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Research with/in Communities

Fissures and Practices for an Anthropology Otherwise

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Research with/in Communities:

Fissures and Practices for an Anthropology Otherwise

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Abstract This paper pushes for a reframing of Anthropology as a collaborative and situated practice grounded in relationships rather than extraction. Using the metaphor of the fissure (*raja*) as both concept and method, it explores how research with/in communities unsettles disciplinary boundaries and challenges the coloniality of knowledge production. The text proposes a constellation of orientations -decolonial vigilance, feminist reflexivity, embodied attention, sensory attunement, and ontological openness- that operate as ethical and political commitments rather than fixed techniques. Through examples that traverse various disciplines, it shows how different media can be reimagined as tools for collective inquiry and transformation. The paper concludes by calling for creativity, solidarity and hope in order to sustain plural, accountable, and co-created forms of knowledge.

Keywords Participatory ethnography, Decolonial methodology, Feminist epistemology, Sensory ethnography, Community archives, Counter-cartography

Introduction

This essay is born of an encounter which represented an opening—a *raja* in Spanish, a fissure. In December 2024, at the University of Cologne, I taught a Master-class titled *Community and/in Collaboration: Exploring Cultural Mediation and Spatial Research*. Its proposal was straightforward: to offer conceptual frameworks and some techniques to explore the potential of collaborative models for Anthropology, and to create a forum for reflecting on the ethical and methodological implications of mediation and public engagement. Over two days, participants shared their work, presented provocative questions, and engaged in discussions and exercises—participatory cartographies, body mapping, sensorial ethnography—designed as gestures toward a more collaborative Anthropology.

Yet from the outset it became clear that such goals already required something more radical, a separate instance where we could dig deeper into one of the tennets of the title of the Masterclass. This text attempts to be

that instance. Because to speak of collaboration is not merely to diversify methods, but to interrogate Anthropology's very conditions of possibility: What does it mean to produce knowledge *with* and *within* communities, rather than *about* them? How do our categories (or our materials, like film, archives, and maps) reproduce colonial/imperial orders, and how might they be repurposed as tools of a work that is critical? What pedagogies prepare us for co-creation instead of extraction? Can ethnography be not only analysis but poetics, not only description but a way of making worlds otherwise?

The reflections gathered here are an attempt to follow those questions beyond the temporal bounds of the classroom (or in our case, the ethnological library in Cologne). They expand what was a workshop into an essay that is at once retrospective—anchored in the exchanges that occurred and questions that arised—and prospective, oriented toward horizons that remain undefined. They are also written back in Buenos Aires, from a Latin American standpoint, attentive to epistemologies forged in contexts of coloniality, in a language

that is not the one I use daily, in the midst of feminist struggles, battling the scarcity of resources for the production of academic outputs, and enacting everyday practices of survival in the face of neoliberal reform.

Because of these material and subjective conditions, this reflection is also guided by the challenge posed by Macarena Marey: how can we build critical thinking in structurally unjust countries? If injustice is structural, then critique cannot be content with rationalizing the status quo. But critique itself is never simple. It risks silence, for oppression produces epistemic deficits that cloud even the perception of problems. It risks sterility, when critique remains purely negative and slides into political nihilism incapable of imagining more just futures. And it risks elitism, when the exercise of critique is monopolized by privileged circles, for whom the costs of speaking are minimal and the benefits plentiful, while for those outside such circles, the very act of critique entails vulnerability and risk. For a rethinking of Athropology with/in communities, then, critique must be more than denunciation; it must be a practice of imagination, accountability, and shared transformation.

In this spirit, I draw inspiration from Marie Bardet's notion of *rajarse*—to split oneself, to crack open, to escape. Bardet recovers the translation of Deleuze's *ligne de fuite* made by the collective Juguetes Perdidos in Argentina as not only a line of flight but a *raja*, a scar that both wounds and opens, a gesture of evasion that is also an incision. To think Athropology with/in communities nowadays is to practice this kind of *rajarse*: to escape the enclosures of method, to tear at the binaries that stabilize our categories, to let something leak and run. This essay, then, is itself a fugue, an epistemological exercise in loosening the restrictions that hold Athropology in place, if only for the duration of its writing.

