Following threads touching knots: Decolonising heritage through contemporary art.

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To my dearest Desert, *gracias por mostrarme las chakanitas repartidas en el mundo* and nurturing me even in the distance.

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Abstract:

The Chakana or Andean cross is a pan-American symbol, it comes from the word *chaka* which means bridge or dam. It is a crossed path, a mountain, the in-between that connects the cardinal points, and the stairs that connects the cosmos, the sky and the underworld. The Chakana is characterised by creating bridges that connect different traditions, times and places, it is the place where time-space (Pacha) create each other; *donde las ideas se cruzan entramando saberes y develando patrones*.

From a decolonial approach, I contour methodological Chakanas to activate *movimientos y momentos de tensión, ambivalencia y precariedad* of different but coexisting conflictual strands. I use a decolonial framework to address the epistemology of this research as an enactive reflection on dominant institutional structures and practices. Through these methodological and metaphorical Chakanas, I bridge the multiple dimensions of art and heritage, arguing for their mutual constitution, reflecting, and enacting non-western ontologies that reshape the meaning of heritage.

This research invites the reader to embrace discomfort and trust an ambivalent and precarious path, where tension is productive to work and think through. It is also, an invitation to be open to other forms of knowledges, to unveil layers of thought, as layers on the earth, and rethink how we understand and reshape the reality of heritage and contemporary art. It is the invitation for rebalance voices *y silencios,* to sow *semillas decoloniales*, and to follow the threads and touch the knots of the fabric composed by contemporary art and heritage.

Here, I argue that contemporary art pulls the loose threads of that symbolic fabric, allowing us to unweave the ontological assumptions present in Western heritage conceptions. In this mutual interaction, the artworks I analyse, such as Natalia Montoya, Nicolás Grum, Patricia Domínguez and Cecilia Vicuña, activate and visualise conflicts, tensions, frictions, and healings. They exemplify the interdependency of art and heritage rather than its separation, challenging accumulative, Cartesian, linear, extractive, and future-oriented logics of modernity present in Western conceptualisations of heritage. They create new patterns and emerging forms that re-weave, re-shape and rethink art and heritage relationships from a decolonial perspective and mutual creation. These entanglements propose alternatives to address the conflictive history of heritage practices, where the artworks work as reparative acts where the materiality creates and recreates a symbolic world attempting to heal colonial violences exercised, in objects, land, beings and their people, aiming for more-than-human healing, *acercando, tocando y sanando.*

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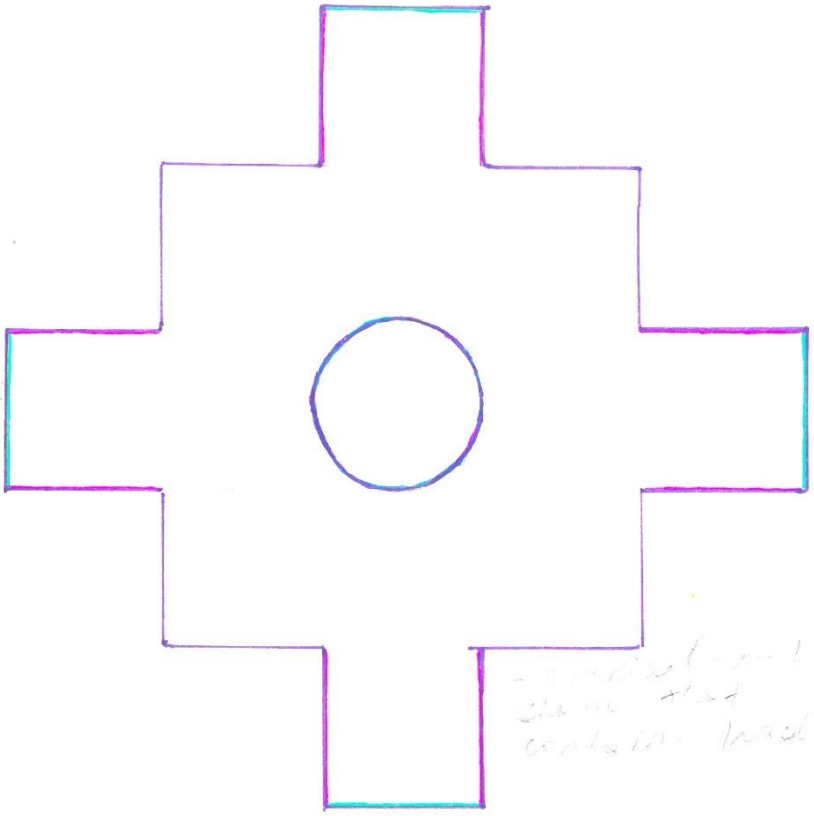

Figure 1 The Chakana is the bridge, the in-between of things and beings; a shape that contains traditions. ©Victoria Vargas Downing

> 'Me encuentro en tránsito hacia una forma de expresión que, sin dejar aún la forma escrita, está a la búsqueda de un lenguaje, de formas, de un tono y de un estilo de recolección de palabras cuyos significados rebasen los mundos académicos. Estoy oscilando entre el afuera y el adentro de la academia, pero más inclinada a alimentar con mi pensamiento las prácticas insurgentes' (Marcos 2018: 97). [1]

[1] 'I am in transit towards a form of expression that, without leaving the written form, is in search of a language, forms, a tone and a style of collecting words whose meanings go beyond the academic worlds. I am oscillating between outside and inside the academy, but more inclined to feed insurgent practices with my thinking' (my translation).

Chakanitas que guían mi camino: Chakanas as structures

The Chakana is a pan-American symbol, also known as the square cross, *cruz cuadrada o escalonada* and the Andean cross, *Cruz Andina*. It is the stepped cross with twelve points and eight edges, the stairs that connects the cosmos, the sky and underworld, the world of the deities and the world of earthbeings, the world of the living and the world of the deceased. It is what connects and communicates two points, 'el objeto con el que se hace cruzar los entes' (Cisneros-Ayala 2021: 330).[2] The word Chakana comes from the Quechua-aymara *chaka* and *hanan; chaka* means bridge, ladder or dam and *hanan*: up, high, large (Moreno Quisaguano 2012: 25). The Chakana appears in Nazca ceramics, Chavin reliefs, Wari tunics and Paracas sculptures, it has been found in Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Perú. It appears in ancient and sacred places such as Tiwanaku, Chan-Chan and the Atacama Desert. It is present in the land as ladders and bridges that communicate worlds; in the sky as the southern cross constellation, as a local syncretic Catholic celebration of the Holy cross; and as a fertility celebration in the Andes. It creates bridges that connect different traditions, Indigenous, Christian and multiple worlds.[3]

The Chakana is also a crossed path, a bridge, a mountain, and the mid-point that connects the cardinal points. It takes multiple forms and relates in multiple ways. It is a symbolic representation of the cyclical time and space explained through multiple interrelated knowledges (Alulema Pichasaca 2020). As the southern cross, it is the compass guiding to the south pole (Cisneros-Ayala 2021), a symbol of complementarity and mutual help, an indication of the harvest time, a cosmic calendar of the seasons and a base for organising Andean societies (Fernández 2018). The Chakana is the place where time-space *(Pacha)* create each other; *donde las ideas se cruzan entramando saberes y develando patrones*. [4]

The Chakana is also a dam, and as such, it contains water, it is what feeds the seed. *Calma la sed de agua, cria la vida*, *y como la vida* the seed grows up when is the given time, when it is nurtured and cared for, not forced, it has a generative feature. [5] We charge our seeds inside as DNA, as blood, as heritage and inheritance, as creative force.

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[2] 'the object with which the entities are made to cross' my translation.

[3] 3rd of May is the moment when the southern cross constellation is seen more clearly in the Andes, the beginning of the harvest, and also is the celebration of the holy cross.

[4] Where the ideas cross each other, weaving knowledges and unveiling patterns.

[5] Calma la sed de agua, it can be translated as 'calm the thirst of water' but I am also thinking of it as 'seed of water', while *criar la vida,* raising life, as life the seeds grow.

Within the Andean cosmovision the Chakana:

> representa cómo el mundo pervive en medio de relaciones que le corresponden al mundo y su propio orden, donde el significado no es independiente, dado que se debe a un contexto. […] se trata de relaciones biunívocas que generan otros conceptos (Beder Bocanegra et al. 2022).[6]

The Chakana is where concepts relate, involving critical thinking that transits between forces. The relationships that exist within the Chakana reiterate the essences, substances and versatility of the concepts that interact with it, working either independently or in subordinated ways (Beder Bocanegra et al. 2022). In the Andean cosmovision, the Chakana is the conceptualisation and image of the world (Moreno Quisaguano 2012: 25). It is a form and symbol that connects, relates, expands, and contains universes and agencies in a constant becoming with. It is the place where ambiguities and contradictions, tension and ambivalences exist; where precarity, interaction and reciprocity appear. The Chakana as a bridge, works as a communicating paths or stairs and a space towards a community, and as such it, involves risks. To cross or not, to stumble, to find out what is on the other side, and even the possibility of being wounded and vulnerable are within the possibilities of the Chakana.

Finding Chakanas is like finding mushrooms, it needs willingness and training. It is not just about finding it, but also about being willing to cross bridges. It entails being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to be physically and mentally willing to cross to the unknown (Anzaldúa 2002b: 3). It entails change because when you cross those bridges, you are touched by the unknown on the other side and we change in that touch. We are exposed to our vulnerabilities and precarity, to the uncomfortable feeling of facing our fears and the unexplored, which is not easy or neat, because it implies trusting and acknowledging the multiple interdependencies with what is around and inside of it. Symbolically, the Chakana is interpreted as '*lo que une fuerzas'* (Szabo 2008).[7] Therefore, the Chakana can open paths and meanings *comunicando raíces.* It is a body that contours practices and relationships; it is the place where ideas, feelings, intuitions, knowledges, and cultures touch each other. The Chakana like water containers, incorporates the constant transition between the 'fluid and

[6] 'it represents how the world survives in the midst of relationships that correspond to the world and its own order, where the meaning is not independent, since it is due to a context. [...] These are biunivocal relationships that generate other concepts' (my translation).
[7] 'what binds forces'.

permanent, in a constant process of change and yet resilient' (Marcos 2006: xx), opening paths and bridging contradictory ideas. It is ambiguous, fixed and dynamic at the same time.

I am writing this thesis from this big Chakana (Figure 1), as a way of exposing my body and to understand the shared *experiencia de mundo*. As a way of writing and researching from those unattended uncomfortable places of wounds and movements: writing to make the present. I write from this Chakana as recurrent form that has guided this research in physical and metaphoric ways. I have found *chakanitas* in my old notebooks, documents, cars, artworks, architecture and streets. The Chakana has guided me through this research, signalling where to stop, what to follow and when to keep moving.

For this research, I use the Chakana as a concept and metaphor to theorise a critical mobility, exploring dominant and alternative designs, epistemologies and ontologies. I start with the Chakana as an introduction because it is a symbol that is not linked to Western conceptualizations, and therefore it allows me to explore non/Western thoughts without excluding the West from the conversation. The Chakana as research design allows me to move and derive new ontological questions about art and heritage. While as a form, it appears in multiple artworks and spaces: such as in Natalia Montoya's works yet is still a form that contains a heritage. In this sense, the Chakana works as a structuring design for this thesis. I use the Chakana as a decolonial tool that helps me to unweave ontological assumptions of concealed global, universalist and Eurocentric structures, and allows me to reweave them in a new design.

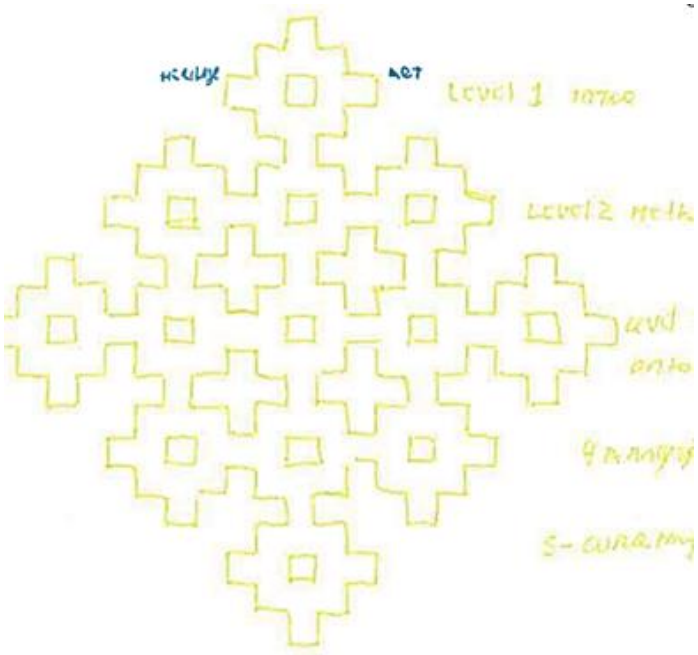

Figure 2 Big Chakanitas and bridges ©Victoria Vargas Downing

This project is designed and divided into 5 levels of Chakanas (Figure 2) that enact, structure and bridge the content and form of this thesis. On a micro-scale, these little Chakanas are connecting with each other in multiple ways and times. You will find *chakanitas* in the content and the form of this research, in the language, in the writing, in the heritage and art expressions, as poetic and concrete forms within this thesis. They embody a complex net and structure replied in different scales, patterns that appear and disappear, that produce and reproduce, compose, and recompose; they appear in multiple ways: as a different ways of writing, as a form that challenge underlying assumptions and theoretical positions; as roots and seeds that open the possibility of decolonising knowledges, art and heritage. *Estas chakanitas guían mi camino, también guiarán el tuyo*.[8] The *chakanitas* are structures organised by different features, opening and contouring topics and working in non-linear ways. As a structure, it is concerned with relationalities, reciprocities, complementarities, oppositions, and cyclicality, it works as multiple bridges that connect and relate to different topics. In this sense, each chapter enacts a different type of Chakana and it can be read in different orders and non-linear ways. I work with these Chakanas, as methodological tools, ontological bridges, and meeting points of the experiences that I analyse. The Chakanas hold the tension of what it is in-between interactions, in between ways of communication. I use these Chakanas as an act of presenting knowledge that comes from the interaction between art and heritage, as a way of showing the interdependency and mutual constitutionality with what is around us. They are also an attempt of healing problematic patterns of the past.

The Chakanas path, is the presentation of the different types of conceptual Chakanas that are present in this text. This research organised this research in five main Chakanas, the 'Introduction Chakanas', 'Methodological Chakanas', 'Ontological Chakanas', 'Constellating Chakanas' and 'Conclusion Chakanas'. Each Chakana is divided in *chakanitas*, that activates tensions, ambivalences and precarities through the text.

Introduction Chakana

The Chakana that you are reading now, is the first approximation of the Chakana's path, a route and form that works as an introduction to macro and micro shapes. A first glimpse and a handbook of how this document works. The Chakana as figure and symbol acts as a guide to activate options and routes. It establishes guiding lines, patterns or paths for reading and thinking with the document. These are the *chakanitas* that have guided the research as signs,

[8] These little chakanas guide my path, they will also guide yours.

as repeated figures in the landscape and as a language to understand another form, another way of learning, another way of being and interacting. The path created by that pattern works as an invitation, maybe a first shock. It is a guide on how to read and approach this document and its decolonial approach. They act as instructions on how to access alternative views to hegemonic commands.

This guidance has a set of conditions for reading this text, it implies to understand the noise as generative of questions and the uncomfortable as the place to pause. These conditions help the reader to pay attention to how the text is performing, to pay attention to their own resistances, because once we are aware of them, and how comfortable or uncomfortable they feel, we can identify where the borders of the conceptualisations are, and we can be open to the possibility of finding alternative routes.

The conditions are not set in stone; however, they attempt to facilitate the Chakana's performance' within the document. The possibility of bridging knowledges that the Chakana activate is conditioned by the reader's openness to:

1- Give up part of the control, the grammatical control, the scientific control over the subject, and the object, conceptual control, or any other control you might identify while reading it.

2- Trust in the enterprise that this text is developing. It is necessary to be open to trusting in how the ideas take their own path before preconceiving where you want them to take you, be ready to make agreements, pay attention to the noise, be ready to be in tension, ambivalence and discomfort.

3- Be ready to get uncomfortable. Before rejecting something, ask yourself what has been imposed on you that limits you from accepting other rules or forms? How do those rules of forms feel? How comfortable, uncomfortable or unsettling are they for you? Can those rules be bent to integrate new forms and ways of thinking? where in your body you feel uncomfortable? Is it your throat? Back or neck? Is that feeling moving, changing in intensity or settle until it feels more comfortable? How long took you to feel comfortable again?

4- When I say I, our, your, how much do you feel identified with that pronoun, are you that I or you? Or do you feel more like we or them? Feel where in your body this text resonates.

5- Embrace different temporalities, time will have different fluxes than colonial, linear and accumulative expectations.

Methodological Chakanas

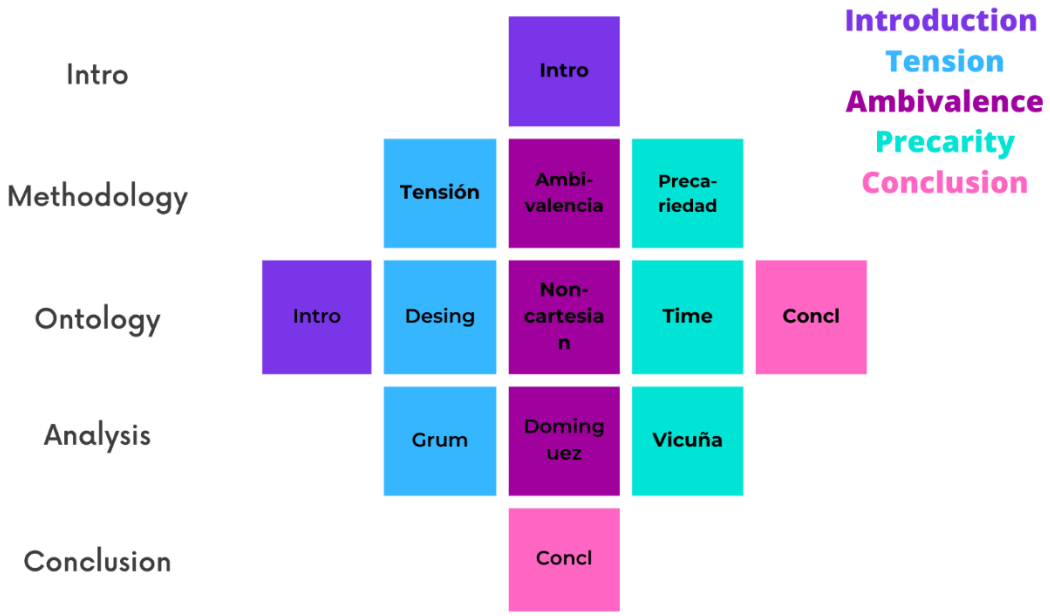

Figure 3 Chakana as Structure Diagram ©Victoria Vargas Downing

The Chakanas *metodológicas* act as epistemological bridges connecting multiple spaces of knowledge. They are thought-generating and thought-provoking. The methodological Chakanas are organised into little Chakanas or *chakanitas*: Tension *chakanitas*, Ambivalent *chakanitas*, and Precarious *chakanitas*. These *chakanitas* firstly, tension the language; secondly, they show the ambivalence of pluriversal forms and finally create a space to be vulnerable and precarious. These three forces (tension, ambivalence and precarity) cross the thesis (Figure 3) and connect topics in different ways. Tension is connected to Design *chakanitas* and to the work of Nicolás Grum; Ambivalence connects with the Non-cartesian *chakanitas* and with the work of Patricia Domínguez, and the Precarious connects with the discussion of Time and the work of Cecilia Vicuña. In this way, as methodology, they cross the different levels of ontology and analysis.

Tension Chakanitas

The tension *chakanitas,* allow me to write from the Chakana that bridges European and non/European languages, working as a way of stepping into the complexity of the interactions, reciprocities, flows and movements of and from the positionality that I embody. From these *chakanitas*, I defy the monolingual academic world to allow multiple tongues to speak. From a broken English, my broken English, like a tongue cut in half, I attempt to show part of the narratives of the cut tongues that I cannot speak because of the Spanish

imposition and European education. With the accent of the cut tongues, I am here writing in English and Spanish with a *mestisa* accent from South America that has Quechua, Aymara and Mapuche influences.[9] A cut tongue that is divided in-between the land and the multiple realities that I inhabit. That cut tongue that is still capable of speaking, without words or sounds, multiple other tongues beyond English and Spanish.

These language *chakanitas* also work reclaiming of the space, land, and voices erased, silenced and denied by colonial forces. From them, I am writing as an act *sentipensante*, to recognise accents in the writing, silences in the white pages, unsaid words in gestures and movements in the pages. From these *chakanitas*, I can perform a change in the terms of the conversation, demanding an equal right to exist, think and be, a moment of suspension of control granted to Western narratives. These *chakanitas*, invite us to the multilingual experience as a gesture and act for decolonising the language. Here, I am writing from Chakanas that create encounters of different creative forces, as an invitation to tension and communicate, where we become-with each other, as an attempt of designing new worlds and working within concept-metaphors.

The Chakana, as a concept-metaphor, open meanings and relationships as enactive co-creation in the world; they attempt to influence the mattering world. As result, I am writing from this Chakana with its metaphors, enactments, and complexities, sowing words as seeds into these pages. *Chakanitas* as theories of relationality, as provocations, as enaction, as a way of pulling the threads where questions emerge, as forms that populate the world with concrete existing beings, producing and reproducing it in practice. They play with what is and is not, with elements that open and expand the register of what is being discussed; are physical and poetic. They are generative and ambivalent.

Ambivalent Chakanas: epistemological Chakanitas

The ambivalent *chakanitas* work as epistemological Chakanas. This *chakanita*, as an enactive and fluid form, can act individually and relationally. They work in the in-between spaces, knotting opposite commands and stretching rigid structures. These types of *chakanitas* create a space for the production of a different paradigm. Instead of excluding and constraining, they act as a narrative that *incluye y expande*. While as a metaphor, it embraces the ambivalence,

[9] I write Mestisa with 's' because the pronunciation in Latin America is closer to the 's' than the 'z'.

allowing multiple forms of knowledge to coexist, escaping from being *catch* as an object of study or 'clasificado en el estante de lo conocido' (Mignolo 1997: 11).[10] They accept an epistemological ambivalence acknowledging that there is not a single way of knowing or single truth. These *chakanitas, cruzan* and challenge epistemic logics and orders, allowing to cross *ideas caudalosas* and overflowing understandings.

From them, from those interactions and crossings, as *chakanitas que guían mi camino y aparecen en mis cuadernos*, I weave my argument of ambivalent *chakanitas*. As the Chakana that I embody, with my European and Latin American blood, with my Western education and southern *sentipensamiento* (feeling/thinking). As *chilena* and researcher *latinoamericana* in the UK composed of different origins. I write from those *mestisa* stairs that go in different directions I write from those ambivalent, sometimes contradictory Chakanas that communicate in different languages and multiple worlds. I write from the Chakanas in-between the privileges and counter-knowledges present in the unsolved contradictions within myself. From those bridges, I re-think impositions, recognising and legitimising excluded selves. These ambivalent *chakanitas* attempt to show the plurality of thoughts, to explore how epistemology frames the ways we learn and know, and venture into the multiple ways that have passed unnoticed. From this ambivalent *chakanita*, whatever I say is 'located beyond, next to, tangential to, diagonally to the Western code' (Mignolo 2011a: xvi). I write from where I am, because like this, I can acknowledge my own ambivalence, of being and not, of writing differently while using colonial languages, of looking to decolonise while working within a colonial institution as the university. They expose the vulnerable spaces that allow us to grow as soft spots of mutual constituency between concepts. They embrace a logic of encounters and interactions, between you and me, between art and heritage. I write from the ambivalent place of vulnerability and empowerment to face those vulnerabilities.

Precarious Chakanitas

The last methodological Chakana is the precarious *chakanita.* This *chakanita* integrates the body as positionality in movement, recognising it as a repository of knowledge and as the site of the experience (Delgadillo 2011: 7). In this section, I write from the Chakana I embody, to understand how the body responds and theorises physical, emotional, and intellectual stimulis (Anzaldúa 2015: 5). I explore *tantear* as a logic that challenges hegemonic knowledge and brings forms of sense-making that stand as an alternative to Western epistemologies.

[10] 'classified on the shelf of the known'.

Tantear allows me to understand the visible and invisible agencies that influence the internal and external world in everyday life. This type of *chakanitas ponen el cuerpo,* acknowledging the entanglement of 'the intricate interrelations that define our very 'being'' (Escobar 2020: xvii), understanding embodiment as 'integral to the relationship between humans and their environment' (Pink 2009: 7) and working with the body as form and the site of creativity (Anzaldúa 2002a).

From this Chakana, I write with the whole body to feel the unsaid, the fragments of oral stories and nonhuman narratives; to create rhythms, *sentipensar* movements that include voices and silences, inside-out. To write with the body unsettle the senses as it implies 'to grope with the skin, to listen with the back, to sound out with the feet' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2020: xix), it is to root my back and foot to the ground before writing and being open to hearing the rhythms until the words can dance. In these precarious *chakanitas* I am held by my vulnerabilities while I learn to understand the interrelated and synaesthetic features between pluriversal worlds.

In this context, I explore the autoethnographic and autotheoretical register as a necessary tool to enact the decolonial form. In here, the body, my body, also enacts that bridge that connects the world and connects me with what we can understand as heritage and art. Then, the autoethnographic register allows me to write from my positionality and experience. It helps me to theorise the daily workings of culture from the critical movability and vulnerability necessary for a body that grew up in the Atacama Desert and writes from the UK. These type of *chakanitas* exposes the vulnerabilities of the writing, the openness of the body and the systems of knowledge. Finally, the precarious *chakanitas* reveal vulnerabilities to emphasise the interdependency, honouring the contradiction as a gesture that contours dynamic limits between art and heritage. I write from those Chakanas of vulnerability and precarity, from the Chakanas that invites constant movement and rebalance, the Chakana in-between the wound and healing.

Ontological Chakanas

The ontological Chakana is composed of five little chakanitas; they face ontological assumptions of Western thought and question key heritage features to decolonise them. At the same time, they propose alternatives to address them and sometimes heal them. The ontological Chakana departs with the Desert and the sky and ends with the Desert and land. The first introductory ontological *chakanita* presents the Atacama Desert as a departing point

to question ontological assumptions, then the second *chakanita* aims to stress and tense ontological heritage design; the third *chakanita* relies on the ambivalence of non-cartesian forms to understand heritage otherwise; while the fourth *chakanita* explores alternatives to the precarity of time in heritage beyond its Western future-orientation; finally the fifth *chakanita*, present the outcomes of thinking heritage in relational ways and towards logics of reciprocity and care.

The ontological chakanas, exercise the conscious and constant task of hearing and recognising the different forms, times, interactions, voices, accents and noises of the surroundings and myself. The chapter traces a route of challenges and alternatives, where some of the assumptions of the colonial/modern matrix of power and knowledge-making are unknotted and knotted or reknotted in new ways useful for reframing and rethinking heritage.

Introductory chakanita: Constellation paths to epistemology and ontology

The introduction chakanita, is an introduction to the Desert and to the constellations of assumptions to be addressed in the next sections. In this chakanita, the sky is the main figure in talking about ontology and opens the floor to other forms of knowing and hearing; it is a first clue to explore the ontological paradigms that are further developed in the chapter.

Ontological design towards decolonising heritage

The design *chakanita*, address the question of ontological design in heritage. In this section I analyse how heritage has been conceptualised by academic literature, to then, unweave some of the assumption regarding its design. Here notions such as domains, representation and future orientation of heritage are challenged as they maintain ontological assumptions that delimit the expression of alternative heritage perceptions and management. As design it invites to think heritage with a different language and reorganisation of practices.

Non-Cartesian Chakaitas

The non-cartesian *chakanitas* explore three of the primary forms of Western dualism and how they are present within the heritage field and critique. The non-cartesian Chakanas are weaved so that it is possible to see that despite the assumed separation and Western imposition, they are interwoven and touch each other in different moments. These *chakanitas* introduce non-binary forms and concepts and relate to the multiple ways the world is entangled. In this way, the first dualism faced is the idea of ‘us’ and ‘them’; here,

I analyse heritage theories of Authorised Heritage Discourse and Subaltern Dissident Heritage Discourse to show how this Western dualism is applied even as unconscious bias. Then, I show how the distinction between 'them' and 'us' is also linked to the difference between nature and culture and later to subject and object. In this section, I address with concrete examples how these dualities are erased within Indigenous and Andean cosmologies, rendering a different understanding of heritage practices.

Time-space Chakanita

Time-space *chakanita* explores the linear narratives that justified imperial management of time, taking distance and separating the present from the past and the future. They address the lines that have framed future-oriented approaches to heritage. Here, I inquire about the modern conception of time and its influence on heritage policies through anticipatory logics. This *chakanita,* also moves between alternative time paths, where time is conceived in circulatory ways, where time is wrapped, knotted and unknotted. It is malleable. In these alternative logics, the perception of the future does not refer to the visual field. In other words, rather than imposing an image of the future, they act through daily rebalancing acts in negotiation with the cosmos. Here, other-than-linear approaches to heritage present questions to hegemonic policies and theories that allow us to think of heritage otherwise in a different set of rules than those imposed by colonial standards and conceptualisations. This chakanita explores the question of: 'What happens when heritage does not have the future ahead, and what other possible conceptualisations can we find?'

Chakanitas que encuentro en los cerros

This *chakanita* comes back to the Desert to exemplify on one side how the ontological question appeared in the world, and secondly to explain the role of contemporary art within this heritage paradigm. In here, I narrate the story of a personal experience in the Quillagua museum, and how that experience changed my relation to heritage triggering a series of questions and linking it to art. In this section I also explore how those ontological questions were applied in the experience of that particular museum and also how those questions are somehow answered in the work of the Aymara artist Natalia Montoya.

Constellating Chakanas

The Constellating Chakanas, are small constellations of the concepts developed on the ontological Chakanas, they are formed by bodies of artworks, and conceptual bodies that

explore how art engages within different heritage policies offering possibilities for healing. Drawing on heritage dynamics and problematics, I analyse the works of three different Chilean artists; Nicolás Grum, Patricia Domínguez and Cecilia Vicuña. This section aims to show how contemporary art is capable of showing contradictions and tensions within different types of heritage practices, as well as the ambivalences and precarities of the works analysed. The first part of the analysis aims to tense the museal space through the practice of Nicolás Grum, which address the conflict of human remains questioning museum practices and proposing possible forms of repairing wrong doings. The second part of the analysis explores the work of Patricia Domínguez and how her practice plays with ambivalent spaces while includes nonhuman and more-than-human in her work creating a dialogue with institutional practices. The third analysis relates to the work of Cecilia Vicuña, in here her work explore how precarity can be useful to rethink heritage practices and management strategies.

In these constellations, the heritage practices feed the artistic creations in diverse ways, changing, updating, and refeeding heritage understanding. More than given directions, they create bridges to expanding and connecting multiple places geographically, politically, and intellectually; they become a terrain of mutual fertilisation. In those connections, the possibilities of how heritage is understood, managed, and performed are expanded, integrating, and enacting different ontologies. At the same time, they propose a different set of rules for enacting different entanglements and ontologies rather than reproducing or representing them, creating path for healing them.

Closing Chakanas

The closing Chakanas are a sort of conclusion, but they open possibilities for more reflection, they summarise the main encounters of this thesis and they address the distinctive interventions of this thesis. However, despite being closing, they embrace the contradiction by opening new thoughts and stories, keeping the tension, ambivalence and precarity.

Methodological Chakanas: *Tension, Ambivalencia, and precariedad*

> There can be no discourse of decolonization, no theory of decolonization, without a decolonizing practice. (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 100).

> We must venture into the uncomfortable, perhaps disturbing *espacios y cuerpos* to engender decolonial possibilities. […] *Nuestro* research should be subversive acts. (Saavedra and Nymark 2008: 13).

Tension is a force that, by definition, creates changes within structures (OED). When something is in tension, it can stretch or elongate its form. In the subject that holds that tension, it implies stress and maybe destabilisation. Tension implies forces, influences, arguments, and feelings, but in tension, there is also exchange, there is communication that brings new information and a change in the conditions of the space and materiality. Tension also can come as a warning, a process where what is tensioned needs to re-evaluate the energy in use, to hold, release, increase, or rebalance forces. For humans, tension also comes with notions and feelings of anxiety, nervousness, discomfort or unpleasantness, excitement or emotion; however, when acknowledged, sometimes within tension we find balance. The tension I embrace here is needed and conscious. It is like the tension that makes us impatient and less comfortable, like the tension of threads before becoming in textiles, sometimes tighter or loose, is the tension that appears before understanding textures and before having recognisable patterns or forms, like the tension that makes strings sound.

This research is an invitation to feel the tensions that we hold, experience, cross, and affect us. It is the experiment of consciously writing from the positionality that I embody, acknowledging the tensions that agitate life, that communicate and pass between multiple bodies and borders, the tension that connects us. As part of the decolonial approach of this research, I want to activate that tension by pulling the threads of power structures, hegemonic ideas, concepts, and languages to destabilise and unsettle the normative forms of thinking, feeling, and writing. It is a methodology that works as actions for thinking, sensing, believing, doing, and living otherwise (Walsh 2018). I will pull the threads that rebalance injustices, re-evaluate privileges and re-direct forces. As a planned imperfection, a deliberated choice, I will trigger uncomfortable feelings that come from a critical disobedience to dominant structures destabilising hegemonic views. I will emphasise part of the violence and rebalance voices and silences.

Within this context, the artists and artworks that I explore in this thesis share multiple selection criteria. Firstly, they share a mestisx or Indigenous background.[11] However, the selection of artists and artworks is not limited to this characteristic, as plurality appears in multiple ways, and the aim of this research lies in the dialogue and interdependency between multiple realities. A second main criterion is that the artists addressed in this research are Chilean, because in that way, I can easily identify shared stories, and gaps as part of a mixed nation. Nevertheless, their practices call to different traditions, respond to diverse ways of organising realities, and different forms of heritage appreciation and practices. Some artworks are made in Europe, US, or Chile, however the artworks constitute a set of territorial displacements that Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) describes as the continuous coming and going in which the material fabric of our daily life is encompassed. The selection is made on the base that we share bits of concerns, movements, ideas, languages, and poetry, as well as being held by the memory of the Abya Yala (American continent) and the *Cordillera de los Andes*.

The artists and artworks analysed, struggle in multiple ways with the ambivalence of the conflictive roots and the movement through the borders of countries and thinking. They use different narratives as practical and restorative strategies (Simpson and Smith 2014); they resist neocolonial postmodern formations (Lincoln, Smith, and Denzin 2008: 15) by borrowing, repeating, reinterpreting, linking and interacting with images, knowledges, and practices; pushing their meanings and bringing a new sense and relevance to heritage according to the needs of the context in which they interact. I am interested in how they address concerns regarding the ancestral ways of knowledges, identified as part of ancestral lineages and heritages, as well as the critical forms in which the artworks challenge dominant heritage conceptions. The artists and works analysed, *tantean* the limits of heritage forms establishing dialogues with material realities in different ways and challenging the understanding of heritage through their practices. At the same time, the artists and artworks selected *ponen el cuerpo* in their works in the long hours of their practices, in the moving in between places, bending, carrying, transporting, troubling and challenging concepts, knowledges and practices, creating and enacting different types of bodies in the process. They open and fill the cracks of ontological separations in order to heal painful pasts, lost histories and silenced voices (including nonhuman and more-than-human voices). They knot ideas informed with affective content of the experiences in their research practice, modifying

[11] Mestisx, the 'x' is because in Spanish, mestizo/mestiza refers to a binary gender, while the 'x' creates a gender-neutral adjective.

heritage meaning and understanding, while also challenging hegemonic conceptions and ontologies. They undo, unsettle and question ontological and epistemic assumptions, the forms in which heritage is traditionally accepted, and the devices that sustain those conceptions.

The artworks to be analysed, address untold stories questioning official means that tend to hide how domination works. The artists and the artworks, explore different strategies and have different concerns, including, or working with neglected cultures, acknowledging their privilege, and creating a space for healing a damaged heritage. They dig into their cultural roots imaginatively and make art from their findings (Anzaldúa 2015: 48). The works analysed, show how art and heritage constitute each other, working as tools to unearth roots and meanings to find with new senses changing them and transforming them. They approach knowledge without having conquering or feeling the need of possesses something including knowledge itself (de la Cadena and Hiner 2020). These are pieces that reinterpret the pasts and traditions, bringing present-day usage to the heritage practice engaged and activated (Marcos 2006: xv).

For example, in the *Rebelión de la huaca* (2022), of Nicolás Grum, I will explore how his work rebalance interactions claiming for a different relation to heritage objects and forms of reparation. With Patricia Domínguez, *Matrix vegetal* (2021–2022), and *Balada de las sirenas secas (2020),* I will explore how the symbolic reconfigurations in her work decolonise botanical drawing, bringing an alternative on how to approach hegemonic and alternative forms of heritage; and through Cecilia Vicuña *Precarios* and *Quipus (1974-2022)*, I will explore the temporality of heritage and how her work shows alternatives to modern/Western temporalities.

In addition to the artworks, the writing form of the present document also have a function, it looks to enact and activate the tensions that expose the ambivalence of the critical positionality I embody; that transcultural, linguistic, epistemological and ontological border that overflows, *que desborda,* as an approach that recognises pluriversal realities not limited to binaries options, places where tension, ambivalence, and precarity emerge.

However, before navigating this path, I will explore the basis of a decolonial methodology, through notions of tension, ambivalence and precarity. The interventions I am going to perform crosses multiple levels, and it requires the reader's willingness to let go of some assumptions we make and the structures we hold. It requires taking responsibility and letting go some of the power, scepticism, and privileges in order to repair and begin to decolonise.

In this context, the more the reader attempts to hold those structures, assumptions, and power, the more uncomfortable this project will be, but at the same time, I want to invite the reader to use the acknowledgement of that discomfort as a recognition of our/my/your implication, of our/my/your complicity. In other words, to follow the path of this research, I am asking the reader to be open to being vulnerable and precarious. It is necessary to recognise our interdependency in our precarity, to then, allow vulnerability to sustain us while this text is performing. I am asking the reader to enact the tensions, ambivalences and precarities that I am confessing. Here, I am vulnerable, and my vulnerability comes from different strands that cross this document. I am vulnerable because I am an immigrant, I am vulnerable because I am not native to this land or tongue, and I am vulnerable because I am exposing my wounds and their/your/our power. However, I use this critical vulnerability as empowerment to make evident normative parameters but, at the same time, decolonise them. As a subversive act, I want to invite the reader to stay and feel the tension and discomfort, to embrace conflictual strands, and trust the ambivalent path where tension is productive to work through.

Nevertheless, because I want to actively decolonise, I must consciously disobey. Then, I need to tension the language and form of the two different spheres I daily navigate, the borders where I move, places I walk and ideas I share; to report the tension and ambivalence within myself, as a critical bridge between epistemological borders, ontologies, ways of knowing, facing, interacting, and viewing the world, with no clear boundaries. What I propose here is a type of critical disobedience, the kind of disobedience that cracks and opens the ground like seeds, *semillas decoloniales.* Seed that in words of Zapatistas SupGaleano (2015: 33) 'que cuestione[n], provoque[n], aliente[n], impulse[n] a seguir pensando y analizando. Una semilla para que otras semillas escuchen lo que hay que crecer y lo hagan según su modo, según su calendario y geografía'.[12]

Therefore, I am asking the reader to let go of some of her/his/their power; then, I can tension to rebalance it. I am asking to rebalance firstly the universal monolingual feature that punishes us when we do not master a foreign language. *Permitamos múltiples voces hablar* and acknowledging mistakes as part of those colonial differences that are still present: allow me to decolonise the language. The second structure for the reader to let go of is the analytic reason, which separates and constrains logics within modern thought and epistemology. Here

[12] 'Questions, provokes, encourage, pushes us to continue to think and analyse; a seed so that other seeds listen that they have to grow, in their own way, according to their own calendar and geography' My translation.

I suggest exploring alternative ways, pluriversal ways that allow concepts to expand. I ask to release linearity, to instead, weave arguments as a braid where multiple narratives, times and ideas can entangle and interact, bringing new critical dimensions to the analysis. Finally, as part of this border consciousness, embrace the ambivalence and ambiguity, to allow me to write differently, *escribir de una forma distinta.* To use the language differently to let concepts interact in multiple tones, textures, and ambivalences. I am asking the reader patience within this impatient process, willingness to struggle, and willingness to stand in the precarious and uncomfortable position of this thinking-doing-reading of this *sentipensar*.

Tension: Destabilising Language/Decolonising language

> Deslenguadas. Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla, because we speak with tongues of fire, we are culturally crucified, racially, culturally, and linguistically somos huerfanos, we speak an orphan tongue (Gloria Anzaldua 1999: 80).
>
> Language is migrant. Words move from language to language, from culture to culture, from mouth to mouth. Our bodies are migrants, cells and bacteria are migrants too. Even galaxies migrate (Vicuña 2016).
>
> 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' (Audre Lorde).

I struggle because I carry colonial languages, and languages carry with them the culture and privileges of their colonial backgrounds and epistemologies. My privilege gave me Spanish as given, it is my mother's tongue. Despite this, in my daily life I use '*nanai*' as a way of affection, I played *lapa* when I was a kid. I do not say belly, I say '*guata*' and without noticing it, I use words and expressions that are not Spanish, they are Quechua, Aymara or Mapuzungun. Even when nobody taught how me to speak those non-European languages, I use them every day. Those languages are native to the territory where I grew up and are part of my everyday life.[13] However, here I am, writing in English. I am privileged among those 'others' who need to learn a European language to have a voice, to be heard or read. And yet, I am not the most privileged because English was not given to me. I had to consciously learn it before moving to the UK. I can read, speak, and write in English as a second tongue, Spanish as first, and I can speak French or Portuguese if I need to. The fact that I learnt Spanish and English and not Quechua or Aymara, draws attention to the lack of recognition, or of those languages, bodies and people, as well as their agencies and social ways of making sense (Trejo Méndez 2021).

Regardless, if we are lucky enough of speaking more than one language, we are restricted to use one colonial language at a time. And perfection is demand until our origins and ways of thinking are neutralised. We forget that when we learn a new language something changes, a different voice starts to interact within us, combining, changing, and almost merging with the voice of our first thoughts. Something of that new language stays with us in the path of everyday life experiences. We, the bilingual, the people that live between diverse cultures,

[13] Quechua, Aymara, Kunza, Mapuzungun are language of the Indigenous people from Chile.

the people that move to different countries and stay in contact with our original territory, our daily life happens in the different worlds we inhabit, and in the diverse ways we communicate in different spaces. I wake up in Spanglish, my mornings are in English, my lunch in Spanish, my evenings in English and my dreams in Spanglish. We write and think differently than our first tongue, we write and think differently from an English native speaker, we do not count on the privilege of perfect grammar, and our proficiency in the language will be always dyed with our thinking in a foreign accent.

We stay on the periphery of grammar judged by a disposition against communication, a hostility toward non-monolingual communication and a misjudgement towards imperfection of that foreign voice, the imposition of one colonial language affirms an empire (Veronelli 2015). When the imaginary of the modern world system is focused on structures, frontiers, and nation-states, a national language brings a sense of authority, order and political truth to the empires, and a monolinguistic ideology appears as a tool to unify empires and the state, establishing a power relationship behind the language spoken (Mignolo 2000). The mastery of a colonial language and the power relation behind it was also described by Fanon, for whom 'The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language' (2008: 8).

This monolingual rule contributed to the erasure of native tongues, imposing a demand to master colonial languages, where the correctness of the use of colonial languages would be proportional to the whiteness of the speaker and his/her ability to express knowledge and therefore humanity. This incompatibility with humanity, because of language, was also applied by conquistadors in the Abya Yala (American continent).[14] When the colonisers arrived, they found people semi-naked as beasts, beings who talked the birds' language, lacking writing and incapable of rational expressions, closer to nature and, consequently, inferior and incompatible with humanity, creating therefore, a colonial discursive domination.[15] This monolinguistic feature and the universalisation of just one language rule brought with it colonial oppressions hidden at discursive and dialogical levels (Veronelli 2016). For a tongue to be considered a real language it required specific attributes such as

[14] Abya Yala is the name given to 'Americas' before the invasion by the Kuna-tule people (from what is now known as Colombia and Panama) and means 'Land in full Maturity' or 'Land of vital blood'.

[15] Miguel Rojas Mix in *America imaginaria* quotes some conquistadores, that legitimised the use of Latin languages as the languages of reason, different to the native languages which were identified as closer to nature and similar to birds sounds, therefore inferior. Additionally, Teresa Gisbert, bolivian art historian, in '*El paraíso de los pájaros parlantes'* /the paradise of speaking birds- argues how in colonial paintings birds are depicted as messengers of the gods, and later represented in paintings as angels (Gisbert 2001; Rojas Mix 2015).

grammar, like Greek, Latin and Hebrew. In this way, it can be taught and written, granting the civility of the speakers and the submission of languages under the same modern structure of reason and mathematical organization (Garcés 2007). At the same time, when a language is institutionalised and organised with grammar as the language of an empire or nation, it is closed to any interaction, complicating the variety and heterogeneity of the users. This means that a perfect grammar and pronunciation would universalise language under one rule. While perfection covers its imposition, the imperfection in our pronunciation, and our grammar, manifest our provenance, history, culture, and diversity behind that apparent universal. In this way, the perfect reproduction of a language is crossed for racial and geopolitical hierarchies, perpetuating structures of power deployed for that language. The hierarchy in the use of languages is exercised as mental subordination, cultural stigmatisation, and social stratification (Chow 2015: 32).

For example, in Spanish, when speaking or writing in academic contexts, the use of words in English, German or even French are allowed, such as anglicism or neologisms. However, words in Spanish or non-European languages are hardly seen in English academic contexts, while words in Indigenous languages are even more difficult to find. This monolingual feature maintains hierarchies, impositions and segregations, reproducing a system of inequalities and differences depending on your access and use of a language. Then, the first disobedience I need to enact, is to decolonise language, to stand for alternatives to monolingual, and to make the ancient words new again.

My attempt of decolonising language looks towards a way of connecting with the motley identity of the positionality I am embracing, a way that communicates realities, quoting Anzaldúa (1999: 55): 'a language with terms that are neither Español ni Inglés, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue' a variation of multiple tongues, and we also think and live in that in-between. For the Argentinian professor Walter Mignolo multi-languaging would be 'that way of life between languages: a dialogical, ethic, aesthetic, and political process of social transformation' (2000: 265). This multi-lingual option integrates the multiple ways we communicate in different spaces and times, that communication that happens on the border of opposite commands and the multiple languages I use. Considering this, the notion of *lenguajear* becomes useful as Maturana and Dávila (2018) understand it, as the 'convivir cotidiano en el lenguaje'.[16] Languaging has an emphasis on its dynamic and relational character as recursive networks of life coordination. Languaging and multi-languaging reveal

[16]'Ways of carrying out our daily life and coexistence in language' my translation.

the relationship between the language as action and ways of living otherwise, proposing that it is in language that people create their reality.

Multi-languaging allows presenting the language of the borders, of the frontiers, the language that takes place in specific places, creating bridges instead of walls. It emanates as a way in which language can reflect us: our culture and spirits that inhabit two different lands. Is in this daily coexistence in the language that languaging and multi-languaging emphasise an ongoing character rather than a finished product. It opens epistemic alternatives to non-Eurocentric worlds as situated activity enacting moments of everyday interaction. As a consequence, the multilingual gesture I want to unfold is a first attempt to open the possibility of multiple tongues to speak. A way of subverting the ready-made choices and the hegemonic hierarchies about language. It is an invitation to allow thoughts to grow in their diversity and plurality as a strength and the encountering of different creative forces with their tensions, ambivalences, agreements, and disagreements. A constant becoming-with as new worldlings, from monolingual to multilingual.[17]

This multilingual form does not find its shape from the opposition of current systems; instead, it grows from the attention to another way of being, another way of writing (Kohn 2013: 14), *en sororidad de linguística*. It is a first gesture for decolonising the language and the attempt for a creation of a 'we', as interlocutors and producers of knowledge having discussions towards 'a language to name the world' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 106) with other centres of thought on the same ground. Here, I consciously work with-in the tension between the multiple languages to show the ambivalence and precarity. I am writing like this purposely, with imperfect grammar, with long sentences, and with a multilingual approach, as an attempt to create bridges, to decolonise the ways in which we think and speak about heritage and art because of the forms in which heritage is expressed, and forms of art are also multiple and plural. I have to recognise I am aware of the noise of imperfect grammar for the reader; however, it is necessary. I need the noise because when something makes noise, we make questions, and we learn new forms. It is in the noise of the imperfect grammar where we uncover silenced and unheard voices. It is in the uncomfortable places where we learn to let go of structures and adapt. We learn to find the new, and in this case, we find a point in-between Spanglish and non-European languages, a point in-between art and heritage. Starting with the monolingual proximity of academic writing, *desde aquí*, as critical positionality, I face the multiple languages that I have learnt, the scattered words I speak

[17] Including English, Spanish, Aymara, Quechua, and more.

