An autopsy of the coloniality of suicide: Modernity’s completed genocide

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Abstract
From the Latin American modernity/coloniality project, we address the inhospitality of the modern/colonial and globally designed world-system in relation to suicidality. In our vernacular Spanglish, guided by epistemological disobedience, and responding to epistemicide, we interpellate ourselves to unmask the hidden colonial structures of power of modernity’s global design on suicide knowledge. Our intent is to argue, specifically from the perspective of coloniality and our racialized, gendered, and monetized bodies, that suicide is rather an extension of modernity’s colonial genocide. From the decolonial geo and body-politics of knowledge, our discussion on modernity’s Eurocentric rhetoric on suicide departs from the materialization of suicidality in our flesh. We story experiences of our bodies with life and pleas of death, within the context of our immigrant backgrounds, and as family therapists in the United States (U.S.). We adopt autopsy as an analogy from where to advance such analysis to contest Eurocentric configurations of suicide from within, but against modernity. We emphasize the hidden racism and capitalism of suicide embedded within the persuasive Eurocentric promises of the Anglo scientific method and the U.S. American Dream. We address the concepts of epistemicide, coloniality of knowledge and of being. It is our hope to contribute to further advance decolonizing possibilities to reinscribe options that would border with the current Western knowledge on suicide. This may require other configurations of the body, knowledge, hence ways of being, doing, thinking, sensing, feeling, imagining, and dreaming to coexist among pluriversal hospitable worlds of life and death.

Keywords
coloniality of being, decolonization, racism, suicide

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In Spanglish, we address the inhospitality of the sophisticated modern/colonial and globally designed Anglo world-system (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000) that materializes *en carne y hueso*, in flesh and bone, in our experiences with both life and pleas of death. Our intention is decolonial. Hence, we address the conditions of such design as well as its designers that, for over 500 years, have made it as inhospitable a world *de la chingada* for people *como nosotras* (Tisha and marcela) with colored, gendered, sexed, and monetized ranked bodies.

In addition, our decolonial task here is to attempt to unmask the darker side of modernity in relation to *suicidio*. We adopt Argentinian Semiotician Mignolo’s (2018) understanding of modernity as belonging to European social sciences and humanities as “a type of storytelling based on assumptions and regulations about story-building that defines and is still defining the contours of Western civilization (the European Union and the United States)” (p. 373). Therefore, we seek to reveal the intended concealed locations, bodies, and language of those who have designed such storytelling, from where, and how they have sustained it within self-interest configurations of “suicide” and “the suicidal.” In the words of the queer Chicana theorist Anzaldúa (2009), “though we have not broken out of the white frame, we at least [want to] see it for what it is” (p. 114) and take an ethical position to contest it and delink from it. The frame is of a Euro-Western Man-Human (Wynter, 2003) and heterosexual made design or invention.

For this purpose, we adopt autopsy as a modern analogy from where to advance a critique, among many others, from within but against modernity’s structures of power of Eurocentric configurations of suicide or as we linguistically situate it here in turn, “euro-suicide.” Our critique consists of advancing an analysis of euro-suicide particularly from one of the most salient terms of the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality project from Abya Yala (which is the name given by the Kuna people to what we now call *América Latina*), coined “coloniality” by Peruvian Sociologist, Quijano (2000). Much like French philosophy has been adopted in the literature to critique suicide from Foucault’s work (Marsh, 2010), here we are adopting Quijano’s coloniality or colonial system of power to contest modernity in relation to euro-suicide. We emphasize specifically the coloniality of knowledge and being. We argue, within the particular historical context of Abya Yala, that euro-suicide and euro-suicide knowledge is an extension of modernity’s colonial genocide. These are the genocidal mechanisms since the times of the European colonization in the 1500s, currently disguised by Eurocentric scientific configurations of psychiatric or psychological technologies of individual dysfunction in regards to euro-suicide.

It is our hope to contribute to further advance decolonizing possibilities to reinscribe options that would border with the current Western knowledge on suicide toward the coexistence of pluriversal hospitable worlds (Escobar, 2020) of life and death. Below, we *tejemos* or weave our argument by emphasizing first the corporeal and geographical grounds from where our discussion departs. In proceeding with the discussion on the colonial analysis of euro-suicide, we depart first and foremost from territorial, linguistic, esthetic, emotive, imaginary, and corporeal renderings. I (Tisha) greet you, the reader, at the door of my embodied experiences at the borders of life and death. Following, we advance the analysis of euro-suicide from the coloniality of knowledge and being by adopting the modern method of autopsy as an analogy.
A kitchen story

This is the story of my first memory. I hold it so vividly that in remembering it I am transported to the day I realized I was not born enough, and that I had to work hard to be granted existence into this world. This memory and others like it have become storied within mis lágrimas, a tapestry of untranslatable images and feelings that tell the cuento of a loneliness felt in my bones and a sense of displacement that has made my existence nomadic. A memory that to this day leaves me rebelliously gasping for air. A rebelliousness that refuses to allow my existence to be suffocated into its denial and has allowed me to breathe life into this cuento. I find it difficult to translate el cuento de mis lágrimas into the linguistic world, but I do so in an attempt to transport you into the word-less mundo del corazón which houses los cuentos de mi vida y la muerte. Therefore, I do so the only way mi corazón Xicano knows how, by inviting you into mi cocina—a kitchen that still smells like the zheetgoo zaa3 (tamales de frijol) that mi Wita and I made last Saturday. A kitchen where we sit lado a lado, with a bowl of caldito that mis lágrimas have prepared for us, to warm our hearts-bodies-minds-spirits from the coldness of euresicide. The caldo tastes like a knot in my throat, heavily and unfamiliarly seasoned for the past 27 years by a sazón that has permeated mis huesos and now leaves behind a hearty bone stock of failure of existence within a modern Western world. Pero pues here I go con mi cuento.