It is organized as a rumination, tracing orientations that can sustain Athropology with/in communities. They are organized under umbrella-terms such as decolonial vigilance, feminist reflexivity, embodied attention, sensory attunement, ontological openness, and the refusal of rigid disciplinary boundaries. Each orientation is less a technique than a disposition, a way of holding oneself open to multiplicity. Together they suggest that Athropology is a practice of relations—always partial, always situated, always shared.

The reader is invited to move through these pages not in search of definitive answers, but as one might follow the lines of a *raja*: uneven, uncertain, yet fertile in what they open. Along the way, questions will accompany us: How might communities be recognized as theorists in their own right? How can feminist and decolonial critiques shift the categories we take for granted? What forms of knowledge emerge when we listen not only with our minds but with our bodies and senses? And what role does Athropology play in a world where knowledge must be plural, collaborative, and—shall we say—revolutionary?

Rethinking Anthropology: With, In, and Within?

Why insist on the prepositions *with* and *in*? To be *with* a community is to collaborate, to recognize horizontal relations, to build reciprocity. To be *in* a community is to be present, to share time and space, to be vulnerable alongside others. Together, these prepositions displace the figure of the detached ethnographer who arrives, observes, and departs. They orient us toward Athropology as co-presence, as dwelling, as accompaniment. This shift is both semantic and epistemological: it forces us to question what counts as knowledge and who has the authority to produce it.

Athropology has always been entangled with the project of modernity. Its birth coincided with European expansion, its categories often mirroring the needs of colonial governance. To use such categories uncritically is, simply put, to reproduce colonial violence. An Athropology with/in communities must therefore cultivate epistemic vigilance, a refusal to take categories at face value, and a commitment to asking who names, who classifies, and who benefits from such decisions.

This vigilance expands to the broader structures of knowledge. The global division of academic labor mirrors the world-system described by Immanuel Wallerstein: data flows from peripheries to cores, where theory is refined and valorized. Anibal Quijano calls this the *coloniality of knowledge*: the persistence of Eurocentric epistemic hierarchies that present themselves as universal. Athropology with/in communities challenges this dynamic by insisting that communities are not sources of data: they are producers of theory. It positions itself against epistemic extraction and for epistemic justice.

Yet power asymmetries do not exist only between North and South; they are also reproduced locally, within national and regional contexts. Universities, often positioned as the sole legitimate custodians of knowledge, become gatekeepers. Their readerships are narrow, their circulation limited, and their audiences frequently other academics rather than the communities who inspired the research in the first place. This raises further questions: what knowledge are we producing, with whom, and for whom? To write only for academic journals is to risk reproducing another form of epistemic enclosure, where insights are locked away from those who most urgently need them. To think Athropology with/in communities is to resist not only the coloniality of knowledge at the global scale but also the hegemony of academic institutions at the local scale. It is to imagine alternative circuits of knowledge—assemblies, community archives, workshops, popular publications like fanzines—where theory is not hoarded but shared.

As Boaventura de Sousa Santos has taught us, knowledge is not a monolithic archive but an ecology of practices. Each practice is situated, partial, and valuable in its own right. The task of Athropology is not to trans-

late all knowledge into a single universal idiom, but to create dialogues among epistemologies without subsuming one under another. This ecological approach resonates with the very practice of being with/in communities: to listen, to learn, and to resist the temptation to reduce difference to sameness.

Orientations of Epistemic Vigilance

If Athropology with/in communities is a way of thinking and doing, then its methods are best described not as a rigid toolkit but as a constellation of orientations. They are postures, sensitivities, and commitments that guide how we approach knowledge. Each orientation represents a moment of epistemic vigilance: a readiness to interrogate inherited categories, to question the conditions of knowledge production, and to open ourselves to forms of knowing that exceed the familiar. They are less about procedures and more about ethos – ways of being with others, ways of positioning ourselves in relation to power, and ways of practicing humility in the face of plurality.

These orientations also remind us that Athropology is never neutral. To choose a method is to choose a politics, a way of relating to communities, and a horizon of ethical responsibility. The orientations outlined here are therefore not separate techniques but overlapping pathways that together form the scaffolding of a community-centered Athropology. They orient us toward attentiveness, reciprocity, and the recognition that knowledge is always situated, contested, and shared. Each orientation addresses a murky spot in Athropology's history, offering a way to move...elsewhere.