(Mapuzungun, Aymara, Quechua) and the colonial oppressions and impositions that I embody, as an invitation to learn, to hear, to feel the tension and heal, to make the effort of understanding *una lengua otra*.

I write in-between languages because, in this way, *puedo tensionar* issues that are present in this project. This *gesto transfronterizo,* is the result of my migration experience, crossing aesthetic and geographical frontiers, establishing an intersectional commitment where I want you to question hierarchical systems. This gesture has the 'voluntad de reanudar las identidades opuestas, […] de colmar los vacíos' (Dasseleer 2021: 14).[18] My decisions on writing in English, Spanish or Quechua have different logics. They do not work just as translations, rather they express the logic of my thoughts, the grammar of the migratory movements, the textures, and porosities of the pages, and they are meant to enhance meanings, *sentidos* (Dasseleer 2021: 13). With these gestures, these insubordinations, I attempt to decolonise the language or at least its monolingual feature, so I can start to move towards a decolonial methodology, I can start to unweave some assumptions of the concealed structure and reweave them in a new design.

In addition, as we design ourselves in the language (Winograd and Flores 1986: 78) and language is generative rather than only representative (Marcos 2006: 112), writing in multiple languages is not enough. It is necessary to use language differently in a way that it is possible to explore how we are open to the emerging worlds around us (Kohn 2013: 15). In this sense, I am writing from this linguistic *chakanita* that challenge hegemonic forms as a way to open and expanding of the language to new forms, particularly, to one that does not use the old critical language to address, describe, or contain new subjectivities (Anzaldúa 2015). I write differently, with the threat of crossing the bridge of the known, risking putting into crisis a hegemonic system with its assumptions on the language, colonial views and practices (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 41). From here, enacting a decolonial form requires a way of writing -a form- that works not just as a stylistic or aesthetic feature, but as a reflection about ethical and moral heterogeneity that is translated at content and form levels (Dasseleer 2021: 21). In this case, this implies a form that can work as the reflection of an underlying knowledge system that is being enacted.

For this reason, I write from the Chakanas that open languages and poetic worlds, engaging with the content and the ontology behind this project, enabling a form that can produce and co-create a different reality, that can open other forms of reality. The poetic use of language

[18] 'willingness to re-knotting opposing identities, [...] to fill the gaps'.

I use here acts as theories of relationality and not just as abstract representations (Villanueva Criales 2020: 29). It appears as a form that populates the world with concrete beings, producing and reproducing it in practice. In this sense, I am writing from the Chakana as a metaphor that enables words to flow onto poetic language, images and worlds as *chakanitas* that 'emergen más de una conversación con el mundo que de su abstracción' (Villanueva Criales 2020: 20) activating the ontological approach of this project. At the same time, these concept-metaphors work as cognitive functions that 'create and extend structure[s] in experiences and understanding, which are culturally embedded, humanly embodied, and imaginatively structured' (Ouweneel 2018: 11). For Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, the metaphoric potency of language opens a new space to think reality in which metaphors are forms of life organisation in the public space (2015: 206), they work with images they allow catching blocks and forgotten senses for official languages unveiling strategies for resisting colonialism (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010c: 5). Moreover, these concepts-metaphors describe complex mediations, ways of thinking and heterogenous societies, they are a middle point that attempts to overcome historicism and binarism (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018). In these tension *chakanitas*, metaphors work as allies, as images that can be modified and changed, interpreted in multiple ways simultaneously (Anzaldúa 2015: 55), they work as tools for 'conciliar la contadicción' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010c: 65).[19]

Therefore, my monolingual rupture aims to unveil some of the contradictions present in this document and my writing gesture of mixing languages is a first approach to a decolonial methodology. The act of mixing languages works by activating contrasts and discomfort as expressions of the tensions, ambivalences, and ambiguities. It enacts and bridges the multiple theories, methodologies, and movements between linguistic, epistemological, ontological, and embodied borders. The borders beyond memory and beyond the geographical position where I am. For this research, the linguistic tension acts as a bridge, a *chakanita lingüística*. It creates a productive tension present in opposite commands, in the multiplicity of languages, and forms that modify structures. It is an invitation to be vulnerable and experience another structure, embracing the contrast of languages as an expressive means of the tension. Here, the tension works expanding, stretching, and questioning other features that -now- cannot pass unnoticed.

Nevertheless, I am aware that the generation and legitimation of knowledge have been crucial as a process that creates power over some others (Saavedra and Nymark 2008), and I

[19] 'reconciling conflict'.

have to acknowledge that I also belong to that system. I also have benefited from academic structures and powers, but I am critically aware of my complicity and yet, I cannot escape from all hegemonic commands. Therefore, I am using English because I am pursuing a PhD in the UK, but I use these languages to critically question the 'positional superiority' that has helped colonise non-Western knowledges. I use it to acknowledge my ambiguity, inner tensions, and precarities. Here I use languages as allies to explain, enact and repair that uncomfortable position, because in using the languages differently *puedo tensionar su poder* and because, at this point, I think in the border between English and Spanish. Withal this *sororidad lingüística*, is not enough. I need to keep pushing, resisting, and subverting other unnoticed colonial structures in knowledge-making. So, I ask the reader to trust the ambivalent path, to give up part of the control, the grammatical control, language control, scientific control over subjects. I ask the reader patient and tolerant towards the multiple languages, towards the path of tension, ambivalence and precarity.

Ambivalencia/contradicción: standing between the cracks of different lands, co-existent epistemologies

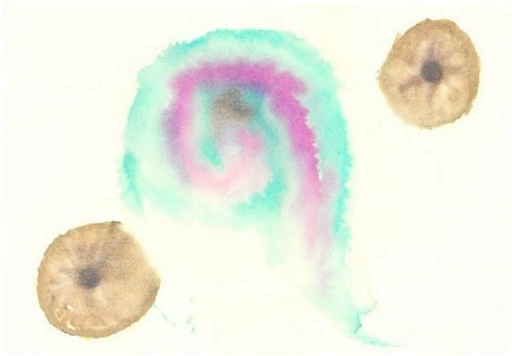

Figure 4 If some people listen to their knees before it rains, what other forms of knowledge are beyond observation? ©Victoria Vargas Downing

> '*Mi cuerpo vive dentro y fuera de otras culturas*, and a White man who constantly whispers, "assimilate, you're not good enough" and measures me according to white standards' (Anzaldúa 1999: 63).

While I tension language, I perform ambivalences and contrasts, not just of language, but the ambivalence of having European and Indigenous roots, the ambivalence of thinking about Latin America from Greenwich Meridian, from the different geographical times and locations that this implies. The ambivalence of working within a decolonial framework in a colonial institution like the university; the contradiction of seeking legitimization while challenging the institution that awards it; and the contradiction of decolonising heritage and art when both are colonial constructions. I struggle with these contradictions because they are part of myself, and at the same time, there is a command that constantly demands to eliminate these conflicts when I am working with the dynamic movement that these tensions create. Then, how can I enact a decolonial methodology when the form and structure are given by colonial institutions that privilege dialectic and binaries forms, fixed and universal positions? How can I decide on only one fixed position when I take root and grow in multiple places? When I have grown and lived in-between ambivalences and contradictions. I live between the United Kingdom and Chile, my last names are Vargas and Downing, and my thoughts are in Spanish and English. I am, and I am not, and yet always not enough.

How can I select one grain when there are parts of me that work within Western traditions and knowledge, as well as there are parts of me that work with alternative ways of thinking-

feeling, *de sentipensar?* How do I write when the academic rigour demands picking just one grain as valid, which is commonly the universal grain? How am I consequent with myself when Western knowledge traditions ask me to select one language, one command, one side, one grain? And how can I know that we are all talking about the same grain? For me, when you say 'grain', I imagine a grain of salt or sand because I grew up in the Desert and by the beach; for you, a grain may be the grain of the wood because your reality was full of forests and vegetated mountains. Either a grain of wood or a grain of sand, I can identify and think about more than just one grain. Because grains are not uniform, they have multiple compositions, shapes, colours, and patterns. How do I write thinking in a universal grain when I learned to find the subtle differences and similarities between the multiple types of grains? How do I write against the grain when I am grounded in different grains?. [20]

Suppose I replicate the normative grain, the generic-universal grain, with its hegemonic assumptions under the same academic tradition. In that case, I will be reproducing the world view of the hegemonic grain, and I will not show the differences between the other grains. Then, I will erase the differences between the grain of an oak, a cherry tree, or a pine. I will assume that the grains of a stone, a shell, coral or even salt are the same in shape, colour, and composition, and I will not show the difference between the grains that compose the sand or the forest. If I write with the normative grain, this text would be constrained in its constitution by the imposed control of a vigilant academy that veils and judges me by the homogeneity of the grains, the colonial grain. If I replicate the normative grain, I must leave one part of myself aside, denying parts of my thoughts and ways of knowing that are not validated by the rational Western scheme. Then the text, the research, will be constrained by the assumption of a normative form. If I accept the imposed form of the grain, I would not be just negating one side but neglecting all the other grains with their shapes, colours, and compositions as equally valid, and then this text will not enact the ontology behind this project. However, I am aware that I cannot step totally aside from the Western grain. So, how do I challenge the grain in a coherent way with all the multiple grains? How can I activate a form that is consistent with the tension and ambivalence between the grains?

I struggle because I must work between opposite commands: an academic rigour of fixed rules and limits and the embodied and intuitive knowledge, the sensations and expansion of

[20] There is a long history of Writing against the grain within feminist theory, i.e.; see Harrison, F. V. (1993). Writing Against the Grain: Cultural politics of difference in the work of Alice Walker. *Critique of Anthropology*, *13*(4), 401–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X9301300407. Also the work of Lila Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against culture' (2008).

the concepts in their interaction, that are also part of my understanding of the world and this research. What should I do with my knowledge when I learnt to learn from the interactions rather than separation? How can I decolonise a form that has been constraining, invalidating, and silencing the other grains? I struggle because I know I need to unsettle and disobey in order to dismantle, but at the same time, I cannot deny everything of that normative-abstract grain because it is also part of myself and my heritage. Then, how do I dismantle the form of art and heritage without invalidating or reproducing the Western grain? How do I approach this research when I am standing in-between the cracks of two different lands, two different epistemologies and ontologies, when I am standing with one foot on each side? When I am, and I am not, and yet I am never enough?

Decolonising epistemology

> These are the words I want to make heard in this book with the help of a white man who will make those who do not have our language to hear them […] They are words of our ancestors. Yet unlike white people, we do not need image skins to prevent them from escaping. We do not need to draw them like white people do with theirs. They will not disappear, for they remain fixed inside us. So our memory is long and strong […] They are also very ancient. Yet they become new again each time they return to dance for a young shaman (Kopenawa 2013: 21-23).

If I consider the typical product of academic research, this would be a document that rationally challenges ideas, using methodologies that organise and systematise a form for testing, searching, producing, or/and replicating knowledge in the world. It is true; I cannot deny the contributions of Western knowledge or the usefulness of academic research; we transport faster than before through planes, cars, trains or more. We use Western technology on an everyday basis. I communicate with my family between continents connected by a wire under the ocean and satellites in the sky. I use artefacts to talk and see my family in the distance. In less than a year, we had a vaccine for a new virus (COVID) that paralysed the world when it appeared, and I have benefited from many of those contributions. However, I cannot deny that knowledge and methodologies are also colonised, and these advances are also consequences of colonisation. The cable under the ocean follows almost the same route that colonisers used to trade slaves to the Abya Yala. The lithium that feeds the batteries of our computers, cell phones and electronic devices comes from countries exploited for their natural resources and is the cause of severe environmental damage (Escobar 2020: 107). In

Meyer's words, they 'helped to heal and helped kill' (2001: 189). The economic system is based on exploitation and accumulation, and research and researchers play a crucial role in those transactions while we replicate those forms of production. For the Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), the term 'research' is unquestionably liked to European colonialism and imperialism, whether it is regulated by scholars or institutions, scientific or/and disciplinary rules. Researchers and their results frame the sense of what is possible or impossible, real, or unreal, true or false. Researching -in its traditional form- comes with a sense of power relationships and a notion of authority.

Furthermore, the idea of research is also protected by imperial centres where scientific interests are organised and embedded in those colonial systems, safeguarding universal reason and progress while reproducing assumptions of racial and intellectual superiority. These commands reflect in the form and organisation of knowledge, reproducing and repeating itself to achieve objectivity and neutrality in knowledge (Maldonado-Torres 2012). But being 'objective' in Western terms means that things and people are treated as objects, creating notions of subordination and distance (Anzaldúa 1999: 59). It implies to be absent of the experience narrated, to observe it in the distance (White 1990: 3). This means that in Western terms, the appreciation of the world and the ways of experiencing it are disembodied and submitted to controlled observation. For this view, research objects do not have a voice, they do not contribute to the research or science (Smith 2012: 64). They are subjects of controlled manipulation and what is observed is in an inferior position.

Then, for writing from this view, I must take a position where I cannot interact or influence, the position of an unobserved and distant point of view over the rest. This separatist and disembodied method suppose that I am not there or here: I acquire a superior position, an objective/neutral perspective. This disembodied and superior point of view is called by Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez 'Hybris del punto cero' or Hubris of point zero (2007).[21] The concept of *Hybris del punto cero* coined by Castro-Gomez (2007), finds its origin in the Greek word for arrogance and pride. From this point of view, the researcher is placed from the distance and above of the research subject, denying the place of enunciation as means to proclaim its universality and neutrality. It is the point of maximum privilege where the colonial difference of race, gender, sexuality, and more, are mapped out. For this epistemological approach, the further the observer is from the object of observation, the

[21] In English translations this term appears as 'hubris' i.e: Mignolo 2011', however, Castro-Gomez original text in Spanish uses 'Hybris ', I will keep 'hybris' when I am referring to Castro-Gomez theory mentioned by him, and hubris in case of quoting sources in English.

more objective would be knowledge. Nevertheless, if I take distance, I lose touch, a rational logic delimits the object of research in a system of thought that creates separation, losing contact. Is in these gestures, that Anzaldúa finds the root of violence in the negation of bodily experiences and interaction (1999: 59). Here, the knowledge acquired by living, exchanging, touching, feeling, and sensing is denied, and an essential part of human experiences is considered invalid, wasting multiple forms of knowledge as almost undeserving of attention or non-existing under the valid hegemonic regime (Santos 2003).

In this sense, for Castro-Gomez (2007) and Mignolo & Tlostanova (2015), the elimination of perspectives, or *hybris del punto cero,* denies the possibility of asking about my position or taking a position in the world. This Western epistemology 'grant[s] to modern science the monopoly of universal distinction between true and false' (Santos 2014: 119). The distinction is presented as Abyssal division between of what is useful, existent, real, true, legal and what is useless, non-existent, unreal, false, and illegal; as well as what included and excluded, visible and invisible (Santos 2007, 2014). At the same time, this generates scales and forms of systematisation that favours the hubris of zero point and the idea of uni-versality.

Through these strategies, the co-existence or co-presence of diverse ways of transmitting and producing knowledge is eliminated; locating scientific thought, reason, and objectivity as tools of truth (Meyer 2001: 189) and the only valid form of knowledge, and locating, at the same time, the 'Global North' as the hegemonic epistemological centre over the rest of the world (Mignolo 2011a: 81). The abyssal line frames experiences in a logic of radical absence, where the other side of the line 'harbours only incomprehensible magical [invalid] or idolatrous practices [less valued]' (Santos 2014: 122). This distinction supports and privileges theories and knowledges from hegemonic centres while marginalising peripheries (Harding 2016: 1070). For example, cartography as a constitutive part of modern knowledge, presents the global map depicted from above the earth with the Atlantic Ocean as the centre and not the Pacific, reinforcing the hegemonic Eurocentric universalist view of the Hubris point zero (Mignolo 2011a).

Another example of this is depicted in the imposition of land names and organisations in the colonies, creating new frontiers and changing names referencing imperial kingdoms instead of native names. For instance, in the Tawantinsuyo as the Incas denominated the area, the names were changed to Nueva Castilla, Nueva Toledo, among others, instead of Qullasuyu or Antisuyu, just to name a few of them. In addition, the ways of naming and organising experiences are also guided by a scientific project that undermines other forms that seem

confusing or disorganised for the Western scientific regime and its mathematical organisation (Harding 2016: 1074). The scientific-rational-capitalist perspective encapsulate experiences and knowledge in a rigid and controlled format that replicates the logic of the ideas that produce. Under Western logic ‘el conocimiento ya no tiene como fin último la comprensión de las “conexiones ocultas” entre todas las cosas, sino la descomposición de la realidad en fragmentos con el fin de dominarla’ (Castro-Gómez 2007: 82) establishing a power relationship.[22] This means that knowledge for Western thought, is something placed to be discovered, extracted, appropriated, and distributed. What is observed becomes a source of raw material, data, or labour, evidencing an extractive rationale and exposing a lack of reciprocity and correspondence: in the words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith ‘They came, they saw, they named, they claimed’ (2012a: 80). This implies that knowledge no longer works as a legitimation mechanism but as a form of power (Castro-Gómez 2007). It establishes relationships of subordination and exploitation by those hegemonic centres, also known as the Global North (Garcés 2007).

This power relation of knowledge is also reflected in the accumulative and progressive way in which knowledge is validated in the academy, I.e., referencing other authors through mainly written sources and the constant search for the ‘discovery’. This need frames the access, production, and construction of knowledge to literate societies principally linked to European vernacular languages, implying an unwritten rule that says that whatever I say is not enough, and it will always be dyed by suspicion or distrust. If I want the right to write, if I want to legitimise my thoughts, I need to quote or reference European/Anglo sources and languages, almost asking for permission to be valid (Simpson 2004). We live with the fear of not ‘be[ing] heard nor welcomed’ (Audre 1995: 109), a fear of immediate invalidation of our thoughts (Meyer 2001), unless we back it up with a written source or/of European/Anglo authors and consequently from European/Anglo languages. As if without referencing, quoting, or knowing those languages and authors, the production of knowledge is not possible or less valid (Saavedra and Nymark 2008: 6). We are culturally dependent on those thoughts and structures because many of those other forms of knowledges are controlled and stored in countries of their extractors (Rigney 1999). [23]

[22]‘Knowledge no longer has as its ultimate goal the understanding of the "hidden connections" between all things, but the decomposition of reality into fragments in order to dominate it’.

[23] This is also reflected in heritage appreciation, the idea that heritage ‘objects’ belong to a past or to people that cannot produce those ‘objects’ any more as if they do not exist anymore.

Meanwhile, nobody asked ethnographers or anthropologists about their right, validity, or authority to extract, represent, interpret, or write about 'others' culture, their proficiency in Indigenous languages, or their authority to apply their theories in other people's land.[24] We are submitted to learn our culture by second-hands, and we are left with non-digested parts of it. Then, how I can have the right to speak differently, to say something different when we are forced to follow the same path of thought? When breathe coloniality all the time and every day? (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243), when 'the essence of colonization [is to] rip off a culture, then regurgitate its white version to the "natives"' (Anzaldúa 2015: 48). When we face an imposition to learn from theories, problems, and experiences from the specificity of a 'neutral' Global North, even when they are our own. When we need to reply to a privileged academy with its ideological, epistemological, methodological, and theoretical frameworks and interests?

We found epistemological limitations because we need to repeat those parameters and sources. After all, if we do not follow that systematisation and rules, we face the misjudgement of epistemic inferiority (Resende 2018). Even when it is clear that epistemology 'está entretejida con el lenguaje y, sobre todo, con los lenguajes alfabéticamente escritos' (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 313); this colonial form of systematisation and validation of knowledge, and the hierarchical position of the written word, deprives, displaces, and silences forms of oral expressions and non-alphabetic/non-European forms of writing and knowledges (Icaza and Aguilar 2021: 212).[25] We tend to forget that 'el lenguaje [también] está entrelazado en el cuerpo y en la memoria (localizada geohistóricamente) de cada persona' (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 313), meaning that epistemology is not only about written sources, but experiences and memories outside of hegemonic centres and forms.[26]

Alternative forms of knowledge come from different ways of being, living, learning, dreaming and making sense, beyond European sources or languages and beyond that predefined route that we are constantly referencing. For example, in the Andean world, the definition of the text includes practices such as the khipus, dances, songs, textiles, among others. these practices are understood as bases for later vocalizations that interact dynamically, and they are not limited just to visual engagements (Arnold et al. 2017). In the case of the khipus, these

[24] For an expansion of this topic check the notion cultural assumptions in Meyer (2001) and Canella and Manuelito (2008).
[25] 'is interwoven with language and, above all, with alphabetically written languages'.
[26] 'language is [also] intertwined in the body and in the memory (geohistorically localized) of each person'.

are tactile devices of memory that recorded events and narratives; however, in contemporary times and due to colonisation, we do not know how to access that knowledge and, at least in Western terms, we do not have the tools for its codification. Although these forms are starting to be recognised as valid textual sources by academic fields, there are still limitations in their integration, where, its understanding is framed within forms of accountability or numeric organisations and not as narrative accounts of the past, rituals, and others. That is to say that traditional academic practices still rely on textual and written sources as privileged ones, maintaining political and epistemological forms embedded in colonial frameworks that systematise knowledge production (Mallon 2012).

Despite that we can start to see a recognition of non-Western knowledges and innovations, these are reduced to data or sources, aiming for better management or control over, for example, the environment. In other words, they exist to be patented or sold by capitalist purposes. Meanwhile, the values and spiritual foundations that support Indigenous Knowledges and their world views are of 'less interest often because they exist in opposition to the worldview and values of the dominating societies' (Simpson 2004: 374). This systematisation is also manifested in the misrepresentation of sources such as shaman's contribution to Western pharmaceutics, Indigenous knowledges of biodiversity (Giraldo Herrera 2018a), local knowledge of agriculture and non-Western ways of thinking and doing. These forms are still less recognised, dismissed or categorised as inferior, fake, or superstitious by the more scientific paradigms. This epistemological inferiority evidences a need to balance the weight of such integrations and the perpetuity of those privileged forms.

However, new critical and epistemological engagements -such as post-structuralisms, post-humanisms, deconstructivism and feminisms are accepting and integrating methods that aim to rebalance the scale; collaborative knowledge production, oral expressions and autoethnographic perspectives are some of these integrations. Regardless of the integration of new voices and the disciplinary turn challenging core issues of hegemonic Western epistemology, there continues to be plenty of forms of knowledges are yet not recognised or accepted.

As a result, the geopolitical hegemony of the Global north in the academic production of knowledge is maintained despite the political defeat of colonialism (Resende 2018). The Global North as physical and epistemological territory monopolises ways of knowing that keep sustaining capitalist/neoliberal/patriarchal and colonial systems (Santos 2014). In this way, the control over language, land, culture, and knowledge by hegemonic Eurocentric

epistemological backgrounds gives visibility to realities and forms of knowledge that reproduce those systems, while hiding, marginalising, or suppressing forms that resist the oppression that those systems create, such as forms of knowledge that cannot be explained by scientific paradigms.

Furthermore, the systematisation of Western reason and canon, generates scales of value and hierarchies in the organisation and transmission of knowledge (Mignolo 2011a: 80), i.e., from community to individuals; from traditional to modern; authorised to subaltern; superstitious and scientific; body and soul; from the orient to occident; schools, and universities. In this way, Eurocentrism is not just a 'proceso histórico [y una] forma de operar intelectualmente y de construir nuestra realidad social [del pasado]' (Garcés 2007: 222), but a current project of political, epistemic, and economic domination, where the relationship to transnational capitalism, is constantly upgraded through power mechanisms that systematise the hegemonic production and reproduction of knowledge. [27] This is what Smith (2012), Quijano (2007) and Mignolo (2018, 2007, 2011a) recognise as the geopolitics of knowledge: geopolitical centres where knowledge is produced and validated.

For the Brazilian academic Viviane de Melo Resende, the colonisation of knowledge is closely related to the colonisation of the being, where the notion of inclusion and exclusion are prompt to the identification of patterns of what we can or not do, and how we should behave in social contexts limiting our actions. This type of coloniality

> Relates to discourse [and therefore to language] in the way we perceive the social realm associated with classism, racism, sexism and its intersectionality. […] since we act according to capitalist, racist and sexist standards; and we reproduce, whether consciously or unconsciously, these patterns of action [and ways of knowledge] (Resende 2018: 9).

Breaking these patterns requires awareness of how these hegemonic structures work, recognising the value and contributions of Global South critical thinkers. This is, to think about how to de-normalise interpretative frameworks and those naturalised forms in which we reproduce inequalities. For doing so, we need to decentre the production of knowledge from hegemonic centres and displacing it towards a co-production with and from racial/ethnic/sexual subaltern spaces and bodies, implying an effort on behalf of patriarchal, colonial, and hegemonic systems, to include new critical perspectives and forms of

[27] 'historical process [and a] way of operating intellectually and constructing our social reality [from the past]'.

knowledge that have been traditionally excluded, to then, create a dialogue between *diversos saberes*.

As the scientific understanding of the world is incomplete –we do not know everything- but works under the assumption that it is complete and determinist –a universal law, it creates 'modern problems for which there are no modern solutions' (Escobar 2016: 69). In this regard, instead of a crusade against the West or modern science, decolonial epistemologies takes, as a departure point, a radical critique of geopolitics and body politics of knowledges (Grosfoguel 2006). The critique does not aim to discard, deny, or throw away Eurocentric critical traditions or ignore or abandon the sediments of imperial languages or categories of Western hegemonic thought. On the contrary, they are recognised as a part of the ecology of knowledges and, therefore, necessary as part of the plurality. As political and epistemic project, the possibilities of the contributions of Western knowledge for social emancipation in different life domains are still counted (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 321). Then, an epistemological change requires to challenge the monoculture of science, not by discrediting of scientific knowledge, but by integrating 'counter-hegemonic understanding and uses of Eurocentric concepts' (Santos 2014: ix). As Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, the decolonisation of epistemologies, as wider project, is about 'coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes' (2012: 41). This implies the possibility of appropriating Western contributions to de-chain imperial universalist designs (Mignolo 2011b).

Therefore, decolonial epistemologies fosters for a more integrative form of thinking where 'la ciencia occidental pueda "enlazarse" con otras formas de producción de conocimientos' (Castro-Gómez 2007: 90). [28] For the Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel (2007), a decolonial epistemic approach, requires expanding the canon of thought to other epistemic perspectives broader than the Western canon, and beyond a universal abstraction as global design. Consequently, this task implies going beyond the abyssal line that excludes, invalidates, and makes invisible what is not contained by the Western side of the canon. It requires including realities that are absent due to the silence, suppression, and marginalization of the hegemonic forms, as a way of opening the space for what can emerge and has not been imagined yet. In this sense, for Grosfoguel (2007: 212), it is necessary a 'critical dialogue between diverse critical epistemic/ethical/political projects towards a

[28] 'Western science can "link/entangle" with other forms of knowledge production'.

pluriversal as opposed to a universal world' (Grosfoguel 2007: 212), arguing for the coexistence of different worlds and epistemologies instead of just one.

At the same time, this expanded and integrative shape proposes a suspension of methods to desegregate and degenerate current ways of power and being, emancipating and reshaping them according to their own orientations, rules and needs. As the scholar in Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies, Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2012) explains, a decolonial logic, stands as an alternative to the delimitation and control of hegemonic forms and canons of knowledge, undoing and rethinking the way of being and interacting with and in the world. Here, the integration of pluriversal approaches complicates the universalist-homogenising and excluding logics that tend to essentialise conflicting groups presenting them as binary or antagonist options (Harding 2016). This coexistence and interaction between epistemologies, derive in the emergence of a space in-between where the understandings and realities may be transcended and hybridised.

For example, Indigenous ancestral forms of wisdom and knowledges, have integrated a space in-between in their epistemologies, as for them is not possible 'basarlo todo en una discriminación de los contrarios porque estos tienden a unirse […] no puede existir el uno sin el otro' (Castro-Gómez 2007: 89) creating the notion of a third included.[29] At the same time, this third included is also present in Indigenous languages such as the Aymara concept of '*Jiwasa*', which is a singular person that also means us. As it includes the interlocutor, is singular person and collective (Rivera Cusicanqui in Cacopardo 2018: 191). The benefit of these spaces is that they allow to 'identificar preocupaciones comunes, enfoques complementarios y, por supuesto, también contradicciones intratables' (Santos 2010: 57-58).[30] These conceptualisations, challenge dominant epistemologies by recognising broader and more complex logics than hegemonic impositions and disciplines (Maldonado-Torres 2012: 17), suggesting a space capable of creating mutual intelligibility among possible and available experiences without compromising their identities, *sin suprimirlas o someterlas* (de la Cadena and Hiner 2020), in simultaneity and contemporaneity.

This space in-between is also described in Gloria Anzaldúa's thinking as *Nepantla* (2015, 1999) a Nahuatl word for an in-between space. For her, *Nepantla*, are places in constant tension; the contact point and *el lugar entre mundos donde* 'the missing or absent pieces can be

[29] 'to base everything on discrimination of opposites, because they tend to unite [...] one cannot exist without the other'.

[30] 'identify common concerns, complementary approaches and, of course, also intractable contradictions'.

summoned back, where transformation and healing may be possible, where wholeness is just out of reach but seems attainable' (Anzaldúa 2015: 2). *Nepantla* is where we can accept contradictions and paradoxes, the place where 'realities clash, authority figures of the various groups demand contradictory commitments, and we and others have failed living up to idealised goals' (Anzaldúa 2015: 15). It is the space present in the borderlands and a 'space in which antithetical elements mix, neither to obliterate each other nor to be subsumed by a larger whole, but rather to combine in unique and unexpected ways' (Cantu and Hurtado 2007: 6). It is a bridge, a body in transition to another place, a place outside the limits of categorical thinking, a space that overflows, *desborda* (Trejo Méndez 2021). For Anzaldúa, *Nepantla,* as third space, suggest a gesture *of desborde de fronteras* or border crossing, whether there are theorical, physical or other.

This *desborde de frontreras,* reflects on the consequences of the configuration of divided and cracked subjectivities, and how those *heridas coloniales*, divide ideas, places and people, affecting bodies in distinctive ways. At the same time, it entails an embodied consciousness that recognises places beyond dualities and vulnerabilities as central to the decolonisation task. These in-between spaces 'open new possibilities for the creation of a relational power from a place of non-categorical logics' (Baumann 2022: 3). This form of border thinking, looks for the liberation concepts beyond Eurocentric perspectives, where notions such as democracy, humanity, citizenship, human rights, and territory, are defined according to local necessities, times, and cosmologies. This means that instead of 'trabajar por la acumulación del conocimiento y el manejo imperial, [border thinking] trabaja por el empoderamiento y la liberación de los diferentes estratos' (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 315).[31]

Furthermore, border thinking

> directs researchers to begin thought from their everyday lives—from the liminal or intersectional spaces where they live […] ''think[ing] where they[/we] stand'' from the places in the social order where vulnerable people's bodies and thinking are located. [...]using the existing conceptual frameworks to advance their/our projects, while criticizing them and trying out ''other'' frameworks (Harding 2016: 1078).

As result, this border thinking and the space in-between can be found in the world as the threads of unsuspected connections, the complexity faced in the borders and the tension of

[31] 'working for the accumulation of knowledge and imperial management, [border thinking] works for the empowerment and liberation of the different strata'.

opposites but complementary commands. In this sense, to understand the workings of these spaces in-between demands a language that is not limited to territorial epistemologies nor monolingual communication. It demands a space that enables the coexistence of multiple and complex options, languages and epistemologies and where knowledge is communicated widely and in-depth: a place of inclusion rather than exclusion (Resende 2018: 12; Mignolo 2000: 252). Then, instead of appealing to a dividing line between the real/unreal, the visible/invisible, etc., the third space or space in-between as decolonial approach, propose the possibility of thinking beyond cartesian divisions and disciplinary boundaries.

This approach is nurtured by the crossing in-between different social, political, and artistic knowledges and spheres of production. It articulates problems within a wider and more complex net of understandings that enables unweaving and dismantling hierarchical forms and relationships. In other words, rather than being a combination of existing disciplines, this decolonial approach question the ontological status of concepts and disciplines while also 'seeks to forge conceptual tools that are adequate to the problems and questions addressed' (Maldonado-Torres 2009: 268). In the light of this, the decolonial position enables the possibility of rethinking categories and hierarchies according to local or personal experiences instead of universal. For example, the idea of rethinking the hierarchical categorisations according to embodied experiences, the distinction between nature and culture under alternative ontologies, or rethinking art and heritage not as separated fields.

Additionally, by creating links and ties between different spheres, this epistemic approach allows the possibility of liberating knowledges of current constraints, questioning those boundaries, and impositions; crossing dividing lines of disciplines that modernity has separated. This approach makes possible to think in new ways of behaving, acting, dreaming, being, living and knowing, allowing to think about problems and questions in terms of interdependency rather than in isolation, and expanding their disciplinary frameworks towards more fluid boundaries. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are many ways of working in transdisciplinarity, as well as many ways of decolonising, and depending on the level of complexity, decolonial transdisciplinarity can appear as 'una conciencia fronteriza y su pensamiento también fronterizo [...] se nutre de la experiencia de estar marcado por la línea ontológica moderna/colonial' (Maldonado-Torres 2012: 12) and their cartesian divisions.[32] In this context, decolonial epistemologies work in a more organic and

[32] 'a border consciousness and it's also a border thought that is nourished by the experience of being marked by the modern/colonial ontological line'.

fluid way, fostering interdisciplinary and intimate relationships. They aim for a more horizontal and broader realization that serves as a way of subverting the vertical pattern of knowledge (Resende 2018: 12).

In this sense, a decolonial epistemology cannot be thought of from the geo-theo-ego politics of knowledge because these are embedded in the claim of universality and rooted in the suppression of geo-historical locations and the body (Mignolo 2011b: 274). In different words, a decolonial approach to epistemology implies to 'descender del punto cero y hacer evidente el lugar desde el cual se produce el conocimiento' (Castro-Gómez 2007: 88).[33] Then, decolonial approaches, implies a displacement beyond not just geopolitical borders, but intellectual and personal, beyond the Cartesian divisions of body and mind, human/nature, etc, and beyond fixed conceptualisations and forms. It relates to a border and migrant consciousness, proposing a turn in the geography of reason towards 'las geopolíticas y corpopolíticas del conocimiento' (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 317); this is knowing from the place and the body creating *ese saber*.[34]

In addition, for the Mexican academic Sylvia Marcos, decolonial epistemologies 'van al encuentro de una episteme que conjuga cuerpo y mente, lo material y lo inmaterial […]. Es la episteme de aparentes "contrarios" en conjunción' (Marcos 2018: 97).[35] For Marcos, the embodiment of knowledge practices speaks about a doing between body and mind as a clear indication of the efforts to include other philosophical worlds in dialogic relationships. This approach to epistemology proposes an awareness of how and from where knowledge is produced, standing as an alternative to neutrality, disembodiment, and objectivity. This awareness acknowledges that such neutrality has its origin in concrete subjects with specific circumstances, powers, and passions (Leyva, Cumes, and Macleod 2018: 11).

Yet, the critique of neutrality does not mean that objectivity is compromised; rather, it recognises a different type of objectivity, one learnt in our bodies from a not alienating distance, a feminist objectivity that considers 'limited location and situated knowledge, [and is] not about transcendence and splitting subject and object [or body and mind]' (Haraway

[33]'descend from the zero point and make evident the place from which knowledge is produced'.
[34] 'the geopolitics and bodypolitics of knowledge'.

[35] 'They go to an encounter of an episteme that combines body and mind, the material and the immaterial, without loopholes or contradictions. It is the episteme of apparent "opposites" in conjunction'.

1988: 5)[36]. This kind of objectivity acknowledges how neutrality undercovers the differences and pluralities under a homogenising universality. At the same time, implies that there is not one right way of decolonising, as decolonisation cannot be imposed or reduced to a universal abstract that includes all the experiences, memories, and violences. It is an option among many coexisting ones, and it can be manifested in multiple ways. As a consequence, decolonial epistemologies, on the bases of situated knowledge 'presupone que no existe una sola verdad esperando ser descubierta por el observador imparcial, a la vez que implica que todo conocimiento es parcial y contingente' (Leyva S 2019: 355).[37] Therefore, situated knowledge as part of a decolonial epistemology, highlights the place, the body and the form in which knowledge is produced and received, recognising that our senses are culturally mediated (Meyer 2001). As a result, our understanding of the world is mediated by the form that knowledge is presented to us, reflecting in our perception, social position, and our own representations of reality (White 1990).

With this in mind, how to challenge colonial-imposed patterns in terms of configuration and presentation of knowledge?

I cannot do it alone

Despite my good intentions, if I want to root my work in the politics of decolonization and anticolonialism, I cannot do it on my own; this work cannot be done alone. It cannot be achieved by just one person; it is a collective work. Although current traditions within the academy explore ideas and formats with different nuances, such as the use of multiple languages, personal perspectives, or alternative use of poetic images, to challenge the form in which knowledge is produced and presented is still seeming threatening to more traditional academic formats. This is because it entails the risk of untangling colonial strategies and unveiling power structures from which we are also benefit from. Then, the decision about sustaining those forms and inequalities or staying in the same place renders uncomfortable as it requires of a decision between reproducing the same oppressions or losing some

[36] Despite Haraway contribution to decolonisation within the anglosphere, it is necessary to mention limitations of situated knowledges as it does not come from a critical engagement with coloniality and do not allow to explain or address the ontological excesses, nor repairing damages of colonisation.

[37] 'Presupposes that there is not a single truth waiting to be discovered by the impartial observer, but instead all knowledge is partial and contingent'.

benefits. This means that in the actions of unveiling and challenging, we realise our complicity.

Considering this, the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson argues that it is not enough if the academy just engages with anti-colonial or decolonial theory; instead, she argues, it is necessary to be 'willing to step outside [of our/] their privilege position and challenge research that conforms to the guidelines outlined by the colonial power structure' (Simpson 2004: 381).[38] This involves a willingness to let go of the impositions and assumptions made by rational modern reason, and to take distance from 'the disciplinary limits of linguistics, in order to boldly assume our lack of other knowledges' (Resende 2018: 9). In other words, to let go of privileges, to humbly listen, read and experience. It implies the action of consciously letting go of hegemonic logics that lies on homogeneity, linearity, verticality, unity, determinacy, and completeness of knowledge. That is to say, when the hubris of point zero carries the exclusion and radical difference of universal knowledge, a decolonial epistemology and methodology work towards inclusion and pluriversality of thoughts. Instead of an epistemology of fragmentation, it becomes an epistemology of bridges (Lugones 2018), an epistemology of connections and interactions.

Therefore, for working towards a decolonial methodology I need to appeal to a different logic; one that relies on diversity, horizontality, plurality, and incompleteness. I need to appeal to the willingness to be open to work and listen toward a decolonial epistemology, questioning and expanding the categories of analysis of modern disciplines. This entails an increasing engagement towards new academic forms as options and alternatives to hegemonic projects and a strong commitment towards critical inquires. Then, to reach a decolonial methodology, I need to stretch out and step out of the rules in the production of knowledge imposed by the academy and, at the same time, recognise that I am also part that structure. As consequence, the challenge is expanded not just to experiment and embrace different forms, domains, and ways of researching, interacting and knowing, but also to the academy to accept these different ways of doing, knowing and researching.

This epistemological approach comes with the determination and action of being 'unruly, disruptive, critical, and dedicated to the goals of justice and equity' (Lincoln, Smith, and Denzin 2008: 2). Meaning that we, me, you, us, need to be open to different knowledges, amplifying forms that cross multiple fields, like intimacy, emotions, ancestral knowledges, and

[38] Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg refers to the Indigenous people of what is now known as Ontario, Canada. And it means 'The place of many rivers mouth'.

corporality, among others. This suggests that I need to make hegemonic academic paths, formats, agents, and hegemonic traditions uncomfortable. But, uncomfortable enough, to be willing to bend some of the assumptions; uncomfortable enough to be humble and to trust in each other, so we can step outside our/their privilege to experience that it is possible to stand in-between the open cracks, in the middle of other worlds, with one foot on each side. However, I require of the willingness of field agents to accept those disruptions, encounters, and insubordination. The disposition to accept new forms and alternative ways with less resistance.

Then, we can find the interactions that are not contemplated by those linguistic, epistemological, geopolitical, and disciplinary limits. Then, I can talk about the emergent. Then, and just then, I can enact what is absent and unthinkable by the hegemonic side of that abyssal line. Then and just then, I can attempt to craft new forms of analysis, to 'craft another space for the production of knowledge…un paradigma otro, the very possibility of talking about 'worlds and knowledges otherwise'' (Escobar 2007: 179). This, require us to consciously caring about not replicating the same patterns and political frameworks that reproduce inequalities and oppressions. It requires us to take a critical position regarding our categories, senses, and concepts. It requires awareness against reproducing silences and invisibilities unless to make them evident. It demands alertness against established and imposed hierarchies, and awareness about the assumptions, logics and strategies that justify modernity extractions and accumulative linearity.

Withal this considered, my position emerges from the different conditions and understandings of the everyday everchanging time-space. I take this stand because from here, I can talk and research about art and heritage as an integrative part of everyday life, from the ways it resonates in different actions, locations, crossings, displacements and fragmentations (Bhattacharya 2018: 11), from different feelings triggered by the wounds and roots. From the places where I found artworks and practices that recall a root *donde me atan y desatan,* tangle and untangle with them; by living, thinking, dreaming and sensing in those in-between things, practices, knowledges. That something that, in Marco's words, is 'permantly recreated but remains based on their own roots' (Marcos 2006: xx).

Whether language, bodies, categorizations, art and heritage, the pluriverses that I am interweaving here recognise the various places where the mark of colonial difference can be placed; the different places where that root has been chopped; and resilient germinations that create and recreate new forms in which those concepts can be applied; the results from

those interactions, exchanges and interdependencies, as well as the different paths to healing them. Within this ground, I challenge the way, the form, and the epistemic engagement with counter-hegemonic perspectives and broader realities, expanding them to realities not limited just to what exists but to what is absent and about to emerge in reality. So, I can write and research about art and heritage from those generative encounters in specific times and spaces that change perceptions and thoughts and turn the question from 'what heritage is' to 'what heritage can be', framing them not by universal or institutional rules, but local and temporal (non-linear) ways of understanding these concepts. In other words, using them under a different set of conditions and rules, considering their own calendar and geography, and recognising the urgency for their emancipation.

In this sense, I propose to challenge the conventional ways of producing knowledge, acknowledging their limitations, silences, and absences, but also proposing alternatives that consider pluralities and emergencies as a way of obtaining different results; as options for repairing and healing. This decolonial methodology is an openness and willingness for the communion and communication of knowledges, a disposition to keep questioning assumptions about how to think and coexist, a willingness to repair and heal the sediments of that hegemonic thought (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2015: 329). As result, this text is constantly resisting the attempts of confining or restraining inquires to the universal reason, to a single interpretative strategy or paradigm; it resists and deals with the dilemma and risk of being domesticated by global designs as well as linear forms. In other words, this decolonial approach to the epistemology of the concept of heritage does not work just in one way, one direction, one line, one history, one definition, one option or one abstract or universal form of understanding. Instead, it relates to a logic of multiplicity, it moves between multiple fluid, flexible and shifting positions, where I explore the diverse ways of activating that potential. This research recognizes new paradigms that complicate the relationship between art and heritage, acknowledging pluriversal forms of both. Therefore, the decolonial approach that I enact in these pages reflects on art and heritage; with the intention of unlearning, stretching strict ideas and unbending those rigid conceptualisations and divisions (Saavedra and Nymark 2008: 4). Because of this, I use western concepts with the purpose of 'de-normalis[ing] the interpretative frameworks that lead us to subordinate identities' (Resende 2018: 9).

Writing with the grains

If the idea of writing against the grain implies the selection of just one grain, I propose an alternative where it is possible to find multiple types of different grains that challenge binary

options and divisive lines. Grains that add complexity instead of simplification to the analysis. Hence, more than considering a unique, universal, abstract grain, I bet for the coexistence of grains that can create sand. Then, under these conditions, I can approach a decolonial epistemology; then, and only then, I can write about decolonisation within a colonial institution, and I can talk about art and heritage as far as European concepts. Then, and only then, the compression and definition that I am going to explore of heritage and art would not be limited to hegemonic conceptualisations, categorisations or dynamics. Rather, I have the option of opening it to other forms, uses and ways of interpretation, relation, and creation. Then and only then I can bridge the gap and connect different critical genealogies and academic traditions, different locations and thoughts, according to their own local needs, times and interactions, allowing us to 'move beyond universalism into forms of argumentation that are built on the possibility of a dialogue across a plurality of epistemic locations' (Icaza and Vázquez 2013: 687).

As a consequence, to enact a decolonial methodology, I need to acknowledge the different forms in which knowledge emerges from this research, including my personal experience, which is marked by being 'in-between' of epistemologies because, as *Latina,* I emerge from two complementary but distinct paradigms (Escobar 2007: 190). That ambivalent position that inhabits in-between locations and traditions. That border space mentioned before, that space not totally there, nor totally here. A space of in-betweenness that allows creation, liminality and multiple shifting positions (Dutta 2018: 95). An in-between space that carries all the creative potential to generate new forms and understandings of art and heritage. That space informs my critical position and allows me to theorise about contradictory social experiences while it does not discredit intercultural exchanges that I have been exposed to. Because I have been exposed to multiple social worlds, classes, nation-states and colonisations, I am able to navigate contradictions and challenging monocultural and monolingual conceptualisations and experiences (Cantu and Hurtado 2007: 6). A space where I can recognise that I have a privileged position, in-between resistances and dominations.

In this space, I navigate between feeling empowered and disempowered, in-between agreements and disagreements. I work in-between traditions, in their tensions, ambivalences, and precarities. My privilege allows me to consider the frameworks and ways of functioning of an academy of which I am also part. Still, it also allows me to rethink critically the practices rooted in modern/colonial orders (Icaza and Vázquez 2013: 687) and move between the multiple layers of this complex relationship. Because I am in-between, I can

establish links and dialogues, and I can negotiate about and 'between' contradictories but coexistent practices, beings, and feelings. I know where tension can make strings sound.

At this point, it is obvious that I follow several epistemic paths and trajectories that emerge and escape from the control of global linear thinking. My perspectives are not fixed into a specific geographical position, as I see fragments of my heritage wherever I go, I find pieces of home in every place I visit; with every person and being that I interact and share it. I honour my heritage from many spaces without the need of being fixed in one place (Escobar 2007: 190). Paraphrasing Mignolo (2011a: 83), I am where I think, the place we are, follows from the place we occupy in this the modern/colonial world. [39] Therefore, my epistemic principle, legitimizes my way and other ways of thinking while discrediting the pretence of a singular epistemology: universal, disembodied and detached (Mignolo 2011a: 81). I am where I think, because I write from the Greenwich meridian acknowledging that the Atacama Desert informs my practice, because *desde acá me entretejo* and I reweave my understanding of myself *desde acá interctúo, crezco y comparto*.[40] My roots are interwoven between the land of desertic mountains, and this land crossed multiple bodies of water. My roots are knotted and interwoven between myself and the others, 'en nuestros seres largos y anchos, histórica y socialmente, en muchos tiempos y en muchas relaciones' (Lugones 2018: 89).[41] I am where I *sentipienso.*

Finally, if I want to honour a decolonial methodology, I need to activate the noise, *el ruido* of those that were silenced before, I need to make noise, and consequently, I cannot only stay just in the discourse or theory, I need praxis and presence in the world (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012). Thus, to enact a decolonial methodology, is necessary not just to challenge ideas but to question the way in which knowledge is produced, conceived, validated and transmitted, placing a question about epistemology, but also about design. This means that this epistemic approach has ontological repercussions, where the form in which this research is developed also needs to be challenged, not just in linguistic terms, but in format and traditions that allow sustaining webs of connection and shared conversations, nets of life rather than divisive walls and borders. So, I appeal to a critical mobility in-between points in constant tension and ambivalence, a way of staying in and with the conflicts 'staying with the trouble' in Donna Haraway's (2016) words. A way sustaining each other in our vulnerabilities, in our precarity.