I am 7 years old, and it is fall in San Diego, California. The air is cool and crisp, and although it is not very late in the afternoon, the sun has already gone to sleep for the night. I am in the home of my immigrant parents, Maria y Gaudencio, who both work two jobs so that we can afford to live in that home. It is a home in which se habla el Español that I have inherited from Oaxaca México, although it is slowly being gentrified by el Espanglish de San Diego. As su única hija, I carry in my small unworked hands the responsibility of my family’s esperanzas y sueños to achieve the American Dream. I am painfully aware this opportunity has come at the cost of mi familia’s uprooted lives and weathered manos campesinas. Their crossing of the border making them lesser beings in this life so that I could in turn have a chance at being alguien en la vida.

I am in my bedroom that my parents recently and proudly adorned with my first big-girl-bed. It is white and gold and a bit too flowery for my queer tomboy sensibilities. The weight of the insurmountable amount of math homework I have due on the first day of third grade brings me down to my knees, and I feel the rough, yet cushy blood red carpet beneath me as I frantically count and recount all of the pages I have left to do, knowing that each one will be closely examined by Mrs. Fields, one of the predominantly White teachers at my public and poorly-funded school. I am already the Mexican girl who is too quiet in class, whose parents speak an English that requires the assistance of my broken translations in a hopeless attempt to accommodate monolingual ears. I knew I could not also be the girl who failed to honor her parents’ sacrifices and simultaneously prove that she was indeed not a good student, as may have been suspected by reading my Spanish name on my school’s meticulously documented academic folder outlining my performance.

Thus, my small brown hands go faster and faster through the pages, but all they manage to achieve is to make my heart pound faster and faster as the weight of responsibility
of what it means for me to fail leaves the heart in the border between life and death. In that borderland my heart’s yearning to speak becomes intensified, thus *el cuento de mis lágrimas* begins to flow. In the face of these feelings I respond the only way I can possibly imagine. I begin to breathlessly call upon the heavens in between gasps of air. As the same small hands that have been entrusted with *toda una familia y cultura* reach desperately for the *Virgen de Guadalupe* necklace around my neck that my Wita gifted me for *mi cumpleaños*. I hold onto *la Virgen* for dear life because she is my lifeline, a direct line to God himself. *Diositooo* pleaseee, I beg you, take me with you, pleaseee! If you do, I promise I will do anything you ask. I’ll be good, I’ll listen to *mis papas, caminare de rodillas*. I will do whatever you want. Just please! *Diosito*. Make it stop. I can’t do this, I can’t, pleaseee! don’t leave me here. I am crying so much that I enter into a silent cry that moments later is abruptly interrupted by a whimpering breath as I begin an endless loop of saying: I am sooo stupid. My hands that no longer feel like mine become accomplices to this message and begin to repeatedly hit me on the head as punishment for not thinking, for not working hard enough. My hands blame my brain, sentencing it as the culprit of my illogical procrastination that is endangering *mi familia y cultura’s* dreams.

I suddenly hear my parents talking in the living room. Their voices hit me like a bucket of cold water that sends a shiver down my spine. I try to go back to a silent cry in an attempt to mute my pain, to avoid having them question the uncontrollable and seemingly disproportional and illogical stream of tears that never-endingly pour down my face. However, because *el cuentos de mis lágrimas* refuse to be silenced, the weeping continues, and my hands become further complicit in the act of silencing *el corazón* by covering my mouth so that my desperate attempts to gasp for air would not let my parents and the world know of the devastating amounts of pain and loneliness housed in my heart.

### An autopsy of modernity’s genocidal crimes

In this paper we adopt English, a European language, to accommodate but also critique the prevalence of English in the linguistic hierarchical construction of knowledge on euro-suicide. However, we do so from our Spanglish. Similarly, we adopt the modern scientific method of autopsy commonly used to establish causality of suicide of the dead body; although, as an analogy of analysis from Abya Yala’s perspective of coloniality, we trace, unmask, and contest instead the hidden colonial structure of power embedded in euro-suicide and in relation to the American Dream as well as the scientific method. We contest euro-suicide from within modernity but very much against it.

