



Decolonizing Southern Criminology: What Can the “Decolonial Option” Tell Us About Challenging the Modern/Colonial Foundations of Criminology?

Eleni Dimou¹

Accepted: 10 June 2021 / Published online: 14 July 2021
© The Author(s) 2021

Abstract

Southern criminology has been recognized as a leading theoretical development for attempting to overcome the perpetuation of colonial power relations reflected in the unequal flow of knowledge between the Global North and Global South. Critics, however, have pointed out that Southern criminology runs the risk of recreating epistemicide and colonial power structures by reproducing colonial epistemology and by being unable to disentangle itself from the hegemony of Western modern thought. This article introduces the approach of the “decolonial option,” which suggests that all our contemporary ways of being, interacting, knowing, perceiving, sensing, and understanding are fundamentally shaped by coloniality—long-standing patterns of power that emerged because of colonialism and that are still at play (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Quijano 1992). The “decolonial option” seeks ways of knowing and being that heal, resist, and transform these deeply harmful and embedded patterns of power. Drawing on the “decolonial option,” this article aims to provide a constructive critique of Southern criminology by facilitating a better understanding of “coloniality” and offering an epistemological shift that is necessary to move toward global and cognitive justice. The rupture and paradigm shift in criminological knowledge production offered by the “decolonial option” dismantles criminology’s Western universalist narratives and its logic of separation that lie in modernity. By doing so, it provides a different understanding of modernity that looks behind its universalizing narratives and designs (e.g., development, progress, salvation) to expose “coloniality”—modernity’s dark, destructive side. While the “decolonial option” does not entail a universalizing mission, it is *an option*—one of the many paths that one can select to undertake decolonial work—and this article argues that if Southern criminology were to incorporate the decolonial epistemological and conceptual framework, it could better insulate itself from certain consequences of “coloniality” that it risks embodying.

✉ Eleni Dimou
eleni.dimou@open.ac.uk

¹ Social Policy & Criminology, Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

Introduction

Critics of criminology have pointed to the discipline's amnesia, blindness to and complicity in colonialism and its enduring, pervasive and harmful legacies (Agozino 2003; Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Goyes and South 2017; Moosavi 2018). Among the colonial legacies perpetuated by criminology has been its active engagement in silencing and downplaying non-Western knowledges (Agozino 2003; Carrington et al. 2016; Kitossa 2012). This is troublesome because it maintains the intellectual violence of colonialism through the discrimination and denial of any alternative ways of thinking, knowing, and being in the world. Such different ways of knowing and being would not only enable criminological scholarship to split from its colonial and Eurocentric underpinnings, but could also provide alternative possibilities of justice and forms of social organization to emerge (Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Escobar 2018; Moosavi 2018). The growing awareness of the discipline's complicity in such harms has resulted in the emergence of various strands within criminology over the past decades, all of which endeavor to decolonize the discipline from its Western-centrism. These include Asian (Liu 2009), counter-colonial (Agozino 2003, 2004), and Indigenous criminologies (Cunneen and Tauri 2016), as well as the criminology of liberation (Aniyar de Castro 1985, 1987), marginal realism (Zaffaroni 1988), and post-colonial (Cunneen 2001) and transnational (Bowling 2011) criminologies. The strand, however, that has gained most traction of this group has been the development of Southern criminology in recent years (Carrington et al. 2016, 2018b; Carrington and Hogg 2017).

Drawing on Connell's (2007) ideas about Southern theory, three leading Australian criminologists—Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg and John Scott—and, most recently, Reece Walters with Máximo Sozzo from Argentina, have set forth the framework of Southern criminology. One key point of departure has been the recognition that the Global North/Global South economic inequalities perpetuated from colonialism have also shaped hierarchies in knowledge production—with the Global North, particularly English-speaking countries (principally the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), but also Australia, Canada and New Zealand), being perceived as the *producers* of theories and concepts, and the Global South being viewed as the *recipient* of Northern theories and the *provider* of case studies and data to prove them (Carrington et al. 2016, 2018a; Connell 2007). As such, Carrington and colleagues (2018a: 3) argue that while dominant concepts, methods, perspectives, policies and theories are rooted in experiences and concerns of particular Global North contexts, they have represented themselves and been regarded as the only valued forms of knowledge with “universal validity and applicability.” This universalism and intellectual hegemony of the Global North has its roots in colonialism and was achieved by actively delegitimizing and dismissing social thought stemming from the Global South (Carrington et al. 2016; Connell 2007). Consequently, for these scholars, Southern criminology is both an epistemic and political project that aims to democratize knowledge by fully recognizing Global North/Global South hierarchical relations and by resurfacing marginalized knowledge and experiences from the Global South (Carrington et al. 2016). As they argue, by quoting de Sousa Santos (2014: 163), there can be “no global justice without cognitive justice” (Carrington et al. 2018a: 4).

The academic movement of Southern criminology has been recognized as one of the most important theoretical advancements in recent times (see Friedrichs 2018; Matthews 2017). Critics, however, have warned that Southern criminology runs the risk of reproducing the colonial power structures that it aims to challenge by: (1) failing to provide and embed an adequate theorization of colonialism, in particular (Cunneen 2018);

(2) lacking sufficient conceptual, ontological, philosophical, and theoretical tools, in general (Blagg and Anthony 2019; Moosavi 2019; Rosa 2014); (3) being dominated by Global North (particularly Australian) scholars (Moosavi 2019); and (4) misinterpreting, neglecting, and silencing earlier and contemporary works from the Global South, which have called for more than three decades for a decolonization of criminology (Agozino 2003; Goyes and South 2017). Stemming from the literature on the “decolonial option,” which has emerged and blossomed in Latin America over the past thirty years, this article adds to such critiques with an aim of contributing to and moving forward the effort of decolonizing criminology. More than Southern criminology, the “decolonial option” contends that *all* our contemporary ways of being, interacting, knowing, perceiving, sensing, and understanding are fundamentally shaped by “coloniality”—long-standing patterns of power that emerged because of colonialism and that are still at play (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Quijano 1992). The “decolonial option” speaks about these issues in a much deeper way than Southern criminology and seeks ways of knowing and being that heal, resist, and transform these deeply harmful and embedded patterns of power. The “decolonial option” attempts such a transformation by providing an epistemological shift that is necessary to move toward global and cognitive justice.

With few exceptions, Southern criminology has not yet utilized fully the invigorative knowledge of the “decolonial option.” As this article will demonstrate, Southern criminology’s neglect of the “decolonial option” has resulted in its inability to break away from criminology’s Western-modern philosophical origins and, as such, it unconsciously reproduces colonial epistemology. A more expansive conceptual analysis of the “decolonial option” can help illuminate further the implications of this way of thinking to criminology and its value in expanding the decolonial criminological imagination. This article will demonstrate the richness of the “decolonial option,” in general, and the concept of “coloniality,” in particular, to provide a theoretical framework that can transcend the Western epistemological canon and that can account for Southern criminology’s limitations (see Moosavi 2019; Rosa 2014).

This article aims to show that without an awareness of “coloniality” (also referred to as the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP)), which illuminates the patterns of power established by colonialism and that are still ongoing, the current decolonizing efforts in criminology, no matter if they are called Asian, Southern, or transnational, will remain within the same Eurocentric colonial framework of knowledge. Indeed, one cannot break away from dominant Western epistemic paradigms without, first, understanding that “coloniality” is “the underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of Western civilization” (Mignolo 2011: 2) and its modernity; and, second, without challenging the very foundations of criminology and our world today, which lie in modernity itself.