[39] '"we are where we think"' (Mignolo 2011a: 83)
[40] from here I interact, grow and share.
[41] Lugones wrote in Spanish, English and both at the same time, however when she included Spanish in her English texts, she did not provide a translation and I want to honour that decision, hence I will not translate Lugones quotes.

Working with the tension, in their mutual and reciprocal constitutionality, to open the space for new meanings and knowledge to emerge. To activate a decolonial methodology, I need to work with a form that can include and expand, rather than separate and constrain, a form that can uphold different commands and grains, capable of finding the balance between the tension and ambiguity between myself and the reader to sustain us in our precarities.

Precarious paths: Tanteando Decolonial methodologies.

> In our common struggle and in our writing, we reclaim our tongues. We wield a pen as tool, a weapon, a means of survival, a magic wand that will attract power, that will draw self/love into our bodies (Anzaldúa 1990: 163).

> Las mías son incursiones fascinadas, cautelosas, y a veces vacilantes, en otros mundos de significados para entreverlos desde otro lugar. No existe definición académica para lo que busco, y eso explica también el estilo de mis comentarios. Busco pistas que me expliquen dónde se coloca mi quehacer (Marcos 2018: 95).[42]

Tanteando el camino y poniendo el cuerpo

Figure 5 The need of always walking for the present. ©Victoria Vargas Downing

I am following a path, but it is not like I am seeing the path with my eyes. Every time I have tried to write or describe this path, I find myself closing my eyes as the only way of starting this task. I feel my breathing, my heart beating, and I leave my senses to guide me; smells, sounds, and temperature, how humid, how dry, how it feels. I take my time while the temporality of the moment slows down and speeds up, synchronising my nervous breathing and impatient beatings with the clumsy movements of unexpected adaptation. It is not a situation where you or I can rush; we need a deep pause to feel the surroundings. I feel the breeze on my skin, cold air in my nose, and my feet timidly touching the ground, and I wait… until I feel an inclination to gently and carefully move, a signal for finding my way in that accountable darkness. I am awake, listening, feeling and thinking how this path behaves and how it interacts with me.

[42] 'Mine are fascinating, cautious and sometimes hesitant incursions into other worlds of meanings to glimpse them from another place. There is no academic definition for what I am looking for, and that also explains the style of my comments. I look for clues to explain to me where my work is placed'.

I know from my gut that to accurately perceive this path, I do not have to rely on my eyes and the assumptions that may imply. To navigate this path, I must rely on my body, my senses, and my feelings more than my eyes; because a clear vision can compress the space and time for complex communication, and from an observing distance the transformative possibilities are denied. Rather, I need a gaze that avoids rational judgement when I look for signals of invisible communication. Like the experience of arriving at a new house at night and discretely trying to find the switch of the light; avoiding furniture, forcing the body to remember familiar textures and softly touching the wall until the 'click!' brings the light and colours back. So, likewise, the best way I can describe the road is with my eyes closed.

I know I am not the first one following this track, and neither the first one doing it with the eyes closed, Maria Lugones described this approach long before me as *tantear*. For her, this sensorial engagement is way of searching for meaning and contouring practice: '"tantear en la oscuridad" [is] putting one's hands in front of oneself as one is walking in the dark, tactilely feeling one's way' (Lugones 2003: 1). *Tantear*, implies an active movement of tactilely searching together in the dark; it is 'a productive unknowing that allows individuals to make sense of themselves, each other, and their praxis beyond predetermined understandings or fixed visions of the future' (Beckett 2020: 123).

For me, before starting to *tantear* I need to breathe. It is hard to describe the sensation, but it feels like walking managing the unknown, dealing with complex and subtle communication, a tension between doubting and trusting, a learning with my body in the turns, branches, rocks, rain and splashes, the tables, curtains breezes, smells and senses, learning to walk differently, and breathing in a conscious way. So, I breathe… for Emmanuele Coccia 'to breathe means to experience that the body in which we are is at the same time within us' (2018: 29), when I am *tanteando*, I try to perceive those bodies within and outside. I place myself in that atmospheric mixture, a space in between thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and I breathe keeping my eyes closed. I know I could rely on familiar ready-made trails or optic meanings. I know that in keeping that tradition, that path, I would arrive faster wherever the destination is, but I do not want to rush and fall into the temporality of quick decisions and decided paths, I want to explore the alternatives. Sometimes, I find myself in utterly uncomfortable places, but I have to learn to be there... in my transits. My movements are neither neat nor ordered, but I am learning how to negotiate with the cold, narrow and spiky until a new agreement with the surroundings allows me to pass or turn back. Whilst I adapt, I pay attention to the apparently empty spaces, the sounds and the silences around in a full sensory attentiveness to shape different tracks.

When I am bumping and groping while walking in the dark, I have to follow the signals of the embodied and material engagements (Baumann 2022); I have to learn from the relational politics of the branches cracking, the rocks falling and the textures in the unperceived messages of my trippings even when sometimes I can fall. I know is risky and it will take me longer, but as far as I can hold my tensions, trust and listening carefully to my body its resistances and interactions, I know I will find the information to solve directions and make conscious decisions. The only thing I know is that I need to be attentive, listen with care, and be open to the reception of information and communication. I need to actively engage with relational politics of gratitude and care (Vázquez 2020). Because here, the issue of solving where to go becomes a dynamic and interdependent situation, the crossing of interactions and senses, finding mutual limits and agreed paths with what surrounds me.

While I explore my body inclinations, the spaces that *tantear* agrees, I am listening carefully and searching for meaning, questioning assumptions within myself about what I think I know to reveal new paths and understandings. I wonder how my ancestors navigated this path and how many others' paths are there waiting to appear? How many people have read the signs of the invisible in similar ways than I am doing right now? and how to approach with the unknown and unseen, when we have approached knowledge as a mainly visual matter? Hence, if discovering is described as a bright moment of illumination or clarity; a moment of optical enhanced sense about what is perceived; the unveiling of something not seen before; or a first-time finding; what happens with the encounter of something that was already there, and you find in your *tanteo*? Something that maybe is older and wiser than me, which is different… what happens when that 'finding' is contoured by the mutual decisions and interactions? Moreover, what happens when I am recognising my agency and the agency of elements around me in this *tantear* and contouring of the path?

As we can appreciate, *tantear* the path offers a relational space that invites uncertainty, allowing us to pause and explore how practices are contouring each other. *Tantear,* is a way of knowing and communicating, and as such, relies on a relational practice of questioning our own assumptions to reach the unknown and build new understandings. *Tantear* allows exploring in creative ways the limits where my practice, my walking, my writing opens and close to transformative possibilities, integrating the tension of the encounters with complex ways of being with each other. In those encounters, multiple layers are activated, layers with textures and porosities that cannot be understood in the distance. *Tanteando* the path we make agreements with the invisible, to walk and to pause at the pace of our interactions and rhythms. It implies trusting when to keep moving in that unknown to create the space for

agentive possibilities in and with the making of the coalition, revealing new forms of knowing and *saber* (Beckett 2020: 136).

This way of knowing and navigating in the darkness is a form of outlining that provides texture to our understandings in relational and dialogical ways, emphasising bodily meaning-making processes. For this reason, *al tantear,* knowing becomes inseparable and simultaneous to the body (Postigo 2016), disobeying dominant paradigms and narratives and activating a decolonial practice. *Tantear,* as practice*,* also requires of 'a deep relational vulnerability as each person [and being] enters an unknown relation to others' (Baumann 2022: 11). In other words, theories from this approach come from embodied perspectives and interactions in a mutual production of knowledge. Then, when hegemonic knowledge comes from a disembodied, distant observer, *el conocimiento tanteando,* brings a logic of proximity and contact, acknowledging that 'nuestros cuerpos and experiences can be powerful sources and sites of knowledge and identity negotiation and production' (Saavedra and Nymark 2008: 3). Al *tantear,* the origin of theories comes from everyday lives, body experiences and interactions, requiring of a maximal sense of responsibility when compared to abstract detached perspectives (Baumann 2022).

Tantear reminds us of the body sensations that make us bond with theoretical and tactile frameworks for resistance, as it 'obscures imagined futures and remind us to feel the edges that shape the oppressing resisting tensions in our daily lives' (Beckett 2020: 123), reminding us of present concerns affecting the body/bodies. *Tantear,* as embodied corporeal-everyday activity, implies *poner el cuerpo* and as such, it produces knowledges, since 'producir saber y poner el cuerpo son acciones sinónimas que se fecundan mutuamente' (Postigo 2016).[43] In addition, *poner el cuerpo* also implies to *reconocer los diferentes cuerpos* seeking for complex and creative ways of being with each other in tension, and 'reaching of beyond the desires of sameness and homogenous sense making towards new ways of relating and communicating' (Beckett 2020: 123). *Poner el cuerpo* implies the unknown being known otherwise, not through the imposition of meaning, but rather in a relationship where an anxious questioning is inside of you and questions you deeply, meaning that 'aquello que no sabes, aquello que te reta, se hace parte de tu pregunta' (de la Cadena and Hiner 2020: 172).[44] Then, *tantear y poner el cuerpo*, suggests the importance of 'engag[ing] in our self-differences and others in

[43] 'Producing knowledge and putting the body are synonymous actions that fertilise each other'.
[44] 'What you don't know, what challenges you, becomes part of your question. It becomes part of you and questions you deeply. The distressing questioning is within you'.

such way that it is, by nature, uncomfortable and often really messy, in order to become with' (Ortega 2016: 146). In other words, this form of decolonial knowledge occurs 'mediante la mirada del observador a si mismo y no al otro' (Postigo 2016: 127).[45]

Overall, notions such as *poner el cuerpo y tantear* unsettle the familiarity of vision, taking distance of optic meaning-making forms, as these practices recognise inner tensions and distress, acknowledging the uncomfortable, ambivalent and precarious as the site for questions, knowledges and understandings, *de saberes y conocimientos*. Hence, when I am writing here, I am writing about observations about myself, with close attentiveness about how I inhabit myself, and how I put my body in constant interaction to other bodies and spaces, bodies of art, heritage, water and so on. I am listening to the intertwined rhythms of my senses, and recognising where it hurts and what is around, *tanteando, poniendo el cuerpo* to follow the path of this research.

In words of the Mexican poet and activist Joyce Jandette:

> Poner el cuerpo es quitarse el miedo
> poner el cuerpo es averiguar dónde están las heridas
> poner el cuerpo es quitarle el seguro a la granada
> poner el cuerpo es convertir vulnerabilidad en amenaza
> […]
> poner el cuerpo es inventar curitas para el alma
> [...]
> poner el cuerpo es permanecer en guerra sin perder la ternura
> […]
> poner el cuerpo es darle voz a la entraña
> poner el cuerpo es quedarse sin palabras y aún así no parar de hablar
> poner el cuerpo es convertir poesía en conjuros y teorías en magia
> poner el cuerpo no es hablar de poner el cuerpo, ¡¡es ponerlo!! ¡es ponerlo todo!
> poner el cuerpo es detener el tiempo […]' (Joyce May 2014).[46]

[45] 'through the gaze of the observer to himself and not to the other'.

[46] 'To put the body is to remove the fear / to put the body is to find out where the wounds are / to put the body is to remove the lock from the grenade / to put the body is to turn vulnerability into a threat […] / to put the body is to invent band-aids for the soul / [...] To put the body is to remain at war without losing tenderness. / [...] to put the body is to give voice to the tripe / [...] to put the body is to be speechless and still not stop talking / to put the body is to turn poetry into spells and theories into magic / putting the body is not talking about putting the body, it is putting the body!! it's putting it all in!/ to put the body is to stop time […]'.

As the poet shows us, the logics of *tantear y poner el cuerpo* have wider and more complex implications than observing in the distance. Is leaving neutrality aside and standing against injustice. *Poner el cuerpo* is to embrace the inner reflexibility with a sense of kindness and willingness towards learning. *Poner el cuerpo*, is being aware of our body contractions, fears, and triggers but being kind enough to face them and treat them with love and care. To put the body is to crumble, to be vulnerable, and still standing despite exhaustion. Is being tired of impositions and *seguir poniendo el cuerpo. Poner el cuerpo* is to fundamentally be made of tensions, ambivalences and precarities, and at the same time, being held and sustained by them, *usar la digna rabia* as a weapon. *Poner el cuerpo* is being in constant contact and communication with other bodies. It is laughing and crying, being upset and excited, consciously living the emotions and feelings, *es pensar con las entrañas* (Leyva S 2019). *Poner el cuerpo* is to change the proposal, changing how each one knows and learns to reshape the relationship with what is presented as other and occupy it otherwise. *Poner el cuerpo* is active, complex, layered, painful and dangerous and empowering.

Considering this, is understandable that *poner el cuerpo y tantear* may look like a more threatening and exposed option compared to the safeness of a disembodied and detached distance of traditional Western forms of knowledge. Because *poner el cuerpo* is too risky, physically and emotionally demanding, too unstable and as transitory and as precarious as bodies are. As we can appreciate, *tantear y poner el cuerpo* attempts 'to reach for the unsettle, the stirring feelings that can articulate alternative narratives' (Beckett 2020: 123) and worlds loaded with emergent meanings in reflexive relational practices. The knowledge acquired by *poner el cuerpo* does not look to the future or past, but it acts in the present to establish links to the centre (Million 2014: 32). The concern while *tanteamos* are with the needs, sensations and feelings of the current moment. It activates an inner critical reflexivity, 'bringing the attention to the everyday embodied, relational meaning making that is not tethered by utopias but found in the liminal, at the threshold of what individuals think they know' (Beckett 2020: 123).

As a decolonial practices, on one hand, *poner el cuerpo y tantear* unsettles the visual regime with its ontological assumptions to reveal another understanding not accessible with the view, and also it is 'reintregar la mirada al cuerpo' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2015: 25), *un mirar con todo el cuerpo y sus sentidos,* which requires 'deep self-vulnerability and acceptance of relational discomfort as one spends time with and among individuals and collectives'

(Baumann 2022).[47] On the other hand, the vulnerability that *poner el cuerpo y tantear* embrace, from a decolonial stance, is understood as the condition of ''recognizing oneself' outside the framework and the term of the modern/colonial certainties from which one has been excluded' (Trejo Méndez 2021: 11). Through vulnerability the body becomes threshold, the crossing, the bridge, and emergence point of silenced voices.

For this reason, *al tantear y poner el cuerpo*, vulnerability work as a source for growth and understanding (Ellis and Bochner 2000), as well as becoming what Chela Sandoval describes as technologies of crossing. These crossing devices work revealing rhetorical structures 'by which the language of supremacy are uttered, rationalised and ruptured' (Sandoval 2000: 3). They break what is being controlled permitting to cross over; working in and with the margins, creating and supporting alternative cultures that express various needs and desires (Fournier 2020). They become tools for shifting to other modes of consciousness, in a way in which 'love is reinvented as a political technology, as a body of knowledges, arts, practices, and procedures for re-forming the self and the world' (Sandoval 2000: 4). These practices acknowledge gestures of interconnectedness considering affects and limitations while also recognizing power for going beyond (Sandoval 2000) and displaying multiple layers of self-consciousness, embracing vulnerability with purpose in a rigorous and yet compassionate way (Levins 2013). These forms, are open for criticism and deep reflexibility about how we have lived, creating paths for reciprocity, mutual responsibility, and participation. I want to share these ways of creating reciprocity, mutual responsibility and participation that *poner el cuerpo y tantear* implies. I want to share where this - at times uncomfortable - research path takes me and how the path feels.

Uneven and precarious steps

I have to admit I am not a stranger to traditional paths. I have followed imposed rules that demanded me to write from a distance. I had followed paths that demanded perfection to follow preconceived routes and instructions, perfection to walk, perfection to write, but my steps were uneven. However, those imperfect steps took me to more interesting places, finding new words not included in the description of that predefined path. In my writing, I want to share how I learn more from the mistakes of my clumsy steps than from imposed perfection and neutrality, how to understand the world without silencing the sensations and emotions. Despite this, I am not saying that neutrality is not valid, and I do not mind taking

[47] 'Re-Integrate the gaze to the body' a way of seeing with the whole body and their senses.

distance if I need it, and is what my body asks, instead is the imposition that causes me resistance and tension because I cannot escape from my body, feelings, and experiences, I cannot escape of how I *sentipienso; y por lo tanto* I struggle.

I struggle because *me resisto a caer en trampas de las que anteriormente me liberé.*[48] I rather prefer to engage with generative and creative logics that 'Reta[n] y agrieta[n] las estructuras de poder' (Leyva S 2019: 349).[49] In spite, I know that challenging structures can make worlds collapse, especially when raised in the imposition of perfect standards, and even more when we end up causing harm to others or ourselves trying to achieve them, when perfection comes from a wound. I struggle because I deal with difficult, uncomfortable topics. I struggle because epistemic violence is also reproduced at ontological and embodied levels, and I care about not reproducing them. So, I am here sharing this path, sharing this *tantear,* I am putting my body and I am struggling to write here and now while *tanteo* and I face my fears, my wounds, my tensions, the unsolved contradictions, ambivalences and precarities that cross me. I struggle because there is no space for contradictions and ambivalences in the world of purity and perfection (Vázquez 2020: 119), and I need to make that space. I constantly feel vulnerable because I am trying to decolonise methods that have colonised me. I am dealing with the colonial wounds that resonate in us in different parts of our bodies because in the bodies is where 'healing, harm and political truths about the world coexist' (Trejo Méndez 2021: 2). I fight with my internalised colonialism, while I also try to decolonise the reader. I *tanteo* the path to know the place 'where we are standing in relation to that colonial wound, how are we implicated in it, how it is crossing us' (Vázquez 2020: 119) and how to heal it.

Then, *Pongo el cuerpo*, my body crossed by those wounds, with my uneven steps, because 'the consciousness of the wound unveils horizons of healing […] it calls for a turn in our disposition towards the real, from enunciation to listening' (Vázquez 2020: 119). *Pongo el cuerpo con* my de-neutralised voice, my broken sentences, my languages and my awkward mixed grammar, my non-linear thinking, and my unsettling academic practice because I am not writing about being in my head; I am writing about being in my body. I am not writing about being above but in the ground. Gloria Anzaldúa noticed it before: 'writing is a gesture of the body, a gesture of creativity, a working from inside out' (2015: 5). At the same time, *pongo el cuerpo* as a way of enacting 'a practice of freedom, an act of imagination, a tool for healing a traumatized, highly unequal world' (Morris 2015: 548). My writing and

[48] I am resistant to falling into traps from which I previously freed myself.
[49] 'challenge and crack power structure'.

decolonisation practice are grounded in corporeal realities rather than abstract. They look to entangle the multiple discourses, my internal and external colonialism, and the hybrid spaces that I inhabit, feel and think (Bhattacharya 2018). In this way, my writing looks for ways of materialising the political imaginations intertwined with heritage and art perceptions. As consequence, I write with the body and *tanteo* to see myself in the pages, to put myself in the pages and confirm our presence (Levins 2019), because these practices disclose lived experiences as 'means of becoming conscious of the ways in which so-called personal issues [are], in fact, structural and systemic' (Fournier 2021: 11).

Pongo el cuerpo, to show where harms, where heals, to show systemic constrictions, and *sororidad sanadora*.[50] I show my imperfections, my precarious steps because I am tired of being judged because I was not born in the 'right' country; because I learnt too late to speak the right language; because of my 'first' and 'third' world experiences; because I am a settler/coloniser and colonised at the same time; because is much more complex than just being oppressed or oppressor (Lugones 2003). Linda Tuhiwai Smith express that the binary logics of coloniser and colonised did not considered the different layering that occurred between and across groups (Smith 2012: 27), and I am tired of hiding the dynamic character of my migrant and *mestisa* complexity, my inherited ambivalence and precarity.[51] I am tired of being judged by purity when I am *manchada*. I struggle because in a world of perfection the others exist only 'as incomplete, unfit beings' (Lugones 2003: 131) and power is acquired and maintained only through degradation, making the other undesirable and less than-a-being. So, I show my imperfections because as Anna Tsing states, we all carry 'a history of contamination: purity is not an option' (Tsing 2015: 27). I am sharing my imperfections because I am aiming for the reader to question him/her/their self, to feel those apparently superficial but deeply uncomfortable questions that Marisol De la Cadena mentions (2020).

I attempt to get the reader to pay attention to those constrained, unattended bits or hidden imperfections, to be part of the question, and not stand outside of it. However, the question here is not about if I want the porosities of the questions to permeate the reader's body. But instead, if the readers want them to permeate them. There is necessary an openness to receive the questions, I cannot do it by myself because I not looking to impose, I am looking for dialogues, empathy and interdependence, and this requires the other to be vulnerable and willing to accept another form of knowledge, a form that does not look to possess, or

[50] Healing sorority.

[51] I am writing mestiza with an 's' and not with the 'z' because in Latin America we pronounce the 'z' as an 's'. Also as the conceptual difference from the homogenising feature of mestizaje.

own the truth; because in order to heal is necessary to move from possession to relate, to re-member what has been dismembered (Vázquez 2020: 119).

With this in mind, *tantear y poner el cuerpo* moves from possession to relating, through a process of mutual deep vulnerability of mutual exposure. It is in our vulnerabilities and precarities where we find each other, where we recognise that we need help because precarity implies the recognition of mutual interdependencies. For Tsing, precarity 'is the condition of being vulnerable to others' (Tsing 2015: 20). In precarity, we hold each other, and we allow others help to sustain us, finding the time for treating our wounds *con ternura*.

Being precarious for Anna Tsing, is being thrown into shifting assemblages to survive. It entails the possibility of losing control and being transformed in unpredictable encounters, in a constant re-making of ourselves and others. This empathy and solidarity towards survival implies contact with others, active listening with humility, and willingness to contamination. In this context, for Anna Tsing to collaborate 'means working across difference which lends to contamination. [and] Without collaborations we all die' (2015: 28). In other words, survival is possible because we can 'build webs of relationship, able tend to each other, feed each other, [...] able to insist on our own stories about who we are' (Levins 2019: 49). Hence, thinking through precarity makes evident that life is possible in indeterminacy (Tsing 2015: 21). However, the way of being vulnerable and precarious here is not to assume a position of power or destruction, nor seen as a weakness, but it works as an invitation to scrutinise wounds carried by displacements, border crossings and fragmentations (Bhattacharya 2018), because once we can unpack the wounds, once they become visible, healing can take place (Trejo Méndez 2021: 2).

At the same time, the precarity of *tantear y poner el cuerpo*, appears as an onto-epistemic praxis of learning with each other and brings the opportunity for collaboration and transformation. In this sense, t*antear y poner el cuerpo* allows us to create a new type of relationships, one 'with respect and cariño [...], a type of relationship that allows to move forward [or backwards if necessary] in the encounter' (Icaza and Aguilar 2021: 212), and towards healing. For this reason, the emphasis in *tantear el camino* relies upon the small movements towards each other because, in them, we can remember our agency and transcend the incapacity of connection with others (Icaza and Aguilar 2021: 212).

Reconociendo manchas: autoethnography and autotheory

This document looks to activate the reflections of living *entremundos*, the critical mobility of making connections, the same critical mobility of the ambivalence and tension as 'a promise to be present with the pain of others without losing [ourselves/themselves] in it' (Anzaldúa 2002b: 4). So, I write from the awareness of the deep memories of bodies being activated, with the deep thought and reflexivity of getting in touch, from the diverse ways of worlds sensing and interactions, because the understanding of the world that I am performing comes from the interactions and exchanges rather than detachment. Because before writing, I have to touch and feel *el camino de mis palabras, tanteando;* 'My rhythm to write is the rhythm of walking' (Tsing and Ebron 2015: 685) says Anna Tsing. There is no quick way to acknowledge wounds we have carried without noticing and there is no quick path to recognise the generative knowledge of healing interactions, we cannot run if we want to *tantear*. I pay attention to the tensions my body holds, to walk, to breathe, to write the tension within myself, and I struggle because I am fundamentally made of tensions, ambivalences and precarities and I need to acknowledge them.

In this regard, *poner el cuerpo y tantear se alínean* to research methods such as autoethnography and autotheory. In the case of autoethnography, this understands knowledge as an embodied, critical and ethical exploration of culture as well as a practice of deep reflexibility and 'an ongoing interrogation of the privileges we occupy [particularly] as scholar/critics' (Dutta 2018: 95). In words the of Carolyn Ellis, it 'emphasize that we live within the tensions constituted by our memories of the past and the anticipation of the future' (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 746). Autoethnography, functions as a telling method that identify systems that construct and disrupt the story and the storyteller, providing a space for creating an embodied relationship in the writing and reading performance (Holman et al. 2016). As decolonial method autoethnography

> offers possibilities for making visible the contours of the personal, the political, and the professional, inviting us as participants to critically examine the terrains of power that disenfranchise the postcolonial voice, and the many possibilities of resistance that are opened up through our participation in the telling of stories (Dutta 2018: 95).

Meanwhile, autotheory integrates body experiences to develop knowledge, working as a generative force, impulse and practice that 'reconfigures fields, genres, and canons, proposing new relations between the selves and theories far more expansive [and expressive] than the master discourse' (Fournier 2021: 272). According to Lauren Fournier's Autotheory:

> offers oblique and ambivalent forms of critique; unexpected forms of practicing theory; new ways of being that can be understood as critical and efficacious, intellectually and politically; [...] forms of becoming and being with identity that are in excess of certain delimiting categories and distinctions and ways of understanding oneself in relation to others, where introspection tied to study and citation becomes a way of understanding both yourself and the world around (Fournier 2021: 272).

In this sense, both autotheory and autoethnography allow us to recognise the vulnerability of unlearning privileges (Icaza 2021: 47), acknowledging the fear, loss and self-doubts of honestly revealing yourself (Ellis 1999: 672). These registers permit me to write from the complexity of the more than a century of stories and experiences accumulated and forgotten, the complexity of my history and my family, my accent, *mi tierra, mi desierto,* my home, while I live in the UK and its connection to other places through the displacement and acknowledgement of my body. In other words, they contribute to the unfolding of systems and creating new layers of reflexibility of embodied practices such as *poner el cuerpo y tantear*. These practices -AE, AT, *Tantear y poner el cuerpo*- integrate a deep vulnerability as a conscious *sentipensar* that overflows strict categories, borders, concepts, theories and languages, allowing connections between personal histories and social realities as part of 'making knowledge, meaning and identity through self-inscription' (Anzaldúa 2015: 6) while also looking for new forms and worlds (Escobar 2007: 195).

As methodologies, they have an essential role in processing tensions and helping to understand the relationship between knowledge, body, community and practices (Fournier 2021). They create bridges between methodologies, theories, cultures and practices, troubling categories and conceptualisations in which we live, breathe in and think through (Dutta 2018: 95). They serve as a way of 'critiquing and transforming existing colonial discourses of philosophy and theory through […] intertextual kinship' (Fournier 2021: 270) as well as conceiving 'invitational spaces for co-creating possibilities for a socially just world' (Dutta 2018: 96).[52] Additionally, in the case of AE and AT, they appear as an alternative to standardisation and cultural homogenisation (Fournier 2020), offering different storytelling techniques and diverse writing styles (Atay 2018) that, under the scrutiny of reflexivity,

[52] Intertextual kinship is defined by Brostoff as polyphonic prose interwoven with other voices, in which 'citation perform social gestures that characterise kinship as practice […] [This] kin relationship performs repeated life-sustaining social functions that originate and renew interdependency and vulnerability' (Brostoff 2021: 94).

unsettles and undoes the ethos of hegemonic Western/White/Eurocentric knowledge claims (Dutta 2018). According to Carolyn Ellis, as methodologies they

> zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, [while] distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms—short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, [diagrams, drawings, pictograms], personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories impacted by history and social structure, which themselves are dialectically revealed through actions, feelings, thoughts, and language (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 739).

The flexibility of autoethnographic means allows me to integrate some images – pictograms - that accompany this thesis as well as images of artworks that have feed this research. The pictograms are drawings, poetic images and abstractions that gave me clues to understand and theorise ideas; to see relationships and connections, noticing patterns, *caminos, puentes y chakanas*. [53] These worked with me in a space between doing, sensing, and thinking, as a combination of agencies that helped me to explain, explore, feel and make unexpected associations. The pictograms allow me to become present in this work, expressing and opening ideas, spaces, interactions, ways of self-inscription and self-differentiation. These methodological tools, weave the path in practical and theoretical ways as 'threads that bind us across borders and wounds, [and untold histories, bringing] enfleshed experiences of resistance-oppression-fragmentation [to] the surface as situated forms of knowing' (Trejo Méndez 2021: 2).[54] Furthermore, they allow me to work in relation to academic requirements and standards, showing the result of my reflections, as well as my 'failures' or 'mistakes', not as such, but as spaces for dialogue within my attempts to decolonise (Atay 2018: 20). These methodologies create spaces for empathy rather than violence, looking for a dialogue that tries to bring back the life-forms and knowledges that colonial forces have been attempting to extinguish.

[53] paths, bridges and chakanas.

[54] Due to time-space constrictions, I couldn't integrate and elaborate in depth a wider literature regarding the notions of flesh, enfleshment, and cuerpo-territorio-tierra. Despite this, it has a relevant influence on my understanding of embodied knowledges, for more information see authors such as Cabnal (2017); Pitts, Ortega, and Medina (2019); Rodriguez Castro (2021); Vasudevan et al. (2023); Motta and Bennett (2018); Motta and Bermudez (2019); Motta (2021);

Within this context, these decolonial methodologies and practices descend from the superiority point, *relocalizando la mirada en el cuerpo y en '*el flujo del habitar cotidiano' (Rivera Cusincanqui 2015: 25), allowing knowledge to come from the inner reflexivity of a self-observing view and not the view about the other.[55] They permit the integration of experiences that are in the *memorias corporeas, en los tanteos*, *en las experiencia heredaras y detalles no lineales* of the forgotten stories and memories that our bodies carry.[56] As methodological approaches, they are at the margins of dominant epistemologies, while permitting epistemic and political pluralities to exist (Trejo Méndez 2021: 2).

For example, when traditional knowledge comes from a disembodied, distant observer, *el conocimiento tanteando* and the autoethnographic-autotheoretical position*,* brings a logic of proximity, contact, fluidity, and change, acknowledging the own body and the bodies around as sites of knowledge. They recognise the interdependencies and interactions, rather than dominant positions, taking a step aside from the discovery of hierarchical logics towards reciprocity and care. They also challenge colonisation by focusing on hybrid spaces and in-betweenness as alternatives to binary options (Chawla and Atay 2018). In other words, they acknowledge the impossibility of 'purity' in the Western sense, giving space for motley mixed perspectives. In addition, as practices, they allow us to identify self-ascribed epistemic privileges, bringing the physicality and affects into the analysis, not looking to impose meaning or knowledge over others but creating a dialogue within discursive and productive tension. In this sense, they disrupt Eurocentric norms of research practice and representation, incorporating marginalised voices, breaking silences and reclaiming the space (Holman et al. 2016), making it possible to acknowledge the body's resistances and aiming for strategies that attempt to not reproduce oppression. In their integration of everyday experiences, they contest and alter the struggles of colonisation. These practices and methodologies invite us to think outside epistemic logics of territorialities, linear chronologies, and hierarchies of knowledge as they are driven by a logic of mutual interaction, vulnerability and curated humility rather than separation, distance, and power.

In this context, AE and AT, as well as *tantear y poner el cuerpo,* considers a deep vulnerability, as a conscious *sentipensar* that overflows strict categories, borders, concepts, methodologies, theories and languages. They work with same logic of the memories of our bodies. In non-linear ways, interweaving times and topics with circling feelings and thoughts, moving

[55] *relocate the gaze in the body and in* 'the flow of everyday living'.
[56] Corporeal memories, in the *tanteos*, in inherited experiences and non-linear details.

forward and with sudden flashbacks, emerging and dropping to reappear in a different context, acknowledging that

> In real life, we don't always know when we know something. Events in the past are always interpreted from our current position. Yet, that doesn't mean there's no value in trying to disentangle now from then, as long as you realize it's not a project you'll ever complete or 'get right'; instead, you strive, […]to get it contoured and nuanced in a meaningful way (Ellis 1999: 675).

As practices and methodologies, AE-AT, and *poner el cuerpo y tantear* embrace fluidity of the moment, but not in the sense of the ideal of being fluid or without obstacles, but instead considering viscosities, porosities and textures that the liquid matter has, fluidity is not absolute but contingent (Blackmore 2022). Like water, these methodologies can flow swiftly or quietly, at different rhythms, 'changing course unpredictably but always remaining the same river' (Marcos 2006: xx). As knowledges practices, they create *contradicciones que geneneran tension expansora* acknowledging the encounters and interactions as a constitutive part of knowledge creation. They embrace different bodies, solid, fluid, ambiguous, and the complexity as part of the history, and my story, with the many places from where I come from, and I move through (Trejo Méndez 2021: 13).[57] As a consequence, as embodied forms, they reflect on colonial and post-colonial experiences and moments, taking back the agency of the denied control, opening the space for dialogue in more relatable ways and towards of reciprocity and care.

Furthermore, the strength of *tantear y poner el cuerpo,* as well as AE and AT, do not rely just on critical reflexivity or on breaking down hierarchies and oppressions (inclining within ourselves). The strength of these methods and practices resides in recognising a multiplicity of selves while also unsettling and challenging each bone of familiarity of traditional and structural ways of knowledge, especially when raised in perfect standards and uneven grounds. They work within the tension between preserving the contributions of ancestors and transforming them according to the current needs of the inherited stories and contexts (Fournier 2020), reminding us that 'change and continuity does not exclude each other (Marcos 2006: xiii).

Poner el cuerpo accepts that we are not perfect nor timeless. It acknowledges that it is not possible to escape from our bodies neither *tantear* in the distance. As practices, they activate those technologies of crossing with a sense of care against the violent or exclusionary forms

[57] Contradictions that generate an expansive tension.

of canonical philosophy or theoretical work. In this sense, *tantear* is not only about touching but being open to the unknown with the different senses. It is the acknowledgement that more than one sense plays a role in our understanding and dialogue with the world. At the same time, autoethnography accepts that neutrality is not a magic wand that erases any interest or structural inequalities by not mentioning its position. Whilst autotheory, focuses primarily on engendering theory, from a lived experiential perspective, addressing people integrated into a particular community or ancestral contexts and knowledges passed by other means that peer reviewed. These practices and methodologies are open-ended, intuitive, rooted forms of knowledge and gut-based understandings. They involve un *saber*, a way of knowing, in the sensory experiences and learning in the mutual and humble interaction in the sense of an apprentice. As set of practices, they recognise a position where knowledge does not come from a place of power but a place of vulnerability: 'conocer para aprender y no para dominar' (de la Cadena and Hiner 2020: 174).[58] As epistemic position, they comprehend other possible regimes in the present, apprehending multiple paths, meaning that, if I choose one path, that does not mean that the other possible paths do not exist or are less relevant (Castro 2021).

Within this framework, the path I am contouring through autoethnographic and autotheoretical means helps me to identify concepts repeated in the landscape, in the soil, mountains and the stars, the heritage in the land-space and the sources that come from reflection and interconnection. I have followed the path of the patterns and symbols that guide my instinct and body, my divided heart, *chuyma* and my whole s*entipensar*.[59] These registers are forms of exploration for theories, ways of writing and enacting a position that allows me to explore and theorise from the place where I stand, from the geographical movements, intellectual changes and challenges, ancient memories and new experiences that contour affects, feelings, knowledges and thinking. Because of this, I approach this research about art and heritage exploring knowledges that are reflexive, poetic, and critical, that comes *desde un corazón como brújula, un norte emocional y sur geográfico de mi brújula invertida*, the sensible north of a geographical south of my up-side-down map.[60]

When I write about my *tantear*, I put my body in the long days editing, in my tired eyes searching for senses and words, I put my voice while reading these pages, because the body is the first territory to flourish and is inseparable from the territory we inhabit, the ancestors

[58] 'To know to learn and not to dominate'.
[59] *Chuyma* is a Quechua word that means guts, bowels superiors, including the heart, lungs and liver.
[60] from a heart as a compass, an emotional north and geographical south of my inverted compass.

we share, and the community we live in (Trejo Méndez 2021: 5). I put my body looking at the strength of my ancestors' gestures, because some of their names are lost, their faces were erased, and their voices silenced. And again, I struggle because I want to honour them, but also honour my own paradigm, knowing that 'concepts that arise from our lives, our histories and our cultures […] are often inextricably mixed with concepts growing from our subjugation' (Million 2014: 34). I struggle, and I am in tension, because I am the combination of multiple parts, semantic ideas that came from the land, interactions, and conversations with people in multiple places and of the worlds that I inhabit, the in-between geographies and the multiple heritages I share. I live with a divided heart because my sense of home is here and there, but always in bits. Because the movement is constant, and being at home only happens 'in the cracks of liminalities, where I feel shuttle between mismatched and contradictories sensibilities informed by various types of border crossing' (Bhattacharya 2018: 15). These methodologies cross and contains this project. They work in-between the tension and ambivalence of my inherited whiteness and my erased Indigenous branch. My settler background, colonial education and the education I received from the mountain. The class mobility, university access and privileges. But also, the precarity and vulnerability of the struggle against domination and violence experienced by the same system.

I am ambivalent because I am always in between, always arriving and departing, saying more goodbyes than hellos, in transition and translation, and yet as Atay perfectly express:

> We translate from one experience to another, from one language to another, from one epistemology to another. Our stories are hybrid, half-performed, half-written, half-digital, half-memory, and half-reality (Atay 2018: 21).

I embrace my *sangre mestisa, mi esencia indígena, mi ambivalencia,* my hybrid blood *y mi cuerpo migrante* that brought me to the UK to find bits and pieces of home interweaved with the territory from where I am writing this despite that, for Western standards, I am divided. For Western standards I do not belong there, or here I am a hybrid, and in Latin America I am called *mestiza*, as a concept that emerged by colonisers. I am *mestisa* because I cannot say I am Indigenous enough or white enough. Because I am not pure, I will only be enough if I pass unnoticed in the way I look, in the way I talk and in the way I write. I am mestisa because I deny hiding my accent, the accent of my *ancestros y ancestras*, the inherited imperfect grammar that contains multiple ways of thinking and the gestures that remain in my body after centuries of stories of survival that led to that mixture.

I am *mestisa, estoy manchada, pero* I need to clarify that I do not use *mestisa* here as a homogenising feature, neither I understand mestisaje as the 'mixture that became the emblem and the image of a homogeneous nation […] of mixed people, the purity of the impure' (Mignolo 2000: 320). For the Argentinean philosopher Néstor García Canclini, the notion of hybridity as a mixture refers to the survival of pre-modern thoughts in modern societies. It entails the idea that we can "enter and leave modernity" (García Canclini 1990) as if would be as easy as entering to a room or restaurant. However, it does not consider the constructive process of interactions, gestures and ideas about the world that are involved in that mixing process, nor the multiple layers and centuries of history in which it has developed (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012). For this reason, my understanding of *mestisaje* and hybridity is in the kaleidoscopic experience that constitutes us, where each movement changes us, each interaction moves something in us. Where the hidden and the visible share a space in different times where the tension brings creative ways, in which I found art and heritage interacting. I understand *mestisaje* as the claim of my Indigenous ancestry as the chance to embrace a 'social responsibility and care for the other, [a] respect for difference and a challenge to established inequalities and hierarchies' (Nziba Pindi 2018: 24). As the third space of listening to the potential of new forms and identities in-between because as Icaza and Vázquez argue, decolonial requires listening to a plurality of epistemic and aesthetic realities (2013: 130). I reclaim my *mestisaje* as a notion that looks for the difference (Delgadillo 2011).

I am not Indigenous by law, I am not close of being pure, but the demanded purity of Western standards becomes impossible to achieve if we think in a collaborative world, if we think in the fact that we all are the 'collection of all stories we've inherited from those that have come before' (Ballard and Ballard 2011: 73). If we consider how difficult is to differentiate between what has been inherited, acquired and imposed (Anzaldúa 1999). The demand of maintaining that purity renders absurd even for legally recognised Indigenous people. As their worth is based on how they perform an identity that meets Western expectations of precolonial authenticity and suits a national-multicultural imaginary in order to be recognised (Povinelli 2002). The binary thinking that purity entails maintain the illusion of separation, artifice of an abyssal line, minimising lives and excluding pluralities; reducing the Indigenous to a fix identity (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010a). These categorisations keep open the colonial wound (Trejo Méndez 2021). The unachievable demand of purity does not consider the fact that 'all our cultural heritage bears the mark of the interpretation of civilizations' (Marcos 2006: 3). And I carry multiple interpretations.

I refuse to reduce the Indigenous to a stereotype of the original, archaic and pristine condition because the reality of our daily interactions

> no puede[n] pensarse sin ese conjunto de desplazamientos territoriales que atraviesan todo tipo de fronteras (de países, oficios, costumbres, lenguajes, comidas, etc). Es en ese ir y venir incesante donde se constituye la trama material de nuestra vida diaria (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010a: 7).[61]

Our blending or syncretism hides realities much more complex than homogenous mingling. I reclaim my body, my *mestisaje,* not as the whitening of my heritage, but as the claim to honour those erased names and knowledges even though they remain unknown for my family or myself, because of will or not. I want to honour my ancestors, both branches, by doing-thinking-feeling and caring, doing with care… feeling with care… being response-able, as Haraway (2012) express the: ability of response in a loving and caring way. I am not Indigenous by law, but I hold to the definition of the Métis Indigenous academic David Garneau of 'Indigenous':

> The Indigenous are globally connected folks who choose to identify and ally with each other rather than with those who maintain colonial power. Their connections are forged negatively by shared oppression and positively by sharing strategies used to resist that oppression. Indigenous peoples honor their own cultures while also acknowledging that their ways of knowing and being often rhyme with those of traditional peoples from other territories. These are living philosophies that emerge from the earth and are contrary to colonial, patriarchal, capitalist, and anthropocentric modes (Garneau 2020a: 1).

I embrace my *mestisaje* not as the fusion of hybridity or as a 'fuzzy cultural descriptor' (Nziba Pindi 2018: 23), but as a way of inhabiting the contradiction. I hold the different grains that sustain me without denying them or synthesise them 'sino [para] admitir la permanente lucha en nuestra subjetividad entre lo indio y lo europeo' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2019).[62] This double consciousness is identified by the Bolivian academic Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui as Ch'ixi: an active recombination of opposite worlds and contradictory signifiers that forms a fabric in the

[61] 'The actuality of our motley cities cannot be thought of without this set of territorial displacements that cross all kinds of borders (of countries, trades, customs, languages, foods, etc.). It is in this incessant coming and going that the material fabric of our daily life is constituted'.
[62] 'but to admit the permanent struggle in our subjectivity between the Indian and the European'.

frontier of antagonist poles (2010b: 5).[63] Ch'ixi, 'conjuga opuestos sin subsumir uno en el otro, yuxtaponiendo diferencias concretas que no tienden a una comunión desproblematizada' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010a: 7).[64] It is an image that help to think about the coexistence of heterogeneous elements, not as the fusion or the production of a global concept. For Rivera Cusicanqui, the metaphor of Ch'ixi assumes a double and contentious ancestry denied by the colonisation of the imaginary.[65] However, the Ch'ixi also contains the possibilities of developing dialogical forms of construction of knowledges (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 106).

I embrace my *mestisa, Ch'ixi, nepantlera* self as empowerment and as a challenge to binary options, as an active agent of 'liminal and ambivalent positions in-between forms of identification that may be asymmetrical, disjunctive and contradictory' (Bhabha 2006: xii). I embrace my ambivalence of that in-betweenness as a creative and liminal space, as 'a site for decolonizing method [and] generating other knowledges' (Dutta 2018: 95), as a place to turn 'ambivalence in something else' (Anzaldúa 2015: 101). So, I write from that ambivalent hybrid *mestisa* place, and I write in a kaleidoscopic way because my heritage is multiple and kaleidoscopic; because only like this can I describe the conflictive roots that go underground and connect us to the earth and each other. Therefore, my narrative comes from the personal perspective and experience, rather than accepting the dominant history without questioning it. My 'I' is not individualistic, but an 'I' that looks towards restoring, one action among many more in kin that tries to think on the possibility of bringing back life forms of knowledge, sounds, understandings, and languages that colonial forces have attempted to extinguish (Fournier 2021: 50). I am repairing the 'I' of my heritage that have been erased, with an 'I' that in words of Lugones 'is always multiple when inhabiting different worlds' (2003: 88).

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[63] The Ch'ixi is described by Rivera Cusicanqui as the 'Motley mix', the colour product of the juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of opposed or contrasting colours, black and white, red and green, and so on. It is the heather grey that comes from the imperceptible mixing of black and white, which are confused by perception, without ever being mixed (Rivera Cusicanqui 2020: 64). Ch'ixi appeals to dialogical forms of knowledges Rivera Cusicanqui explains:

> is hidden in the blossom of mythical animals like the serpent, the lizard, the spider, and the frog; Ch'ixi animals belong to the immemorial time. […] Ch'ixi expresses the parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonise and complement each other' (2020: 65).

[64] 'conjugates opposites without subsuming one in the other, juxtaposing concrete differences that do not tend to a deproblematized communion'.

[65] Ch'ixi means superimposed, overlapped, not combined in Quechua. Rivera Cusicanqui describes the Ch'ixi as a scenery where there is an 'active recombination of opposite worlds and contradictory signifies, that creates a textile/fabric/tejido in the boundaries of those antagonist poles, in-between textile'.

In this section, I have explored decolonial ways of activating methodologies, bearing in mind and heart Catherine Walsh C. definition (2018: 100):

> decoloniality is a perspective, stance, and proposition of thought, analysis, sensing, making, doing, feeling, and being that is actional (in the Fanonian sense), praxistical, and continuing. Moreover, it is prospectively relational in that it looks, thinks, and acts with the present--future-- past, including with the peoples, subjects, and situated and embodied knowledges, territories, and strug-gles that push toward, - advance, - and open possibilities of an other-wise. […] decoloniality can be understood as a process, practice, and project of sowing seeds; of cultivating, nurturing, and growing, always vigilant of what the Zapatistas refer to as the Storm brewing, the catastrophe and collapse that is now upon us thanks to the incredible capacity of regeneration of the capitalist hydra, and relatedly, the continual reconstitution of the coloniality of power.

I know the path I have followed is not the traditional, it implies multiple risks, territorial, intellectual, emotional, among others. I know that failure is possible, particularly if one side is not willing to let go of part of the structures that sustain his/her/their position and do not want open dialogue. I know what I am proposing may be unsettling because it does not fit totally with what we are used to seeing in these contexts, particularly in traditional academic writing and research. I am trying to make the space for something different with the aim of not reproducing a colonial model but proposing an alternative to take control over a narrative, interest and view, not as a totalising abstract project but as a way of being situated in the system without reproducing the same oppressions, allowing contradictions to co-exist even in tension.

Considering that tension is the simultaneous existence of two opposed and conflicting attitudes, emotions, and feelings, that is characterised by discomfort, the difficulty to relax o la *incomodidad,* tension does not exist without ambivalence. While ambivalence is defined by uncertainty, indecisiveness or insecurity, fluctuation, and the possibility of answers that are not limited to binary options, *la tensión y la ambivalencia*, are complementary to each other. They do not exist without each other. They accompany this text in diverse ways, colonial-decolonial, belonging and not and everything in between those categories. The tension of working in-between concepts, world views, epistemologies, and the ambivalence of not having a clear limit. As in this text, they are only sustained by acknowledging vulnerabilities and that we need others to heal. They can be productive when they are held

in a listening, through empathy towards the living, only then it is possible to create something different in those interactions.

As methodological approach, I try to tension words, worlds, images, places, experiences, artworks, and languages to unveil the complex network of associations and the creative power hatched in the interactions in-between their borders. As an entry point for deeper reflection, I work the tension and ambiguity, like a straitjacket, as immersive concepts, *envolventes*, wrapped around constrained but sometimes loose, containing and liberating. I use tension and ambiguity as a way of holding bodies of work in-between the layers of meaning, *tramado, enredando, soltado,* cutting and knotting different topics, ideas, and thoughts. I use the tension because when we learn how to stretch dominant theories or methods, we also learn coping and survival strategies. I use ambivalence because we learn we need from each other; we learn how and when to manoeuvre together to shift the power currents in which we are immersed (Sandoval 1998). I use precarity because the acknowledgement of vulnerability reminds us of our interdependency. *Tanteo esta chakanita* also as a body, to bridge understandings, to approach heritage practices and objects, to feel how they appear to me, to see how my ancestors introduce knowledges and how art communicate those interactions. *Pongo el cuerpo y tanteo* to hear the ways in which art and heritage speak, behave and feel, as a way to approach those vulnerable ways of relating to art and heritage, of thinking about how they interact and constitute each other in that interaction, to decolonise heritage through contemporary art.

