problems can be addressed by relocating both frameworks within modernity and by shifting some of the frameworks’ epistemological and political implications, especially in terms of refusing to decode subaltern knowledges as a provisional phase that would allow for concretely changing the terms of the conversation between those of us situated in the academy and the subaltern groups or movements we are engaging with.

In this respect, my project has also been influenced by, and resonates with, the World Anthropologies Network (WAN) project. Building on anthropological critiques of dominant anthropologies as nodes of expert knowledge production that exclude—or at least make invisible—other ways of doing anthropology world wide, WAN is envisioned as an effort towards creating conditions of possibility for pluralizing anthropology and, more generally, for de-colonizing expertise (see, e.g., Ribeiro and Escobar, eds. 2006; see also www.ram-wan.org). The end result is a transformation of the conditions of conversability among anthropologies of the world; paraphrasing one of the slogans of MCD (“worlds and knowledges otherwise”), this aim has been stated as “other anthropologies and anthropology otherwise” (Restrepo and Escobar 2005).
I. Two critical frameworks on modernity: Initiating a conversation

a) Actor-Network Theory

In *We have never been Modern* (1993), Latour argues against the prevailing nature-culture divide, a divide which he sees as foundational to Modernity. As he defines the concept, ‘Modern’ indicates “not a period, but a form of the passage of time; a way of interpreting a set of situations by attempting to extract from them the distinction between facts and values, states of the world and representations, rationality and irrationality…” (2004:244). He points out that while the distinction was installed within the realm of the scientific method, in practice moderns have never maintained such an unambiguous distinction. Instead, what has taken place is a proliferation of hybrids between nature and culture, so that non-modern practices have never been displaced.

The divide between the subject and the object is another central characteristic of modernity which by means of “purification creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand; and that of nonhumans on the other” (Latour 1993:10). Actor-network theory allows for the possibility of overcoming this divide by reformulating the status of both objects and subjects, which are decentered and recast as actors (Law, 2002). In effect, ANT allows us to engage with the phenomena we are researching not as being an object in the sense of being relegated to the domain of the natural (something out there to be examined) but rather in terms of actor-networks constituted by both humans and non-humans. Moreover, as researchers, we are constitutive of, rather than detached from, the actor-networks with which we engage, as modernity stipulates.

Latour tries to make social connections traceable by rendering the “social world as flat as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible” (2005:16). As Latour argues, context bestows upon the social a three-dimensional shape; subsequently; he makes a case in favor of an alternative flat topography in which context is not considered in the process of re-tracing associations (2005:171).

“[A]ctors are always engaged in the business of mapping the ‘social context’ in which they are placed...This is why it is so important not to define in advance what sort of social aggregates could provide the context for all these maps. Group delineation is not only one of the occupations of social scientist, but also the very constant task of the actors themselves. Actors do the sociology for the sociologists and sociologists learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations.”(Latour 2005:32)

In *The Body Multiple*, Anne-Marie Mol looks at how a particular disease, atherosclerosis, is being done through different practices. For her “the practicalities of doing disease are part of the story, it is a story about practices. A praxiography”. She is concerned with how objects are enacted in practice (Mol 32). Her conclusion, and stronger claim, is that ‘different enactments of a disease entail different ontologies. They each do the body differently’ (Mol 2002:176). “If atherosclerosis is a thick vessel wall here (under the microscope), it is pain when walking there (in the consulting room), and an important cause of death in the Dutch population yet a little further along (in the computers of the department of epidemiology).”

By foregrounding practices, performances and enactments, something happens: Reality multiplies. Amidst this ontological multiplicity and the consequent “permanent possibility of alternative configurations” (Mol 2002:164), Mol is specifically concerned with exploring modes of coexisting.