The decolonial approach illuminates one of the possible ways to achieve epistemic decolonization—and a delinking from modernity—by moving away from the universalizing point of Western thought and its logic of separation, which underpin criminology. By doing so, this article provides a different understanding of modernity that looks behind its universalizing narratives and designs (e.g., development, progress, salvation) to expose “coloniality”—modernity’s dark, destructive side. While the “decolonial option” does not entail a universalizing mission, it is *an option*—one of the many paths that one can pursue to undertake decolonial work, and this article argues that if Southern criminology were to incorporate the decolonial epistemology and conceptual framework, it could better insulate itself from certain consequences of “coloniality” that it risks embodying.

Colonialism and Epistemicide in Criminology

Indeed, there is something hauntingly unreal about a scholarly discipline dedicated to the study of crime, the criminal and the criminal law that focuses almost exclusively upon the actions of lawbreaking individuals, while turning a blind eye to the mass terrorism imposed upon innocent people by slavery, colonialism and their continuing legacies. [Pfohl 2003: xii]

Pfohl's words serve as a summary of the seminal work by the Nigerian scholar, Biko Agozino (2003, 2004), regarding the blindness of criminology to compelling manifestations of crime and harm by states, corporations and individuals relating to colonialism and its perpetuating effects. Agozino (2003) demonstrates how colonialism was essential for the development of criminology—namely, that the discipline was employed to “regulate the lives, bodies and resistances of colonial subjects” (Atiles 2018: 310), and that its dominant theories served to legitimize and establish the interests of the imperial metropolises, to perpetuate the colonial political system by maintaining the ruling of the White elites before and after independence, and to depoliticize and delegitimize any anticolonial manifestations (Agozino 2003; Atiles 2018). For Agozino, criminology constitutes an intrinsically colonial discipline for the additional reason that its dominant theories were established by being imposed on and by silencing and omitting alternative perspectives from non-Western areas of the world. Almost two decades earlier, similar critiques were formed in Latin America, among which were the *criminology of liberation* by the Venezuelan criminologist Lola Aniyar de Castro (1985, 1987) and the *criminology of marginal realism* by the Argentinian Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni (1988), which will be discussed in more detail below.

Aas (2012) echoes Agozino in addressing the imperial politics of criminological knowledge by arguing that if we were to create a wall map with pins in the main areas of criminological knowledge production, the vast majority would be situated in the Global North's English-speaking countries, principally the UK and the US, but also Australia and Canada. Indeed, the fact that from all existing languages—including those Indigenous languages that have survived—English is the only language deemed relevant in any social sciences knowledge production, illuminates the dominance of Western-centric knowledge by disqualifying the vocabulary and logic of other knowledges (Mignolo 2011, 2018).

Agozino (2004) observed that when Global North academics publish their work, they often assert that their theories can be applied universally, whereas the work of scholars from the Global South, including from non-English speaking countries of the Global North (e.g., Finland, Greece, Japan, Poland, Russia, Turkey), is not considered to have universal application unless the work cites Western scholars and perspectives to prove their arguments (Aas 2012; Agozino 2003; Kitossa 2012; Moosavi 2019). For Agozino (2003, 2004), these power differentials in how knowledge is produced and what counts as universally applicable knowledge are exacerbated by the fact that Western theorizing is valorized in teaching material that equips future generations of criminologists, severely limiting any potential for alternative perspectives to come to light. The active destruction of different ways of being, knowing and thinking through practices of de-legitimation, denial, obliteration and suppression has been a key process of colonialism and is what de Sousa Santos (2014) refers to as “epistemicide.” The continuation of epistemicide and of imperial politics of knowledge production is the reason why Agozino (2003, 2004) has called for a decolonization of criminology—a process that would question the privilege of Western-centric knowledge and made-for-export colonial criminology, explore social control

through anti-imperialist lenses, and focus on colonial manifestations of crimes and harms of the powerful and resistances to them.

While Agozino has been identified as the most recognized counter-colonial criminologist (Valdés-Riesco 2020) and while there has been some recognition of his work in Southern criminology (e.g., Goyes 2018, 2019), in the most cited publications on Southern criminology (i.e., Carrington et al. 2016, 2018a, 2019; Carrington and Hogg 2017)—which have proclaimed the need for “cognitive justice”—there is no mention of Agozino’s work. Similarly, while the “decolonial option” is starting to be recognized in criminology, it is useful to provide a more developed exploration of the “decolonial option” to rectify some inconsistencies, omissions and misinterpretations in key Southern criminology texts (i.e., Carrington et al. 2016, 2018a, 2019; Carrington and Hogg 2017). In these core texts, the three decades old literature on the “decolonial option” is referred to in passing and often incorrectly. The concept of “coloniality,” for example, which is a key concept of the “decolonial option,” requires better definition and operationalization because it is too often conflated with the concept of “colonialism” in the works of Carrington and colleagues (see Carrington et al. 2016, 2018a, 2019; Carrington and Hogg 2017). These terms are related, as will be discussed below, but they are not the same. In addition, in one of the most cited articles on Southern criminology (Carrington et al. 2016: 2), the authors (Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo) distinguish their approach from the work of a key *decolonial* scholar, Walter Mignolo, in the following way: “our purpose is distinguished from the post-colonial project of epistemological and ontological disobedience and insurrection, where redemption is neither a conceptual or political possibility (Mignolo 2008).”

There are several problems with this statement. First, while Mignolo is a decolonial and not a post-colonial scholar, Carrington and colleagues label his approach as a “post-colonial project.” The conflation of the post-colonial perspective with the “decolonial option” denotes that there is a misreading of the “decolonial option” and Mignolo’s work, and a limited understanding of the differences between the post-colonial and decolonial perspectives.¹ Stemming from this limited understanding, the second problem that emerges is the dismissal and failure to acknowledge that the “decolonial option” not only considers a multiplicity of colonial and imperial differences (e.g., British, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, French, Ottoman, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish) and embodied experiences that have borne and still bear the scars of colonialism, coloniality, dispossession, and occupation, but because of its (the “decolonial option”) attentiveness to locally-rooted embodied experiences and struggles, it is principally about a *shift* from Western hegemonic frames of being, knowing, perceiving, and sensing, which is necessary (as will become clear below) to heal the colonial wound in all its manifestations (Mignolo and Vázquez 2013; Tlostanova 2019). The “decolonial option,” then, is essentially a gesture to move from a trauma-informed framework of dehumanization, exploitation, silencing, and separation and destruction of the Earth, to a life-informed framework of multiple knowledges and ways of being and of relationality to the Earth, humans, and nonhuman animals (see Escobar 2020; Grosfoguel 2011; Mignolo and Vázquez 2013; Vázquez 2009). This is why decolonial scholars call for an epistemic and ontological reconstitution of, and disobedience and insurrection against the hegemonic logic of modernity, which leading Southern criminologists seem so hasty to dismiss (Mignolo 2018; Grosfoguel 2007; Lugones 2007). Elsewhere, Carrington and colleagues (2019) describe Mignolo as a leading thinker who has influenced the Southern

¹ To fully iron out the differences between the “decolonial option” and the “post-colonial project” would require a full article. Please see Tlostanova (2019) for a critical exploration of the two approaches.

criminological approach, but they do not rectify the previous statement or explore and put to work the “decolonial option” and “border thinking,” which this article will explore in detail below (see Mignolo 2000).