Guided by our decolonial intentions, our autopsy is not on the body. Rather, it is on the coloniality of knowledge and being of euro-suicide. It implicates an analysis to uncover the darker side of modernity that keeps hidden the evidence of the crimes of modernity to be found in the pain and loneliness of our racially, gendered, and monetized ranked hearts and bodies. Our autopsy seeks to reveal how rigor mortis of our non-European knowledges and ancestry sets in through epistemicide (Santos, 2016), intellectual enslavement, storycide of kitchen narrations *y cuentos de lágrimas*, and genocide suicide. Furthermore, our autopsy on euro-suicide knowledge seeks to denounce the
Illogical mechanisms by which Eurocentric modernity’s logic recruits us as its accomplices of its crimes against our own bodies and lands: punishes us for not thinking, speaking, researching, dreaming, practicing, and being like Europe; and silences our corazones and lives by covering our own mouths during our desperate attempts to exist otherwise. In turn, an autopsy of the coloniality of suicide places responsibility on the inhospitality of the modern world-system’s genocide mechanisms of the civilization of death (Mignolo, 2010) via euro-suicide rather than on the persona’s mental health, psychiatric or psychological dysfunction, immorality, or criminality.

We seek to advance an autopsy of the coloniality of euro-suicide knowledge and being as the materialization of a decolonial project toward possibilities for the reconfiguration of our bodies, life, and death within hospitable pluriversal worlds of co-existence, hence detached from modernity’s euro-suicide. The autopsy requires us to spray luminol on the scene of modernity’s genocidal crimes for the traces of blood that its structures of power leave behind to glow, through the following: (1) recognizing modernity’s paradox that sustains its failing promise of progress whereby some benefit out of euro-suicide knowledge at the expense of others’ death and pleas of death; (2) analyzing euro-suicide from the perspective of coloniality and the colonial matrix of power through the co-presence of race/gender, capitalism, and eurocentrism; and (3) adopting a decolonial geo and body-politics to open possibilities for the re-inscription of our bodies and territories in relation to life and death and from our racially, gendered, monetized ranked bodies.

**Euro-suicide’s paradox: Deadly and profitable prevention**

Quijano (2000) developed the term colonialidad or coloniality as a perspective, different from the term colonialism which for him alludes instead to the relationship of domination between one identity or race over another. Coloniality served him as a lens through which to understand and respond to the realization of modernity’s failing promise of civilization, progress, and development. For our autopsy, the perspective of coloniality provides the vantage point to address why the modern promise of life at the base of science of prevention, mental health professions, and the geo-Drim continues to fail as evidenced by the sustained global prevalence of euro-suicide.

Quijano coined the term coloniality as a lens from where to discern modernity’s entanglement in a paradox that assures the ongoing failure of its science and geo-dreams when it comes to its followers but not its makers. Modernity’s scientific advances continue to fail its promises of life of esperanzas y sueños in the U.S. American Dream (Adams, 2017) that we and many families follow all the way from México (Tisha) and Colombia (marcela) at the cost of familias’ weathered manos campesinas and their uprooted lives to become someone in life. It fails because paradoxically, its promises of prevention are fabricated and dependent on structures of power, which we discuss below, that create and lead life instead through paths toward precisely the opposite; pleas of death that bring us down to our knees, gasping for air while shutting our own mouths. Modernity’s hidden promise of economic and mental civilization and development is based instead on what Mignolo (2010) calls the “civilization of death” (p. 161) of coloniality whereby modernization, production, and prosperity prevail at the cost of life of racialized bodies, as it is the case of euro-suicide. Therefore, modernity/coloniality are
mutually dependent, and the realization of such interdependency is part of any decolonial project from where the regeneration of life prevails over primacy of the rhetoric and mechanisms of modernity.

Our lives, pleas of death, and practices are entangled in modernity’s paradox. Whether in relation to Godly, scientific, or a geo-dream knowledge from the perspective of either life or death, as family therapists and instructor (marcela) in the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay people in the U.S., nosotras have been avid consumers of the research on euro-suicide and its promise of discovery of the sustainability of life through evidence-based preventive responses to the suicidal individuo. We studied this billable and devoid-of-color knowledge throughout our Westernized educational journeys to respond to the professional mandate of saving lives at all costs of the liability risk and to follow the Drim.

Undoubtedly, scientific and professional knowledge has been “beneficial” to us by becoming paying clients’ lifelines. This kind of knowledge has given us seeming professional recognition, hiding our darkened skins, and Spanish names behind our credentials, as we become the agents of the dissemination and replication of its authority in our lives, among our families and communities, in the therapy room, and university classrooms. In Mignolo’s (2010), words “As we know: the first world has knowledge, the third world has culture; Native Americans have wisdom, Anglo Americans have science” (p. 160).