ANT creates the conditions of possibility of performing ethnography as non-modern practice. Thereby, I want to underline the inherently performative character of ANT. Markussen defines Performativity as “a theory of how things – identities and other discursive effects – come into being”. She explains that “all research is performative in the sense that it helps enact the real. However, performativity is not
only a theory, but also a deconstructive practice” (Markussen 2005:329).

Performativity thus entails both a theory and a method. It is a theory about emergence as well as an emergent methodology which entails destabilizing established certainties. In this sense, performance ethnography, I would argue, resonates with ANT’s project of recapturing the ‘surprise of seeing the social unravel’ (Latour 2005).

Subsequently, in her discussion of performativity as emergent methodology, Markussen points out to the ontological encounters that practicing performance ethnography entails; these are “encounters in which the terms of the real are allowed to shift” (2005:341). This implies the recognition that research and reality co-produce each other. Moreover, practicing performativity, the author asserts, “requires an openness within the research process to the possibility that researchers and their practices themselves must alter”(2005:329)

In Critical Ethnography (2005), Soyini Madison further reconfigures ethnography as a performance of possibility. This allows for research practices which open up a diversity of ontological possibilities. Madison writes:

In a performance of possibilities, the possible suggests a movement culminating in creation and change. It is the active, creative work that weaves the list of the mind with being mindful of life, of merging the text with the world, of critically traversing the margin and the center, and of opening more and different paths of enlivening relations and spaces (Madison 2005:172)

This co-performative approach to methodology embodies many aspects of Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia as advocated in The Dialogic Imagination, in the manner in which it incorporates a multiplicity of voices, genres and languages, as well as its dialogic aspect. It is through this dialogical encounter that, I want to argue, the different actors are more fully present. For as Bakhtin writes,

I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness… Separation, dissociation, enclosure within the self is a main reason for the loss of one’s self (1984:287).

However, following this account of ANT one might be left with several questions: how does ANT account for differences among actors? How does ANT address questions of power and violence, history and hegemony?

As I conceive of it, ANT deals with these questions performatively. By flattening the landscape, by emphasizing the need to relinquish any assumptions one might carry about the phenomena we are engaging with; by not taking any group or network as predetermined but rather looking at groups as in continuous process of formation; always re-tracing the actor-network’s outlines and constitutive elements.

ANT’s performance entails a process through which modernist logic, categories and power/knowledge hierarchies are suspended. They are deprived of the authority bestowed upon them by modernity. Thereby, ANT addresses the question of power precisely by negating its function.

Although a powerful tool for doing so, ANT still falls short. By not addressing how the processes with which the dominant knowledge hierarchies were established, ANT is at a disadvantage. For how can we adequately examine, trace and understand the actor-networks we are engaging with, without accounting for the processes by means of which other knowledges have been systematically subalternized for centuries. This is precisely what MCD can contribute; the understanding of coloniality and how it operates as a constitutive element of modernity. To sum, while ANT addresses power structures by rendering them obsolete through practice, MCD is looking at how these very
b) The Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality Research Program

According to the MCD program, Modernity is a project rather than a particular historic moment. This project starts in the sixteenth century. As Escobar explains, “The conquest and colonization of America is the formative moment in the creation of Europe’s Other; the point of origin of the capitalist world system, enabled by gold and silver from America; the origin of Europe’s own concept of modernity (and of the first, Iberian, modernity, later eclipsed with the apogee of the second modernity); the initiation point of Occidentalism as the overarching imaginary and self-definition of the modern/colonial world system (which subalternized peripheral knowledge and created, in the eighteenth century, Orientalism as Other…Finally, with the Conquest and colonization, Latin America and the Caribbean emerged as ‘the first periphery’ of European Modernity” (Escobar 2003:60).