By presenting Southern criminology as the latest intellectual advancement, while omitting previous works and engaging in under-exploration and misrepresentation of the “decolonial option,” Southern criminology—specifically, that of Carrington and colleagues (2016, 2018a, 2019)—engages in unconscious epistemicide by downplaying, ignoring, and silencing other ways of understanding that could prove significant allies in decolonizing criminology (Blagg and Anthony 2019; Cunneen 2018; Moosavi 2019). This has led Blagg and Anthony (2019: 6) to argue that Southern criminology constitutes “a defensive reflex, designed to exonerate Anglo-spheric theory from complicity in epistemic violence, rather than equipping criminology with the tools required for a progressive” decolonial thought and strategy.

This article does not contend that this epistemicide is intentional. As Moosavi (2019) argues however, Southern criminology’s limited concepts, epistemological tools, engagement with existing decolonial literature, and theorization render it, in its current form, unable to disentangle itself from criminology’s Western epistemological and ontological origins that lie in modern thought. Likewise, Cunneen (2018) maintains that Southern criminology’s lack of reflection on whether decolonizing criminology is even possible given the discipline’s intellectual roots and its deep connections to colonial power relations and coercion, may render it at risk of reinscribing epistemic violence.

Decolonial scholars (e.g., Grosfoguel 2011; Mignolo 2018; Quijano 2000) would argue that Southern criminology, while no-doubt well-intentioned, changes the *content* but not *the terms* of the discussion. For Carrington and colleagues (2019: 25) Southern criminology aims to: “transnationalise and democratise criminological practice and knowledge”; “inject innovative theories into the study of crime and global justice from the periphery”; and “generate theory not just apply theory imported from the Global North.” The “decolonial option,” however, changes the *terms* of the discussion by shifting to a different epistemic paradigm, and the cognitive justice which is necessary to be achieved to move toward global justice, requires such an epistemological shift (de Sousa Santos 2014). Indeed, the rupture and paradigm shift in criminological knowledge production offered by the “decolonial option” brings forward a different epistemological critique and understanding of modernity—one that is needed to dismantle criminology’s Western-centric universalist narratives (Blagg and Anthony 2019). Such an epistemic shift can prove fruitful in decolonizing criminology and attaining global justice. To decolonize and liberate knowledge and ways of being, however, one needs first to understand the matrix of power at play. Accordingly, this article now turns to an exploration of the concept of “coloniality,” and shows how it is distinct from “colonialism.”

What is “Coloniality”?

The term, “coloniality,” was first introduced by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano in 1992. “Coloniality”—the constitutive but invisible side of modernity—refers to the molding of a complex matrix of power that emerged due to colonialism and was established during the 500 years of colonial rule (Quijano 2000). “Coloniality” differs from “colonialism” in that the latter denotes an economic and political relation “in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power [and systematic use of

violence] of another nation, which makes such nation an empire” (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243). “Colonialism” was an historical phenomenon, which ended with the struggles for independence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Mignolo 2011). “Coloniality,” on the other hand, describes *the intertwined and mutually constitutive power relations* “between the international division of labor, the global racial/ethnic [and gender/sexuality] hierarchy and the hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies in the modern/colonial world-system” (Grosfoguel 2007: 95), which define culture, intersubjective relations, labor and knowledge production and which transcend “the strict limits of colonial administration” (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243). Therefore, “coloniality” outlives colonialism (Quijano 2000).

Essentially, “coloniality” is a matrix of power of four complexly intertwined domains: (1) the control of knowledge and understanding (aesthetics, epistemology, ontology, philosophy, religion, science); (2) the control of subjectivities (being, sensing, thinking) and intersubjective relations (racism, sexism); (3) the control of the economy (capitalism, control of natural resources, exploitation of labor, land appropriation); and (4) the control of authority (the nation state and its institutions) (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo 2011; Quijano 2000). As such, “coloniality” forms social, political and economic organization; it is maintained in books, law, migration policies and penal systems, as well as in the criteria for academic excellence; it shapes corporate harms at global and local levels and the unequal flow of knowledge production; it underpins state criminality and Global North/Global South inequalities and exploitation; it is sustained in common sense, the self-image of people, intersubjective relations, and in relationship with nature, the body and non-human animals; and, in so many other aspects of our lives, because it is inscribed in ways of thinking, sensing, representing, perceiving, knowing and being in the world (Aas 2013; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo and Vázquez 2013). Therefore, for the “decolonial option” *everything* about our contemporary life—from our economies, geopolitics, and race relations to our ways of knowing, being and seeing oneself—are fundamentally shaped by “coloniality.” As such, the “decolonial option” and Southern criminology differ in their modes of understanding: the latter sees colonialism but is blind to “coloniality,” whereas the former scrutinizes something more constitutive, deeper, and fundamental, which is “coloniality” and which is harder to undo.

Among the legacies of “coloniality” is that the criminal justice system (“CJS”) and administrative criminology, underpinned by colonial epistemologies, have been utilized historically as tools of power, “dispossession and control, and part of a larger project of sovereign extinguishment and coercive assimilation” of non-White populations (Blagg and Anthony 2019: 6). Racism lies at the core of “coloniality” (Quijano 2000, 2007) and this has implications for criminology regarding: the pervasive influence of colonization to its epistemology; criminology’s role in pathologizing, demonizing, criminalizing, disciplining and governing colonized or non-Western populations and their ways of being; and the thwarting of any attempts to understand and address the racialized institutional structure, practices and violence of the CJS across the globe (Blagg and Anthony 2019; Cunneen and Tauri 2016). With this in mind, this article attempts to show that Southern criminology could learn a lot from the “decolonial option” in terms of recognizing the hidden forces of “coloniality,” its manifestations, and its current transformations, and that through the lenses of the “decolonial option” and its concept of “coloniality,” one can see possible ways for epistemic decolonization.

Coloniality of Power: The Racial Order of Power

While the significant over-representation of non-White populations and rampant institutional racism and violence within the penal systems across the globe have been well-documented, their link to “coloniality of power” is still underexplored (Cunneen 2018). Similarly, critical criminological perspectives have illuminated how dominant administrative (positivist and Classical) approaches in penal policy and criminology that define “crime” as a breach of state criminal law, overlook practices by states, which could be more harmful in their consequences than those defined as “crime” by the law (Hillyard et al. 2004; Passas and Neva 2004). Consequently, and as mentioned above, the relationship between the state, state-corporate criminality and colonialism has been both silenced and legitimized by administrative criminology (Atiles 2018; Carrington et al. 2018b). The severe implications of excluding systems of oppression and harm (anthropocentrism, capitalism, epistemicide, heterosexism, imperialism, patriarchy, and racism) instigated by states, powerful institutions and corporations have also been well-documented, but—with some notable exceptions—the connection between such systems to “coloniality of power” still remains underexplored (Atiles 2018; Kitossa 2012). “Coloniality of power” is the underlying structure and *logic* of Western civilization (Quijano 2000, 2007; Mignolo 2011). Understanding it can reveal the complexly intertwined CMP, which is necessary to move toward epistemic decolonization and help overcome forms of oppression, harm and epistemicide embedded in it.