Decolonial Vigilance

To speak of decolonial vigilance is to recognize that colonialism did not end with so-called political independence. It continues to shape the very ways we know, the categories we use, and the institutions that govern knowledge. For a researcher working with communities, decoloniality is not an abstract philosophical position but a practical orientation: it is about questioning what assumptions underlie our questions, what histories are embedded in our methods, and what relations of power structure our collaborations. Decoloniality, in this sense, is vigilance against reproducing domination in the very act of knowing. It demands that we recognize the epistemic hierarchies that privilege certain voices over others and the geopolitical asymmetries that mark some knowledges as universal and others as local or particular.

This vigilance also calls us to interrogate the tools we inherit. Maps and archives, for example, are not neutral devices; they are –amongst other things– colonial artifacts, technologies of governance designed to fix, classify, and control. To use them uncritically is to risk reproducing the very structures we seek to chal-

lenge. Yet to reject them altogether would be to abandon powerful means of expression and memory. The decolonial task, then, could be to repurpose these tools—to turn them against their colonial origins and transform them into instruments of autonomy, sovereignty, or resistance.

Cartography offers a vivid example. In Latin America, participatory and counter-cartographic practices have flourished as ways of reclaiming space from the logics of erasure. Maps produced by indigenous and peasant communities do more than record territory; they inscribe cosmologies, memories, and struggles. They layer oral history onto geography, weaving together sacred sites, histories of displacement, and claims to land. Such maps contest official cartographies that render communities invisible, refusing to let territory be reduced to coordinates or resources. They demonstrate how a decolonial approach to mapping is not about representation alone, but about asserting ways of seeing and inhabiting the world that resist colonial simplifications. In this sense, Latin American cartographic practices are technical, profoundly political and ontological: they reveal that maps can be worlds in themselves, crafted from the perspectives of those who live within them.

Archives, too, are central sites of decolonial critique. Ann Stoler has argued that colonial archives should not be read merely for their content but for their form, their silences, their anxieties—the traces of power embedded in what is kept and what is excluded. Archives, in this sense, are not passive repositories but active instruments of colonial governance. As we know, they shape what counts as history, whose voices are recorded, and whose are erased. To engage archives decolonially is to recognize these dynamics and to seek interventions that unsettle them. How? Well, this might mean building community archives that relocate custodianship of memory from the state to the people, where oral histories, photographs, and testimonies coexist with official documents. It might mean rereading colonial records against the grain, attending to the margins and silences where subaltern voices persist. It might mean producing new narratives that refuse the authority of the archive, privileging lived memory over official documentation.

In both cartographies and archives (and similar media), the work of decolonial vigilance is to transform instruments of domination into tools of resistance. For researchers with/in communities, this means being attentive not only to what is studied but to how it is studied, to the media through which knowledge is produced and circulated. Decolonial vigilance asks us to see maps and archives not as neutral containers of knowledge but as contested territories, sites where colonial power is inscribed, and also where it can be challenged and undone.

Feminist Reflexivity

Feminist epistemology begins with a gesture of suspicion: to doubt the neutrality of categories and to interrogate the silences they conceal. Feminism as an epistemological horizon invites us to rethink the categories through which we think, experience, and narrate the world we live in. It is not only about including women or gender as variables in our research, but about questioning the very structures of knowledge that have historically rendered some lives invisible and others hyper-visible. In this sense, feminist reflexivity is a transformation of how we understand what knowledge is, how it is produced, and for whom.

Latin American feminist thinkers have long underscored this transformative potential. Dora Barrancos, in her historical work, has illuminated how women and feminist movements have been systematically excluded from canonical national histories, thereby showing us that what we call “history” is always selective, partial, and gendered. Diana Maffía, in turn, has critiqued the masculinist bias of philosophy and epistemology, calling attention to the ways in which exclusion operates not only in political or social life but in the very foundations of how we define knowledge and reason.