This is the moment of the crystallization of binaries such as subject/object, self/other, nature/culture into a system of hierarchical classification of people and nature. This hierarchization, effected through domination, is the other constitutive underside of modernity, namely coloniality. As Mignolo asserts, ‘there is no modernity without coloniality’ which accounts for the coinage of the modernity/coloniality concept. Modernity presents a rhetoric of salvation, while hiding coloniality, which is the logic of oppression and exploitation; although historically, modernity has been markedly successful in hiding this darker side. However, just as coloniality is constitutive of modernity, so is decoloniality. Decoloniality refers to the processes through which the subaltern resist the rules and racialized hierarchies within which they are confined, defying the logic of coloniality which casts them as inferior or not quite human. De-colonial thinking is distinct form other critical projects; as Mignolo points out, ‘decolonial thinking is an-other critical theory’, an attitude that takes root at the colonies and ex-colonies in accordance with ‘an-other epistemology’ (Mignolo In press 2006). Escobar characterizes it as “think[ing] theory through/from the political praxis of subaltern groups” (2003: 38). In contrast to the ‘hegemonic modern epistemology…put in place from the perspective of a white male body, located in Christian Europe and the US’ (10), the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality research program, as Mignolo writes, is concerned with ‘the de-colonization of knowledge and of being which means, the de-colonization of the economy and of authority’ (10) It is an intellectual framework concerned with examining the rhetoric of modernity/logic of coloniality (3). In sum, MCD is a framework from the Latin American Periphery of the modern colonial world system; in that sense “Latin America itself becomes a perspective that can be practiced from many spaces, if it is done from counter-hegemonic perspectives that challenge the very assumption of Latin America as fully constituted object of study, previous to, and outside of, the often imperialistic discourses that construct it” (Escobar 2003:44).

While ANT (as theory as well as method) is an exceptionally suitable tool for mapping other worlds/multiple ontologies, MCD framework offers critical insights which lead to an even more profound understanding and account of the ethnographic encounter. This enriched view would be based on the understanding that the concept of coloniality brings of how the processes of subalternization of other worlds/knowledges have been undertaken for the past five centuries, and the expansion of ANT’s conceptualization of modernity to encompass coloniality as well as decoloniality as two constitutive elements of modernity. This results in an ANT account much more apt in attending to questions of power and more responsive to tracing actors that might have otherwise been overlooked not because they are not part of the network but because they have been subjected to processes that render them invisible.

II. MCD and ANT through the eyes of MCD / ANT: Challenges and Opportunities

In the previous part of the paper, I outlined some basic themes through which the conversation between ANT and MCD can be made manifest. In the next section, I will turn the gaze of decoloniality towards
the two frameworks themselves and sketch some of the implications, challenges and possibilities which emerge from the above discussion for our own practices and modes of engagement with subaltern knowledges and worlds.

I start by examining the situatedness of the two frameworks within the academy; looking at the implications of this positionality on the geo-politics of the knowledges that ANT and MCD produce. I try to answer the question of how to escape repeating practices through which other knowledges are subalternized. After looking at the loci of enunciation of these knowledges and who their interlocutors are, I infer that there is a need to recognize both frameworks as modernist inscribed, i.e. operating within the framework of modernity. This move would allow for engaging more directly in the process of decolonizing the academy which has historically been one of the key sites where modernist knowledge has been envisioned and constituted. Next, I look at what does changing the terms of the conversation, a central theme advocated by MCD, entail concretely in terms of our research practices and modes of engagement with subaltern knowledges. I consider what the practice of listening to silences and refusing to decode might offer.

Geo-politics of ANT and MCD knowledges

As situatedness and embodiment are central themes that emerge from the preceding conversation, I will now look at ANT and MCD specifically in these terms. I will be addressing the following questions: Who are the ANT and MCD advocates? Where they are speaking from? What actor-networks are they part of? Who are they speaking to? What are they trying to achieve?

The sites from which knowledges are produced are central to our understanding of those knowledges, hence the concept of the Geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo 2003). Accordingly, the first step towards situating ANT and MCD is to look at their loci of enunciation. Both frameworks are predominantly produced within the institutional sites of the western academy. Therefore, the university and its role in the production of the modernity/coloniality project needs to be addressed.