Ontological *Chakanitas*:

Figure 6 'La cuchara' Nearby Tocopilla personal archive ©Victoria Vargas Downing

Preface: Entre los cerros y las estrellas

This section is an exploration of the ontological implications of decolonising heritage through contemporary art. Here I explore constellations that tense heritage ontological design, show the hidden ambivalence of cartesian notions and rethink the precarity of time, to finally move towards forms of reciprocity and care.

For this section, the *chakanitas recorren caminos* of the multiple experiences that connect the Atacama Desert and myself. From the coast to the highlands, I entangle multiple experiences that challenge hegemonic heritage appreciation, ideas of knowledge and extraction present in the land and my body, which also connect to my presence in the UK. Before discussing the relationship between contemporary art and heritage, first, I must talk about the Atacama Desert in Chile. The Desert is the starting point of this research, where my relation to art and heritage begins. It is the place where art appeared as expressions in the mountains and arrowheads on the beach; as the encounter of more-than-human beings communicating in poetic languages. From the diversity and wisdom of the Desert, I carry in my body its lessons wherever I go. To connect with these experiences, whenever I am writing, I try to feel the company of the mountain, the support of my *ancestros y ancestras;* I try to evoke the sense of the sea breeze on the coast; the heat of the *pampa* in the midlands; the scent of the salt flats and volcanoes, and the strength of the heart pumping blood to get

oxygen in the highlands.[66] Those sensations are the same that I evoke when I am writing*;* I remember the cloudless sky during the day, the infinite stars and dark clouds during the night, keeping in mind the unknown stories and forgotten names of those that preceded me in the land where I grew up.

The Atacama Desert is a territory that comes with a history which is briefly told in the Abya Yala. We learn the history, customs, views and traditions of the West as ours. We learn about progress and development, industrialisation and wars that involve people from Germany, France, the UK and the US (among the main ones). Yet, we are left with the ruins of those extinguished empires and the slag of their extractivist practices.[67] They came, extracted, and left (at least some of them); while the history of the 'other' is the story of the Indigenous natives that preceded them and stayed after them. Nevertheless, the non-narrated histories of the 'native other' are always present; they appear physically in the space, in the land as figures in the mountains, stone carvings and ceramics in the middle of the dust. Like little gifts, objects and people share their stories; the material present and presence of that past that is briefly explained in the study books. Although my upbringing has been within Western tradition, the seeds of the Andes have influenced my thoughts, my language, and my appreciation of the world. Those unspoken lessons have taught me to recognise paths not included within that tradition. Ways of thinking, feeling, and learning from the senses; active processes of reflection that move through and with the body, however this is not the only reason why I am in debt with the Desert.

Le debo al Desierto; its generosity healed my body of physical pains I suffered when I was a child due to a bone condition.[68] In my childhood, because of this condition, my mom took me to the multiple *termas* scattered in the Desert and well-known for their curative properties. During those journeys, I remember seeing for the first-time figures in the mountain, like the *Gigante de Atacama* and other geoglyphs used by the old *caravanas* to navigate through the rocks and the *llano* (plane) of the *pampa,* and they also were used by my family in order to navigate to the *termas*. On those trips, we visited *termas*, nearby villages, geysers, salt lakes and oases. I remember seeing ceramics, glyphs, mummies, nature, objects, places and

[66] *Pampa* is the name of the flat mid-land in the Desert, is worth to mention that the highlands can have an elevation around 3,703 m (12,149 ft) over the sea level which can cause *puna* or altitude-sickness, which is caused by the increase in the atmospheric pressure provoking a headache and nausea due to the lack of oxygen, because of this is common to chew Coca leaf to overcome the symptoms.

[67] For more information see Galaz-Mandakovic and Rivera (2023) article, where the authors explore how those traces of extractivism are scattered in the Desert. Also Purbrick (2017)

[68] I owe a debt to the Desert.

landscapes with ancient symbols; sometimes in glass cases of museum displays and other times, as beings present in the land. It would not be fair to say that the Desert allowed me to move just in physical ways, because it also triggered intellectual movements. It aroused an awareness of colonial legacies, ancestral knowledge, and wisdom. After multiple trips, my bone pain disappeared, and my connection with art and heritage started. Years later, I decided to study Theory and History of Art in Santiago of Chile, and I volunteered at a Contemporary Art Gallery. Weirdly enough, I did not find the figures Chakanas, ceramics and textiles that I saw in my childhood in the modules or textbooks of my art history degree, but I started to see them at Contemporary Art galleries. In that crossed path, in those displacements is where this research takes form.

For this section, I want to reflect on the impositions and learnt assumptions, moments when I am hit by my own colonialism and caught by the ontological binarism. The route I am trying to trace here is to understand some keys to these constant movements, pressures, and interactions. I try to describe a path and enact multiple forms of healing. In this document, I exercise the conscious and constant task of hearing and recognising the different forms, times, interactions, voices, accents and noises of the surroundings and myself. In this written route, I am challenging some of the assumptions of the colonial/modern matrix of power and knowledge-making regarding heritage through a decolonial option where multiple temporalities and pluriverses are possible. In this section, I will address the ontological possibilities of thinking otherwise about design, cartesian divisions and time-space. Here, I explore the tensions, ambivalences, and precarities of the movements between bodies of ideas, while interacting with the geography of the experiences of the Desert, their oases and my displacement to the UK. I will present stories and questions that appear in the land, as well as questions fed by my migratory experience. I seek to understand heritage and art as dynamic forces, forces that heal and give root to living memories.

By using the constellations analogy as a departing point, in this section, I will analyse and frame the hegemonic heritage conceptions, reflecting on the possibility of different coexisting epistemological and ontological forms of understanding, managing, and appreciating heritage. Then, I will explore the notion of design to see how heritage is framed within a form that constrains it. Later I will address the cartesian divisions in non-cartesian ways. Followed by the exploration of time, to finally step in the territory of art and heritage, where I argue that contemporary art pulls the loose threads of that symbolic fabric composed by art and heritage, allowing us to unweave the ontological assumptions present in Western heritage conceptions and integrate plural ontologies on their own terms.

Introductory *chakanita*: Constellation paths to epistemology and ontology

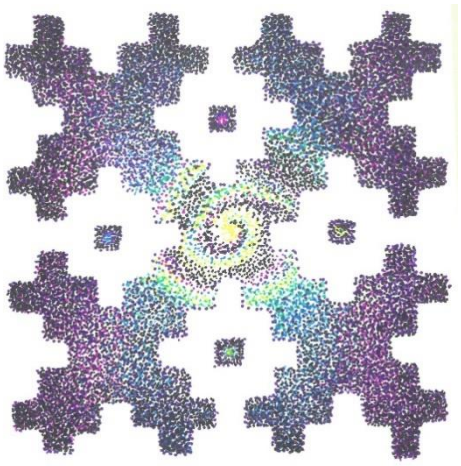

Figure 7 dark constellation ©Victoria Vargas Downing

I learnt to read the Desert when I was a child; the colour and shapes of the hills and mountains, the vegetation, the slows and sometimes dramatic changes, shaped my perception of the world. It is funny to think that for tourists, the Desert resembles a different planet. When for me, because I grew up there, the new planet appeared when I moved to a different city first and to a foreign country later. When I moved to the UK, I remember the impact of being in a 'first world' country. I was fascinated by the traces of aeroplanes in the sky and the lack of urban spider nets (lack of cables in the streetlights). Thanks to the privileges of my education, I had the possibility of making intercontinental journeys and crossing the hemispheres. This gave me space for extended reflections and physical reactions, including feeling at 'home' in different places or in shock back 'home'. On every trip back to the Desert, I look for ways of illuminating the sensations of my readings, clarifying feelings and understanding what they move, and how they allow me or not, to move to different places; how those trips allow me to move my thought in the most unexpected directions.

My relationship with the Desert is a root relationship; I am willingly tied to it, and I carry its minerals in my blood. Every time I go there, I feel *el abrazo del cerro* and the warmth of the sun as if I am being welcomed by an old friend.[69] I get energised by the interactions of its syncretic forms and by the nocturnal movement of the sky. The lack of artificial light in the surroundings and the cloudless sky of the Desert allows to see more stars than in the UK. Sometimes, it is possible to see colours among the dark shapes that embrace the mountains. I think about the same stars whenever I have the possibility of seeing them in the UK. I know there is a difference between seeing the sky in the rainforest, where more than the stars can

[69] The hug of the mountain.

captivate our attention (insects, noises, animals and more), or in a city, where the stars can become almost invisible because of light pollution. It is a strong contrast when compared to the darkness of the sky in the Atacama Desert, where constellations are identified as patches of dark clouds that move with the milky way.

In my migratory movement, in that change of hemisphere that sometimes feels like a change of planet, I wonder how do we look at constellations from an upside-down world? Because even when the stars could be the same celestial group as in the 'North', they look different on the other side of the map.[70] Then, which are our assumptions when we think about constellations?

In the West, a constellation is constructed from star to star, and space is a boundless three-dimensional expanse. In Andean cosmologies and ontologies, the constellations are created from star-to-star and by the negative space between stars. In this space in-between, time and space create each other in their interaction, is in the dark cloud where creation happens (Vicuña and Livon-Grosman 2009; xvii). The fact that for the West, constellations are made from star-to-star, helps illustrate how our conceptions are organised. In this case, from dot to dot, light to light and from concept to concept. The idea that bright neighbouring stars are physically separated, conceptually linked and organised into a celestial shape (Urton 1981: 9); illustrates how in the West, we divide and separate knowledge by names and categories to identify phenomena or experiences.[71] In comparison within Andean ontologies, for example, it is possible to observe two types of constellations: star-to-star (as in the West) and as dark clouds in between the stars or dark constellations. The notion of a dark constellation or constellation in-between, illuminates the space of creation and interaction in between the patches of interstellar dust that cuts through what we call the Milky Way. In the same line, while in the West the reference for constellations is based on cardinal and fixed points, in the Andes the marking point for constellations is the Milky Way (Celestial River), which is in constant movement.

These ontological differences reveal the possibility of experiencing alternative approaches and perspectives that emerge from interaction and movements. Seeing the constellations as black spaces between stars rather than just as lines opens the possibility of questioning how

[70] Guaman Poma de Ayala, a Quechua chronicler during the colony in Peru, in *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, describes that the world after the arrival of the Spaniards to the Abya Yala was the world up-side-down, at the same time from the south the stars and constellation looks up-side-down.

[71] I am using we, as a way of acknowledging my complicity in replicating Western thought, even when unconsciously.

we design concepts and the ontological assumptions we carry. As Martin Holbraad and Axel M. Pedersen state (2017: 6), ontology is not about seeing differently but about seeing different things. In this case, the dark cloud, rather than just the lineal configurations of constellations. Then, how to start a dialogue between different ontologies and epistemologies? Moreover, how this analogy helps us to rethink the ontological assumptions on heritage?

The idea of constellations as a starting point may seem a long path to address the questions on ontology and epistemology. However, these fields present a common path based on Western forms of understanding and philosophy; and as such, they face the risk of presenting a minded view and assuming an external perspective in their reflections (Tateleán 2019: 15). Constellations, like ontologies and epistemologies, cannot endure without a cultural tradition that agrees on their existence and form. Albeit they are different fields of knowledge, it is possible to find similarities through the difficulties of these areas of research experience. For example, in the case of astronomy, despite the recognition of similar celestial groups in diverse cultures around the globe, it would be mistaken to assume that different sociocultural groups recognise the same shapes and names projected onto the sky. In different words, to say that people from the Andes during pre-colonial times saw the same constellations as the Greeks or Romans, such as Virgo and Taurus, and organised them under those same principles, names and forms constitute an ontological misconception, or imposition (Urton 1981: 5). Then, to study constellations in the Andes, assuming Western names, shapes or configurations similar to the West would be part of those assumptions.

Through these basic assumptions, we can start to question the underlying assumptions present when we talk about ontology and epistemology. If we consider that we do not share or use the same names, shapes, methodologies, or languages, how do we think of alternative ontological designs? What do we assume when we talk of Andean or Amazonian ontologies? What happens when conceptualisations of worldviews rely more on interdependency than on the separation of fields? What happens when conceptions of time-space are interrelated? And how may that influence the conception of heritage when it moves from its lineal ontological logics to logics of reciprocity and care? As I intend to show here, the question of how constellations are conceptualised in the global South and North (also hegemonic West and the other) can help us to illuminate from the dark space of the assumptions and problems experienced when talking about plural ontologies.

By using the constellations analogy as a starting point, in this *chakanitas*, I will address those questions framing the hegemonic heritage conceptions to show how art comes to play a role in new configurations of heritages.

Ontological design towards decolonising heritage

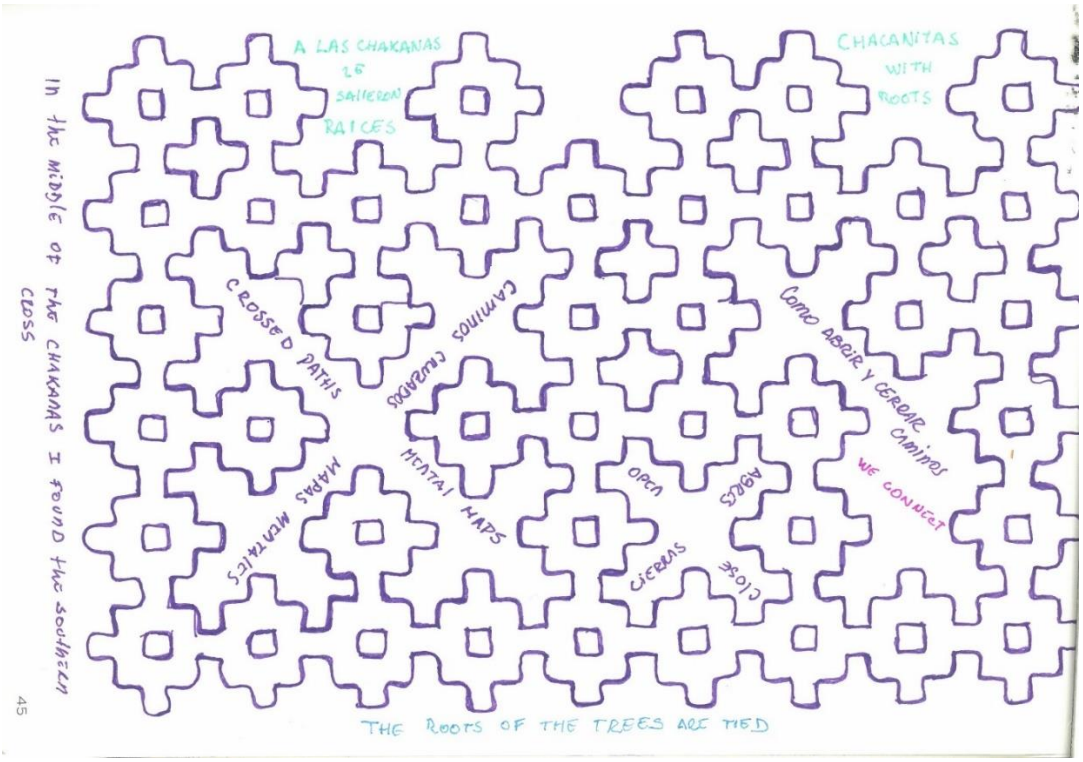

Figure 8 mental maps, chakanas with roots ©Victoria Vargas Downing

> We are facing modern problems for which there are no modern solutions (Escobar 2016: 69).

The notion of design comes from the Italian word *disegno. A*ccording to Tatarkiewicz (2004), the word appeared around 1400 on the hand of Cennino Cennini. First, referring to the drawing of a project in the sense of the shape of a drawing, but also as the intention or purpose. Later, Giorgio Vasari expanded the notion of *disegno* as the equivalent of 'idea' and as the lineal configuration that indicates the structure of what is represented (*tractiare, trazar,* to draw a line). Consequently, designing required the correct skills and professionalism of the person drawing lines, linking *disegno* to the Fine Arts and to future projections (Montijano García 2010). However, the activity of designing, as it is understood today, has industrial origins (Quiñones Aguilar 2020). As a modern discipline, it is embedded in a rational planification that privilege reason over intuition (Quiñones Aguilar 2020: 388); being the 'actividades proyectivas que introducen recursos estéticos en los productos de la industria masiva' (Acha 1990: 75).[72]

[72] 'Projective activities that introduce aesthetic resources into the products of mass industry'.

In this vein for Winograd and Flores, the creation and design of new artefacts, buildings, organisational structures, and equipment, tries to forecast or foresee 'how and where breakdowns will show up in our everyday practices and in the tools we use' (1986: 163), emphasising the sense of anticipation of design and the future agency for creation and resolution of problems (Fry, Dilnot, and Stewart 2015). In this context, for the Argentinian scholar Paula Serafini, the interventions we do can potentially alter society as 'reworlding involves redesigning our very ways of thinking and doing' (Serafini 2022: 195). Then, the notion of Design as Future-Making, appears as 'the social relationships embedded in and mediated by the spaces, places, messages, and things encountered everyday' (Yelavich 2014: 12). These conceptualisations frame design as a fundamentally ontological discipline, because it concerns with 'the form and content of the environment in which we live' (Fry 2017: 24). Similarly, for Winograd and Flores the most important form of design is ontological, as it:

> constitutes an intervention in the background of our heritage, growing out of our already-existent ways of being in the world, and deeply affecting the kinds of beings that we are. Ontologically oriented design is […] reflective and political, looking back to the traditions that have formed us but also forwards to as- yet- uncreated transformations of our lives together. […] Through the emergence of new tools, we come to a changing awareness of human nature and human action, which in turn leads to new technological development. The designing process is part of this "dance" in which our structure of possibilities is generated (Winograd and Flores 1986: 163).

In this respect, design contributes to the creation of the languages that create the world in which people operate, establishing domains of conversations for actions; it is enactive (Escobar 2018: 133). However, current design forms, including ontological design, are not exempted from colonial influences. For instance, the Philosopher Hayden White (1990) argues that forms play an essential role in the way we understand the world, meaning that there is an intention and worldview produced and reproduced in the forms in which we engage with the world. In other words, how the information (content) is presented (form) reflects and manifests a latent purpose or desire of moralizing in the form. This indicates that forms are not innocent nor passive. For example, oppressive regimes and colonial powers exercise domination and control of peoples using the 'sense of history' as a tool (Levins 2019: 69) - this is a designed form- for influencing and transforming collective memories and people's past through the gaze of the oppressor; revealing radical difference as a justification

for oppression within narratives of one universe (Bigenho and Stobart 2018; Trejo Méndez 2021: 3).

In this sense, the anthropologist Sylvia Marcos explains the knowledges systems, in which we are immersed, organise how we conceptualise the material world around us. She suggests that 'cognitive frameworks pervade our thinking, influence our conceptions of causality, and guide our sensory perceptions' (Marcos 2006: 1). As an illustration of this, the notion of 'form' in Western models 'came to be seen as imposed by an agent with a particular design in mind, while matter, [...] rendered passive and inert' (Ingold 2011: 210), resulting in the imposition and repetition of this model.

Here, the question of the agency of the form brings to the forefront the problem of control in the form and design within Western values, especially when compared, for example, to the Ojibwa people of the Anishinaabe people, currently located in southern Canada and the northern Mid-Western United States. Or compared to Gunadule nation located in what is today Colombia and Panamá. For them, everything is animated, and notions such as 'inert' or 'inanimate' are highly problematic and unrealistic (Giraldo Herrera 2018a: 23). The Ojibwa and Gunadule people recognise the high dynamism of everything in the world. For them, everything changes, moves and delays; even corpses are part of a constant transformation process. This comparison reveals how an ontological design approach needs to deal with the engrained coloniality of thought (Serafini 2022: 195). Meaning that coloniality of thought can also be applied to design; not just as a form of control, but as a form of disciplining our perception and interpretation of the world according to certain legitimised principles, including hierarchization between other humans, more-than-human and nonhuman beings. This forceful imposition of ontological, epistemic and axiological notions onto the whole world reveals how 'alternative versions of life, social structures, environmental models or aesthetic principles have been invariably dismissed' (Tlostanova 2017: 3).

When Western thought understands the form as borders and boundaries, normally adapted to master a standard of classification, the imposition of a form becomes a conceptual structure for humans to apprehend the world (Kohn 2013: 20). In this context, to see different things, in order think differently, requires of an understanding of the form in more engaging and open ways. As Kohn argues, it needs to be understood as a 'process of pattern production and propagation […] one whose peculiar generative logic necessarily comes to permeate living beings (human and nonhuman) as they harness it' (Kohn 2013: 20). In this context, design is one of the spheres in which both ontology and epistemology intersect in dynamic

and creatives ways (Tlostanova 2017: 1). But, to do so, it is necessary to step out of the Western social theory engaging with ontologies of worlds in struggle and different epistemic configurations that embrace relational ontologies (Escobar 2020: 68).

Therefore, a decolonial take on design and research need to change and challenge the shape and the landscape in which questions are asked and formulated. It necessitates of a form that is able to reflect the content in a more coherent way than the colonial impositions, so it is possible to make a different sense out of existing information (Levins 2019). As the ontological turn entails the unveiling of 'root assumptions [...] concerning the essential nature of things and their relationships with multiple and at times even contradictories cosmological schemes' (Scott 2007: 3); the problematisation of ontology should deal with questions about the being and existence, and the assumptions that different social groups make about the kinds of entities taken to exist "in the real world" (Escobar 2020; Tateleán 2019). In different words, seeing different things instead of seeing differently (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 6). Hence, a decolonial take on design requires questioning naturalised, essentialist or instrumentalist approaches, as well as problematising 'the affective and conceptual operations that form the basis of our relations with the world (Tlostanova 2017: 2). This, requires of a form where criticism should not disable the dialogue with other forms of thinking, allowing to build theoretical and political bridges that can connect postcolonial and decolonial divides (Asher 2017). Thus, they can reintroduce the links between the cosmos and polis by re-inscribing spirituality and the present (Mignolo 2018). This means keeping a tension that can stretch the horizon of possibilities.

On this basis, for Arturo Escobar (2020), ontological designs should engage with practical and relational ways of relating the world, transforming design in a dynamic set of directions (Fry 2017: 1) that helps to understand the relations between the world, things and human beings. In the same vein, Caroline Gatt and Tim Ingold (2013) propose that an open notion of design can offer direction to collective processes without fixed endpoints. These authors argue for a type of flexibility that 'lies not only in finding the ways of the world's becoming— the way it wants to go— but also in bending it to an evolving purpose' (Gatt and Ingold 2013: 145). For them, design should be more about giving directions as the world unfolds than specifying ending points. Design, then, 'does not transform the world, it is rather part of the world transforming itself' (Gatt and Ingold 2013: 146). This implies the recognition of other types of agencies and ontologies in the unfolding of the world, as they enact alternative designs and forms of being, sharing and organising it (Serafini 2022: 195). For César Giraldo-Herrera, this turn is the realisation that 'our interlocutors not only have different cultures but also

often dwell in radically different realities' (Giraldo Herrera 2018a: 3). Therefore, the ontological opening should search for explanations beyond 'all determining interpretations of modernity' (Blaser 2013: 549) and have the commitment to recuperate radical difference as 'something other than tradition' (Blaser 2013: 550).

For instance, distinctions between human and nonhuman, natural and cultural, subject and object are key characteristics of Western/modern assemblages. While in comparison, Indigenous cosmopolitics emphasise the agency of earth-beings, attributing agency to cultural landscapes such as mountains, lagoons, and more. For Ailton Krenak (2023), Indigenous intellectual from the Amazon Forest, life moves through everything: mountains, lakes, rocks, winds, and more, meaning that agency is located everywhere. This creates an epistemic rupture that challenges dualist ontological formulations, allowing the participation of sentient earth-beings in politics (Hill 2018b: 1189). In this type of ontology, 'performative practices [...] play an important role in enacting alternative worlds' (Hill 2018b: 1196), and orality appears as a radical form of relationality, making language generative rather than only representative (Marcos 2006: 112). This means that the process of designing takes place in language too, giving relevance to alternative narratives (Serafini 2022: 236). Now, how does this paradigm relate to heritage?

Ontological heritage design

Heritage studies tend to come from a mainly Eurocentric position, often as part of the colonial expansion and design. Such eurocentrism lies in the 'persistence of a cultural version of colonialism in the way in which heritage has been identified and managed in many parts of the globe' (Herzfeld 2015: 534). As heritage is defined by its management practices, these are intended to determine, manage, identify and ensure the existence of their subject in the future through gaining control of the uncertainty of such futures (Harrison 2020: 35). Therefore, notions such heritage domains are 'actively engaged in the work of assembling and caring for the future' (Harrison 2018b: 1378). The domains, according to Rodney Harrison (2020, 2018b), are informed by notions of endangerment, care for the future and presensing the past. They work relatively autonomously, applying their own techniques for anticipating factors of what can be perceived as threatening through: categorisation, documentation, conservation, preservation, interpretation, storing, archiving, etc. Examples of how such domains are enacted in practices, can be found in areas such as biodiversity conservation and preservation of endangered languages. The use of heritage domains is helpful in thinking about how practices are associated to them and become implicated in the composition of

multiple worlds. These ideas engage with the change in how the academy has approached heritage in recent years, where questions about its performativity (Chronis 2006; Ruggles and Silverman 2009; Smith 2011), discourse (Smith 2006), and management (Howard 2003; Ashley 2006) have challenged dominant appreciations of heritage and proposed new turns regarding what and how to research it. In this context one of those turns is the ontological turn.

For Harrison, the recognition of a plural notion of heritage ontologies is central for the future-making capacities of heritage, as 'different forms of heritage enact different realities and hence work to assemble [radical] different futures' (Harrison 2015: 28). For this author, the emphasis on heritage *futures assembling*, relies on the heritage abilities and practices for enacting 'new realities through contingent processes of assembling and reassembling bodies, technologies, materials, values, temporalities, and meanings' (Harrison 2015: 28). This kind of heritage assemble or agencement, concerns how heritage is produced in the conversation between equipment's, material arrangements, texts, temporalities, and technologies (Harrison 2020: 38) and how material and discursive practices, by which heritage is 'assembled', inform each other with alternative forms of value, processes, and practices of future-making.

In this view for Harrison (2015: 35), the ontological turn implies an openness that

> involves practices which are fundamentally concerned with assembling and designing the future—heritage involves working with the tangible and intangible traces of the past to both materially and discursively remake both ourselves and the world in the present, in anticipation of an outcome that will help constitute a specific (social, economic, or ecological) resource in and for the future.[This paradigm acknowledges] that heritage is neither "fixed" nor "inherent," but emerges in dialogue among individuals, communities, practices, places, and things.

In this vein, the concept of 'connectivity ontologies' is resourceful for explaining how heritage modalities work, combining life and place 'into generations of *continuities* that work collaboratively to keep the past alive in the present and *for the future*' (Harrison 2015: 27).[73] Connectivity ontologies, recognise the interactions between humans and nonhumans, and the connections as part of the broader natural-cultural assemblage, here relationships are means of inquiry and not just as objects of investigation (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017: 170).

[73] Emphasis added.

This entanglement between living beings and time acknowledges that if practices and objects are relevant 'at particular times and in particular places for the maintenance of the past in the present, it follows that they may, like humans, come and go, live and die, pass from one state to another' (Harrison 2015: 32).

The flexible understanding of heritage as collaborative, dialogical and interactive also means that heritage should be considered as 'a material discursive process in which past and future arise out of dialogue and encounter between multiple embodied subjects in (and with) the present' (Harrison 2015: 27). Within this framework, the approach to heritage as future-making recognises the need of more plural and diverse forms of knowledge and the need of a change towards the achievement of heritage plural ontologies. Finally, Harrison argues in favour of new modes of decision making, as well as more 'discerning and sustainable policies which consider heritage objects, places, and practices as part of a *range of actors in our environment that we nurture and which in turn nurture us'* (Harrison 2015: 33), suggesting, that Indigenous ontologies 'propose a philosophy of "becoming," in which life and place combine to bind time and living beings into generations of *continuities* in particular places' (Harrison 2015: 30).

However, it is clear the intention of challenging and changing the heritage hegemonic discourse, this formulation is still embedded and therefore limited to Western Heritage practices and design. Firstly, in spite of recognising the extent of Indigenous ontologies, the argument of Harrison does not specify the Indigenous community or locality to which he is referring, falling into an essentialisation of those ontologies. In this context, the notion of learning must be within a logic of reciprocity rather than exploitation or extraction; meaning that it is necessary to specify the origin of the ontologies and theories. Otherwise, those other forms of knowledge will still be invisibilised and not credited as they should. For the Sami academic Rauna Kuokkanen (2011), there is a difference between learning to know the other, and learning as an engagement with the other, while the first implies a hegemonic dialogue and a logic of colonial domination (Kuokkanen 2011: 117), the second looks for mutual forms of listening -c*onocer para aprender y no para dominar* (de la Cadena and Hiner 2020). Then, knowledge and the engagement with Indigenous ontologies implies learning to perceive the Indigenous epistemes as part of a geopolitical present (Kuokkanen 2011: 40). In this sense, a decolonial ontological turn on heritage design, should depart from a situation of the self, the community affiliation, and place in order to give accounts of the importance of knowledge

production, otherwise it reproduces forms of ontological violence authorised, and usually unperceived by Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies (Sundberg 2014).[74]

Secondly, the author maintains notions of continuity associated with linear heritage perceptions rather than cyclicity or reconnection.[75] Finally, despite the intention of including Indigenous ontologies, heritage management is still related to 'domains' that privilege Western ontologies of separation, rationality, accumulation and extraction. The domains such as; categorisation, conservation, preservation, storing, etc. are strategies mediated by human behaviour and that reproduce the separations between human, nonhuman and more-than-human. They are practices framed within a rational principle that is still centred in apparently neutral activities such as collecting, preserving and interpreting as forms of reasserting documentation of methods and separation from the objects that are now considered private property (Azoulay 2019).

According to Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (2019: 51)

> collecting is not separate from other foundational practices, procedures, institutions, concepts, and categories […] shaped through imperialism. […] even with critical tools, one continues to be bounded by the phenomenal field created by imperial destruction, cultural appropriation, and the imposition of a new regime.

Considering this, it is necessary to understand that interactions between humans and the worlds and social relations may vary from society to society. As concepts emerge from 'a more general and broad knowledge that people have about the world' (Mannheim 2019: 244). Then, the establishment of domains responds to broader ontological configurations and has distinctive causal structures assigned to them. This means that, despite Indigenous ontologies having similar ways of enacting or assembling their world, as Blaser (2013) argues, these worlds should be accepted on their own terms and not through the imposition of other rules or in this case, domains. In addition, as Fúnez-Flores argues the emphasis on moderns categories, keeps reproducing and creating 'the conditions of possibility of sustaining modernity's colonial project (against human and nonhuman beings alike)' (Fúnez-Flores 2022: 31). As result, it is necessary not just to challenge the domains of hegemonic Western

[74] In this case, it is essential the term 'homework' as Spivak and Harasym (1990) understand it, as the self-reflexive analysis of one own's epistemological and ontological assumptions, and how these assumptions are naturalised within institutional and political powers, relations, and practices.
[75] I will expand more this point in the time-space *chakanita*.

heritage management, but also to look for ways of repair the damage and wrongdoings of colonisation that are still reproduced within the heritage field.

Within this framework, how can categorising, conserving, documenting, listing, storing, exhibiting, or collecting and preserving -among other domains- enact different ontologies? If we consider that the strategies for the definition of these domains are guided by the ontological assumptions of the modern conception of heritage, how does those other forms of existence engage with practices that are framed within a separation between human and nonhuman, subject and object (Holbraad, Pedersen, and Castro 2014)?

Despite recognising that heritage must act on the present in a way that maintains and manages an openness to the future, and that plural ontologies can rework and remake heritage practices and therefore, open future-making possibilities, there are still limitations appearing in terms of the assumptions of the ontological framework. However, it is reasonable that Harrison's arguments are insufficient to properly enact a different ontology considering that:

> the objects of heritage and the methods to research them are inseparable, locked together in a conceit of reciprocal meaning.; 'Heritage' came to be known, therefore, through this ontological framework. This provided it with an objective reality, a 'something out there', given empirical proof in the materiality of its objects and a veracity of method underwritten by the science of its origins. Thus, a reified form of heritage research was put beyond ontological examination (Waterton and Watson 2015: 26).

In this context, it is necessary to recognise that we are just starting to understand ontological and conceptual differences and locating the inadequacies in our concepts (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017), which makes more difficult to identify underlying assumptions, particularly when we talk about heritage and different ontologies. Hence, how to escape the ontological trap that the traditional concept of heritage implies? And what are the possibilities when heritage is not tasked with the role of preservation? As Emma Waterton and Steve Watson argue, because heritage is a modern construction of the past, it is based on a selection of narratives that support a specific kind of material culture, a form and design that circumscribe it within a specific political ontology: Modern/Capitalist (Waterton and Watson 2015: 27).[76] This political ontology designates an imaginary for reality, in this case, the field of heritage

[76] This is why narratives matter.

stands within a political economy and ecology, that involves notions ideas of growth or nature aligned with capitalist societies.[77]

Therefore, if the domains are defined by practices and methods used in order to assemble futures, how to assemble futures out of these domains and its assumptions? We need to acknowledge that methods are invested with power. They are not just a form of describing the world; they are performative and, therefore, enactive. In this sense, methods touch design and the configuration of possible futures. They also work as a way of thinking about the worlds to make. The methods in heritage studies come mainly from social design research and from Western orientations towards heritage. They deal with forms that measure change and control as external aspects of heritage. As consequence, how to face these ontological conflicts without re-enacting the assumptions -out there-described? (Blaser 2013: 548) How to stretch the ontological possibilities of heritage design? As mentioned before, methods have effects and make differences. They enact political ontologies. This means that an ontological turn on heritage needs to challenge hegemonic methods and designs to enact the different ontologies it is trying to engage. In other words, the ontological opening needs to look for the political in unexpected places to seek expansion beyond modern determinist interpretations (de la Cadena and Blaser 2018). As result, researching heritage under canonical domains present limitations in the ontological design.

With this in mind, the possibilities of effectively enacting different ontologies, implies finding tools that can provide new forms of register of individual and collective practices and forms of exploring beyond the conventional designs. This means that ontological designs are also political, and as such, they should focus 'on the performative practices of "reality making" in which ontological differences take the form of "ever-emerging, fluid, and tentative stories" about multiple worlds' (Hill 2018b: 1189). Then, to renew the reflection, and therefore heritage ontological design, is necessary a radical mixture and a reconfiguration of heritage research, so it can address aspects previously unnoticed or unseen (Savage and Burrows 2007: 896). Consequently, if heritage is defined by its methods and methods control how to approach what is out there, maybe a different way of approaching this issue is by engaging what is -here- as 'we are not just, or even primary, detached observers but rather participants

[77] Although the idea of degrowth of collections is starting to be discussed within heritage spaces and museums (see Morgan and Macdonald 2020), one of the limitations of degrowth is that not capable of thinking in alternative forms of living to capitalism and it does not repair violences of Western developmental model, in this sense it is a formulation that maintains the notion of living well at the expense of others, rather than with other (See Bigenho and Stobart 2018).

and designers, we engage the world by being immersed in it' (Escobar 2018: 157). This suggests that personal and affective forms of engagement may result useful to question heritage assumptions. In this regard, acknowledging the body as the space for processing experiences and the place of resonances, circulation, inclusion, or exclusion brings to the surface those experiences that have been relegated within heritage discourses.

Including the body in heritage analysis recognises heritage narratives are mediated in affective worlds (Waterton 2014).[78] At the same time, this implies opening heritage and its research to new forms of designs beyond analytical domains and more-than-representative/non-representative approaches. Non-representational or more-than-representational forms create meaning in the present using the past 'interact[ing] with other forms of engagement, in the experience of heritage' (Waterton and Watson 2015: 30). This means that in terms of heritage, this type of theory accepts spaces and practices of heritage as simultaneously past and present. Recognising that it will 'always be in a process of becoming, such that if the two eventually superimpose, it will never be in a fixed or entirely anticipated way' (Waterton 2014: 828). As a result, meaning-making occurs in the entanglements of the contexts, actions and interactions instead of only in the representational dimensions of symbolic orders, structures, domains and discourses (Waterton 2014: 826). This type of approach implies that the understanding of the world is inevitably intertwined with our doing, and we enact the world in our lived and embodied experiences. Hence, more-than-representational or non-representational approaches are also a form 'thinking that draws attention to the corporeality of bodies and probes at the multi-sensuous places in which we find ourselves' (Waterton 2014: 826).

These approaches remind us that heritage has effects beyond the representations that influence how heritage is understood, as 'we seem to be stuck with the old [methods], together with anxieties about whether we are doing them properly, or well enough, or whether the sample size is too large or too small' (Waterton and Watson 2015: 23). Those anxieties mentioned, are policed within the academic worlds, while heritage research methodologies have become a sort of rulebook that dictate what should be done and how. Then, more-than-representational or non-representational approaches address the lack of creativity in the traditional methods of heritage research, considering the diversity of the heritage phenomena.

[78] To see more of the affective turn see: Hemmings (2005); Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson (2017); Smith, M., and Campbell (2018); Waterton (2014); Crouch (2015).

For Waterton, it also relates to heritage politics for different reasons: firstly, it shifts the questions about the 'site' or artefact to questions related to experiences, engagement, or performance. Secondly, recognises the spaces as co-participant, and producers of the experience; thirdly, it allows understanding the heritage phenomena 'complexity as embodied processes of meaning and sense-making' (Waterton 2014: 824). And I will add as a fourth point it locates the body within the academic practice rather than from a distance, acknowledging that the language of heritage, and heritage practices, is not the language of the academic world or the world of management.

Then, if we consider that heritage domains are defined by academic practices and languages, to enact alternative designs, it is necessary to challenge the language used for those designs and approaches. While some authors have suggested speaking of 'heritages' (Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge 2007) in plural to account for the different meanings of heritage for different groups over time (Schramm 2015: 442), I argue that recognising the plurality is not enough if those pluralities or heritages are still being understood under hegemonic domains. In other words, the ontological turn should not be limited just to the division between human and nature or culture and nature; in the same way, it is not enough adding a 's' to have an account of the plurality of heritages. Rather, it is necessary to address a different set of rules instead of imposed notions of conservation or preservation. This implies a willingness to listening to local needs and an openness to generative forms of heritage that exceed traditional domains and languages, including other forms of information, communication and knowledge that overflow modern rationality and that cannot be addressed in the distance of academic domains and forms. In other words, it is necessary to expand heritage definition and design beyond the cartesian and binary separation embedded in the modern project, as well as expanding and changing the language of heritage from 'risk', 'protection', etc to forms of care and mutual responsibility.

Non-Cartesian *chakanitas*

Heritage, as a colonial invention, is one that better summarises the modern thought that made it emerge. Its origin is paired with the development of devices such as universities, museums, and nation-states. Normally categorized as natural, cultural, tangible, or intangible (UNESCO), heritage within hegemonic spheres maintains an emphasis on materiality, values of progress, development, and ideas of prosperity. Traditionally, heritage has been conceived through the management of objects or places of the past that we need to safeguard and preserve for the future. In this sense, it is future-oriented, and it has been strongly marked by the separation between humans and nature (Harrison 2013). While the prevailing logic of preservation places an emphasis on materiality and its conservation, policymakers have come to consider immaterial practices that were previously less contemplated, integrating alternative views, developing community-based approaches and de-centring 'expert' testimony within conservation processes (Winter 2013: 359; Witcomb and Buckley 2013; Smith and Akagawa 2009; Smith 2006). This comes in hand with the efforts of Critical Heritage Studies to challenge the traditional heritage conceptions rethinking the field within their material, political and ecological implications (Geismar 2015).

In this context, the ontological turn has been decisive in questioning the Cartesian division and integrating non-western appreciations. Furthermore, Harrison (2015, 2018a) has proposed an ontological turn for understanding heritage beyond the Cartesian gaze admitting that 'different forms of heritage practices enact different realities' (Harrison 2015: 24), starting to integrate Indigenous perspectives that consider the agency of nonhuman within heritage criticism. Nonetheless, there are still some aspects within the ontological turn to heritage that remain unexplored, and it is still thought of as a 'broad and heterogeneous academic domain' (Harrison 2018b: 1367), restricting the interaction within academic boundaries. Then, how to think about the complexities of heritage within different practices and heritage conceptions?

In this section, I will explore three main characteristics of modern dual logic: the distinction between 'us' and 'them', Nature and Culture, and subject and object (Escobar 2018). Here I will analyse how these categories are expressed within heritage theories and studies, exposing the limitations and some of the ontological assumptions. Then, I will compare and propose how these categories can be challenged and expanded, addressing conceptions that have yet to be explored within the field. I will discuss some of the ideas present in critical heritage studies, appealing to visible and invisible layers of time and heritage. Through

moments of ambivalence, tension and precarity, we will move backwards and forward to establish a different and alternative view, to then think about heritage from alternative ontologies, particularly from the Andean region pointing out similarities and differences to propose alternative forms of decolonising heritage.

Us-Them

Figure 9 reinterpretation of Guaman Poma ©Victoria Vargas Downing

Empecemos, in recent years, the complexity of heritage within the academic debate has become more evident; some academics have criticised heritage issues and their disconnection from the real world, whereas a new call for renovation has emerged, proposing that heritage should face the complexities of the contemporary socio-political world and contexts such: environmental sustainability, economic inequalities, social cohesion and heritage industry among others (Winter 2013; Witcomb and Buckley 2013).

However, despite the efforts of heritage studies to challenge the Eurocentric positions, there are still assumptions that remain unquestioned within their colonial and universalising root (Herzfeld 2015; Sterling 2020). As Laurajane Smith (2006) argues, the Western European model of heritage management goes hand in hand with the process of colonisation, the

expression of Western cultural imperialism, and the expansion of a ‘set of ideas and practices that challenge or even threaten alternative forms of experiencing, knowing and preserving the past’ (Smith 2006: 11), and as such, they can derive in forms of ‘alienation [or separation] of local communities from their cultural heritage’ (Smith 2006: 11). This means that, what is, and what can be considered as heritage is veiled for a set of practices and assumptions that legitimate or delegitimate it, framing its management and identification within what Laurajane Smith calls: Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) or Subaltern and Dissenting Heritage Discourse (SDHD).

On the one hand, AHD is outlined by an authorised voice, normally from institutions or nation-states. This voice of authority derives from ‘a knowledge practice [that is] primarily informed by material-centric disciplines that privilege scientific and/or positivist methodologies’ (Winter 2013: 539) as a way of situating the ‘expert’ point of view as an objective/superior and neutral/detached point of observation; what in modern and colonial thought is known as ‘disembodied and unlocated neutrality and objectivity of the ego-politics of knowledge‘ (Grosfoguel 2007: 214). In addition, AHD is framed within the “grand, great and good” history of a past, centering the attention on ‘aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations ‘must’ care for, [and] protect’ (Smith 2006: 29). For example, National museums are representative of AHD as they preserve a selected -official- history of the past that reflect on the values of the nation, such as presidents, heroes and elite figures that helped to establish that Nation, as well their political and economic interests. This not only keeps a focus on the conservation of material forms of heritage for the future but also separates heritage from practitioners, as under the conservation logic, heritage must be preserved from the moment of its finding frozen in that found condition.

On the other hand, SDHD is positioned on the other side of the balance as it concerns minority groups such as LGBTQ+ communities, working class, Indigenous groups and those normally underrepresented by AHD (Geismar 2015), implying a community's participation rather than the ‘expert decision’. In the words of Smith, SDHD ‘concerns the expression of subaltern discourses of community participation in heritage management and conservation processes’ (Smith 2006: 35). This type of heritage discourse situates knowledge and heritage expressions from bottom-up approaches, including less represented groups and practices such as oral practices, immaterial forms of heritage, etc.

The division between AHD and SDHD resembles an embedded form of dualism in modernity, such as moderns- nonmoderns, the civilized- savages, 'Us' and 'Them' or the West and the rest. For example, the division between 'us' and 'them' also accounts for the difference between moderns and primitives, which, in the case of the colonisation of the Abya Yala, was used as a tool and source for European expansion, allowing or restricting new forms of identity and power differentiation. There were white Europeans (Moderns), which were different to (primitive) Indians, blacks, creoles and *mestisos*. On the one hand, moderns were capable of distinguishing between science and society, Nature and Culture, while 'them' (pre-moderns) remain entangled to nature (Sundberg 2014: 38; Latour 1993: 99). On the other hand, the distinction between 'them' (pre-moderns) and 'us' (moderns) reflects in the capacity of producing legitimate modern knowledge as opposed to magical or pre-modern (Sundberg 2014: 38).

Under the AHD and SDHD paradigms, there is a separation between the official history and heritage and the history and heritage of the 'other'. While AHD is perceived as familiar, the history of those included in SDHD is viewed as the other, and the degree 'of 'Otherness' is influenced by the distance between the two in terms of geography, culture and time' (Onciul 2015: 30) as well as notions of gender and race. However, it is necessary to mention that museums and institutions are making significant efforts to overcome the exclusion of those groups and separation, moving towards forms of participation and inclusion, particularly of Indigenous and black communities. Despite this, the endeavour should be expanded not just to Western understandings of inclusion and participation -which are human centred-, but also to changing the forms of representations of those 'minority' groups, where for example; unidirectional narratives of power depict Indigenous people 'other' as passive victims of colonialism without acknowledging their resistance within and against hegemonic narratives (Onciul 2015: 34). Or where these groups are misrepresented, locating them in a past time as extinct or exotic (Fabian 1983). In any case, for Smith, both types of discourses are 'concerned with the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of "identity"' (Smith 2006: 5). In this context, heritage can be understood as a political and cultural tool that helps define and legitimise the identity, experiences and social/cultural standings of different social actors, whether official (Authorised) or unofficial (Subaltern).

While Smith's approach to AHD and SDHD constitutes a relevant effort to include non-western heritage perceptions expanding the field beyond its Western framework, it reproduces the

dualism embedded in colonial and Western logic, such as the division between 'us' and 'them', and therefore reproducing the ways of knowing and being.

As part of heritage configuration, the establishment of superior or inferior categories (AHD or SDHD) aims to control and negotiate knowledge and power (Mignolo 2019: 107; 2011a).[79] These practices of control are closely tied to scientific regimes and methods that ensure the value, truth and authenticity of such goods creating 'particular heritage objects and particular heritage subjects' (Appelgren 2014: 247). For Graham (2002), heritage is a means of transmission of values, ideas and knowledges, and at the same time, implies a range of conflicting and potential identifications, especially when involving issues of legitimation or power structures. This means that heritage is a 'fundamental element in the shaping of these power networks and in elaborating this 'identifiable but diffused' concept of power' (Graham 2002: 1006). Nevertheless, heritage is not only a source of power because it can define identities or transmit values. Heritage is also a source of economic growth and as such it is also subject to politics of exploitation, accumulation, and extraction (Appelgren 2014; Bigenho and Stobart 2018; Graham 2002), constituting an economic and cultural capital. The use of heritage within neoliberal societies and policies is reduced to a set of economic practices or 'heritage goods' that promote socio-economic development, and it is almost interchangeable with ideas of tourism (Coombe and Weiss 2015: 44).[80] Within this economic and political regime 'los bienes acumulados por una sociedad importan en la medida en que favorecen o retardan "el avance material"' (García Canclini 1999: 23). [81]

Then, in order to give an account of that material progress, heritage within its hegemonic conceptualisation needs to be 'recognisable, visible and visitable […] [so it] can be recognized and made to gather communities, local, national or the whole of humanity' (Appelgren 2014: 153, 248). In this way, it reflects on the impulses of materialisation and territorialisation of the hegemonic heritage landscape as 'a constantly accumulating category' (Robinson and Silverman 2015: 3). In this context, the accumulation of heritage acquires importance 'because it converts ownership into power' (Tsing 2015: 133), leading to preservation practices and different forms of identity representation. Despite the close link between

[79] This is not saying that Smith categorises AHD and DSHD as superior or inferior, but rather those categories are implicit within the Western framework of Authorised, subaltern, legal or illegal, legitimised by the state or not. In other words, by the display of heritage discourses as binary option she produces and reproduce modern paradigms.

