



TERRE AVSTRALIS

découverte l'an 1644.

THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN

Matthew Norman Kiem

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2017

Western Sydney University

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.....

Matthew Norman Kiem

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This thesis was researched and written on Aboriginal lands, predominantly that of the Cadigal people of the Eora nation. I pay my respects to the Elders of these lands, past and present, and to any Indigenous person generous enough to engage with the document I have prepared below.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

ABSTRACT

Since its emergence in the later part of the twentieth century, the field of design studies has functioned as a discourse that configures and directs the designs of what decolonial thinkers call the *colonial matrix of power*, alias *zero point epistemology*. As such, 'design' has come to represent a disciplinary orientation, a mode of thinking, and a set of practices that act in support of a specifically modern/ colonial structure of violence and exploitation. Enfolded into this configuration is the problem of the *coloniality of knowledge*, a condition in which the *coloniality of power* seeks to govern the designing of knowledge, understanding, and attachment, all according to the rationalist and anti-relational designs of the zero point. In sum, the condition that this study confronts is one in which the designs of the zero point configure a restrictive and conformist conception of 'design' that undermines the capacity of designers to disclose the structural (designed) violence of the colonial matrix and, as such, to reconfigure designing in support of *relational plurality*. Notwithstanding important counter movements within, beyond, and at the margins of zero point designs, this study takes as its central problem the idea that 'design studies' as a whole has failed to comprehend and respond to the *ontological designing* of zero point epistemology.

This study looks to address the non-disclosure of the coloniality of design through a process of relational reading with and across two major intellectual genealogies: ontological designing and decolonial thinking. The concept of *relationality* as methodology is further explained through a reinterpretation of Tony Fry's concept of *unsettlement*. Whereas for Fry 'unsettlement' names the condition of the global breakdown of *settlement* as a dominant mode of human habitation, this study argues that a process of unsettling the terms and designs of zero point epistemology in favour of relational plurality is an imperative of Fry's concept of *Sustainment*. The claim here, in short, is that a politics of Sustainment implies a commitment to learning how to discern the presence and relational (designing) import of the experience of *unsettlement*.

The study unfolds in five chapters that are configured as two movements of thought. The first movement enacts a process of reading ontological designing in light of coloniality and coloniality in light of ontological designing so as to disclose a preliminary conception of

the *coloniality of design*. A confrontation with the fascist political ontology of Martin Heidegger is configured as a critical examination of the philosophical underpinnings of ontological designing. In light of this, the argument is made for theorists of ontological designing to think and design with a critical sense for the normative designs of Heideggerian thought. This is followed by a process of reading with and across feminist and decolonial interpretations of Heidegger's philosophy, in order to disclose possibilities for alternative ways of conceptualising ontological designing. Finally, after a close reading of Mignolo's concept of the *locus of enunciation*, the argument is made that Mignolo's practice of producing decolonial concepts represents a designerly process of disclosing and, as such, redirecting of the unsettling designs of zero point epistemology.

The second movement is devoted to interpreting 'Australian' settler colonialism in light of the concept of the coloniality of design. An argument is made concerning the need to consider the import of settler colonialism in the context of theorising the experience and designs of marginality. Further, an argument is made for the value of Ghassan Hage's analysis of white nationalist ontologies of governmental belonging in the context of thinking about 'Australian' nationalism. Additionally, the import of Cheryl Harris' theory of 'whiteness as property' — as elaborated within and for an 'Australian' context by Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Angela Mitropoulos — is brought to bear on the question of 'nation as image'. Nelson Maldonado-Torres' conception of the *coloniality of being* is used to trace the shifting configurations of colonial knowledge from the event of the European Christian invasion of the Americas in the sixteenth century to the British invasion of Cadigal country (the present location of the city of Sydney) in the late eighteenth century. The second movement concludes with an argument for interpreting the core violence of the coloniality of design as *anti-relational designing*.

The overriding thesis of this study is that 'design' is presently configured as a design for normalising relations of negation, hyperexploitation, and ecological destruction. In the context of this study, this condition is named and explicated as the *coloniality of design*. The central finding of this study is that the core violence of the coloniality of design manifests as a *metaphysics of nihilism*, alias anti-relational designing. In this light, decolonial designing is disclosed as a life affirming practice of reconfiguring designing in support of relational plurality.

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Wenny Theresia, for far more than I can express, 謝謝。

He who fights with monsters should look to it that he
himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long
into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.

(Nietzsche 2003, p.102)

[...] may we honor other people's feelings
respect their anger, sadness, grief, joy as we do our own
Though we tremble before uncertain futures
may we meet illness, death and adversity with strength
may we dance in the face of our fears.

(Anzaldúa 2002, p.575)

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[...] “I am where I think” is one basic epistemic principle that legitimizes all ways of thinking and de-legitimizes the pretense of a singular and particular epistemology, geo-historical and biographically located, to be universal. (Mignolo 2011, p.81)

Human beings have turned the very ground of being into design, the designed, decision and direction — not least by how ‘we’ live and act upon our world and the worlds of others. (Fry 2008, p.70)

0.0 I AM WHERE I THINK

For Walter Mignolo, the dictum ‘I am where I think’ is an anchoring device for delinking from the designs of the *coloniality of knowledge*. I will explain the concept of the ‘coloniality of knowledge’ in more detail below. For the moment it is sufficient to describe it as the structurally enforced (designed) mis-recognition of how the meaning and production of knowledge — particularly academic knowledge — is configured by colonial relations of power. A second feature of the coloniality of knowledge that is useful for me to explain at this point is that it delimits (by design) the ability of writers, activists, designers and other generative practitioners to think clearly and seriously about the *materiality of knowledge* or,

in other words, the manner in which *what* and *how* ‘we’¹ know — the terms or form of knowing being as significant as the content — is a question of being immersed within worlds of understanding that are both tangible (if largely inexplicit) and particular (while still retaining the capacity to connect and affect). ‘I am where I think’ thus presses the imperative to consider the how and what of knowing as ‘located’ in way that is inherently political; that is, in a sense that pertains not to an ‘organic’, ‘natural’, or pre-political sense of ‘rootedness’ but, rather, to “the ‘place’ that has been configured by the colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo 2011, p.xvi).

The image of knowledge in Mignolo’s decolonial project is of a ‘*world of many worlds*’, or, as I will refer to it below, a condition of *relational plurality*. One of the tasks of decolonial thinking is bring attention to the how *zero point epistemology* has developed the power to assert its own sense of reality as the standard against which all other ‘worlds’ and ‘beings’ are judged, ranked, and objectified. In this context the ‘zero point’, a concept first developed by Santiago Castro-Gómez (2007), is the point from which colonial power seeks to design a world that accords with its desire for power and control.² Mignolo’s conception of knowledge is radical for the way it discloses how ‘Western’³ intellectual practices sustain colonial power relations not simply through their content but by the ways in which knowledge is theorised, produced, inscribed, and circulated in contexts of

¹ The politics of this thesis is grounded in the notion configuring a condition that I name ‘relational plurality’. An imperative of this politics is to not allow categorical terms to enclose and, in so doing, flatten or erase the presence of difference and multiplicities. As such, throughout this study I have tried to remain disciplined in not taking for granted or imposing homogeneity in my use of pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’ etc. The exemption that proves the rule of this imperative are moments in where the boundary of the ‘we’ invoked is clearly defined or indicated, e.g. in the biographical snapshot below in where I am talking about my family. My sense for what is at stake in this kind of move is informed by Ellen Rooney’s (1989) concept of the pluralist (not plural) evocation of a ‘generalised reader’, as well as my experience of reading the works of Tony Fry and Angela Mitropoulos.

² For illustrative example of what is implied by the zero point, Castro-Gómez observes its early formation in the emergence of perspective painting during the European Renaissance, a painting technique that designs a desire for a world that is arranged so as to facilitate the gaze of a singular perspective.

³ The concept of the ‘West’ and the ‘Western’ is an object of critique and contestation within and beyond decolonial thinking (Mignolo 2000, 2011; Akkach 2014). While the arguments I present here are not based on a substantive analysis of this debate, I have chosen to indicate the complex, loaded, and contested meaning of the concept by representing it within inverted commas throughout most of this thesis.

imperial-/ colonial⁴ domination. In doing so, Mignolo invites his reader to question the ‘grounds’ of knowing on political as opposed to sceptical terms. The question is not ‘how is it possible to know anything’, but, rather, how does power manifest in the ways ‘we’ either conform to or depart from the terms of zero point epistemology. As Mignolo suggests, the answer to this question will look different depending upon how one is ‘placed’ within the colonial matrix of power.

0.0.1 EMBODYING DECISION AND DIRECTION

In this study I take up Mignolo’s critique of zero point epistemology as a provocation to examine the grounds upon which *design* is theorised. My sense for what ‘design’ is is influenced by theorists of ontological designing who have defined it as “decision and direction embodied in all things humans deliberately bring into being” (Kalantidou & Fry 2014, p.1). As I find it, one of the complicating factors in attempting to *think the politics of thinking design* is that I — under the designing influence of *ontological designing* — have come to understand design as a force that is itself involved in configuring and directing the experience of thought. From an ontological perspective, design is, as Tony Fry puts it, “the very ground of being” (Fry 2008, p.70). Thus, insofar as it is held to be the ground of ‘our’ being, the act of thinking about design has to be acknowledged as something that always occurs in the medium of what is already designed-/ designing. As theorists such as Anne-Marie Willis assert, while the interplay between the agency of the designed and understanding that informs acts of decision and direction is indeed circular, the relation is *hermeneutical* rather than vicious (Willis 2007). From this it follows that, while the ability to think and reflect cannot be said to be fully or reductively determined by design, design theorists themselves must nevertheless contend with the fact that the very thing that we set out to study is at the same time an agent in the formation of ‘our’ conception of what design is and does.

⁴ The ‘-/’ form is a technique I have adopted from Angela Mitropoulos as a way to invoke relational rather than categorical thinking in the experience of reading (for an explanation of ‘relationality’ see Chapter 1). I first came across this technique in Mitropoulos’ *Contract & Contagion* (2012).

0.0.2 DESIGNING THE DISCLOSURE OF VIOLENCE

While I have more to say about both the coloniality of knowledge and ontological designing in the chapters to follow, the problematic I am attempting to sketch here centres on the question of how to think about design in light of the problem of coloniality and coloniality in light of ontological designing. The central difficulty of my intentions here is that each of these concepts — along with the traditions and experiences of thought that they embody — *call into question the very ground upon which I am attempting to think their relation*. Following Mignolo, my task is to think (design) the unsettlement of zero point epistemology. In my own case, this implies not only a confrontation with the zero point orientation of the ‘design discourse’ but also a critical path of reflection on the place from which I think and write; namely, as an ‘Australian’ who was born and socialised into the white settler class (Wolfe 2006). Following Fry, the task of thinking about coloniality calls for designerly reflection on the role that design plays in configuring and directing the ontological structures of everyday lifeworlds, or, as Fry — writing with Eleni Kalantidou — puts it how designs “relationally constitute the made environments of our existence” (Kalantidou & Fry 2014, p.1).

0.0.3 DESIGNING UNSETTLEMENT AS A DECOLONISING MODE OF DISCLOSURE

The complication of this problematic is that both elements of the relation that I am interested to examine — coloniality and-/as design — tend towards unsettling each other’s terms while at the same time calling into question the grounds upon which I attempt think their relation. Moreover, the movement of this thought as a whole is also something that have experienced as inherently unsettling. While I am aware that experience of unsettlement is common for any project of critical thought — particularly those that tends towards confrontation with their own social and conceptual grounds — my objective in this Introduction is to recognise and reflect upon the experience of unsettlement as a (designed) experience that, respectfully handled, allows for the disclosure of the *core violence* of the coloniality of design.

My argument here is that decolonial thinking about design requires the (ontological) designing of an ability to discern, disclose, and redirect the experience of becoming unsettled, particularly insofar as this experience is derived from a tacit (designed) investment in the colonality of design. This implies, in the first instance, an ability to *receive* rather than reject the experience of unsettlement so as to remain-with and critically reflect upon the experience, and, in the second instance, an ability to materialise-symbolise this experience in designs that performatively⁵ reconfigure the designs of zero point epistemology. In this sense, my argument concerning unsettlement as a decolonising design is not to be confused with a desire to hold on to or fetishise unsettlement. Rather, in the context of this thesis, I approach the question and experience of unsettlement as the designing of an ability to discern when a feeling of discomfort — ‘intellectual’ or otherwise — ought to be received, acknowledged, and handled as a necessary and expected condition of decolonising design.

In my own case this argument pertains specifically to the experience of reading and acting upon the work of critical decolonial thinking as someone who might otherwise be comfortable working within the terms of zero point epistemology.⁶ The ability to receive the experience of unsettlement, rather than reject or ignore it, is thus something I take to be a condition of my being able to think through the implications of decolonial thought. In particular, I suggest that the ability to remain-with the experience of unsettlement (as opposed to becoming lost in it) represents a skill that is key to allowing decolonial thinking to redirect (ontologically design) one’s way of being-in-the-world. While I do not claim that an ‘intellectual’ practice is in and of itself a sufficient way of responding to the imperatives implied by decolonial thinking, in the context of this study I treat the work of

⁵ For how I understand and use the concept of ‘performativity’, particularly with regards to the ontological designing of texts, concepts, identities, and other designs see Fry (2014a), Mignolo (1995), Mitropoulos (2012), Moreton-Robinson (2015a), Maldonado-Torres (2007) and Parsley (2003).

⁶ In saying this I am not ignoring the significance of thinking and writing from the relatively marginal location of ‘Australia’, an issue that I address in more detail in Chapter 4. The position I take in that chapter and throughout this study, however, is that — as things are presently configured — members of the white ‘Australian’ settler class have more in common with those who benefit from the effects of zero point epistemology than those who do not.

critical reading, thinking, and writing as a material-symbolic practice that designs embodied experiences and dispositions. For my purposes, unsettlement is the place to begin reflecting on the relation of coloniality and design because it is itself both a condition and an expression of the ontological designing of decolonial thinking in action.

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My reflection on learning to remain-with the experience of unsettlement arises from my experience with learning to discern the value of unsettlement. My reflection is also a response to arguments made by Fry concerning unsettlement as an immanent condition of human habitation. In the middle parts of this Introduction I draw my thinking on unsettlement as *a decolonising mode of disclosure* into relation with Fry's conception. What follows here, however, are two snapshots from experiences in my life that I offer as examples of how unsettlement arises as a designing configuration in the context of relational lifeworlds. These snapshots also provide a biographical context for the study as a whole, a design of decolonial thinking that I will examine in more detail in Chapter 2.

0.1 UNSETTLEMENT SNAPSHOT I | 9/11

One of the clearer memories I have of the event of the 11th of September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York was how unusual it was for my mum to have on the television on the morning of a school day. The usual practice in our family was to prepare for school to the sound of the radio tuned in to the local state broadcasting service. Growing up I did not experience this as a prohibition so much as a given. It was simply the way things were. While I cannot discount the possibility, I have no recollection of a moment when as a child I had ever considered asking to watch the television at that time. In terms of television-watching practice, my younger brothers and I had been ritualistic Saturday morning cartoon watchers, and throughout my high school years it was common for us to spend the time between arriving home from school and sitting down to dinner watching television. As far as we were concerned, however, the

idea of having the television on while preparing for school simply did not exist. To wake that morning in September 2001 to the sounds and appearance of television news footage, notwithstanding the content of the event itself, was for me a sign that something out of the ordinary was unfolding. In this instance, the message of the medium of the television was enacting a reconfiguration of the assumptions that underpinned my normative sense of being-in-the-world.

Like many members of the white ‘Australian’ settler class — who are, for the most part, sheltered from and, as such, affected more so by the mediated spectacle of such ‘world historical events’ than the direct, physical violence itself — my family, friends, and I looked upon the World Trade Center attacks with a peculiar sense of proximity.⁷ Physically we could hardly be further away from New York, and in terms of globally measured time we were fourteen hours ahead. Despite this, however, it was impossible to place the event at a distance. The images and sound conveyed by the television filled the space of our morning routine and the messages it delivered — tacit and felt as much as visual and verbal — created a mood that was at the same time macabre and surreal. In that moment the event of the attacks was, for me, and like many others I knew, something beyond reason and comprehension, a kind of rippling sublime that foretold of significant but as yet unclear consequences.

⁷ For an account of the specificities of these forms of affect, particularly as mediated by the experience of racism, see for example Ghassan Hage’s reflection on the differential reaction in ‘Australia’ towards the terrorist attacks in Paris and Beirut in November 2015 (Hage 2015). See also Angela Mitropoulos on the June 2016 gay nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida (Mitropoulos 2016a).

0.2 UNSETTLEMENT SNAPSHOT II | 'OCCUPY SYDNEY'

Your law! I no tink much of your law.

(Ngambri elder Nellie Hamilton speaking c.1890, as quoted in Gale 1977, p.123)

•

'Occupy Sydney' was a public protest movement that began on the 15th of October 2011 as part of a global wave of solidarity with the movement that had burst into being on Wall Street, New York, in the previous month. The movement in New York was ostensibly in response to the imposition of austerity measures in the fallout of the so-called 'Global financial crisis' of 2007-8 (Blumenkranz et al. 2011; Byrne 2012). By October the movement had spread to a multitude of cities across the world, drawing support, in particular from countries that had suffered under the effects of the financial crisis. While the Sydney expression of the movement was marked by its small size, global marginality, and relatively diminished public support, perhaps its more remarkable characteristic was the tenacity with which an emergent core of activists persisted to hold the space for a period of several years.

My involvement in Occupy Sydney began on the day of its launch and continued until around May of 2012. In that time I saw the movement mutate from an initial outburst of populist political energy into a smaller but more cohesive and better-organised network of participants and supporters. At the time of my withdrawal, the space had for some time been transitioning into a dedicated (but unauthorised) homeless-persons' support platform. This occurred predominantly under the direction and design of Lanz Priestly, the most committed and indefatigable of Occupy Sydney participants. Lanz himself was a long-time Indigenous (Māori) homeless activist with activist experience with the New Zealand anti-South African Apartheid movement and Indigenous land rights struggles in Brazil. The final dismantling of the occupation-turned-support hub occurred in 2014, but

only after Lanz was arrested and imprisoned for a short period in Queensland.⁸ As of 2017 the Sydney of City council and New South Wales government continue to wage intermittent removal campaigns against homeless support hubs set up by Lanz in the area of the original Occupy Sydney protest (Brook 2017).

Occupy Sydney was the first protest I can recall being involved in since I participated in the failed anti-Iraq war marches of 2003. While Occupy Sydney itself also failed to actualise the vague and decidedly romantic visions that energised its initial formation, its more subtle and understated impacts continue to offer, in my view, valuable moments of insight. My own participation in Occupy Sydney emerged from the interest I took in what I had seen of the social designing involved in the New York protest. At this point I was a graduate of a design and art education degree program working as a design studies tutor across several local universities. Since the early years of my undergraduate studies I had developed an interest in radical conceptions of design (as) politics thanks, in part, to my reading of Tony Fry's *A New Design Philosophy* (1999). What I saw represented in the photographs and televised snapshots from the New York occupation were forms of creative action oriented towards pragmatic issues of shelter, food, communication, social organisation, police resistance and so on — all of which struck me as a more interesting mode of designing than what was predominantly valued and spoken about in programs I had studied and taught. The time I spent at Occupy Sydney exposed me to a range of ideas, experiences, practices, and processes — both positive and negative — that opened up a new and more politically sophisticated world of understanding, along with connections to social networks of political thought and practice that were hitherto unknown to me.

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⁸ Lanz was picked up on years-old charges while participating in protests related to the Queensland state government's imposition of new anti-biker laws.

One experience from Occupy Sydney that continues to hold poignancy for me and my interests in this study was the opportunity I had to observe and on occasion participate in the political practice of Darren Bloomfield, one of a handful of experienced Aboriginal sovereignty activists who were involved in early days of the Sydney movement. Darren's background included substantial stretches of time spent at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra, as well as a range of Embassy and direct action protests across various sites in Sydney and elsewhere in 'Australia'. While Darren's way of comporting himself in the context of Occupy Sydney was relatively unremarkable in the context of radical Aboriginal sovereignty activism, the manner in which Darren spoke about and enacted his Aboriginal sovereignty — both in the context of a settler dominated movement and in the face of both the police and the magistrates of the local Sydney courts — was something I had never seen or experienced before.⁹ In particular, Darren's simple but persistent rejection of the jurisdiction of New South Wales law on his own conduct brought forth for me a need to re-evaluate a host of foundational assumptions that had been guiding my political (design) thinking and practice up to that point. Darren's way of practicing his Aboriginal sovereignty was always done with skill and awareness of both the risks he was willing to take and the limits he was prepared to push. As such, the expert performativity of Darren's Aboriginal sovereignty enacted a profound intervention into my hitherto unquestioned settler identity.¹⁰

⁹ This view is based on my later marginal participation in Aboriginal protest actions and events, including attendance at the 40th anniversary of the Tent Embassy in Canberra, attendance at various Sydney based protest events, and my marginal participation in the 2015-16 Tent Embassy campaign at 'The Block' in Redfern, Sydney. My point here, to be clear, is that the effect that Darren's practice had on my thinking around the time of Occupy Sydney was a reflection of the relation of his performative expertise to my ignorance and inexperience.

¹⁰ In my experience at Occupy Sydney it was relatively common to observe Darren dismissing the instructions and demands of police on the grounds that the system (ontology) of law that they represented had no jurisdiction over him as an Aboriginal person given that the sovereignty of Aboriginal peoples in 'Australia' had never been ceded to the British Crown (for one recorded example see Yupster2501 2011). This was also a line that Darren also took one time in a brief dispute I observed with a magistrate during one of the many court appearances attended as a consequence of largely unsuccessful efforts by the police to enforce charges against Occupy Sydney activists. In this one example Darren pulled back from the argument at the point at which the magistrate began to gesture towards summoning the court bailiffs and charging Darren with contempt of court. This incident ought to be read, I suggest, as an instance of tactical concession in the face having pushed the terms of settler law towards the act of self-exposing violence upon which it relies. This act stands in contrast to an act of ontological concession in which the law is obeyed out of authentic (if still complex or conflicted) deference to the terms of its authority (for a discussion that

In this capacity, Darren enacted precisely what Geonpul woman and Indigenous studies scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson has describes as the capacity of Indigenous sovereignty to unsettle the terms of settler colonial configurations of colonial entitlement. As Moreton-Robinson writes,

Indigenous belonging challenges the assumption that Australia is postcolonial because our [Indigenous] relation to land, what I conceptualize as an ontological belonging, is omnipresent, and continues to unsettle non-Indigenous belonging based on illegal dispossession. (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.4)

What Darren's political practice brought to the fore in my own thinking was precisely this question of what options I, as a non-Indigenous person, had for dealing with the understanding that my colonially configured sense of being-in-the-world is premised on an oppressive, exploitative, and contested structure of dispossession. In the face of someone who enacted the full meaning of what is at stake in the question of Aboriginal sovereignty — against both the physical and ontological violence of 'Australian' settler colonial designs — a question arose for me as to where I stood in the context of any expression of political practice given that the very grounds of my sense of self and world had been designed by a political ontology that was premised on the negation of Indigenous being-in-the-world (Wolfe 2006; Moreton-Robinson 2015b).

draws a similar distinction on different terms see Arendt 1970; for a valuable critical perspective on the topic of Arendt's anti-Blackness see also Gines 2014). Darren's awareness for the consequences of his actions was further indicated in accounts he gave of the violence he had experienced on the part of the police, particularly in the course of his activism at the Canberra Aboriginal Tent Embassy. The relevance here is that the opposition that Darren performed in the face of the police at Occupy Sydney came from a position of deep and serious perception of what is at stake in the everyday enactment of Aboriginal sovereignty (see Moreton-Robinson (2015b, 2008) for a more thorough elaboration on the ontological performativity of Aboriginal sovereignty).

It is this form of questioning that has continued to guide the path of my thinking and practice since the time of my experiences at Occupy Sydney.¹¹ It is also the form of questioning that underpins and directs the thinking represented in this study. By my intention and interpretation, this is not a mode of questioning that is directed towards recovering a sense of solid ground but, rather, one that looks to cultivate an awareness for the presence and possibility of continuing the process of disclosing-/unsettling the coloniality of design.

0.3 RELATING TO FRY ON UNSETTLEMENT

As indicated above, part of my purpose in recounting these snapshots is to connect elements of my biographical context to my interpretation of unsettlement as a mode of decolonising design. In the following section of this Introduction I bring my interpretation of unsettlement into relation with Fry's original conception (Fry 2012, 2014b).

In Fry's thinking, the concept of 'unsettlement' names the terms of a new epoch of worldly habitation that seems likely to emerge as the complex effects of climate change and other ecological 'feedback' processes take hold and deepen over the course of the twentieth century. Fry's conception of 'unsettlement' can be understood as emanating from the following thought: while humanity at large has survived climate change events of the past — at one point the global population of homo sapiens was reduced to a few thousand — never before has the kind of globally organised systemic dysfunction that characterises the current order been brought into contact with what is predicted to be the most dramatic change to conditions of planetary life in human experience.

¹¹ See the following publications for an indication of the direction and form that my design political thinking has taken since: (Kiem 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2015a, 2015b, 2014, 2013; Mitropoulos & Kiem 2015; Mitropoulos, Verma & Kiem 2015)

Fry's argument here does not suppose that unsettlement is something entirely new to human experience. As Fry suggests, in context of the *longue durée* of human-design configurations, it is *settlement* rather than unsettlement that stands out as the stranger, more anomalous condition. This thought is based in the plethora of human (hi)stories that are written, drawn, weaved, and performed — along with what is inscribed within the archaeological and geological archives — that together describe the time of human planetary existence as an expansive, generative, and responsive flux of formation, disturbance, change, and adaptation. In this sense, it is not so much the question of an 'unsettlement to come' that is of most interest to me so much as the present day scale, expression, and distribution of historic (designed) unsettlements.

Speaking in broad terms, and on the basis of his reading of archaeological and evolutionary theory, Fry proposes that since *Homo sapiens* emerged as a species around 160,000 years ago (via a long process of ontological designing (Fry 2012)) there have been two basic modes or epochs of habitation: nomadism and settlement. For Fry, 'settlement' names a process that begins around 10,000 years ago with the configuration of various processes of technical learning and environmental manipulation (chiefly agriculture) that led to the emergence of the first city, around 7,000 years ago. By Fry's reading, settlement does not mark the disappearance of nomadism as such but, rather, the designing of a mode of living that has continued to expand its material-symbolic force and impact over time. By this account, nomadism is not replaced so much as it is progressively encroached upon and displaced to the margins of settlement designs (see Chapter 4 for my more detailed analysis of the concept of marginality).