Philosophically, María Lugones and Rita Segato carry this critique further into the domain of decolonial thought. Lugones speaks of the *coloniality of gender*, reminding us that colonial domination was not only about race and labor but also about reconfiguring gender relations. Her idea of “world-traveling” invites us to move across multiple lifeworlds with humility, to inhabit perspectives different from our own without erasing difference. Segato, for her part, traces how colonial modernity intensified patriarchal domination, transforming communal patriarchies of lower intensity into modern patriarchies of high intensity, marked by greater violence and control over women’s bodies. Together, these thinkers reveal that gender is not a universal category but a site of colonial and historical struggle.

But, even critical perspectives can reproduce domination if they erase difference and impose universal narratives. Chandra Mohanty’s warning against the homogenization of the “Third World woman” in feminist scholarship reminds us that solidarity must be built not on the illusion of sameness but on the recognition of specificity and diversity. To practice feminist reflexivity is thus to attend to the intersection of gender, race, class, and coloniality in every research encounter, insisting that we remain attentive to the asymmetries that persist even within critical discourses.

So what does feminism as an epistemological horizon add to our research methods and to our toolbox as practitioners? First, it adds an acute sensitivity to power: to how categories shape realities, to how silences operate in texts and practices, to how bodies carry histories. Second, it demands reflexivity: an awareness of where we speak from, of our own positionalities and

privileges, of how our presence in the field shapes the knowledge produced. Third, it enriches our methods by opening them to voices, experiences, and perspectives often marginalized, insisting on collaborative processes that redistribute authority. Finally, it adds hope: the conviction that knowledge can be otherwise, that research can be an act of care and solidarity, that new worlds can be imagined through the lens of feminist critique.

Embodied Attention

Critical reflexivity is not only a method but an invitation. It asks us to think differently, to see differently, to practice Anthropology in ways that are more attentive, more inclusive, and more just. It is a horizon that does not close questions but opens them, reminding us that our task is not to provide final answers but to create spaces where new questions and new possibilities can emerge.

In this sense, embodiment as an anthropological orientation calls us to recognize that bodies are not simply biological organisms but sites of meaning, practice, and world-making. To attend to embodiment is to shift: rather than treating the body as an object to be studied, we treat it as the condition of possibility for experience, relation, and knowledge. Thomas Csordas (1990) articulated this shift in his call for “embodiment as a paradigm” where the body is not what we have but what we are, a ground of perception and presence. This paradigm unsettles the Cartesian separation of body and mind, inviting us to consider lived experience as irreducible to either physiology or discourse alone.

Silvia Citro (2011) expands on this perspective by emphasizing the performative and collective dimensions of embodiment. Dance, ritual, and performance, she argues, are not marginal cultural expressions but central embodied practices through which communities enact and reproduce worlds. Through movement and gesture, bodies become archives of memory, aesthetics, and spirituality. Citro’s work reminds us that embodiment is not only an individual matter but an intersubjective and social process, a way of creating bonds and transmitting values. To study embodiment is thus to pay attention to how communities live through their bodies, how they inscribe meaning in posture, rhythm, and performance.

If embodiment is paradigmatic, then ethnography must be retooled to capture corporeal experience. How do we listen not only to words but to silences, hesitations, and affective resonances? How do we describe the tacit knowledge carried in hands, in gait, in collective movements? How do we account for the sensory, the visceral, and the affective without reducing them to metaphor? These questions are methodological as much as philosophical. They point us toward fieldwork practices that remain attentive to the body as both a source and medium of knowledge.

For research with and within communities, embodiment raises further questions: How do we create spaces where participants can express themselves not only verbally but corporeally? What techniques—such as body mapping, participatory performance, recorded collective exercises—can facilitate this? How do we avoid reifying bodies as objects while honoring them as living sites of knowledge and history? How do we ensure that our descriptions of embodiment do not aestheticize suffering but instead illuminate resilience, creativity, and resistance?

Ultimately, to embrace embodiment is to acknowledge that knowledge is not only in texts or speech but in bodies moving, sensing, and inhabiting the world. It is to affirm that Athropology, if it seeks to be with and with/in communities, must learn to feel and move alongside them, treating embodiment not only as data but as theory, method, and horizon.