[80] Pablo Alonso González propose that instead of commodities, changing the frame of heritage to "commons" (see Alonso Gonzalez 2014: 365).

[81] 'The goods accumulated by a society matter to the extent that they favour or retard "material progress"'.

heritage and economic commodification, its complexity and colonial legacy cannot be reduced to the practices of economic exploitation or accumulation (Harvey 2001: 324).

While AHD and SDHD reproduces the dualism and division embedded in colonial legacies, non-western forms of thinking present alternatives to the dualism, where, for example, in Andean Aymara ontologies, the word *jiwasanaka* means 'we all' inclusively and diversely, *jiwasanaka* includes everybody, including those that are not present (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 82). It is 'us with them' rather than 'us' without 'them'. Then, if within Aymara language, there is a concept of 'us with them', the discourses of heritage cannot be limited to separated discourses. This evidences how the distinction between AHD and DSHD is still rooted in colonial distinctions of power, superiority, and separation, exposing how the discourse analysis reproduces the colonial distinction based on English language. This means that conventions and practices of Western social sciences become less relevant to Indigenous ways of thinking and being (Kusch 2010) as well as forms of heritage management and administration.

At the same time, AHD and DSHD resemble similarities to notions such as colonised and coloniser, between 'them and us', and subjects and objects. In other words, AHD and SDHD do not unsettle key aspects that define modernity logic relying on ontological dualisms. [82] Regardless of the ontological dualism of these discourses, the dynamic of heritage is more complex than it seems, as they also work in ambivalent or paradoxical ways. For example, Shramm explains how UNESCO policies:

> attempt to preserve the multiplicity of local cultural traditions perceived to be under threat by the forces of globalization, the resulting heritage regime itself seems to act as a homogenizing machine, objectifying and classifying distinct cultural forms as heritage and others not (Schramm 2015: 445).

For this author, even when some policies attempt to safeguard heritage expressions, the submission to external regulations homogenises them within the 'universal' idea and values of what should or should not be considered heritage. For Schramm, the entanglement of heritage, power and ideology appears in 'mutually overlapping discourses that do not fit neatly into a dichotomy of dominant versus marginal positionalities' (Schramm 2015: 449), making of heritage an issue more complex than binary options, where the division between AHD and DSHAD appears insufficient to explain it. For example, as Katherina Shramm

[82] Here, it is necessary to consider that Smith's intention was not to decolonise or unsettle but explain, identify and describe the type of discourses and regimes of heritage.

explains, Nation-States use cultural policies that are compatible with globalised heritage regimes, making possible to expand the domain and governance of those hegemonic forms through the control and representation of the past; whilst communal heritage emerges as forms of resilience and resistance to those dominant discourses (Schramm 2015: 447). This overlapping sense of heritage discourses between dominant/marginal results akin to the notions of resisting ↔ oppressing of María Lugones (2003). For Lugones (2003), the tension between 'resisting ↔ oppressing' address the intersection of those dynamics and how they create a space of interaction where multiple stories can emerge. Meaning, resisting ↔ oppressing must be understood as an 'interactive, social, body to body, ongoing fluid tension' (Lugones 2003: 170), corresponding to the space where those mixed, resilient and resistant heritage discourses can emerge. [83] This tension between resisting ↔ oppressing reflects on the relationality and intersectionality 'in which power relations and social inequality interact or intermesh with negotiations of identity' (Baumann 2022: 1535), leading to unequal forms of appropriations.

For instance, García Canclini explains how the symbolic capital of those subaltern fields have a subordinate place within institutions and hegemonic devices, particularly in democratic countries where revolutionary processes were able to include Indigenous or peasant knowledges and practices in the definition of national culture (such as Mexico or Ecuador). According to García Canclini:

> la reformulación del patrimonio en términos de capital cultural tiene la ventaja de no presentarlo como un conjunto de bienes estables neutros, con valores y sentidos fijos, sino como un proceso social que, como el otro capital, se acumula, se renueva, produce rendimientos que los diversos sectores se apropian en forma desigual' (García Canclini 1999: 18). [84]

These forms of relationality of heritage can be explained by the ontological excess of coloniality, which 'occurs when particular beings impose on others and [the potential forms in] which the other responds to the suppression as a result of the encounter' (Escobar 2007:

[83] For Lugones, 'oppressing/being oppressed/resisting construct space simultaneously and that, at their infinite intersections, produces multiple histories/stories'.(Lugones 2003: 24). As for her, 'One inhabits the realities as spatially, historically, and thus materially different: different in possibilities, in the connections among people, and in the relation to power' (Lugones 2003: 27).

[84] 'The reformulation of heritage in terms of cultural capital has the advantage of not being presented as a set of neutral stable goods, with fixed values and meanings, but as a social process that, like the other capital, accumulates, renews itself, produces returns that the various sectors appropriate unequally'.

185). Marisol de la Cadena (2015) exemplifies this ontological excess in the relationship between subaltern and dominant worlds, where for instance, in Andean Indigenous worlds, the division between human and nonhumans do not endure, even when that divide can be present in other practices. This leads us to the second binary characteristic of the modern/colonial thought embedded in heritage: the division between Nature and Culture.

Us-Them, Nature-culture

Figure 10 Anonymous, *Virgen del Cerro*. Oil painting, 92x72cm; La paz, Bolivia: Museo Nacional de Arte. (1720) ©Public domain.

As we have explored, critical heritage studies have focused its efforts on exploring the social worlds in which heritage is embedded and encountered (Sterling 2020: 1036). Hence, notions such as AHD and SDHD help us understand how heritage operates within modern and neoliberal schemes and among human policies. However, the limitations in their application are also manifested in other characteristics of the dual Modern/colonial order, which are the division between nature-culture and subject and object. In this section, I will explore the forms in which the division between 'us' and 'them' are also linked to the distinction between 'nature' and 'culture', bringing additional backgrounds and examples that explain their working.

As discussed, this separation between 'us' and 'them' was also accounting as the separation between 'modern' and 'primitive'. On one hand, this was a way of legitimising modern knowledge on behalf of colonisers. On the other hand, it was also a way to establish forms of appropriation and dominion of territories; rendering nature and nonhuman to be seen as an external resource to be appropriated, dominated and exploited (Demos 2016; Gómez-Barris 2017). In this context, the binary difference between Nature and Culture is based on the idea of an external nature as an independent entity of the human, that 'man has to dominate and conquer' (Mignolo 2019: 112) being one of the foundational pillars of Western civilization.

In addition, the European colonisation of the Americas designated nature as *terra nullis,* as if Indigenous people were not existent, reorganising the space and time within modern paradigms (Gómez-Barris 2017). For Browning, 'the colonial imaginary is staked on naming, on describing and observing things' (2018: 118) in these actions, it becomes possessive and proprietorial claiming to ownership and creating dispossession. In a similar vein, the colonisers claimed 'superiority' over the Native Americans based on the myth of truthful universal knowledge, and what was understood as 'magic' by the colonisers provided evidence of the incapacity of scientific reason and the closeness of their 'nature' (Gómez-Barris 2017: 46). For Mignolo, these distinctions between progress, ancient and modern brought also the notion of 'history' as 'time', placing 'societies in an imaginary chronological line going from nature to culture, from barbarism to civilization following a progressive destination toward some point of arrival' (Mignolo 2011a: 151). Furthermore, according to Latour (1993: 71) the asymmetry between nature and culture also becomes an asymmetry between past and future, where the past is presented in a status of confusion between things and men. While, in contrast, the future appears as the place for development.

Furthermore, by framing Indigenous people as 'uncivilised' and linking them to a pre-historic past, the colonial discourse distanced colonised people from the settler and the land (Onciul 2015: 30; Fabian 1983). These logics accompanied by rational judgment justified the displacement, marginalisation or/and subjugation of the Indigenous people (Smith 2012: 23; Quilter and Urton 2002: 8; Gómez-Barris 2017). In this way, the discovery of a new world, as a historical moment, intended to be irreversible, creating a clear cut of what existed before the arrival of colonisers and establishing a clear division between the 'Old' and the 'New' world, and nature and culture (Kelly 2018: 319). Meanwhile, for Indigenous conceptualisations of the world, such as Mesoamerican, African or Andean, there was no such conception of 'nature' as a separate entity from human beings (Mignolo 2019: 12) as

‘life is not conceived in terms of separate domains’ (Lugones and Price 2010: lxviii) nor ‘nature’ is understood as divided from other realms of the self (Gómez-Barris 2017).

In this sense, Western dualisms conflicted with the interconnectedness of the pre-Columbian people, which was based on a world of shared humanity and coexistence with the cosmos (Tateleán 2019). To exemplify this, the Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viverios de Castro explains how in the ‘Amerindian conception [the world] would suppose a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity’ (Viveiros de Castro 2015: 196) referring to the notion of ‘multinaturalism’. In contrast, Western conceptualisations refer to multiculturalism, which is based ‘on the mutual implication of the unity of nature and the plurality of cultures’ (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 1). In different words, while European ethnocentrism questioned if the body of Indigenous people had the same type of soul than themselves (are Indians humans or animals?), they did not question if Indians had bodies. While for Amerindians, the question was if other souls had the same bodies (are European humans or spirits?), they did not question if Europeans had a soul (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 62; Viveiros de Castro and Skafish 2014).

This debate was used as a justification of the enterprise of colonisation, where the influence of multiculturalism derived in the attribution of different grades of humanity to the different identities, framing the other as partially humans, nonhuman or ‘savages’ (Smith 2012: 27; Maldonado-Torres 2007), in other words: closer to ‘nature’ and inferior. Likewise, the degree of ‘development’ of natives’ cultures was also part of this strategy, questioning their intellect and enabling them (Europeans) to classify natives as ‘savages, ‘primitives’ and/or ‘irrational’. For colonisers, the ‘lack of rationality’ in the Andes was attributed due the absence of a writing or reading system. For instance, Samuel Purchas describe the superiority of Men over beast as ‘Men’ were able of writing showing how civil, sociable and religious they were in comparison to the ‘brutish, savage and barbarous’(Quoted by Greenblatt in Urton 2017: 6).

As a result, the natives were not only considered inferior in terms of the ‘quality’ of their soul but also because they were seen to be less intelligent or closer to savages, justifying policies of extermination, subjugation or domestication, and exacerbating the distinction between Nature and Culture. In comparison, the relational ontologies of Amerindians are not limited to humans, but they include animals, plants and material objects that constitute their biocultural spaces.

For example, Johanna Page (2021: 216) notices that

> the resistance of indigenous and other groups to extractivist practices and the reduction of the natural world to resources and commodities is rooted in an understanding of the complex and constituting relations that different forms of being – humans, animals, rivers, forests, mountains – maintain with each other as subjects dwelling in multiple but interconnected worlds.

In this regard, there is a lack of distinction between 'the nature of the (human) body and the body of nature' (Mignolo 2011a: 308). For this reason, notions of 'living harmony' meant in harmony with all the living organism as well as the humans or *runas* (Mignolo 2011a).[85] This results in the existence and inclusion of a 'double agency of human and other 'persons', their mutual transformations, and interacting subjectivities' (Arnold 2018: 256).

As we can appreciate, dualism infused different areas of life, not only in terms of the division between Nature and Culture, but also in how different types of knowledges and forms of understanding were subjugated and marginalised. In this context, it is interesting to think about the treatment of heritage considering the division between human-non-human, and natural-cultural, body and mind, as it also resonates in the traditional ways in which heritage is approached (UNESCO), such as natural and cultural heritage (Lowenthal 2005) or tangible and intangible heritage (Smith and Akagawa 2009). While the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage is widely accepted on behalf of the 'future' or 'for the future generation' (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020: 2), it is necessary to take into consideration how these practices not only reproduce the dualisms (Alonso Gonzalez 2014: 373), but also prioritise 'people-centred' approaches to forms of management, administration, preservation and interpretation that respond to materialist considerations of those hegemonic heritage practices (Sterling 2020: 1030).

Similarly, for Marisol de la Cadena (2010), the division between nature and society is also understood mechanistically (Latour 1993: 27-29; de la Cadena 2015), where the representation of nonhumans belongs to science, and humans is allocated to politics (Hill 2018b: 1188). This is particularly interesting when compared to the discussion regarding heritage discourses, as AHD-DSHD focuses on the politics of heritage (the world of humans), whilst the discussion of nonhumans is not addressed (one could say being relegated to the world of science).

[85] Runas comes from the Quechua and is the closest concept to the Western 'human'.

However, criticism of the Cartesian division between culture and nature in heritage has been addressed before by Rodney Harrison, for whom Smith's approach of AHD and SDHD is insufficient to theorise satisfactorily 'the role of material "things" in the complex set of relationships in which human and non-human agents, heritage objects, places, and practices are bound together in contemporary worlds' (Harrison 2018b: 1369). For Harrison, the question about the division between Nature-Culture, implies a reconsideration of Western assumptions of universality and decentralisation of Western anthropocentric practices, proposing an ontological turn in heritage. This ontological turn requires moving outside privileged epistemologies as 'the multitude of societal challenges to which culture-natures inherited from the past now connect, demand another way of knowing, of talking about and of doing, heritage' (Winter 2013: 542).

In this sense, natural and cultural heritage definitions are based on their relationship to their endangerment and, therefore, to their preservation, conservation and safeguarding. The ontological turn, allows us to question naturalised forms that are usually presented as neutral and objective hiding their political or power interests and advocating for more dialogical models of heritage. This approach would help to consider alternative ways of valuing places, practices and objects (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020). For Harrison, this movement includes a turn towards embracing Indigenous ontologies where '"culture" is everywhere, [and] not only is there no boundary between nature and culture' (Harrison 2015: 30), contrasting with the cartesian dualism.

Conversely, when heritage is seen as a cultural process, it tends to be restricted to human-centred (multicultural) ontological frameworks, being marginalised as an expression of material-discursive processes of inheritance. In this regard, for Harrison, embracing the dissolution between culture and nature can help to reorient the questions towards a reconceptualisation of 'what' and 'how' heritage could be, 'inviting to creatively re imagine heritage building connection between domains that we normally assume as separated' (Harrison 2015). However, one of the criticisms of Harrison's approach relates to the form, as ideas and world views of Indigenous people are grasped without locating their concepts within 'embodied expressions of stories, laws, and songs' (Todd 2016: 18), or context of their broader politics of self-determination. This is, in the wider sense of relationships and engagements between human, nonhuman and more-than-human.

Nevertheless, the ontological turn in heritage contributes to the integration of Indigenous people, their practices and heritage understandings, and it definitely contributes to the

dissolution between Nature and Culture. Within this framework, an ontological turn effectively challenges the 'Nature-culture' binary. Although, it is necessary to admit that challenging just the 'Nature-culture' binary renders a limited strategy to compensate or repair the damages caused for such divisions and impositions. This is even more complicated when we consider the notion of ontological excess, where heritage is appropriated unequally. To be clear, the ontological turn must also challenge methods 'that take 'the human' to be the centre of all heritage meaning' (Sterling 2020: 1030), and other forms of Cartesian dualism, as well as the limitation of mind as an only human quality, leaving nature as mindless (Harrison 2015: 30).

Whether the divisions are between Indigenous (the rest) and the West or mind and body or subject and object, it is necessary to question 'the actual things that human and non-human actors do' (Harrison 2020: 40) as well as the humanist approaches. These challenges bring us to the next characteristic of the cartesian divisions this is: subject and object.

Us-Them, Nature-culture, Subject-object

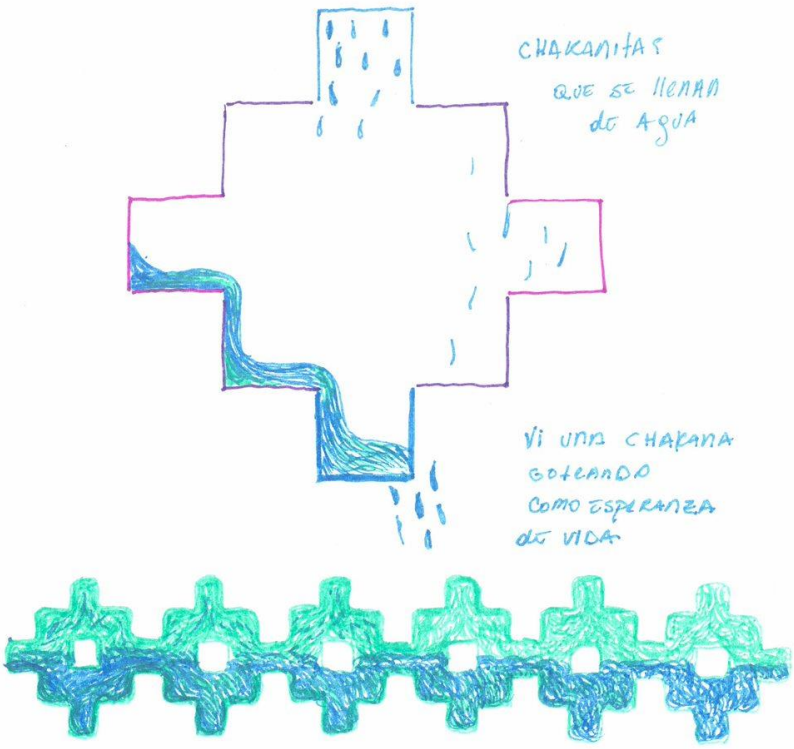

Figure 11 Chakanitas que se llenan de agua, ©Victoria Vargas Downing

As we explored before, the division between nature and culture is also entangled with notions of human and nonhuman, questions about the animosity of the other, and the separation between subject and object. In this section I will be exploring how the separation between

subject and object exposes new complexities within the heritage field, and how other ontologies have integrated the distinction in a different way.

As part of rational thought, the separation of different domains was intended to dominate an external nature. When the Cartesian dualism is assumed as ontologically given, materiality is not recognised as an agency but as static essence. In this sense, a pre-given matter can be interpreted and conceptualised as natural resources for exploitation, rather than as having agency (Latorre and Malo-Larrea 2019: 389). In this context, Western ontology looks to have objective control of the world through the reduction of intentionality in order to obtain a perfect/objective picture of the world. Within this paradigm, the scientific approach reduces every action to a causal chain of material interactions, where the observer does not take action (Viveiros De Castro 2019: 28; Latour 1993). In this ontological scheme, objects remain passive and non-human forms of representation and enaction, are overlooked. The only way for non-human of having agency is by linking them with human actors, either as networks of human- non-human, or as hybrids (Latour 2005). This derives in the agency from humans and disclosing the 'participation' of non-humans in actions (Latour 2005: 15: 1993).[86] In this process, the intentionality of non-human participants is denied, they cannot act in the place of the human, having an intermediary role 'in action that falls between "full causality" and "sheer inexistence"' (Hill 2018b: 1192). In this perspective, subjects and objects are result of a process of objectification as the subject 'constitutes/recognizes itself in the objects it produces, and the subject knows itself objectively when it comes to see itself from the outside as an "it."' (Viveiros De Castro 2019: 26). In this way, the point of view creates the object and knowledge from the distance.

This form of dualism between subject and object, is also appreciated in the heritage field, where heritage forms create 'distinct objects and subjects, enrolling them into solid constellations, through stable linkages' (Appelgren 2014: 149). For example, historical plazas, churches, sites or practices can be objectified and linked to places, people or memories. These types of practices can be claimed, displayed or owned for others including those forms of AHD that organise and define the other territorialising by 'one existence and one's history' (Appelgren 2014: 247). However, this conceptualisation is mainly linked to hegemonic forms of heritage and does not provide the tools or skills for disclosing other ways of being and thinking about heritage (Escobar 2018: 112). For Matthew Hill, to challenge this

[86] In this case I write non-human with the dash as it is how Latour writes it, in that way he also reproduces the distinction and separation between human and non-human.

conceptualisation implies displacing assumptions about the stability, singularity or externality of heritage and rethink materiality as something else than a mediation (Hill 2018b, 2018a).

In this vein, Viveiros de Castro (2002, 1998, 2019, 2004) explains how in Amerindian societies to say that animals and spirits are persons implies the personification and attribution to nonhuman of a 'conscious intentionality and social agency that define the position of the subject' (Viveiros De Castro 2019: 24). In this case, to know is linked to the capacity of taking the point of view of what we want to know, where subjects are capable of communicating with humans in a reciprocal and intentional stance. This requires maximum intentionality implying that *'the point of view creates the subject*: whatever is activated or "agented" by the point of view will be a subject' (Viveiros De Castro 2019: 25).[87] In this context, bodies are not understood as material 'things', rather an assemblage of affects engendering different 'points of view' or perspectives (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 6).

These notions are slowly being incorporated to the heritage field, accepting we are not only observers 'picking our way around the objects lying about on the ground of a ready- formed world' (Ingold 2011: 129), rather we are implicated as participants with a world in formation. Becoming participants, implies a different set rule for conforming new worlds, and particularly when thinking about heritage. Then, the question is, how to rethink heritage in ways that considers the agencies of the nonhuman?

In this regard, some authors have criticised the cartesian ontology arguing that 'heritage is not simply an inert "something" to be looked at, passively experienced or a point of entertainment' (Waterton, Silverman, and Watson 2017: 8), but it implies a more complex web of relations that brings the past into the present through the creation of connections and reconnections. For example Rodney Harrison, understands heritage as 'a series of diplomatic properties that emerge in the dialogue of heterogeneous human and non-human actors' (Harrison 2015: 24). He proposes the notion of a plural heritage ontology that open the assembling future capacities of heritage to different ways and practices of enacting reality, and therefore different futures (Harrison 2020: 40). This turn, as discussed before, considers posthumanist perspectives that drawns to the 'ontological politics of connectivity' (Harrison 2013: 216). In this context, Harrison and Deborah Rose's approach to Indigenous ontology suggests a philosophy of "becoming" (2010: 250) in which the constant becoming combines life and place, binding living beings and time into generations of continuity 'that

[87] Emphasis original.

work collaboratively to keep the past alive in the present and for the future' (Harrison 2015: 27), leading to a definition of heritage as:

> collaborative, dialogical and interactive, a material-discursive process in which past and future arise out of dialogue and encounter between multiple embodied subjects in (and with) the present (Harrison 2015: 27).

For Harrison, this implies paying attention to material arrangements, texts and technologies and considering how heritage is produced in conversation with them, although he does not explain how this dialogue is enacted. Despite this, this formulation is a contribution that attempts to transcend human subjecthood to integrate other processes and agential forces. Instead of seeing heritage as an only human phenomenon, it presents a crossing between human and nonhuman and articulates and approaches in a way that may help to understand 'the complexity of ongoing processes of subject-formation' (Sterling 2020: 1034), engaging with post-humanist thinking.

This way of post-humanist thinking is highly influenced by animistic worlds, in which there are not objects as such. For example, Denise Arnold and Elvira Espejo Ayca in *El textil tridimensional: la naturaleza del tejido como objeto y como sujeto* (2013) explore how in the region of Qaqachaka (Bolivia), the textile is subjectobject that have agency in a net of wider social relationships, in which 'la tejedora está relacionándose con otro sujeto, otro ser viviente que ella, mediante sus actividades […] debe traer a existencia y luego respetar con referencia a sus características' (2013: 185).[88] This interspecies interaction, activates a new dimension of understanding and knowledge, as both human and nonhuman are affected in corporeal ways (Calvimontes Díaz 2021: 195). Here, the bond between the weaver and the textile starts with the *crianza del ganado,* the transformation into the yarn, the process of dying colour and goes beyond the elaboration of the textile as a finished product.[89] In addition, weaver and textile share embodied link that is acknowledged as part of a lineage. In Arnold and Espejo research, the textile have a heart and a soul and is recognised as 'objetos complejos y compuestos en un estado de construcción dinámica, y luego en descomposición y decadencia, o posible reutilización' (Arnold and Espejo Ayca 2013: 62), as they live, they can die.[90]

[88] 'The weaver is relating to another subject, another living being that she, through her activities[...] must bring into existence and then respect with reference to her characteristics'.
[89] livestock rearing.
[90] 'complex and composite objects in a state of dynamic construction, and then in decay and decay, or possible reuse'.

This kind of cosmology (Andean) does not separate between mind and matter as all beings, animate or otherwise, are interconnected through *ayni* 'the fundamental reciprocal "give-and-take" that controls and circulates vitality in the Andean world' (Spence-Morrow 2018: 212). *Ayni* is a Quechua word that means *cooperación y solidaridad en mutua reciprocidad* (Monsalve 2017: 3).[91] It relies on the coexistence of the vitality within all substances, in this way, it attributes agentive animacy to material objects. For example, gestures as such as the spinning of yarn are the result of working together with the weaver in a field of forces, where the energy of the weaver is directly combined with the energy of the instruments whose movement she directs (Arnold 2018) emphasising in the mutual agency between them. For Ingold's:

> things are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit – whether in or of matter – but because the substances which they comprise continue to be swept up in circulations of the surrounding media that alternately portend their dissolution or – characteristically with animate beings – ensure their regeneration. Spirit is the regenerative power of these circulatory flows which, in living organisms, are bound into tightly woven bundles or tissues of extraordinary complexity (2007: 12).

Another example of this can be found during the colonial era in the Abya Yala. The violence of colonisation brought with it a series of subjugations and divisions. With the imposition of Christianity and the struggle against the idolatry many practices were confided be clandestine, as they threatened Christian and Western ideas. Then, textiles, 'decorative' objects, mummies, *keros* (ceremonial coups), *wakas* (ceremonial centres) and *khipus*, among others, were declared idolatry objects, prohibiting their use and commanding their destruction affecting the Andean religion and the cultural identity (Gareis 2004; Urton 2017).[92] Native people was forced to learn the official language (Spanish) and respond to colonial practices. Meanwhile, the popular and vernacular characteristics were displaced to intangible forms of knowledge and heritage, such as in oral traditions, weaving or as 'crafts'. However, many of them resisted the passage of time through a process of adaptation and change, by means of appropriation, hybridisation, and resignification, between elements of the European and pre-Columbian cultures.

[91] Cooperation and solidarity in mutual reciprocity.

[92] Particularly the khipus were a threat to the Spanish novelty because they contained the legal accounts and information regarding the ownership of the land by the Inkas from precolonial times (Urton, 2002).

Within the campaign of the extirpation of idolatries, the production of paintings representing Christian figures had an important role in the indoctrination and imposition of the new religion and values. However, it also was used as a tool of resistance of those subjugated world views. It is known that the role of images in religious context is to represent something outside of the painting, in this case, Christian figures. While colonial paintings were trying to bring the image of the saint to the indigenous world, for indigenous people the power of the paintings lay in the materiality of such (canvases, pigments, metal, stone, etc.) (Siracusano 2011). In other words, there was a reflexive dimension in terms of the materiality and presence related to the sacred. The material agency of mountain, soil, metal, or local stone, etc. was present in the painting as pigment or frame, that when used to represent either a Virgin, the Holy Spirit or any other saint; was transferred, having power in themselves and not recalling something external to the painting as Western representation works. For example, in a painting of a Virgin Mountain or *Virgen Cerro*, the representation of the virgin was not relevant as something exterior, rather the painting itself, the pigments were enacting the force of the mountain through the materiality. Meaning that the painting was not possessed by a spirit, or representing it, but rather the mountain was present as pigments in a process of swept, flow and circulation. Vital forces are not created out of nothing, but transformed form one material form to another, from one form to another. It is not as adding an 'agency-giving' ingredient but rather 'a mutual effort in circulating life force in relational fields directed towards achieving the full potential of each element' (Arnold 2018: 256). Then, bringing things to life is a way 'of restoring them to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist' (Ingold 2007: 12).

This implied an economy of mutual animation, as the 'continuity in sustaining the being, an ongoing relationship *camay* and *camasca*' (Tateleán 2019: 20). *Camay*, is understood as an specific kind of essence, force or power.[93] It is a vital force 'movilizada por la captura y transferencia de fuerzas y principios vitales entre las distintas comunidades humanas y no-humanas del cosmos' (Arnold 2020: 164).[94] This notion implies a constant movement, change and transformation of the world as important elements to understand how the world, nature, society, heritage and the earth are conceived (Swenson and Roddick 2018: 18). Summing up, in these conceptions 'things are their relations […] While moderns occupy space, nonmoderns dwell in places by moving along the lines and threads that produce the place'

[93] Also: *Camac* (Taylor 1987) or *Kamay* (Arnold 2017) in Quechua, or *Kamasa* in Aymara.
[94] 'mobilised by the capture and transfer of vital forces and principles between the different human and nonhuman communities of the cosmos'.

(Ingold 2011: 70) inhabiting a world that is alive. In this sense, for the Yorta Yorta curator and writer Kimberley Moulton ‘cultural belongings, whether old or new, are constantly awake, and recharged when they have community with them. There is a reciprocal channel that is opened when community connect' (Moulton 2018: 210).

This way of thinking about material agency brings new questions to the way we think about heritage and its management. It also raises questions about heritage as something more-than-representation in mutable and generative ways. Furthermore, these examples of relational ontologies expand, firstly, the question of the in-between, what happens with the forms of heritage that, in the words of Escobar ‘lives partially outside of the separation between nature and humanity but who also live with it, ignore it, are affected by it, utilize it strategically, and reject it’ (2018: 217). And secondly, if we consider that historically, heritage has been defined as something of the past, for the future, this definition is still referring to something outside of heritage, whether it is ‘past’ or ‘future’. Rather, the notion of the material agency, for example, where the power and force of the pigments relates to a ‘here and now’ in the painting, not only challenges the representational characteristic embedded in colonial forms of heritage but also challenges the temporalities in which heritage is normally conceived.

Time-Space *Chakanita*

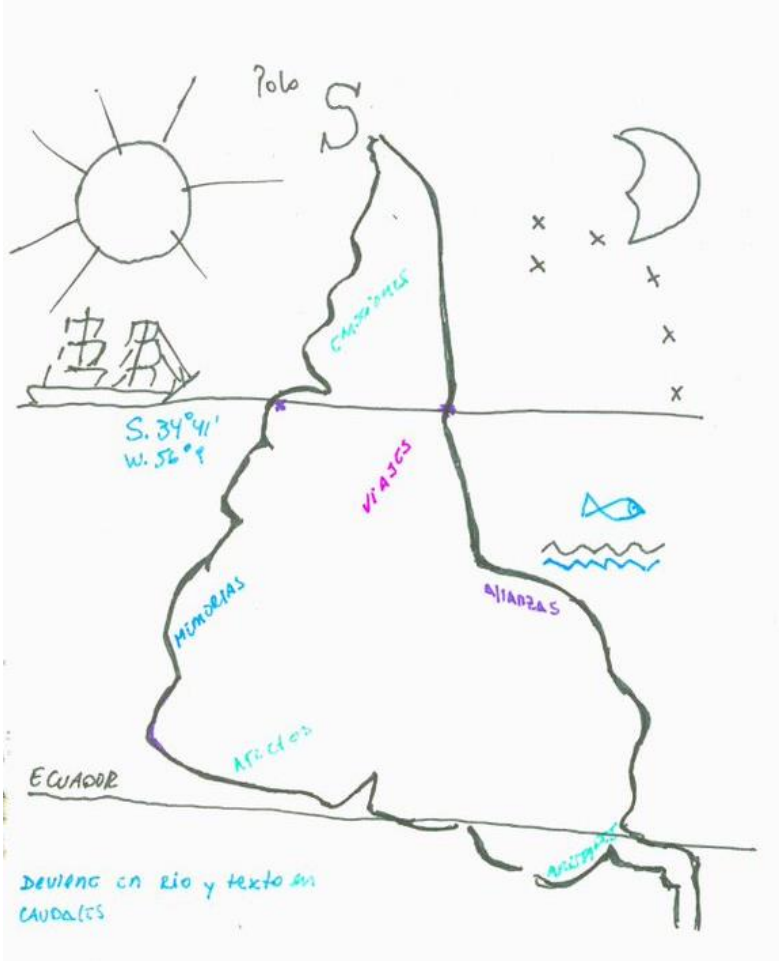

Figure 12 Reinterpretation of América invertida, Joaquín Torres García,1943 *©Victoria Vargas Downing*

Heritage is complex and layered, as part of its modern configuration, it is influenced by a series of aspect that shape our relation to it, whether its design or their cartesian divisions, heritage have been defined by its management and by its relation to time. Normally assumed within its linear dimension, heritage is something 'from the past, in the present and for the future'. This is a notion of time is embedded in colonial and modern forms of time hierarchisation and conceptualisation. In this *chakanita* I will explore the time-space notions present in the heritage field, going from the linear feature to its anticipatory approaches, to finally explore alternatives to linearity and their implications to the heritage field.

From the past, in the present and for the future

In the contemporary context, heritage has been veiled by its relationship to modernity, nature and time. We separate, categorise, and define objects, concepts and problems, as a way of seeing them, identify them and solved. In this line, we take our distance because it allows us

to explore and organise the world; it helps us analyse it and study it properly. Western culture teaches us to divide knowledge into fields, to separate the land with lines, to take distance between nature-culture, subjects-objects, and 'us' and 'them'. At the same time, we are taught to follow straight lines as routes to reach the dreams of modernisation, development and progress. In this regard, the Judaeo-Christian tradition introduced a linear concept of time that was reproduced and replicated during colonial times until today (Mignolo 2011a: 107-08,55). Later, the 'Tratado de Tordesillas' drew a line that expropriated and separated lands between Castillians and Portugal in 1500 A.D., mapping the world not only into dividing lines but between the known and unknown. For Mignolo (2011a: 168), the division of the world into lines also resulted in the control of time:

> the zero line longitude that unites the two poles, vertically, and that crosses the heart of England's Greenwich observatory, reconverted the spatial global linear thinking into temporal global linear thinking. The zero line of longitude was also a zero point of epistemology, controlling time by establishing that "all countries would adopt a universal day".

This separation between time and space, also explains the separation between nature and culture, as the linear notion of history organises the world, separating it from the confusion of nature under a global linear time and a singular narrative (Villanueva Criales 2020). As consequence, modern-time became a fundamental factor for connecting imperial and colonial differences throughout the globe (Mignolo 2011a: 168), naturalising ideas of 'progress, development, and, most recently, neoliberal globalization' (Fúnez-Flores 2022: 30).

This unidirectional rational thought conceptualised time on an evolutionary scale (Quijano 2007), while the scientific revolution achieved greater control over nature taking distance from nature, and, from the past and the future. Europe was established as Modern and present, temporally displacing racially 'inferior' or sexually deviant people outside of the present; in this context, a modern and civilised Europe belongs to the present, and the 'otherness' is relegated to the past; as traditional and barbarian (Fabian 1983). This distinction made the past different from the present, leading to the demarcation between the West and non-West, between coloniser-colonised (Mignolo 2011a; Hunfeld 2022). In addition, the past was something distanced from the present, constituting 'the founding principle of history' (Bevernage 2016: 353). For Maldonado-Torres, 'la modernidad es un estado de conciencia sobre cómo lo presente sobrepasa el mundo antiguo'(Maldonado-Torres 2012: 17).[95]

[95] 'Modernity is a state of awareness of how the present surpasses the ancient world'.

Therefore, the correspondence of modernity with the present resulted in the displacement of the nonmodern to the past (Blaser 2013: 549).

For Johannes Fabian, this point of view is called denial of coevalness, which is understood as 'the problematic simultaneity of different, conflicting, and contradictory forms of consciousness' (Fabian 1983: 146). For him, the colonial conceptualisation of time reinforces the mental distance between 'the intellectual outsider, belonging to dominant society (Self) and the 'primitive' or 'traditional' poor (i.e., dominated and exploited) peoples-as-objects' (Jansen and Pérez-Jiménez 2017: 1), helping to sustain claims of epistemic superiority and neocolonial logics (Bevernage 2016).

In this framework, the Hegelian schema presented history as a progression, a synchronisation of the rhythm of labour meshing with industrialisation. The narrative of time 'built up in the form of annals and compared over time, became the foundation of the event-based linear histories of early modern Europe' (Urton 2017: 18), making time lineal and accumulative; while its narrative became an 'objective' account of the past. Time as an extension of human existence became a resource, being objectified in monetary terms. In this linear dimension, the sense of time mutated, for Latour (1993: 68-69)*:*

> moderns have a particular propensity for understanding time that passes as if it were really abolishing the past behind it… since everything that passes is eliminated forever, the moderns… sense time as irreversible arrow, as capitalisation, as progress*.*

In this sense, the arrow presents the past behind and the future ahead, as if it is possible to see the future despite the infinite distance. As we move towards the future (modernisation, progress and development) we take distance from the past. Then, to see the past, we have to look just over our shoulders, and somehow, immediately after, we are forced to move forward pushed to face a blurry future, hoping to accomplish its promises of development and progress. As time moves forward, everything in the past is in danger of being erased by time, of being temporally classified and excluded from belonging to the now. The irreversible arrow of Latour does not allow us to come back, presenting the past as something fragile that we have to take care of or as something confined to 'the past' (Smith 2006: 12). Thus, we are taught that not only that the past is separated from the present, but it is behind, and the future is beyond. In that distance, the past loses its continuity with the present, and its transference resembles more an imposed value than a current significance.

Fixed in that linear dimension, what is in the past stays there, and moderns must move away to achieve the promise of a better future. This contrast between the past, and the future makes of heritage a determining factor in the conceptualisation of modern societies. On the one hand, the past becomes a memory at constant risk of loss that we have to take care of and transfer for the future and on the other, the future is uncertain. Considering this, how to manage an uncertain future? And which strategies have heritage used?

Anticipating (an) uncertain futures

As we have seen, the linear dimension of time within Western thought presents the past as something in the back and the future in front. This perception of time, as linear and separated from the space, has heavily influenced the ways in which heritage has been approached. Although the increased questioning of this linear dimension, heritage policies and theoretical approaches are still rooted in this distinction. In this section, I will explore how linearity has framed heritage approaches through the management of uncertainty and anticipatory policies.

Ultimately perceived as a problem, uncertainty deals with how to make reliable and safe what is precarious or in danger of being lost (May and Holtorf 2020). Uncertainty, on the one hand, deals with the optimisation of resources for the future, anticipating risks and taking precautions, and, on the other, it emphasises what is important, what to keep and maintain for the future. In this appreciation, the organisation of time into linear sequences appears as a way of organising the past and reducing the uncertainty of an unpredictable future that we need to prepare for. For Latour (1993: 69), the modern relationship with the past is enacted through conserving everything from that past as something distant from the present (conservation ethos). In this context, what is conserved can be seen but not used or touched, as it does not belong to the present. This temporal appreciation is also explored by Vázquez (2009), for whom modernity praises the present 'as the site of the real and the future as the horizon of expectation, [a teleology of progress] and the ultimate source of meaning' (Vázquez 2009).

While for Rodney Harrison (2020: 21) the relationship between modernity, time and heritage is one of simultaneities, in which:

> modernity creates for itself pasts and futures that are perceived to be both immanent (contained within) and imminent (impending) in the present. This simultaneity of the past and future in the present is part of the way in which

> the experience of modernity is emphasised as one of *rapid progress* and technological and social *change*. Heritage in such contexts emerges as a set of *material practices* concerned with *anticipating* and *resourcing* more or less distant futures in the present.[96]

However, the concern about resourcing the future is still based on the linear notion of time. In this case, the anticipation and resourcing of the future relates to uncertainty as the perception of endangerment and risk, have a fundamental role in the designation of heritage value (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020: 1). Making heritage management not only concerned with material testaments of change but also anticipating the inherent uncertainty and the risk of loss that the future implies (Harrison et al. 2020: 11). This type of policies and linear movement is identified by Anderson (2010), and Jeffrey and Dyson (2021), as anticipatory policies.

Anticipatory policies look to preserve the present 'against the deprecations of hypothesised dangerous futures' (Jeffrey and Dyson 2021: 645). The anticipatory movement uses visions of the future to manage complex governance processes, where discourses of emergency, threat, and crisis are used to justify acts and interventions in the present, preventing change. For Anderson, Institutions and governments engage more frequently with anticipatory politics, '(re)making life tensed on the verge of catastrophe in ways that protect, save and care for certain valued lives, and damage, destroy and abandon other lives' (Anderson 2010: 793). Similarly, for Jeffrey and Dyson, anticipatory politics 'depends upon governing as if the subject of that emergency is already there in embryonic form in the present' (2021: 643). Hence, practices such as risk assessments, preventive policies and control of change, seek to minimise undesirable or 'negative' impacts, by taking suitable precautions that can optimize the outcome for desirable futures, or resourcing desirable futures. In other words, by focusing on the danger and risk of the upcoming future, anticipatory politics manage, control and avoid change through preventive measures that render a more controlled future.

This means that in terms of heritage, objects, practices and places considered of 'collective value' need to be classified and organised as a means of being identified and protected against risk and loss (Harrison 2013: 28-29). For example, Natural and cultural heritage are commonly defined and designated considering implicit and explicit risks and threats over practices, places or objects perceived to hold collective value.[97]

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[96] Emphasis added.

[97] However the decision of that collective value relies on authority figures, see 'Us'-'Them' in Ontological Chakanas: Non-cartesian *chakanitas*.

In this configuration, heritage is defined by its practices of control and identification, denomination and securitisation of the existence of those practices, places and objects into the future (Harrison 2020: 35). These forms control, prevention, suspicion and minimisation of risk are known to hegemonic heritage practices and domains as they are 'tasked with preserving endangered object[s] for the "future"' (Harrison 2015: 34). For this reason, domains are a form of "futurology" that is 'actively engaged in the work of assembling and caring for the future' (Harrison 2015: 34-35). Then, domains expressed in actions such as identifying, collecting, categorising, curating, conserving, and managing are entrusted to overcome the threats of globalisation, the modern world, and other potential risks, through the establishment of conservation targets and the application of specific techniques *for* the future, preventing factors for possible threats. This future orientation is foundational to the politics defining heritage, at least in its Western canonical conception. In this sense, Holtorf and Högberg (2015: 510-11) explains:

> heritage management is a futuristic activity because to a large extent it is motivated by the present-day desire to preserve the remains of the past for the benefit of future generations. This makes the heritage sector a future-targeting type of business. It is based on a professed notion of the importance of what is constituted as an underlying conservation ethos.

Here, the past appears as something fragile, in constant risk and in danger of being lost in need for protection (Harrison 2013: 46); then, the possible changes and the future of those practices, objects or sites, are framed as a problem to be solved reinforced via heritage management and institutional policies (Waterton and Watson 2013: 549). These policies and management strategies apply 'a process of segregation and separation [where] tangles are untangled through a kind of semiotic and material boundary work' (DeSilvey 2017: 130). In this separation and boundary, the distinction between natural and cultural is preserved as gesture of 'conservation' or 'restoration'.

For Þóra Pétursdóttir (2020), conservation and preservation practices separate culture and nature by seeing objects of heritage 'as the compliant subjects of stewardship, management and control' (Pétursdóttir 2020: 97), and also by maintaining the distinction between subject and object as stable conceptualisations (Appelgren 2014: 249). From here, the past and heritage are framed as something passive and inactive to be seen, studied and preserved, ideally in the state of 'conserve as found' (Smith 2006: 90) or as frozen; as a resource for the

future.[98] In this regard, for García Canclini (1999: 23), anticipatory politics tend to conserve and preserve a past which its only sense is:

> es guardar esencias, modelos estéticos y simbólicos, cuya conservación inalterada servirá precisamente para atestiguar que la sustancia de ese pasado glorioso trasciende los cambios sociales. Quedan fuera de esta política los bienes precarios o cambiantes, los que sólo documentan prácticas populares o acontecimientos culturales, sin alcanzar un puesto sobresaliente en la historia culta de las formas y los estilos. [99]

In other words, the preservation of heritage and its anticipatory politics are linked to a sense of fixation of history in which, a monumentalised past, that has been 'canonised […] pretends to be unchanging' (Vázquez 2020: 35). In this sense, the fixation of hegemonic forms of heritage is associated with a sense of stability where 'visible and visitable territorialized material heritage is engaged to stabilize the past, to stabilize places, and to stabilize communities' (Appelgren 2014: 249). In this context, the need for conserving is justified because loss is seen as a 'fatal undermining of stability and integrity' (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020: 3). Therefore, the movement that hegemonic practices and domains follow is a linear direction: heritage is something 'of the past, in the present [and] for the future' (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020: 2). Then, the conservation of the material remains, in the shape of objects or ruins of the past, suggests that the past cannot be touched because, in this gaze, it is not ours; it belongs to the future, contributing to the disconnection of the past with the values and aspirations of heritage in the present and prolonging that disconnection into the future. As a result, the transference of heritage is closer to an imposed value than a current connection. Under this gaze, by changing, manipulating and touching that past, the future would be utterly unstable, as if the objects only generate meaning through their preservation and persistence and not through the destruction and disposal (DeSilvey 2017: 29).

The past as political tool, is maintained in the present and *for* the future, without specifying if that future is the same as the present, or what or who is included in that future. In this respect, Holtorf and Högberg emphasise that heritage institutions need to make explicit the futures they are working for (2015: 519). Especially when the future appears as a 'blank

[98] Also, as a resource that the future may not be allowed to use, because it needs to be preserved for the next future.

[99] 'It is to keep essences, aesthetic and symbolic models, whose unaltered conservation will serve precisely to testify that the substance of that glorious past transcends social changes. Excluded from this policy are precarious or changing goods, those that only document popular practices or cultural events, without reaching a prominent position in the cultured history of forms and styles'.

separate from the present [we do not know what or whose future] or that the future is a telos towards which the present is heading [maintaining the same direction]' (Anderson 2010: 778). For this reason, the future-orientation of anticipatory politics not only reproduces the linear assumption entailed by the Western future, but also maintains practices and objects that ensure linear progress, reproducing accumulative and extractive practices, and maintaining the present and future unchanged.

As a result, the movement of anticipatory practices is oriented to a specific image of the future that is not addressed but assumed as better, without considering more-than-human agencies and how they 'shuttle between durability and vulnerability in response to social and physical forces often outside our control' (DeSilvey 2017: 8). In the idea that objects, places and practices must be conserved and preserved *for* the future, the agency of the more-than-human is not considered, and the capacity of engaging and empowering the present is denied, imposing or preventing a specific type of future and not allowing its renewal. Within this framework, conservation and preservation take relevance because they resource specific futures 'by acting on or around certain physical or non-physical objects and subjecting them to particular practices of 'care'' (Harrison et al. 2020: 4). While anticipatory politics favours preserving the past, in the present *for* the future, they reproduce assumptions about linear temporality controlling how that future may look like, and maintaining divisions such as subject-object, 'us' and 'them'. Care is enacted as an imposition rather than a relationship, becoming a paternalistic act over subjects, objects and time. In other words, the same arrow that forces us to move to the future also tries to protect or conserve places, sites and objects as a way of maintaining power structures untouched. Then, how to think alternative ways of engaging with the future rather that dominate it? How to approach the issue of loss in a different way?

Heritage Ongoing-ness

As we saw anticipatory politics use a sense of threat, emergency, and crisis to justify interventions in the present, while also controlling what specific future is worth of conserving without specifying what or for whom is that specific future. This type of policies creates a narrative based on objects and sites of the past, where coming back is possible only in terms of protecting the remains and ruins. However, in the last years, the heritage field have been questioning the assumption of loss and uncertainty through a second line of thought that can be described as an ongoing-ness. In this brief section I will be describing some of authors that infuse the question on how to deal with loss and uncertainty with more organic and

alternative approaches, such as: Pétursdóttir (2013); (2020) Holtorf and May (2020) and DeSilvey (2017); (2020).

Among the assumptions of the linear and Cartesian temporarily, we found the issue of conservation for the future. In recent years, this issue has been explored by different authors whether proposing a critic or a turn. For example, for Þóra Pétursdóttir (2020), defining or protecting heritage against change, loss or deterioration is an issue that talks as much about envisioning the future as something stable; as about establishing a fixed version of the future (Pétursdóttir 2020: 98). In addition, for this author, in the reproduction of these practices, the future is seen as a 'matter of design(ation)' (Pétursdóttir 2020: 97), if not the imposition of a fixed future. While Pétursdóttir anylises and critisises the outcome of canonical conservation practices, Caitlin DeSilvey argues in favour of reimagining the 'contours of another mode of attention that involves care without the attempt to control' (DeSilvey 2017: 169) and proposing that, what may appear as loss can also be generative of something new. In a similar vein, Trinidad Rico (2020) have explored the tension between the reconstruction of pre-disaster heritage and the possibilities of new forms of remembrance after the tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

Likewise, Holtorf and May (2020: 341); Holtorf and Fairclough (2013) have explored alternative strategies for responding to change, not as destruction or damage but as opportunities for transformation, framing uncertainty as a source of creativity, dynamism and freedom (Holtorf et al. 2013); and opening new forms of material and discursive management practices that can bring a 'broad participation and engagement, for exploiting favourable circumstances' (Holtorf and May 2020: 337). For Holtorf and May, this exploration of uncertainty 'also demands responsibility and invites affection, love and care for living being' (Holtorf and May 2020: 337). Finally, Jennie Morgan and Macdonald (2020); (also Macdonald, Morgan, and Fredheim (2020)), have explored processes of deaccessioning and disposal in museums through strategies of profusion and degrowth, challenging the assumptions of continued growth and accumulation, and questioning the need of conserving everything and forever.