In contrast to settlement, Fry's conception of unsettlement names an age and process in which the materially intensive designs of the settlement mode of inhabitation begin to break down, fragment, and unravel. By Fry's account, the unsettlement of settlement looks set to arrive as a consequence of the inability of settlement designs to cope with the rapid, systemic, and broad-scale impact of climate change. While the impact of climate change plays a key role in Fry's conception of unsettlement, Fry's sense for the relational significance of 'climate' change reflects an understanding that moves beyond the

restricted designs of a rationalist metaphysics (see Chapter 2 for my more detailed discussion of metaphysical designs). Rather, by Fry's reading, the event of climate change is situated in relation to already existing crises of bio-physical reproduction, including resource limits (energy, minerals, and water), biodiversity depletion, and nutrient cycle disruptions. By this reading, Fry argues that the relational impact of unsettlement will register not simply as changes to weather patterns but, rather, as a multiplicity of unknowable shifts and ruptures within the mode of settlement designing. As Fry goes on to suggest, the relational designing of these ruptures will eventually materialise as novel geo-political-/socio-technical orders that encompass a new configuration of political designing, including new regimes of conflict, warring, and population control. In the midst of such complexity, Fry insists that, by his reading, unsettlement is not something that could ever belong to the authority of any one perspective or frame of reference. The actuality of unsettlement, as Fry puts it, "may have very little in common to the way it is represented" (Fry 2012, p.205).

0.3.1 DISCLOSING UNSETTLEMENT AS EXPERIENCE DESIGNING

Fry stresses that his conception of unsettlement is not intended to imply an epochal shift into the modes of nomadism that existed before settlement. By the same token, however, Fry argues that it is impossible to imagine that the rationalist designs of capitalist 'development' could remain unaffected by relational designing of unsettlement (cf. Fry 2005b). As Fry puts it, "Certainly, we cannot return to being nomads, but equally we cannot survive as sedentary in even larger and denser cities that simply amplify our vulnerability to both extreme weather events and conflict" (Fry 2012, p.119).

In addition to the bio-physical and socio-technical dimension of unsettlement, Fry states that unsettlement ought to be conceptualised in experiential terms: "events fuel the feeling of unsettlement, both for people directly affected and for observers, the very nature of human psychology will start to change" (Fry 2012, p.182). Fry's conception of unsettlement-as-feeling indexes his sense for the affective designs of events, an idea that

encompasses both the ways in which events are perceived and — or, more to the point, *as* the ways in which sense is made (designed) of them. Here Fry's argument resonates closely with my snapshot account of the performativity of the tele-visual designs of the World Trade Center attacks (Fry 1993). To expand on the designing of such affective relations, it is useful to observe the significance of the attacks in the context of 1) the shock of the collapse of a presupposed — and evidently unwarranted — sense of US invulnerability, 2) the import of the attacks themselves being targeted at several of the major centres of global (colonial) financial and military power, 3) the racist geo-political designs of the modern/colonial system of international law (see my discussions in Chapters 4 and 5), and 4) the directive configuration of the tele-visual as a design always already disposed as an infrastructure of war (Baudrillard 2012; Virilio 2009; Fry 1993, 1999). With these factors in mind, the logic of Fry's conception of the 'feeling of unsettlement' can be seen in the manner by which the relational designing of the World Trade Center attacks (as image-/sense) precipitated a plunge on the part of the US and its allies (Australian included) into the violence and destruction of the Afghanistan and Iraqi wars — imperial designs that, while being overwhelmingly disproportionate *vis-à-vis* the World Trade Center attacks, were nevertheless still amenable to the capitalist logic of profit extraction (Weigley 2013). Living now in the fallout of the 2007 financial crisis, the Syrian war, 'Brexit', the election of Donald Trump as US president etc etc., it is not hard, I suggest, to garner a concrete appreciation for Fry's conception of the experiential designs of unsettlement.

Thus, in the mood of my unsettled sense for Fry's conception of 'unsettlement', I propose the image of a decolonial mode of thinking and-/as designing as the guiding design of this thesis. As such, my intention in the chapters to come is to reconfigure the relational designing of unsettlement at large as a design for disclosing — on decolonial terms — the core violence of unsettlement.

0.4 ON THE DESIGNING OF ZERO POINT EPISTEMOLOGY

By my reading of Fry, the conceptual designing of ‘unsettlement’ shares nothing in common with a misplaced reverence or nostalgia for the (colonial) designing of settlement. This point acknowledges the history of what decolonial theorists refer to as *coloniality at large* (Moraña, Dussel & Jáuregui 2008). According to decolonial thinkers, ‘coloniality’ — also expressed as the ‘*coloniality of power*’ or the ‘*colonial matrix of power*’ — refers to the historical-/structural designing of a globalised system of colonial power relations that is directed towards configuring lifeworlds according to zero point designs, alias the identity politics of bourgeois, ‘Western’, male, Christian, heterosexual supremacy (Wynter 2003; Castro-Gómez 2007; Lugones 2007; Mignolo 2011).¹² Within ‘our’ irreducibly plural experiences of the here-and-now, as Deborah Bird Rose has put it, this order is in crisis, which is not necessarily to say that it is at an end (Rose 1996).

Against this background, the question I bring to the concept of unsettlement is not simply how to respond to the unsettlement of an existing order but, rather, *how to do so in a way that gives life, energy, and direction to (desired) alternatives to zero point designs*. Such alternatives *qua* desired would be directed and configuring by designs of relational plurality that redirect the impulse to recoil into the reactive and joyless affects of the zero point.¹³ Thus, while unsettlement bodes an intensification of fears, anxiety, and violence, my argument here is that ‘our’ options for thinking and responding to this condition are not limited to the imaginary of catastrophe, apocalypse, eschatology, or nihilism; these being the self-reinforcing tropes of the modern/colonial zero point. As Angela Mitropoulos once put it, the shields that ‘we’ create to outlast the danger need not become a fortress set against the world (Mitropoulos 2006a).

¹² On this point see also Angela Mitropoulos’ relational concept of *oikonomia*, defined as “the nexus of race, gender, class, sexuality and nation constituted through the premise of the properly productive household” (Mitropoulos 2012, p.28).

¹³ On the meaning of ‘reactive’ and ‘joyless’ affects see Nietzsche (2009), Deleuze (Deleuze 1983, 2001b, 2001a), Sedgwick (2003), and Berlant (2011).

0.4.1 UNSETTLEMENT AS SUSTAINMENT

My inquiry questions what decoloniality means as an option for expressing what Fry has otherwise called ‘Sustainment’. Here I take Sustainment to mean a way of being or becoming — in all ‘our’ interdependent differences — that is able to sustain rather than destroy the generative relations of plurality that the configure possibilities for life and enjoyment. The idea of Sustainment calls for a decidedly political distinction to be made between designs that increase ‘our’ ability to sustain and enact relational plurality versus the chronophic, anti-relational designs of the zero point.¹⁴ In succinct terms, part of my argument in this study is that the most ethical response to both enacting a politics of Sustainment and-/ as a response to unsettlement at large is to adopt the decolonial strategy of designing (for) the unsettlement of the zero point. The imperative that lies at the core of Fry’s conception of ‘unsettlement’ is a desire to enact a disruption¹⁵ (unsettlement) of the restrictive¹⁶ designs of the zero point by way of the generative designs of relational plurality. This is the argument that I bring to Fry’s concept of unsettlement in this study — one that I believe Fry implies in different but somewhat less explicit terms.¹⁷

¹⁴ On the concept of ‘chronophobia’ see Fry’s *Becoming Human by Design* (2012).

¹⁵ On my sense for the term ‘disruption’ see the work of Angela Mitropoulos on risk management and supply chain activism (Mitropoulos 2006a, 2011, 2015a; Mitropoulos & Kiem 2015; Mitropoulos & O’Brien 2017). See also my discussion in the later part of this Introduction on my experiences working with the xBorder network.

¹⁶ For more on my sense for the meaning of ‘restricted’ in this context see Fry’s writing on George Batailles’ concept of the ‘restricted economy’, particularly this passage from Fry’s ‘Aeonic Economy’:

The ‘restrictive’ economy can be taken as the identity of a rationalist, productivist and iconic system of ‘mastery’ that seeks (but always fails) to command and employ the resources ‘of nature’ by turning them into commodities that meet the utility and, in consumerist biased capitalism, symbolic needs of a market. (Fry 1994a, p.160)

¹⁷ The problem that I am interested in is expressed, I suggest, in what Fry refers to as “a destabilization of the conceptual foundations of modern existence” (Fry 2012, p.22).

As both Mignolo and Norman Sheehan have argued, the project of unsettling the zero point has been in play since the first moments of its emergence (Mignolo 1995, 2011; Sheehan 2004). In this sense, the movement of relational plurality as a whole is not contingent on the thinking I express here (Mitropoulos 2006b). With this thought in mind, the contribution to decolonial thinking-/designing that I look to make with this thesis is the disclosure — on decolonial terms — of a way to enact a designerly unsettling, redirection, and unravelling of zero point designs in favour of designs for relational plurality.

0.4.2 RELATIONAL READING AS A METHODOLOGY FOR UNSETTLING THE ZERO POINT

To provide a provisional image of what “unsettling the zero point” means I suggest that my thesis here is an effort to think decoloniality about — and as such disrupt — the designs of the zero point by means of a critical investigation into my own ‘disciplinary’ and ‘hermeneutic’ investments in the coloniality of design (for more on the meaning of ‘disciplinary’ and ‘hermeneutic’ investments see my discussion of Mignolo’s ‘Afterword’ in Chapter 3). Working from the premise that the configurations of zero point epistemology have already been designed into-/as my way of being-in-the-world, I suggest that the possibility of disrupting and unravelling zero point configurations is a questions of amplifying the resonance of designs for relational plurality.

Simply put, the task I have set for myself in this thesis is to understand and learn from ways of thinking whose value and significance is denied, marginalised, ignored, undermined, and erased by the restrictive designs of the zero point. In the terms of what Walter Mignolo (2011), Franz Fanon (1967, 1970), Gloria Anzaldúa (2002), Norman Sheehan (2004, 2011), Deborah Bird Rose (2004, 2011) and others have said concerning the ethic of decolonisation, my task is not to configure novel forms of obliteration¹⁸ but,

¹⁸ This is, to me, and in the context of the analysis to follow, the significance of aphorism 146 in Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* (2003, p.102):

He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.

rather, to think (design) in ways that unsettle the terms of the zero point epistemology to a point of drawing the integrity of its self-image into confusion and-/or receptiveness to the designs of relational plurality.¹⁹ In this sense, my design for this study is to practice a relational methodology of reading across and, as such, *becoming designed by*, the designs of decolonial thinking (see Chapter 1 for my more detailed discussion on ‘relationality.’

0.5 WHERE THIS STUDY CAME FROM AND HOW TO READ IT

My intention with this study is to configure a (not *the*) design for disclosing the core violence of the coloniality of design. The methodology of my approach is informed and directed by the designs of relational plurality as materialised across a multiplicity of texts

¹⁹ My sense for the political (designing) import of ‘chaos’ and ‘confusion’ comes from Angela Mitropoulos (2012, 2017c; Mitropoulos, Verma & Kiem 2015), Sun Tzu (1910), and François Jullien’s (1995) reading of Sun Tzu (see my discussion on ‘relationality’ in Chapter 1). Regarding Sun Tzu (1910), one of the more relevant passages comes from his writing on ‘energy’ (兵勢):

Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy; masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

By my reading, the import of these ideas is that, from the perspective of zero point epistemology, the designs of relational plurality appear as chaotic, unsettling, confusing, and evil (see also Carl Schmitt’s (2005, p.53) reading of ‘anarchism’ from the perspective of the “Counter Revolutionary Philosophy of the State”). By contrast, my guide to what relational plurality means and designs from the perspective of decolonial thinking follows Anzaldúa’s (2002, p.575) expression in *This Bridge We Call Home*:

[...] may we honor other people’s feelings
 respect their anger, sadness, grief, joy as we do ‘our’ own
 Though we tremble before uncertain futures
 may we meet illness, death and adversity with strength
 may we dance in the face of ‘our’ fears.

and-/as experiences. The personal or biographical²⁰ impetus for this work comes from a desire to make my interest in design, design theory, and politics relevant to the meaning and imperatives of decolonisation. By my reading, these imperatives are integral to Fry's concept of 'Sustainment.'

My enacting of this design in the writing of this thesis has involved reading, thinking, and writing with and across the ideas of three major influences: decolonial thinking, as represented most predominantly in the work of Walter D. Mignolo (2011, 1995, 2000); theories of ontological designing, as represented here most predominantly in the works of Tony Fry and Anne-Marie Willis (Fry 2012, 2011, 1999; Willis 2007); and the 'post-autonomist' Marxism of Angela Mitropoulos (Mitropoulos 2016b, 2015a, 2012, 2006b). Of these three, the work of Fry and Mignolo occupy the bulk of the theoretical analysis presented. Concerning the chapters that follow, while I have not enacted a direct or extensive reading of Mitropoulos' ideas in the same manner as Mignolo, Fry, and Willis, I nevertheless consider the influence of Mitropoulos' thinking — in particular her concept of *oikonomia*, her critique of nationalism, her analysis of the material force of affect, and her method of reading the historical de/re/formations of the terms of capitalist futurity (Mitropoulos 2012) — as essential to the reconfiguration of my own thinking throughout the time and in the performance of this study.

The relatively understated representation of Mitropoulos' work in this study — one which belies its influence — is a reflection of the fact that the initial design was directed at coming to terms with the ways in which theories of ontological designing and decolonial thinking both affirm and challenge each other's aims, objectives, methods, and philosophical presuppositions. This was a process of thought that began with my experiences at Occupy Sydney detailed above, and which took on a tangible focus following a suggestion to me by Tony Fry in 2012 that I look into Mignolo's writing on decolonial thinking. The influence of Mitropoulos' thinking, by contrast, emerged on

²⁰ For a discussion on the place of biography in decolonial thought see my reference to Moreton-Robinson's analysis of Aboriginal women's 'life writings' in Chapter 2, as well as my analysis of Walter D. Mignolo's concept of the 'locus of enunciation' in Chapter 3.

different terms. This process began in February of 2014 when I became involved in a boycott campaign against the 19th Biennale of Sydney regarding its sponsorship by Transfield Services, a company who were at that point the largest contractor within the ‘Australian’ government’s asylum seeker detention system.²¹

My participation in this campaign involved periods of working closely with Mitropoulos and her ideas as part of the xBorder anti-border activist network. Throughout the course of the Biennale boycott and several subsequent campaigns, I was encouraged by Mitropoulos and other organisers involved in xBorder to consider ‘borders’ not as a problem ‘out there’ or at the edge of political significance but, on the contrary, as a condition that shapes the very terms and experience of political thinking and practice (Mitropoulos 2007, 2003a).²² One of the key lessons learnt through my work with xBorder was that a politics of border (zero point) disruption and divestment is one that reaches into the question of what you are affected by (what you are or are not attached to or invested in) and how such configurations of affect and identification are re-/produced within and throughout normalisation of zero point epistemology. Border abolition and divestment is, in this sense, precisely a question of relinquishing attachments to futures and identities that are — in awareness or not — premised on an *oikonomic* configuration of the power to delineate who is or is not worthy of help, care, protection, safety, and attachment.

By my reading, I suggest that elements of this idea of designing of one’s affective investments can already be found across the existing body of work on ontological design

²¹ Details of this ultimately successful campaign are documented in Joanna Warsza’s reader on contemporary art, *I Can’t Work Like This* (Warsza 2017, p.258–323). See also the archives of the xBorder Operational Matter blog, xborderoperationalmatters.wordpress.com.

²² xBorder was established in Melbourne, ‘Australia’ in 1999. Through its initial formation it was involved in advocating cross-border solidarity actions at the S11 (World Economic Forum) protests of 2000, and organising support for the Woomera detention centre protests and breakouts in 2001. xBorder Operational matters was launched as a boycott, divestment, and disruption support portal in late 2013 in response to a new phase of border militarisation on the part of the ‘Australian’ government. For information on the first iteration of xBorder see the archive version of the website stored at Wayback Machine (<https://web.archive.org/web/20000816082218/http://www.antimedia.net:80/xborder/>). For the more recent iteration see xborderoperationalmatters.wordpress.com

and decolonial thinking. Willis, for instance, describes the experience of working with Fry and others at the EcoDesign Foundation as one in which “We opened ourselves to ontological designing, allowing it to design our thinking and to design with it” (Willis 2007, p.95, n.2). A sensitivity to the inextricable relation between the terms of discussion and its content is likewise a key element of Mignolo’s thought. That said, I am of no doubt that (the designing of) my experience of working with xBorder and Mitropoulos played an integral part in my learning to discern the presence and significance of this dynamic, and in way that was of immediate practical (designing) import. These comments do not account for everything that I learnt as part of working with xBorder but they do describe a key vector of unsettlement that both animates and challenges the thinking that I enact in the proceeding chapters.

Concerning my conception of relational plurality, it should be noted that, by my reading, there is nothing within my configuration of Fry’s, Willis’, Mignolo’s, and Mitropoulos’ thinking that lends itself towards easy synthesis, simple resolution, or total consummation. Moreover, in the context of the decolonial designs of this study, I consider the relational plurality of such thinking to be both a challenging and rewarding stimulus to a mode of (relational) reading that discloses the significance, legitimacy, and pleasure of ontological difference, multiplicity, and relationality. This mode of reading stands in contrast to efforts that are directed at enacting familiar (*oikonomic*) forms of reduction (on this issue see Sedgwick 2003). By my reading, it strikes me that the only quality that each of these thinkers share in common is a committed refusal of the terms of such conflationary and reductive gestures. To put this another way, while the works of each of these thinkers’ functions as a force of unsettlement, each of the texts, arguments, and concepts that I engage with in the chapters to come are in each case the products and designs of different experiences, influences, dispositions, and intents. As such there is neither an agreement nor departure among them that operates without disjuncture or remainder.²³ This very thought is itself materialised in resonant concepts of differing

²³ See for instance the dialogue between Fry, Katantidou, and Mignolo in *Design in the Borderlands* (Fry, Kalantidou & Mignolo 2014).

origin, inflection, and determination, including Fry's (2005a) 'commonality-in-difference', Mignolo's (2000) 'border thinking' and 'pluritopic hermeneutics', and Mitropoulos' (2016b) 'infrastructures of uncommon forms'. It is to this relational configuration, and in light of its designs, that I bring the concept of 'relational plurality.'

The matter of thinking with these and other key works — here I have in mind especially the writing of Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2000, 2008, 2015b), Norman Sheehan (2004, 2011), Deborah Bird Rose (1996, 2004), Ghassan Hage (2000, 2017), Frantz Fanon (1967, 1970), Gloria Anzaldúa (1999, 2002), and Cheryl Harris (1993) — has been an experience of moving within and across irreducibly different moods of resonance, variable atmospheres, and mixed landscapes.²⁴ What emerges from this process is an awareness of the need to read with care and rigor for, on the one hand, the manner and context in which texts — the designerly materialisations of thought — are configured towards certain ends, and, on the other, the manner in which every text is a design that designs its reader.²⁵ This is one of the emergent insights of this study, one that I have done my best to practice in the process of my own writing.

²⁴ My expression here invokes ideas and images from the works of Norman Sheehan (2011), Levinas (Kearney & Levinas 1984), and Deleuze and Guattari (1996).

²⁵ For an argument concerning the ontological designing of texts see Fry's 'China vs China: conflict and translation' (2014a). Two passages are of particular relevance:

All performative objects arrive out of, and carry, a theory of knowledge and functional intent, which is to say that design objects and their technologies are epistemological inscribed. (p. 24)

[...] texts are not consumed, rather they produce in the act of reading (p. 27)

See also the section 'Guided Reading' in the Introduction to *A New Design Philosophy* (Fry 1999) and Mitropoulos on the politics of authorship and the material labour/efficacy of writing (Mitropoulos 2013). In the introduction to *Contract & Contagion* Mitropoulos also offers a valuable description of reading the of texts in history:

texts of read and rewritten, by myself and others, in the preoccupations of the present, their significances amplified and translated in the aftermath of the discontinuities of centuries. (Mitropoulos 2012, p.9)

On writing-/design as the materialisation of thought see Thomas Wendt's comments on the notion of design as "doing philosophy with your hands", as derived from Cameron Tonkinwise via Allan Chochinov (Wendt 2015, p.6). See also Tonkinwise's brief but evocative account of theory as "think-writing" in

0.6 THESIS OUTLINE

The thinking that configures and animates this study has been designed towards disclosing the meaning, structures, and core violence of the coloniality of design. In its structure, the general course of this study unfolds in two movements. The first is a shifting process of reading ontological designing in light of coloniality and coloniality in light of ontological designing. The result of this double reading is a provisional conception of the ‘coloniality of design’. The second movement of this study involves turning from the process of enacting my interpretation of the coloniality of design to a process of enacting an interpretation of the onto-colonial designing of ‘Australia’ specifically and settler colonialism in general. The methodology that designs and directs my reading within and across these movements can be summarised as the ontological designing of relationality (see Chapter 1 for my explication of both ‘ontological designing’ and ‘relationality’). As I argue in the Chapter 5, the final result of this process is my claim that the core violence of the coloniality of design manifests as a *metaphysics of nihilism*, alias *anti-relational designing*, or, following Maldonado-Torres (2007), *the coloniality of being*.

Chapter 1 is devoted to explicating the concepts of ‘ontological designing’, ‘decolonial thinking’, and ‘relationality’. My approach at this point is to explicate these concepts in (relatively) discrete terms as part of a preliminary set up to my more overt relational reading throughout the subsequent chapters. In my reading of ‘ontological designing’ I argue that contemporary discourses of design — both as a practice and field of academic inquiry — have been configured by the rationalist designs of the zero point to disclose ‘design’ as a transferable skill or profession in service of the capitalist mode of reproduction. In this light, I argue that theorists of ontological designing offer a radical critique of the rationalist foundations of ‘design discourse’ that configures ‘design’ as a more expansive and relationally conceived political-/directive force.

‘Redesigning Theory: The Art of Making Real the Counter-Factual in the Indecent Institution’(2006) The insight at stake here is an inversion of Wendt’s otherwise felicitous summation, i.e. that *theory* involves the enactment of *design* through the body just as design too enacts theory.

In Chapter 2 I turn to a critical examination of the philosophical underpinnings of ontological designing in order to enact a process of reading design in light of coloniality. My intention in this chapter is to provide a critical examination of philosophical configurations of ontological designing; namely, the work of Martin Heidegger. Here my purpose is to confront the question of Heidegger's fascist political ontology as a design that configures the enactment of colonially normative interpretations of design. In the later part of this chapter I turn to Tina Chanter and Dorothy Leland's feminist-/decolonial readings of Heidegger as a means to disclose alternative configurations and directions for theorising ontological designing.

In Chapter 3 I turn to reading coloniality in light of ontological designing. My purpose in this chapter is to provide a reading of Mignolo's conception of the *coloniality of knowledge* and the *locus of enunciation*. My argument in this chapter is that Mignolo's theory offers a distinctly designerly interpretation of the coloniality of knowledge. An additional objective of this chapter is to observe the relation between Mignolo's experience of the coloniality of knowledge-/power and what I describe as his mode of 'generative critique'. My argument in this respect is that Mignolo's conception of the coloniality of knowledge is designed by his interest in configuring concepts that name and, as such, bring to light the experience of the *colonial difference*. By my reading, the relation between Mignolo's lived experiences and his concept of the 'locus of enunciation' and '*image of the real*' together help to clarify the structure of the coloniality of design as configuration to impose the rationalist designs of the zero point upon a condition of relational plurality. At this point I provide a provisional interpretation of the structure of this imposition as anti-relational designing, or, the core violence of the coloniality of design. Following Mitropoulos and Arturo Escobar, my argument here is that, notwithstanding the (ontological) violence of zero point designing, the condition of relational plurality is one that continues to configure and generate difference despite, beyond, and autonomously to the zero point. In this sense, the skill of configuring the designs of relational plurality is disclosed as a key strategy of responding to the unsettlement of coloniality.

In Chapter 4 I shift to analysing 'Australia' as an expression of the coloniality of design. My approach here is to provide a reading of early work by Fry on the question and

experience of 'marginality', and Willis on the concept of 'nation as image.' Concerning the question of marginality I argue that, while 'Australia', 'Australian' identity, and 'Australian design' have been configured as relatively marginal with respect to zero point epistemology, acknowledging and responding to the specific import of white settler nationalism is an essential task of thinking through (and against) the onto-colonial designing of 'Australia.' Concerning the question of nationalism, I argue that Willis' concept of the 'nation as image' helps to disclose some of the designerly terms of what Ghassan Hage has theorised as the 'white nationalist governmental imaginary.' In light of Hages' theory of the (anti-)relational designing of a racialised sense of belonging and entitlement, I bring the ideas of Moreton-Robinson, Harris, and Mitropoulos concerning 'whiteness as property.' In doing so I note Moreton-Robinson's provocation to think through and, as such, reconfigure the terms of white 'Australian' settler colonialism. As a set up for my thinking in Chapter 5, I conclude Chapter 4 with a critical reading of Ann Stoler's account of 'colony as design' that is designed to disclose the radical implications of the concept of the coloniality of design.

In Chapter 5 I engage in a relational reading of the onto-colonial designing of settler colonialism. My approach in this chapter is to trace shifting configurations of colonial knowledge from the event of the European Christian invasion of the Americas in the sixteenth century to the British invasion of Cadigal country (the present location of the city of Sydney) in the late eighteenth century. The purpose of my design in this chapter is to disclose ontological designing of the coloniality of being as a key configuration of the coloniality of design. Through my process of interpreting the coloniality of being as the ontological designing of non-being (lack) across the designs of the Spanish Renaissance jurist Francisco Vitoria, seventeenth century writings of Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius, and the colonial thinking of early English 'Enlightenment' thinkers, I arrive at my final claim that the coloniality of design manifests as a metaphysics of nihilism.

In the Conclusion I review the course of thinking presented in the preceding chapters and summarise the major arguments and findings of this study.