Sensory Attunement

If embodiment calls to us, then we must think about the sensory. To speak of sensory attunement is to expand the scope of ethnography beyond what can be seen and said into what can be felt, heard, touched, experienced, and reproduced. Athropology has long relied on the written word as its privileged medium, yet life is also lived through textures, atmospheres and rhythms that exceed discursive capture. Sensory ethnography invites us to train our attention to these dimensions, not as embellishments to analysis but as essential to understanding how worlds are made and inhabited.

This is not a call to abandon ethnographic writing – let us enrich it. In fact, sensorial attunement brings us back to the very tradition of ethnography as a literary, expressive, and analytical craft. James Clifford and George Marcus, in the classic *Writing Culture*, remind us that ethnography is never a neutral transcription of reality, it is always a poetics and politics of representation. To write ethnography is to craft worlds into words, to choose metaphors, rhythms, and forms that convey not only information but also atmosphere and feeling. Ethnographic writing, when attuned to the sensory, can evoke the smell of smoke in a ritual, the texture of dust on a path, the hum of a factory floor. It can allow readers to feel the world we describe, bridging analysis and expression.

Experiments in ethnographic writing have pushed this tradition further. Kathleen Stewart's evocative tales, for instance, use fragments, moods, and impressions to convey the affective texture of everyday life. She demonstrates that analysis does not always need to be explicit to be powerful: it can be felt, suggested, and evoked. Similarly, the anthology *The Future of Scholarly Writing*, edited by Angelika Bammer and Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, gathers interventions that stretch the boundaries of academic prose. It begins with the recognition that writing is both a struggle and a love, a craft that demands experimentation, vulnerability, and

openness. We might also acknowledge here the contributions of contemporary researchers like Maryam Adjani, whose poetic and experimental texts blur the line between scholarship and literature. Her work demonstrates that writing can be both analytical and affective, rigorous and evocative. Such approaches show us that ethnography is not diminished by poetics but deepened by it, capable of capturing aspects of lived experience that conventional academic prose often flattens.

Sensory attunement offers opportunities and challenges. Beyond writing, it invites us to also employ methods such as soundscapes, collaborative photography, and participatory performance, amongst many other mediums. It asks us to design research that does not merely document but resonates, that allows participants themselves to choose the modes of expression that best convey their worlds. It also demands ethical reflection: how do we represent the sensory lives of others without appropriating or aestheticizing them? How do we balance the evocative power of poetics with the responsibility of accuracy and accountability?

Some more questions –that I can't quite answer yet– can guide us in this orientation: How can ethnographic writing honor the expressive potential of language while remaining attentive to the lived textures of community life? In what ways might poetics serve as an ethical mode of representation rather than a decorative flourish? How can sensory methods—sound, image, performance—be integrated into research in ways that empower communities to speak and feel in their own registers? And how might such practices expand the audiences of Athropology, reaching beyond academic readers to those who live the worlds we study?

Ultimately, sensory attunement reminds us that knowledge is not only cognitive but affective, not only propositional but experiential. It affirms that ethnography, when written and practiced with sensitivity to the senses, can be both rigorous and moving, analytical and poetic.

Ontological Openness

Among the orientations that sustain Athropology with/in communities, ontological openness is perhaps the most demanding and the most transformative. To speak of ontological openness is to challenge the assumption that there is one single world described differently by many cultures. Instead, it is to recognize that there may be many worlds, each theorized and enacted in its own terms. This move unsettles the classic division between reality and representation, urging Athropology to consider the possibility of a pluriverse rather than a universe.

Bruno Latour, in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991), argues that modernity never truly purified the realms of nature and culture as it claimed. Instead, we constantly create hybrids—assemblages of humans and non-humans, of science and politics. His proposal of a “symmetrical Athropology” means taking seriously

the agency of non-human entities and recognizing that categories like nature and society are themselves constructs. Ontological openness, from this perspective, begins with humility: to stop assuming that Western categories are universal and to acknowledge that our world is also one ontology among many.

As Rolando Silla and Brígida Renoldi (2016) have pointed out, the “ontological turn” has been both fruitful and contested. On the one hand, it has allowed Athropology to treat other cosmologies not as symbolic representations of a shared reality but as alternative realities in themselves. On the other hand, it risks becoming a theoretical fashion if detached from ethnographic practice. For them, the value of ontological debates lies in their ability to reorient how we pose questions in the field, how we interpret what our interlocutors tell us, and how we recognize the limits of our own categories.