Within this framework, for DeSilvey, approaching uncertainty in a different way implies to understand that heritage can be constantly renewed 'if the social relations and practices that give it meaning are sustained over time, even if the associated material fabric is substantially altered or erased' (DeSilvey 2017: 185). In these cases, the openness to loss and decay appears as a productive process that can allow other narratives to appear, move and

transform. In doing so, materiality is not conceived as a passive agent but rather as a multiplicity of arrangements within a system. Then, heritage as an ongoing process may help to open ourselves to 'more meaningful and reciprocal relationship with the material past' (DeSilvey 2017: 179).

However, despite the that sense of loss is being challenged by these perspectives, they are still rooted in the ongoing-ness of future-oriented practices, whether to stop decay or accept it. Although, it is important to mention that these practices associated with dealing with loss otherwise, open the floor for new and unexpected futures rather than aiming to control it or resource it. For Anderson (2010: 794), desired futures are made and expressed in diverse ways of welcoming, anticipating or waiting. Considering this, if the relation to heritage is future-orientated, in the form of anticipation or a sense of ongoing-ness, how can a different time relationship frame different questions within the heritage field? If heritage is a sort of futurology, is it possible to relate to the future otherwise? what happens if, for instance, the future is no longer in front?

Circulatory lines

As discussed before, with colonialism and enlightenment, a linear sense of time was imposed as an upwards trajectory in constant movement towards the future (Browning 2018: 126). In the same direction that capitalisation, development and progress, the lineal time creates a movement from primitive to modern, from uncivilised to civilised, *de involucionado a evolucionado.* It imposed a race towards evolution that conceals domination, and in the process 'nos arrebata la memoria y nos fija en el futuro' (Guzmán Arroyo 2019: 14).[100] The linear dimension imposed one time and one history as the time for production; a fixed past closed and locked in its documentary value; and left the present -as long as it is modern-, as the only site of real experiences (Vázquez 2009). The future as a horizon of thought is a constitutive part of the modern project, and heritage has played a relevant role in its engagement and use. In this section, I will explore how time is perceived and engaged in the Andes, particularly between Aymara and Quechua societies, and how this resonates within the heritage field.

While the West conceives time as a singular, chronological, arrowed time, other conceptualizations of time have been assumed as mythical, linked to nature or uncivilised by Western thought (Guzmán Arroyo 2019: 15). The societies with other-than-lineal time, such

[100] 'It snatches our memory and fixes us in the future'.

as: Métis, Anishinaabe nations, Andean, Maya, etc; have been underappreciated by rational schemes as they challenge the future orientation and the capitalist desire for accumulation and extraction. Then, notions such as *Buen vivir; Sumac kawsay,* or good living in Quechua, not only displace Western conceptions of knowledge, privileging diversity and recognising the value of nonhumans, but also rejecting the idea of progress and time as a straight line, admitting different types of temporalities and relational entanglements (Escobar 2020: 148).

For instance, the Bolivian feminist activist, Adriana Guzmán Arroyo, explains how in Quechua and Aymara societies time is understood as circular, 'el tiempo siempre viene y va, es constante, así como el círculo que no tiene punto de partida ni meta, no hay principio ni fin, todo es energía en movimiento'[101] (Guzmán Arroyo 2019: 15). In Quechua the word *nawpa* can mean: ancient, before of or ahead and *qipa*: following, next or behind; meaning that 'the past can lie ahead, while the future may reside "behind" the present' (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 244). While in Aymara, the past is called *Nayrapacha,* however *nayra,* are also the eyes, meaning that past and the present are 'associated with the visual field, because they are both known, while the future remains unknown and associated with the unseen' (Wilkinson and D'Altroy 2018: 113). For this reason, for Guzmán Arroyo 'nuestras abuelas y abuelos nos dicen que hay que caminar mirando al pasado porque el pasado está adelante, lo puedes ver, y el futuro está detrás, no lo conoces no lo puedes ver' (Guzmán Arroyo 2019: 15).[102] Furthermore, for the Bolivian scholar Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2015: 11); (2018: 84) the Aymara aphorism of '*Qhipnayra uñtasis sarnaqapxañani*' also reflects in this view. [103] For her, to locate the future behind implies to think the future as a load of worries that are better to have on the back, *en la espalda (qhipha)*, 'porque si se la pone adelante no deja vivir no deja caminar' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 84).[104]

This notion of the future in back, implies an ontological turn where the future is not seen as a threat, or imposed, while the past as possible future to come is 'understood as stored in a latent and virtual state' (Spence-Morrow 2018: 22). For Andean ontologies, the future does not come out of fear of loss, but out of daily 'practices that create better worlds in the now' (Jeffrey and Dyson 2021: 643) through activities that look for rebalancing the world in the here and now. With this in mind, *qhipnayra* 'es pensar con la conciencia de estar situadxs en

[101]'Time always comes and goes; it is constant, just like the circle that has no starting point or goal, there is no beginning or end, everything is energy in motion'.
[102] 'Our grandmothers and grandfathers tell us that we have to walk looking at the past because the past is ahead, you can see it, and the future is behind, you don't know it, you can't see it'.
[103] 'looking back and to the front (future-past) we can walk in the present-future'.
[104] 'because if you put it forward, it doesn't let you live, it doesn't let you walk'.

el espacio del aquí y ahora como un *taypi* que conjuga contradicciones y se desdobla en nuevas opciones' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 86). [105] In other words, to have the past ahead means that the past 'es lo único que conocemos porque lo podemos mirar, sentir y recordar' (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 84).[106] While the future stays in an unseen status. This means that for Andean cultures time is conceived as 'intimate and continuous present that need constant regeneration' (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 242).

Differently to Western ontologies, the idea of a distant past behind does not play a role within the Andes, because past and present are fused, sharing and inhabiting the same time-space (Spence-Morrow 2018: 17). In other words, in Andean ontologies, the past is not frozen nor understood as dead or musealised; but rather present, active, mutable, living and breathing (Tlostanova 2017: 5). In the Andes, the dead or 'ancestors' were not relegated to a remote sphere called 'the past' but instead were involved in social practices and day-to-day decisions (Spence-Morrow 2018: 16).[107] For example, Wilkinson and D'Altroy (2018) explains how for the Inkas, the past instead of being remembered because of its absence, was made kin and family in the present through practices of housing and feeding powerful wak'as (nonhumans) (2018: 129). As a result, memory, more than having a political purpose, intervened in the 'very warp and weft of history itself, remaking it so that the past literally took on a different form […] as a series of material relationship that could always be unravelled, and then rewoven in new ways' (Wilkinson and D'Altroy 2018: 127). In addition, the Bolivian academic Jaime Villanueva Criales, explains how the past as *pacha* (time space), was located in an identifiable place adjacent to the present and inhabited 'by active entities that affect the world of the living [which relates] with the past through a matrix of mutual feeding and consumption' (Villanueva Criales 2019: 271).

In simple words, within Andean ontologies, the past is perceived as inhering and animating the here and now, while the agents of primaeval times (ancestors, wak'as, Chulpas, etc) are still considered living social actors that can determine the unfolding of future events (Spence-

[105] 'It is to think with the awareness of being located in the space of the here and now as a *taypi* that combines contradictions and unfolds into new options'.

For Bouysse-Cassagne (1987: 31) *taypi* is understood as a mediation point; 'es el lugar donde pueden convivir las diferencias, es el tiempo mítico original, cuando diversas naciones –que más tarde serán tal vez enemigas-surgían del mismo centro' (Bouysse-Cassagne 1987: 29)// 'It is the place where differences can coexist, it is the original mythical time, when different nations – which later may be enemies – emerged from the same centre'.

[106] 'it is the only thing we know because we can look at it, feel it and remember it'.

[107] This also present in African societies under 'Ubuntu' (Hunfeld 2022: 112).

Morrow 2018: 15). Hence, time is understood as a continuous present constantly re-updating and reworking the dynamics and meanings elaborated since ancient times (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018: 64). Considering this, the past arises out of the present, no less than the present from the past, making them mutually sustained by each other (Wilkinson and D'Altroy 2018: 120).

As a consequence of this present-past or future-past dynamic, the assumption of memory as representation of the past renders unfeasible because the past is not perceived as distant or absent (Bray 2018), and because history is continually engaged with the here and now. In this sense, for Spence-Morrow (2018: 28) and Villanueva Criales (2020: 30), time is set in motion through the material renewing and engagement with the present. Therefore, how to act in specific circumstances emerge from interaction and involvement with the present and not from its abstraction.

In this setting, time and space are not understood as separated or in terms of abstract lines, borders or geographical boundaries. Instead, *pacha* is defined socially and ethically as concrete living spaces; ergo, a limit could be a mountain, a river, and so on (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 241). In this relational approach, for de Peruvian bioarchaeologist Maria Cecilia Lozada (2019: 103), life and death mirrored natural and celestial cycles that were constantly regenerated through cyclical and transitional ritual work (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 43). The rituals aimed to create balance in the daily enactments through repetition, establishing relationships between material and immaterial components of the world (Lugones and Price 2010: lx). Furthermore, for Diana Taylor (2003: 24) traditions re-enacted in various moments are 'stored in the body […], and transmitted "live" in the here and now', making present forms handed down from the past. In different words, the ritual entanglements, linked the sacred landscape in direct relationship with the 'forces that exist on earth and their connections to other worlds' (Tateleán 2019: 21). For Tateleán (2019: 21) this means that 'human beings are inextricably connected to the *pacha* and they establish a balance with it', in other words there is no separation between bodies and places (Garneau 2020b: 2). As result, the changes and transformation within *pacha* (time-space) are a very important feature to understand the Andean the conception of the world, nature, society and the earth.

The complexity of the concept of *pacha* implies worlds in constant movement, and as such, even when the present-past is precarious, this does not mean irreversible or in danger, nor it is concerned with the future. Rather, *pacha* as time-space, concerns the interdependence that sustain life in constant transformation. Therefore, a conception of time or history cannot

be conceived as linear but circulatory (Swenson and Roddick 2018: 18). The notion of circulatory history is also addressed by Tateleán (2019: 22) for whom 'history is not seen as a chain of events, but rather as a pattern of events'. It is different to modern understandings of *Pachakuti* or Mesoamerican fifth sun, which were translated to 'final judgment' or 'revolution', involving cycles of creation and destruction (Mignolo 2011a: 158); the cyclicity of the *pacha* is understood as a succession of 'reconfigurations, consisting of the reshaping or realigning of the world' (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 240). In this sense, it is a form of time and space that exceeds categories of modern history and tells a different story about the unfolding of the world (Blaser 2013: 548). In other words, rather than fixing notions, time in the Andes involves a dynamic sense, a constant enacting of the present instead of representing it, and a successive reconfiguration of interdependencies; here the present appears as mutable and dynamic. Contrary to Western conceptualisations, the Andean present does not exclude the past or impose a future*, sino que fluye en multiple tiempos y direcciones.*[108] It exists as a mesh of temporalities multiple and parallel, interacting and converging. As consequence the present is the time for caring in relation and dialogue, not by imposition.

In terms of heritage, the cyclical time challenge the hegemonic discourses and theories previously discussed in multiple ways. Firstly, having the future in the back questions the practices and policies that define heritage in the contemporary framework. While anticipatory policies impose a future, a heritage focused on the 'here and now' would respond to the needs and challenges 'here and how' through acts that attempt to rebalance the cosmos in that time-space (pacha). These rebalancing acts, allows us to establish new and intimate relationships with what is around us, including human and nonhuman agencies allowing us to think heritage otherwise. Secondly, centring us in the present, as multitemporal dimension and not as exclusion, envisions a meeting place that creates spaces for intergenerational and multispecies encounters (Hunfeld 2022: 112). In this way, cyclical or circulatory models embrace complex relationalities where making, remaking, visiting, revisiting, telling, and retelling are strategies for valuing 'how your lived current is entangled with all other currents' (Garneau 2020b: 2). In different words, whether is repairing, sharing, recognising conflicts, or healing them, the focus in the present looks for enacting better futures in the now through daily acts and rituals of reciprocity as forms of rebalance the world. In this sense, to understand the past, we need to face it, and this implies recognising

[108] but flows in multiple times and directions.

and addressing historical injustices, examining how memories are embodied and reflecting in the 'conditions, practices, practices, beliefs, norms, and institutions of the here and now' (Koggel 2014: 498).

Then, the idea of a circulatory heritage and time, recognises the timely rhythms, forms of recurrence and reiteration that appear in daily life and history, in an intimate relationship 'with the current we actually occupy' (Garneau 2020b: 2). Here, the idea of return or re-emergence, overflows the linear temporalities, and connects with the notion of heritage as the 'the totality of connections, disconnections and reconnections that constitute the past, over time, in places' (Waterton and Watson 2017: 47), admitting a movement beyond the hegemonic linearity and expressing different and changing relationalities. Similarly, for Knudsen et al. (2021: 11), the idea of re-emergence in heritage is

> used for the practices that, at least potentially, open up social space for new voices, affects and bodies forging relations or 'contact zones' between actors, which transcend both the antagonistic dichotomies of removal and the domesticating pressures of reframing, thereby opening up the possibility for a heritage practice that presents a lost opportunity from the past that returns to offer itself as a potential future horizon.

In addition, placing the past in front and not behind, as decolonial option, actively engage with the struggle against oblivion (Vázquez 2020: 129), can we forget what is in front of us? Or is it that we do not want to see it, or we do not have the tools for seeing it?

Considering this, notions such as return, re-connection and re-emergence, engage with the multiple temporalities of a past that is interacting with us. At the same time, reconnection, return and re-emergence, challenge other heritage practices and concepts, such as authenticity, representation, and conservation, as these concepts engage with transformation and reconfiguration. Moreover, the circulatory time, questions the orientation to the future and the load of the past, for example how much of that past can we load in our backs, before we cannot walk? How much of that vision of the future is interfering in our steps? Contrary to Harrison, who argues in favour of heritage as a form of 'futurology' (Harrison 2015: 35), the Andean perception recognises the presence of the past in the present, not as future, but as better present in interdependency. Then, while linearity forces us to keep moving towards the future, it does not allow us to appropriate and use the past as something active in the present. This means, that when the past is frozen in its 'conserve as found' status, is not possible to dig in the alternative's stories and voices that the future left behind, it does not allow to think in alternative interpretations or the interdependence of

that world left in the past, and it does not allow to create new meaning beyond the linear causality that constrain it. As Orr points out 'heritage is a cultural resource that informs contemporary life rather than remaining in the primordial past' (2017: 646), and as such it needs to be explored, entangle, touched, and faced, no matter how uncomfortable it can be, in that dialogue we can engage with healing possibilities of the stories and matter.

Finally, having the past ahead, implies a shift in the questions and the views of what heritage is and what can be heritage. For example, it questions the representative feature heritage as representation of the past, as the past is seen as alive and active in the here and now and not absent from the present. To think heritage within the present, as multi-temporal space, not only integrates the idea of successive reconfiguration, constant reshaping to the values and ideas into the present, but also integrate a hearing and listening of the world according to the needs of the present. Therefore, it is necessary to recognise that if we are here now, it is because what we have in front, 'we could or not be alive if we were not in this net of relations that is sustaining us' (Vázquez 2020: 156), but that recognition also implies to acknowledge, silences, violences as well as virtues. For Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 91):

> vivir en tiempo presente tanto el pasado como inscrito en el futuro (principio de esperanza), y como el futuro inscrito en el pasado (quipnayra), supone un cambio en la percepción de la temporalidad, es decir la eclosión de tiempos mixtos en la conciencia y en la praxis.[109]

Whether is by placing an ethos of minimising loss and threats or openness and change, challenging the linear appreciation of heritage is an attempt of decolonising the concept. It opens the space for new voices and agencies, recognising the embodied practices and understanding that past and present are together. Despite the efforts of the heritage industry, research and practice, heritage has tended to preserve what that remains in the surface. In this sense, exploring the Andean ontology for heritage analysis can bring new alternative ways of building connections with the past and the present, but also can help to rethink heritage out of modern regimes. It reminds us that when the future is in front of us, we will never reach it, however, by placing the past ahead we can recognise the energy of the matter, we can see the past and face it, and heal it. In other words, we move forward by facing the past. Not turning our back to it.

[109] 'Living in the present tense as both; the past and inscribed in the future (principle of hope), and as the future inscribed in the past (Quipnayra), supposes a change in the perception of temporality, that is, the emergence of mixed times in consciousness and praxis'.

Chakanitas que encuentro en los cerros

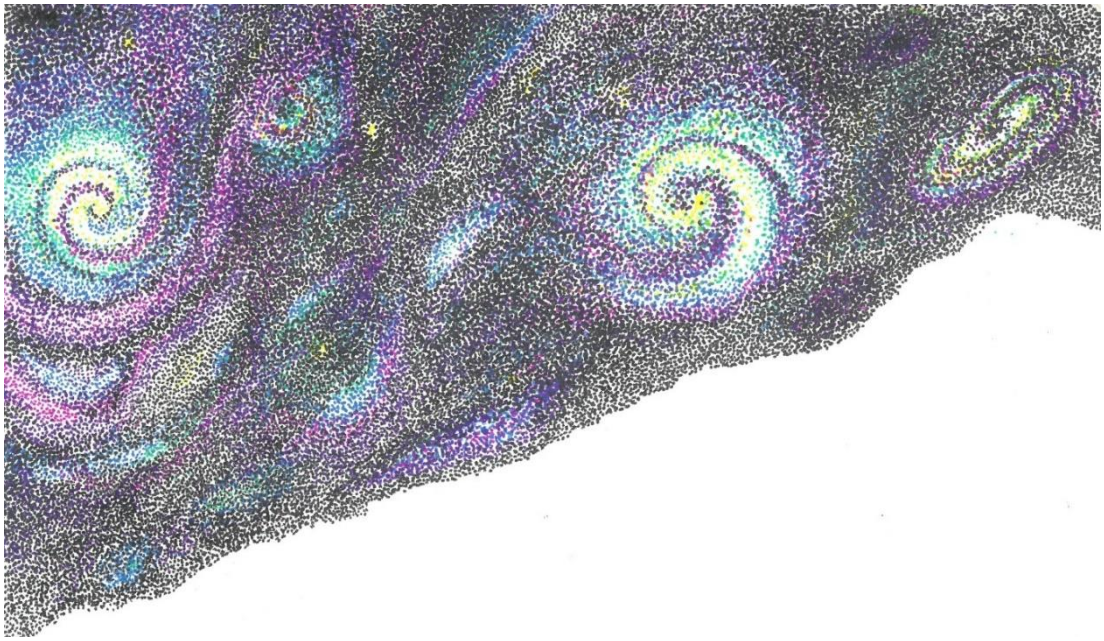

Figure 13 Quería llenar la página con múltiples universos pero descubrí los cerros enmarcando el cielo y mis palabras se volvieron mar---- I wanted to fill the page with multiple universes, but I discovered the hills framing the sky and my words became into sea. ©Victoria Vargas Downing

Threads of the Desert

I grew up in the Desert, but I went to traditional schools and universities; I am in a traditional Europe-based university. For my degree in Theory and History of Art (around 2014-2015), as a way of giving back to the Desert, I decided to make a cadastre of the Museums of the Desert. In my mind, the area to explore -Antofagasta Region- only had five museums; I checked multiple written sources, tourist notes, archives, and word-to-mouth tips, and I located 27 museums in total. I created a list with the aim of visiting all the museums and checking in person if they were still working. Full of assumptions, I made multiple trips where I encountered museums hidden between mountains, sand, volcanos, pukaras, valleys and salt lakes, and more than once, the museums found me in between oases, beside rocky cliffs, in cellars, small dark rooms and fully equipped rooms. I remember the sounds of the fiestas, trumpets, and brass of the syncretic celebrations around the locations of the museums or the sound of old keychains opening doors and warehouses. I remember that the smells of the old

rooms, unattended storages or the nearby volcanos were as impressive as the stories, collections, and fortuitous encounters that emerged on those journeys.

The museums were varied in their form, content, administration, and display. Minerals, geological, anthropological, communitarian, ethnographical and historical museums were some of the self-categorisations of those 27 museums. Some of them were focused on the region's history, the miner history from an industrial perspective or natural history; others were concerned with people's stories, and many were anthropological museums safeguarding the objects, textiles and bodies of ancient civilisations. Most of them displayed objects inside glass cases, separated from the viewer and isolated from the space that once they belonged and interacted.

Figure 14 Geoglyph of "Los Balseros", near Quillagua. The individual on the largest raft is 12.60 m long Photo: ©Fundación Patrimonio Desierto de Atacama.(This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons)

I have in my heart one museum in particular, which I found thanks to a short reference in an old book: the Museum of Quillagua, a small town of less than 200 inhabitants, also known for being an old Indigenous cemetery. Quillagua is a bit less than two hours' drive from my parents' house; the way is a dry and long road between mountains and geoglyphs in the middle of the Desert. I did not have an address, contact, or phone when I decided to visit it, but I trusted my luck and the town's size. I went there with an aunt, who, as a lucky charm, knew the only person sitting in Quillagua's plaza. This friend of hers took us to the person that had the keys of the museum. The museum key-keeper was a local old lady, she opened the museum for us and told us the history of the objects and 'mummies'. She explained to us that the museum used to be part of an archaeological collection made of diverse expeditions and

local findings in María Elena, but because of a petition from the local community, part of that collection was transferred to its current location.

Initially, the museum's objects seemed disconnected and isolated, not only because of their geographic isolation away from population centres and the museum's location in the middle of the Desert. But also because of a sense of lack of people around the objects and a lack of interaction with the practices that once gave them a function, they seemed asleep and uncommunicated with the Desert, but that is something expected within museums, particularly in such remote, almost random emplacement.

At that time, the research I had in my mind was for achieving my BA under the strict academic requirements of traditional and hegemonic Western education. As such, my attention was drawn to the objects, conditions of preservation and management practices. But something, or many things, in my encounter within that museum, completely changed my view. I remember the pots, the dusty glass cases, and cabinets when I entered to the museum, and how the museum key-keeper opened those cases and showed us the objects closer; she explained to us where they were from, the people that brought them, how they were used, etc. Her relationship with the objects, pieces and bodies was completely different to what I was used to seeing within museums and university contexts; she was talking and touching the objects, closely showing us the details, colours, fragments, opening cabinets and touching the human remains.

At the beginning of that interaction, my colonised mind only worried about the cross-contamination of her fingers, as minutes before, she was explaining to us how she was cooking a cuy (a sort of guinea pig and a traditional dish from the highlands in Chile and Perú) and that she was the baker of the town. I remember being incredibly uncomfortable while she was touching pots and taking leather and puma masks to show us mummified faces. The worst-case scenarios of my conservation modules. For Anzaldúa, ‘every paroxysm has the potential of initiating you to something new, giving you a chance to reconstruct yourself forcing you to rework your description of the self, world and your place in it’ (Anzaldúa 2002a: 547), in that moment, despite that my inner conflict was still latent, I let go of my craving for control and started opening myself to new perceptions, I left the difference emerge in between the ‘cuts’ of my assumptions. Between my bewilderment and wonderment, I left my preconceptions behind and started to humbly listen. I started to appreciate the subtleness of her gestures, seeing and feeling how something else was happening in that touching, in that interaction. The closeness with which she talked about the collection, the care and

relatedness was something I was not expecting. She was able to establish a connection, a bond or thread so strong that the objects seemed alive for the time she talked, those vulnerable objects appeared in that involvement and interconnection, and I felt as if she was presenting me with part of her family. She touched, talked to, and arranged the mummies' clothes and showed us their braids and wrinkles. For Leonardo Boff (2002: 78):

> cuidar de las cosas implica tener intimidad con ellas, sentirlas dentro, acogerlas, respetarlas, darles sosiego y reposo. Cuidar es entrar en sintonía con las cosas, auscultar su ritmo y estar en armonía con ellas.[110]

It took me a time to realise the worlds entangled in those acts of care, in those gestures of everyday responsibility. It was a world enacted in that interaction and dialogue, in that coming together (Icaza and Vázquez 2013: 649), of the multiple relationships between objects, practices and knowledges. For the museum key-keeper, her sense of responsibility was that in dialogue and interaction*, en un acompañar*.[111] In the Andes, the concept of *uywaña*, *crianza mutua,* describes a reciprocal flux 'expressed through metaphors of maternal/paternal care and feeding' (Villanueva Criales 2019: 277).[112] *Uywaña,* comes from a care 'desde un sentido íntimo de proteger, alentar o amparar [desde] de un entendimiento mutuo […] en un cuidado constante, cooperativo y armonioso, creando una comunidad' (Calvimontes Díaz 2021: 193).[113] I think that sense of care resonated in my visit to that museum as the elements of that collection were not just 'objects' and the mummified bodies were not dead; they were active and creating each other in that flux of interaction, generating life and protection. The *Uywaña* as a mutual affect, 'parte de un conjunto de procesos destinados a convertir a diferentes seres en personas' (Muñoz Morán 2020: 16).[114] For Catherine Allen (2020), the Andean world is built in terms of relationships, interconnectedness and interdependencies between entities that constantly create each other.[115] While for Ingold (2011: 68), a sentient universe is enacted in the transformative potential of a field of relations 'within which beings of all kinds more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence' (Ingold 2011: 68). I

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[110] 'taking care of things implies being intimate with them, feeling them inside, welcoming them, respecting them, giving them peace and rest. Caring is getting in tune with things, listening to their rhythm and being in harmony with them'.

[111] in an accompaniment.

[112] mutual nurturing.

[113] 'from an intimate sense of protecting, encouraging or sheltering [from] a mutual understanding [...] in a constant, cooperative and harmonious care, creating a community'.

[114] 'part of a set of processes aimed at turning different beings into people'.

[115] also see Escobar (2018: 105).

think that was happening in that visit, a form of bringing one another in co-existence, in that living together in acts of caring. That encounter made me see different things, as Allison Ramay argues, there is a lack of heritage polices that draw in the interaction and constant change, as most of them are focused on notions of separation and fixation (Ramay 2019: 9). In this sense, the 'collection' in that museum did not belong to a past; instead, they were there present and alive because of the interaction showing how 'life is interconnected with other lives through a mutual responsibility' (Tlostanova 2017: 6). The beings inside the museum were her kin, and she was introducing me her family.

At the same time, even though the narrative in the labels did not show the interconnection and interaction of the key-keeper and the collection; the collection was in a dialogue with the museum setting. It was not denying that space protecting, containing, and safeguarding the objects. Or better said, the relationship between the key keeper and the objects in the museum was not represented in the walls or labels but enacted in the space. Although my initial inner conflicts remained unsolved, the limits between what I knew was authorised within a museum and what was not were blurred. That encounter was the opportunity for reframing my own preconceptions (de la Cadena and Blaser 2018: 10). For Boff (2002: 32, 74-75), it is in that play of relationships where we construct our being and self-awareness in those 'emergent effects of encounters' (Tsing 2015: 23).

My perception, fully loaded with concerns about the future, mutated because of that encounter and its multiple interactions, and I could but wonder in what other ways I was colonised. That experience triggered a radical change in my appreciation of heritage, something I sensed before but did not recognise. I started to question my understanding of heritage and my own relationship to the ontologies I was imposed. The best way I can describe the sensation is like unknotting knots I did not know I had; and knotting and reknotting others that I did not realise I could knot. What I thought was uncomfortable became a form of self-awareness of how I perceived heritage and how heritage was something beyond museum walls. By integrating the tension of that encounter, the generative possibilities appeared in the multiple acts of care, where some of those colonial oppressions were untangled.

After that trip, I started volunteering at a contemporary art gallery and attending different art exhibitions. I remember that I began to see inside the art galleries the patterns I saw in the mountains, similar pots to those within the museums of the Desert and more objects, symbols and exchanges that recalled those trips in the Desert. However, the display was

different. For Randerson, Salmond, and Manford (2015: 45) arts creates 'new ways of envision, revisit and resist power relations', the objects or artworks were not inside cabinets, glass cases or isolated in the space, but mixed, integrated and interacting, and sometimes, even being touched by the artists. They were working in different ways, unveiling assumptions, showing something, interacting with the world and more-than-human forces, ultimately challenging the assumptions I had about heritage and art. Sometimes, even with precarious balancing acts, the artworks were trigging and unsettling my body in similar ways that when I visited the museum in Quillagua; opening and healing 'cuts'. For Paula Serafini, artistic practices of decolonisation challenge paradigms and concepts questioning the criteria, boundaries and limits imposed by hegemonic conceptions (Serafini 2022: 235). The artworks, were part of a reciprocal becoming of things into beings that bonded matter and energy to all life on the planet (Grosz 2008). They were enacting that experience of the key-keeper; bringing things into beings, and bringing that past into the present, creating a connection or coming together, that interdependence that was absent when I visited more traditional museums. Then how to think about heritage in a way that takes into account the interconnectedness? How to be willing to stage to unexpected encounters as a method of inquiry for conceptual reflexivity?

While the logic imposed in my education pointed to the separation, the Cartesian gaze and linear time; the experience in Quillagua and the contemporary art works I saw, showed me a logic of contact, coexistence, interrelatedness and non-linear time. In a similar way, while the hegemonic museum are ruled by notions of rationality, control and predictability against change and chaos, the artworks worked through notions of impact, expression of forces (Grosz 2008, 61) and a sense of experimentation without controlling the results, a sense of emergence (Barrett and Bolt 2007: 6). The interaction I saw in Quillagua, was also active in contemporary art works, both experiences, transformed the meaning and application of what is hegemonically perceived as heritage into something else. They used different resources and yet the outcome was similar: both experiences were decolonising heritage. In this context, the relationship between art and heritage has been briefly explored, while research exploring on decolonising heritage through contemporary art is even more scarce.

For Clarke and Yellow Bird (2021), creative expressions are means to 'help us to grow and develop through our own individual relationality with others in acts of communicating imaginative ideas through material, visual or aural form' (2021: 106). I think about the artworks I saw, works of Patricia Domínguez, Cecilia Vicuña, among others, they were generating that growth, that expansion by the use of 'heritage practices' or 'objects'. Whether

they were safeguarding traditional knowledge, showing contradictions, or healing painful stories, using a creative force as empowerment, or showing its precarity, or in words of María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017: 78) '[opening the] cuts in which heterogeneity can flourish'.

On the other hand, arts in its design capability:

> provide[s] a space, language, and method for envisioning and enacting other ways of organizing and making. Furthermore, as practice engages directly and deeply with ontological issues and has the potential to contribute to ontological shift (Serafini 2022: 235).

In this regard, the artistic engagements can pursue alternative ways of reconnecting with practices and knowledges that have been excluded within hegemonic worldviews. [116] In this manner, artworks can work in prefigurative ways enacting visions of change (Jeffrey and Dyson 2021: 643), promoting and sustaining ancestral knowledges and practices as a way of changing the present and reflecting in wider aspirations for social for change. They can propose alternative designs that contribute to the integration of plural ontologies in active ways. In other words, artworks open and make visible ignored parts while also exposing what has been purposefully hidden by those in power (Serafini 2022: 229).

This capacity for uncovering layers of meaning in the heritage field is recognised by different authors, and even, some argue that those uncovering processes might be difficult to achieve for curators or institutional directors (Cass 2020; Bouysse-Cassagne 1987). In this respect, 'art interventions open up discursive ways of seeing heritage' (Shaw, Bennett, and Kottasz 2021: 870). For Nick Cass (2020), the juxtapositions of contemporary art in historical settings create an active dialogue, emphasising the capacity to bring new materials to the light through artistic research and producing new and specific connections in visitors' experiences. According to these authors, the artworks can reveal neglected or new stories, materiality's, agencies and temporalities of heritage. Artworks, have the capacity to reconnect with present concerns, having an influence on heritage in how and what can be appreciated or practised as heritage. At the same time, 'art has a major role in visibilizing, platforming, and expanding both ancestral and new ideas and categories that can help us to understand and confront the violence of extractivism' (Serafini 2022: 227).

[116] Also as Cass, Park, and Powell (2020: 3) argues, sometimes one person heritage can represent other person oppression.

In this sense, artistic practices of decolonization deconstruct paradigms and concepts through the development of particular aesthetics (Page 2021), unsettling processes and the outputs of what is generally accepted as art or heritage. For Clarke and Yellow Bird (2021) forms of creative expressions have 'healing force' that once is liberated 'enacts resistance to epistemic colonization that privileges Western aesthetics' (2021: 117) forms. In other words, art is a tool for navigating tensions and power struggles within heritage. In addition, artmaking is inseparable from the decolonial struggle, as it gives Indigenous people the power to 'assert their presence and fuel cultural and political resurgence' (Chow, Carrington, and Ozanne 2022: 5).

While, it is accepted that the relationship between heritage and contemporary art can open a framework to 'mine the contested meanings and values of cultural heritage by intervening directly in it or by challenging the institutional containment of heritage within the museum/gallery' (Elias and Coffey 2018), I also argue it is also a tool for healing those struggles and conflictive memories, meaning that it can trigger new configuration and designs of heritage, and particularly one in which both are reciprocally constituted.

Figure 15 Pieles Rojas dress located in the Museo de la Vivencia Religiosa del Norte Grande, Tarapacá, La Tirana, Chile. (©Courtesy of the Artist Natalia Montoya)

For example, the work of the Aymara artist Natalia Montoya's *Totem de emergecia* (2022), was inspired by a female dress of the *Indios Pieles Rojas* (Figure 15) of the religious society of *Danzantes y Pieles Rojos* Damián Mercado**.** The dress was used for a religious dancing group that performs at the *Fiesta de la Tirana* (Figure 16), in the Tarapacá region in the north of Chile. The dress, that is currently exhibited in the Museo de la Vivencia Religiosa del Norte

Grande, it was used to enact dances in syncretic religious festivities that celebrate the *Virgen del Carmen*. The *Fiesta de la Tirana,* is part of what can be classified as immaterial heritage practice in the North of Chile. Each year thousands of pilgrims visit the *virgen* asking for favours and returning *favores concedidos.*

Figure 16 Fiesta de la tirana, 2021, Ph: Francisco Miranda ©Francisco Miranda, *This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*

In Natalia's work, the dress appears as an unexpected encounter that triggers questions and reflections about the figures of her childhood, appropriation and her Indigenous ancestry. In her work, *Totem de Emergencia n4 (Emergency totem n4, see Figure 17)*, from intuitive movements, she reconnects with the dress in the museum by using the same techniques of the dress in her totems. For her, by replicating the process and the materials, she starts to learn how the materiality behaves and works reconnecting with the imaginary of this festivity in *Pampa* and the dress with contemporary materials (Montoya Lecaros 2021).

The totems compose a body of work that reconnect with the wisdom and forms of the customs of La Tirana dances and the wisdom of the land. They establish an embodied dialogue that reconnects with her ancestors and an appropriated imaginary of what Indigenous 'should look like'. These sculptures are made of textiles, *entorchado*, MDF, embroidering and '*mostacilla*' or little seeds, glitter and feathers, bringing those ancestral roots to the present.[117] They integrate symbols to create material and symbolic relations

[117] Entorchado is a technique made of twisted cords and textures that bring volume to the garment.

between them and the world. In the making process, Montoya's work recognises the agency of the material, shaping and modulating the designs of her works.

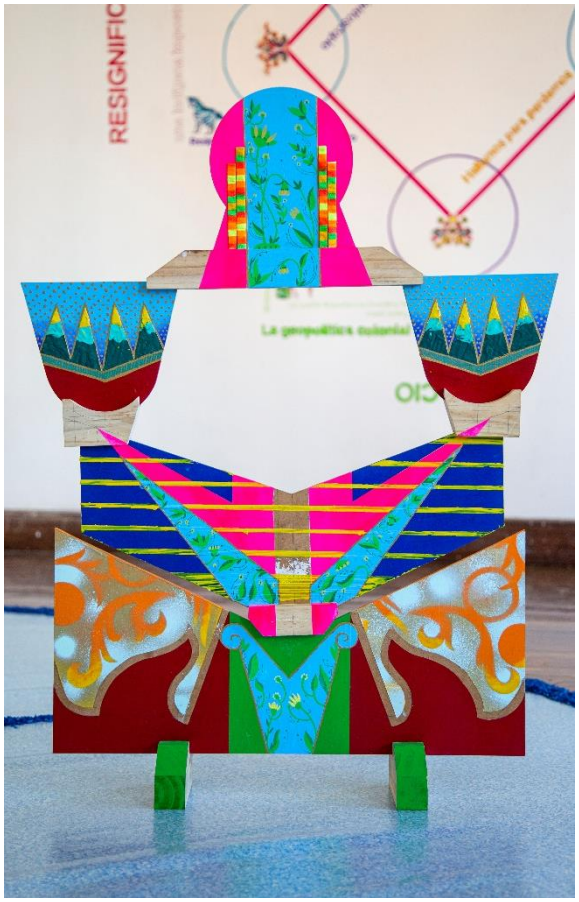

Figure 17 Natalia Montoya *Totem de Emergencia n4,* 55x45x120 cms, mixed media, (2022) Ph: Benjamín Matte ©Courtesy of the Artist Natalia Montoya

The forms are inspired by stars, the ornament of customs of the *Tirana* and ancient figures. Her concern is beyond what they could be in the past or how they will be interpreted in the future. Instead, it relates with finding ways of reconnecting with that past, acknowledging the gap to understand why they are important today. For her, the gesture of mixing the techniques and imaginaries works as an attempt of materialising intellectual and everyday perspectives of her cosmology, making of the Totems fundamental pieces *que se conectan con una visión de mundo.*[118] The totems enact a way of trespassing the dimensions of the flat dress in the museum display- and to which she does not have access- to a tridimensional body similar to Montoya's height. This means that, instead of relating to the dress from a museum case, the totems become concrete subjects and beings that populate the world; they are not detached from it. At the same time, the emergency totems were made during the lockdown in Iquique, the city where the artist lives. They had to be transported to Santiago, so their

[118] that connect with a vision of the world.

pieces are de-mountable or detachable for easy transportation; they are of emergency to acknowledge also the emergency of covid times.

Montoya's practice engages with Andean ontologies, in which textiles have tridimensionality and features such, body, mouth, stomach; they are alive, breathing and beating (Cereceda 2010; Arnold and Espejo 2012a). In the case of the totems, they have pulses and fluxes expressed in the complementary opposite colours of their make, in the patterns and rhythms that configure their bodies.

Figure 18 Detail of the working process (©Courtesy of the Artist Natalia Montoya*)*

Figure 19 Am1982,20.85: Woollen belt, with multicoloured stripes (k'isa), geometric designs and plaited fringe 75x11cms © The Trustees of the British Museum Ph: ILCA, *This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*

They also remind us of the Andean *k'isas (Figures 18 and 19)*, which are coloured pattern textiles related to Aymara and Quechua people. According to the Chilean Anthropologist Verónica Cereceda, they enact a transition between light and shadow. The *k'isas* allow the transformation from one plane of reality to another and are linked to the healing process

(Cereceda 1987: 204). For Cereceda, the *K'isa* 'Se utiliza para permitir un paso, en otra dimensión, entre la enfermedad y la salud' (Cereceda 1987: 204); it is a form of mediation between extremes.[119] Although Cereceda theory has been challenged by Arnold and Espejo (2012b), from which the *K'isa* is the result of the exchange and change of materialities during industrialisation, the *k'isa* is still dealing with matters transitions and appropriations, connecting with the work of Montoya in both senses. As the Chakana, the *k'isas* connect two opposite points, bridging the tension between theories, ontologies and designs.

Figure 20 Manto Cosmogónico, 150x200 cms, textile collage. (2021) Ph: Benjamín Matte © Courtesy of the Artist Natalia Montoya

A last example, her *Manto cosmologónico* (Figure 20)*,* is a study of the representation of the Incan cosmovision of Yamqui Salcamayhua or Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti, as it was renamed. The work is a representation of a golden plate that was in the *Templo del sol, Qorikancha* in Cusco city in Perú. The *Qorikancha,* as known by the Inkas, was destroyed after the conquest and is currently the *Templo de Santo Domingo.* In this work, Natalia uses drawing and sequin embroidery to guide her work to a bigger reflection about colonisation. Through the practice of drawing and embroidering, she approaches symbols and ideas of a

[119]'It is used to allow a passage, in another dimension, between disease and health'.

worldview erased by Christianism. The image of Salcamayhua, reveals a deep relationship between the stars, the sun (i*nti)* and the moon *(Qilla),* as well as a relationship with a world where all the agents participate in the composition of the cosmos. Here, we see the stars, vegetal, human and animal world inhabiting the same space, as well as different materiality's bringing those connections to the piece. Though the mixing of techniques, Montoya is not trying to dominate the work with her interpretation, but to reconnect with a narrative through the time transformed in affect and closeness. Acknowledging that the deep meaning of those figures may be lost, she is still finding ways of reconnecting with those ancestors.

Her work connects with different ontologies in its design and incorporates that ancient heritage as a way of reconnecting with those ancestral roots through elements that keep appearing in her life. In this sense, her work enacts a different ontology that appeals to reconnection and reciprocity rather than extraction. Montoya's work enacts structures, visions, and principles that dialogue, cross and discuss colonial impositions and paradigms. There are reparative acts guided by material practices and embodied knowledge. In their production, they enact ways of reactivating forgotten heritages, where instead of looking for continuity, they reconnect with that past, maintaining a concern about the present and looking for ways of healing those relationships. They take care of the future in non-anticipatory or linear ways, opening ontological possibilities and enacting them in the interactions between space and materiality. They are practices that work as doings (Dewsbury et al. 2002: 438) engaging with a *conocer para apender y no para dominar*.

To finish, the artworks analysed enact an ontology of repairing of the broken beings and broken worlds (Fry 2017) rather than the ontologies of accumulation of the Anthropocene. Is an ontology that takes care of the present, with their wounds and absences. In the interaction of the artworks and heritage, it is possible not only to think about the reconstitution of heritage design, dualisms and time, but also to think how the interaction of art and heritage open the ontological possibilities to think about heritage otherwise, acknowledging, caring and healing those elements of a complicated colonial past.

Constellating Chakana

The works in this section deal with heritage in more-than-representational ways. They activate meanings, questions and reflections, engaging with the world in their creation. Through analysing the works of Nicolás Grum, Patricia Domínguez and Cecilia Vicuña, I elaborate on how these artworks approach heritage in different ways, showing how in their interaction, they modify and constitute each other. From here, heritage practice takes place as a source of discussion, engagement, or dialogue, where the value of the object or practice is not possible without constant entanglement and communication that artistic practices provide. Here I argue that the reflective and contested use in artistic practices not only expands the notion of heritage but also brings the possibility of healing it.

The three artists analysed here connect Chile with the UK in different forms, they reflect on the effects of colonisation, but they also propose bridges to repair and heal past wrongdoings, because we cannot afford a better future without healing the past.

Pulling strings: From policies of extraction and accumulation to policies of care in the work of Nicolás Grum

The work of Nicolás Grum can be described as a 'curated irony', a trace of subversive, sarcastic and even humorous acts that engage and complicate power structures and hierarchical organisations. His work re-interprets historical 'facts', creating alternative designs that defy the narrative of what is imposed as "the official truth", drawing into a colonial critique. Through a variety of media (video, drawing, sculpture and installations), he explores the dominant discourses coming from different circles of power. Born from careful observation of political and artistic institutional management, Grum's work interrogates some heritage practices and devices to tension the same institutionality, rebalancing forces and re-distributing materialities in the form of symbolic returns and more-than-human care. By using museum tools and display devices, Grum's work deals with questions of narrative, restitution, and hierarchies from a relational perspective.

The museum as a concept, and heritage as practice, are widely developed in Grum's work; *Museo* F*uturo* (2014)*, Museo Refractario (2016)* and *Museo Paco (2019)* are just a few of the projects where he uses museographic tools to show alternative histories, new narratives and different ways of understanding and appropriating heritage sites and practices.[120]

For example, in *La Ruina de la Ruina (2015),* Grum presents a dystopian future where specific icons of contemporary heritage are destroyed, making a reinterpretation of colonial strategies practised by the Kingdom of Spain during the invasion of Abya Yala. In this piece, he draws on how cosmogonic representations were destroyed or overpainted, generating palimpsests with catholic religious iconography, criticising the destructive practices of colonisation where many daily and sacred places were transformed into Catholic churches or market centres (Such as the *Quoricancha* in Cusco). Something that today, the same Western vision condemns. In *La Puerta del sol (2015)* (Figure21)*,* a heritage site of *Tiwanaku* people in Bolivia, he questions the cultural extraction and the policies of preservation as an objectivising policy. For the artist, the study of 'heritage' just concerns the preservation and maintenance of the declared site, where the aim is to preserve mainly the object, but not the

[120] Paco is the informal name for the police in Chile. It comes from 'Personal A Contrata de Orden y Seguridad' contracted personnel of order and security.

sacrality of it or its use for local people rendering the site just as a substitute for destroyed worlds (Azoulay 2019: 22).

Figure 21 Puerta del Sol, mix media 45x27x30 (2015) ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the Artist)

In the last years, Grum has been working specifically on museums from the Western World and collections acquired through colonial or neocolonial networks. For this section, I will analyse one of his recent works: *La rebelión de la Huaca (2022)* at CCU Art Saloon in Santiago, Chile.[121]

[121] *The huacas rebellion.*

La rebelión de la huaca.

> Cuando recorres la pampa, el verde aparece tarde o temprano, se muestra en piedras de distinto tamaño y esas piedras son la manifestación de tiempos geológicos, de fuerzas, de presiones y procesos ocurridos hace millones de años. El color, en este caso, es la manifestación de un proceso y de un lugar y, creo, que explica también la milenaria atracción por el mineral (Grum 2021).[122]

Figure 22 Copper in the Desert, personal archive ©Victoria Vargas Downing

The Atacama Desert is the driest and oldest Desert on earth; as inhospitable as it may look, it has fostered life since thousands of years ago. Known for its mineral richness, it started to be exploited around 1800, first for its guano (a natural fertilizer), silver and copper. Later, sodium nitrate and saltpetre were exploited by European companies, which brought conflicts about the use and profit of those products into the land. [123] Today, the Desert is well known for the copper and lithium reservoirs, Chuquicamata being the largest open pit copper mine in the world. However, the extraction of minerals from the earth is not something new. Even

[122] 'When you walk through the *pampas*, the green appears sooner or later, it is shown in stones of different sizes and these stones are the manifestation of geological times, forces, pressures and processes that occurred millions of years ago. Colour, in this case, is the manifestation of a process and a place and, I believe, that also explains the millenary attraction for the mineral'.

[123] The annexation of the Atacama region to Chile was in 1898, after the War of the Pacific. Which, in terms of history, was a war for the mineral resources of the area between, Chile, Peru and Bolivia, however the annexation of the Atacama Desert to Chile was with the intention of privatising those resources for companies whose owners were based in the UK and Germany (Galaz-Mandakovic and Rivera 2023; Blakemore 1974; Purbrick 2017).

today, minerals are easily found when walking *en la falda de la montaña* and long before the industrialisation of mining, this was practised by pre-Columbian people, although in more precarious conditions. [124]

Figure 23 La rebelión de la Huaca, Salón de Arte CCU (2022) Santiago de Chile Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

Held in 2022 in Santiago, Chile, *La Rebelión de la Huaca* (Figure 23)*,* is a project that circulates around issues of extraction, commodification, life and death. Through the history of the mummified remains of an ancient miner that died around 550 a.D; Grum explores questions about museum restitution, reparation, and care. Known as The Copper Man, the remains are currently displayed and exhibited at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York. He was found in 1899 in a small tunnel of 'La restauradora' mine nearby Chuquicamata, wearing scarce clothes, with his tools: a small hammer and a bag. The exotic character of the finding was due to the skin colour of the mummified body. The conditions of the tunnel and the atmosphere of the Desert made the skin absorb the copper sulphate for 1500 years, acquiring a greenish copper colour. Its copper skin was quickly considered a treasure, *una extrañeza,* a rare finding that could be easily commercialised and profited. He was moved and used as an exchange coin, loan object and speculation subject. The body of the old miner was exhibited for a small fee in people's houses and later presented to more extended audiences, and travelled between regions and countries, until appearing as a magic transaction at the AMNH where he still remains. The history of the Copper Man is complex, it involved multiple

[124] the foothills of the mountain.

transits, mutilations, displacements and transactions. It speaks on commodification of human bodies, the need for rest and respect for other cosmologies and ontologies.