According to Quijano (2000), “coloniality of power” emerged with the discovery and conquest of the Americas, and consisted of two fundamental axes. The first was the construction of the idea of “race” which, as Quijano (2000: 533) explains, meant “a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others. The conquistadors assumed this idea as the constitutive, founding element of the relations of domination that the conquest imposed.” This classified the populations of the Americas and later the world according to this new racial model of power. This, in turn, produced the second axis: “the constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its resources and products. This new structure was an articulation of all historically known previous structures of control of labor together around and upon the basis of capital and the world market” (Quijano 2000: 534). As such, the European conquest of the Americas marked the moment when capitalism became intertwined for the first time with forms of domination and subordination based around the idea of “race” (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Quijano 2007). For Quijano (2000), the construction of “race” is a key aspect of “coloniality of power” because it guided the production of the *logic* of profit over life, with all its harmful consequences that we still experience today (Aas 2013; Goyes 2019; Goyes and South 2017). It also provided the cognitive means for the needs of capitalism by producing a global process of labeling (Acuña 2015; Lugones 2007): new subjectivities were formed (e.g., Blacks, Indians, Mestizos), which were designated as *naturally* inferior to White European colonizers and, as such, could be exploited (Quijano 2000). Essentially, a conception of humanity was constructed that differentiated the world’s populations into two groups: inferior and superior or savage and civilized (Lugones 2007). This construction of racism—this establishment of the superiority of the White European colonial subjectivity—enabled the hierarchical organization and distribution of labor along racial/ethnic lines of the world’s population that persists until today (Quijano 1992). According to Lugones (2007: 191), this racist classification has been the “deepest and most enduring expression of [coloniality],” with slavery, alongside destruction, dispossession,

expropriation, extractivism on a mass scale, and genocidal violence, representing coloniality’s crudest manifestations of dehumanization, exploitation and death for profit (Mignolo 2018; Vázquez 2009). Following this racist classification, as Grosfoguel (2011: 98) summarizes, several entangled global hierarchies emerged and shaped the CMP:

- “An epistemic hierarchy that privileges Western knowledge and cosmology over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, and institutionalized in the global university system”;
- “A spiritual hierarchy that privileges Christians over non-Christian/non-Western spiritualities institutionalized in the globalization of the Western Christian [(Catholic, Protestant, Evangelist) church]”;
- “A global gender hierarchy that privileged males over females and European Judeo-Christian patriarchy over other forms of gender relations”;
- “A sexual hierarchy that privileges heterosexuals over homosexuals and lesbians. (It is important to remember that most indigenous peoples in the Americas did not consider sexuality among males a pathological behavior and had no homophobic ideology.)”

According to Segato (2007), it is from this racial order that the carceral order emanates. They feed into one another, and the racial order is that of coloniality. The epistemological and ontological foundations of criminology, discussed below, are based on and largely reproduce this racial colonial order by constructing and legitimizing White/heterosexual/patriarchal/Christian rule, power and violence through law, state policies, and the CJS, as well as taken-for-granted links between non-White populations and crime (Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Kitossa 2012).

The gross manifestations of harm and violence by colonial states that accompanied this racial order and permeated all domains of the CMP produced the development of the modern nation-state and its institutions, as well as its subjectivities, intersubjective relations and economies (Cunneen 2018; Mignolo 2000). White Western European men (the gender term “men” is used intentionally throughout), by assigning to themselves a superior status, were able to establish their forms of social organization and legitimize their control over the exploitation of labor, land, natural resources, and products of the colonies through systematic use of violence, dispossession and genocide, which enriched their powerful metropolitan centers of the Global North at the expense of the colonies and people in the Global South (Acuña 2015; Goyes 2019). Administrative criminologists played a crucial role in producing “common sense” knowledge of the inferior and pathological colonial subject, which legitimized, justified, and consolidated this racial order and metropolitan power over the conquered territories, by rendering whole populations as subordinate and hence exploitable and expendable (Atilas 2018; Mignolo 2018).

Understanding crimes of the powerful, epistemicide, institutional racism, the overrepresentation of non-White populations in the CJS, and sex and gender discrimination and violence requires us to recognize the perpetuity of “coloniality” in the ways that criminology and the penal systems have and continue to operate globally and locally (Agozino 2003; Cunneen 2018; Segato 2007). The value of the “decolonial option” lies in that, by illuminating “coloniality,” it can provide an understanding of the complexity of the CMP, which is based on various intertwined forms of domination-subordination, including those of knowledge and epistemology. By doing so, it can offer a path toward an epistemic critique of the foundations of criminology, which rest upon a modern/colonial Eurocentric

epistemology. The epistemic critique provided by the “decolonial option” reveals that criminology’s foundations conceal and negate gendered/racial/sexual/spiritual “others,” their epistemic position(s), and the crimes of the powerful committed against them. This unveiling is necessary if our efforts to decolonize the discipline are serious. The following parts will provide a detailed analysis of the decolonial epistemic critique, which is essentially a path toward separating our ways of being, knowing, perceiving, sensing, and understanding from modernity’s universalist narratives.

What Does the Epistemic Critique of the Decolonial Option Entail?

According to Cunneen (2018: 24), achieving “cognitive justice” within criminology requires an “understanding and application of differing epistemological positions. A failure to do so simply reinscribes the epistemic violence of colonial rule.” The “decolonial option” can produce such a different way of knowing and understanding that no longer thinks from *within* Western modernist frameworks of thought (e.g., Enlightenment, liberalism, Marxism) in order to allow for other worlds and non-Eurocentric knowledges to (re)emerge (Escobar 2007). As Escobar (2007: 179) argues, the “decolonial option” attempts “to craft another space for the production of knowledge—an *other* way of thinking, *un paradigma otro*, the very possibility of talking about ‘worlds and knowledges otherwise,’” including that of criminology. That is why the “decolonial option” calls for disobedience, insurrection, and an epistemic and ontological reconstitution, which is *not an anti-European critique* but an epistemic perspective from “racial/ethnic subaltern locations” (Grosfoguel 2011: 3). This epistemic shift is not about erasing or denying modern thought because this would reproduce coloniality. Rather, by illuminating *other* ways of thinking from different positionalities, the “decolonial option” endeavors to separate our ways of being, knowing, perceiving, sensing, and understanding from modernity’s universalist narratives and its linear normative notions of civilization, development, modernization, progress, salvation, and scientism, and, as will become more clear below, from its logic of separation that still shape the world (Escobar 2020; Mignolo 2011).

The positionality of this *other* way of thinking invites us to look at criminology from a different epistemic point of view—that is, from the borderlands of body-politics (Anzaldúa 1987) or as Zaffaroni (1988) has referred to it, from the *margins*. Zaffaroni (1988) traces the epistemic violence of criminology based on scientific racism in legitimizing crimes of the powerful, metropolitan power and plundering by local elites in Latin American societies. He identifies how metropolitan criminological theories—even the most critical ones—could not provide an adequate understanding of assassinations, corruption, dictatorships, dispossession, ecocide, femicide, genocide, institutional racism, kidnappings, paramilitarism, police executions, power, state terrorism, torture, and violence because of its Western-centrism and colonial/racist underpinnings. As such, an approximation of criminology from the margins was necessary in order to understand how power and its effects on criminalization, crime, harm and the operation of the penal system, as well as various forms of resistance to it, manifested (Zaffaroni 1988). That power, according to the “decolonial option,” is “coloniality.”