CHAPTER 1 |

A FIRST PASS ON ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING, COLONIALITY, AND RELATIONALITY

The question of designing is always an ontological question, which is a question of what it does in the ways that it acts. (Fry 1999, p.5)

Coloniality, then, is still the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed. It doesn't exhaust, obviously, the conditions nor the modes of exploitation and domination between peoples. But it hasn't ceased to be, for 500 years, their main framework. (Quijano 2007, p.171)

1.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I take a provisional look at the concepts of *ontological designing*, *coloniality*, and *relationality*. My intention with first two of these concepts is to provide an initial overview of where they have come from and what they look like. In this capacity, while I discuss both ontological designing and coloniality are discussed separately and on their own terms, I do so in anticipation of more in-

depth readings in Chapters 2 and 3. In constructing the overview of ontological designing I have sought to contextualise its emergence as a response to the formation of design studies as an academic discipline that is orientated by a restrictive, rationalist perspective on what design is and does. The separate overviews of ontological designing and coloniality are followed by a discussion of relationality, a concept that I use to inform my process of reading and thinking across texts and other designs. Here the concept of relationality performs the role of helping me to think through the question of attachment and affect while at the same time standing as a conceptual resource for navigating the experience of unsettlement. In this sense my way of reading the concept of relationality is intended to disclose a mode of thinking that designs a more consciously embodied, flexible, and patient openness to the presence of difference, complexity, and uncertainty. Relational thinking thus acts as a guide towards drawing out the connections and resonances between the texts and contexts of ontological designing, decolonial thinking, and my own interest in understanding the ontological designing of settler colonialism.

1.1 ON THE ORIGINS OF THE QUESTION OF DESIGN

The question of design as it is encountered in ‘design studies’ is the product of a set of discourses — originating predominately from the industrialised ‘West’ — that were assembled and elevated to the status of scholarly theoretical interest in the context of the shifting composition of twentieth century industrial capitalism. In my overview of the emergence and configuration of ‘design’, I work with a distinction between ontological designing — that is, of design as decision and direction embedded in things that relationally constitute the grounds of ‘our’ understanding (Fry 2008) — and ‘design discourse’, ‘design studies’, or ‘design theory’ as a historically specific and politically consequential project of representing what design is and does. Following Tony Fry’s account, my argument is that ‘design studies’ emerges in the context of the already existing medium of

design as a form of ‘meta-designing’; that is, as a way of giving a particular meaning and direction to the way in which design is conceived and practiced (Fry 1988, p.17). Put differently, the view I take here is that design is a non-neutral directional force in operation prior to, beyond, and within its construction as an object of academic study (Fry 2012). The context for the emergence of the question of design is thus the designing agency of the already designed. In this sense, what ‘design studies’ engages as the question of design is a reflection of an ontology that was brought into being via the agency of design, an agency that is itself conditioned by the meta-designing of ‘design studies’.

Two of the defining features of the design discourse that helps to distinguish it from ontological designing (as process) and provide a sense for the politics at stake is the influence of what Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores have called the ‘rationalistic tradition’ and a deep complicity in the capitalist mode of social reproduction. As Fry describes it:

All modern notions of design are products of the rise of post-Enlightenment reason. Design’s development is inseparable from the attempt to rationally order the world, to command ‘nature’. The context for such development was the rise of an internal logic of an economic system — the capitalist mode of production. At its crudest, capitalism was developed by design and it developed design, as we know it, in this process. (Fry 1988, p.17)

With this in mind, the question of ‘design’ becomes not simply a question of what design ‘is’ but, rather, a question of how ‘our’ understanding of design has been designed and, further, how this understanding provides a certain direction to what design designs.

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Design began to take form as an explicit object of discourse and identity in the context of the industrial revolution in Europe around the mid-eighteenth century. Prior to this event design activity operated predominantly as an embedded dimension of craft or artisan type work. While the activity and agency of designing was always present, 'design' itself was experienced as a dimension of existing practices rather than a stand-alone skill or profession. In pre-industrial contexts, the meaning of design was defined by the work of dealing with situated aesthetic, instrumental, and organisational questions, rather than a meta-concept that could travel across different contexts.

As industrialisation took hold, the division of labour played a role in the process by which the work of prefiguration and planning was identified, isolated, and divided from other forms of labour within the production process. As Fry puts it, by the 1820s "design activity was being taken out of the heads and hands of craftworkers and made a form of mental labour, a specialisation, in its own right" (Fry 1988, p.17). For Fry this process of specialisation marked the beginning of formal design education within Europe and the transformation of the faculty of imagination into a market driven productivist force. In this context the power of prefiguration came to be viewed as both an object of improvement and a commodity of exchange (Fry 1988, p.18).

By the twentieth century, both the growing complexity of industrialisation and the problem of overproduction intersected with a recognition that design could be a powerful means of influencing consumption habits and other behaviours from which profit could be extracted. The question of 'design' gained coherence as it was increasingly recognised and understood as a means of stimulating the circulation of capital (Fry 1999, p.59–170). By the 1960s, design had gained enough standing and recognition as a specialised form of intellectual labour to become an object of inquiry within the university context. Shifting to the contemporary moment, 'design' continues to be viewed as an important and highly valued

component of the capitalist mode of social reproduction. As a February 2017 article in WIRED argued,

Design is still having a moment. Since 2004, corporations like Accenture, Capital One, and Deloitte have scooped up more than 71 independent design consultancies, with 50 of those multi-million dollar talent grabs happening in the past two years. Meanwhile business schools, starting with the Yale School of Management, have begun adding design classes to their core curriculum. Companies like McKinsey and IBM have promoted designers to the top level of management, an acknowledgment that design has, in many ways already proven itself. (Stinson 2017)

The narrative that I have presented so far suggests that design discourse has the currency it does today because of how useful it has been to sustaining the political economy of late twentieth and early twenty-first century capitalism. While I do not mean to suggest that the value of design studies can be reduced to this function, what I do mean to highlight is the manner in which the meta-designing of design discourse operates beyond the stated objectives of design theorists. The point, in short, is that the question of ‘design’ was not developed on disinterested terms and nor did it enter into the field of academic discourse without a systemically prefigured sense of identity and purpose. To this picture I would add the related problem of how design was conceived in the process of its elevation to a university discipline. In this case, one of the arguments made by theorists of ontological designing is that many approaches to theorising design continue to operate under the influence of both instrumentalism (linear means-ends thinking) and aestheticism (a metaphysical conception of beauty¹). Together both instrumentalism and aestheticism can be understood as expressions of what

¹ For an analysis of the problem of standard theories of aesthetics and an argument for an alternative conception see Cameron Tonkinwise’s “Beauty-in-Use” (2004).

Winograd and Flores have named the *rationalist tradition*, the meaning and limits of which I will examine in more detail below.

A second point to add to this argument concerning the origins of design discourse concerns the possibility of change. While the question of design was pulled into coherence (designed) under a particular set of conditions, the possibility of moving the question of design in a more 'progressive' direction rests on the assumption that the prefiguration of the question of design does not determine all that can be said about it. What I am suggesting here is that despite the fact that the question of design has been drawn into existence on problematic terms, its arrival presents 'us' with an opportunity to develop (design) politicised alternatives. The point here is somewhat equivalent to the idea of modifying a tool towards an unintended end, or of retrofitting a building to suit a different need from its original purpose. This point follows arguments made by design theorists such as Fry and Anne-Marie Willis who assert that while it is vitally important to confront the manner in which design theory was brought together as an assemblage of prefigured and prefiguring discourses, this dynamic does not imply a fixed or circumscribed limit to the directional politics of design theory.

Fry and Willis push this point further, arguing that the response at large from design theorists has generally failed to grasp design's most radical implications; namely, that design is as much a question of how 'we' ourselves are designed by what 'we' design (Fry 2008; Willis 2007). In Fry and Willis' terms, one of the limits of design theory has been a failure to conceptualise design as an agent of ontological transformation and futural direction. In this sense, the meta-designing of design studies has had the effect of undermining the ability of practitioners and theorists to conceptualise the significance of design beyond the terms of a commoditised service within the capitalist mode of production. What 'design studies' designs, therefore, is a circumscribed sense for what design is, of how its agency in configuring ways of being can be read, and of how this knowledge can be directed towards the development of alternative political projects.

This critique of design studies forms the basis upon which I propose to develop an understanding of the coloniality of design; namely, as a force that configures and sustains coloniality as an ontological condition both within and beyond the terms of design studies.

1.1.1 DESIGN WITHIN THE RATIONALIST TRADITION

Theoretical discourse on design entered the academy at a moment in which the advanced industrial economies of Europe and America were in the process of shifting towards service-centred economies. It was in this context that design was identified as a hitherto underappreciated source of value within the industrial division of labour, most particularly as a mechanism for engineering desire and the perception of value (Andrews 2009).

As I mentioned above, the theoretical discourse of design initially developed on a largely instrumentalist basis in service of capitalist production and consumption. An early but still influential example of such work was Herbert Simon's *Sciences of the Artificial* (1969).² In this text, Simon dedicates a chapter to a discussion of design that continues to be influential in how design is understood within design studies. Here Simon speaks of design as a profoundly important but largely misunderstood area of professional activity. Design, as he defines it, relates to devising "courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones" (Simon 1996, p.111). In doing so, Simon identifies design as a generalised skill that — despite its marginal status within the tradition of academic study — is an otherwise integral skill within every domain of human practice. In explaining this point Simon goes on to say that,

² For a useful background and context on Simon's work, including the influence of his time at the US RAND Corporation military think tank, see DJ Huppertz's "Revisiting Herbert Simon's "Science of Design"" (Huppertz 2015).

The intellectual activity that produces material artifacts is no different fundamentally from the one that prescribes remedies for a sick patient or the one that devises a new sales plan for a company or a social welfare policy for a state. Design, so construed, is the core of all professional training; it is the principal mark that distinguishes the professions from the sciences. (Simon 1996, p.111)

Simon reads the distinctiveness of design against its misrecognition and devaluation with respect to the sciences, criticising how the curricula of professional courses in engineering, medicine, and business in the post-Second World War era became overloaded with the content and detached mode of thinking of the natural sciences. The need to develop an understanding of the skills and knowledge that were particular to ‘devising courses of action’ was in effect sidelined by the more dominant and well-established tradition of scientific understanding. What Simon touches upon here was an important difference between explaining reality as a scientific object — a mode of thinking orientated by a desire for truth — as compared with a mode of thinking orientated by the subjunctive mood or the question of what can be imagined and brought into being.³

Simon’s response to the under-theorised significance of design was to rationalise it, to turn the activity of designing into the object of a new science: the ‘science of design’. The task of this science was to deliver what Anne-Marie Willis describes as a ‘transportable technique’, an objectification of the act of ‘devising courses of action’ which could be represented, optimised, taught, and eventually marketed across a range of professional contexts (Willis 2007, p.94).

³ See Chapter 4 for a critical analysis of what it means to think about design through the concept of the subjunctive mood.

By identifying and elaborating on the meaning of design, Simon helped to delineate (in rationalistic terms) the distinctiveness of design with respect to the already existing domains of academic research. Simon's claims about design were but one of many similar ideas that appeared at this time. His work can thus be situated within a wider movement across the industrialised centres of the 'Global North' that facilitated the arrival of design as an object of intellectual inquiry. Simon's contemporaries included, for instance, writers such as John Chris Jones (1992), Christopher Alexander (1964) and others who were involved at various stages in the Design Methods movement in Britain in the early part of the 1960s. The work of Simon, Jones and Alexander can be read as both an expression of and a contributing response to the global reorganisation of capitalism following the Second World War. While Simon was aware enough to sense the significance of design, his interest in rationalising it played into and extended the desire to bring design under control, to systematise it, and to render it manageable within the terms of the existing political-economic order.

Under the influence of these early theorists design continued to gain momentum as an object of theoretical inquiry. In 1973, Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber presented a challenge to 'scientific' understandings of design by arguing for a distinction between 'tame' or well-defined problems of scientific research and the 'wicked' or dynamic problems that confronted designers, a move that addressed some of the limits of Simon's assumptions about the nature of design problems (Rittel & Webber 1973). In the 1980s, Nigel Cross and Bryan Lawson developed empirical methods of research that allowed for a more complex picture to be built of the differences between designerly and scientific approaches to problem solving (Cross 2011; Lawson 2005). Donald Schön's concept of "reflection in action" gave support to an interpretative perspective on design practice, wherein the perception of both the problem at hand and its possible solutions shifted and changed in response to the 'back talk' of design work (Schön 2017). Designs in this Schönian sense are not the result of axiomatic reasoning but are, rather, proposals that emerge from putting oneself in "reflective

conversation” with the situation (Schön 1992). In recent decades the field of design research has continued to adapt methods from other disciplines, including ethnographic and scenario planning techniques, as well as the transformation of methods within design and business practices. The shift from manufacturing to service and information-based industries within affluent economies has continued to drive changes to older disciplinary identities, leading to the rise, for instance, of specialised service, social, and user experience approaches to design research and practice.

This narrative of design studies developing an ever more sophisticated picture of design practice belies what ontological theorists of design have criticised as a more fundamental commitment to rationalistic or instrumental interpretations. While contemporary theorists did in fact respond to some of the perceived limitations of earlier theoretical efforts — Alexander himself became a strong critique of the first iteration of the Design Methods movement — the dominant orientation of design research continues to be informed by many of the same philosophical, political, and instrumentalist presuppositions as those involved in the initial construction of the field. As, for instance, DJ Huppertz argues,

Much contemporary design research, in its pursuit of academic respectability, remains aligned to Simon’s broader project, particularly in its definition of design as “scientific” problem solving. However, the repression of judgment, intuition, experience, and social interaction in Simon’s “logic of design” has had, and continues to have, profound implications for design research and practice. (Huppertz 2015, p.29)

1.2 ONTOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO DESIGN

The defining claim of ontological designing is that designed things and processes are agents of design as much as they are its 'object' or 'product'. This claim supports the suggestion that the outcome of design is never reducible to whatever kind of thing or system a designer might be directed towards bringing into being. What the designer takes as the objective of their designing is of course a complex and significant part of what designing accomplishes. That said, what the theory of ontological designing brings into focus is the manner in which both the practice of designing and the deployment of designed things within everyday practices also produces a mode of existence. The designing of something like a pen, a website, or a customer-service experience, for instance, not only brings these things into being but also the people whose being or ontology are configured by these designs. Anne-Marie Willis summarises this effect in the following dictum: "we design our world, while our world acts back on us and designs us" (Willis 2007, p.80).

In order to unpack the concept of ontological design it is useful to make a reference to the thinking of its major philosophical influence, the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. Taking the arguments of Willis as a guide, the aspects of Heidegger's thinking that are most illuminating on the question of design are his account of the ontology of equipment, as well as his concepts of 'worldhood', and 'thinging'. The concept of the 'hermeneutical circle' as developed by Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer brings further clarity to the idea of designed things exerting a designing effect that goes beyond the formal intention of the designer. Rather than follow Willis' structure of explanation, however, the account I provide below follows a chronological trace of the concept of ontological designing from the earlier work of Winograd and Flores. I have added contextual and biographical details in order to provide a picture of the differing situations in which the idea has been articulated, including the degree to

which its development has been oriented by a practical interest design and/as politics.

1.2.1 ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING IN WINOGRAD AND FLORES

Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores produced the earliest argument for an ontological approach to design in their work on computer design in the early 1980s. The respective background of each researcher was significant in the formation of their ideas.

Winograd's research was initially focused on the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with an emphasis on how linguistic theory might be applied within the field of computing. Winograd's interest in design began with the recognition that efforts to create computational replications of human behaviour revealed very little about how computing technologies could be integrated into everyday life. In Winograd's view, the desire of AI researchers to model human language interactions in computational form was based on a rationalistic misinterpretation of how language and (as) equipment worked. One of the central limitations of the AI project in this respect was a failure to appreciate the difference between designing computers to mimic human behaviours and designing computers as equipment for interaction, particularly for people who had no background in computer science.

Winograd's partnership with Flores began after Flores arrived at Stanford University. Flores had previously been the Finance Minister in the Allende government in Chile. As a Government Minister, Flores had lead the development of Cybersyn, an electronic communications network designed to assist the economic management government policy. The Cybersyn project provided Flores with the opportunity to apply what were at the time cutting edge theories of cybernetics or systems theory, a field of study in which Flores had first taken an

interest while working at the United Steel company under the management of leading cybernetics theorist Stafford Beer. Following the right-wing coup d'état of 1973, Flores was held for some time as a political prisoner before moving to the United States in 1976. After moving to the University of Berkley, Flores began a deeper engagement with thinkers across both the 'analytic' and 'continental' traditions of 'Western' philosophy. It was in this context the Flores and Winograd began their collaborative research on the design of computing technologies.

Winograd and Flores' collaboration lead to the publication of *Understanding Computers and Cognition*, a book that is striking for the emphasis it gives to both design and a critique of rationalist approaches. Winograd and Flores' alternative ontological conception of design is summarised in the claim that "in designing tools we are designing ways of being" (Winograd & Flores 1987, p. xi). The key insight here is that what is most significant about designed things is not principally the manner in which they fulfil a range of explicitly defined goal oriented functions but, rather, the manner in which designs (re)organise the naturalised or normative regimes that configure 'our' taken for granted sense of being-in-the-world. Thus for Winograd and Flores,

The most important designing is ontological. It constitutes an intervention in the background of our heritage, growing out of our already-existent ways of being in the world, and deeply affecting the kinds of beings that we are. (Winograd & Flores 1987, p. 163)⁴

⁴ They go on to say: "In creating new artifacts, equipment, buildings, and organizational structures, it attempts to specify in advance how and where breakdowns will show up in 'our' everyday practices and in the tools we use, opening up new spaces in which we can work and play. Ontologically orientated design is therefore necessarily both reflective and political, looking backwards to the tradition that has formed us but also forwards to as-yet-uncreated transformations of 'our' lives together. Through the emergence of new tools, we come to a changing awareness of human nature and human action, which in turn leads to new technological development. The designing process is part of this 'dance' in which 'our' structure of possibilities is generated". (Winograd & Flores 1987, p. 163)

Ontological designing suggests that designed things design in the way that they induct users into attitudes, comportments, affective attachments, registers of attentiveness and domains of practice that are configured by the directive and relational agency of artificial environments. To provide a simple example, the ceramic coffee cup has a characteristic weight, density, tactility, fragility, and material inertia that makes it a gathering point within a certain tradition of café style coffee drinking. The culture of the café is thus disclosed through the ceramic cup in ways that are quite different from that of throwaway cups or the more substantial keep-cup. Whereas these later designs manifest a more ‘on-the-go’ style of consumption, the ceramic cup acts as something of an anchor in time and place. In these ways, the cup is not simply an instrument for conveying coffee but a constitutive feature of a pattern of living, a thing that actively shapes values, sensitivities, and temporalities. The differing designs of each cup disclose differing modalities of consumption that connect in and shape wider webs of practice. In Heideggerian, terms the gathering and dispositional effect of something as seemingly simple as a cup is the expression of its ‘thinging’, the agency it exerts as the thing that it is. As Fry and Willis would argue, the ontological designing of something like the throw-away cup — now the default servicing device in many locations — also facilitates the normalisation of the systemic intensification of material consumption and ecological violence (Fry 1999, Willis 2007).

Part of the argument of *Understanding Computers and Cognition* is an effort on the part of Winograd and Flores to shift existing cultures of computer design away from the ‘rationalist tradition’ and towards an ontological approach. This is a move that encompasses a change in attitude with regards to computers and the task of computer design as a whole. This also implies a transformation in how the agency of design is conceived across the range of both longer-standing and emergent design disciplines, as well as all other domains of practical and creative activity.

The move away from the rationalist tradition is not posed as a refusal of rationality as such but of the tradition of interpreting human action as reducible to or comprehensible within the terms of representational logics, a mode of understanding that gives rise to some of the misguided ambitions of artificial intelligence projects. By contrast, Winograd and Flores argue that human actions arise out of being-in-the-world, the state of always already having been thrown into a form of absorbed involvement in a world whose character takes shape within a particular tradition or mode of socialisation. The reflective deliberations of conscious rational thought emerge on the basis of and in response to what is disclosed by a mode of being, an account of human action that runs against the metaphysical desire to ground thought in foundations that are explicit, rational, and eternal (see Chapter 2 for a more extensive elaboration). The basis of human activity is not representational thinking but the primordial directiveness of the designing of a world.

Winograd and Flores' approach in this respect was to reveal the limitations of computer science's naturalised metaphysics so as to pose ontological designing as an alternative understanding. Going further than saying that the status quo of computer design is simply a reflection of the rationalist tradition, Winograd and Flores help 'us' to understand how the design agency of computers also takes part in the re-production of this tradition. Rationalism is not simply an attitude or disposition that individuals hold within themselves but is, rather, a social habitus that is sustained in the interactions between the bodies, language, and designed things (Bourdieu 1977).⁵

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* in the context of sociological debates over the relation between the objective "external" and subjective "internal" conditions involved in structuring social practices. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu defines 'habitus' as "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures; that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor" (Bourdieu 1977, p.72).

1.2.2 STYLE AND DISCLOSIVE SPACES

As Cameron Tonkinwise (2011) has argued, a further articulation of the concept of ontological designing can be found in a later collaboration between Flores, Charles Spinosa and Hubert Dreyfus. The resulting book, *Disclosing New Worlds*, brings together what are usually disparate interests in entrepreneurship, democratic action, and the cultivation of solidarity in order to elaborate a concept of everyday ‘history-making’, or the skill of being able to bring into being new ways of seeing and acting in the world. While the book presents history-making as part of a conservative defense of liberal democracy, my interest here is how the ideas generated shed further light on the meaning of ontological designing.

As with Flores’ earlier thinking, history-making and its related concepts build on a Heideggerian ontology, one that looks to displace rationalistic conceptions of subjectivity for a situated, embodied, and relational account of social change. A key concept in this respect is the notion of *disclosive space*, which is described as “an organised set of practices for dealing with oneself, other people, and things that produces a relatively self-contained web of meanings” (Spinosa, Flores & Dreyfus 1997, p.17).

As the authors explain, this idea is influenced by Heidegger’s tripartite description of ‘worldhood’. In Heidegger’s account, worldhood involves (i) a totality of interrelated items of *equipment* (such as a hammer) that allow ‘us’ to undertake tasks that (ii) achieve particular *purposes* (such as building a house), which at the same time (iii) inform or give rise to *identities* (being a carpenter). ‘Worlds’ in this context may encompass an idea as large as ‘culture’, but can also refer to smaller subworlds such as different forms of professional identity, workplace culture, family relations, sporting club, or activist organisations. It is the webs of practices and meanings that run through different expressions and scales of worldhood that constitute disclosive space. More precisely, disclosive space can be thought of as

the particular way in which equipment, purposes, and identities interact so as to configure a world of everyday, ordinary, or normative meaningfulness.

Worldhood does not arise on the basis of there being a space prior to the enactment of worldliness but, rather, as a question of 'our' always already being implicated in worlds of practical activity. In her own account, Willis states that worldhood "provides the setting for understanding the operation of ontological designing — which can here be renamed as worlding" (Willis 2007, p.84).

In each case of worldhood, equipment, purpose, and identity cohere as a particular *style*. Style in this context is not an aspect of things, activities, people or practices but what constitutes them as what they are, or, the way in which practices are organised and fit together as coherent domains of activity. As the authors argue, the aggressive and competitive driving cultures found in cities such as New York, for instance, as compared with the more relaxed culture of the US Midwest, shows that the very meaning of driving in each concrete instance is not a question of functional operation, but, rather, the precise manner in which skills and attitudes tend to organise each other in specific contexts. Style is thus the experience of how things are coordinated or disposed in action rather than as simply connected. Style is what gives certain aspects of experience significance and renders others marginal, perhaps even invisible. As the manner in which things are coordinated, style gives rise to the experience of familiarity and an ability to anticipate how something might work if transferred across different contexts. An example given here is the idea of 'first-come, first-served' which manifests as the practice of queuing or merging in a multitude of situations without needing an explanation in each case.

Spinoza, Dreyfus and Flores thus argue that style is not a trivial or surface aspect of experience but, in an echo of Fry's perspective on design, the very "ground of meaning in human activity" (Spinoza, Flores & Dreyfus 1997, p.20). 'Our' training in style begins with how 'we' are handled as children and the particular compartments that 'we' are guided towards enacting. This becomes embodied in

or as the social habitus that informs the way in which ‘we’ interpret and handle everyday situations. These comportments become ‘our’ second-natures, the manner in which each of ‘us’ pre-reflectively respond to things.

Style is naturalised and tends to be forgotten or overlooked as a constitutive dimension of experience, and yet it governs how things appear to ‘us’ as what they are, and the character of ‘our’ interactions with them. Style is what makes cars, bicycles, or computers not simply machines to be operated but everyday loci of purpose and identity that can change depending on the general context or the particular web of practices to which they are connected to. Style opens a disclosive space by coordinating actions, determining how things and people matter, and by configuring dispositions or comportments etc. across situations.

With the concepts of style and disclosive space in mind, Spinoza, Dreyfus and Flores make a further distinction between *customary disclosure* — the ordinary way in which a disclosive space is conserved or maintained — and *historical disclosure* — a variety of action that changes the style that configures a disclosive space. The skill of historical disclosure begins with a sensitivity to tensions or disharmonies in one’s existing practices — a sense that something in the existing arrangement isn’t working — which is then coupled with an ability to change or reorganise disclosive space so as to resolve the sense of disharmony (this concept of tension is taken up again in my reading of Mignolo in Chapter 3). Key to the idea of historical disclosing is that it is not based in a detached reflective mode of thinking that draws upon definitions, general cases, or goal setting. Rather, it is a conception of change as an involved experiment in ways of making the world feel different.

Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus identify three ways of dealing with disharmony: articulation, reconfiguration, and cross-appropriation. Articulation is the effect of bringing an extant style, one that may have become dispersed or fragmented over time, into sharper focus. This involves a process of ordering priorities and

narrowing interests in such a way that brings forth a greater sense of personal or group integrity. Through a process of making explicit or visible something that was otherwise implicit, or retrieving something that was once considered important but has been forgotten, “the style keeps its core identity but becomes more recognizable as what it is” (Spinosa, Flores & Dreyfus 1997, p.25).

Whereas articulation is a strategy of invigorating something that was always somehow central to a disclosive space, reconfiguration involves reorganising a style around an aspect that has until that point been marginal. Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus give the example of changes in ‘Western’ conceptions of making and handling that occurred with the proliferation of machine tools. The shift in this case was from a style of governing to a style of control, that is, a *change of style* rather than a reaffirmation of an existing style. Thus, while the strategy of articulation has the effect of increasing one’s sense for integrity of a particular style, the effects of reconfiguration are experienced as a feeling of ‘widening horizons’ (this is another way of understanding my argument in the introduction concerning the experience and usefulness of ‘unsettlement’).