The problems regarding the Copper Man are multiple; he belongs to a territory and is kin of Atacameños people. Nobody asked the mountain before extracting him from its arms, nobody asked for permission before usufruct of a dead corpse. The body is the subject of a form of material and immaterial accumulation from which escaping becomes only a metaphor, and its restitution is just a hope. The body was brutally extracted, commercialised, and merged with an extractive zone which animal, territories, plants and people are reorganised and perceived as 'commodities, rendering land as for the taking while also de-valorising the hidden worlds that form the nexus of human and nonhuman multiplicity' (Gómez-Barris 2017: 5). Departing from two questions: '¿Qué hacemos cuando las personas se transforman en cosas? ¿Cómo nos relacionamos con una cultura que está viva cuando se la objetualiza al interior de un museo?' (Grum 2021), Nicolás Grum explores how to relate to an alive culture and the notion of de-valorisation of the other ontology while criticising the commodification of a body. [125]

For analysis reasons I will divide the exhibition into three copperstones, or three types of interventions. Firstly, a genealogy of the transaction; secondly, Journey's and mourning's a video installation that explores the issue of reparation; and finally, trying to restore a symbolic

[125] 'What do we do when people become into things? How do we relate to a culture that is alive, when it is objectified inside a museum?'

order, or an inverse *huaqueo*, which presents the *vitrina huaqueada* with the replica of the Copper Man.

1# Copperstones: Genealogy of transactions

Figure 24 Timeline, exhibition picture, Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum *(Courtesy of the artist)*

The genealogy of the transaction (Figure 24) is composed of copper pipes and materials that work as traces for drawings, lines of movement and writing. The copper lines chase the route of the body from 'owner' to 'owner'. From the first conflict between the mine tenant (Monsieur Pidot) and the owner of the mine (William Matthew). Here, we can see how the lines follow the conflicts, agreements and disagreements around the 'ownership' of the body.[126] They show the route of the transactions, from Toyos to Edward Jackson, from Jackson to Norman Walker and so on until it arrives at the hands of J.P Morgan and its consecutive donation to the AMNH.[127] On the other hand, we have the copper pipes that show us the map displacements and movements from private living rooms to more public and paid events in Valparaíso and Santiago, and then to the Panamerican exhibition in Buffalo to finally appear in New York. With them, the artist materialises the routes of transactions and the ideas behind the purchase of the body. Through copper lines, the artist share documentation,

[126] Mathew argued that the leasing was for the minerals and no the miners, while Pidot argued that the man was mostly mineral.

[127] The first time the copper man was sold for $500 Chilean pesos, in a time when each miner earnt 1.5 pesos for a day of work. Also, in the movement between Jackson and Walker the Mummy lost one toe.

pictures and movements that defined the speculation and financial value of the petrified human remains, as well as the ideas behind such speculation.

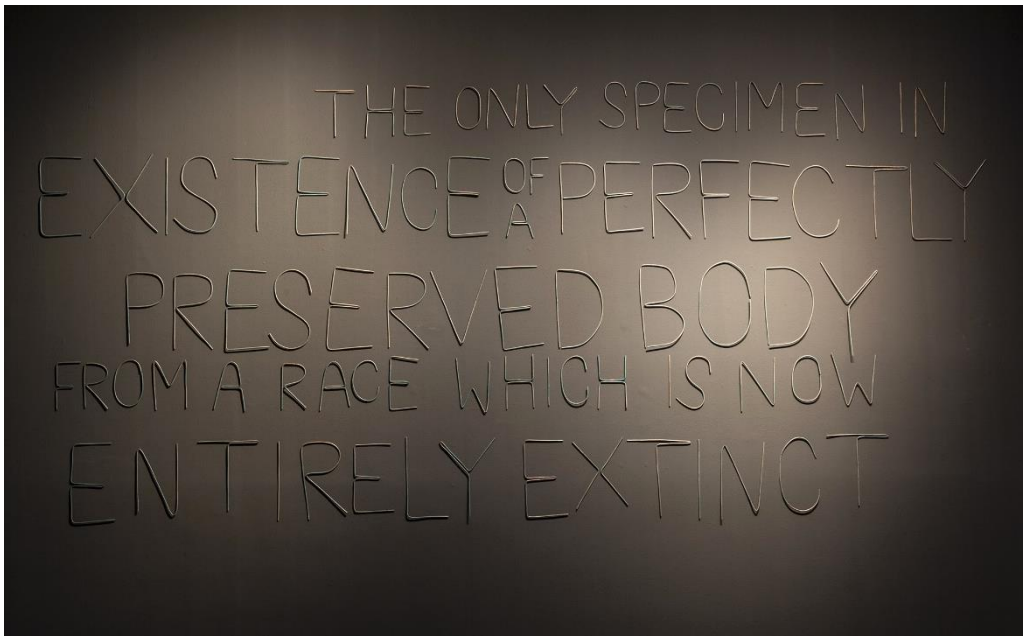

Figure 25 'The only specimen in existence of a perfectly preserved body from a race which is now entirely extinct', copper pipes 300x200 (2021). Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

For example (Figure 25): *The only specimen in existence of a perfectly preserved body from a race which is now entirely extinct (2021)* (MNHN 2016) is the sentence used to attract visitors to the Chilean pavilion at the Panamerican exhibition in Buffalo, where the Cooper Man was exhibited in 1901. The sentence denotes the uniqueness and 'extinct' nature of the indigenous body, as well as the perfection of its preservation status. In this sense, the body's existence is linked to a temporal past and to ancient bygone people. The production of the body as part of a past reflects on the detached form 'from what were or could have been the sustainable worlds of which [he was] part' (Azoulay 2019: 22). In this context, the notion of destruction justifies the obsession with rescue and preservation, the devoted extraction and study of those objects, subjects, documents and relics. This means that as 'ethnographic' object, the Copper Man was presented to be consumed by museumgoers and by the people that attended the Panamerican exhibition:

> Such objects are not there for what they are but for what they might represent; they are there on behalf of a predetermined type of knowledge that was previously organised, classified, and therefore recognised as there for our taking (Bilbao 2021: 655).

Figure 26 Detail copper pipes. Ph:Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

However, for Grum the copper pipes not only describe the transits and the ideas behind the speculation of the body; they are also a form of 'dotar de un cuerpo a las ideas' (Grum 2021).[128] The oxidized copper pipes are in direct relation to the petrified mummy at the AMNH (Figure 26). They reflect from 'una cercanía material, una presencia corpórea' (Grum 2021) that speaks again of the captive body of this ancestral miner. [129] Due to its malleability, the copper pipes create a series of relationships between drawing and sculpture, between immaterial territory, the body and the museal object. They are linguistic, material, and poetic involvements that establish a dialogue and interaction with the world. In this sense, for Grum the pipes are a sort of mineral clock; they are subject to a chemic reaction similar to the one that the miner's body. Subject to decay, they have their own rhythm and agency, and are part of the same corrosion as the human body in the museum. In the words of Grum: 'no se conservan, sino que se modifican, no se establecen, sino que se transforman. […] estas piezas siguen activas y reactivas, se dejan influenciar por el baño corrosivo de la química' (Grum 2021).[130] For Grum, the constant change and transformation is related to another ontology that differs from accumulation and extraction and talks about transformation and reciprocity.

[128] 'Giving to the ideas a body'.
[129] 'A material closeness, a corporeal presence'.
[130] 'They are not preserved but modified, not established, but transformed. [...] These pieces are still active and reactive, they are influenced by the corrosive bath of chemistry'.

Figure 27 View of the exhibition. Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

2# Copperstone: Journeys and mourning's

The journey of Grum following the Copper Man took him to New York, where he visited the ancient miner at the AMNH triggering in Grum new questions about the human remains in the museum. For him:

> un cuerpo extraviado o desaparecido, es un alma en pena dentro de cualquier cultura. Hay algo que no se logra cerrar […] ¿Qué derecho tenemos de colocar lo extraño […] dentro de un marco que lo aísle sin mayor contexto que […] trecientas palabras sobre un panel […]? (Grum 2022: 84).[131]

Grum is aware of how colonial logic locates, particularly indigenous- bodies as goods or objects and how, they are exposed as if they belong to a different reality or time. As Johannes Fabian warns, the danger of spatiotemporal distancing can be used to sustain neo-colonial claims and logic of epistemic superiority (Fabian 1983), and this is one of Grum's critiques. For Bryony Onciul, the passive voice of hegemonic museums 'erases agency that results in an erasure of responsibility and accountability for one's speech' (Onciul 2015: 7). In addition, museums are still interpreting Indigenous cultures through Western or Eurocentric lenses and

[131]' A lost or missing body is a soul in sorrow within any culture. There is something that cannot be closed [...] What right do we have to place the strange [...] within a framework that isolates it without greater context than three hundred words on a panel […]?'.

for Western audiences (Onciul 2015: 31). For these reasons, Grum is interested in re-vindicatory histories, the acknowledgement of other ontologies and the accountability of the violence masked as 'rescue', 'preservation', 'finding' or any other word used instead of looting and dispossession; any other word that takes distance from destruction and genocide (Grum 2022). For this reason, the exhibition counts with two videos exploring how collections showcase the history of the perpetrators rather than the looted people (Figure 28).

Figure 28 Screenshot of Video 'La rebelión de la Huaca' ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

Figure 29 Installation copper lost finger and performance vest. Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

As a strategy to explore these ideas, Grum looked for acts that could repair or heal the pain that this kind of abuse has provoked in the communities directly linked. He worked on the idea of releasing the pain through mourning and crying with two artists: Jacinta Torres, a performer, and Natalia Montoya, Aymara artist. For him, this was a way of integrating Andean knowledge and performance within the work, a way of creating a dialogue about how and what would be the best way of healing. The mourning as re-vindicatory act was an attempt of releasing the pain. While the performance was made without the authorisation of the museum as a counter extraction, a way of bringing back, or a sort of critic usurpation 'mera -e ínfima- apropiación territorial' (Grum 2021).[132] In this way, he presents the performance as a video piece of 16 min and 26 sec, with a replica of the lost toe of the Copper Man and the garment used in the performance (Figure 29).

[132] 'a mere -and tiny- territorial appropriation'.

In this sort of counter extraction, the work also includes a 43min and 58-sec video, where the artist includes the view of local Atacameños: Osvaldo Rojas, the director of the Museo Indígena Atacameño Alto el Loa; Juana Rojas, Kunza language educator; Karen Luza, Indigenous leader; Verónica Moreno, resident of ayllu El Solcor; and Guillermo Chong Geologist. In this longer video, the artist explores indigenous ontologies about the living and the dead, notions about indigenous rights to decide the destiny of human remains and how the bodies should go back to the soil to re-establish an equilibrium. In this context, the video explores how in the Andean world, the dead remained an essential part of society, playing a significant role within communities (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018), a role that cannot be read within the neoliberal schemes of heritage or cultural tourism (Andaur 2022).

Figure 30 Exhibition View. Ph:Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (Courtesy of the artist)

In the video (Figure 30), Grum creates a dialogue where the protagonists (including the Desert and the remains) find a medium to relate to, contributing to a constant fluidity and perspectives exchange. There, Grum critiques cartesian ontologies that separate the living from the dead, where the dead bodies are located in private spaces far away from daily life. Instead, he explores Andean notions in which 'cemeteries as places separated from everyday space are virtually unheard […]. Instead, sepulchres […] were kept open to maintain a relation between the living and the dead' (Seoane and Culquichicón-Venegas 2018: 244), remaining part of the human present.

Through the voice of the protagonists, he explores existing cases of the influence of ancestors in Andean societies, where for example, the ancient wak'as were involved in day-to-day social practices and forms of decision-making (Swenson and Roddick 2018: 16), or like when someone was *tomado por la tierra* and then got sick. In these perceptions, the *ancestros*

remain as 'living social actors that largely determined the unfolding of futures events' (Spence-Morrow 2018: 15). As they are not relegated to ancient times or to a past time, the interaction with them is crucial to ensure the order for the existence of the world, as they bring strength to the present, maintaining a sense of reciprocity and order of the forces that organise the world (Andaur 2022). In other words, dying does not break the links with the community. Life does not end immediately after death, rather it undergoes a process of transformation and disintegration until 'becoming an indistinguishable part of the collective dead (*amaya*), which are considered in turn as seeds, or generators of new life' (Villanueva Criales 2019: 277). In this sense, the ancestors 'configuran una presencia en el territorio que los vincula con los vivos y el entorno, influyendo sobre la vida de las personas, los fenómenos naturales y la biósfera' (Andaur 2022).[133]

When considering this ontology and cosmology, the remains of the Copper Man are not isolated; they belong to a territory and share physical information with that territory. The mountain absorbed the organic material transferring its substance:

> el cuerpo muerto en el cerro devino roca, como en un acto de magia que hubiese ejecutado el cerro sobre el cuerpo, transformando su sustancia pero no así su forma. [...] El cuerpo se le quedó incrustado al desierto y este lo asimiló, entonces el desierto adoptó al cuerpo y lo volvió territorio, lo volvió desierto (Pesce in Grum 2021).[134]

The idea that the body absorbing the information of the land until it becomes rock is utterly relevant and active when we consider Gabriela Siracussano's thesis about the colour and materiality in the colonial Andes. In it, the power of images was based on the pigments as they contained the energy, presence and vital force of the sacred (the mountain, soil, etc) and not in their representative qualities of an image (Siracusano 2011). In a sense, the Copper Man was materiality set in motion sharing a substantial reciprocal flux with the mountain (Villanueva Criales 2019: 277), constantly renewing to become mountain. The Copper man *fue criado y alimentado por la montaña* and vice versa, enacting the idea of 'crianza mutua' (*uywaña*) as a reciprocal way of being raised by the world, between the mountain, the family

[133] 'configure a presence in the territory that links them with the living and the environment, influencing people's lives, natural phenomena and the biosphere'.

[134] 'The dead body on the hill became rock, as in an act of magic that would have executed the hill on the body, transforming its substance but not its form. [...] The body was embedded in the desert, and it assimilated it, then the desert adopted the body and turned it into territory, turned it into desert'.

and other sites of the sacred landscape (Arnold 2017: 33).[135] This notion means to take care in the sense of protecting and encouraging, it is part of a 'entendimiento mutuo donde el humano, la planta y el animal se relacionan entre sí, en un cuidado constante, cooperativo y armonioso, creando una comunidad' (Calvimontes Díaz 2021: 193).[136] In this sense, the Copper Man it is part of a vital force that is transforming from one material form to another (Arnold 2017: 33).

These ideas also take relevance when thinking that for Atacamenos the bodies must be returned; they are buried looking at the stars and in front of the volcanos. In this sense, the ancestral bodies 'son territorio y su restitución es, en escencia, una restitución sobre aquel territorio usurpado' (Andaur 2022).[137] The video installation explores questions on restitution; however, Grum is not looking to solve the problem but discussing it, and mainly, addressing the institutionality of the museum and heritage practices that replicate those extractive models. On many occasions, the instauration of heritage policies delimits the range of action or interaction within Western logics of protection, restoration or conservation that are challenged by relational ontologies such as in the Andes. Then, how to honour a heritage under different conditions? How to think differently heritage?

3# Copperstone: Trying to restore a symbolic order or huaqueo inverso

[135] Raised and nurtured by the mountain.
[136] 'mutual understanding where the human, the plant and the animal relate to each other, in a constant, cooperative and harmonious care, creating a community'.
[137] 'They are territory and their restitution is, in essence, a restitution over that usurped territory'.

Figure 31 Detail of broken vitrine and replica. Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (courtesy of the artist)

Located in the middle of the room, a disrupted museography show us: on one side, an escaping replica of the body of Copper Man, with coca leaves and his tools; on the other *una vitrina huaqueada,* a looted cabinet (Figure 31).

Figure 32. Detail of looted cabinet Ph: Jorge Brantmayer ©Nicolás Grum (courtesy of the artist)

The replica of the Copper Man lays in an earthy bed, aside of a smashed replica of the cabinet in the AMNH that maintains the real Copper Man in captivity. In Chile there are 3 replicas of the Cooper Man, the replica in Grums' work is the original replica of the Copper Man which was made in New York by a specialist in conservation from the original body. For Grum, the replica is an incarnation of the absence, as the mountain with the copper sulphate on the skin of the miner; the replica is also the transference of information, in this case, from the skin to the case. As an escaping act, the body is positioned on the floor and over a soil bed with coca leaves as an offering.

On the other side, Grum uses the smashed vitrine as a sign of rejection toward traditional display and in particular, towards the displaying of human remains. This act criticises the normalisation of expositive methods such as vitrines, protective walls, pedestals, as these practices are 'predicated on the protection of denuded objects' (Azoulay 2019: 319), plundered lives and market value. For Ana Bilbao, the reproduction of these methods of the display can act in two directions, either perpetuating epistemic violence or becoming a gesture of safeguarding 'specific communities from social injustices' (Bilbao 2021: 665). In this case, it moves in those two directions. The smashed vitrine acts as a protest against extractivist methods of display and the devalorisation of other identities and works as a call of attention to the display of indigenous people and particularly indigenous bodies. And the same time, it can be thought of as a re-vindicatory act, the act of setting free the captive body and giving him an offering (the coca leaves).

The work addresses the anger, but also it is thought as a way for addressing inequalities within museum spaces, Onciul argues:

> the anger Indigenous people feel towards museums is often linked to ongoing inequalities in society. Museums cannot resolve these inequalities, but they can help to address them through re-contextualising the history that informs current relations and decolonising the display of Indigenous peoples (Onciul 2015: 33).

As problematic as it can be, at first sight the smashed cabinet may seem a fair strategy considering all the wrongdoings of colonisation, however, it may reproduce the damage and violence of such extraction. Then, the question is expanded; if restitution is not possible, '¿De qué manera las comunidades podrían recuperar sus objetos rituales y, sobre todo, los cuerpos de sus familiares?' (Grum, in Andaur 2022).[138] This is the reflection from which Grum's work

[138] 'How could communities recover their ritual objects and, above all, the bodies of their relatives?'

speculates through the looted vitrine. He creates an action thought to cause an effect in the world (Villanueva Criales 2020). The organisation of the material is intended to bring to existence a reality (Arnold 2017: 26) that, in this case, implies the possibility of freeing the body and healing a memory. In this way, both the *vitrina huaqueada* and the replica of the Copper Man make appeals to re-establishing the lost balance of the absent object. In addition, by bringing back the objects in a different materiality, a culture of reciprocity is reactivated, new dialogues happen, and new relationalities are activated. While the smashed vitrine is an exercise of speculation, it also evidence the asymmetrical relationship of the hegemonic conceptualisations of heritage (de Leon 2018: 15).

In this sense, as Tim Inglod points out,

> despite the best efforts of curators and conservationists, no object lasts forever. Materials always and inevitably win out over materiality in the long term. Things are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit […] but because the substances which they comprise continue to be swept up in circulations of the surrounding media that alternately portend their dissolution or […] ensure their regeneration. Spirit is the regenerative power of these circulatory flows which, in living organisms, are bound into tightly woven bundles or tissues of extraordinary complexity (Ingold 2007: 10).

Either the Copper Man or its replica are destined to be regenerated and transformed to re-integrate the constant flux of life. Thinking about these problems through the lens of contemporary art, allows us to think of ways of restitution of the political agency of the present, creating a space for participating in the world instead of isolating it. The interventions of the exhibition re-enact the principle of reciprocity, give and take, and not just extract. They establish a new dialogue that does not erase but acknowledges and repair in the material world. In Grums' work, there is a reflection on how forms of colonialism are embedded in museum practices, where the elements of one culture must be studied and analysed in institutions that perpetrate and often profit on behalf of others cultures. As Walker (one of the owners) mentions in his diaries 'es un pecado negociar con cuerpos de hombres muertos y nunca lo volveré a hacer' (MNHN 2016).[139]

As result, while restitution advocates against the accumulative and extractive logic embedded in the museum in the Western ontology, Grum's work deals with the question from a relational perspective, aiming for symbolic returns and more-than-human care. His works,

[139] 'It is a sin to deal with the bodies of dead men and I will never do it again'.

looks for ways of re-establishing the balance and kinship between objects in the space, a speculative way of healing the traumas and voids left by the 'found' objects. In addition, it explores the issue that restitution is not enough if it does not come with acts of reparation and care, with a change in the displaying methods and a respect of the materiality and the vital force that contains.

Finally, as we can appreciate, Nicolás Grum *La Rebelión de la huaca* addresses the conflictive history of the objects and museum practices, positioning the artworks as a reparative act, where the materiality creates and recreates a symbolic world attempting to heal the colonial violence exercised in the objects, the land and their people. In this sense, through the symbolic reparation, his works move beyond the problem of restitution to an issue and policy of place and care, *crianza mutua*, re-enacting a sense of reciprocity that bring the past to be used in the present and not locating it behind.

Ambivalent worlds, the work of Patricia Domínguez

Domínguez's works orbit around different cultural juxtapositions, where myths, symbols and rituals are intertwined with ideas of extraction, cultural appropriation, and the destruction of natural heritage due to wild industrialisation. Her work is inspired by the apparently opposite landscapes, the Desert and the forest. Domínguez work constantly creates eclectic environments where she combines elements that may seem contrary, such as corporative thinking, engrained heritage practices, the digital world, ancient sites, and futuristic environments. She entangles worlds of human, nonhuman and more-than-human showing their agency and canalising their energy.

In this section, I will analyse two of Domínguez works, *La Balada de las Sirenas Secas (*2020) a Video installation of 31 min, waterfall, holographic projectors and LED mermaid presented initially at the TBA21 in Madrid, Spain (Figure 33), and *Matrix Vegetal (2021-2022)*, an exhibition held at the Wellcome Collection in London, UK (Figure 34).

Figure 33 La Balada de las Sirenas Secas/ The Ballad of the Dry Mermaids Video installation, 31 min video, waterfall, holographic projectors and dry LED mermaid Commissioned and produced by TBA21 for How to Tread Lightly, Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, 2020. ©Patricia Domínguez, Courtesy of the artist

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Figure 34 Matrix Vegetal: Five totems, archive from the Wellcome Collection, watercolours and dry plant offerings (2021-2022) ©Patricia Domínguez, Image Courtesy of the artist.

La balada de las sirenas secas

The Ballad of the Dry Mermaids, is a Video installation that deals with issues of contemporary life, the danger of industrialisation and the water struggle in the Petorca region in Chile. This area has been seriously affected by the 'drought' and private avocado production. In the video, we see how ritualistic objects are used in their relationship with the space they inhabit, accompanied by moments of offerings and grief. For this analysis, I will focus on two moments of the video: the interaction with the Pedernal petroglyphs (pre-Columbian archaeological site) and the Canto a lo Divino (recognised immaterial heritage by the Chilean State).

However, before diving into these elements, I will provide some context. The ballad deals mainly with the water conflict in Chile. Since the 1990s, Chile has been plagued by water appropriation by the agriculture industry in collusion with politicians. Although water is defined as a national asset for public use, the current Chilean constitution ("Constitución Política de la República de Chile" 1980), Article 19 Clause 24 and the Code of Waters, both drawn up by the civil and military dictatorship in the 80, allow the Chilean State to transfer water rights to private parties with no time limit, restrictions on forms or priorities of use. Meaning that access to water for essential consumption is not constitutionally guaranteed.

Domínguez's work reflects on how the State, encouraged by the free market and neoliberal policies, prioritises ideas of progress and development against the struggle of local life, for

her 'the filial relationship between water and humans has been cut off and replaced with dependence on the tutelage of the government. From Mother Gaia to Father State' (Domínguez 2020). Through different medias and in different moments of the video installation, the artist refers to this conflict, criticising the privatisation of water and how freshwater has been diverted to irrigate large-scale corporate avocado plantations in the Petorca region.

In the first moments of the video, we see how technological devices, such as drones and LED lights, establish a dialogue with heritage sites and practices, such as the Petroglyphs of Pedernal or the singing of Juan López at the end.

Figure 35 The Ballad of the Dry Mermads Video installation, 31 min video, waterfall, holographic projectors and dry LED mermaid Commissioned and produced by TBA21 for How to Tread Lightly, Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, 2020. ©Patricia Domínguez, Image Courtesy of the artist

The video starts showing us water pipes and dry land. We follow the pipe until we find the *Viudas del Agua* (Water widowers) and some petroglyphs.[140] The widowers illuminate and touch the petroglyphs while discretely whispering 'water' (Figure 35). The petroglyphs are part of an archaeological site nearby The Pedernal called 'El Arenal'. They are dated around 500 BCE and 200 BCE, initially attributed to Aconcagua culture; however, currently,

[140] The *Viudas*, are an artistic women's collective, part of MODATIMA (Movement in defence to access to water, land and environment protection).

they are associated with Inkas (Niemeyer F and Ballereau 1996). The figures in the rocks depict abstract symbols, animals, shamans, dots, lines and engulfing cycles; that according Niemeyer and Ballereau, they were produced in 'conexión al trance o prácticas de la conciencia alterada por substancias psicotrópicas' (1996: 314).[141]

In the video, these pre-Columbian petroglyphs are used as an ancient technology that can activate the water flux when in contact with led lights. This interaction aims to activate the memory of the rocks while the whisper of the widowers calls for the water to come back. Although the mixing of modern technology may seem odd, Arnold (2020: 164) explains how for Andean cultures, the interaction between objects is inscribed in an economy of mutual animation, mobilised by the capture and transference of vital principles and forces between the cosmos, human and nonhuman. In this sense, gestures such as grappling and spinning favour life fluxes, cuts and connections and in the case of Domínguez's work, the LED lights activate and wake up water fluxes while enabling a new vision beyond visible things. Domínguez re-activates a syntaxis of the present, where she re-updates dynamics and signifiers made and remade in ancient times (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018) by using ancient and Western technology. While some impulses try to preserve the status quo, others look for the resignification or renewal of the world, a renewal towards healing. In this context, for Patricia Domínguez's, the contact between ancient and modern technology re-energises the memory of the rocks re-signifying the area's cultural heritage from a digital era and summoning the memory of the water from a dry river. While in the process, the Widowers recite the code of water that divides the ownership of water from dominion over the land, leaving owners of water who have no land and owners of land who have no water.

In the next scene, we hear the buzzing of drone propellers, a high-tech mosquito/military in the sky, showing us elements of faraway landscapes. We see the drought land, the industrial water pools, the green patches of the avocado plantations and thirsty avocados sucking water from the rivers and industrial reservoirs. The scenes also show us the brutality of resources mismanagement, exploitation, extraction, oblivion and the absence of water and life (Figure 36).

[141] 'connection to trance or practices of altered consciousness by psychotropic substances'.

Figure 36 Thirsty avocados, min19.30 ©Patricia Domínguez, image Courtesy of the artist

In the last segment, we find a drone approximating us to the dry soil, showing us bones and carcases of dead animal bodies among the timid sound of splashing water, highlighting its absence. The drone's buzzing becomes more persistent and louder while we are introduced to bones and dried animal corpses; the drone shows us what seems to be a futuristic nightmare. Held by a San Pedro (hallucinogenic cactus), we see Juan Lopéz singing from the future (Figure37):

Amongst hills and ravines, Palquico was a paradise
The drought wanted it that way
The drought wanted it that way
That all this changed
People very concerned, there is nothing to do.
Little water to drink
I can't understand this!
For the people of Palquico
Something has to be done
Fodder is scarce
The truck must be bought
7000 must be paid
Going into debt
The preoccupied farmer
When his animal die

On this nobody is aware
When will the weather change?
Water needs to be taken care of
In every place […].[142]

Figure 37 The Ballad of the Dry Mermaids Video installation, 31 min video, waterfall, holographic projectors and dry LED mermaid Commissioned and produced by TBA21 for How to Tread Lightly, Thyssen Bornemisza Museum (2020). ©Patricia Domínguez, Image Courtesy of the artist.

The 'Canto' is a traditional immaterial heritage practice recognised by the Chilean State. It has its origin in Jesuit songs to the divine. As a religious practice, it aimed at the conversion and teaching of the bible. Later, a different branch appeared the 'Canto a lo humano' or 'Mundano', to celebrate everyday life in the area, where the lyrics were mixed with the working class and syncretic festivities origin. The cantos are typically found in the centre of Chile, in the Region of Valaparaíso and Linares. They are part of a popular tradition and

[142] The Canto, continues: 'The father cries without the mother/ Watching his children suffering/ Because they are not able to survive/ Because it is too late/ The weather is not nice/ For what we are going through/ The trees are dying up/ Because there is no rain/ With no hope, with no hope/ The flora is disappearing/ I am overcome with nostalgia/When I remember the past/ When the oxen and the plough/ With the cows and the mares/ To all this, I request a truce/ For the weather to get better/ And let's no speak about the tremors/ When they shake the earth / They don't bring anything better/ It's just shouting and grief/ What a nice morning/ So many things to do/ as sweet as honey/ and such a sad gaze/ he goes calmly sobbing/ to encounter life/ very sad he leaves right away/ where I cannot yet go/ to that infinite heaven/ where he already saw his departure'.

resilient practice from the colony. In this work, Domínguez's collaborated with a popular singer Juan López, where more than a relationship with the preservation of a tradition or the accumulative or extractive forms in which heritage is usually associated, heritage appears as a current pray or a flux claiming what is missed, in this case, water. We see a concern with maintaining and caring for life in all its forms as a resistance act.

In the cantos, Juan López deals with the issue of water extraction, the struggle of living and the pain of those that have already departed because of the drought. Here the song includes not only the human agencies but also the nonhumans and more-than-humans. While singing as activity, creates new relationships between the different agents of the song, where each element 'nutre al otro y crea relaciones de igualdad en búsqueda del mismo objetivo, la fertilidad, la abundancia y el crecimiento' (Favaron 2011: 160). [143] The dead bodies are part of that praying act and a complaint towards paying for surviving. This makes the song a mourning song, as the water is gone and with it, the life of the animals and vegetation that once sustained it. In this sense, for example, for the Ashuar people an indigenous tribe in the border between Perú and Ecuador, the capacity of a song of communicating depends on the strength of heart of the singer 'los cuales se cree tocan directamente el corazón de aquellos a quienes van dirigidos y están destinados a influir sobre el curso de las cosas' (Calvimontes Díaz 2021: 196). [144] This means that singing or chanting is more than just a way of organising energy (Favaron 2011: 159), but also a way of interfering in the reality. As the needs 'que experimenta el corazón humano puede[n] conmover a los espíritus al punto de llevarlos a participar activamente en los sucesos del mundo visible' (Favaron 2011: 155), they also connect different worlds.[145] At the same time, the voice of the singer also enacts the voice of the plants and beings through the singer (Favaron 2011: 160). In other words, the pain of Juan Lopez's song is not only Juan Lopez's pain but the pain of the water, and his chant is looking to influence the rain.

In addition, in the interactive text accompanying the exhibition *GaiaGuardianxs* (Gaia's Guardians) (2020), Domínguez channels different beings, from toucans to the spirit of Water. In this context, she approaches water not as a resource or source of entertainment or

[143] 'nurtures the other and creates relationships of equality in pursuit of the same goal, fertility, abundance and growth'.
[144] 'which are believed to directly touch the hearts of those to whom they are addressed and are destined to influence the course of things'.
[145] 'experienced by the human heart can move spirits to the point of leading them to participate actively in the events of the visible world'.

management, but as a being, with agency and voice. In her canalisation, the water expresses, ‘Let me go! Don’t speculate with me. Don’t make me into office water’ (Domínguez 2020).

In this framework, in Domínguez’s work, life is not only for the human but also the nonhuman and more-than-human, and heritage are not only the practices, but the net of relations that those practices enable. She approaches the issue of water from a different paradigm, where water is heritage as it allows sustaining life, and as such, it should not be reduced to its management, nor should it be a subject of speculation. The Canto of Juan Lopez becomes an act of mediation that looks to acknowledge and repair the water extraction damage. It is a song for the human and more-than-human looking to create actions in the world that change the current situation. In this sense, the work of Domínguez’s is a reply to existing ways of colonial violence but also explores possibilities for healing them.

Matrix Vegetal

These acts of mediation are also present in other of the Works of Domínguez, such as Matrix Vegetal (2021-2022), which were part of ‘Rooted beings’ exhibition presented at the Wellcome Collection between 24th March and 29th August 2022 in London, UK. The exhibition explored the inseparable relationship with plants recognising them as sensitive, complex, and ancient beings. Domínguez’s works consisted of five totems, combined with the archival material of the Wellcome Collection, watercolours and dry plant offerings. For this commission, she worked with the material related to Latin America within the archive of the Wellcome Collection and Kew Gardens. However, before talking about the artworks is necessary to address part of the history of the Wellcome Collection, that, as with most of European collections, is rooted in colonial history.

Founded by the ‘philanthropist’ Sir Henry Wellcome in the early 20th century, the collection started as a private historical medical museum closely linked to the pharmaceutical industry. The collection was created to show ‘the art and science of healing through ages’ (Wellcome-Collection 2021b). The collection mainly consisted of books, images and archives from non-European countries and cultures, but it privileged Eurocentric histories of medicine and achievements. Currently, the Wellcome Collection trust has taken a particular turn regarding the history and conformation of the Wellcome Collection, claiming, ‘we have a responsibility to be honest and transparent about the past injustices in which our collections are rooted’ (Wellcome-Collection 2021b). They do this by, firstly, acknowledging that the collection's origin is based on racist and sexist assumptions, meaning that the collection would not have been possible without a colonial system, structures of violence and imperial power that

allowed it. Secondly, recognising that the collection was used to tell a colonial version of the history of medicine that privileged European views rather than indigenous or non-European. And thirdly, by acknowledging that the pharmaceutic industry took a relevant part in the accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of goods through auctions, where some objects were unjustly taken and separated from the peoples and countries from where they belonged (Wellcome-Collection 2021b).

As a result, the Wellcome Collection has been incorporating policies that try to find different ways of acknowledging the experiences of those silenced, erased and ignored forms, looking for alternative ways of seeing and researching the collection. For example, by recognising that 'alongside human remains, culturally sensitive items may also be considered to be ancestral relatives in their own right, and should be cared for accordingly' (Wellcome-Collection 2021c).[146] These policies also relate to practices of transparency on acquisitions and disposal, ways of supporting communities through consultation, restitution and reconciliation, as well as surfacing previously marginalized contents (Wellcome-Collection 2021b). As part of this last action, we connect with Patricia Domínguez's work.

For her work, *Matrix Vegetal* (2021-2022) (Figure 38), the artist used archival material that had not been exhibited before. The artist, focused on four medicinal and vision plants: brugmansia (floripondio), Banisteriopsis carpi (Ayahuasca), cinchona and mandrake, presented through the totems plus a fifth central honouring the symbolic and spiritual knowledge of pre-Columbian people (Delfina-Foundation 2022).

Figure 38 Matrix Vegetal Five totems, archive from the Wellcome Collection, watercolors and dry plant offerings Installed at Wellcome Collection, London (2022) ©Courtesy of the Artist Patricia Domínguez

[146] Also see Wellcome-Collection (2021a).

For Domínguez, to work with the Wellcome Collection was a challenge as she was well aware of the violence people suffered because of the collection. However, in the cabinet's totems, she negotiated a form of exposing colonial abuses and showing the plants' sacrality. From here, the artist proposed to maintain the archive but changing everything around it, giving them plant-inspired shapes (Vargas 2022). Then, the totems/cabinets stand as beings that are half archives, half offerings. In these totems, we find the two worlds that compose them, the scientific illustration and their symbolic and physical presence. These assemblages are composed of sacred plants and their illustration from the archive of the Wellcome Collection. The totems also work as altars and offerings that help to 'traer a la existencia los objetos [y efectos] deseados, al enfocar energía (y la agencialidad) y atención' (Arnold 2017: 26) and at the same time, maintain their scientific value.[147]

For example, the central totem (Figure 39) includes Plate 75 of the second volume of the work of Viscount Kingsborough, an Irish scholar of ancient cultures. The image is taken from a Mesoamerican accordion-folded codex illuminated around 1562 in Mexico with a European folio (Codex Vaticanus 3738). Here each one of the symbols represents one of the twenty names and tonalli (energy of the month) of the cyclical Mesoamerican calendar, converging with European ideas in which illness resulted from an imbalance between the supernatural and natural forces. In the Andean cultures, illness is a disruption of the body's fluid system 'which eventually led to the gradual disintegration and drying up the body' (Lozada 2019: 106), and as such, it is influenced by nonphysiological factors such as division within families' linage or imbalances of nature. In this totem, Domínguez incorporated the codex with a series of magic potions used in Latin America and composed mainly of a mix of medicinal plants.

[147] 'bringing into existence the desired objects [and effects], by focusing energy (and agency) and attention'.

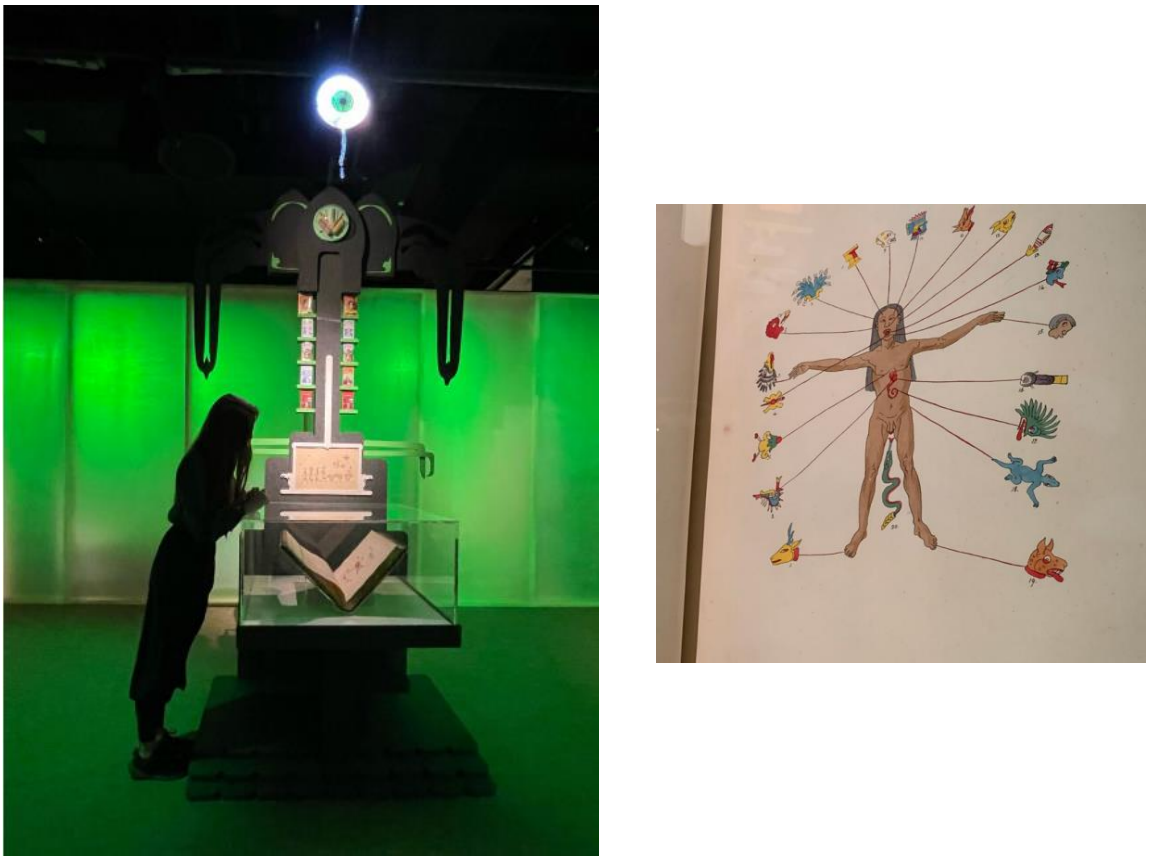

Figure 39 Central totem with Edward King, Viscount Kingsborough, Antiquities of Mexico [Antigüedades de México], (1831) (Royal Academy of History, no. 14 / 4452-14 / 4458) ©Courtesy of the Artist Patricia Domínguez

Domínguez explains:

> I started from the scientific point of view by studying botanical gardens and natural science illustrations, and slowly opened my perception to a more energetic relationship to plants. I am in the process of understanding how powerful they are, their non-verbal and chemical communication with us. Plant permeate our cells, ourselves, we are living through plants (Domínguez in Delfina-Foundation 2022).

In this context, Totems have the characteristic of representing and bringing to existence other forms, not only as cabinets or altars, but also because the plants in them are considered not just objects (Calvimontes Díaz 2021: 200), they are wise beings that communicate, heal and guide humans through a different language. For Marder, we have assumed that plants are less developed than humans and animals because we are unwilling 'to think through the logic of vegetal life [and] therefore vegetal beings are unconditionally available for unlimited use and exploitation' (Marder 2013: 2-3). At the same time, the totems are honouring Andean and Amazonian knowledge as for 'many traditional Andean communities, plants are often

spirits that help and teach humans, guiding them towards greater understanding' (Page 2021: 149). In the same vein, for Bárbara Santos, plants communicate through different senses; they are devices that help to activate the memory stored in the body (Santos 2019: 81).

For example, the intake of plants such as the Banisteriopsis carpi, also known as Ayahuasca (Figure 40), allows other forms of vision. For instance, for Cesar Giraldo, consuming sacred plants such as Ayahuasca will enable shamans to develop enhanced techniques of 'entoptic microscopy' vision. For this author, the use of brilliant lights plus the use of the plants of vision help shamans to optimize the visual sensibility that allows them to see diseases and how to heal them (Giraldo Herrera 2018b: 33). In addition, according to Favaron, the intake of ayahuasca allows the relaxation of the biological body, liberating the spiritual one and making it free of temporal constrictions of dense matter. In other words, when Ayahuasca is consumed for ritual purposes 'tanto los espíritus celestes bajan a la tierra como el cuerpo espiritual de los humanos se eleva a la morada de los dioses' (Favaron 2011: 156). [148] These forms of vision are present in the totem of vision, showing on one side the plant and the achievement with its scientific value, and on the other, a watercolour of Domínguez's ascending into the trance of the Ayahuasca.

[148] 'both celestial spirits come down to earth, and the spiritual body of humans rises to the abode of the gods'.

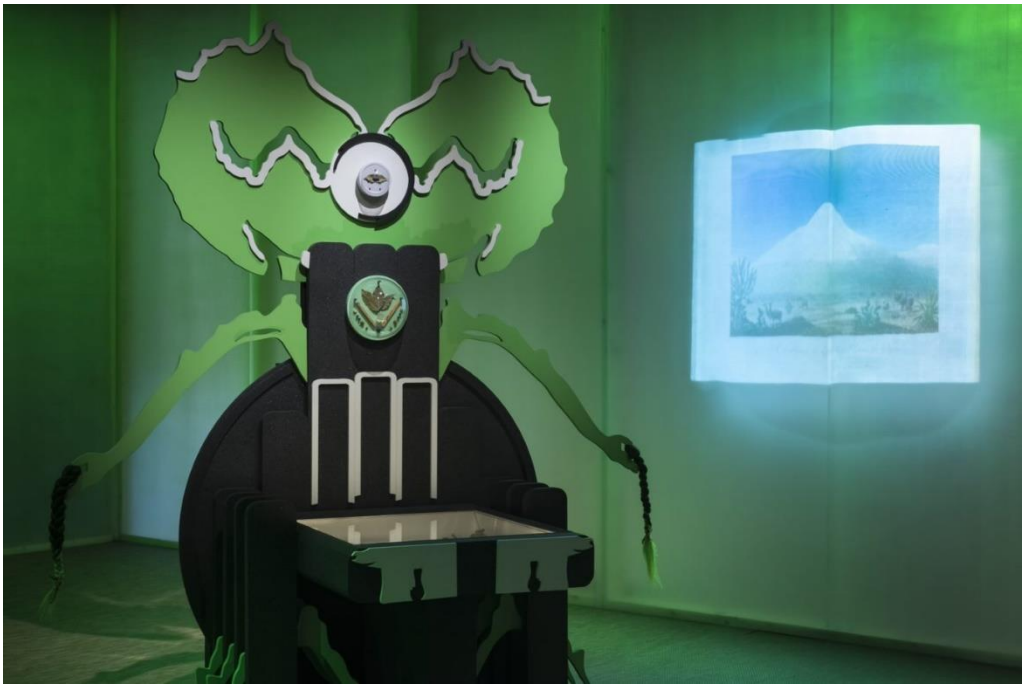

Figure 40 Matrix Vegetal; Vision and Ayahuasca Watercolours made in dialogue with the archive material and installed behind the totems, 56 x 76 cms. ©Courtesy of the Artist Patricia Domínguez

Another aspect of Domínguez's work is the reparative and healing component; during her research in the Wellcome Collection, Domínguez's found a picture labelled as 'Witch' (Figure 41). However, the picture shows a '*Machi'*, a Mapuche healer. She writes in the exhibition label:

Figure 41 A machi, or medicine woman, Araucania, Chile, (19th century) Ref: 21494i Wellcome Collection ©Public Domain

> A female '*machi'* stands on a '*rewe'*, a seven-stepped pillared altar used by the Mapuche, indigenous inhabitants of south-central Chile and southwestern Argentina. *Machis* are healers and religious leaders, who possess detailed knowledge of medicinal herbs and remedies and the power to connect with spirits. A *rewe* is the Mapuche

> representation of the 'Axis mundis' [sic] or cosmic tree, which connects a *machi* to the Earth's celestial poles and allows them to gather allied spirits and information to heal (Domínguez 2022).

For the artist, the image of the *Machi* came from a past to reclaim her real name, to ask for ways of hearing Mapuche people's voices (Vargas 2022). As a result of the encounter with the image and Domínguez's intervention, the Wellcome Collection changed the classification of the image to 'a *Machi*', keeping Domínguez definition in the catalogue of the collection and inviting the *Machi* Millaray Huichalf to participate in the public program of the exhibition (Wellcome-Collection 2022).

In this context, for Domínguez, art is a 'field of possibility that can disrupt existing political narratives, challenge interpretation and propose new ways of approaching problems' (Domínguez 2020). As we can see, the work of Domínguez addresses heritage in non-hegemonic ways; it expands the field to other forms of understanding, seeing, and interacting with it. It deals with contradictory elements without obliterating them and establishing a dialogue. In this sense, her artworks can enact different realities and heritages that are complex and ambivalent. Domínguez works commit us to the future- present -past with a sense of care and reparation. In her work, we see different contradictions inhabiting the spaces, sometimes in dialogue, as in the Wellcome Collection and others in denial, as in the Ballad. At the same time, Domínguez's work address 'human interconnection with nature as a fundamental element of life and its healing' (Clarke and Yellow Bird 2021: 179).

Domínguez work, show us how, if we want to talk about decolonising heritage, it is necessary a willingness to accept uncomfortable truths and be open to unsettling circumstances. This also means accepting the emergence of new beings in a more fluid understanding of materiality and subjectivity. In other words, instead of a 'static field of reference that awaits inscription' (DeSilvey 2017: 17) Domínguez's work shows us heritage as an active form constituted and reformed from its interactions with plants, stones, or any other entity. Domínguez's artworks, also opens the possibility for healing colonial histories and understandings, showing that if museums cannot solve inequalities, at least they 'can help to address them' (Onciul 2015: 33). In this case through the correction of the label and by inviting the *Machi* to speak, or through the decolonisation of the display methods. This kind of work is only possible in a mutual exposure of vulnerabilities, an acknowledgement of injustices (Sterling 2020: 1038), mutual sharing of responsibilities and nurturing each other. These practices must include more-than-human and nonhuman beings, integrating ways

acknowledging their agencies ‘to map out alternative strategies of care, inheritance, preservation and stewardship’ (Sterling 2020: 1038).

To think of heritage through a decolonial gaze is to understand the material and symbolical exchange that creates the social fabric of life with humans, more-than-humans and nonhumans. In Domínguez work, we can see the product sprout from the soul, and how thoughts are also part of that circulation connecting mental and material energy, her work shows us also how heritage is not only about representations of the past, but also about the forms in which it is present and active. In her work, the symbolic and the material elements create heritage, at the same time that are nurtured by it. Dominguez works, activates the memory circuits in our bodies and identities, comprehending a logic of material-spiritual exchanges that organise their use and recognise ancestral and contemporary legacies, through the integration of alternatives forms, she uses objects and practices recognised as heritage in interaction with new materialities, integrating alternative forms to present heritage as well as updating its meaning.