Arguably, Zaffaroni’s (1988) approach is the closest so far to the epistemic critique of the “decolonial option.” Drawing on what Chicana feminism (Anzaldúa 1987; Keating 2008) and the philosophy of liberation (Dussel 1985) have referred to as “body-politics” and the “geopolitics of knowledge,” respectively, the “decolonial option” reminds us

that “knowledge is always situated” and “we always speak from a particular location in the power structures” (Grosfoguel 2011: 4). “Nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies of the ‘modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system’,” Grosfoguel (2011: 4) continues, but everyone experiences coloniality differently depending on their positionality within the CMP. Thus, while Aniyar de Castro’s (1985, 1987) *criminology of liberation* shares the word, “liberation,” with Dussel’s (1985) *philosophy of liberation*—and while Aniyar de Castro’s work illuminates the epistemic violence of administrative criminology and levels of domination exclusive to the countries of the periphery—the deep infusion of Marxist critical criminological thought in her work places Aniyar de Castro’s critique within the epistemological framework of Western-centric modern thought, rather than in the epistemic positionality of Venezuela (see Dussel 1985, 1993; Quijano 2000). In other words, Marxist thought and critique lie within modernity’s linear narratives of progress and the logic of the Enlightenment which, as discussed below, formed the basis for modern Western thought to become a universal totality (Dussel 1993; Mignolo 2018; Zaffaroni 1988).

In addition, as Dussel (1993) argues, Marx, despite his contributions and legacy in critical thought and revolutionary politics, did not recognize the scientific racism and colonial underpinnings in his critique of Hegel’s thought. Indeed, Marx, himself, calls for a liberation of the masses, but only of the masses of *Western industrial* societies (Zaffaroni 1988). As such, he was blind to the masses that were marginalized from history simply because of not being Western European, even though they were the most exploited from the capitalist system (Zaffaroni 1988). Hence, his Marxist critique also reproduced colonial epistemologies and scientific racism (see Dussel 1993; Zaffaroni 1988). Therefore, despite her invaluable influence, unlike Dussel’s *philosophy of liberation*, Aniyar de Castro’s *criminology of liberation* has been unable to transcend criminology’s Eurocentric colonial epistemology. To do so requires geopolitics of knowledge—a subaltern epistemic critique of Western-centric knowledge to address the power relations involved. This is what Mignolo (2011: 91–92) refers to as “border thinking”—namely, an epistemic critique that involves a switch from imperial epistemology “to an epistemology emerging from the places and bodies left out” in the margins.

Decolonial Epistemic Critique: Understanding the Accredited Version of Criminology

To move toward a subaltern epistemic critique and epistemic decolonization, the “decolonial option” would argue that one needs first to think about criminology’s origins, which lie in Western modern thought. Criminology was constituted principally as modernity’s project—as a rational progressive force of penalty and a technology of discipline (Morrison 1995). According to Dussel (1993) and Mignolo (2011), modernity’s foundations, discussed in greater detail below, rest with Western Christianity (Catholic, Protestant), which mutated into a secular project from the seventeenth-century onward, where scientific knowledge and social sciences assumed greater prominence. The Enlightenment—from the late-seventeenth to early-nineteenth centuries—is most commonly considered to be the birth of modernity. Its principles include: the dominance of reason and emancipation, equality, humanitarianism, intellectual inquiry, liberty and self-interest (Mignolo 2018). Therefore, for decolonial scholars, modernity, as a Western project of civilization, came to signify development, progress, and rationalization (Mignolo 2011; Quijano 2007; Dussel 1993). Although modernity was mainly a feature of England, France, Germany, and later

the US, it became a universal and hegemonic planetary project of civilization (Escobar 2007; Mignolo 2011). The “decolonial option,” by thinking, feeling and sensing from the epistemological position of the subaltern, interrogates how the epistemological and ontological foundations of modernity’s project that underpins criminology, gained its hegemony and universality in the first place.

The “decolonial option” responds to this question (or undertakes this interrogation) by looking at Descartes, the founder of Western modern European philosophy, and known for his famous phrase, *cogito ergo sum* (“I think therefore I am”) (Grosfoguel 2011). Descartes secularized Christian thought, which was constituted upon the idea of the primacy of the soul over the body (Quijano 2000). Descartes adopted an ontological dualism, which separated reason (previously, the soul) and the mind from the emotional, unreliable body that is guided by senses and emotion. Descartes constructed the modernist idea of *separation*—that humans are separate from non-humans and nature, that the mind is separate from the body, that reason is distinct from emotion, and that things have an intrinsic existence in and of themselves separately from what or how they are perceived (Escobar 2018).

Castro-Gómez (2005) argues that the Cartesian split constitutes the “point zero” in Western philosophy, which not only inaugurates European modernity, but also legitimizes, as this article explains below, colonialism and coloniality (Mignolo 2011). The “point zero” is where the White Western man installed himself above God and, therefore, as the sole authority over knowledge and truth capable of achieving universal application (Castro-Gómez 2005; Grosfoguel 2011). By replacing God with Western man as the foundation of all knowledge and by producing such dualisms, Descartes “was able to claim a non-situated, universal, God-eyed view of knowledge” (Grosfoguel 2011: 5). As the eyes of the Christian God were the “ultimate warranty of knowing,” their secular replacement with the eyes of reason meant that the “zero-point of observation was and continues to be, in both forms, disembodied,” immaterial, unlocated, without color, gender or sex, and that it is universal (Mignolo 2007: 162). This “God-eyed-view” both concealed its “local and particular perspective under an abstract universalism” and nullified any non-Western knowledge as particularistic, premodern and, therefore, as “unable to achieve universality” (Grosfoguel 2011: 5–6).

The Classical school, a product of the Enlightenment, was that “point zero” for criminology. It affirmed the “God-eyed-view” by secularizing Christian sin with crime and divine law with secular penal law (Zaffaroni 1988). As Zaffaroni (1988) argues, if we are to understand the penal system as a repressive imperial force of power, then we need to look at the Classical school as fundamental in constructing this power. Zaffaroni (1988) states that while laws, social control (formal and informal) and some type of penal sanctions have existed in every society, what emerged with the Enlightenment was modern universalist criminology based on the point of view of the White Western European man.

Criminology, even its critical manifestations, continues to produce knowledge from the Western man’s “point zero.” The epistemic rapture of the “decolonial option” entails a delinking of our ways of being, knowing, perceiving, sensing, and understanding from modern thought’s (purported) universality. Stemming from the Zapatistas, the “decolonial option” moves toward pluriversality—that is, a world where many worlds and knowledges can exist (Escobar 2020). The “decolonial option” strives to achieve that pluriversality in two ways: (1) by moving away from the “point zero” of Western epistemology and its logic of separation found in all social sciences; and (2) by highlighting how the perspectives in modern thought stem from particular Western locations, thus challenging its claim to universality. Modern and postmodern thought deserve recognition and alliances can be built (see Barreto 2013), but they do not deserve to be considered a universal norm as they

cannot capture the experiences of people beyond specific Global North settings (Escobar 2020; Mignolo and Vázquez 2013; Zaffaroni 1988).

By moving away from the “point zero,” the “decolonial option” invites us to think what a history of criminology might look like if the starting point of its enunciation was not England, France and Italy, but Haiti, Mexico or Senegal. By following the geopolitics/body-politics of the subaltern, the decolonial epistemic critique thinks *for* and *with* the oppressed and illuminates that behind the universalizing narratives of modernity on development, progress, and salvation lies coloniality, destruction, and the irrational logic of genocidal violence (Dussel 1993; Mignolo 2011; Quijano 2007). By exposing coloniality, the “decolonial option” is “at once the unveiling of the [colonial] wound and the possibility of healing. It makes the wound visible, tangible; it voices the scream” that has been silenced (Mignolo and Vázquez 2013). Essentially, the perspective attempts to uncouple our ways of being, knowing, sensing and understanding from modernity in order to “restitute what has been made destitute,” in the name civilization, development and progress. Emanating from racial/ethnic subaltern locations and views, the “decolonial option” provides, therefore, a different understanding and critique of modernity for what it conceals and negates. This involves a re-historization of the origins and a different understanding of modernity—that modernity cannot be understood without coloniality and vice versa (Mignolo 2011; Mignolo and Vázquez 2013; Vázquez 2009). In other words, coloniality is, in fact, constitutive of modernity. They are the two sides of the same coin or two entangled movements, with coloniality being modernity’s dark side (Mignolo 2011; Vázquez 2017).