Cross-appropriation, meanwhile, involves a change that is introduced via a practice that is neither central nor marginal to the style in question. Rather, change is brought about through the adoption of practices across different disclosive spaces. The transfer of the mobile phone as a communications technology, for instance, from within the context of business activity to a technology of family, household, and wider social networks, is an example of how cross-appropriation works to reconfigure the feeling and effect of style across a variety of different domains.

The relation between ontological designing and style emerges most clearly in Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus’ discussion of how King C. Gillette’s developed his idea for the ‘safety razor’. In the account provided, the authors describe how the origins of the razor design began not with the instrument itself or as a rationalist

inquiry into the practice of shaving but, rather, with the desire to transfer the throwaway effect of the pop bottle cap into a new domain of activity. In this sense, the 'razoriness' of the safety razor was, from Gillette's perspective, incidental to the goal of finding new ways to increasing the rate of consumption. One of the barriers to Gillette's objective, however, was the inertia of an existing culture of shaving that had been ontologically designed by the performativity of the straight steel razor.

In this respect, one of the defining features of durable razor was that the time and effort involved in learning how to handle and care for the razor had given rise to a range of rituals and signs that helped to define an emotive domain of masculine identity. The skill of Gillette, as Spinoza, Flores, and Dreyfus read it, lay in his sense for the possibility of changing the culture of shaving from one that took pride in its ability to exhibit care in the handling of a valued piece of equipment towards one with a throwaway disposition that would experience the older design as an unnecessary burden. In this respect the success of Gillette came in part through his ability to recode the everyday significance of both the safety and straight steel razors, something that in turn gave rise to a shift in both the design and meaning of shaving rituals and their associated gender identity.

In light of my earlier comment on the ecological violence of the throwaway cup it is possible to see that while the example of the Gillette safety razor provides a rich illustration of the ontological designing of equipment, it also points to a serious flaw in Spinoza, Flores, and Dreyfus' politics insofar as this is not also posed as an example of the deep complicity of design in developing and extending gendered cultures of unsustainable consumption. In this case, the authors' commitment to promoting an explicitly capitalist theory of entrepreneurship works to foreclose on the possibility of articulating an alternative sense of direction for the concepts of style and disclosure.

1.2.3 WILLIS ON ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING

One of the most important and often cited works on ontological designing to date is Anne-Marie Willis' (2007) 'Ontological Designing — laying the ground.' This paper has its origins as a conference presentation at *Design Cultures*, a conference of the European Academy of Design at Sheffield Hallam University in 1999. It was later republished with revisions in a 2006 issue of *Design Philosophy Papers* as well in printed collection of the journal in 2007. As Willis indicates, 'Ontological Designing' was written as an explication of the methodology developed by Willis, Tony Fry, Abby Mellick Lopes and Cameron Tonkinwise at the EcoDesign Foundation, a design for sustainability consultancy established in Sydney, 'Australia' during the 1990s. The experience of working at the EcoDesign Foundation played a deeply significant role in orienting both how and why Willis mobilises the concept of ontological designing; that is, not as a disembodied, abstract theory but as an agent in redirecting the practice and outlook of designers. As Willis describes it,

Ontological designing is an idea that we lived and worked with, developing enough of a shared understanding for its meaning to become self-evident. We opened ourselves to ontological designing, allowing it to design our thinking and to design with it. (Willis 2007, p.95 n.3)

Willis claims that ontological designing is "(i) a hermeneutics of design concerned with the nature and of the agency of design, which understands design as a subject-decentred practice, acknowledging that things as well as people design, and following on from this, (ii) an argument for particular ways of going about design activity, especially in the contemporary context of unsustainability" (Willis 2007, p.81).

With this conception in mind, Willis observes that while there are approaches to thinking design that may study designed objects (material and immaterial) in context (design history), and those that may study the design process in order to arrive at a transportable theory of technique (design methods, design thinking), a point that tends to escape recognition across the broader field of design studies is the significance of the agency of designed things themselves; that is, what they are able to design beyond the intention of the designer or the design team (Willis 2007, pp. 93-5). Ontological designing does not ignore the significance of conscious intent in the designing of objects, systems or processes, but recognises that these modes of analysis ought to be placed alongside and in connection with the performativity of designed things. Because ontological designing recognises that designed things have a way of inducting 'us' into normative modes of being that direct and regulate 'our' desires, attitudes, thoughts and actions, the failure to account for the designing of designed things overlooks the greater part of how design itself configures the conditions in which decision and direction becomes embedded within (or as) the disclosive spaces of everyday practices.

Willis' argument speaks to much of what I have already covered in relation to the work of Winograd, Flores, Spinoza and Dreyfus, however Willis' approach is significant for the way in which she emphasises the value of displacing a focus on designer intention as an object of causal explanation in favour of the ontological agency of designed things, as well as how she describes the difference that ontological approaches look to articulate both within and beyond the field of design studies. Concerning the later claim, Willis argues that many of the approaches to theorising design that arose in response to the overtly rationalist methodologies of the Design Methods period have had the effect not so much of displacing rationalist assumptions as burying them within more sophisticated models of 'the design process' (Willis 2007, p.94). Here Willis points to the work of Donald Schön as a useful example, particularly for the way in which Schön's arguments concerning the significance of tacit knowledge and reflection-in-action represents a situational conception of knowledge that is largely compatible with

ontological approaches. Willis asserts, however, that Schön's view of interpretative 'frames' as devices that can be objectified for analysis and reflection misrecognises the manner in which a habitus or pre-understanding cannot be turned into an explicit object of contemplation. As Willis argues, following Albert Hofstadter, the interpreter of a situation cannot objectify their 'frame' of understanding because the interpreter is their understanding (Willis 2007, p.94, see also n.9).

The overview of ontological designing I have presented here was intended to explain its meaning, difference, and context of origination in *vis-à-vis* the broader field of design studies. In doing so I have argued that ontological approaches to designing represent a critical counterpoint to the normative rationalism of dominant design discourses. My intention has not been to undermine the value of 'design' having been developed into a theoretical discourse but, rather, to raise some critical points concerning how design theory has worked to contain and manage design discourse within the terms of a rationalist methodology that interprets design as a transportable and commodifiable technique. In this light, my argument has been that theorists of ontological designing read rationalism as but one limited and largely damaging approach to understanding what design is and does. In doing so, ontological approaches to design situate rationalism within the context of the medium of design as a mode of understanding that is at the same time a product and agent of design.

This reading reflects the view that the social or political significance of design is not limited to the intentionality of the designer. The full significance of the notion of 'decision and direction embedded in things' is that the design is not simply something 'we' do but something that acts back upon 'us'. Design is ontological in the sense that it configures relations of equipment, purposes, and identities that disclose embodied ways of being-in-the-world as a certain style of practice or way of living. As an ontological force, design configures 'our' everyday or unreflective

sense for what is normal or unremarkable, an effect that belies the systemic impact and ecological violence of modern life and the capitalist mode of production.

The normalising effect of ontological designing is what I am most interested to think through with regards to the concept of coloniality and the project of disrupting the effects of zero point epistemology. In the next part of this chapter I move into an overview of meaning, origins, and broader conceptual context of the concept of coloniality.

1.3 COLONIALITY

In unpacking the concept of ontological designing I argued that the discourse that defines and directs the meaning of design within design studies is informed by the ontological designing of the capitalist mode of industrial reproduction. With this in mind I also argued that the meta-designing of design studies does not fully determine how design can be understood, why 'we' might value it, or the kind of politics it might support. As theorists such as Fry and Willis demonstrate, the concept of design is politically contestable because 'design' as meta-design is itself something that can be re-designed. In the next part of this chapter I return to an examination of some the background conditions for the emergence of the question of design but with a different origin and point of focus in mind. Here my intention is to lay out a history and concepts that situate the political significance of design beyond the context of a Eurocentric design discourse. In this sense I will be situating the concept of capitalist political-economy out of which the question of design emerged within onto-epistemological politics of *coloniality*. As I intend to show, such a move reveals that the question of economy represents but one domain of action and theory amongst others within what theorists of coloniality call the 'colonial matrix of power'.

1.3.1 MARIÁTEGUI AND DEPENDENCY THEORY

The concept of coloniality has its origins in the Modernity/Coloniality Project, a series of conferences and symposiums held between 1998 and 2008 that was organised by an interdisciplinary group of Latin American and Caribbean scholars, including a number of sociologists, semioticians, literary critics, and philosophers. In the overview that follows here I will make use of ideas from three of the more influential figures of this project; namely, the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano who first coined the idea of coloniality and the coloniality of power; Argentine semiotician Walter D. Mignolo, who can be credited with having placed Quijano's work in relation to the notion of colonial difference and border thinking; and Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel who provides valuable context to the development of the concept of coloniality.

Quijano first advanced the concept of the 'coloniality of power' in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Mignolo and Grosfoguel describe, the background to Quijano's thinking includes a number of political and intellectual influences that together provide a picture of the concept's context of emergence (Grosfoguel 2000; Mignolo 2011). In Mignolo's view, the concept of coloniality represents an effort on Quijano's part to demarcate a third stage in a line of thought that includes the writing of Peruvian journalist, political philosopher, and socialist activist José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930) and the discourse of dependency theory — a Latin American school of critical thought that Quijano was involved in throughout the 1970s.

Mariátegui's influence on the development of the concept of coloniality lies in the way in which he identified a number of issues that were particular to the Peruvian context that had received little attention from local creole and mestizo political theorists. The issues raised by Mariátegui included questions of colonialism, racism, land appropriation and expropriation, the university, and religion within

Tawantinsuyu (the Quechua name for the four regions or provinces of the Inca empire) (Mignolo 2011, p.xxi). Mariátegui's influence also derives from the position he took in a debate with fellow Peruvian socialist theorist Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre on the 'science' of revolution during the 1920s. The terms of the debate were influenced by the intellectual impact of the Russian Revolution, particularly the Leninist theory of rational revolution. While both Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui shared the basic assumption that conditions in Peru were within a 'feudal' state of historical development, Mariátegui argued that the conditions in question were a consequence of the logics of the transnational capitalist system rather than a reflection of a stage prior to ordinary economic development. Haya de la Torre, holding the latter to be the case, had argued for a program of collaboration with the protectionist leaning petite-bourgeoisie as a means to move Peru through what he believed to be the necessary stages of capitalist development. Believing this to be a structural impossibility, Mariátegui argued for a direct transition to socialism by establishing an alliance between workers, peasants, and revolutionary intellectuals.

As Grosfoguel (2000, p.355) observes, Mariátegui's thinking on this question was significant insofar as it represents the first attempt by a Latin American theorist to break with the 'denial of temporal coevalness' within the Marxist tradition. A concept first developed by Johannes Fabian (1983), the denial of coevalness represents a way of constructing 'otherness' through 'temporal distancing', the idea that a different set of people or social formations can be ordered and represented along a unilinear path of development. As Mignolo has argued, earlier periods of European colonisation had coded social and cultural difference according to religious belief and the Christian theological concept of salvation (Mignolo 2011; see also the discussion in Chapter 5 of this thesis). These ideas were surpassed in the eighteenth century by Enlightenment theories of historical progress and the rational management of human societies. What was consistent in either case was the assumption that Christianity or Enlightenment thought represented a universal yardstick against which all societies could be measured

and managed, an idea that underscored the developmentalist ontology of both liberals and orthodox Marxists. In asserting that conditions within Peru were not in fact the reflection of a stage prior to capitalism but, rather, a formation of the present world capitalist system, Mariátegui introduced a critique that helped to prefigure the ideas and arguments of both dependency theorists and theorists of coloniality in the later half of the twentieth century.

As Grosfoguel (2000) describes it, the context for the arrival of the dependency school in the 1960s was a political climate marked by three major events: a crisis in the import substitution industrialisation (ISI) policy of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), the Cuban Revolution, and the concentration of exiled left-wing intellectuals in Santiago, Chile — a consequence of military coups in the region. ISI was initially formulated as a developmentalist strategy to increase the ‘self-sufficiency’ of non-industrial countries. The strategy began to show its weakness as the income generated by the emergent consumer goods industries proved incapable of offsetting the expense of capital goods imports — the technologies required for industrial consumer goods production. The strategy did little to increase the self-sufficiency of Latin American states as national economies remained reliant on the importation of technologies that had been researched and developed in wealthy metropolitan centres. Moreover, the strategy laid the foundations for the penetration of multinational corporations into Latin American markets. The Cuban Revolution was significant insofar as it provided a concrete challenge to Haya de la Torre’s theories of socialist revolution that continued to prevail within the Latin American Communist parties.

In this context, members of group of radical intellectuals concentrated in Santiago began to develop a theoretical response to the situation in Latin America that challenged both the CEPAL doctrine and orthodox Marxism. A third front contested by the dependency school was US modernisation theory. As Grosfoguel (2000) describes it, modernisation theory shared the same assumptions of non-coevalness as both the CEPAL doctrine and orthodox Marxism, but was framed

through a discourse and classification system that drew a distinction between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ forms of social relation. Relationships within modern societies were characterised as universalist, functionally specific, and with people being evaluated on the basis of their achievements. Relationships within traditional societies, on the other hand, were characterised as particularistic and functionally diffused, with people being evaluated according to status rather than achievement. The process of development, in this view, consisted of changing traditional values into modern ones (Grosfoguel 2000, p.359).

The dependency school or *dependentistas* — of which Quijano was a member — challenged each of these theories on grounds that echo Mariátegui’s earlier critique. As Grosfoguel (2000, p.360) puts it, “Dependentistas contended that development and underdevelopment constituted each other through a relational process”; that is to say, that each was implied in the other as coeval and coexistent expressions of the same economic system. From this perspective it was an error — one backed by a significant degree of political and economic investment — to read ‘development’ as an ahistorical process that moves through a set series of stages. In contrast the dependentistas argued that conditions within and between countries are always a question of a transnational division of labour that sustains a worldwide capitalist economic system. As they saw it, the possibility for an alternative to questions of poverty and the relative powerlessness of Latin American states lay in a more fundamental and revolutionary break with the capitalist system.

1.3.2 BEYOND DEPENDENCY

Despite its theoretical breakthroughs, the status of dependency theory declined as its presumptions failed to bring about the kinds of political change its advocates had argued for. As Grosfoguel suggests, the reasons for this failure lay in a misunderstanding of capitalism as a world-system, a view that undercuts the

viability of any political-intellectual project that takes the nation-state as its fundamental unit of political analysis. In this respect, one of the limits of dependency theory was the manner in which it obscured the significance of connections that occur at both the local and global levels of political movement (Grosfoguel 2000, p.363). A further limitation — one taken up by Quijano — was an orthodox Marxist reduction of cultural and ideological factors to a restricted conception of economics (Grosfoguel 2000, p.363; see also the extended discussion of Quijano's ideas in Chapter 3 of this thesis).

As Grosfoguel points out, dependency theory retains within its mode of critique an ambition to fulfil a Eurocentric story of development. For the *dependentistas*, autonomy remained both a possible and desirable goal that could be achieved by establishing a socialist economic system at the national level. In this sense, as Grosfoguel (2000, p.361) argues, the *dependentistas* remained within the “problematic of modernity”, a situation defined by questions of national development and the rational organisation of society. Over the course of the 1980s and 90s, Quijano came to understand that a major consequence of the dependency theory's developmentalism and economic reductionism was an underestimation of the significance of race and gender within the logics of a modern/colonial world-system. While he maintained that capital/labour opposition represented a key structural division within capitalism, Quijano also observed the extent to which the capitalist system as a whole relied upon a racial division between Europeans and non-Europeans and a gendered division between men and women.

To elaborate, Quijano identifies racial classification as a “cornerstone” of the coloniality of power. In this view, the process of modern/colonial racial thinking can be seen to originate in theological debates over whether or not the colonised peoples of the Americas could be said to have ‘souls’. This was in effect a question of whether or not colonised people would be considered ‘human’ in the sense understood by Christian Europeans, a practice that would morph into theories of biological and cultural essentialism (Mignolo 2009a). This pattern of unilaterally

determining the ontological status of dominated peoples became inscribed (via ontological designing) as a system of racially coded social stratification that mapped a globalised division of labour. As Quijano, Mignolo and others have argued, the function of race within coloniality has been to naturalise the devaluation and dispensability of life for an economic system that is directed towards the elimination of non-capitalist relations to land, processes of enclosure that exclude people from a means of sustaining themselves, and the constant provision of cheap and compliant labour (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo 2009a; Quijano 2007; see also Chapter 5 of this thesis for an extended examination of the formation of this structure).

Insofar as it reinforced a conception of class and economics that rendered all other factors as epiphenomenal concerns, dependency theory lent support to the social power of male creole elites within the Latin American context. In doing so, the theory not only failed to address the particular experiences and struggles of minoritised populations within Latin American states but also led to a simplified view of the political-economic dynamics that sustained the capitalist system as a whole. The simplification was itself political insofar as it supported the reproduction of colonial hierarchies that existed across both right wing and left wing modes of political organisation. From this perspective, dependency theory was complicit in reinforcing racial and gendered boundaries that excluded minoritised groups from power, including control over policy design and the distribution of economic surpluses.

With these issues in mind, Quijano (2007) formulated a theory of coloniality that looked to expand the terms of analysis beyond both the Eurocentrism and developmentalism of dependency theory. Quijano's difference in this respect was to assert that the achievement of political independence on the part of Latin American states from European powers was insufficient to address the residual structures and processes that had been established over the course of the European colonisation. While independence may have brought benefits to

national elites, the power and position of these groups were still premised on reinforcing a developmentalist ideology that divided and scaled populations according to how closely they resembled a European ideal. Quijano's concept of coloniality was, therefore, a response to the way in which a formalist conception of decolonisation ignored the effect and conditions of the ontological designing of modernity.

Quijano's assertion that the idea of modernity invariably implies the presence of coloniality can be read through the influence of Mariátegui. In the same way that Mariátegui (1971) argued that industrial and feudal formations were temporally coeval and structurally connected within the capitalist system, so too does the idea of modernity rely upon processes and effects that the system as a whole looks to externalise. The essential point here is that coloniality is in effect as 'modern' or contemporary as modernity itself. By the same token, every expression of modernity is at some level also an expression of coloniality. As Mignolo has put it, coloniality "is constitutive of modernity — there is no modernity without coloniality" (Mignolo 2011, p.3).

1.3.3 THE COLONIAL MATRIX OF POWER

Quijano (2007) addressed reductionism of dependency theory in the concept of the colonial matrix of power. In contrast to the previous model, Quijano described coloniality in terms of four interrelated domains: control of the economy; authority; knowledge; and race, gender, and sexuality. The advantage of this model over the discourse of dependency was that each domain of the matrix was conceived in relational terms. While no domain could be singled out as being foundational to any other, so too was it impossible to imagine one domain acting in isolation from any other. Whatever change occurred in one domain would result in changes in all other domains such that the modern/colonial system as a whole could sustain itself through multiple crises, shifts, and mutations.

Theories of knowledge, for instance, were connected to the ideas and ontologies that directed capitalistic economic practices, of which notions of race and the dispensability of life were essential (Mignolo 2009a). Just as knowledge was indispensable to establishing the categories and distinctions that sustained a racialised and gendered division of labour, so too did conceptions of racial and gendered inferiority underscore a dismissal of non-European conceptions of knowledge. This particular dynamic helped to illuminate the coloniality of knowledge that underscored European authority over what was considered to be legitimate knowledge and from whom such knowledge was derived. As Quijano himself writes,

The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivised expression, intellectual or visual. It was followed by the imposition of the use of the rulers' own patterns of expression, and of their beliefs and images with reference to the supernatural. These beliefs and images served not only to impede the cultural production of the dominated, but also as a very efficient means of social and cultural control, when the immediate repression ceased to be constant and systematic. (Quijano 2007, p.169)

Nelson Maldonado-Torres has offered a complementary description of this same effect, one that emphasises the ongoing relevance of the ontological designing of coloniality or, in other words, the coloniality of design:

[Coloniality] is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath [sic] coloniality all the time and everyday. (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p.243)

1.3.4 THE COLONIAL DIFFERENCE

Walter D. Mignolo asserts that the concept of coloniality represents a “specific response to globalisation and global linear thinking that emerged within the histories and sensibilities of South America and the Caribbean” (Mignolo 2011, p.2). This statement is indicative of the kind of intellectual politics that Mignolo has pursued under the guidance of Quijano’s original formulation; namely, a politics of situating and understanding knowledge within the socio-material conditions of the colonial matrix. The rationale behind this strategy is both to signal and enact a break with the Eurocentric assumption that true or legitimate knowledge can have only one expression. As Mignolo puts it in the preface of *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, his intention is to show that,

the belief in one sustainable system of knowledge, cast first in theological terms and later on in secular philosophy and sciences (human and natural sciences; nomothetic and ideographic sciences, as Wilhem Dilthey distinguished the “science of the spirit” from the hard sciences), is pernicious to the well-being of the human species and to the life of the planet. Such a system of knowledge, referred to here as the “Western code”, serves not all humanity, but only a small portion of it that benefits from the belief that in terms of epistemology there is only one game in town. (Mignolo 2011, p.xii)

What Mignolo has in mind here is a project that aims at dismantling the assumption that alternative knowledge systems require Western modes of recognition in order to substantiate their own value. Mignolo’s argument is not simply that different cultures have produced different traditions of interpretation but, rather, that the colonial matrix of power has itself influenced the production of knowledge at both global and local levels. The decolonial option, in Mignolo’s terms, is a project that calls for a delinking from the terms of the coloniality of

knowledge, something that is viewed from the perspective of the zero point as an act of “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo 2009b). (I return to a more detailed discussion of the colonality of knowledge in Chapter 3.)

Mignolo’s take-up of the concept of colonality has led to a number of useful extensions and connections that expand on Quijano’s initial arguments. For Mignolo, the concept of the *colonial difference* is of critical importance to understanding the scope and distinction of decolonisation *vis-à-vis* other political projects. Mignolo’s concept of the colonial difference is demonstrated in his reading of both the commonalities and differences of Quijano’s political-intellectual project with respect to a leading figure of world-systems analysis, U.S. sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. In Mignolo’s account, Quijano began his engagement with Wallerstein at a moment in which the limitations of dependency theory were becoming increasingly apparent. The affinity between the two scholars lay in the influence that dependency theory has had on Wallerstein’s world-system theory. By a similar token, the concept of the world-system has played a significant role in the way in which a number of modernity/coloniality/decoloniality theorists have sought to articulate their own perspectives. Mignolo, however, makes a point of highlighting Wallerstein’s apparent non-interest in Quijano’s concept of colonality, a term that Mignolo’s suggest is absent from the work of Wallerstein.

Mignolo reads this dynamic as a question of the colonial difference. While ‘coloniality’ represented a way for Quijano to foreground the differing geo-politics of knowledge at play in any form of political analysis, the stakes at play in such a move were not felt in equal measure by Wallerstein. The difference that Quijano articulated was not so much the result of a disagreement but an assertion of the significance of a perspective situated outside the terms of zero point epistemology (see Chapter 3 for an extended discussion of the relation between the materiality of knowledge and conceptual invention). As Mignolo puts it, “Wallerstein was looking at the modern-world system critically, but from the perspective and

experience of the First World, while Quijano was looking at coloniality from the receiving end, from the perspective of the 'Third World' (Mignolo 2011, p.xxvi).

For Mignolo, the concept of coloniality is a product of the experience of looking at modernity from the perspective of the colonial difference. Mignolo's point here is that the place from which one speaks within the power structures of coloniality has a significant bearing on the way in which conceptual and practical problems are understood and articulated. The politics of knowledge is not simply a question of content but also one of form and effect. Within the coloniality of knowledge, for instance, only a set number of languages — French, English and German — are presumed to be able to speak the most sophisticated or legitimate forms of knowledge; that is, the languages of science and philosophy. Moreover, genealogies of concepts, arguments, and technologies from within the Eurocentric world-view are selectively edited in order to sustain the image of European thinkers as the originators of the world's most significant and important ideas. For those positioned at the borders of what Mignolo terms 'the colonial difference', this condition gives rise to a dilemma: either conform to the terms of the coloniality of knowledge — thus reinforcing its power — or refuse its terms, thus consigning oneself to the margins of the zero point norm.

Mignolo also connects the concept of the colonial difference with the concept of the *imperial difference*. While the colonial difference articulates the experience of those non-European societies that were conquered over the course of the last 500 years, the concept of the imperial difference refers to the effect of competition for political and economic supremacy amongst the different imperial powers. While the colonial difference helps to explain the effects of European colonialism on Indigenous, Asian, and African peoples, the transition that occurred between the Southern and Northern imperial powers of Europe helps to explain why French, Anglo, and German scholars have tended to mark the beginnings of modernity according to the advent of Enlightenment thought and the French revolution, as opposed to the time and thinking of the European Renaissance.

The concept of the imperial difference forms the basis of Mignolo's argument concerning the difference at stake between decolonial and post-colonial thought. Whereas a thinker such as Edward Said (1979) took 'Orientalism' as the major concept for mapping the effects of colonial power, Mignolo argues for the priority of 'Occidentalism' and the construction of the Transatlantic commercial circuit as the crucial point of departure for theorising coloniality. This argument arises from the recognition on the part of decolonial thinkers of the impact of the sixteenth century colonisation of the Americas on the formation of the modern European identity. In these terms the ontological designing of Occidentalism forms the basis upon which the colonial expansion of the northern European powers would take place across the eighteenth and nineteenth century (this argument is elaborated in more detail in Chapter 5). The point of significance with respect to the imperial difference, however, is the extent to which this history and structures it helped to form has largely been ignored within the academy thanks to the manner in which the English, French, and Germans were able to supersede the Spanish and Portuguese as the dominant political, economic, and intellectual powers within the colonial matrix.

As stated above, this overview of the origin and meaning of the concept of coloniality and the related concepts of the colonial matrix and the colonial and imperial difference demonstrates an alternative point of perspective on the formation of the conditions in which design discourse emerged; namely, on the basis of a condition of coloniality whose origins stretch back to events of the sixteenth century. As I have suggested, the arguments put forward by decolonial thinkers such as Quijano and Mignolo have a strong affinity with some of the ideas presented in the sections above on ontological designing. In particular I argue that what decolonial thinkers describe as a process of the formation of modernity/coloniality and colonial matrix of power can also be framed as a question of ontological designing or, more succinctly, as the coloniality of design.

One major point of significance that decolonial thinkers introduce into the consideration of the colonality of design is the relevance of reflecting upon the place from which one views and attempts to theorise the condition of colonality. The point of the concept of the colonial difference is, in part, to disrupt and break down the notion that a person is able to speak or theorise from a perspective that is not somehow located within and structured by the colonality of knowledge. My suggestion here is that the question of the colonial difference and the colonality of knowledge presents the terms of a problematic that needs to be thought through more carefully in order to understand not only what can be said about the colonality of design, but also the significance of the colonality of design to the way in which the production of knowledge is itself configured within contexts of colonial domination.