Along these lines, persuaded (hence entrapped) by the rhetoric of the geo-Drim, we obediently put forward our cultural expertise to sustain the expansionist authority of the Anglo European saviors’ science and their configurations of the euro-suicidal persona killing other knowledges along the way through epistemicide. For Portuguese de Sousa Santos (2016) epistemicide refers to “the [bloody, pinche] murder of knowledge” (p. 92), here in line with the idea of civilization of the death of knowledge. Therefore, in striving to become someone in life (civilized, White, European, Man), through the rhetoric of the Drim, in our seeming advantageous position as therapists, instead, we are subjected to what we are calling “intellectual enslavement.” We become science’s sirvientas through our cultural adaptations and translation into Spanish, not Spanglish, that render inconspicuous the implicated linguistic and epistemic genocide and give no regard de un chingo to borderland wisdom or kitchen-stories that tears, hearts, hands, or bones pueden contar. Our seeming contributions to epistemicide, therefore the acculturation of science into our lands, languages, and bodies confirm our humiliation, inferiority and narrative enslavement (as well as the Abya Yala ancestral colonization and slavery that runs through the mestizaje of our veins) through our faithful consumerism of scientific knowledge (Mignolo, 2000) by striving to become the impossible (civilized, White, European, Man) at the cost of our lives, kitchen-stories, and bodies.

Paradoxically, in our seeming “privilege” as therapists, adopting science “with the humility of the humiliated” (Mignolo, 2010: 170), the sustainability of the conditions that lead someone to enter negotiations on their death pleas is therefore proportionally in direct relation to the maintenance of our profitable, whitened, Anglo researched knowledge and practices on euro-suicide. Our livelihood as therapists and mandated reporters to protect life in turn depends on the sustainability of an inhospitable world that criminalizes, immorilizes, and monetizes pains and loneliness that lead one’s negotiations of the terms of death. In this paradox, who are we and our helping professions “saving”? People or
modernity’s institutional interests to remain current and profitable, through epistemicide and intellectual enslavement? *Mierda!* “I [we] can’t breathe” (Sidhu, 2020). The structure of power of the darker side of modernity that creates the conditions for the sustainability of this paradox is the next analysis of our autopsy on euro-suicide knowledge, from the perspective of coloniality.

**Coloniality: The inconspicuous power that breathes life into suicide**

The term coloniality is a central decolonial term in the Abya Yala modernity/coloniality/decoloniality project. If coloniality did not exist, neither would the need for decoloniality (Mignolo, 2018). Coloniality refers to the continuity of the European genocidal global expansion after the military colonization of the Americas in the 1500s. It is a lens that seeks to make visible the inconspicuous, complex, and persuasive patterns of colonial power that still breathes life to the deathly mundane life in the modern world-system. Quijano (2000) called this historical longstanding structured power the colonial matrix of power from where we conduct the autopsy of euro-suicide. The matrix continues to function as two co-present axes of power of modernity/coloniality that constitute it and are constituted by it. These two axes impact what happens to subjectivities and intersubjective relations on euro-suicide. They are material dimensions of social relationships that modernity names by each axis as the ideas of race/gender and the capitalist control of labor and production. While the matrix was first the system of the modern spatial-temporal control of Abya Yala, it was later disseminated globally to become a model of a world-system along with its specific matrix of power. This happened through its prevailing rationality, the rhetoric of Eurocentrism, here linked to euro-suicide scientific knowledge.

Therefore, we understand coloniality as the bloodstream that runs under the skin of global modernity without which its institutional racist, sexists, capitalist, and Eurocentric cardiovascular world-system of the “open veins of Latin America” (Galeano, 1997) or Abya Yala would provoke a heart attack. Conversely, modernity propels the bloodstream of coloniality so as not to cause institutional cardiac arrest to its Eurocentric systems.

**The ideas of race/gender and euro-suicide**

For Quijano (2000), one of the fundamental axes of the matrix is the European creation, originating in the 1500s, of a social relationality or subjectivity—race and gender—for the hierarchical classification of knowledge and being that serves as a basic experience of control and domination. Furthermore, race and gender as a social relationality is linked to a binary of inferiority and superiority on the grounds of unquestioned arguments of nature and biologism (Lugones, 2008). Therefore, modernity’s invention of race and gender are not conditions of being per se, but instead a system of colonial power for the configurations of racially, gendered, and monetized bodies for the control, exploitation, and domination of our being and extermination. This is for purposes of sustainability and further development of modernity’s expansionist rhetoric of progress through consumption of science, intellectual enslavement, mental health interventions, or hard work in the pursuit of a geo-dream of a life “resembling an incomplete death” (Fanon, 1965: 128).
When considering the coloniality of power as a perspective for the understanding of different areas of society such as sexuality, knowledge, and economy (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2017), we argue through this autopsy that euro-suicide is not a condition of being or one’s mental health but a system of power whereby euro-suicide knowledge and “being a suicidal person” were invented by Europe (and the Europe in the United States) (1) for the control of life and death and (2) for the sustainability of modernity’s institutional rhetoric, primarily in English and their translations of research, mental health, psychiatry, pharmaceutics, and professions inscribed on the body.

The Western European invention of race and gender has certainly changed throughout the centuries; however, it remains a prevailing hierarchical codification that results in marked racialized corporeal differences between inhumanity and humanity (Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Quijano, 2000). From our analysis, the euro-suicidal marked body, similar to race and gender, is also a fictional modern/colonial configuration within the dimorphism of sanity and insanity to demarcate social relationships of control relegated to different degrees of humanity. Our bodies are subjected to a corporeal nonconsensual existence of the ideas of nations, languages, economies, gender, race, and also mental health that evoke an ongoing suspicious of our humanity and sanity devoid of color. Race and gender, in turn, do not express the pigmentation of our skins or sex, much like suicide does not express pathology, genetics, neuro-dysfunction, mental illness, or emotional dysfunction. Instead, they are explicit expressions of an attitude regarding lack of humanity materialized on criminalizable experiences of living and dying linked to the unquestionable modernity/coloniality global genocidal design of the colonial matrix of power and its civilization of death.