Modernity/Coloniality (Coloniality the Dark Side of Modernity): Challenging the Accredited Version of Criminology

The differing epistemological and ontological positions of the “decolonial option” lie in that it sees the colonialism by Portugal and Spain as initiators of the economic and socio-cultural changes that brought about the Enlightenment to the colonial European metropolises (Dussel 1993). This is the point where the decolonial body-political approach starts to break from the dominant Western-centric approach—and, in particular, Anglocentric narratives of modernity in criminology. These narratives usually downplay or omit the role of Portuguese and Spanish empires in constructing the capitalist/Christian/heterosexual/male/patriarchal/Western European world order (see Carrington et al. 2019). For decolonial scholars, re-historization of the origins of modernity means that modernity’s birth is found not in the Enlightenment but in the conquest of the Americas by the Portuguese and Spanish in the late-fifteenth century and the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit in the sixteenth century.

As Dussel (1993: 66) argues:

1492 is the date of the “birth” of modernity... [M]odernity as such was “born” when Europe was in a position to pose itself against an other, when, in other words, Europe could constitute itself as a unified ego exploring, conquering, colonizing an alterity that gave back its image of itself. This other, in other words, was not “dis-covered”... as such, but concealed.

The re-historization of modernity is not simply an issue of history; instead, it provides a different epistemological and conceptual framework from the point of view and location of the subaltern. What Dussel (1993) implies is that in order for modernity to become a dominant and universal project of civilization, it required a “double negation,” to use

Vázquez's (2017: 78) words. It needed a negation of *otherness* and a simultaneous concealment of that negation (Vázquez 2017). According to Maldonado-Torres (2007: 245), the Cartesian "*ego cogito*" (rational self) was founded through and by the concealment of "*ego conquiro*" (the self as a conqueror). It was the *ego conquiro* that set the foundations for the *ego cogito*. The contact with *the other* established the context from which reflections on subjectivity, reason and reality emerged (Dussel 1993). From that context, the Cartesian split constructed the knowledge that produced and justified not only racial but gendered systems of discrimination (Lugones 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2007). As such, the logic of separation of mind and body, human and nature, helped construct and legitimize power relations, which privileged White/European/Christian/heterosexual/men over the conquered populations. White Europeans were rational and had a soul, whereas non-White Europeans (everyone else) were irrational, with no soul and closer to nature (premodern, savages, uncivilized) and, therefore, were inferior, expendable and exploitable (Quijano 1992, 2000). Essentially, the Cartesian split negated the other but concealed that negation under the the cloak of Enlightenment.

Criminology, as a discipline of modernity, engaged in that "double negation." First, by stemming from, reproducing and legitimizing the above-mentioned perspectives, criminology negated centuries of gross manifestations of harm of the European *ego conquiro* (ecocide, epistemicide, genocide, rape, slavery, torture) to colonized and enslaved populations, rendering them invisible. Second, criminology concealed that negation under the emancipatory narratives of the Classical school, which called for "a rational application of the law based on the principle of equality," rationality, proportionality and death penalty abolition (Agozino 2004: 345). As Agozino (2003: 14) argues, "the execution of a single innocent Frenchman counts for more in the conventional history of criminology than the transatlantic slave trade in which millions of Africans were destroyed or the genocide of Native Americans and aboriginal Australians by European *conquistados*" (emphasis in original).

Criminology, as part of Western modernity, while referring to itself as an emancipatory force and a defender of equality and rationality, simultaneously brings within it coloniality—a destructive force (Vázquez 2009). Coloniality names this movement of concealment, erasure, negation and silencing, which established and keeps sustaining modernity and its founding disciplines (Vázquez 2017)—meaning that there has not been any "civilizing" without violence, development without destitution, progress without destruction, penalty without racism (Vázquez 2009). Modernity could cloak itself in the ideals of rationality, progress and the Enlightenment by concealing that its true progenitor was the brutality of rapacious colonialism. In such a way, Eurocentric forms of social, political, penal, economic and criminological ordering were allowed not just to escape judgment but to be actively diffused, imposed and lionized. It is the subaltern epistemic critique of the "decolonial option" that reveals coloniality as a constitutive element and the dark side of modernity—a feature that, together with modernity's logic of separation, Southern criminology would benefit from understanding if it is to move toward epistemic decolonization and overcome multiple forms of oppression, harm and epistemicide.

Coloniality of Knowledge and of Being: The Destruction of Worlds and the Earth

Dussel (1993) notes that through conquest, modernity was born and asserted itself as Eurocentric² (later to become Anglocentric) and Anthropocentric³ (Vázquez 2017), based on the logic of separation, which underpinned the Cartesian split. The universalization of the modern logic of separation accompanied two movements of coloniality/modernity. For Vázquez (2017: 78), modernity’s movement toward Eurocentrism meant a simultaneous movement of coloniality toward “worldlessness” (the destruction and negation of other worlds, people and knowledges), while the movement of modernity toward Anthropocentrism required a simultaneous movement of coloniality toward “earthlessness” (the negation and destruction of the earth) (Vázquez 2017: 78).

“Worldlessness” appears in the racist underpinnings of coloniality of knowledge and being, which materialized by disqualifying the minds and bodies of color as soulless, savage, pagan, irrational, closer to nature, and backward on the evolutionary ladder (Mignolo 2018). In criminological terms, this disqualification mutated gradually into the scientific criminological racism of biological positivism (i.e., the “degeneration” of the atavist and born criminal) that continues today with pathological interpretations of: immaturity, impulsiveness, low IQs, a propensity for criminality and a lack of self-control, and in need of adjustment, “correction,” and management (Carrington et al. 2019; Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Zaffaroni 1988). In addition, “worldlessness” manifests “in disqualifying regions. . . ‘falling behind’ modernity (conceptualized as pagan, uncivilized, Second and Third Worlds, underdeveloped)” (Mignolo and Vázquez 2013). Criminologically speaking, this racist classification of coloniality of power secularized the Christian purging of “paganism” and rendered whole regions, their cosmovisions, and their bodies as inferior. Criminology justified and legitimized colonialism, criminalization, exploitation, oppression, rape, and slavery by devaluing, obliterating and silencing knowledges and philosophies that did not fit modernity’s project of “progress,” and by treating them as criminogenic or pre-modern (Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Mignolo 2002; 2011; Vázquez 2009; Zaffaroni 1988).

The “superiority” of Western Europeans and their mission to “civilize” conquered and enslaved populations in order for them to “evolve” and “advance” into becoming Europeans, legitimized destruction, ethnocide,⁴ genocide, and pillage, among other myriad gruesome practices to eradicate and disqualify Indigenous or other non-Western cultures, forms of being, knowledges, and sense of identity (Cunneen 2018; Cunneen and Tauri 2016; Escobar 2020). Although the Western world was shocked when Nazi Germany applied coloniality’s genocidal logic and destruction of worlds to Europeans (Dussel 1985; Quijano 2000), as Zaffaroni (1988) argues, genocide and “worldlessness” matter only when they happen to *metropolitan* centers. If the Nazis had committed genocide in the peripheries—against Africans or Indigenous populations—then, as Zaffaroni (1988) suggests, they most likely would have raised monuments of glory—like those of Queen Victoria, British slave traders and Spanish monarchs—concealing as such coloniality’s “worldlessness.”