It is in anticipation of my effort to think through the meaning of the colonality of design in light of the colonial difference that I now turn to the concept of *relationality*.

1.4 RELATIONALITY

The concept of relationality that I explicate here is one that I first encountered in the work of Fry (1999, p.13–4, 2011, p.132–4) and his engagement with both classical Chinese thought and the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. My intention here is to use Fry's reading and sources as a point of departure for drawing connections with other relational thinkers — David Bohm, Mary Graham, Kelly Oliver — who I have been introduced to through the work of Norman Sheehan (2004). As I indicated in the Introduction, the role of this concept in the context of this thesis is to provide a sense for both the means and the condition upon which I read colonality in light of ontological designing and ontological designing in light of colonality. Thinking through the concept of relationality is in effect my strategy for avoiding what Willis (2007, p.94) has

described as the “relativist trap” of treating different points of view or understanding as objects of a rationalist mode of analysis. My argument in this respect is that ‘relationality’ is both a concept and disposition that facilitates a reception to how being-in-the-world implies an attached involvement in things that design ‘us. In simple terms, relationality evokes the significance of developing a sense for the context in which a text is configured (designed) while at the same time attending to the question of how and why a text affects (designs) ‘us’ in the act of reading. The concept of relationality also encapsulates how different aspects of different texts can be experienced as moments of both resonance and dissonance. A second dimension of the interest I have in relationality is what I see as the need for ontologies that are able to respond to what is different, uncertain, or unsettling without defaulting into a rigid, rationalist, or categorical way of thinking. These characteristics — a reflexive awareness for the significance and the generative potential of attachment, resonance, and affect, as well as an openness to the ineffable and the unsettling — are the qualities that define the methodological significance of relationality in this study.

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The concepts of relationality and relational thinking refer to an understanding of people, things, systems and processes as dynamically and mutually affected. Relational thinking considers things as the actualisation of a complex worldly enmeshment rather than as discrete or static in their being.⁶ To state this in terms of a basic or guiding principle, Arturo Escobar (2012) suggests that relationality represents an ontology that presumes nothing pre-exists the relations that constitute it. Relationality in process is difficult if not impossible to represent as it moves against representational conceptions of knowledge.

⁶ My use of enmeshment here is influenced by Tim Ingold’s concept of ‘meshwork’ (Ingold 2011).

Escobar has stated that there are many ways to understand relationality, including within or as a kind of rationalism (Escobar 2012). For my purposes relationality is a concept linked to a disposition that requires ‘us’ to read across modern/ colonial conceptions of ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. It also encompasses a politics of reading traditions of thought and practice that assert difference with respect to the categories of the Occidental imaginary. As an approach to reading, relationality supports a loosening of the terms of modern/ colonial rationality, particularly as ‘we’ encounter notions of sacredness, enchantment, embodiment, and attachment that are often either removed from academic discussion or contained within prescribed domains such as aesthetic or religious experience (Mignolo & Vázquez 2013). My argument in this respect is not that relationality stands as an ‘other’ to rationality, but that an ontology that thinks, acts, and imagines itself as unmoored from worldly immersion cannot be other than a force of social and ecological violence.

Relationality implies an image of situated or placed knowledge that is close to that proposed by feminist philosopher Donna Haraway (1988). This is knowledge understood as concrete, embodied, and, therefore, perspectival, which is at the same time always connected to and in dialogue with the situation at hand. Moreover, this is a conception of knowledge that retains the sense of interest, feeling, and emotional investment. This idea stands in contrast to what Friedrich Nietzsche derides as the Enlightenment fable of the “pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject” (Nietzsche 2009, p.98). Against this, Nietzsche claims that

Perspectival seeing is the *only* kind of seeing there is, perspectival ‘knowing’ the *only* kind of ‘knowing’; and the *more* feelings about a matter, the *more* eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view this matter, the more complete our ‘conception’ of it, our ‘objectivity’, will be. But to eliminate the will completely, to suspend the feelings altogether,

even assuming we could do so, what? would this not amount to the *castration* of the intellect? (Nietzsche 2009, p.98–9).

In this way, relational thinking encompasses an affectual and worldly mode of perspectivism as a basis for knowledge and ethics. This stands in contrast to philosophies of relativism and abstract-universalism. Relationality thus implies and requires a certain reflexivity for how each of ‘us’ are situated with respect to other people and ways of knowing. Further, it implies a sensitivity to thought and perception as matters of different expressions of worldly enmeshment. Relational thinking is thus easier to make sense of if it is thought of in terms of what Escobar and Mignolo have called *pluriversality*, an idea that posits the plural as the condition for all being-/becoming, thought, and action (Escobar 2015; Mignolo 2011).

What follows from this statement is a recognition that this very unpacking occurs in a situated manner. My voice is inescapably Western, male, Anglophone and anthropocentric. It is also the expression of prevailing discourses, ethical/political commitment, academic convention, as well as research and writing technologies. There are of course other things that could be named here. In fact, as suggested in Willis’ critique of Schön’s ‘interpretive frames’, there is more that participates in the process of inquiry that could ever be definitely listed or described. The key point of thinking through the relation and perspective, however, turns not on the question of my inability to objectify my perspective but, rather, on the claim that perspective and limit functions as the necessary condition of inquiry itself. Thus, rather than seeking to deny or overcome perspectivism, my intention with this study — one that has already been articulated in my discussion of unsettlement — is to embrace and contend with the complexity of worldly perspective as a condition of knowing.

In the following parts of this section I will enact a *relational reading of relationality* that moves within and across the plural expressions of Chinese, ‘Western’, and

Indigenous philosophy. The value of this process lies in connecting ideas and processes that are often otherwise separated and considered in discrete terms. It is in a sense an experiment in thinking relationally about relationality. In doing so my intention is neither to collapse distinctions nor to level differences but, rather, to lay the groundwork for a concept and practice that might allow ‘us’ to counter the homogenising effects of coloniality. In this case it is not the disciplinary distinctions as such that are problematic so much as their ontological designing within (as) the colonial matrix of power.

The concept of relationality gives support to the notion that knowledge and understanding are living processes that are implicated in complex webs of connection and interaction (Sheehan 2004). This idea forms a crucial dimension of Sheehan’s conception of design as a form of visual philosophy within Indigenous systems of thought (Sheehan 2004, 2011). Elsewhere, design theorist and historian Clive Dilnot (2005) remarks that design “is, of course, in its essence, *about* relations. What design *designs* are the relations between things and persons and things and nature”. Dilnot’s comments indicate that design is responsible for bringing modes or styles of relation in and out of being. Building on Dilnot’s claim, I note that working with the concept of relationality is itself a process that re-designs thinking, including thinking about both ‘relationality’ and ‘design’ (Fry 1999, p.13–4, 2011, p.132–4). Relationality as both socio-ecological force and idea thus participates in the ontological designing of ‘our’ relation to relationality.

Relational thinking is a thinking that has a sense for the *correlatedness* of systems, things, and thinking itself (Jullien 1995; Rošker 2011). Relationality attends to the dynamic tendencies that are implicit in situations and privileges becoming over attempts to establish and control determinate causes. Thinking in and with Heideggerian terms, Fry describes relationality as “a means to think modes of being-in-the-world in relation to the being-of-the-world as a condition of involvement” (Fry 1999).

Part of what relational thinking of Fry, Escobar, and others attempts to bring into awareness are the political and conceptual limitations of the kind of rationalist and instrumentalist ways of thinking that underscore relations of violence, exploitation, and domination. In talking about relationality as a theory of knowledge, Fry sets it in contrast to notions of cause and effect that dominate rationalist methodologies. Further, Fry argues that linear instrumental thought is grounded in and directed by an anthropocentric sensibility, one that fails to take into account ecological impacts. According to Fry, rationalist instrumentalism has its origins in classical Greek metaphysics, although it is a tendency that was significantly extended in the context of the colonial world system and the emergence of Enlightenment thought (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of metaphysics). Design theorist Susan Stewart describes this as a process of denying attachments that are otherwise essential to the being/becoming of things,

Relations between things erase neutrality and detachment. Where there are relations there are attachments, association, lines of interest and influence. If relations are constitutive of worlds, then there is no world in which influence is not exercised. Things, within worlds exercise a hold over other things. Beings acquire their orientations and directions from the configuration of beings around them. Thus the European Enlightenment, in its quest for detachment, for objectivity, was struggling against the tendency of the world to create binding attachments, obligations and influences. (Stewart 2015, p.280)

Escobar points to the phenomenological insight that 'our' being is never reducible to the guiding ideal of rationalism, that of the detached and supposedly neutral or objective observer (Escobar 2012). Rather, every way of being or becoming unfolds on the basis of primordial immersion and engagement with the world. Detachment is not denied as a particular attitude or experience but from the

phenomenological perspective it is seen as an expression of being that arises on the basis of denying one's worldly immersion, enmeshment, and responsibility.⁷

From the perspective of ontological designing, this denial is understood to be an effect of designs that provide support to the assumption that detachment is not only possible but also necessary. Quantum physicist and philosopher David Bohm (1983), for example, has argued that lens technologies contribute to an analytical or mechanistic mode of perception by supposedly objectifying the ontological assumption that beings are in essential reducible to component parts. Additionally, lenses greatly expanded the field of analytical perception by making visible that which is otherwise too far away, too large, too small, or too fast. In doing so, what the lens disclosed was not only a new way of looking at things but a more general attitude or disposition, a new style of perception that was transferable into and across contexts. As Bohm puts it,

[...] scientists were encouraged to extrapolate their ideas and to think that such an approach would be relevant and valid no matter how far they went, in all possible conditions, contexts, and degrees of approximation.
(Bohm 1983, p.144)

1.4.1 CORRELATION AND PROPENSITY IN CHINESE THOUGHT

In his accounts of relationality Fry often makes reference to the ideas of classical Chinese thought, particularly as presented in the work of François Jullien.⁸ While

⁷ Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1992, p.18–20) have argued that despite the value of their insights, philosophers of phenomenology such as Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty were never in fact able to bridge the divide between a *theory* of worldly immersion and worldly immersion as such.

⁸ “Chinese correlative thought provides a significant path to thinking the causal web that is implicit in the relational ecology of contemporary environments of manufactured commodities” (Fry 1999, p.13).

Fry and Jullien each name thinkers within the ‘Western’ tradition who expressed similar thinking, sometimes under the direct influence of Chinese or Japanese sources — including Heraclitus, Leibniz, Heidegger, and Whitehead — Jullien’s comparative reading of Greek and Chinese thought indicates the extent to which the Chinese centred and privileged a sensibility which classical Greek thinkers and their modern readers have rendered marginal, sometimes mystical, and to a large extent unthinkable. A key divergence between the two traditions is located in the Platonic and Aristotelian practice of distinguishing a higher, external, or primary order through which a fixed and abstract sense can be made of the world.⁹ In Jullien’s words,

Greek thought introduced order into becoming from the outside (on the basis of numbers, ideas, forms), whereas in Chinese thought order is conceived as lying within becoming; it is what makes becoming a process. (Jullien 1995)

Jullien argues that, insofar as it continues to draw upon classical Greek philosophy, contemporary ‘Western’ thought tends to imagine order as an external projection of form onto conditions that are otherwise unordered and, thus, neither intelligible nor controllable. As such, the most valued form of explanation are causal; that is, explanations that establish a chain of connection between antecedent and consequent elements.

⁹ The context in which Aristotle developed his metaphysics was characterised by a tension between the competing doctrines of Platonic idealism and Democritean materialism, a divergence that Aristotle attempted to resolve in his theory of substance. Of the categories of things that he determined a having being, Aristotle posited that substance was the most primary insofar as qualities were only intelligible in terms of substance. As part of his attempt to account for change and generation within his system, Aristotle held that substance was composed of a relation between form and matter, a doctrine known as hylemorphism. A residual Platonism can be found in the way that form (albeit softened from *the* Forms) is privileged as that out of which the matter of substance is made intelligible. The structure of this duality has been read as function to the Athenian political-economic order in which equality amongst free male citizens was established at the expense of women, children, slaves, and animals (Vlastos 1941; Ste. Croix 1989; Cole 1994).

Classical Chinese thought, by contrast, considers order to be intrinsic to the processual flux of life. On these terms, emphasis is given to clarifying the relevant and discernable *tendencies* of any situation rather than in tracing lines of causality. In this sense, classical Chinese ontology reflects a conception of things as *configured* and *disposed*, with the course of nature being interwoven with the course of human thought and behaviour.

The difference that Jullien draws between classical Greek and Chinese thought turns on what he describes as two fundamentally different ways of conceiving or disclosing the nature of reality. In classical Greek philosophy there were essentially two competing schools of thought. The first posited an event of creation from which flowed a complex but necessary chain of consequences. This *mechanistic* or *determinist* explanation represented in the thinking of atomists such as Democritus who thought of reality as constituted by the interaction of discrete and indivisible units of matter interacting within a void. The *finalistic* or *teleological* explanation, on the other hand — the position adopted in different ways by Plato and Aristotle — looks to establish the *telos*, the final, optimum, and logical end of any thing or process as its explanation. Thus, while the first school looks for the reason of things in their origins, the second looks to the end or final form to be fulfilled. Jullien observes that both of these positions are grounded in a common notion of causality that tends not to be found in classical Chinese thought.

In contrast to Greek or Enlightenment forms of metaphysics, Chinese thought was not based in concepts of *telos*, causality, or instrumentality. The Chinese had no need for a concept of *telos* because they understood order as arising from the autoregulation of correlating energetic forces. Thus they held no conception of a pure, abstract origin or future that fixed either meaning or states of being. Within classical Chinese ontology, reality is composed only of what the existing configuration is already in the process of bringing about, a process for which there is no beginning or end.

Jullien elaborates this idea by tracing the concept of propensity — as encapsulated in the notion of *shi* (勢) — across the domains of military strategy, politics and diplomacy, calligraphy, painting and poetry, history, and conceptions of nature (Jullien 1995). *Shi* as propensity represents a disclosive style characterised by a mode of correlational discernment. According to Jullien, the significance of *shi* as a disclosive concept first arose in the context of the general Sun Tzu’s reflections on military strategy. In this context it referred to “organizing circumstances in such a way as to derive profit from them” (Sun Tzu, as quoted by Jullien, p. 32). The tendency at work in things depends on both an actualising energy and a regulating principle; tendency is energy spontaneously oriented. Actualisation is fuelled by the energy that is constituted by the dynamic and mutual correlation of contrary or opposite forces.

While both classical Greek and classical Chinese thinkers viewed contrary relations as relevant to their respective theories of change, each held radically different conceptions of their meaning and significance. In Aristotle’s philosophy, for instance, contraries are mutually exclusive and can only relate to each other through recourse to a third something. The Chinese tradition, however, understands that contraries are at the same time both opposed and mutually contained within each other. Thus, for instance, the opposed conditions of *yin* and *yang* hold within each other an element of their respective opposite. As Jullien puts it, if ‘we’ conceive the opposition between density and dispersion, “the *yang* penetrates the density of the *yin*” just as the *yin* “opens up to the dispersion of the *yang*” (Jullien 1995, p.251). Both give rise to the actuality of the other without recourse to a more fundamental third.

In order to draw out the distinctiveness of correlational thought in a more concrete manner, Jullien compares Sun Tzu with the nineteenth century Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. Here Jullien suggests that Clausewitz conceptualised war in terms of its essential and accidental features; that is, as a

question of increasing one's relative chance of victory in battle based on a calculation of both quantifiable (troop numbers) and qualitative (morale) factors. Clausewitz introduced the idea of friction as a means to deal with the disparity between the idealism of plans and the experience of its implementation, a structure that is similar to the way in which Aristotle renders all difference or departure from established essences as 'accidentals'. Chinese military strategists, by contrast, were far more interested in what Jullien calls the *shaping of effect* of situations as a whole; that is, of adapting to and working with tendencies at play in any circumstance (Jullien 1995, p.37). In this manner, the classical Chinese strategist gave a much greater degree of emphasis to preliminary operations and setup rather than to the battle itself

Water functions as a key image in this way of thinking, and it is worth noting that there are resonances here with pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus' doctrine of flux, strife, and balance.¹⁰ Water is recognised as having a disposition to move from high points to low in such a way that is radically adaptable to any situation. Just as water adapts its movement to whatever terrain it finds itself in, so troops of well-trained and deployed soldiers will be 'naturally' disposed towards good effect. One's priority is not to conform to a preordained plan but to exploit the "ineluctable" tendencies of situations (Jullien 1995, p.26).

Classical Chinese conceptions of correlational propensity and classical Greek theories of causality thus embody two different ontologies of relation. As suggested, both forms of thinking relate not simply to detached theoretical abstractions but, rather, to modes of disclosure that orientate one's manner of dealing with the world. Jullien's account suggests that, for the way in which it

¹⁰ The phrase, "one never steps into the same river twice" is often attributed to Heraclitus, however Kirk et al. provide a translation of the relevant fragment that offers a more expansive and evocative image of the Heraclitian conception of flux: "Upon those that step into the same rivers different and different waters flow... It scatters and...gathers...it comes together and flows away...approaches and departs" (Kirk, Raven & Schofield 1983, p.196).

posits an external cause ‘outside’ of nature, post-Socratic classical Greek thought gives rise to a more restricted or impoverished conception of relationality. Chinese correlational thinking, on the other hand, while perhaps more difficult to grasp from the perspective of rationalist ontologies, represents but one way of thinking and acting within a world conceived as a condition of flux, something that is irreducible to theoretical/causal abstraction. As suggested with the example of military strategy, both causal and correlational ontologies represent not only different ways of thinking but also different modes of ontological designing or stylistic disclosure of being-in-the-world.

Jullien’s account of classical Chinese thought thus proves useful to my interest in relationality as a methodological position. In the next section I turn to the thinking of David Bohm as a source of insight into an ontology of relational flux.

1.4.2 REALITY-AS-PROCESS

The twentieth century quantum physicist turned philosopher David Bohm developed an account of reality-as-process that has resonances with the notions of correlation and propensity discussed above. Crediting Heraclitus and Whitehead as thinkers who also thought in terms of flux, Bohm begins one of his studies with the following proposition:

Not only is everything changing, but all is flux. That is to say, *what is* is the processes of becoming itself, while all objects, events, entities, conditions, structures, etc., are forms that can be abstracted from this process. (Bohm 1983, p.48)

The metaphor here is, again, water, however Bohm provides the image with a slightly different emphasis. The surface of a flowing stream presents “an ever-changing pattern of vortices, ripples, waves and splashes” (1975, p.48). Each of

these formations has no independent existence from the general flow of the stream, and there is no clear or definitive line of separation that can be drawn that would not be arbitrary at some level. Bohm's interest in this case is to provide a description of flux that does not resort to the idea of an ultimate substance; that is, neither a Platonic ideal form, Aristotelian genus, or the Democritean atom.

As Bohm argues, if all that *is* is flux then propositional or representational knowledge, along with thought itself, is necessarily always partial and abstract. Moreover, thought is itself a question of ongoing processes rather than fixed or settled ideas. Thought — which in Bohm's case includes all the intellectual, emotional, sensuous, muscular and physical responses of memory — is in a *movement of becoming*. Thought is not about a reflective correspondence with things because the thing-thought relation is an abstraction of the indefinable whole. Thought is better conceived as a kind of 'dance of the mind' that works indicatively within the flows of an overall process. A 'dance' that resonates suggests a thinking that is interacts pleasurably with its current situation.¹¹

Within his reflection on reality-as-process, Bohm encounters a problem with the notion of the distinction between what is 'real' and what is 'mere thought' being necessary for establishing and sustaining a sense of sense. By my reading, Bohm's issue here is not a question of *where* to draw the line between thought ('ideas') and non-thought ('reality'), but, rather, that the drawing of such a line seems to be at the same time both necessary and impossible. To be fully 'at one' with flux would equate to being so infinitely dispersed as to have no sense of self. While the self remains an illusory abstraction of a kind, it seems evident that this abstraction is not simply useful but, more problematically, that it is impossible for 'us' to get beyond it without losing touch with 'reality'. In thinking this through, Bohm

¹¹ Much of Bohm's argument itself resonates with the work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and Australian Indigenous philosopher Norman Sheehan. On Deleuze see in particular his studies of Nietzsche and Spinoza (Deleuze 1983, 1995, 2001b). On Sheehan see his discussion of Bohm in his PhD thesis, *Indigenous Knowledge and Higher Education Learning* (Sheehan 2004).

entertains the idea that ‘thought proper’ begins with the flash of insight that allows for a distinction between thought and non-thought, an event that begins a process of distinguishing that which has thinghood (the palpable, stable, resistant) from that which belongs to thought (the impalpable, transient, easily changed).

Bohm finds, however, that this proposal involves distinctions that are too fixed and so fail to account for how the activity of thought implicates itself in thinghood, and vice-versa. Most features of ‘our’ environment are “extensions of the process of thought” (Bohm 1975, p.58). At the same time, all the things of ‘our’ environment ‘flow’ into thought, giving rise to sense impressions that structure the memories upon which thought arises. Memory passes into and becomes an integral feature of the environment as the content of the environment passes into and becomes an integral feature of memory. We can recognise this as an account of the hermeneutic cycle of ontological designing, albeit written with different terminology and at a time before Winograd and Flores began their collaboration.

Bohm goes on to make the double claim that thought *is* non-thought and that non-thought *is* thought.¹² Bohm resolves what appears to be two contradictory statements in a way that resonates with Jullien’s discussion of classical Chinese thought; that is, by claiming that what is at play here are non-fixed distinctions or distinctions that move with the process of thought as it contemplates its implication within the totality of a flux that can never been known or represented in its totality. In the course of Bohm’s discussion the point emerges that ‘we’ are only interested in what is named ‘thought’ and ‘non-thought’ insofar as the

¹² “This cyclical (or spiral) movement, in which thought has its full actual and concrete existence, includes also the communication of thoughts between people (who are parts of each other’s environment) and it goes indefinitely far into the past. Thus, at no stage can we properly say that the *overall process* of thought begins or ends. Rather, it has to be seen as one unbroken totality of movement, not belonging to any particular person, place, time, or group of people. Through the consideration of the physical nature of the response of memory in reaction of nerves, feelings, muscular motions, etc., and through the consideration of the merging of these responses with the general environment in the overall cyclical process described above, we see then that thought is non-thought (T is NT)” (Bohm 1983, p.58–9).

movement of such distinctions works to “dispose the mind to an act of intelligent perception” (Bohm 1983, p.61). The thought/non-thought distinction is thus something that unravels into the recognition that each participates in the other.

1.4.3 AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE ON RELATIONALITY

Australian Aboriginal philosophers such as Mary Graham and Norman Sheehan have also argued for the significance of relational thinking in Indigenous systems of thought. Graham argues, for instance, that Aboriginal societies have traditionally cultivated an understanding of relationality that acts as “an elaborate, complex and refined system of social, moral, spiritual and community obligations that provide an ordered universe for people” (Graham 2014, p.17). Graham explains further that,

Within the context of this system [of Aboriginal relationality], relationality embraced uncertainty and imprecision, consented to being driven by feeling, accepted and made room for conflict while regarding invasion and warlikeness as not only invalid but also highly inefficient, resolved the contradiction between power and authority, provided coherence about the notion of a life, as Deleuze (2001a) put it, and, finally assumed and lived *as if* not only groups, but all people, are autonomous beings. (Graham 2014, p.17).

Graham proposes that there are at least four attributes of relationality within an Aboriginal perspective: empathy/ethics, identity/place, autonomy, and balance.

1. *Empathy/ethics*

For Graham, Aboriginal perspectives on relationality are grounded in a sacred conception of the relationship between Land and people. This emotionally

invested relationship gives rise to an ethic of custodianship; “a permanent, standing obligation to look after Land, society and social relations” that constitutes an Aboriginal conception of Law (Graham 2014, p.18). This ethic governs two core relations: a relation between people and Land that forms the basis for relations amongst people. This is a cultural system disposed towards sustainment over long periods of time, something that requires a great deal of “effort and imagination, especially with regard to creating social structures, formalizing and managing conflict and decision-making, and, most importantly, building congenial fellowship” (Graham 2014, p.18). Graham (2014, p.18) argues that empathy is integral to sustaining this system whose ethics is a question of custom or tradition, rather than “an ideal to be pursued” or as the warrant for adopting an attitude of righteousness in situations of conflict. In this sense, ethics is situated within the proper performance of protocol and manners that respect reciprocity and maintain strategic cooperation.

2. *Identity/place*

In an echo of Mignolo’s own formulation, Graham summarises her response to the Cartesian maxim of ‘I think therefore I am’ as ‘I am located therefore I am’. Locatedness gives rise to *coherence*, which is a sense of *confidence* in the predictability of one’s environment. Coherence is not a given but a product of a “social, spiritual, and cultural life” that must be worked at and constructed (Graham 2014, p.18). More specifically, coherence is achieved through the “sacralization of obligation and the putting of this obligation into practice via ceremonies, social structures, organizing principles, patterning (identity imprinting), laws, repetition of narratives” (Graham 2014, p.19). Coloniality disrupts the interplay between locatedness, confidence, and coherence, giving rise to confusion not simply on personal or social levels, but as “the sense of an orderly universe” (Graham 2014, p.19).

The coloniality of design thus expresses itself in the experience of the colonised not simply as a condition of direct physical violence but as the disruption and confusion of a worldly order of sense and coherence. From this perspective the coloniser appears as a force of utter confusion and destruction. This is born out in an account from Deborah Bird Rose of conversations with her Aboriginal teachers from the Victoria River people in the Northern Territory:

they pointed to actions and ideas which to them indicated that Whitefellas were trapped in a state of confusion about their own past and their own place. Not knowing what to remember and what to forget, Whitefellas according to Victoria River people, follow dead laws, fail to recognise living ones and, in our power and denial, continue to promote death. Similarly with regard to place, people spoke of Whitefellas 'coming of blind' and bumping into everything. The living presence of the living country in its own flourishing particularity was not noticed by Whitefellas, whose mission was conquest. (Rose 2004, p.9)

3. Autonomy

Place is not a position but a "matrix of relations, narratives, obligations" (Graham 2014, p.19). These relations are organised according to the autonomy of clan groups, a multipolar system that instituted a logic and sense of time that Graham claims is different to both 'Western' and 'Eastern' conceptions. Within this system the places, individuals, families and clans were understood to each have a unique voice that was both valid and reasonable.