As described by the Puerto Rican philosopher Maldonado-Torres (2017), Europe created something more pervasive than the concept of race as “an attitude characterized by a permanent suspicion” (p. 244). We consider it to be very much applicable to the suspicion over the European configured suicidal body. Living within modernity’s inhospitable conditions of the civilization of death, our failing aspiration of being someone (European) in life, through the pursuit of a Drim and westernized family therapy education, departs from such suspicion. This suspicion becomes the means to reach the unreachable: a certainty for the realization of being in the image and likeness of what we will never be, the Western European Human Man (Wynter, 2003). This suspicion is central for modernity and becomes very evident even after living for only 7 years in this designed modern world-system de la chingada, for which calling on the heavens for Godly pleas to die are most sensical as a confirmation of what modernity already knows from its hidden genocidal structures that assure the killing of our devalued, inferior, and expendable bodies, knowledges, kitchen and lágrimas’ stories, and exploitation of our lands. According to Fanon (1965),

the disinherited in all parts of the world perceives life not as a flowering or a development of an essential productiveness, but as a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death. This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, [suicide], a high death rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future. All this gnawing at the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death. (p. 128)
While modernity has in place structures that keeps it acquitted of any crime, coloniality makes visible to us its hidden strings that manipulate the hands of the racially marked bodies to go to their mouths to suffocate their lives or to plea for the seeming morally appropriate authority to use “his” strings to do so for them. Therefore, a decolonial project seeks to cut modernity’s strings that coloniality reveals.

**Capitalism and euro-suicide: Pain as a commodity for the market of knowledge**

For Quijano (2000) the articulation of the ideas of race and gender from the colonial matrix of power since the 1500s was dependent on the simultaneous configuration of Europe’s global model of labor control and exploitation, meaning the distribution of products (including knowledge) with the deliberate intention of churning out commodities for the world market, hence for the benefit of Europe. The establishment of a capital order of things in relation to euro-suicide (i.e. multi-million worth of research, psychotropic prescriptions, and billable therapy services) are fundamental for a model of power. It emphasizes the production of commodities (i.e. researchers, therapists, the euro-suicidal person, and euro-suicide knowledge) for the world market of knowledge (i.e. research grants, research journals, etc.) control to advance the development of profitable new traits (i.e. therapy and systematic research) along with the structural or institutional configurations that produce and profit from them (i.e. university, professions, publication industry, and mental health organizations).

The development of ideas of race, gender, and the euro-suicidal are consequently interdependent with the capitalist world-system and therefore shaped by the capitalist value of productivity and monetization of being and knowledge. This value is central to modernity and determines various dimensions of society, including: the weight of the insurmountable amounts of math homework for a 7 years old student; the number of therapy sessions completed with racialized sufferers who are pleading to die while sustaining therapists’ livelihood; or ability or lack therefore for the euro-suicidal person to maintain employment in spite of intent, plan, and/or ideation to execute modernity’s genocidal expansionism and suspicions on the euro-suicidal marked body.

Furthermore, according to the Argentinian Philosopher, Dussel (2008), capitalist value results in the objectification of life and the production of subjectivities. Labor is objectified in relation to its product, and the product, in turn, is the parameter for the manufacturing of subjectivities and their corresponding social roles embedded in the exploitative categorizations of relationality of racialized, gendered, and monetized inferior and superior bodies. The euro-suicidal person is objectified as product and commodity of the mental health system, which, in turn, produces a criminalizable and pathologizable euro-suicidal subjectivities under the same kind of suspicion that the racialized body already evokes.

**Eurocentrism: The superiority of science and murder of kitchen-stories**

Only a very careful, manipulative, and highly sophisticated design could create the necessary conditions for *nosotras* to *d Rim* to live a life that will ultimately result in our own
confirmation of inferiority, humiliation, and death—or the inferiorization, humiliation, and death of one another. Through the matrix of colonial power and its racist and capitalist social configurations of modernity, Europe (and later the U.S.) positioned itself as the center of the world it designed with the use of this system of power. Europe invented itself as the most advanced, rational-scientific bearer of knowledge and dream-designer. It achieved this position because it could disseminate and impose its historical and geographical superiority and hegemony as a global model of power. Hence, it was able to Europize the rest of the world to consume and abide by its design.

In the same line, Anglo European and U.S. American researchers have: mapped suicide globally in English scientific language; ranked the suicidal person within a spectrum of psychiatric normality and abnormality, mentally and emotionally; developed global and imperishable evidence-based treatment plans to be replicated faithfully; criminalized suicide; and deemed it an individual immoral act. They have created a global urgency of response to suicide in statistical rates in tandem with their economic price; and the science of prevention in terms of protective factors that promise foresight power when identifying the seemingly lethal intrinsic combination between mental illnesses and personal trauma.