Touching knots, the work of Cecilia Vicuña.

> The Inca is about to be/ and the ruins of the past /are the model for the future /being created by our/ remembering (Vicuña, quoted by Lippard 1997: 15).
>
> In the turn from spinning a thread to stretching it from point to point lies the 'hinge' between bodily movement and abstract reason, between the textilic and the architectonic, between the haptic and the optical, between improvisation and abduction, and between becoming and being. Perhaps the key to the ontology of making is to be found in a length of twine (Ingold 2010: 100).

Imagine that you are in the Andes, close to some lagoon surrounded by mountains and the sky. You see the stones, the yellow-green grass as tall as your knee; a few clouds in the sky and the sparks of the sun over the water; you feel the freshness of the wind over your head. Then you see a few animals, the camelids of the Andes, a vicuña, llama or alpaca; the raw wool moving in circles thanks to the cordilleran wind, creating figures and flowing in apparently unexpected directions. It moves until it finds another similar kin, and then it becomes a cloud over the soil. That is how Cecilia Vicuña's work emerges. Everything starts with a thread and the circles of the unspun wool by the wind creating a net.

Figure 42 Vicuña, *C. 'Guardián',* Chile. Mixed media, Con cón, Chile*. (1967*). ©Ceciliavicuna.com, *This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*

The work of the visual artist and poet Cecilia Vicuña is a work of encounters, a work where things and beings sustain each other in the time-space. Configured by a complex net of mediums, meanings and metaphors based on ancient traditions, precarious objects and

forgotten words. Vicuña's works have the capacity to resonate as waves of energy; through different languages, she weaves visual and aural resources creating sensorial and spatial metaphors, connecting and transforming those entanglements into new meanings and thoughts (Figure 42).

Her work, strongly based on Indigenous and Andean ontologies and research, serves to illustrate different ways of approaching heritage and the idea of time; whilst also encompassing the ancestral Indigenous wisdom from the Andes. How are the concepts of heritage visualised in Vicuña's works? Moreover, how can the artworks say something about heritage influencing its meaning and practice?

To think of heritage through the work of Vicuña is to think in a multidirectional and multi-temporal way. It questions the key essence of the Western heritage field, their material conditions, practices and how from Vicuña's works, they are appropriated and re-signified. As actions and corporeal sensations, Vicuña creates a textile that takes the shape of threads, poems, *Quipus* or performances. It is a work that comes from her awareness and acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge and a consciousness about the present. Drawing on Andean ontologies and Indigenous perspectives, Cecilia Vicuña reflects on how the order of time is altered for Indigenous people, particularly in the Andes.

For Aymara, Quechua and Kogi people, among others, the future is behind, and the past is ahead. The linear form of the colonial and modern time conceptions is challenged by a shape where the past is continually renewed and knotted. We weave thoughts by moving us backwards and forward, instead of only moving forward. This time orientation ‘makes a future facing the past, remembering. It re-inhabits its place and its space, invoking, reconceiving, reviving collectively through a seminal, fertile renovation’ (Lugones and Price 2010: lviii). It questions the silences and acknowledges the empty space of what has not been written with words but with sounds, gestures, movements, and embodied knowledge or its abscence. Vicuña's artworks recognise the space as a transformative means for interactions, as worldview and heritage embodied in her practice.[149]

[149] in *Quechua,* the word for language is “thread” while a complex conversation is “embroidering” it summarize the relationship between text and textile, and the notion of survival communication. Text-ile is the way in which Vicuña makes reference to the mixture and link between textile, the act of weaving images, sounds and the written text in her poetry. According to Zegher, etymologically it means ‘the twine of two (or more) strands twisted together, [and] also the interlacement of two persons copulating’ (Zegher 1997: 19).

To analyse Vicuña's production is to open a series of questions regarding heritage appreciation. If we consider her poetic work, we find the *QuiPoems* as a mix between *Quipus* and poems. For her, they are part of another kind of poetry, a 'poetry [that] emerges spontaneously and anonymously as by-product of physical connections, arising from the inventive and usually unfettered aspects of the very act of living' (López 2019: 16). For Vicuña, 'a poem only becomes a poem when its structure/ is made not of words but forces' (Vicuña 2012b: 121).

The understanding of her assemblages activates the forces of ancestral memories, knowledges and heritages. According to Lucy Lippard, Cecilia Vicuña 'sees herself as the receptacle of ancient knowledge, which she then translates into a very contemporary idiom' (Lippard 2017: 35). She often refers to the link of her practice to ancient civilisations and Indigenous knowledges. For example, QuiPoem 48 embraces the time-space of new and old temporalities situated in the context of Indigenous ontologies:

"Time has come to renew the past"
"The future is behind: it has not yet arrived"
they say in the Andes
"The spindle is the axis of the world and to weave is to think"
"Thoughts are threads and the strand we spin is our thought"
"A strand well spun is a life well lived"
the Kogi says
(Vicuña 1997: Q.48).[150]

The quipoem encompasses the ancestral Indigenous wisdom from the Andes and Kogi people whilst also illustrating how in the Andes time is not static, chronological or fixed, as discussed before. While the future is behind us… we only can see the past. This perception, beyond the poetic and metaphoric, it is based on a reality. Has someone ever seen the future? If the objects are in front of you, in front of us, do they belong to a past? *Es pasado si lo veo, toco y siento?* The question implied by a future that is behind defies the forms of understanding heritage in its Western conceptualisation. What happens if we shift the idea of preserving for the future? How do Vicuña's artworks challenge some of the ideas of linearity and time? Moreover, how can they present an alternative ontology to heritage appreciation?

The *QuiPoems* are part of a wider practice that involves not just words, but sound, gestures and multiple senses mixed with notions of disappearance and precariousness. In one of her first exhibitions (Figure 43), *Otoño* (1971) at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Chile), she covered the museum floor with autumn leaves and bags full of dry plane tree leaves. Here,

[150] Original poem appears as centred for this reason I have opted for maintaining it centred.

the intention was not to represent autumn in the room but to bring Autumn to the room; with its smells, sounds and textures. The work was not made to last, nor to be stored but to be felt in the present. The poetic gesture of bringing autumn to the room allowed visitors to play and create own experiences in-between the interaction of the leaves and the space.

Figure 43 Otoño/Autumm, Santiago, Chile. Mixed media. ©Ceciliavicuna.com *This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons*

This vanishing aspect of Vicuña's work proposes different challenges for heritage critical studies, practices and designs. One of the first challenges is that her artworks are made for the enjoyment of the present; they are not made to last for the future as they come with the idea of the *precarious*. Vicuña takes the etymology from the Latin word *precarious, precis*; prayer, and links the pray with *orar* - *oir*; to hear in Spanish. The *precarios* or also called *basuritas* (Little rubbish), are a series of small sculptures or installations made by found objects (wood, feathers, shells, branches, plastic, wool, cloth, stones, and more), sometimes exposed in art galleries and others to the hazards of nature, nonhuman or humans (Vicuña and Zegher 1997). Located in the landscape, studios, or street, as a gift to the cosmos, they are made to vanish at the hands of nature, humans, more-than-human and the invisible agencies; they recognise their change, power and interactions as constitutive of their ontology. These fragile sculptures enact their ontology, establishing a relationship and

equilibrium with the material and the present. They are forms sustaining each other for the moment. In this sense, they do not attempt to recall a glorious past -what they were. Instead, they are presented as they are in the present; as little fragments and pieces harmonically displayed; as small sculptures characterised by their fragility; an assemblage that creates visual poetry recognising the vulnerability but also acknowledging the interdependency between its pieces (Butler 2004).

The *precarios* are poetic offerings, as the gifts in the old *huacas*, ancestors and beloved ones; they imply a sense of reciprocity and reconnection. These *acciones precarias* and scupltures, enact little *plegarias u oraciones* that implies a specific 'cualidad parpadeante entre lo visible y lo invisibilizado por el colonialismo de la razón hegemónica' (Prieto 2019: 246).[151] This means that *they* involve the disappearance and what is not visible, or not anymore; they are visual metaphors made in the space intended to disappear. They are not thought as a form of recuperating a lost origin but as a recognition of relationalities that sustain them in the moment. In Vicuña's words the *precarios*, 'h[ave] no concern for the future. [they] evolve within the present' (Vicuña 1973: 66). They are a prayer that acknowledges the loss of knowledges, languages, voices and lives (human/nonhuman and more-than-human). As a claim to the cosmos, they unearth meanings and stand by the voices that we cannot hear, the untold stories and suppressed emotions, as evidence of the violence of political regimes or extractivist practices. In this sense, they are the presence of an erasure (Diaz 2018: 181), and at the same time, the possibility of reinvention (Clark 2015b: 25).

Within these characteristics, the logic of the precarious exposes a material engagement that acts in nonrepresentational forms honouring the balance, complementarity, and reciprocity of the forces. Its disappearance is linked to a reactivation and transformation of the present rather than strategies of conservation or safeguarding. They are the response to a sign and not its imposition. These little pieces defy the value of the precious, proposing an understanding that integrates the value of the precarious. A regeneration of meaning in poetic forms and forces as a way of making sense of exchanges and political shifts (Witkowski 2019). However, the forms in which Vicuña's works render when talking about heritage are not limited to the *precarious*.

[151] 'flickering quality between what has been visible and invisible by the colonialism of hegemonic reason'.

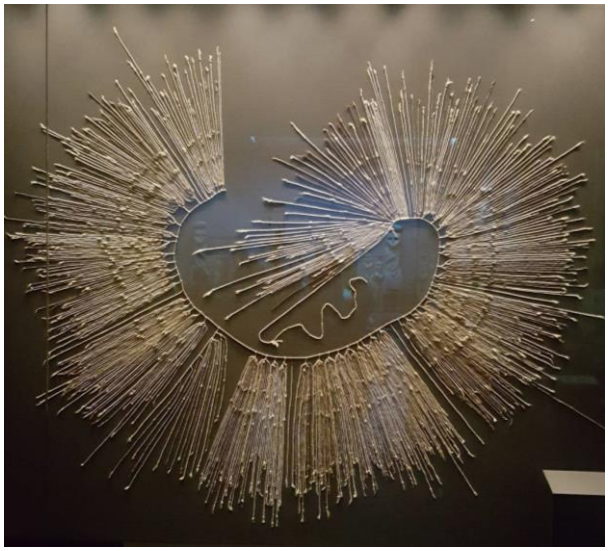

Figure 44 Quipu 0780, at Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, Santiago, Chile Ph: Personal archive ©Victoria Vargas Downing

Another example are Vicuña's *Quipus*, which are based on the Inka *khipus:* a three-dimensional visual and tactile system for recording accounts and narratives based on coloured cords, spinning gestures and knots.[152] The *khipu* is a knotted textile device historically used in the Andean region of South America (Figure 44). The word *khipu* comes from the Quechua for 'knot' (Urton 2017).[153] Its logic works through unifying two or more segments to a main cord. When we think about the *khipu* compared to Western forms of writing, it is interesting to link this thought to the words of the Yanomami Shaman Davi Kopenawa (2013); for him, written sources of the West are described as 'image skin' (visual reference). For the Yanomami, people of the West need 'Image Skins' to remember, while the Yanomami 'do not need image skins to prevent [words] from escaping […], they become new again each time they return to dance for a young shaman' (Kopenawa 2013: 21-23). In the Andes, the *khipu* system implied not only the visuality but also the tact, an embodied form like the dance of hands and fingers reading them, an embodied access to knowledge and not its possession. The *khipus* were codified considering the interaction between the coloured

[152] I use the distinction used by Meredith Clark, between *khipu* and Quipu (2015a: 195) Here, *khipu* from the Quechua refers to the Inka device; while *Quipu,* with the Spanish spelling, refers to Vicuñas objects and creations.

[153] The *khipu* consisted of a series of cotton or wool cords with pendant strings of a variable number, knotted at regular intervals, dyed in codified colours, and tied to a principal cord from which they hung (Urton 2002: 3; Paternosto and Allen 1996: 155). The combination between knots and colours contained information such as: numbers, calendrical information, poems and narrations organised in a visual and tactile system.

cords, directions of the spin and number of knots. As a result, the ontology of the *khipu* relies upon the interaction and interdependency embedded in the Andean world, a form where things only exist in relation to each other (Conklin 2002: 81), rather than in the separation of the visual means as in Western ontologies.

During the Inka period, the *khipus* were read by the *quipucamayocs* (cord-keepers) during public performances. However, today the meaning of this ancient device is lost, not because the *khipus* do not remember. The cord, knots and spins still have the information, but we do not know how to read them. The absence of meaning of the *khipus* draws on forms of colonial violence. For Vicuña, the *khipu* has a mental quality that helps to measure and meditate on reality (Clark 2015a: 195). In this sense, she uses the *Quipus* as a form of exposing how those forms of violence are still present and reproduced in different contexts, at the same time that they offer alternatives to heal those violence's. In other words, the artist recognises the loss of meaning of the *khipu* and its fragments, but she also resignifies the fragments in the present as a claim for environmental responsibility, political practice and epistemic justice. As consequence, the meaning of *Quipus* is remade in their reactivation and reformulation in the present. When she 're-use obsolete memory technologies associated with women's and Amerindian practices, [she] reweave the past' (Diaz 2018: 176); they become treads knotted in the present... This means that despite we cannot access to the memory and the information of the *khipus* -because of colonial violences-, the *Quipus* and its fragment emerge as the possibilities for exploring those forgotten alternative pasts and social hierarchies, bringing the past into the present and creating a new way of remembering (Diaz 2018: 182) and healing.

Figure 45 Beach Ritual (near Athens) Documenta 14, Kape Beach Legraina on the way to Sounioun, April (2017) ©Ceciliavicuna.com, *This image has been altered by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.*

Vicuña's *Quipus* speaks not with letters, but in the entanglement of its constituency. In her performances the raw wool of the *Quipus* is presented as alive blood, white cloud, melting snow, forest skeletons or white bones circulating, and moving through people (Figure 45). The meaning of the *Quipu,* is created by the act of touching, activating a reciprocal exchange and tactile sense between the interactions of those that are part of the performance, including non and more-than-human. In this way, the meaning of the artwork is created by touching in a reciprocal exchange between objects, people, feelings, and thoughts. This interaction is what, for Denise Arnold (2020), is described in Aymara cultures as an economy of mutual animation which is mobilised by the capture and transference of forces and vital principles between human and nonhuman communities. For Denise Arnold 'ciertos gestos, como "envolver" y "agarrar", propician cortes y conexiones entre distintos flujos de vida y muerte en "un mundo ya en marcha"' (Arnold 2020: 164), in other words an economy of mutual animation.[154] In this context, the performances activate multiple vital forces, while Vicuña's voice whispers and sings the instructions, the *Quipus* move, wrap and knots the participants, sometimes even bringing them back to coloured wombs that resemble the *Quipus* to umbilical cords. In Vicuñas words: 'united by a tread, we form a living quipu: each person is a knot, and the performance is/what happens between the knots' (Vicuña 2012a: 99). From here, while the hegemonic logic frames the interaction with objects of knowledge and the past as a 'do not touch', the Amerindian and Vicuñian system exposes a logic where only touching it is possible to activate the knowledge and interactions recorded in these cords and knots.

[154] 'Certain gestures, such as "wrapping" and "grasping," foster cuts and connections between different flows of life and death in "a world already on the move"'.

Another example of the multidimensional and temporal ways in which the *Quipus* work is the *Brain Forest Quipu (2022).* Composed by*:* the *Dead Forest Quipus* (Figure 46); a multimedia installation consisting of two sculptures of 27 meters of nets, wool, stone, etc., at each extreme of the Tate Modern Museum and musicalized piece by Ricardo Gallo*;* a *Digital Quipu*, with videos that show indigenous activist and organisations; and the *Quipu of encounters.*[155] These multiple bodies and voices crossed the TATE Modern and connected the museum with its exterior and the *Quipus* to the planet.

Figure 46 Brain Forest Quipu, Tate Modern (2022). Ph: Personal Archive *©Victoria Vargas Downing*

The *Dead Forest Quipu* was made of long strands of fabric, unspun wool, nets, strings, shells, cardboard, stones, etc. It presented fragments and found objects collected at the Thames bank in London by women from Latin American communities. For the artist, the 'multimedia installation is an act of mourning for the destruction of the forests, the subsequent impact of climate change, and the violence against Indigenous people' (Tate.org.uk 2022a), but it also is the chance to create a space for new forms of knowledges, understanding and voices to be heard. It is a place for listening carefully to what Indigenous people have to say, a call for accountability of our part in the destruction of the planet, and the place where new forms of organising can break an existent/existence format to reconnect with

[155] In the videos we see organisations such as: Survival international, Environment and Social Action Network (Kesan), Project Sepik, Amazon Watchers, Global Witness, Indigenous Climate Action and If Not Us Then Who?

multiple ones. For Vicuña, 'the Earth is a brain forest, and the *Quipu* embraces all its interconnections' (Tate.org.uk 2022b), the elements of the *Quipu* are connected to a field of knowledge where each knot is a gathering of energy (Tate.org.uk 2022a).

Figure 47 Brain Forest Quipu, details Ph: Personal Archive *©Victoria Vargas Downing*

Figure 48 Brain Forest Quipu, waterfall detail Ph: Personal Archive *©Victoria Vargas Downing*

In this sense, The *Dead Forest Quipu,* was created in the interaction of multiple gathering of energy of people collecting its fragments. Each bone, net, shell, or clay piece is connected to the Quipu by a thread or wire, but also by the energy and time of the people involved in the multiple dimensions of the Quipu (Figure 47). This means that *Quipus* and the fragments that compose them are not trying to evoke what they were or calling to its past; they are not trying to manipulate an absent past; rather, they make it kin in the present as a source of reconnection, energy and agency (Wilkinson and D'Altroy 2018). In other words, when Vicuña's makes *Quipus* she also engages with cultural modes of understanding temporality in Amerindian cultures, the *Quipu* wrap those temporalities (Alvergue 2014b: 80).

In addition, from the material process, Vicuña reconceptualises the Andean weaving practice by integrating new technologies and aesthetic features. Due to these re-enactments, the Quipus acquires new qualities being expanded to the digital world, integrating Indigenous voices and the soundscape from the Andes. As result, the tangible qualities of the Quipu are as relevant as the intangible; the pieces and fragments of the *Quipu* work evoking synecdochical or fractal relationships, connecting the *Quipu* to the Thames, the stories of those fragments, to the stories of the women that collected them from the river banks.[156] Furthermore, the *Dead Forest Quipu* have physical relation to the bones, not just of animals integrated into the *Quipus*, but the white textiles also resemble human bones and evoke the structure that sustains the *Quipu.* On top, the connections to the *Quipu* to the world do not end with the bones or the entanglement of stories of the people that collect them. Even the artificial intelligence of my phone confused the *Quipu* with a waterfall, showing how the interconnections are enacted in the configuration of the bigger structure and the ensemble of multiple worlds (Figure 48).

For this reason, despite the white wool, bones, shells and stone reminding us of the fragility of the ecosystem, the vulnerability and the possibility of disappearance, each knot remains us that the pieces are standing together, holding each other; they drive the hope of healing in the present. For Vicuña, the *Brain Forest Quipu* is an invitation 'to create spaces for imagining and dreaming so that we can bring our heart-minds together to give life to a new forest in a spirit of reparation' (Tate.org.uk 2022a). The artist makes an invitation to the ‘unión colectiva como estrategia política y amorosa para revertir el daño

[156] The synecdochical feature is also related to the weaving in the Andes and refers to a conceptualization of the world in which ‘mutually developing homogenous structures act upon each other’ (Allen 1997: 76; 2020), also links to the notion of fractals which can be expanded and contracted or scaled (Mannheim and Salas 2015). These notions rely on a sense of envelopment, ‘with parts standing for the whole, and the whole for the part’ (Spence -Morrow and Swenson 2019: 153).

ecológico' (Barros 2019: 18).[157] In terms of heritage the *Quipus* engage with the notion that heritage is not just a representation of the past, as most Western forms depict it; instead, it is also a form of 'reconnection with the past that is active and alive in the present' (Waterton, Silverman, and Watson 2017: 8), implying that the *Quipus* are constantly updated to the needs of the present. In this sense, as Diaz argues, the *Quipu* as aesthetic form and memory technology device, although obsolete, presents 'an active use of the past that not only serves as a new modality of expression but also as an antidote to the neoliberal ideal of consuming the new' (2018:183). This engages with the cultural function of remembering as regenerative practice, as in Vicuña's work, the past provides symbolic resources from where the present makes sense allowing continuity and change (Howard 2002).

These artworks, whether performances, the *precarios* or *Quipus*, are not looking to represent something they were in the past; they are not seeking restoration or reconstruction of its old meaning or a nostalgic ideal past. Instead, they are a reminder that what we see in the present is constantly renegotiated with oblivion (Diaz 2018). Vicuña's poetry, precarious sculptures or *Quipus* are located in-between pre-Columbian symbolic forms and contemporary social representations, creating a poetic of the present (Alvergue 2014a).

In this sense, Vicuña's pieces create meaning by knotting, deknotting and exchanging, they disrupt the landscape as prayer or manifestation in terms of physicality of the object and *manifestación* (protest) against the current condition represented in her prayers (Brown 2011). They disobey, the Western ontological gap between the past and the future, understanding how they appear mixed and entangled in the present, as a way of 'atraer a existencia mundos deseados' (Arnold and Yapita 2022: 26).[158] They enact the possibility of healing the past to take care of a future that we will not see. As Méndez-Ramírez argues, Vicuña's work offers 'as much a return to a tradition as it is the creation of a new embedded in the old one' (Méndez-Ramírez 1997: 59).

Her work unweaves the ontological assumptions in Western heritage interpretations, creating new sources for reweaving and re-thinking art and heritage relationships from decolonial perspectives. The relationship is presented as ways of doing, where art and heritage become mutually constituents. They recognise the value of the past for the present, activating the meanings, conflicts, and challenges of the present, what Rivera Cusicanqui (2018) calls non-

[157] 'collective union as a political and loving strategy to reverse ecological damage'.
[158] 'bring into existence desired worlds'.

digested past, not as an attempt to solve the conflicts, but recognise and challenge them, and then, heal them.

As result, Vicuña's artworks son *fragmentos que hacen sentido*, poetic actions to be re-signified in the present, they explore the possibility of forgotten alternative times and social hierarchies, breaking with colonial logics that point to the separation, the Cartesian gaze and emphasis on the future. These artworks re-think and re-interrogate the construction of cultural memory and reconnects with the Amerindian tradition of reciprocity, interconnectedness, and coexistence. They enact epistemology that is capable of being nurtured by the paradox of history instead of neglecting it. Vicuña's work deals with symbols and rituals intertwined with ideas of extraction, cultural appropriation, and the destruction of natural heritage. Either a visual or auditory stimulus, in the interaction between contemporary art and heritage, Vicuña's works pull, tensions, cuts and reknots the threads of this symbolic fabric.

In this sense, the ideas of things with souls or pigments with power, enacts a notion of life fluxes and ways of attracting desired words to the existence. This challenge the future orientation as the artworks are constantly enacting the presence of the desired world in the present. In opposition to the logic imposed by colonisers that pointed to the separation, the Cartesian gaze and an emphasis on the future, the Amerindian tradition of interconnectedness and coexistence rooted in Vicuña's work constructs concepts through the relationship between objects, practices, human and nonhuman, a *crianza mutua* of the interaction. Then, if heritage works as a source of futurology as Harrison (2015: 35) argues, it is one that we cannot see or project onto that future, but one that is created and enacted in the present from the interaction of dynamics forces and dialogues in between objects, people, nature and culture, this is its interdependency.

To think in the alternative ontologies that these works embrace makes possible to consider the way in which the Andean memory and thinking are constructed. Remembering us that in Andean thinking and Quechua narratives, the past appears as ever-present; it is constantly remade in the here and now (Bray 2018). In these artworks, we see a continuous process of reactivation and reformulation of those 'objects' that, for Western views, are relegated to the past**.** If we think of the *Quipus* as heritage, we can appreciate how Vicuña proposes new ways of keeping that heritage contingent and alive. In its inspiration from the ancient *khipu*s, she adds layers of complexity, knotting and unknotting new senses and meanings. Moreover, when she includes Indigenous knowledges, her work promotes alternatives ontologies to the

West. In her precarious and *Quipus,* she questions not only the idea of time in Western culture but also the function and presence of memory, making an urgent claim to challenge the hegemonic ideas of heritage and research. A claim for reconnection instead of separation.

The artworks of Cecilia Vicuña challenge these Western conceptualisations in terms of symbolic and material practices, while also claiming for the voices suppressed by those conceptualisations. They are not just enacting new forms of making heritage, but also new forms of healing those conflictive pieces of the past in the present, showing us how heritage and art are mutually constituted; particularly, if we consider that 'remembering in the Andes is a culturally vital activity involving not only the telling of stories but also the performance' (Howard 2002: 29). Then, rather than possess and managing the idea of the past, the work of Vicuña performs ways of remembering the fragility of the present, and the presence of the past as a discourse about the ephemerality of the Andean material culture and consciousness about the present.

Finally, although the concept of heritage has changed by integrating the role of affects (Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson 2017; Smith, M., and Campbell 2018), more immaterial approaches (Geismar 2015; Smith 2006) and recognising non-human agencies (Harrison 2018b), its management and understanding is still rooted in colonial ideas of time, power and nature. Despite the past's multiple layers, heritage practice has tended to preserve what remains on the surface, while Vicuña's works dig into the past entangling those deeper ancient meanings and acknowledging that we can move forward by facing our past, instead of carrying it on our backs.

In terms of time, while linearity forces us to keep moving towards the future and the idea of linear causality, these artworks propose a system of interconnectivity and interdependence allowing the creation of new meanings. Her work recognises the value of the past for the present, activating the embedded meanings, conflicts and challenges with the possibility of making amends and healing. Vicuña's practice safeguards an ancient view defying the 'do not touch' for 'only touching is possible to know' (*Quipu*). It shows us that safeguarding is not equivalent to not touching, but caring from a place of love, respect, and appreciation of the multiple forms of vitality.

Summing up, including alternative ontologies opens new voices and agencies in the heritage embodied practices and understandings. The Andean ontology embedded in Vicuña's artworks presents new issues to the analysis, understandings of heritage and alternative ways to build connections with the past and the present, showing that they are not separated but

together. We can see the past and face it. In this vein, by integrating new voices, agencies, embodied practices and material and non/human agencies, heritage and contemporary art create a complex fabric in their interaction: a mutual constitutionality. Beyond the division between humans and nature, decolonising heritage through contemporary art results useful for exploring alternatives ways of time appreciation, and challenging heritage dynamics and conceptions. In this context, Vicuña's work presents new forms for building connections with the past and the present, alternative ways of reweaving; re-activating and enacting ancient knowledges and heritage practices. These works modify heritage meaning, integrating new conceptualisations, a mutual creation in their shared temporality. Vicuña's works dig into the past, the histories, voices and materialities that follow multiple tangible threads, showing that if we recognise the energy of the matter, if we heal the past, if we move forward to the past, we can take care of the future, and that heritage is such when it is used and activated when it is touched, when we face our past rather than turning our backs.

Conclusions

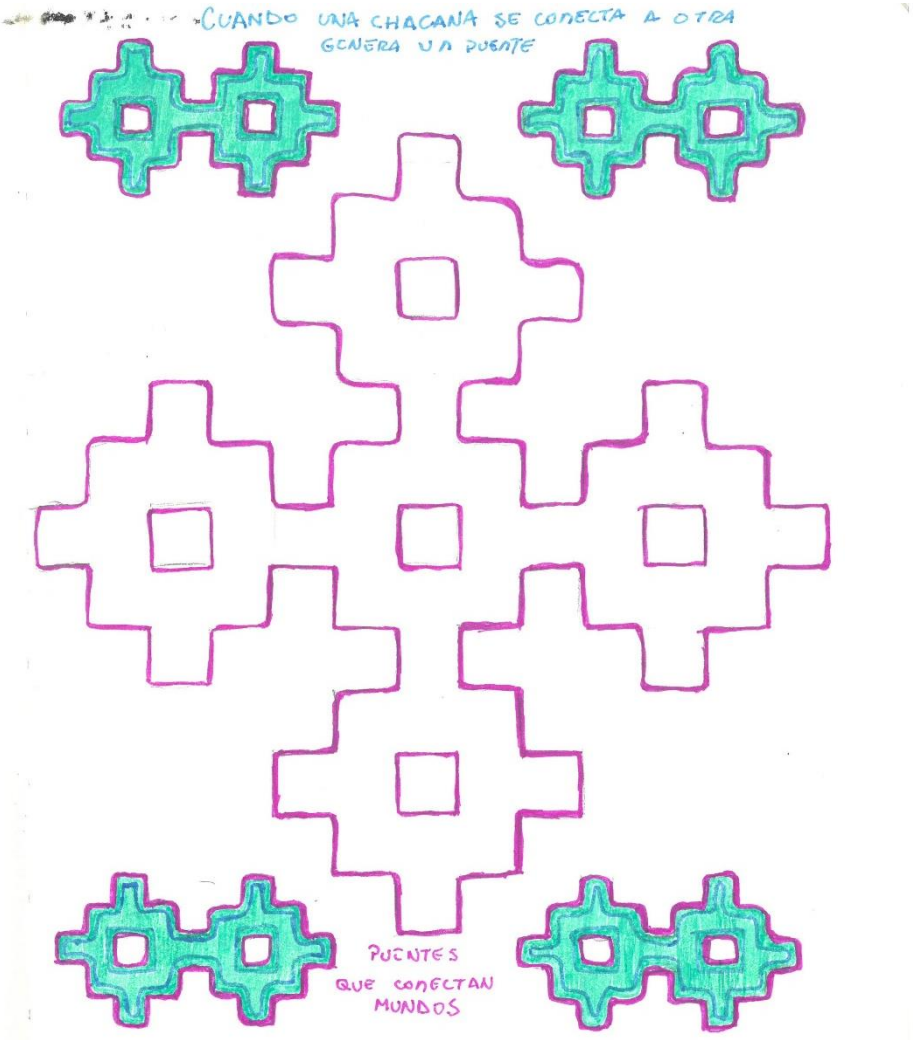

Figure 49 Conectando mundos [159] ©Victoria Vargas Downing

Closing Chakanas

> Las culturas antiguas no separaban las artes y la sanación. Era todo uno y la misma cosa. Baile, música y artes visuales eran parte de la vida cotidiana y entendían que todos los aspectos de sí mismos debían participar en la vida para estar completos (Monsalve 2017: 7).[160]

[159] Connecting worlds.

[160] 'Ancient cultures did not separate the arts and healing. It was all one and the same thing. Dance, music and visual arts were part of everyday life and they understood that all aspects of themselves had to participate in life to be complete'.

Colonisation and modernity work through the imposition and control of fixed forms, ways of thinking, doing and being. In this paradigm, we have been taught that unidirectional movements approach us to development, progress, and a desired future. To reach that future, we have to follow one way of thinking, one way of doing, one way of writing and one way of being. We have been taught to learn from the distance, to separate things to understand them. We have been taught to move as individuals to reach individual success and that we can do everything without help. We separate ourselves from people, from nature; we separate our cultures, and our races, as almost denying coexistence and mutual respect (Escobar 2018: 91).

However, despite Western desires for control and separation, we are interrelated; we are interdependent; life does not happen in separation from other beings because we are constantly interacting with each other. Even the West is 'highly polyvalent, [as] it is composed of multiple instantiations each encompassing a wide variety of syncretic practices, ideas and Identities' (Giraldo Herrera 2018a: 219). The contact between the West and the non-West is multi-folded, simultaneous, and experienced in multiple ways; they are constant and multilateral relationships. For example, the development of Western sciences has not been in isolation but instead in contact with non-western ontologies (Giraldo Herrera 2018b: 32; Blaser 2009). The (Western) history of art would not be the same without the cochineal red or lapis lazuli to make ultramarine blue, without the trading of pigments from the non-west. However, the biggest imposition of the West is its hierarchies that privilege Western thought and knowledge, suppressing, erasing or omitting other forms of interaction, presenting them as homogenous and unidirectional.

For this research, *mi recorrido me a llevado a la tensión del lenguaje*, to find ambivalent epistemologies and embodied methodologies.[161] To face the uncomfortable and the contradictions that are part of the constitution of the world, to realise that only by being vulnerable is possible to sustain each other in moments of precarity. As a result, each *chakanita* contains possibilities of undoing, delinking, and disobeying preconceived paths and separatist options. They challenged hegemonic structures of knowledge and making, stretching conceptions to make space for emergent conceptualisations and ways of doing.

[161] My journey takes me to the tension of language.

The uncomfortable, the contradiction and the precarity are still present, but in different forms, in different layers and porosities.

For this reason, I have been following the threads and touching the knots of coloniality. I have untied the knots of colonial forms and reknot them with other forms of thought. I have unwoven assumptions and reweave them in a different design. In this research, I have explored decolonial methodologies as ways of reimagining, refiguring, and unsettling those imposed standards and assumptions that somehow take us to where we are today. My aim has been trying to decolonise heritage; however, this thesis is about more than just decolonising heritage. Heritage, as understood hegemonically, is also part of a bigger structure rooted in colonial ideas, knowledge and power. As such, the university and institutions are also part of those structures that validate colonial forms. Therefore, for decolonising heritage was also necessary to rethink the structures, designs, languages and spaces that traditionally hold heritage, such as academic forms, languages and institutions that constrain the limits of what we know and understand as heritage.

My first intervention stands in-between different grounds, or better said, it creates bridges between different fields. I have approached this research from a decolonial methodology that aims to unsettle hegemonic structures, languages and forms. While for Clarke and Yellow Bird (2021: 175), decolonising methodology implies a set of radical changes, such as: recognising the legacy of the people that colonisation has omitted and erased; acknowledging the damage of colonial conquest and extractive policies; and restoration of the beliefs and practices of the original people as essential needs; I would add that decolonising methodologies also implies a series of changes in the language and the position that we take as researchers (Smith 2012). I argue that this means to move from the position of power to one that humbly listens, to be open to new forms of learning and understanding, while also embracing/experimenting with other forms of working, that do not lay in exclusion or in the logic of modern/colonial rationality; in other words, a change from distance to empathy towards the living. In addition, this research reminds us that through our vulnerabilities, we can connect to others (human, non-human and more-than-human) and be sustained during moments of precarity. Summing up, a decolonial methodology requires of a change in the language of how we approach each other and how we approach heritage.

While heritage maintains a language linked to its management and control, this is the language of heritage in risk, danger, or conflict; to think about heritage otherwise becomes limited to patriarchal ways of control and power, such as impositions of narratives and

conservation logics. Instead, what I propose through this document is a shift to a language and dialogue of care that engage with other forms of conceiving heritage, including feminist approaches that can be applied to the field.

Consequently, I have been writing this thesis enactively and performatively, bridging poetic forms with more academic ones; I have been writing in different ways, in different tones and rhythms, so the text reflects on the alternatives to Western forms, epistemologies, and ontologies. I have been writing as a process to make the world, 'with the impulse to push boundaries, to shape ideas, images and words that travel through the body and echo the mind into something that has never existed' (Anzaldúa 2015: 5); I have been writing from uncomfortable places using my writing *para fabricar el presente*.[162] I have been writing as 'a prayer for connection across differences and with darkness, whiteness and other 'shadow beasts' within' (Jara 2002: 437); and as a way of touching *el enemigo que llevamos dentro.*[163] I have been writing to connect different routes, to follow multiple forces, topics, ideas and lands. I have been writing from multiple times and in different registers, so my words can become 'cables that hold bridges' (Anzaldúa 1999: 9), so my words can contour different paths that move through and with the tensions, ambivalences and precarity of enacting a decolonial methodology.

In each chapter, I have used the Chakana as a form that harmonises times, spaces and as a gathering of multiple knowledges, ways of thinking and being; as a referent about how to read and understand our relationship with the world, with the *Pacha, Pachamama* (Alulema Pichasaca 2020: 12-13). As a way of leading the reader towards a learning, unlearning and relearning process. Because to learn a new language, we require interlocutors, and unlearning imperialism, as well as healing it, as Azulay expresses, 'requires interactions, collaborations, and relations with many' (Azoulay 2019: 166). As a result, my writing grows from the interweaved roots that we find in-between the cracks, in-between the divisions and places where multiple resilient seeds can germinate and interact. I have been writing as a process to understand and reimagine methodologies and heritage in non-colonial, non-patriarchal ways. Ways that instead of talking of danger, conflict, risk and safeguarding (which relate to power relations and violent language), point towards a language of care and mutual responsibility, a language of healing.

[162] To make the present.
[163] The enemy within us.

My second intervention address heritage studies. Here, I unweave assumptions present in the contemporary heritage field, questioning theories and how heritage assumptions reflect on its design, limiting the emergence of new forms. I argue that despite the efforts of integrating new ontologies, the management and interaction of heritage practices are still constrained to hierarchies or domains that remain unquestioned. Instead, I propose that the rules and hierarchies of heritage must not be imposed by the hierarchies of others, but by their kin. This does not imply that heritage domains should not be applied to all 'heritage', as they can exist within the objects that stand by Western categorisations. However, other 'heritage beings' should be cared for according to their own needs and hierarchisations, not those imposed by Western design or domains.

In addition, as Western heritage design imposes forms of management and analysis, such as divisions between subjects and objects, us and them, nature and culture and the distinction between the past and the present, the definition of what is or what can be heritage falls into these categorisations of objects, places, things from a past, etc. This constrains their interaction and presents them as a representation of something out there, whether the past or the future, an object or as part of human-centred approaches. In this case, I argue that a decolonial approach to heritage implies acknowledging that heritage has effects beyond its representation, and it can be engaged in more-than-representational forms, such as in the Andes, where heritage enacts and activates new possibilities to repair and heal, creating spaces for more-than-human approaches. In this sense, while Western heritage ontology uses heritage to impose narratives, hegemonies, times and structures of power, other ontologies, such as the Andean, look at heritage from a different perspective, as interactions, understanding between different beings and balancing practices.

At the same time, while for Western approaches, heritage is understood as something 'of the past, in the present and for the future', by basing this research on Andean ontologies and temporalities of Quechua and Aymara people, I argue that a shift from the lineal future-orientation of heritage is essential to start to manage heritage differently. I argue that future-centred approaches reproduce Western linearity limiting other forms of interaction and reproducing extractive and accumulative practices, while instead, the Andean conceptualisation of time unsettles the direction of time, enacting a different time ontology where the past is present and alive, where the past 'arise out of the present no less than the present arises from the past' (Wilkinson and D'Altroy 2018: 120), creating each other in that interaction and shifting future-oriented practices, to future-present-past approximations.

My last intervention relates to the two before; language and ontological dualism. However, this intervention is enacted in a different field, contemporary art. Here, art appears to create a different language and form. The role of art for this thesis is enacted in multiple ways, it activates memories that, paraphrasing Rivera Cusicanqui (2015: 78), do not work as a nostalgic act but a wakeup call, and I would also add that it does not act from fear but comes from a caring place seeking the restoration of life cycles.

The artworks of this document integrate and understand heritage as more than a representation, activating new meanings, integrating marginalised voices, and allowing the re-emergence of memories through small rebalancing and reparative gestures of everyday connection. In other words, the artworks engage with heritage, whether it is questioning it or reflecting on their symbolic and material enactments, while also claiming and giving space for the voices that have been absent from the discussion. The artworks present in this thesis are nurtured by heritage practices, and at the same time, the practices are updated and enacted in the artworks. These practices are also modified and updated in a movement where they constitute each other. They are as much a return to a tradition as 'the creation of a new embedded in the old one' (Méndez-Ramírez 1997: 59) in the process of mutual constitution and nurturing (Uywaña). At the same time, art can create improbable worlds, and not only to 'investigar redutivamente o passado, como faz muitas vezes a ciência, mas transformar o presente sem perder vínculos fecundos com nossa memória ancestral' (Nóbrega 2009: 81).[164]

In this sense, the artworks not only deconstruct paradigms and concepts, unveiling hidden assumptions (Serafini 2022: 235), but they also extend the boundaries between art and heritage, moving away from the exclusionary limits of imposed hegemonic conceptions and transforming the present, in other words: being enactive. In a similar vein, for Gomez Barris, artistic practices make visible 'submerged perspectives, ones that perceive local terrains as sources of knowledge, vitality and livability' (Gómez-Barris 2017: 1), meaning that art can make visible and tangible ancestral and new ideas, destabilising hegemonic categories that help to confront and heal the damage of colonisation.

In different words, art, when linked to decolonisation practices, exposes what has been purposefully hidden by those in power. It allows to express and engage with a relational and political ontology of the different territories (Serafini 2022: 229), affecting the reality and engaging with a world that is active in its cocreation, as world-building activities in the space

[164] 'investigate the past in a reductive way, as science often does, but to transform the present without losing fruitful connections with our ancestral memory'.

rather than being detached. I argue that a decolonial approach to heritage through contemporary art may help to overcome and heal the distances and violences of colonial impositions, giving space for hearing and sharing a safe space for interdependency and precarity.

The artworks have a *inmediatez* and strength where, in words of Rivera Cusicanqui:

> la composición y montaje forman parte de juego de interpretaciones sobre el pasado, no como algo dado, acabado y muerto, sino como un pasado-como-futuro: una fuente de renovación y crítica moral frente a lo dado, a la opresión y la dominación en tanto resultados inevitables del progreso y la modernización (Rivera Cusicanqui 2015: 90).[165]

Here, the works of Natalia Montoya, Nicolas Grum, Patricia Dominguez and Cecilia Vicuña reweave different ontologies and forms into a mix that both: includes and repairs. They work with and through heritage to 'softening into the complex process of change from which any newness can emerge' (Streit Krug 2021: 21). They are not concerned with heritage domains, nor with its management or at least in direct forms, nor they try to control it; they are not framed within the past nor the future. The concern of the artworks does not rely on the objects, in their classification or conservation, but on the series of relations that they establish with the around, human and nonhuman, not as something fixed but in constant movement and dialogue, as rebalancing acts in the present.

In this sense, heritage is not isolated but in the interaction between humans, nonhuman, and more-than humans. In the works of Montoya, Grum, Domínguez and Vicuña, the relational perspective is understood as a process of continuous becoming where the definition of one affects the other (Vigliani 2016: 29). The artworks analysed, are not concerned with heritage domains, nor with its management, rather, they open new ways of understanding the different relationalities between humans, nonhumans and more-than-humans as 'multiplicidad de mundos mutuamente entrelazados y co-constituidos pero diferentes' (Escobar 2014: 146).[166] This means that more than representing these relationships, they enact them. In this interaction and constant formation, the healing possibilities lay as interdependency moves us 'to a deeper understanding of the forms of collaboration and co-creativity that bind us to other species and to our environment (Page 2021: 218).

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[165] 'The composition and montage are part of a game of interpretations about the past, not as something given, finished and dead, but as a past-as-future: a source of renewal and moral criticism against the given, oppression and domination as inevitable results of progress and modernization'.

[166] 'multiplicity of worlds mutually intertwined and co-constituted but different'.

In these interactions, art pulls the loose threads of the symbolic fabric between art and heritage, allowing us to unweave the ontological assumptions present in Western heritage conceptions and reweave them in a new design, in mutual nurturing or mutual interaction. Contemporary art as a tool for decolonising heritage, allows the reshaping and delinking of those power structures represented and unconsciously (or not) reproduced. The use of artworks to decolonise heritage questions and breaks those imposed paths while proposing alternatives to heal and repair, alternatives in their own terms and needs. The artworks researched enact rebalancing acts, connecting multiple relations erased by modernity and calling for institutional change. In this sense, art and heritage from a decolonial perspective not just reimages or reconstruct what can be considered heritage but also gives an alternative to heal and repair forms of damage.

For Clarke and Yellow Bird, 'creative expression [can] detail our ancestral paths and historical trauma but also gives wings to the beauty and wonder of our existence and futurity (Clarke and Yellow Bird 2021: 105). The idea of healing through contemporary art, brings with it a place to honouring to our ancestors, to give the place that was erased, to repair the relationship with the involuntary cut branches of our family tree. For Serafini 'art can repair broken social bonds as well as damaged connections within our ecosystems' (Serafini 2022: 254-5), and I will add it also can repair our broken relationship with time, in a way where we can 'recognis[e] the significance of the past trauma in the present'(Clarke and Yellow Bird 2021: 184) and being able of not repeating the same mistakes, so they stop reappearing.

For this thesis, I have followed multiple threads and touched many knots; I unknotted the knots that tied heritage to hegemonic forms, its design, dualisms and conceptions of time, to then, reknot forgotten and absent forms in different ways. I have created patches and textures of a fabric whose intention was never to be perfect, but to be aware. I tried to understand how the past reappears in the present as a way to re-learn its language, and among many languages, I found contemporary art useful for understanding it. Decolonising heritage through contemporary art activates and pulls the strings that make new sounds, creates new designs, points out where the gaps are, indicates the absences and brings new materials to patch when necessary. I have faced the past as much as the present, to understand that the future is not granted or in front of us, but rather is a load that can be shared in dialogical care and mutual interdependency, and that heritage was never in the back, but always saying something about how to heal the present.

Last *Chakanita*: Disclosing *chakanita*

Hay lugares que nos llaman sin que nos demos cuenta, when I decided to come to the UK, I checked multiple universities, and without knowing the city, I decided to come to Leeds in 2016.[167] In my first year, I found a Chilean Mural hidden in the walls of the University Student Union, and with other Chileans we felt the call for reviving it. Then, when I started my PhD, I learned that an old train that used to pass by Tocopilla (the Junin), the city where I grew up and the Toco Area, was built in Leeds by Hudswell, Clarke and Co. (Ward and Johnson 2023); and is now stored in the City Industrial Museum. Later, I discovered that Colonel John Thomas North (Purbrick 2017), the Nitrate King, donated part of his fortune to the Yorkshire College of Science, which later became the University of Leeds. The same guy that made his fortune out of the monopoly, exploitation and speculation of nitrate and water, in the land where my ancestors died, is responsible for the existence of the University I am in. There is miners' blood, in the foundations of this University, the blood of my *ancestros, tíos, abuelos, envueltos en la faena o tragados por ella* are in the basis of this University.[168]

Beyond how personally unsettling these facts are, I cannot make myself blind to the blood of my ancestors that this University holds, and already enrolled in the PhD; I had to face that colonial injustice every day. For Clarke and Yellowbird, 'coloniality goes out of connecting with the histories and wisdom of our ancestors. It limits our ability to understand and heal our trauma by erasing memory' (Clarke and Yellow Bird 2021: 184). I had to come here to let the story re-emerge, memory re-emerge. I did not know that in coming to Leeds I would have to face that trauma, nor did I know I had that trauma, but I know that remembering can be a healing act (Clarke and Yellow Bird 2021: 5). For Irene Jara, 'healing work also means being engage in a battle' (Jara 2002: 436) and my battle has been linked to the decolonial work of this thesis. This net of unexpected relations made me realise how, in different places around the world, I have found people with which we share places, histories, traumas and ways or desires for healing. For Dian Million (2014: 32) 'the space is filled with the emotional resonance of our actions in this place', people, beings, and places are interconnected through invisible fibres that mutually affect and connect us, consciously or not. I can see our connections to places through networks of exploitation and extraction, from an ancient body exhibited in a museum, or as claim of return to the land; from an avocado from Chile affecting the land that ends up being consumed in the UK; or as the healing act of bringing a *Machi* to

[167] There are places that call us without us noticing.
[168] ancestors, uncles, grandparents, involved in the mining sites or swallowed by them.

slowly repair the wrongdoings of an imperial collection. From the Amazon Forest being burnt, or the act to reconnecting claiming environmental justice on the riverbanks of the Thames; or as the Nitrate King legacy in this University, or as myself and my decolonial struggle, trying to honour my ancestors in the place that probably took the life of their kin, my kin.

In those multiple transits, on a map that grows up with each trip, I came to realise how the history, how my ancestors have pushed to get me here, how much a place would let me know, how the past comes back asking for rebalance, how places work in multi-temporal and juxtaposed ways to help to understand the world and how the way we live 'life right now extends the impact of my ancestors and enriches the soil my descendants will plant their own lives in' (Levins 2019: 17). I have come to expand my understanding about the ways in which memory is inscribed in the land and how that memory plays as a coincidence to meet us with the right people, to get to the right places, to find the right artworks, the right supervisors and how 'we receive information from ancestors inhabiting other worlds' (Anzaldúa 2015: 24) in unexpected ways waiting for us to heal painful stories. I am, after all, a Victoria Elizabeth, not from royalty but from the Desert. What better irony?

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