4. Balance

For Graham, Aboriginal logic is expressed in the "tendency of the group (clans) to locate and accept each other's distinctiveness or singularity" without needing to synthesise, unify, or arrive at a necessary agreement on matters (Graham 2014,

p.20). At the same time, people practiced a sense of socio-political balancing that sought to enhance distinctiveness. Graham makes the point that a concept of ‘balancing’ is preferable to the Western political ideal of ‘equality’ as the former “contains qualities such as equilibrium and congruence” (Graham 2014, p.20). This underscores decision making practices that are consensual rather than democratic, a laterally organised social order with a soft hierarchy around knowledge, and balanced gender relations. In an echo of both Jullien on classical Chinese thought and Bohm on reality-as-process, this system of decision-making is conducted according to a processual rather than goal-oriented logic.

1.4.4 RELATIONALITY, RESPONSE-ABILITY, ETHICS

A dimension of relationality that features more so in the work of Graham and Sheehan than Jullien and Bohm is the question of ‘ethical’ relations amongst people. In speaking on this aspect of relationality, Sheehan (2010) refers to the work of Kelly Oliver (2004) as a useful source of insight. In her study of the social-psychology of colonialism, Oliver remarks that while many psychoanalysts, phenomenologists, and critical theorists — particularly those still thinking within the Hegelian tradition — view subjectivity as intrinsically *inter*-subjective, these theorists have often failed to extend this thought to the point at which the subject itself is conceived in relational terms. As Oliver puts it, this latter idea requires a more radical shift from a narrative of already existing subjects entering into relations with others, to an understanding that *subjectivity only arises on the basis of relationality itself*. The shift here is towards seeing relationality as primary; that is, as the basis upon which self-conscious encountering and recognition can occur.

Oliver’s argument can thus be seen as an expression of Escobar’s principle of relationality — that nothing pre-exists relations — but within a discourse of socio-critical psychoanalysis. What is of specific interest to me in Oliver’s thinking is the way she extends this principle into the realm of ethics, linking relationality to her

concepts of *responsivity* and *response-ability* (Oliver 2004, p.xviii). For Oliver, responsivity is both a prerequisite and a definitive feature of subjectivity:

Subjectivity is constituted through response, responsiveness, or response-ability and not the other way around [...] it is responsiveness and relationality that make subjectivity and psychic life possible. (Oliver 2004, p.xviii)

As Oliver puts it, the constitutional interplay of responsiveness and relationality reflects a Levinasian conception of the subject as fundamentally ethical. This leads Oliver to making an argument for the cultivation of the very ability to respond:

We are [exist], by virtue of our ability to respond to others, and therefore we have a primary obligation to our founding possibility, response-ability itself. We have a responsibility to open up rather than close off the possibility of response, both from ourselves and from others. (Oliver 2004, p.xviii)

Bringing this to design, Oliver's concept of response-ability resonates with both Fry's notion of sustain-ability and Susan Stewart and Jacqueline Lorber-Kasunic's discussion of *akrasia* within design practice and education (Fry 1999, 2008; Stewart & Lorber-Kasunic 2008). In *A New Design Philosophy*, Fry distinguishes sustain-ability from the dominant discourse of sustainability. Whereas the political potency of sustainability has tended to be hollowed out within both rationalistic and popular discourse, sustain-ability names "the agency of a process [...] the ability to constantly learn, work on and improve that which is vital to, and for, the 'being of being'" (Fry 1999, p.8). *Akrasia*, meanwhile, acting as the obverse of sustain-ability, names a failure to do what is known to be right. In Stewart and Lorber-Kasunic's analysis *akrasia* is read in structural terms as an ontologically designed disablement of proper action, an experience that, if attended to rather than suppressed, might form the basis of new form of a ontological designing,

something what 'we' might understand as response-ability. The crucial point in this case is that both the designing of sustain-ability and response-ability both rest on the priority of a relational understanding.

1.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided an overview or first pass over the two major schools of thought that form the framework of this inquiry. Additionally, I have enacted a relational reading of the concept of relationality that acts as both a concept and methodology that will inform my reading of the coloniality of design. As suggested, one of the central problematics that I engage in this thesis is the question of developing a conception of the coloniality of design that attends to the designerly configuration of one's perspective within the colonial matrix. As the discussion of perspectivism indicates, whatever can be achieved here can only ever be a reflection of my own manner of reading the relation between design and coloniality. That said, such a condition can only be represented as a problem from the perspective of zero point epistemology; that is, an epistemology that is ontologically invested in the denial of relation and perspective, a denial that is fundamental to the reproduction of the coloniality of knowledge. The problem moving forward, therefore, is neither a question of overcoming perspective nor one of letting it remain unquestioned. Rather, my intention over the course of the next two chapters is to conduct a course of reading that attends more closely to some of the philosophical background of both ontological designing and coloniality so as to draw out some of ideas, issues, and questions that will further inform the concept of the coloniality of design. In short, this will amount in the first instance to engagement with the problem of Heidegger's political ontology and in the second with the question of Mignolo's conception of the materiality of knowledge. The insights arrived at through this process will then be used to inform an inquiry into the ontological designing of coloniality in an 'Australian' context.

If at the beginning our reflections are in large measure inspired by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, where we find the concept of ontology and of the relationship which man sustains with Being, they are also governed by a profound need to leave the climate of that philosophy, and by the conviction that we cannot leave it for a philosophy that would be pre-Heideggerian. (Levinas 2001, p.19)

The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian — our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (Anzaldúa 1999, p.87)(Anzaldúa 1999, p.87)

2.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 1, the concept of coloniality is conceived by decoloniality thinkers as a condition that “is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance,

in cultural patterns, in common sense” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p.243). In my first pass on design studies I was concerned with situating design discourse as a form of meta-designing that works to ontologically design a rationalistic concept of design that delimits its meaning to a compliant service role within the terms of the capitalist mode of production. The view I insist on, one I derive from the perspective of ontological designing and relational thinking, is that the agency of design is far more significant and complex than what design discourse can ever hope to represent. As it stands, design has been turned, by design, into a complicit and constitutive force of socio-ecological violence. The task of a radical conception of ontological designing, therefore, is to recover and expand ‘our’ sense for the significance of design so that its normative and directional capacities may be turned towards the interests of different form of politics, in this case, decoloniality.

My task in this chapter is to turn the question of coloniality and colonial difference towards thinking about the philosophical foundations of ontological designing. As indicated in Chapter 1, ontological designing is itself a mode of thinking that emerges out of the lifeworlds of particular thinkers who are located within rather than beyond the flux of historical change. This point speaks to the question of the materiality of knowledge that I will take up in more detail in Chapter 3, however I suggest that the discussion that I have provided thus far concerning the relation between thinking, ontological designing, and perspectivism is sufficient to indicate that the concept of ontological designing must itself be subject to a form of critical decolonial reading. This relates, in part, to what I mean by reading ontological designing in light of coloniality.

My intention in this chapter is to provide a discussion of both the value and limitations of the thinking of Martin Heidegger that centres on the unsettling problem of Heidegger’s fascist political ontology. My process of questioning here is influenced by a tension between the critiques of Heidegger developed by decolonial thinkers — most particularly Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2004, 2007, 2008) — and my own recognition of the value that Heideggerian thinking holds within the body of work devoted to ontological designing. With this tension in mind, my strategy here is to situate Heidegger’s project as a critique

of metaphysics that gave rise to a radically new conception of human experience and agency that was initially encapsulated in the concept of *Dasein* or 'being-there'. After explaining the origins of this concept within the context of Heidegger's own philosophical project, the later part of this chapter is devoted to feminist and social conflict readings of Heidegger by Tina Chanter and Dorothy Leland that show how, despite its value, Heidegger's own conception of *Dasein* remained constrained by his conservative, ethnocentric, and patriarchal political ontology. Both Chanter and Leland's analysis, however, also demonstrates a way of retrieving and reformulating Heideggerian conceptual tools for a politics that attends to the pluriversality, existential problematics, and political stakes of minoritised expressions of *Dasein*. This work sets the initial terms for my reengagement with Quijano and Mignolo in Chapter 3.

In summary, I aim to show how ideas, concepts, and other expressions of thought represent materialisations of situated lifeworlds that can be prefigurative and directive of modern/colonial 'common sense'. At the same time, I argue that such works nevertheless remain open to reformulation and appropriation into alternative political projects. A key qualification here is that there is nothing certain or final about the prospects of such work, and that Heidegger's error ought to remain exposed and confronted as a source of unsettlement in those who turn to his work for insights into a way of thinking and acting beyond the limitations of metaphysics.

2.1 UNSETTLING DESIGN THEORY

As indicated in Chapter 1, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger represents a foundational source of insight for theorists of ontological designing.¹ Thinkers associated with

¹ Heidegger himself rejected the label of "philosopher" in favour of "thinking". The meaning of such a distinction, however, requires an explanation that seem irrelevant to what I am trying to achieve here. Given that there really is no way to understand Heidegger's work other than as and via an engagement with what continues to be called philosophy for my purposes here I see no major issue with referring to Heidegger and his work as philosophical, particularly given that it provides for a sense of difference with respect to the interests and disposition of design theorists, granted of course that such a difference is not categorically distinct.

ontological designing such as Winograd and Flores, Fry, Willis, Tonkinwise, Lopes, Stewart, along with post-phenomenological theorists of technology such as Don Ihde (1990), Peter-Paul Verbeek (2005), and Albert Borgmann (1987) have drawn on Heidegger's thought in order to develop an ontological understanding of the complex nature of 'our' relation to and within situated worlds of design. In this respect the understanding derived from Heidegger's work has proven to be of significant value in overcoming the rationalism of design theory that I discussed in Chapter 1.

The value of Heidegger's work to design theorists centres for the most part on his way of articulating the ordinary but essential equipmentality of human existence; that is, 'our' way of existing within, through, and by means of dynamic and relational ensembles of design. Heidegger's philosophy allows for an understanding of design *qua* design; that is, from a perspective of interest in design as a distinctive kind of practice, knowledge, and socio-political force. In a context in which what is uniquely powerful about design struggles to find expression amidst scientific conceptions of technical innovation and aesthetic philosophies that centre the interests of the fine-arts, Heidegger's investigations into the subtle complexity of ordinary experience has provided design theorists with a means of establishing a theoretical grip on the uncanny significance of design's naturalised and normative artificiality (Fry 1993, p.13; Fry, Kalantidou & Mignolo 2014, p.186).

While I will elaborate on these insights in a later section of this chapter, but for the purposes of this section they represent the set-up for a discussion of a different kind of problem; namely, what calls for rethinking in an attempt to move from a Heideggerian inflected conception of design towards an engagement with questions of (de)colonisation, or, a reading of ontological designing in light of coloniality. The difficulty here resides in the relation between two distinct political ontologies; namely, a commitment to the aims and values of decolonisation versus the increasingly well-documented case of Heidegger's fascist political ontology (Trawny 2015; Maldonado-Torres 2004). To pose the issue in a preliminary way, the question to confront is one of how to face, understand, and contend

with a situation in which a way of thinking that I have experienced as a source of insight has a shadow cast upon it by its connection to a detestable politics and a catastrophic event of colonial violence.²

Since the publication of Victor Farias' *Heidegger and Nazism* (1989) there has developed a large and still growing body of literature on the question of Heidegger's Nazism and its relation to his thought. Perspectives on this topic divide in various ways but the strongest lines of debate are on the question of how committed Heidegger was to the National Socialist movement as well as the extent to which it is either possible or legitimate to interpret and judge his philosophy in connection with his actions during the period of Nazi rule. I will not spend time on the details of Heidegger's involvement with Nazism, nor will I engage the literature that is devoted to working over the various comments and silences from Heidegger, his defenders, and sympathetic critics. It is enough for me to indicate that the scope and diversity of these responses has been usefully surveyed by Gregory Fried in his book *Heidegger's Polemos* (2014). In Fried's terms these range from efforts at denial, to justification, condemnation, recuperation, and problematisation. In recent years the debate has been re-energised by the publication of the *Black Notebooks*, a collection of hitherto private notes from 1931-1941 that are significant for, as Peter Trawny has argued, shedding light on the material influence of Heidegger's anti-Semitism within several key themes of his philosophy, including his thinking on technology (Trawny 2014). While Trawny's argument limits the initial appearance of anti-Semitism in Heidegger's philosophy to the period of the 1930s, this depiction is contested by Tom Rockmore (2014) who insists that anyone who cares to look will find signs of anti-Semitism present throughout the entirety of Heidegger's corpus. Amidst these debates, the point that strikes me as most significant for thinking through the politics of thinking with Heidegger is one made by Fried: what are 'we', Heidegger's readers, to do with the understanding that it was by no accident that Heidegger's thinking lead him to fascism (Fried 2014, p.12). Simply put, my suggestion here is that there is no possibility of learning

² For classic accounts of the connection between European colonial exploits and the German National Socialist movement see Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973) and Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (2001). See also Nelson Maldonado-Torres' *Against War* (2008).

from Heidegger unless those of 'us' who seek insight in his thought are also prepared to confront and understand the dangers of Heidegger's political ontology.

If Heidegger and his thought is so troublesome why contend with it at all? Posing such a question presents an opportunity to check the error of assuming that any particular thinker could be more important than the political task 'we' might call upon them to assist us with. On this front it is useful to clarify that Heidegger need not be defended as the singular or necessary patron of the insights that have otherwise been derived from him. To put this another way, developing a sensitivity towards the ontological nature of design is not something that of necessity requires an engagement with Heidegger. In one respect the condition of 'our' being equipmental beings is, as Cameron Tonkinwise (2016) has argued, a more or less tacit assumption in the work of any designer, professional or otherwise. Here there is a way of saying that all practices of design embody at some level an understanding of equipmental being that Heidegger and his readers have fashioned into a object of inquiry that is derivative of how each of 'us' actually experience design and designing. Moreover, it is both important and possible to recognise that aspects of what Heidegger's philosophy makes available to theory is manifest in the writing of many thinkers, including those positioned either within or beyond the influence of Heidegger himself, the discipline of philosophy, and the traditions of Western or European thought (see, for instance, the work of Norman Sheehan (2004, 2011)). There are other paths towards the kind of learning that Heidegger makes possible, paths that, to be clear, are of value not for being comparable to Heidegger but for what they reveal about the nature of design itself.

It is possible to acknowledge all of this, however, and remain unsatisfied with the idea of abandoning a critical engagement with Heidegger. The error of presuming that there are theorists or philosophers who are politically 'safe' to read is one thing, but the factor that I think presses the issue in a more compelling way is that so much of the design theory that I suggest is of value to the task of re-thinking design has already arrived via an engagement with Heidegger's thought. To put the issue as directly as I can, I want to be able to acknowledge and explain why this work remains of value despite Heidegger's

political ontology. At the same time I want to acknowledge that the idea of decolonisation presses 'us' to consider what possibilities for thinking have been covered over by the form of disclosure that Heidegger enables.

The issue here is not that reading Heidegger might lead 'us' in some mechanistic fashion to adopt his politics but, rather, that a failure to articulate and think through the ontological designing of his thought leaves 'us' ill-equipped to theorise design from the actual place in which I am; that is, as a design theorist who is already influenced by a philosopher whose relationship to fascist thinking is undeniable, whatever the complexity. Seeking insight from someone considered "safer" without having considered this problem itself only works to defer and cover over questions that are required of a decolonial politics. Searching for insight amongst a diversity of thinkers is imperative but so is acknowledging the unsettling truth of a tradition of thought that holds within it things that might remain important to us. Eliding the issue via recourse to other thinkers would amount to displacing the kind of confrontation that brings to light what is at stake in the politics of decolonisation, which is nothing if not a call to reassess 'our' relation to the ontological designing of traditions as they are handed down and taken up, not only prior to critical thought but as a condition of its possibility. That said, in what follows part of what I hope to demonstrate is that alternative thinking and critical confrontation are not categorical opposites. Rather, I suggest that a different form of disclosure is possible if the decision is made to read with those at the margins of thinking with and against Heidegger. Such thinking encourages theorists to hold on to what 'we' find valuable in Heidegger's work, but also leads 'us' to decentre the designs of his thought and move into a relation with thinking that runs against the grain of his political ontology.

As a final word before moving forward, it is worth emphasising the extent to which the problematic to be engaged here is far from new. The thinking expressed here occurs in the midst of work already done by many other powerful and serious thinkers. Among them are Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas, whose respective involvements with both Heidegger and the violence of German National Socialism was intimate. The scope of what I am looking to achieve here is not equal to the efforts of these thinkers even if

the questions are in many respects similar. The reason for engaging this question, I suggest, lies in the sense that an ethics-/politics of decoloniality obliges me to articulate a stance that takes heed of the conditions of a theorist's work while also doing justice to the concrete particularity of my own time and place. This is to say that while there is a sense in which the problem I am trying to work through here is not entirely new, it is also not possible to substitute the process of working it out via another person's thought. The issue at hand is not one that can be put to rest simply because others have considered it because what is at stake in this labour is not simply a question of how a reader relates to Heidegger but of how each of 'us' relate to 'our' selves and a world in which we encounter others to whom we are always already responsible. That I might feel called to take a stance on my existence in this way is of course an exemplar insight of Heideggerian thought. In this context it provides direction for facing the question of decolonising (and) design (theory) that is most proximal and, as a consequence, most difficult.

2.2 THE QUESTION OF BEING

Heidegger's project in its most general terms can be described as the recovery of the question of *being*³ from within or beneath the 'Western' philosophical tradition, or, more specifically, the tradition of metaphysics.⁴ The concept of 'being' in Heideggerian thought

³ The common practice is to write "being" in the capitalised form "Being", as is done so throughout the Macquarie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time*. I have chosen to use the lower-case form so as to counter the tendency to interpret the word in mystical or metaphysical ways.

⁴ The idea of 'Western' philosophy, particularly as it implies a line connection from the Modern to the Classical via Medieval Christian thinkers, has been contested on the grounds of its ahistorical and partial reading of history (Dussel 1995). As a case in point, even the narrow conception of philosophy — that which takes the record of ancient Greek thought as its point of origin — generally fails to acknowledge and include the material contributions of thinkers of the Islamic world. The origins of concepts in Chinese, Indian and other non-European sources, including the work of African thinkers prior to what is recorded of the Ionian pre-Socratics, have also been marginalised and erased from within the dominant historical narrative. Additionally, there is the problem of taking the idea of 'the West' as a natural concept despite one of its key premises being the ability of imperial powers to classify and regulate subalterned modes of thought and the story of their origins. While more could be said on this issue, the point that I acknowledge here is that there is no way of escaping the ideological import of the idea of 'Western' philosophy. I use the term here with caution as a way to explain how Heidegger positioned himself in the history of thought.

can be difficult to come to grips with, for as Anne-Marie Willis (2007) points out, its meaning can easily be confused for something like a mystical type essence or some “supra-entity” such as Spirit or God. ‘Being’, however, as distinct from individuated and plural ‘beings’, is emphatically not an entity nor an essence, nor is it to be thought of as a substance, a process, or an event (Dreyfus 1991, p.xi). Rather, the definition for ‘being’ given in *Being and Time* is “that on the basis of which beings are already understood” (Heidegger 1962, pp.25-6). As the argument goes, the ‘that’ upon which beings are understood is related not to something composed of implicit principles or rules that can be clarified and formally represented but, rather, the everyday know-how of embodied social practices. ‘Our’ most fundamental way of making sense of things is grounded in what ‘we’ do, in ‘our’ activity, in ‘our’ involvement with things. As Hubert Dreyfus suggests, the significance of Heidegger’s interest in “being” can be usefully described as an inquiry into the nature of ‘our’ most concrete manner of intelligibility, a task that involves distinguishing between several different ways of being as they relate to and concern human being. The question that Heidegger asks of ‘being’, therefore, relates to a story of ‘our’ basic and practical way of relating to things as they are disclosed to ‘us’.

The task that Heidegger sets himself in *Being and Time* can be understood as the effort to correct an error that he saw as fundamental and pervasive in both the ‘Western’ philosophical tradition and in the way of thinking that dominated the modern world. This error is located in the assumption that the most coherent or rational way to talk about being is in terms of the substance ontology laid down by Aristotle, a philosophy that has implications for theory and perceptions of classification, change, and identity. While I touched on Aristotle’s ideas in brief in the discussion on correlation and propensity in Chapter 1, the relevant aspects of Aristotle’s argument are worth examining in more detail so as to understand both Heidegger’s argument as well as the ontological designing of substance ontology.

While I would argue that this is an important part of the story of Heidegger’s thought, I have no interest in diminishing the problem of the geopolitics of Heidegger’s thought (Maldonado-Torres 2004).

2.2.1 SUBSTANCE ONTOLOGY

Heidegger himself had a great deal of respect for Aristotle, particularly for the way in which Aristotle studied the phenomena of human action and conduct. Heidegger took issue, however, with Aristotle's approach to the question of being, or at least the manner in which Aristotle's account led to a foreclosure on the question of being itself. This story can begin with those elements of Plato's conception of theory that carried over into Aristotle's metaphysics, something that was a problem both in itself and for the significant influence of Aristotle's metaphysics throughout the philosophical tradition.

Plato is well known for promoting a mode of reflection that valorises detachment from the world as a method for producing knowledge that is certain, beyond questions of politics, and therefore, of highest value (Sheehan 2004). This approach assumes that the proper way to understand things is not to take reality at face value but, rather, to discern the ideal Form that lies behind the mere appearance of things. Sensual experience represents a suspect source of knowledge as its being is merely a corrupt and unstable derivative of an absolute ideal, something that could only properly be grasped via a process of rational abstraction. The Forms are universally and eternally correct and the task of philosophy is to derive their proofs and from them construct the most rational solution to any problem, including questions of politics and social organisation. It is by no accident that Plato's way of thinking stands out as a classical precursor to modernist aesthetics and theories of design (Verbeek & Kockelkoren 1998).

Plato favoured a rational-idealist methodology in which the Forms can be derived through the technique of thought experiment and abstract logical reasoning. For a Platonist, the highest priority in determining the being of beings is to discern the most general and perfect Form, something that is achieved by turning away from the appearance of things rather than towards them. As a student of Plato, Aristotle was heavily influenced by these ideas but in the process of his own work he found reasons to diverge from a number of Plato's core doctrines. Aristotle was more open to the

approach taken by Democritus' atomist-materialist school of thought — a contemporary and rival of the Platonic school — and took an interest in deriving something of a synthesis between the two positions; that is, a philosophy that told a story of the relationship between identity (form) and change (matter) without reducing the reality of one to the other. The result was the doctrine of *hylomorphism*,⁵ an account of how form acts upon matter so as to produce beings that are intelligible in their being.⁶ Aristotle identifies this composite of form and matter as *substance* and it is with this concept that Aristotle defines the meaning of being. Being or intelligibility obtains in the substance of beings as the interaction of form and matter rather than as an abstract Form that is absolutely devoid of all matter.

Aristotle also differs from Plato on the question of whether classes of things (e.g. apples) have ontological priority (are more real or intelligible) over individual entities (e.g. this particular apple). While Plato gave priority to the latter, in Aristotle's system whatever is common or essential to individual entities of a particular class is that which gives intelligibility to the class as such. The essential properties of members of the class 'apple' thus inhere in every individual instance of an apple such that a particular apple is perceived in its 'appleness' regardless of whatever 'accidental' or non-essential properties it is said to have, such as being in a bowl or rolling across a table. For Aristotle, individual entities are more 'truly' substantial for it is within individual entities that the greatest number of properties inhere. Higher order classes such as 'species' or 'genera' are distinct for helping to define the essential properties of a thing but they are nevertheless still 'secondary' substances insofar as they inhere in individuals. The individualness of an individual does not inhere in anything else and so is considered to be a case of 'primary'

⁵ Tim Ingold provides an insightful critique of this doctrine with regards to making in "Toward an Ecology of Materials" (2012). The doctrine of hylomorphism is also connected with Aristotle's economic and political philosophy insofar as, for instance, he viewed men as the active or 'form giving' component *vis-a-vis* women as the passive 'matter' component that together created the composite substance of 'Man'.

⁶ This account draws upon a variety of sources including Aristotle's *Categories* and *Metaphysics*, Hugh Lawson-Tancred's 'Introduction' to his translation of the *Metaphysics* (Aristotle 1998), Hubert Dreyfus' *Being in the World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time Division I* (1991), Howard Robinson's entry on "Substance" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014), and John F. Sowa's 'Building, Sharing, and Merging Ontologies' (2009).

substance. The significance of this distinction can be understood if ‘we’ consider that there is, in a sense, more information available in a particular thing — the chair that you might be sitting on for instance — than there is in the concept of an abstract class such as ‘chairs’. Likewise there is more information available in the concept of ‘chairs’ than there is in the higher order class of ‘furniture’, more information in ‘furniture’ than in ‘made things’ and so on and so on as the degree of abstraction is increased.

2.2.2 THE ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING OF METAPHYSICS

Aristotle’s substance ontology is significant not simply as a point of departure for understanding the question of being in Heidegger’s philosophy but for reasons that are relevant to the question of the relation between ontological designing and coloniality.

While I have tried to give a coherent representation of the basic features of the substance ontology doctrine there is an enormous history of commentary — some major pre-modern figures being Alfarabi (2002), Avicenna (2013), Averroes (2011), Maimonides (2013), Aquinas (1995, 2008), Scotus (2014) — devoted to teasing out and resolving the various ambiguities or ‘glitches’ that have been discovered within the Aristotelian system. While the influence of Aristotle’s thought throughout Greek, Arabic, and Latin speaking worlds has waxed and waned across time and place, the impact of his substance ontology remains extensive both within and outside the ‘Western’ defined discipline of philosophy. The history of Aristotelian thought is a significant part of the history of systematisation itself, something that is today expressed in many branches of science and research, including the various natural (e.g. physics, biology), social (e.g. politics, economics), and applied (e.g. medicine, engineering) sciences. The computer scientist John F. Sowa, for instance, has observed that,

Aristotle’s method of defining new categories by genus and differentiae is fundamental to artificial intelligence, object-oriented systems, the semantic web, and every dictionary from the earliest days to the present. (Sowa 2009)

Sowa also points to quotes from the German rationalist philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) that provides a sense for the enthusiasm with which the thinkers of the European Enlightenment took hold of and extended the reach of substance ontology:

The art of ranking things in genera and species is of no small importance and very much assists our judgement as well as our memory. You know how much it matters in botany, not to mention animals and other substances, or again moral and notional entities as some call them. Order largely depends on it, and many good authors write in such a way that their whole account could be divided and subdivided according to a procedure related to genera and species. This helps one not merely to retain things, but also to find them. And those who have laid out all sorts of notions under certain headings or categories have done something very useful. (Leibniz, as quoted in Sowa 2009)

As Heidegger argued, in modern(/ colonial) times substance ontology has been established as the hegemonic mode of knowing and representing knowledge. It has become a habit of thought and discourse that takes on the sense of being the most natural, obvious, and intuitive way of interpreting the being of beings. As such, the pervasiveness of substance ontology represents the effect of a particular form of ontological designing; that is, an outcome not of the way things actually 'are' but of the kinds of embodied equipmental practices that make such thinking and its associated practices meaningful.