Europe puts itself at the center of the above suicide conceptualizations. Moreover, eurocentrism is the rhetoric of modernity and a rationality legitimized by its own creation of the scientific and technological methods, on euro-suicide in this case, to reassert its privilege and superiority (Quijano, 2000). For Colombian Anthropologist Castro-Gómez (2010) since Descartes’“I think, therefore I am,” white bourgeois male Europeans settled themselves above God as the absolute adjudicator of knowledge and truth. This was the turning point from when they started to think of themselves as observers of the world through heteronormative scientific methods that resulted in suffocating, therefore eradicating, any other culture’s morals and ethics.

Furthermore, eurocentrism is a binary name (between a center and a periphery) that determines a universal criterion for what counts as knowledge, humanity, and a legitimate way of producing knowledge, being human, living and dying (Quijano, 2000). In de Sousa Santos’ (2016) words, “Social practices are knowledge practices, but they can only be recognized as such to the extent that they are the mirror image of scientific knowledge. Whatever knowledge does not fit the image is discarded as a form of ignorance” (p. 92). A structure of knowledge (coloniality, as we discussed above) is created for its privilege to be sustained globally; consequently, it furthers the murder of all alternative representations of knowledge (Santos, 2016), kitchen-stories o cuentos de lágrimas that could possibly question its privilege. Therefore, the Europe in Eurocentrism, (as well as in the prefix “euro” in euro-suicide) no longer refers to a geographical location or race, nor to the way of thinking of all Europeans but to a rationality and a totality prevalent among all of us educated under its instrumentality across geographies, races, genders, languages, etc. (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000)

For Santos (2016), the “unequal exchanges among cultures have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture, hence the death of the social groups that possessed it” (p. 92). As in Descartes’ thought above, the devalued life of an unknowing subject is more susceptible to be commodified or discarded (in the case of euro-suicide or death pleas). Modernity’s crime of the murder of knowledge implicates, according to
Santos “. . .the destruction of social practices and the disqualification of the social agents that operate according to such knowledges.” Furthermore, he affirms, in the “. . . European expansion, espitemicide was one of the conditions of genocide” (Santos, 2016: 92).

Through the replication of our billable and devoid-of-color practice, we have contributed to create inhospitable conditions that lead to epistemicide, and in turn, genocide. Our single euro-scientific understanding of the psychiatrization of suicide, and its inward identified mental illness-ridden risks, have disqualified, inferiorized and silenced the existence of any other possibilities as well as the existence of the social agents who can generate them, including people who have come face to face with death. Pucha! For Maldonado-Torres (2017), in the current modern, hence colonial systems of power, racially marked subjects or the euro-suicidal persons emerge, not by the interpellation of an-other, but by the co-constitution of regimes of knowledge, power, and being that aim to make of this subject an agent of coloniality and a commodity of modernity.

In addition, eurocentrism depends on concealing its own geo-historical and corporeographical locations that could put at risk its universality and unquestionability if its provincial and Man-made origins are revealed. Castro-Gómez (2010) coined the term la hybris del punto zero or the zero point of reference to refer to a neutral platform that denies the geo and body-politics of knowledge and knowledge location of enunciation of eurocentrism. Eurocentric rationality is un lugar sin lugar, a place with no place from where to institute power to inscribe, represent, and construct a universal vision, to name, and to intervene in the world. A decolonial project would therefore require revealing the face of the makers of geo-dreams, science, and euro-suicide as a none universal idea.

**A call for the reconfiguration of life and death: Decolonial geo-body politics**

Decoloniality, in our autopsy of the coloniality of euro-suicide, consists of something other than responding to the rates of suicide of bodies of “different races.” As we discussed above, it is a project enacted by euro-racialized, gendered, and monetized ranked bodies to make visible and contest the hegemony of systems of oppression and self-designated privilege of Eurocentric knowledge-making, storytelling, and classifications, along with the institutions used to perpetuate it (i.e. universities, mental health system, research, professions, etc.). This project implicates a geo-body politics to ratify decoloniality from racialized bodies and exploited lands in contestation against the systems of oppression that create inhospitable conditions for living and dying.

Geo and body-politics, according to Mignolo (2010), refer to a decolonial alternative enacted by bodies—not about bodies—that Europe violently configured and classified (Blacks or Indians), and territories—therefore borders—they created and then assigned them to (Africa, Asia or America) since the times of the colonization or the invention of the idea of the Americas in the 1500s. Moreover, European configured bodies could be considered as “bodies who realized that they were considered less human at the moment they realized that the very act of describing them as less human was a radical un-human consideration” (Mignolo, 2010: 174). Therefore, a geo-body politics alludes to the understanding that relationality, systems of meaning, knowledge, and knowing (here in relation to euro-suicide) are historically, geographically, and
corporally designed by North Europe (i.e. Germany, France and the United Kingdom and North Europe in the U.S.).

Therefore, in our decolonial autopsy we highlight three particular considerations on the coloniality of euro-suicide: (1) centering our racialized corporeal narrations in our writing about euro-suicide rather writing about essentialized and racialized suicidal bodies; (2) giving special attention to the bodies of the knowledges we engage in our narrations (and cite); and (3) attuning also to the territories from where we narrate as much as to the ones we engage into our stories.