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s perspectivism offers a concrete illustration of this reorientation. In many Amazonian cosmologies, animals and spirits are not seen as radically other but as persons with their own perspectives. The radical implication is that there is no single, objective world seen from different angles. Instead, there are multiple worlds, each constituted by a point of view. This is perspectivism: the recognition that perspective is not just a way of seeing the world, it is a way of making it.

For practitioners, ontological openness raises crucial questions. How do we recognize when our categories—nature, culture, society, individual—are inadequate to capture the realities of the communities we work with? How do we resist the temptation to translate other ontologies into our own conceptual frameworks? How can we design research that does not flatten difference into sameness but instead creates spaces where multiple worlds can coexist? And what does it mean to take seriously the agency of non-humans—rivers, forests, ancestors—as actors in our ethnographies?

Methodologically, ontological openness requires us to suspend our certainties and to remain attentive to how communities themselves theorize their worlds. It asks us to cultivate patience with ambiguity, to resist premature closure. It also requires reflexivity: to recognize that our own ontologies are not neutral but particular; they are one way of worlding among many others. It challenges us to reimagine the very project of Athropology: not as the study of cultures that describe the world, but as a dialogue among worlds themselves.

Can We Think Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries?

As a practitioner, what does it mean to practice Athropology when life itself is not organized into disciplines? People do not separate their daily experiences into Athropology, art, design, or urbanism. They live lives that are messy, overlapping, and interwoven, where thinking and doing, feeling and making, belong to the same

continuum. If Athropology with/in communities is to remain faithful to lived reality, then it must embrace this messiness, this cross-pollination of practices. Interdisciplinarity here is not a slogan but a condition of life, a recognition that knowledge is always already collaborative.

Celebrating this crossing of boundaries also means asking: what is *the anthropological* in each field we encounter and collaborate with? In art, the anthropological is its ability to evoke and circulate meaning, to transform experiences into collective reflection, to bring audiences into dialogue with other ways of being. Community archives, participatory residencies, and transmedia projects elicit everyday life through different mediums, turning them into shared inquiries. Athropology learns from art how to reach publics beyond academia and how to use aesthetics as a language of relation.

In urbanism and design, the anthropological is the recognition that space is lived as well as built, that every plan and structure is also a story about belonging and exclusion. Participatory design processes reveal how communities imagine their futures, and how physical spaces embody memory, conflict, and aspiration. Athropology learns from design to treat the built environment not as backdrop but as protagonist, as both a result and an active agent of social life.

In cartography, the anthropological lies in the insistence that maps are not merely representations of space but expressions (and producers) of worldview. Participatory and counter-cartographies highlight how territory is narrated differently depending on who is drawing the lines, what memories are inscribed, and what futures are envisioned. Here Athropology learns that maps are never neutral: they are stories of power, but also tools for reimagining community.

In education, the anthropological is the recognition that teaching and learning are never neutral transmissions of knowledge but encounters shaped by context, history, and power. Popular education traditions remind us that these relations can be shifted, and that learning can be acknowledged to begin in lived experience, later moving toward reflection and transformation. Athropology learns from education how to practice pedagogy as ethnography, and ethnography as pedagogy.

In journalism and literature, the anthropological appears in the commitment to truth-telling through narrative, in the crafting of stories that are both rigorous and moving. Testimonial writing, group crafted chronicles, and poetry show how words can illuminate injustice, reveal hidden structures, and amplify marginalized voices. Athropology learns from journalism and literature how to reach wider audiences and how to blend analysis with storytelling in ways that move people to think and act.

In each of these fields, Athropology does not lose itself but discovers new dimensions of itself. The anthro-

pological is what attends to meaning, relation, and lived experience; what listens for the implicit and the unsaid; what insists that knowledge is situated and that lives are plural. By crossing disciplinary borders, we do not dilute Athropology but extend it, weaving its sensibilities into the fabric of other practices. In return, Athropology itself is revitalized, challenged, and reimagined.