Mignolo (2003) examines the history of the university culminating with the emergence of the corporate university in the post World War II period, which displaced the preceding Kantian-Humboldtian university. Since the Renaissance, the history of the European university has been inscribed within the macro-narrative of Western Civilization. Mignolo describes the relationship of ‘epistemic dependency’ that accompanies economic dependency; this entails the ‘cultural, intellectual, scientific in the larger sense of the word and technological, as well as related to the natural and social sciences, and [the epistemic dependency] manifests itself at the level of the disciplines.’(2003:110)

The site of production of theory is thus the initial factor to be considered when following the ANT and MCD theories. Referring to Rich’s conceptualization of Location, Clifford (1989) writes:

“Location," here, is not a matter of finding a stable "home" or of discovering a common experience. Rather it is a matter of being aware of the difference that makes a difference in concrete situations, of recognizing the various inscriptions, "places," or "histories" that both empower and inhibit the construction of theoretical categories like "woman," "patriarchy," or "colonization," categories essential to political action as well as to serious comparative knowledge. "Location" is thus, concretely, a series of locations and encounters, travel within diverse, but limited spaces (1989:179).

According to the MCD program, decolonial thinking is not just an analytic concept but is rather an effort imbued with political implications, it is a project that entails an-other thinking, changing the terms and not only the content of the conversation (Mignolo In press 2006). I find it useful to differentiate between two distinct and significant connotations that changing the terms of the conversation entails. One the one hand, terms refers to the terminology and language used, particularly contesting the use of logocentric language, the second use of terms demands changing the very
conditions, i.e. power dynamics and structures within which the conversation is taking place. So I am speaking of changing the terms and the terms of the conversation. In this regard, Fanon is arguing for changing the content and the terms (terminology and form) as well as for changing the conditions of the conversation altogether. Fanon calls for a ‘liberating transformation of the everyday’. A process which involves forcefully rejecting the dominating Western values, a rejection that emerges from the embodied situated experience of the colonized. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1966) writes:

*The violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man’s values. In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these values, insult them, and vomit them up* (1966:43)

In the process of situating MCD and ANT, we need to recognize the extent to which the subjectivities of those of us who ascribe to those frameworks and projects are framed by the *rhetoric of modernity/logic of coloniality*; to identify how/where/to what extent have our own subjectivities been molded by modernist epistemologies, and subsequently engage in an effort of internal decolonization. This entails an ongoing practice of self-interrogation which undermines the naturalization of modernist epistemologies by the participants of the both ANT and MCD projects. As Fanon points out, “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (Fanon 1967:17-18).

This thorough interrogation would signify a situated move towards redefining the current coloniality of power. It might be argued that only after such a process is undertaken it might become possible to re-engage in a conversation with the modernist paradigm in accordance with different and more equitable conditions --thus changing the terms, and terms, of the conversation. Otherwise, the danger might be that although discursively and analytically, the MCD program is advocating alternatives to modernity, by not radically interrogating our own subjectivities, we are leaving room for modernist categories to re-emerge through the back door and become manifest whether in the manner in which de-coloniality gets cast as just another object of study or by means of processes through which an alternative hierarchization of subaltern knowledges becomes enacted in the process of decolonial theorizing. As Foucault puts it:

*“The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are, is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.”* (1984: 50)

A central theme which emerges from the above discussion is how to escape repeating practices through which other knowledges are subalternized. Here, it is worth pointing out to the danger of reassigning the theory/practice or knowledge/experience binary between the modern and the non-modern. If the MCD program is to assume the role of translator/interpreter of de-colonial knowledges elsewhere, then there is risk of reproducing knowledge hierarchies. In this regard, there is need to caution against the MCD group assuming a position in which we may be perceived as granting recognition to other knowledges and thus validating their existence, while in the process reproducing new power/knowledge structures in accordance with which we, as participants in the group, still enjoy the power and are in position of authority to name such knowledges.