Who we are in the discussion of this paper, and from where, when, and why we are engaging it is as imperative as our topic of euro-suicide. We simultaneously focused our attention on what we are speaking about as much as nosotros as the speakers—with euro-colored, gendered, sexed, and monetized ranked bodies that have been historically, and geographically marked as inferiores and deficientes. As Maldonado-Torres (2007) wrote, “people of color, and the colonized become radical points of departure for any reflection on the coloniality of being” (p. 253). Along the same lines, Mignolo (2018) wrote that where reflections start depends on the terrain explored, more so when the intention is for the terrain to change; in this case the terrain of our interest is coloniality in relation to euro-suicide.

Had we started from the available literature or evidenced gaps in suicide and its prevention, we would have risked getting caught in the same inhospitable systems we seek to unmask. While we are aware that scholarly critiques toward Western knowledges, White perspectives, and decolonization are receiving more attention in recent times, including work by insiders of the experience of suicide and through various disciplines like Autopsy Studies, Disability Studies, Mad Studies and Critical Suicidology, in our view, their undoubtful significant contributions dwell in a skin and lands different than ours. They mostly seem to emerge in English and academia as well as from the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. So we understand that our problemas are not by definition their problemas even though we may share the effects from modernity’s structures of oppression. Our skins and lands undoubtedly experience them differently.

From a place of epistemic disobedience, we write on suicidology with no aspiration to contribute to the elite specialization of knowledgeability on suicidology but to the kitchen narrations of the skin and the land in Abya Yala from coloniality. Hence, we do not engage, for the time being, the groundbreaking critical scholarly work on suicide but saberes sobre colonialidad. Whatever the impact, or lack thereof, it may have on euro-suicidology experts and their scholarly developments, our intention was to write, in Spanglish, from the colonial wound endured by Abya Yala and by our immigrant skins and borders in order to heighten our visibility toward mechanisms that threaten our existence by modernity’s genocidal systems of colonial oppression, suicide being one among many. Our analysis in this paper is a first step before engaging the stories from other skins and territories to understand what we are bringing to the kitchen table.

We adopted perspectives from knowledges of the exploited and expropriated, bleeding lands and open veins of our non-European ancestors lxs Zapotecos (Tisha), and Black, Muiscas and Pijaos (marcela). These are perspectives lived in the land and by the skins of the bodies of Abya Yala. While often the literature of decolonization is attributed to the experience of Indigenous communities in colonized territories, including for
example Canada, New Zealand, and Australia (by the British), the decolonial project in Abya Yala, however, emerged instead from the enslaved and the colonized historical experiences of Black, Indigenous, Campesinxs and Mestizxs’ social activists and intellectuals. These emerged outside of academia, among which is the modern/colonial/decolonial project we discuss here (Lugones, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2000). Furthermore, while we write from the U.S. land, we acknowledge the different embodied histories of colonization and enslavement from the history of Abya Yala, which is foreign, yet not distant from ours.

However, what we attempted here was to interpellate ourselves and decolonize our Anglo euro-understanding on euro-suicide by specifically departing from our experiences in Spanglish, *en carne y hueso de nuestros bodis racializados*. As gendered and racialized family therapists, of immigrant backgrounds, and instructor (marcela) in the U.S., we gave close attention to epistemicide. We linked epistemicide to the extermination of our cuerpos, knowledges, and languages that are further perpetuated when adopting Eurocentric knowledges that are foreign to us.

We attempted to counter epistemicide in our autopsy from a Fanonian decolonial attitude⁴ (Maldonado-Torres, 2017) embedded in social and cultural structures to call into question the control of systems of knowledge, power, and their parameters that determine the *foquin* deniability of nuestras corporeal existencias, conocimientos y territorios. Therefore, we took a position of epistemological disobedience (Mignolo, 2010). We aimed to not depend on or follow obediently all the rules of the patriarchal, heteronormative, classist, and racist game of euro-suicide knowledge-making by our muy estimados compas, White, middle-class, Anglo European and Northern American scientists in the U.S. and abroad. We are referring to the game we ought to play so that they make us part of their elite circles of citable knowledge (their knowledges), anchored in the rhetoric of scientific rules and términos on euro-suicide or euro-suicide citations to shape our lives and deaths.

Therefore, for the reinscription of life, death, the body, and knowledge, a decolonial perspective departs from an autopsy by our racialized bodies to discern the Euro-Man-hand-made brand of the 500 years-old products Europe continue selling and delivering to the world including race, gender, class, sexuality, and suicide. The exposure of the “Made in the USA” or “Made in Europe” labeling of knowledge and being along with its price tag are required. Decoloniality makes traceable the historical faces and the physical addresses of the modernity makers. It helps us see the white men makers of this world, who we now imagine sitting at their wooden kitchen tables of their homes, in their hometowns, wearing thick woolen coats to shield them from the cold Northern European weather, with pen in hand, and taking a sip of a hearty kartoffelsuppe, bouillabaisse or mulligatawny soup that may have inspired their imaginations to write up their designs that can be respectable if delinked from deadly systems of power. This image has helped us become more ethical consumers of their products so that we can judge for ourselves the implicit moral, environmental, and humanitarian implications of being made blind and deaf to the consideration that their creations are also just kitchen stories. We believe this to be “our collective responsibility not to contribute to the reproduction of [their] domination” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012) and to recreate new systems of meaning, relationality, and being with respect to life and death.
Tisha’s closing reflections: Entrusting each other through hospitality