² “Eurocentric” means the belief in the superiority of Western European economy, knowledge, politics, religions and ways of being and sensing over other such systems and ways of being around the world (Vázquez 2017).

³ “Anthropocentric” means the belief in the superiority of humans over the Earth and other living beings (Vázquez 2017).

⁴ According to Cunneen (2018), colonizers carried out ethnocide through forced sterilization and removal of Indigenous children from their families and with subsequent confinement in Christian boarding schools.

With respect to modernity's movement toward Anthropocentrism and the simultaneous movement of coloniality toward "earthlessness," one could assert that the violent dominance of Eurocentric knowledges and ways of being not only formed intersubjective relationships, but also shaped the relationship of humans to nature—by identifying the Earth and its living beings as less significant to humans (Escobar 2020; Vázquez 2017). In many civilizations and cosmovisions around the world (philosophical traditions of Buddhism, Taoism, Zen, the Druids, Indigenous cultures, Siberian Shamans, and those of Ancient Egypt and Greece), human beings used to and some still do perceive their lives in coexistence, complementarity and connection with all living organisms, inanimate objects and spirits (Escobar 2020; Kusch 1970; Mignolo 2018). These pluriversal cosmovisions are underpinned by the logic of *relationality* instead that of *separation* (Escobar 2020). Humans are seen as an interconnected part of the Earth but not more important than the rest of its parts. With the Christian demonization and criminalization of what was perceived as paganism and later with the Cartesian split, modernity's *logic of separation* was established, in which humankind was constructed as disconnected and distinct from nature (Blum 2018; Mignolo 2018). Conceiving of humans as apart from and superior to nature meant that the latter could be dominated, enslaved and dissected into smaller and smaller pieces (Blum 2018). As such, from the conquest of the Americas onward, the Earth and all its living creatures were constructed as *objects* to be exploited for profit (Mignolo 2018; Vázquez 2017).

The relationality and interdependence of humans with nature was obliterated by the dominance of the Western Christian cosmovision and later, with science, reasoning and order praised by the Enlightenment and the modern self. By compartmentalizing nature into scientific domains for each part to be investigated separately, humanity further lost its relationality and interdependence with the Earth. On the one hand, nature became devalued and reduced to the "law of the jungle" and "survival of the fittest," which fed into scientific criminological racism of biological positivism with the aforementioned consequences (Klages 1913). On the other hand, nature became devalued and transformed into "natural resources" that could be extracted, commodified, consumed and discarded in the name of progress and development (Klages 1913). The dominance of the logic of separation, extraction, and destruction of nature and living organisms for profit was born with the conquest of the Americas and continues today in practices of neoliberal extraction, monocultures, and ecocide, among others (see, e.g., Goyes et al. 2017; Mol 2017). That is the reason why the "decolonial option" aims to delink our ways of being, knowing, perceiving and sensing from modernity's universalist narratives to restore what has been destroyed by the concealed harmfulness of onslaught of development and its logic of separation—a logic which is, at its core, anthropocentric and discriminatory.

Conclusion

Southern criminology, despite its invaluable contributions in making more visible the unequal distribution of knowledge production between the Global North and Global South, is blind to coloniality and, therefore, has yet to break away from criminology's modern epistemological and ontological underpinnings. A more in-depth consideration of the subaltern epistemic critique of the "decolonial option" and of the intertwined relation of modernity/coloniality can provide a rupture and a paradigm shift in criminological thinking—one that moves away from the discipline's "point zero" of enunciation

and, as such, from its colonial and Eurocentric underpinnings. Criminology has been a crucial site for the dominance of modernity, which helped construct and legitimize practices of silencing, obliteration, destruction, criminalization and classifications of the “other.” From a decolonial perspective, criminology has been at the center of the production of the Western White man’s gaze as the default position of knowledge in the world. The conceptual and epistemic framework of the “decolonial option,” therefore, could prove to be a significant ally in Southern criminology’s efforts for epistemic decolonization and cognitive justice by providing an understanding of coloniality and inviting us to question the core issues of Whiteness, heterosexuality and separation.

Prevailing inequalities, gross manifestations of harm—both locally and globally—and climate change, as well as social movements and subaltern struggles, in response, such as Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, Idle No More, the Zapatistas, and recent demolishing of colonial and slave trade monuments, show signs that modernity’s discourses and its design of neoliberal capitalism are in crisis. Criminology, as a modernist project, is arguably also in crisis. Criminology could continue to be a political technology of modernity/coloniality—of devouring and destroying worlds, humans, nonhuman animals and nature, and of perpetuating anthropocentrism, capitalism, racism, and sexism in the name of development. Alternatively, it can contribute to the disruption of harmful and criminogenic forms of the global CMP by making visible what it facilitated to make invisible, destroyed, lost, pillaged, or silenced. That is, it can transcend the violence of silence and bring to voice forms of perception and relational worlds that will allow for possible different, multiple futures and forms of healing, justice, knowledge, reparation, restoration, and social organization to exist.

Acknowledgments I am immensely grateful to Walter Mignolo, Jonathan Ilan and Avi Boukli for their constructive insights, encouragement and valuable reflections on earlier drafts. I would also like to thank the editors of this special issue and the anonymous reviewers for their perceptive comments and suggestions, as well as, Galiëna Conolly, Lynne Copson, Steve Tombs, Teresa Willis and the DD311 module team at the Open University, whose comments and recommendations on module-related material led to the shaping of the ideas found in this article. This article is dedicated to the decolonial scholar that touched my heart and soul, Maria Lugones, who passed away in July 2020.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article’s Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article’s Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Aas, Katja Franko. (2012). ‘The Earth Is One but the World Is Not’: Criminological Theory and Its Geopolitical Divisions. *Theoretical Criminology*, 16(1), 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480611433433>.
- Aas, Katja Franko. (2013). *Globalization and Crime*. Second edition. London: Sage.
- Acuña, Roger Merino. (2015). The Politics of Extractive Governance: Indigenous Peoples and Socio-Environmental Conflicts. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 2(1), 85–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2014.11.007>.
- Agozino, Biko. (2003). *Counter-Colonial Criminology: A Critique of Imperialist Reason*. London: Pluto Press.