This crossing also extends into artistic and cultural institutions. Museums, theaters, cultural centers, and community festivals are not only sites of artistic production but also of ethnographic encounter. Here the anthropological lies in attending to how cultural practices mediate memory, identity, and belonging. By engaging these institutions, Athropology can contribute to reshaping them as spaces of dialogue rather than exclusion, co-creation rather than display.

Finally, in the realm of public policy design and implementation, the anthropological is the sensitivity to how policies are lived on the ground, how they intersect with everyday practices, and how they can either reinforce or dismantle inequalities. Athropology contributes ethnographic depth and relational insight to policy-making, reminding decision-makers that behind every category, statistic, report or indicator are people with histories, bodies, and dreams. In turn, public policy challenges Athropology to scale its insights, to translate situated knowledge into structures that can foster what the commons should be.

To think beyond disciplinary boundaries, then, is to affirm that Athropology belongs not only in universities but in the world: in workshops and classrooms, in neighborhoods and factories, in art spaces and design studios, in courts of law and theaters of struggle, in cultural institutions and in the policy arena. The task is not to defend disciplinary purity but to celebrate the hybrid, the porous, and the collaborative.

No Single Path

If Athropology with/in communities is a way of thinking and doing, then its future is not a straight line pointing forward but a weaving of multiplicities, entanglements, and possibilities. What lies ahead is not a singular destination rather the recognition that knowledge can be produced otherwise, in plurality, without assuming linear progress. Athropology, when practiced with and within communities, resists the idea of a final endpoint. Instead, it affirms that knowledge is always situated, relational, and in motion.

The orientations explored in this essay are not sequential steps but overlapping gestures. They compose a repertoire, a set of dispositions that can be combined, reconfigured, and reinvented depending on context. They invite us to see Athropology not as a line to be followed but as a field of convergences, divergences, and intersections.

Philosophy has offered me conceptual tools to think this multiplicity not as fragmentation but as a politics of knowledge. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's notion of *chi'xi* speaks of coexistence without synthesis, of difference that remains in tension yet produces new possibilities. Her metaphor of the speckled fabric resonates with Athropology's own need to hold together heterogeneous voices without dissolving them into sameness. Enrique Dussel's *philosophy of liberation* echoes this stance by insisting that knowledge must emerge from the exteriority of those excluded from Eurocentric universals. He reframes epistemology as an ethical and political project, one that recognizes the dignity and authority of those long silenced. Moira Pérez has exposed with clarity how epistemic violence reproduces itself through testimonial injustice, objectification, and extractivism, which can be subverted with an intentional undoing of our structural and structuring epistemic paradigms. Together, these perspectives sketch not a proper blueprint but maybe an epistemological horizon of plurality, reminding us that to produce knowledge otherwise is also to enact a politics of recognition, accountability, and reciprocity.

The questions that follow are urgent and generative. How can academia foster accountability without suffocating the creativity that makes Athropology distinctive? What do we preserve from our disciplinary past—attention to detail, care for context, devotion to narrative—and what must we relinquish—elitist dissemination, extractive fieldwork, the illusion of neutrality? How do we build forms of Athropology that circulate beyond universities, accompanying communities in their struggles while honoring their knowledge as theory? What infrastructures and media—curricula, community archives, public institutions, collaborative platforms—might enable this plurality of practices? And how do we train students not for a canon but for openness, not for mastery but for dialogue?

From my experience, and from the conversations sparked in the masterclass, I have seen glimpses of what this Athropology might become: ethnographic innovations that merge mapping soundscapes with big data, collaborations where research media is co-designed and inform scientific protocols, hybrid mediums of dialogue where art and policy intersect, amongst many others. These are not signs of a single desirable future but perhaps traces of multiplicity already underway, indications that Athropology is capable of renewal when it trusts the creativity of collective inquiry.

Finally, to think in terms of multiplicity is, in a way, to refuse closure. And, though maybe loquacious, this is not a text that seeks closure. It is an invitation to stay with the fissures, to dwell in the fugue, to affirm that doing with/in communities is less about representing the world as it is, and more about making it otherwise, together. The task is to foster creativity without losing rigor, to practice solidarity without reproducing paternalism, to nurture hope without falling into naïveté.

Research with/in communities should not be a teleology – it is a condition: a practice of vigilance, experimentation, playfulness, and an openness that exposes us to the unknown.

Connected readings

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