To ensure that our modes of engagement do not re-enact the very *epistemic violence* (Spivak 1988) that we are working to undermine, it might be necessary to acknowledge *the difference that makes a*
difference (Clifford 1989); to unmask the power structures that still characterize our engagement with other knowledges/epistemologies while working actively towards transforming those structures and thereby the terms of the conversation. Otherwise, we run the risk of practicing what Bourdieu (1990) terms ‘strategies of condescension’, strategies by means of which:

“…agents occupying a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space symbolically deny the social distance which does not thereby cease to exist, thus ensuring they gain the profits of recognition accorded to a purely symbolic negation of distance…In short, one can use the objective distances so as to have advantages of proximity and the advantages of distance, that is, the distance and the recognition of distance that is ensured by the symbolic negation of distance” (1990:127-8).

Thus, there is urgent need to recognize the power and privileges present in the loci of enunciation of the MCD and ANT frameworks; the need for incessant self-reflexivity by those of us engaging with other knowledges; to be constantly on guard against being involved in the reproduction of new hierarchies; to avoid falling into the draw of representing, explaining or speaking on behalf of the subaltern.

Relocating MCD within the space of modernity

After examining ANT and MCD’s locus of enunciation, the next step would involve interrogating who their interlocutors are; who are these two theoretical frameworks speaking to? It is my observation that most of the texts I came across from each of ANT and MCD perspectives are geared primarily towards a western/modern academic audience. And although MCD is clearly inspired by subaltern contributions towards the project of decolonial thinking, however, most of these encounters still take place within the medium of western epistemologies. The work of Ali Shariati(1980), may be taken as an example. Shariati’s writings were among the most influential in theorizing for the Iranian Revolution. Yet Shariati’s analysis, while presenting a critique of Western hegemony from the perspective of Islam, is framed predominantly in reference to the dominant Western epistemology; largely lacking the positivity of his own location. So while changing the content, he is still using the language of modernity.

Mignolo points out that the MCD program “looks at modernity from the perspective of coloniality” (In press 2006:19). He argues that in contrast to world-systems analysis embedded within European genealogies of thought, MCD (as exemplified by Dussel and Quijano) is working towards the ‘continuation of an-other genealogy of thought’ (20), one that is emerging from the colonial wound of the subaltern and that sees its pillars to be intellectuals such as Jose Carlos Matiategui, Frantz Fanon and Fausto Reynaga (In press 2006). While I am not questioning the extent to which MCD program is articulated with decolonial projects initiated by subaltern groups and struggles, however instead of foregrounding associations and upholding genealogies with and within ‘subaltern epistemologies’, perhaps we need to consider the possibility of relocating this project into the realm of modernity as a strategy to work more deeply in and against it. To unveil mechanisms through which the myth of modernity attains its claims to universality. If this epistemic break is recognized as taking place within the discursive sphere of the modernist project, then its move could be of greater potency and consequence for the project of decolonizing knowledge and being.

This break could be seen as reverberating in Latour’s We have never been modern; Latour’s use of terminology for his title is noteworthy. He situates his voice within modernity; it is modernity seeing itself as a myth. Dussel’s notion of exteriority (2002) points in the same direction; it ‘refers to an outside that is precisely constituted as difference by a hegemonic discourse’ (Escobar 2003:39). Yet in terms of framing, the adoption of the concept of an outside assumes that the gaze is still modern-based. Escobar’s Worlds and Knowledges otherwise, is also a performance of this rupture. His essay is not addressing, as I see it, those inhabiting other worlds, but instead it is signaling an epistemic break from within the Modernity/coloniality project towards enacting alternatives to modernity. These illustrations
by members affiliated with each of ANT and MCD reveal a practice of dislodging; an enactment of a rupture from within modernity’s project as it made to realize its fallacy.