My uninterest in life and I have walked alongside each other for as long as I can remember. We have religiously followed our society’s reputable treatment plans, yet have been unable to live a life worthy of my parents’ American dream. The only seemingly logical explanation for my failure to rid myself of my suicidality being that I am so broken that what I have cannot even be explained by the 265 drop down menu options found within the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. My experience did not exist in science, thus it was not fixable, meaning I was destined to remain a failure. My existence, held forever hostage by my lack of normality, a fate worse than death. Yet here I am, in part because it is el corazón’s hope that inviting people into the territory of my experience outside of the story of euro-suicide sheds light on the existence and hospitality of stories of life and death that can exist outside eurocentric borders of reality. Not from a place of philosophical contemplation of alternate realities, but from a lived experience of cuentos not able, and not interested in being housed within modern understandings of reality.

It was not until I acknowledged en carne y hueso the existence of otherworldly saberes that I understood that I would never be granted existence into the euro-world. That my existence was not a matter of how hard I work because the system was rigged. That the cost of existence in the modern world was the genocide of my existences outside of its borders. In that moment I realized the inhospitableness of this world had not been due to my uninterest in life or interest in death, but the problematization of my way of relating to life and death.

The writing of this paper for me was a matter of breathing life into an invitation to consider the possibility of alternative knowings, realities, and existences. As to not render mute stories outside of a euro-understanding of life and death by requiring people’s lives to be told, heard, felt, understood, and experienced within the territory of modern mental health. An invitation to imagine what conversations about life and death could look like if there was no single reality of normality or wellness. To consider the possibility of an existence in which there were no standards to be measured up against, no problematization of stories outside the borders of our realities, no denying of anyone’s worthiness to exist because they were not born enough. So that if a 7 year old asks God to take her by his side, she has the option to feel something other than shame for being broken, and guilt for not being able to be fixed.

Now, I see the way I relate to life and death as a form of rebeldía. A refusal of the cuerpo-mente-espiritu-corazón to kill its otherworldly saberes in order to belong, an act that they have been resisting for over 500 years. Instead, I turn my back on the checklist of requirements in order to be granted existence into the euro-world. Mi corazón is able to find solace, and I am able to walk alongside my uninterest in life because the pain and loneliness that permeated my bones melts away alongside the standard of humanity and requirements of existence. I am now able to live with dignity outside the involuntary holds of ‘suicidality’ as someone who relates to life and death como se le antoje y que.
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge Alejandro Montelongo González and Britney Romine for their meaningful contributions to our writing. As well as the manuscript reviewers who, although unfortunately blinded contributed respectfully to the creation of this work.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Notes

1. Spanglish represents the borderland (Anzaldúa, 2009) of our migratory contexts as a meeting of two imperial languages that undermines the syntax authority of each, and, in this paper, of English in suicide knowledge by reinscribing, code switching, developing new vocabularies, and structuring our thinking/writing. It also highlights the eradication of our ancestral languages (Zapoteco, Muisca, Pijaos, African).

2. “Tisha” is my Spanglish way of writing my name in my grandparents’ Zapoteco, a language that has existed in what we now call México for over 2500 years.

3. I called mi Wita (my grandmother) to ask her how to spell black bean paste tamales in Zapoteco. Following the advice of her elementary school teacher, she told me words in Zapoteco are spelled how they sound. Thus, this is how my Spanglish ears heard her Zapoteco tongue.

4. For Fanon, attitude means other than feelings or intentions (Maldonado-Torres, 2017) but “that [which] can lead subjects to become agents in a process that involves the rehumanization of the world” (pp. 434–435), and a guide to position oneself as agents in thinking and practice in relation to the basic dimensions of human realities and possibilities.

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**Author biographies**

**Tisha X**, I am the only child of parents who migrated from *Oaxaca México* to *San Diego, United Estates*. I am a daughter of the clouds—which speaks to my indigenous *Zapoteco* ancestry. I am a queer *mujer*, a *Xicana*, and a part of a working class family. I live in the borderlands—*las fronteras* of a Spanglish existence, and my hope is that my work invites others into these experiences; so that together we may play and explore within the territories of these *fronteras* in a way that nurtures accountability and acknowledgment of the legitimacy of these borderland existences.

**Marcela Polanco**, es de *Bogotá, Colombia* e inmigrante en United States. Su ancestry es African, Muisca, Pijao, and South-European. As a bilingual (Colombian Spanish/Immigrant Spanglish) family *terapista*, she practices in San Diego. She is also a member of the faculty team del Master’s en Family Therapy y del Spanglish/Ingleño Family Therapy training *Certificado* in the Counseling and School Psychology Department at San Diego State University, located in unceded Kumeyaay land.