The effect of the ontological designing of substance ontology lies not in conforming to any particular system but in having normalised the habit of interpreting and speaking about beings in terms of properties, classes, taxonomies, models, co-ordinates etc. The significance of the metaphysical interpretation of being is also besides the point of whether or not such varieties of systematised knowledge are found to be useful or valuable. What is really at stake here in terms of understanding both design and

coloniality is the assumption that knowledge is most valid when it can be represented or derived on the basis of either one system, a particular group of systems, or substance ontology as such.

Substance ontology shows up in everyday or ‘common sense’ discussions that are oriented towards determining the nature of things as property bearing substances (Mitropoulos 2017a). For instance, to interpret the presence of a bird as an instance of a particular species in the context of a broader taxonomy of living beings, to interpret a person as the expression of a particular ‘culture’, ‘ethnicity’, or ‘race’, or to interpret the patterns of one’s feelings and thoughts in view of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, is to think and act under the influence of an habitualised Aristotelian style metaphysics. Similarly, to think about physical geography in terms of a system of bordered and defined continents or regions, or of time as a system of measure, is to adopt a metaphysical mode of interpretation.

Part of the argument that Heidegger looks to make in *Being and Time* is that substance ontology represents a severely limited way of interpreting the being of beings, particularly insofar as it designs a blindness towards both relationality and the presence of pre- or non-theoretical interpretations of being. By framing the question of being as a matter of propositional statements, as a question of what ‘we’ might claim as having being or not, the project of substance ontology misses out on the fact that ‘we’ are always already have an understanding of the being of beings before the explicit or formal question of ontology is ever raised. Further, despite the effort at clarity derived from its supposition, the meaning of “substance” in Aristotle’s metaphysics remains ambiguous (Heidegger 2009, p.17).

Substance ontology thus encounters an internal problem of defining the essence of that which all other properties are supposed to inhere in, meaning that its claim to be able to derive certain knowledge about the world invariably shows up as being without an

absolute rational foundation.⁷ In foreclosing on this problem, the history of metaphysical thinking obscures the manner in which systematised thinking finds its ground in inexplicable and correlational ‘doings’ rather than in tacit but inherently explicable reasons. The common interest of Heidegger, ontological designing, and decolonial thinking is thus an interest in situational, relational, and processual thought rather than metaphysical knowing.

2.2.3 THE ONTO-COLONIAL DESIGNING OF SUBSTANCE ONTOLOGY

It is, in particular, the combined systematisation of race and geography under conditions of coloniality that has facilitated the onto-colonial designing of what Mignolo (2009a) has called the ‘dispensability of life’. The relevance of this formulation in the context of ‘Australian’ coloniality has been made clear in Allaine Cerwonka’s study of the settler colonial racialisation of bodies in space (Cerwonka 2004). In an argument concerning racial-colonial formation of policing ontologies, Cerwonka suggests that

Botanical, scientific classification was a means of ordering and regulating territory in Australia. Like the [land survey] grid, it was a form of modern power insofar as it constructed the natural Australian landscape in terms of European scientific categories that came to dominate over Aboriginal spatial meaning. (Cerwonka 2004, p.180)

Cerwonka’s account of the colonisation of “Aboriginal spatial meaning” via grids and taxonomies relates to my discussion in Chapter 1 concerning the ontological confusion of the coloniser. Whereas Rose provides a description derived from the perspective of Victoria River people of the violence of anti-relational spatial ontologies, Cerwonka articulates the significance of the substance of ontology from the perspective of the

⁷ For an alternative derivation of a similar point see, for instance, Mitropoulos’ discussion of Kurt Gödel’s incompleteness theorem in ‘Encoding the Law of the Household and the Standardisation of Uncertainty’ (Mitropoulos 2017a).

coloniser looking to bring ‘order’ to a space perceived as ‘wild’ and as such available for appropriation (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed argument on the genealogy of this ontology).

Importantly, Cerwonka links the ‘Western’ scientific mode of spatial regulation to the racial classification of Indigenous people. Within the racialised settler ontology, Indigenous people are interpreted as occupying an ambiguous and, therefore, suspect position between the settler categories of ‘human’, ‘subhuman’, and ‘animal’ (Anderson 2012). As Cerwonka’s study suggests, the terms of racialised policing practices are, in this sense, a product of the metaphysics of both territory and sociality within the settler ontology that discloses Indigeneity as, in essence, a legitimate and desired target of state surveillance and control (Cerwonka 2004, p.181). The ontological designing of metaphysical orders of space and racial identity thus discloses the coloniality of design as being distinctly anti-relational in its particular mode of relationality.

Moving forward, what calls for clarification is the path by which Heidegger felt and conceptualised his critique of metaphysics in light of a desire to defend the ‘European *Völker*’ and ‘*German* spiritual life’ against a racialised array of internal and external enemies (Maldonado-Torres 2004, pp.33-4). In working towards this problem my next step is to address another thinker against whom Heidegger, ontological designing, and decolonial thinkers have defined their work: the seventeenth century French rationalist René Descartes.

2.3 DESCARTES’ ‘THINKING SUBSTANCE’

Heidegger’s motivation for his critique of substance ontology was not based in the notion that theory or formal systematisation could never deliver useful knowledge. Rather, it was grounded in the recognition that substance ontology gave rise to the hegemonic notion that the meaning of being — including one’s own existence — is reducible to this particular mode of intelligibility. Whereas Plato and Aristotle told a story of rational

foundations, their proof, and their implications, Heidegger took an interest in exposing the ambiguities and contingencies that lay at the centre of any attempt to fix the being of beings. The stakes of such a project lay not only in revealing the non-rational, relational, contingent, and historical condition of rational constructions, but also in providing a corrective to the rationalist account of human being. A significant point of reference for the modern/colonial appropriation of this tradition is the philosophy of René Descartes (1596-1650), who for Heidegger represented a key source of contemporary philosophy's inability to think beyond the erroneous separation of thinking substances (consciousness) from extended substances (objects).

The relevant aspect of Descartes' philosophy are directed by a desire on his part to address the fallibility of knowledge or the problem of establishing secure principles upon which to generate reliable opinions. Descartes' method for accomplishing this goal is to adopt an attitude of radical doubt concerning everything that might ordinarily be taken for granted, including the relationship between how 'we' think, 'our' bodies, other people, animals, and the physical objects 'we' encounter in the world.

The first step of Descartes' *Meditations on the First Philosophy* (1641) is to outline the strategy of his radical doubt, something that involves a process of undermining the value of common sense and sensate or bodily experience. Descartes' accomplishes this by rejecting, at least initially, the intuitive distinction between dreaming and being awake, as well as via the notion that experience ought to be considered an elaborate construction of some malevolent demon intent on deception. Descartes' methodological doubt aims at establishing a mood of almost paranoid uncertainty concerning anything that cannot be logically deduced. This is the condition upon which Descartes points to the self-evidence of thought is as the foundational certainty upon which reliable knowledge can be produced. In Descartes' terms, whatever else may be the case, it is thought that provides both the grounds for certainty as to the reality of 'our' own existence and a new iteration on the theory of human being. In Descartes view 'we' are "things that think", that is, "a thing that doubts, perceives, affirms, denies, wills, does not will, that imagines also, and which feels" (Descartes 2005, p.107).

Descartes' task of securing knowledge against all deception thus takes as its object of study what is evident in consciousness itself, as opposed to what might exist 'outside' it. Habitual, intuitive, or 'common sense' understandings are undermined for having been accepted as true before any rigorous assessment has been made of how they appear or by what conditions 'we' should afford them the status of having truth, being, or reality. Following these strict terms, Descartes later reduces this list of properties to what he considers to be the essence of mind; namely, the ability to conceive of something. Even imagination becomes extraneous to thinking once it is reduced to pure intellection.

The most Descartes feels confident to say concerning the reality of bodies is that their existence is probable or something to be affirmed in a statistical or normative sense. From the position of pure intellect he sees no proven relationship between the sensations of the stomach and the desire to eat, nor between the feeling of something that causes pain and the "sadness" that such a feeling gives rise to (Descartes 2005, p.154). Whatever judgments he may have formed regarding the objects of senses prior to the investigation become the suspect product of habit, something formed in him before he had been able to "weigh and consider the reasons which might oblige me to make them" (Descartes 2005, p.154). Eventually he settles on the idea that while the senses are on the face of it untrustworthy, they ought not to be doubted in general. The decisive conclusion, however, re-enforces a strict conceptual division between the substance of mind — which is identical to the being (intelligibility) of the self — and the substance of extension,

[F]rom the mere fact that I know with certainty that I exist, and that I do not observe that any other thing belongs necessarily to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing, I rightly conclude that my essence consists in this alone, that I am a thinking thing, or a substance whose whole essence or nature consists in thinking. And although perhaps (or rather as I shall shortly say certainly,) I have a body to which I am very closely united, nevertheless, because, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself in so far as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and because, on the other hand I have a distinct

idea of the body in so far as it is only an extended thing but which does not think, it is certain that I; that is to say my mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it. (Descartes 2005, p.165)

Logically speaking, having reduced its being to pure intellection, Descartes regards the existence of the mind as being certain and sufficient unto itself. The essential nature of all other beings is otherwise reduced to the idea of extension and all sensory experience rendered as a question of probability rather than necessity.

2.3.1 THE ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING OF DESCARTES AND THE *EGO CONQUIRO*

The relation between Descartes' life experiences and his philosophy provides a particularly clear example of the hermeneutical relation between the ontological designing of thought and the designing that is enabled by habits of mind. Born in 1596 and orphaned shortly thereafter, Descartes entered a school of the Jesuit order at 10 years old where he remained until 1615. The Jesuit's had been founded in 1539 (approved by the Pope in 1540) under the leadership of Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatius had converted to spiritual life after a battle wound ended his military career. In the course of his conversion Ignatius developed a practice of ascetic style meditation that was later codified as the *Spiritual Exercises*. The *Exercises* aimed at developing a discernment for distinguishing good spirits from evil spirits, with the ultimate purpose being "the conquest of the self and regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment" (Ignatius of Loyola 1951). This will to total self-mastery was coupled with an unreserved commitment to the authority of the Catholic Church, the strength of which was represented in the constitution, adopted in 1594, that required the good Jesuit to follow directions of his superiors "as if he were a lifeless body" (Ignatius of Loyola 1951). This ideology enabled the Jesuits to become a crucial force within both the Counter-Reformation and colonial exploits of the Catholic controlled empires.

The timing of Descartes' entry into formal education came just a few years after the Jesuits had returned to France, following a brief expulsion, to establish schools for the education of clerics, young nobles, and wealthy members of the bourgeoisie. The influence of Jesuits on Descartes' philosophical interests and method is evident in Enrique Dussel's description of their pedagogical theories and practices:

Each Jesuit constituted a singular, independent, and modern *subjectivity*, performing daily an individual "examination of conscience", without communal choral hymns or prayers as was the case with medieval Benedictine monks. Put differently, the young Descartes needed to withdraw into silence three times a day, *to reflect* on his own subjectivity and "examine" with extreme *self-consciousness* and *clarity* the intention and content of every action [...] (Dussel 2014, p.16)

As is the case with Aristotle, the philosophy that this form of discipline gave rise to represents a significant point of opposition for both Heideggerian and decolonial critiques. The Heideggerian critique centres on the presumption that one's involvement in the world can be meaningfully denied, that human being is reducible to "thinking substance", and the notion that the most valuable form of knowledge is that which can be represented as a formal system.

By contrast, feminist-/Marxist-/Decolonial scholars show how the understandings of the self, the body, and the nature of knowledge represented in Descartes' philosophy participated in the ontological designing of the colonial matrix of power. Silvia Federici, for instance, explains how the mechanistic conception of the body propagated by Descartes and his English contemporary Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) played an important role in the emergence of the labour theory of value, a theory that relates as much to the labour of reproduction (the uterus as machine) as any other form of work (Federici 2004, p.133–55). By Federici's argument, it is the human body rather than the steam engine or clock that represents the first machine developed by capitalism; an understanding — worked out on the bodies of women, Amerindians, and African slaves — that prefigures twentieth century theories of labour management. On a related point,

Dussel also finds that Descartes' mechanistic conception of the body disregards questions of racism, gender, and other forms of difference, as such aiding the development of zero point epistemology as the prevailing habit of mind amongst European thinkers (Dussel 2014, p.21).

Descartes' hostility to indeterminacy and chance is also deeply significant to the emergence of modern/colonial attitudes towards economics, politics, and knowledge. As F. E. Sutcliffe writes, "What characterizes the men of the generation of Descartes is above all the will to dominate, to control events, to eliminate chance and the irrational" (1968, p. 21). Considering the proximity to and complex interrelations of the Spanish Inquisition, early modern/colonial witch-trials, and the colonisation of the Americas, Sutcliffe's description resonates with the way that Nelson Maldonado-Torres interprets Descartes' thought as the expression of a form of systemic suspicion that was prefigured by and encodes the notion of an *ego conquiro* — a self that secures its being through domination of its own being and the being of others (Maldonado-Torres 2007). This interpretation is further supported by Sutcliffe who, while commenting on the frequency of military analogies throughout Descartes writing, suggests that "one rightly guesses that we are here in the presence not of a professional philosopher but of a soldier who, with remarkable audacity and a great nobility of spirit, sets out upon the path of intellectual conquest" (Sutcliffe 2005, p.14).

2.3.2 REVERSING DESCARTES

So far I have covered two of the major points of critique for Heidegger's philosophy; namely, the substance ontology as elaborated by Aristotle and the mind/body problem as set up by Descartes that carries on the metaphysical tradition in the form of a dualist ontology. Throughout this process, I have tried to situate these points of critique in relation to a history of philosophy, ontological designing, and coloniality.

In concert with other historical movements, Descartes helped to prefigure both the emphasis given to epistemology within European philosophy as well as a wider ‘common sense’ concerning the proper way to understand human being and its relation to the world. As preeminent Heidegger scholar Hubert Dreyfus argues, the tendency observed in Descartes can be situated in a tradition that travels from Plato to Descartes, then from Descartes on to Immanuel Kant and finally Edmund Husserl, one of Heidegger’s early mentors. This tradition, which — as I mentioned in Chapter 1 — Winograd and Flores label ‘rationalistic’, is characterised by an interest in generating formal descriptions or models of its object of study, whether this be the working of the mind, language, politics, markets, society, nature, or any other domain of research. This approach is valued for the way it lends itself towards seemingly neutral forms of calculative or predictive reasoning, the premise being that control and certainty, or at the very least a baseline level of predictability, can be established by deciphering the underlying laws of any domain of inquiry.

Dreyfus locates Husserl within this tradition for the way in which he, under the influence of Descartes, practices a methodological ‘bracketing’ off of the world so as to provide an account of intelligibility that is premised on the idea that human minds are directed towards objects by way of representational content. By this account, the subject remains self-contained and anything encountered obtains its meaning as the image ‘we’ form as ‘we’ direct ‘our’ attention to it. In this respect, Husserl’s image of human intelligibility maintains a commitment to the notion that ‘our’ most basic way of making sense of things in the world is by mental representations.

Heidegger broke with this way of thinking by privileging questions of ontology over epistemology, and the significance of non-representational understanding over representational knowledge. Heidegger’s interest always remained with the question of being but in the context of *Being and Time* he set himself the task of providing an account of human being that dispensed with the mind/body problem as a meaningful frame of reference. Unlike philosophers such as Descartes or Husserl whose studies were set up as investigations into a philosophically reflective subject cut off from or secured against the

world, Heidegger directed his attention at the condition that both precedes detached representational thought and upon which detached representational thought is possible.

In doing so Heidegger undercut the image of intelligibility that is privileged by the rationalistic tradition. Dreyfus reads this as in effect reversing Descartes' interest insofar as Heidegger looks to recover the question of being from which reflective thinking arises; the dictum 'I think therefore I am' becomes 'I am therefore I think'. It is interesting to note that Dreyfus' formulation precedes the exact same reversal of terms put forward by Walter Mignolo, albeit in the context of a different (though not entirely) set of concerns (see for instance my discussion in Chapter 3 on the place of Heidegger in the work of Edmundo O'Gorman, one of Mignolo's earlier theoretical influences).

2.4 BEYOND THE 'THINKING THING' | DASEIN AND STANCE-TAKING

For all the criticism levelled at Descartes it is curious to observe that the course of inquiry in *Being and Time* is somewhat similarly structured as an investigation of the being who poses the question of inquiry. As Heidegger writes in *Being and Time*, "To work out the question of being adequately, we must make a being — the inquirer — perspicuous in his own being" (Heidegger 1962, p.27). Unlike Descartes, however, the being of the inquirer in *Being and Time* is characterised from the outset as *being-in-the-world* as opposed to a "thinking substance." For Heidegger, the distinctiveness of the being of the inquirer obtains not in it being the foundational source of certainty but, rather, the being for whom its own being is an issue. This being is in a basic sense human being or, rather, the human way of being. Heidegger offers the concept of *Dasein* as way to hone in on what is particular to and interesting about a capacity that is not, in principle at least, limited to any particular 'species being'.

In a literal sense the word 'Dasein' can be translated as 'being-there'. This meaning is useful for drawing out the sense in which the concept in Heidegger's usage speaks to the being of situatedness; that is, of finding oneself always already partaking of an experience

that is concrete, corporal, meaningful, and finitudinal. In this sense Dasein is not the abstract subject of Descartes' investigations — the being whose being is defined in terms of what remains once everything pertaining to the world has been distinguished and set aside — nor is it the Husserlian consciousness made up of representational content. Anne-Marie Willis (2007) draws on an interpretation by Albert Hofstadter to define Dasein as its understanding, which is a way of indicating that Dasein is not something like an attribute or property but, rather, a condition of intelligibility. Importantly, because it is located in practices that are embodied, social, active, dynamic, correlated, layered, and distributed, this understanding is at base non-cognitive and non-representational. By this account cognition is a derivative dimension of experience that covers over much of what is important and significant to how 'we' relate the world and each other.

Dasein, as Heidegger puts it, is the being that, in its being, comports itself towards its being. Dreyfus interprets this as meaning that Dasein's way of being is to take a stand on its own being or to adopt an interpretation that provides a sense of meaning and structure to a person's life. This interpretation need not be consciously adopted as it speaks to the pre-conscious way that an individual adopts a role or purpose that is made available to them within a socially defined field of possibility. A child, for instance, might take up the role of being the 'class clown' first and foremost as a behavioural disposition before becoming aware that this is a known social archetype. Likewise, adults play out a certain interpretation of their existence as they take up various roles within the domains of family, friendship groups, or work. A 'stance on one's being' can be thought of as the understanding that a person takes up within the range of possibilities that are available to them within the social context that they grew up in.

The phenomena of 'stance-taking' in Heidegger's thinking represents a distinctly different conception of human being as compared with the model of the Cartesian subject. Whereas the cogito gains clarity, definition, and control by means of withdrawing from the world, the concept of Dasein is unthinkable other than as a relation to a world of activity of which it partakes in a concerned manner.

In this respect, the startling significance of Dasein is that it has no metaphysically determinable essence or ground upon which to rationalise its existence. As Dasein, there is no transcendental place from which to determine what Dasein is supposed to be or do, meaning that the only way of answering such questions is through a more or less creative appropriation of meanings that have otherwise been historically and materially determined. If Descartes' cogito consolidates a zero point mentality, the concept of Dasein retrieves and brings into focus the manner in which the meaning of 'our' existence is not rationally or universally determinable but is, rather, a matter of what 'we' ourselves make (design) of the possibilities for being that 'we' discern within the social practices of 'our' upbringing. Moreover, and importantly, the very condition of being able to discern this or that possibility for being, and to determine the manner of its appropriation, is itself a question of already having a pre-ontological (non-theorised) social ontology. Unlike Descartes methodological doubt, the relation between Dasein and its context 'stance-taking' does not act to eliminate the place of contingency, risk, and vulnerability in 'our' lives but, rather, to provide an embodied and historically informed and directed — i.e. ontologically designed — manner of dealing with things, people, and one's own sense of self.

A relational context embodies both discernable possibilities for being and a sense for discerning them, but it cannot provide a definitive answer to what stance is best to take. Drawing on the existentialist writings of Søren Kierkegaard, Heidegger brings to the fore the way in which such questioning produces a sense of one's own groundlessness, something that manifests as anxiety or the unsettling feeling that one is not 'at home'. A Dasein may be more or less open to the experience and significance of the groundlessness of its being, however, as Heidegger observes and makes an issue of, the general tendency of Dasein is to 'flee' such anxiety for a stance that has the feeling of being most natural, ordinary, and safe.

Whether Dasein flees from or confronts the question of its own being, the practice of stance-taking remains a matter of concern in a number of ways: as a way of answering the question of 'for what am I doing this?', as a basis for answering the question 'what should

I do?’, and as something that can be tested or put on the line. The concept of Dasein thus stands as an interpretation of the basic structure and predicament of its being rather than as a solution to it. By this account, the means for Dasein to deal with an existence that concerns it is to practice an ongoing concrete and practical interpretation of its own being. This interpretation is ontological insofar as it shapes a way of being but is not necessarily a work of philosophical ontology in the sense of what Heidegger is trying to do in *Being and Time*. The salient point here is that unlike the Cartesian subject, Dasein is inherently and unavoidably hermeneutical, affective, relational, and involved, rather than certain, rational, and detached.

2.4.1 HEIDEGGER, EQUIPMENTALITY, AND ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING

On the face of it ‘stance-taking’ may seem like an abstract concept but in the context of Heidegger’s analysis the idea is intended to invoke a concrete aspect of the phenomena of existence. Stance-taking represents the pre-ontological manner in which Dasein becomes intelligible to itself in the context of its everyday practices. The work of stance-taking is at the same time directive of everyday practices insofar as it provides, among other things, a sense of identity and purpose to individuals, groups, and communities. In Heidegger’s view, the being of Dasein has to be interpreted holistically and relationally, meaning that even though stance-taking may not always be foremost in the mind of a Dasein caught up in everyday coping, the stance Dasein takes on its being is always marginally present and able to be drawn upon as a guide to whatever might be required of a situation. Likewise, stance-taking only has meaning as a dimension of a concrete existence made up of a network of practices (for more on this see my previous discussion on ‘style’ in Chapter 1).

As a way to understand what practices are and the extent to which they operate as public, sub-discursive, and non-representational ensembles of equipmental-/bodily technique, Dreyfus points to descriptions by French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu who — despite his own strong criticisms of Heidegger’s political ontology (Bourdieu 1991) — exemplifies for Dreyfus what Heidegger is aiming to describe through his analysis of Dasein:

A whole group and a whole symbolically structured environment exerts an anonymous, pervasive pedagogic action. [...] The essential part of the *modus operandi* which defines practical mastery is transmitted in practice, in its practical state, without attaining the level of discourse. The child imitates not “models” but other people’s actions. Body *hexis* speaks directly to motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systemic, because linked to a whole system of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values: in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult — a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience. (Bourdieu, quoted by Dreyfus 1991, p.17)

From a Heideggerian perspective, every one of the elements that Bourdieu identifies as being involved in the composition of a practice — the body, tools, symbols, speech, tone, and style — are all relevant and correlated. The significance of equipment, in particular, works as a useful point of entry for theorists of ontological designing. However, the strength of the ontological approach to design as a whole lies in the way that theorists have been able to bring to the fore an understanding of the relational agency of equipment; that is, as connected to and so affected by and affecting the body, speech, and less tangible qualities such as mood, judgment, and style.

Anne-Marie Willis (2007) provides an exemplary account of the significance of the Heideggerian ontology of equipment in her essay on ontological designing. In the relevant section she opens with a description of how the rationalist or metaphysical tradition would approach the question of equipment through the lens of functions and properties. This approach represents the intelligibility of the substance ontology in which the meaning given to a designed thing would involve an abstract normative description of the work it is supposed to perform, the materials used in its construction, the overall performance specifications, the model type and so on. While this scientific mode of

intelligibility is indeed relevant to certain aspects of various design practices, the image it provides of any design is removed from the actual experience and ontological effects of using designed things. In this view, the tool is viewed as being as self-contained as an object as the Cartesian subject is as a mind. The problem for Heidegger and the lesson for designers is that the being of objects cannot be conflated with the being of equipment or equipmentality. While Dasein is required to deal with both modes of intelligibility, within modern/ colonial societies the being of objects has for the most part overshadowed an awareness and appreciation for the significance of everyday equipmentality.

For Heidegger (and designers), equipmentality is part of what makes up the condition of the existence or understanding that is Dasein. As Heidegger puts it “we understand ourselves and ‘our’ existence by way of the activities ‘we’ pursue and the things ‘we’ take care of” (Heidegger 1962, p.159). The being of equipmentality is not that of substance ontology or representational thought, as it does not presuppose an act of conscious classification and rule following as a condition of usability. The experience of sitting down at a table, for instance, does not proceed by way of the kind of information processing model depicted in popular ‘Western’ cyborg films such as *Terminator* or *RoboCop*. Rather than being encountered as an object with properties, a piece of equipment is encountered as ‘something-in-order-to...’ whose meaning belongs to a broader ‘equipmental whole’. Every item of equipment obtains its meaning as part of an ‘equipmental nexus’. It makes sense for a set of chairs, for instance, to surround the table in the communal living area of a house in support of the practice of housemates sitting down together to share a meal. The designed equipmentality of things is thus relational, affective, and directive in ways that an abstract-theoretical conception of objects fails to register or understand. As Heidegger puts it, the idea of *an* equipment is not simply grammatically incorrect but ontologically unintelligible. This is due to the fact that the being of equipment — as a non-representational dimension of a material practice — is not something that is available for contextless cataloguing. Dreyfus uses the example of a chair to point out that people who were raised in a context of chair usage tend to know what one is and how to use it without ever having to draw up a formal definition. The prospects of a water-tight definition is undermined by borderline cases such as a bean-bag or bicycle seat. However,

because the in-order-to of chairs obtains in practical familiarity rather than abstraction, these definitional issues have no bearing on the ability of someone who grew up using chairs to cope with recognisable instances in ways that satisfy their own sense of comfort and custom.