**Decolonizing the academy**

ANT and MCD frameworks are also in an advantageous position to contribute to the process of decolonizing the academy, the place within which both frameworks are predominantly situated, and the site of production of hegemonic modern epistemology. Both projects are located at a great juncture which allows them to unmask the mechanisms through which the rhetoric of modernity/logic of coloniality manifests itself and through which other knowledges are systematically subalternized. Santos identifies this epistemological move as *sociology of absences* through which he calls for theorizing processes through which hegemonic epistemology and rationality produce non-existences (2004:238). This effort is already considered by ANT and MCD participants; as Escobar points out, ‘the group seeks to make a decisive intervention into the very discursivity of the modern sciences in order to craft another space for the production of knowledge – an other way of thinking, un paradigma otro’ (2003:32).

While it has been a central concern among those of us who identify with either or both frameworks (and are members of the Social Movements Working Group, UNC-CH) to acknowledge social movements and subaltern groups with whom we engage as knowledge producers, the arguments presented in this paper give us a reason to pause and reflect upon. As Hage (2000) cautions: “In much the same way...as the tolerance/intolerance divide mystifies the more important divide between holding the power to tolerate and not holding it, the distinction between valuing negatively/valuing positively mystifies the deeper division between holding the power to value (negatively or positively) and not holding it” (2000:121)

Therefore, unless the very conditions of the conversation change towards a more egalitarian mode that takes this unequal power into account, our efforts to make other knowledges visible then do not challenge the very power we maintain to make them invisible.

**Listening to silences**

The challenge becomes to re-configure our own frameworks and modes of engagement; so that we can replace giving voice (as practiced by committed intellectual traditions, participatory action research...) by listening (as inspired by the other kind of politics advocated and enacted by the Zapatistas in The Other Campaign and more generally by the turn of various social movements in Latin America towards non-representational politics). This learning to listen to/through the silences, rather than signaling to an end or closure of dialogue, might contribute to tangibly changing the terms of the conversation; which would create better conditions of possibility for the subaltern to be heard. As Saldana-Portillo (2002) writes, “silence does not eliminate differences. Rather, it makes it possible not only for differences to emerge, but also for a universal identification in difference to take place. Silence is the site on which alterity and universality converge” (Saldana-Portillo 2002:302).

For Spivak the subaltern cannot speak because "the ontology of the Western subject necessitates and creates the other: the silent subaltern" (1988:183). After 500 years of silencing and subalternization by the project of modernity/coloniality of its Others, it is worthwhile to explore the value of being quiet when working with subaltern groups towards decolonizing knowledges; a silence that forces us to listen.

One question I raise above pertains to the effects of ANT and MCD’s engagement in politics of location with respect to decolonizing the academy. The second question relates to the value of restricting and acknowledging our limitations/constraints as well as allowing for silences. What would the consequences of marking out the ‘territory of the unreadable, or the unknowable’ be? (Saldana-Portille...
2002:299). Is it important for us to learn to be quiet at moments where the inclination might be to make other knowledges visible and other voices heard? By refusing to decode, are we enacting a reconfiguration within the structures of knowledge production which would create conditions of existence of more equitable terms according to which the conversations between MCD / ANT and other subalternized knowledges can take place? Are we to believe The Ethnographer (Borges) who discovered that, “the secret is not as important as the paths that led [him] to it. Each person has to walk those paths himself” (1999:335)?

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**NOTES**

1 This paper is part of a larger ethnographic project which engages with sites of encounter between social movements of the Arab World and Latin America in articulation with, and as an enactment of, WAN objectives as well as being envisioned as a contribution towards fostering South-South dialogue.

2 Quijano introduced the concept of coloniality (as distinct from colonialism) as operating in four interrelated domains: control of economy (labor, resources, product); control of authority (institutions, violence); control of gender and sexuality (sex, resources products) and control of intersubjectivity (knowledge, communication) (Quijano 2000:573).