- Agozino, Biko. (2004). Imperialism, Crime and Criminology: Towards the Decolonisation of Criminology. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 41(4), 343–58. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:CRIS.0000025766.99876.4c>.
- Aniyar de Castro, Lola. (1985). Fundamentos, aportes y líneas de desarrollo posibles de una criminología de la liberación. *Nuevo Foro Penal*, 12(26), 351–60.
- Aniyar de Castro, Lola. (1987). *Criminología de la Liberación*. Maracaibo, Venz: Vicerrectorado Académico Universidad del Zulia.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. (1987). *Borderlands/LA Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Atilés, Jose. (2018). Frank Pearce and Colonial State Crimes: Contributions to a Research Agenda. In Steven Bittle, Lauren Snider, Steve Tombs, and David Whyte (Eds.), *Revisiting Crimes of the Powerful: Marxism, Crime and Deviance* (pp. 309–21). London and New York: Routledge.
- Barreto, Jose-Manuel. (2013). *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective: Critique, History and International Law*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Blagg, Harry, and Thalia Anthony. (2019). *Decolonising Criminology: Imagining Justice in a Postcolonial World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blum, Alexander. (2018). How The Enlightenment Separated Humanity From Nature. *ARC*, February 15. Retrieved on June 8, 2021, from <https://medium.com/arc-digital/how-the-enlightenment-separated-humanity-from-nature-c008881a61b0>.
- Bowling, Ben. (2011). Transnational Criminology and the Globalization of Harm Production. In Mary Bosworth and Carolyn Hoyle (Eds.), *What Is Criminology* (pp. 361–77). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carrington, Kerry, and Russell Hogg. (2017). Deconstructing Criminology's Origin Stories. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 12(3), 181–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-017-9248-7>.
- Carrington, Kerry, Russell Hogg, and Máximo Sozzo. (2016). Southern Criminology. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 56(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azv083>.
- Carrington, Kerry, Russell Hogg, John Scott, Máximo Sozzo, and Reece Walters. (2019). *Southern Criminology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Carrington, Kerry, Russell Hogg, John Scott, and Máximo Sozzo (Eds.) (2018a). Criminology, Southern Theory and Cognitive Justice. In Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg, John Scott, and Máximo Sozzo (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South* (pp. 3–17). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Carrington, Kerry, Russell Hogg, John Scott, and Máximo Sozzo (Eds.) (2018b). *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Castro-Gómez, Santiago. (2005). *La Hubris Del Punto Cero: Ciencia, Raza e Ilustración En La Nueva Granada (1750–1816)*. Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.
- Connell, Raewyn W. (2007). *Southern Theory: Social Science and the Global Dynamics of Knowledge*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Cunneen, Chris. (2001). *Conflict, Politics and Crime: Aboriginal Communities and the Police*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Cunneen, Chris. (2018). Indigenous Challenges for Southern Criminology. In Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg, John Scott, and Máximo Sozzo (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South* (pp. 19–41). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cunneen, Chris, and Juan Tauri. (2016). *Indigenous Criminology*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- de Sousa Santos, Boaventura, (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Abingdon, Oxon, UK, and New York: Routledge.
- Dussel, Enrique. (1985). *Philosophy of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Dussel, Enrique. (1993). Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures). *boundary 2* 20(3), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/303341>.
- Escobar, Arturo. (2007). Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise: The Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Programme. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 179–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162506>.
- Escobar, Arturo. (2018). *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Escobar, Arturo. (2020). *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Friedrichs, David O. (2018). Critical Criminology and the Critique of Domination, Inequality and Injustice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.246>.
- Goyes, David Rodríguez, Hanneke Mol, Avi Brisman and Nigel South (Eds.) (2017). *Environmental Crime in Latin America: The Theft of Nature and the Poisoning of the Land*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Goyes, David Rodríguez. (2018). Green Criminology as Decolonial Tool: A Stereoscope of Environmental Harm. In Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg, John Scott, and Máximo Sozzo (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminology and the Global South* (pp. 323–346). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Goyes, David Rodríguez. (2019). *Southern Green Criminology: A Science to End Ecological Discrimination*. Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Goyes, David Rodríguez, and Nigel South. (2017). Green Criminology Before ‘Green Criminology’: Amnesia and Absences. *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*, 25(2), 165–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-017-9357-8>.
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. (2007). World-System Analysis and Postcolonial Studies: A Call for a Dialogue from the “Coloniality of Power” Approach. In Revathi Krishnaswamy and John C. Hawley (Eds.), *The Postcolonial and the Global* (pp. 94–104). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Grosfoguel, Ramón. (2011). Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality. *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1), 1–37.
- Hillyard, Paddy, Christina Pantazis, Steve Tombs, and Dave Gordon (Eds.) (2004). *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously*. London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.
- Keating, A. (2008). *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kitossa, Tamari. (2012). Criminology and Colonialism: Counter Colonial Criminology and the Canadian Context. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4(9), 204–26.
- Klages, Ludwig. (2013 [1913]). Man and Earth. In John B. Morgan (Ed.), *The Biocentric Worldview* (pp. 29–47). Trans. Joseph D. Pryce. London: Arktos.
- Kusch, Rodolfo. (1970). *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in America*. Trans. Joshua M. Price and Maria Lugones. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Liu, Jianhong. (2009). Asian Criminology – Challenges, Opportunities, and Directions. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 4(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11417-009-9066-7>.
- Lugones, María. (2007). Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System. *Hypatia*, 22(1), 186–209.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. (2007). On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 240–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>.
- Matthews, Roger. (2017). False Starts, Wrong Turns and Dead Ends: Reflections on Recent Developments in Criminology. *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*, 25(4), 577–91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-017-9372-9>.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2000). *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2002). The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 101(1), 57–96. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-101-1-57>.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2007). Coloniality of Power and De-Colonial Thinking. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 155–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162498>.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2008). The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference. In Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (Eds.), *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate* (pp. 255–88). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter D. (2018). The Decolonial Option. In Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Eds.), *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (pp. 105–226). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter D., and Rolando Vázquez. (2013). Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings – Social Text. *Social Text Online*, July 15. Retrieved on June 8, 2021, from https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthetics-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/.
- Mol, Hanneke. (2017). *The Politics of Palm Oil Harm: A Green Criminological Perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moosavi, Leon. (2018). Decolonising Criminology: Syed Hussein Alatas on Crimes of the Powerful. *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*, 27(2), 229–242. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-018-9396-9>.
- Moosavi, Leon. 2019. A Friendly Critique of ‘Asian Criminology’ and ‘Southern Criminology.’ *The British Journal of Criminology*, 59(2), 257–75. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy045>.
- Morrison, Wayne. (1995). *Theoretical Criminology from Modernity to Post-Modernism*. London: Routledge.

- Passas, Nikos, and Goodwin Neva. (2004). *It's Legal but It Ain't Right: Harmful Social Consequences of Legal Industries*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Pfohl, Stephen. (2003). Foreword. In Biko Agozino, *Counter-Colonial Criminology: A Critique of Imperialist Reason* (pp. xi–xiv). London: Pluto Press.
- Quijano, Anibal. (1992). Colonialidad, Modernidad/Racionalidad. *Peru Indigena*, 13(29): 11–20.
- Quijano, Anibal. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1(3), 533–80.
- Quijano, Anibal. (2007). Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 168–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>.
- Rosa, Marcelo C. 2014. Theories of the South: Limits and Perspectives of an Emergent Movement in Social Sciences. *Current Sociology*, 62(6), 851–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114522171>.
- Segato, Rita Laura. (2007). El color de la cárcel en América Latina: apuntes sobre la colonialidad de la justicia en un continente en desconstrucción. *Nueva sociedad*, 208, 142–6.
- Tlostanova, Madina. (2019). The postcolonial condition, the decolonial option and the post-socialist intervention. In Monika Albrecht (Ed.), *Postcolonialism Cross-Examined: Multidirectional Perspectives on Imperial and Colonial Pasts and the Neocolonial Present* (pp.165–178). Abingdon, Oxon, UK, and New York: Routledge.
- Valdés-Riesco, Amalia. (2020). Can the Subaltern Speak in Criminology? Analysing the Production of Knowledge on Crimes of the Powerful in the 21st Century through Latin American Postcolonial Lenses. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 9(2),1–22.
- Vázquez, Rolando. (2009). Modernity Coloniality and Visibility: The Politics of Time. *Sociological Research Online*, 14(4), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1990>.
- Vázquez, Rolando. (2017). Precedence, Earth and the Anthropocene: Decolonizing Design. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2017.1303130>.
- Zaffaroni, Eugenio Raúl. (1988). *Criminología: aproximacion desde un margen*. Bogotá: Temis.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.