One of the characteristics of equipmentality that provides an important insight into design — particularly as distinct from a fine-art oriented aesthetics — is the tendency of equipment to express its familiarity by withdrawing from attention. When, for example, an ensemble of knife, cutting board, bench, lighting, floor, and experienced cook comes together in a way that is fit for dicing vegetables, the entire ensemble and its particulars tend to ‘hold itself in’ in such a way that attention can be directed to things other than the equipment itself. In this case, the cook’s sense of themselves as a distinct part of the ensemble also withdraws into the flow of cutting, not as a fully determined machine but in the form of non-deliberate, un-thematic practical awareness that Heidegger calls ‘circumspection’. According to Heidegger, it is this form of non-theoretical, pre-ontological awareness that constitutes how ‘we’ are at most moments in time, as opposed to the subject of Descartes’ disciplined meditations, a scientific mode of being that Descartes himself acknowledges can only ever be sustained for short periods of time.⁸

The phenomena of withdrawal and practical circumspection is of particular importance to theorists of ontological designing who are interested to account for how designed things partake a process of naturalising the artificial (Fry 1993, p.13). Most of what design

⁸ Descartes concludes his first meditation by drawing a comparison with the experience of a slave in order to comment on the difficulty of pursuing his method of radical doubt. In Descartes’ words, the task of his investigation is “arduous”, no doubt as it requires the suppression of a number of intuitive commitments to the existence of the world, his own body, and the existence of God. Such attachments, as he puts it, induces “a certain indolence” that leads him back into a mood of involved sensate coping. The comparison to the slave is constructed along the lines of equating the dream of freedom with the “indolence” of the non-sceptical attitude. Both are, as Descartes suggests, merely “pleasant illusions”. Descartes confesses that in his own case the seduction of sleep has as much to do with an anxiety over “dispersing the shadows” that have been cast by the rigorous confrontation with doubt. Descartes’ analogy is similar to the language used by Blaise Pascal (2013, p.73) in the *Pensées* (1670), in which he describes reason as that which traps the thinker into accepting the rational argument for believing in God, even if the belief itself has not yet been embodied. In both cases reason acts as an instrument of discipline upon the sensual attachments of the body, both of the self and of the non-believing other.

is and does goes unnoticed and misrecognised because the majority of designing — from that of individual items, to systems, experiences, and more — is deliberately designed to fit in with the in-order-to-ness of equipmentality, meaning that most designs aim at withdrawing from attention and taking up a material role in the conditioning of intelligibility. Designs are designed to be absorbed into an equipmental whole of in-order-tos, to become embedded in the relational meshwork of body, tools, symbols, speech, tone, style, etc that together constitutes a meaningful practice.

Thomas Wendt (2015) provides a useful account of the agency of equipmental circumspection in his description of the experience of someone with a normalised practice of mobile phone usage who on one occasion accidentally leaves their phone at home. As Wendt puts it, the sense of loss this creates is not related to the fetishisation of the device but,

because the phone provides an almost infinite means of interactions that allow the user to attain goals. Without that cluster of affordances we call a mobile device, we are forced to design our situations by other means that seem substandard by comparison. (2015, p.21)

Another of Wendt's descriptions, this time of what is involved in the design of an air travel experience, shows how design shapes 'our' experience through the ontology of involved concern rather than an ontology of abstract objectification.

For example, when we design an experience for air travel it is easy to become caught up in considering physical locations: cab to the airport, airport terminal, lounge, bar, security, on the plane, etc. The difficult part, however, is to understand the user's *involvement* with each of those locations in relation to their concern. When in a security line, the concern is certainly with physical surroundings, but also the tasks to be done (remove liquids, take off shoes, etc.), authority process, time until takeoff, etc. The post-security mindset is often quite different in that although the user is in a very similar physical location, there are

now different concerns: getting to the gate, finding food before boarding, making a call, finding a power outlet, etc. (2015, p.21)

Equipmentality can in this sense be taken as a primordial condition of Dasein's intelligibility insofar as its agency manifests as what is brought into and out of presence, rather than as being the focus of attention itself. Designing is ontological because it participates in Dasein's pre-ontological sense of being-in-the-world. This process or effect is not neutral, however, for at the same time that designs are designed to fit into the existing equipmental whole of any user they are also designed to participate in giving direction and meaning to experience.

As Winograd and Flores have noted, the condition of designs being able to reveal possibilities and support activities is that they also institute limits, modulate sensitivities, and cover over details and possibilities within a practice. Their example is the 'electronic library' that is automated to retrieve reading options based on cataloguing techniques. While such a system offers a range of desired affordances, it also changes the experience and practice of visiting a library. Visiting the shelves yourself, for instance, provides the opportunity to encounter a book in the context of other texts that you may not have thought to search for but that nevertheless strike you as interesting or relevant to your topic of research. The designed in-order-to of the retrieval system eliminates a previous dimension of the library experience that may have seemed marginal or incidental but which is nevertheless not without significance within the overall practice. In this way, the retrieval system modulates the character of the practice, perhaps even contributing to a structural drift in the cultural significance of libraries. A shift of this kind, one facilitated by design, can be further related to recent developments in the digital archiving of libraries and the rise of a the new field, agenda, and ideology of the 'digital humanities'. Similarly, the diffusion of machine systems within such practices as carpentry and writing has a profound impact on the character and distribution of skills within a society (Fry 1994b).

The point in these cases is that the play of what is made available and unavailable is a feature of the equipmental whole of any domain of activity. The terms of this dynamic is not zero-sum — an expert designer, for instance, is able to draw out the complexities and nuances of how different designs are likely to modulate an experience and thus test for what might be lost or gained in its use — but it does speak to the way in which designs always embody an interpretation of what is more or less important or valuable within any domain. Designs, therefore, design normative states by inscribing into things the kinds of value judgements that modulate the terms of pre-ontological circumspection.

Similarly to the condition of stance-taking, the hermeneutical nature of ontological designing means that there is no place outside of the influence of design from which to make such judgments. This means that every design appropriates and embodies the influence of an historical equipmental whole at the same time that it intervenes in shifting the character of any practice. This effect is what Fry describes as design's capacity to embody decision and direction in things. This is a feature that stands out in the event of encountering a new thing or a change that requires some getting used to, but in most cases at least this very quickly becomes absorbed into the ordinary naturalisation of the artificial.

2.4.2 EQUIPMENTALITY AND THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN

The argument of this thesis is that the normative, directive, and ontological power design underscores the reproduction and sustainment of the coloniality of power. The brief point I wish to make here is that such an idea calls for an alternative reading of the story told by Wendt; that is, one that is able to highlight the coloniality embedded in the ontological designing of something like the airport security experience.

One such as example can be found in Sarah Ahmed's phenomenology of racial profiling (Ahmed 2006, p.139–42). Beginning with the experience of racialised policing brought to light by Black activists, Ahmed argues that the practice of the 'stop and search' represents

a “technology of racism” that is designed to both physically check and symbolically signal to a Dasein that they are a “body that is ‘out of place’ in this place” (Ahmed 2006, p.140). For Ahmed, the designing of stopping is at the same time an unevenly distributed political economy and “an affective economy that leaves its impressions, affecting the bodies that are subject to its address” (Ahmed 2006, p.140). What Ahmed’s argument suggests is that the police ‘stop and search’ is a design based on the racialised policing ontology identified by Cerwonka that also enacts the ontological designing of the racialised Dasein as an embodied being-out-of-place within a place that is designed and policed according to the ‘ego ideal’ of the ‘Western’ settler colonial zero point (Ahmed 2006, p.139).

Following her analysis of the ‘stop and search’, Ahmed provides her own account of the airport security experience:

I arrive in New York, clutching my British passport. I hand it over. The airport official looks at me, and then looks at my passport. I know what questions will follow. “Where are you from?” My passport indicates my place of birth. “Britain”, I say. I feel like adding, “Can’t you read. I was born in Salford”, but I stop myself. He looks down at my passport, not at me. “Where is your father from?” It was the same last time I arrived in New York. It is the question I get asked now, which seems to locate what is suspect not in my body but as that which has been passed down the family line, almost like a bad inheritance. “Pakistan”, I say, slowly. He asks, “Do you have a Pakistani passport?” “No”, I say. Eventually he lets me through. The name “Ahmed”, a Muslim name, slows me down. It blocks my passage, even if only temporarily. I get stuck, and then move on. (Ahmed 2006, p.140)

While Ahmed’s account does not contradict anything in Wendt’s example it does bring into view the experience someone whose racialisation ‘shows up’ as the ontological designing of interrogation and delay. Further, while Wendt speaks of the ‘post-security mindset’ — that is, the moment after having passed through performative ritual of security (Parsley 2003) — as a domain that discloses a new set of concerns, he does not

include within his list a concern with repairing the ontological injury of a process that is designed to make an exception of people who are racially profiled. What Ahmed's example highlights is that 'Western' airports design the absence of support for the racialised Dasein's sense of safety and self-worth as a constitutive part of the ontological violence of racial interpolation. Thus, whereas Wendt's example inadvertently describes the designing of a racially normative airport experience, Ahmed's example demonstrates how the decision to make an exception of people with 'Muslim names' is something that is designed into the same systems and positions of authority that Wendt passes over without comment. In this sense, the difference between Wendt and Ahmed's accounts is the difference that is designed by the ontological designing of the zero point and the colonial difference, such as it is embedded in the equipmental and dispositional designing of airport security. My point, in short, is that the difference between these two accounts of the same situation — one normative, the other the exception that defines the racial-colonial norm — is an expression of the coloniality of design.

The difference between Wendt and Ahmed's accounts demonstrates what an insufficiently critical engagement with Heideggerian thought designs, particularly as this concerns the designing of a design theoretical mindset. While I would also suggest that Ahmed's reliance on Husserl over Heidegger results in a weaker understanding of the agency of design, the issue at stake here is that the lack of thinking in ontological designing in light of coloniality (Wendt), and coloniality in light of ontological designing (Ahmed, relatively speaking), leads to a foreclosure on the ability to disclose the directional agency of the coloniality of design.

So far I have outlined some of the reasons for why Heidegger's hermeneutical-ontology of Dasein has proven a source of insight for design theorists, particularly in contrast to efforts to theorise design from within the rationalist tradition. While the account that I have given only skims the surface of what design theorists have been able to draw from Heidegger, it nevertheless establishes a sense for why Heidegger's philosophy has proven to be of value to design theorists. In the next section I shift from a focus on explicating the significance of Heidegger's account of equipmentality to a focus on the social dimensions

of Heidegger's ontology as part of a step towards engaging critical interpretations of Heidegger's political ontology.

2.4.3 THE SOCIALITY OF DASEIN

In *Being and Time* (1962) one of Heidegger's closest engagement with questions of sociality begins in section 26, 'The Dasein-with of Others and Everyday Being-with'. Here Heidegger observes how others are encountered in the act of designerly type of work. Others are for whom a work is created, meaning that even though they may not be physically present with 'us' as 'we' work, they are in a sense present for 'us' as a matter of concern. The clothes maker in the flow of their work retains an awareness that they are making for wearers just as a writer maintains an awareness of the reader as a guiding dimension of their practice. Likewise, there is the producer of materials in use, the owner of the field I walk by, and the person from whom I bought the book that I am reading.

Others are therefore encountered as part of the everyday equipmental nexus of every in-order-to that 'we' pass through. Things show up as in-order-tos for other Daseins who are themselves intelligible in a way that differs from equipment. In beginning to think about the being of other Daseins, Heidegger confronts the limited way in which the Cartesian subject has prefigured this as a question of 'inter-subjectivity'. In Heidegger's formulation, however, others are not 'everyone but me', but rather those from whom I, for the most part and in a circumspensive sense, do *not* distinguish myself. "The world of Dasein is a with-world", one in which Dasein's interpretation of its own being arises in view and concern with what 'One' does rather than first and foremost with what 'I' do (Dreyfus 1991, p.149).

These observations are of course related to and have bearing on equipment. As Dreyfus helps to clarify, equipment is public in the sense that it is designed in view of, and therefore by and for a world of others. I design not just for myself but for other people, people whose being has some presence in my work as a designer. Additionally, because

‘we’ tread similar footpaths, use similar mobile phones, drive similar cars, equipment partakes in normativity, both in the way it conditions an averaging of equipmental interactions as well as being a locus of proper use or common style. As Dreyfus puts it, ‘we’ understand a chair by knowing that it is normally used for sitting. The design and use of the chair thus embodies — in both the user and the chair — what One does with chairs. The normativity expressed in the relation between users and equipment is so powerful that someone who is familiar with chairs will struggle to see them as something other than equipment for sitting. Behind the obviousness of chairs, however, there is likely to be a story of having been taught as a child how to use a chair properly. As Heidegger puts it, “The obviousness, the matter-of-course way in which this movement of Dasein comes to pass, also belongs to the manner of being of the One” (Dreyfus 1991, p.152).

The being-with of Dasein is thus expressed in the appearance and maintenance of norms as something that ‘we’ are circumspectually concerned with. This is the case even when ‘we’ are confronted with the experience of deviation, for deviation can only be experienced as such on the basis of that from which it deviates. As Dreyfus emphasises, such averageness plays a role in being able to generate and sustain the referential whole of equipmentality: “norms define the in-order-tos that define the being of equipment, and also the for-the-sake-of-whichs that give equipment its significance” (Dreyfus 1991, p.154).

Norms, however, also set up a problem for Dasein that is expressed in the experience of deviance. In teasing out this phenomenon Dreyfus sharpens what he argues is a vaguely articulated distinction in *Being and Time* between a positive *conformity* and a negative *conformism*. In Dreyfus’ terms conformity has positive importance for Dasein insofar as it allows for a shared or public intelligibility. As an essentially social form of being, Dasein cannot be without some sense of conformity for it is on this basis that a life of meaningful involvement in a world of people and things is possible. Dasein-ish intelligibility thus arises on the basis of what it shares. Importantly, the sharing that allows for intelligibility is not conceptual or available for formal representation but, rather, an ‘average comportment’ or style that expresses a pre-ontological interpretation of being.

However, even as Heidegger draws out the significance of conformity to the intelligibility of Dasein he also reacts against its levelling effects. While conformity as socialisation or the induction into norms is a necessary condition of intelligibility as such, Heidegger also wants to draw out the manner in which the averageness of norms can often lead to an attitude of being resigned to a taken for granted way of being. Stance-taking in this case occurs, but only in the most shallow sense; that is, one that is unconcerned with the depth and variety of possibilities for being and untroubled by the fundamental groundlessness of intelligibility itself. Conformity thus degenerates into conformism, a relatively thoughtless take-up of the tradition that one grows up in. In this respect, Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* can be understood as, in part, an effort to make a point of this difference and shake his readers out of a sense of shallow resignation to one's condition. As he put it in a passage from the second division:

Dasein's *kind of being* thus demands that any ontological Interpretation which sets itself the goal of exhibiting the phenomena in their primordially, should capture the being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up. Existential analysis, therefore, constantly has the character of *doing violence* whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation, or to its complacency and its tranquilized obviousness. (Heidegger 1962, p.359)

2.5 ALTERNATIVE READINGS OF DASEIN

Examining the sociality of Dasein and the question of norms provides a setting for shifting to readings of Heidegger that arise from more marginal social positions. In this section I re-engage the question of Heidegger's political limitations by examining some of the arguments made by feminist readers. Here I begin with Tina Chanter's comments on the normative assumptions of Heidegger's ontology before moving on to Dorothy Leland's repositioning of the conformity/ conformism problem along the lines of social domination and modes of resistance. This final move opens up a terrain of questions to which the studies of chapters to follow will respond.

2.5.1 HEIDEGGER'S NORMATIVE GENDER ASSUMPTIONS

Chanter (2010) argues that Heidegger's treatment of question of the body, others, temporality, and history tends towards neglecting issues of concern for feminist readers. In doing so Heidegger exhibits a systemic blindness with regards to the significance of gender and other normative assumptions. By Chanter's reading, Heidegger's methodology provides no significance to gender difference, leading to a reading of Dasein that is specific to the norms of European patriarchal masculinity.

On the question of the body, for instance, Chanter notes that notwithstanding the manner in which Heidegger retrieves questions of practical comportment from the Cartesian erasure, Heidegger does in fact retain elements of the kind of transcendental disembodiment exhibited in the work of Descartes and passed on through the later works of Immanuel Kant. Chanter thus argues that Heidegger retains the "legacy of a disincarnate intellect" insofar as his ontological project "remains bound to theoretical clarification" (Chanter 2010, p.81). Chanter's reading is based on the suggestion that even though the argument laid out in *Being and Time* might begin with a close examination of Dasein's equipmental involvement and practical comportment, there is a shift over the course of his analysis away from Dasein's concrete situatedness and towards a more disembodied understanding of Dasein. Further, Chanter observes that Heidegger's account of everyday coping is oriented almost exclusively around task oriented forms of work, an approach that offers little to no insight into the hermeneutical-ontology of sexuality, eroticism, enjoyment, or pleasure.

Chanter also observes that Heidegger pays no attention to the way in which women are socialised into distinctly gendered modes of being. In this respect Chanter highlights the significance of care ethics: while women are socialised to be orientated towards others, men are encouraged to comport themselves as autonomous, self-directed individuals. Further, the norms for women tend to push them towards context-bound orientation as opposed to a masculinised sense of objectivity, as well as an orientation towards care and

nurture rather than the rational and abstract. Gendering thus produces ways of being that are distinct in ways that go unacknowledged and unexamined by Heidegger.

Chanter traces this lack of awareness on Heidegger's part into his own reading of Dasein. Chanter finds Heidegger's account of others is highly attenuated, with the effect that Dasein's sociality tends to yield in favour of an individualised conception of its being. Heidegger's gendered bias towards an account of the individual thrown back onto an existence that it is forced to face alone leaves questions of social or collective action under-examined. As Chanter writes:

Dasein's relations to others is described by Heidegger primarily in terms of its fall or dispersion into the they-self, that is, Dasein's tendency to interpret itself and its ideas in terms of opinions that it unthinkingly takes over from the public realm. This leaves little room for any systematic consideration of the possibilities of informed, thoughtful, or authentic collective social or political action at the level of protesting prevailing socioeconomic conditions. (Chanter 2010, p.91)

Chanter's reading thus helps to tease out some of the elements of Heidegger's problematic political ontology. Notwithstanding his insights into the pre-ontological significance of the public, Heidegger's analysis tends towards privileging a Dasein that is able to achieve mastery and fortitude by consolidating elements of a culture that it claims and represent as its own. As Chanter puts it:

To the extent that Heidegger does take the impact of others seriously, he imports notions of tradition and heritage that we should approach only with extreme caution. For the idea of history that seems to be foreshadowed is one that harks back to a quasi-Hegelian view, where whatever happens happens, and then gets regarded as necessary. Under the sway of fate, Dasein can apparently cling to traditions that pronounce themselves as destiny, traditions that discriminate on the basis of sex, race, ethnic identity, sexuality, class, and so on, without acknowledging the partiality and bias of these traditions. (Chanter 2010, p.106)

2.5.2 CULTURES OF DOMINATION AND CONFLICT

While Charter focuses on the gendered limitations of Heidegger's ontology, Leland (2010) modulates the critical focus to include questions concerning specifically colonial forms of domination. Leland's strategy for doing this occurs not simply as a direct engagement with Heidegger but also through the work of Charles Guignon (1983, 2006). Charter identifies Guignon as part of the 'Berkeley school', a group of North American Heidegger scholars who, particularly under the influence of Dreyfus, give emphasis to the continuities between Heidegger's *Being and Time* and Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1991) *Philosophical Investigations*. Leland takes up Guignon's work for the way in which he elaborates on Heidegger's notion of authentic versus inauthentic living. On this point Guignon agrees with Heidegger's account of stance-taking as something that emerges in the course of being socialised into ways of being, and that the coming-to-be of a person is a question not of some inner-being but of how public possibilities for being are appropriated by an individual Dasein. By this account, an inauthentic life is characterised not as a case of pretending to be something you are not but, rather, of being too easily absorbed into present or immediate preoccupations. Authentic living, on the other hand, arises from a reflective questioning of the stance-taking or the for-the-sake-of-whichs that provide meaning and direction to everyday equipmental coping. Authentic living is not more 'real' but, rather, more aware of how rich the possibilities for being are within a particular culture, and that one's life, if taken seriously enough, can become a conduit for expressing such richness.

The authentic/inauthentic concept is very close to the conformity/conformism problematic detailed above, and it is to this very problematic that Leland brings her critical eye. Leland takes issue with Guignon's Heidegger by pointing out that the account that Heidegger gives of the relation between norms and traditions is devoid of any sense of social conflict. While Guignon was concerned to show how Heideggerian ontology provides an alternative kind of socio-political framework to that of the individual versus individual story of social contract theorists, Leland takes issue with the

way the story of a common pool of possibilities for being obscures the conflictual nature of social life. The “with-world” of shared social practices in Heidegger’s work “floats free from systems of dominance and subordination and from an analysis that links the prevailing practices of a culture to such systems” (Leland 2001, p.112). Heidegger thus exhibits a kind of methodological erasure of questions of socio-cultural domination and resistance, one that “obscures the way in which groups can be differently situated within a given historical/ cultural realm” (Leland 2001, p.112). The Dasein of Leland’s interest is less troubled by the groundlessness of being than it is with a desire to find coherence and direction in a situation in which the notion of belonging to singular and identifiable culture shows up as an unreasonable and potentially harmful assumption. As Leland puts it,

Historical cultures aren’t “pure”: through migration, conquest, and various forms of assimilation, different histories are mingled, and the resulting mixture is not always or even usually a homogenous blend. (Leland 2001, p. 117)

What Leland draws out here is the fact that it cannot be assumed that the question “to what tradition or culture do I belong?” has any easy or obvious answer. The dynamic at play in a colonial situation, for instance, is for the most part one in which minoritised communities are forced into an unequal relation with a dominant power, one in which the dominant power is able to assert its own stories, language, and embodied commitments as the paradigmatic way of being. This occurs without any sense of reciprocity or responsibility with respect to the colonised. The colonised and/or minoritised Dasein is not only faced with a situation of cultural complexity but one in which a culture of domination works to restrict the possibilities for being to roles that sustain colonial domination. There is thus a limit to the idea of a “shared medium of intelligibility” insofar as the work of conformity to the dominant norms implies an unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of conformity.

By way of example, in the introduction to her seminal paper on whiteness as property, Cheryl Harris (1993) tells the story of her grandmother’s experiences of “passing” as a

white woman in order to secure and maintain her retail job in 1930s Chicago. Harris' mother was a Black woman who had been born into a life of share-cropping in Mississippi but her fair skin, straight hair and "aquiline features" provided her with new kinds of possibilities in northern urban centres. As Harris describes it, her grandmother felt the weight of what was both an act of daring and self-denial. The "fine establishment" at which she worked defined itself against the idea of Blackness, meaning that the presence of Harris' grandmother in the space was an act of transgression, a crossing of borders under the protection of "false passport", "not merely passing but *trespassing*" (Harris 1993, p.1711). In the course of her work, Harris' grandmother learned to listen to and sympathise with the everyday life concerns of her white co-workers but was herself barred from revealing her experience and worries. The effort of conforming to white middle-class standards, the burden of having to deny her own sense of being, and the lack of everyday emotional reciprocity, all took a toll on Harris' grandmother that was far in excess of the affective labour that her white colleagues experienced. As Harris writes,

Day in and day out, she made herself invisible, then visible again, for a price too inconsequential to do more than barely sustain her family and at a cost too precious to conceive. She left the job some years later, finding the strain too much to bear. (Harris 1993, p.1711)

The story of Harris' grandmother resonates with Leland's claim that participation of minoritised Daseins in the public life of the dominant culture is often pernicious. Harris' story is also comparable with Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (2000) analysis of what she calls the "life writings" of Indigenous women. In her study of the place of Indigenous standpoints in 'Australian' feminism, Moreton-Robinson argues that the practice of Indigenous women's self-representation is a means by which Indigenous women "come to know, embody and perform reality" (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.xxii). In generating representations that arise out of and correspond to their own experiences and concerns, the life writings of Indigenous women work to disrupt the ontological designing of settler forms of control, alienation, and objectification that arise from being represented through the lens of the colonising gaze, including in "the diaries of explorers, the photographs of

philanthropists, the testimony of white state officials, the sexual bravado of white men and the ethnographies of anthropologists” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.1). As Moreton-Robinson argues, the texts of Indigenous women represent something other than autobiography insofar as they are part of the relational and social life of the writer as opposed to something like an alienable commodity. Life writings are significant for revealing the creative strategies of survival developed by Indigenous woman in the context of colonial domination. They also reveal the “practical, political, and personal effects of being “other”” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.3).

Through her reading, Moreton-Robinson points to the subject position of the ‘Indigenous servant’ as one of the strategies of cultural or ontological domination used to target and control the lives of Indigenous women. The formation of the ‘Indigenous servant’ began as part of a government policy on missions and reserves and by employers who targeted Indigenous women as a potential pool of domestic labour. The value of this process for the colonising power lay not only in expanding the availability of labour, but also in undermining Indigenous attachments to land and ways of living that Moreton-Robinson describes as uniquely relational and spiritual or as “another standard of being human” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.21). The cultural domination of Indigenous women occurred through their training as domestic servants, a process that, as Moreton-Robinson puts it, “was training in subservience and basic domestic skills, not social etiquette” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.21). The nature of the instruction was forceful and authoritarian rather than based on “mutual understanding and relationships of reciprocal recognition” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.21). Indigenous women were treated “as though they had no knowledge, feelings or emotional attachments” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.22); that is, as mere material or mechanical extension to be incorporated into the reproduction of a settler capitalist society. This experience had an equipmentality constituted in various cases by the deployment of white domestic object as tools of control and devaluation.

Indigenous women were allowed to be in contact with material items and operate in certain contexts as servant (that is, as objects), but to allow them the same service or use of the same material items meant recognising them as equal

subjects. Such recognition would have disrupted the ontological basis for hierarchy and discrimination. (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.28)

Indigenous women were not passive in the face of such treatment and many were able not only to survive by way of both overt and discreet forms of resistance, but also to sustain or recover connections to other Indigenous people and Indigenous knowledge. As Moreton-Robinson emphasises, however, the ontological impact of this training (designing) continues to resonate beyond the time of its original conception, having become embedded as part of the naturalised artificiality of relations of domination. In Moreton-Robinson words, “Although the morphology of colonialism has changed, it persists in discursive and cultural practices” (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p.28)

2.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Against the examples of Harris’ grandmother and the life writings of Indigenous women, Heidegger’s Dasein tends to stand out as one who occupies an untroubled position within the domain of a dominant, colonising culture. The problem for this Dasein as Heidegger sees it lies in how the norms and averages act to level the possibilities of some higher level or exemplary mode of existence. Leland (2010) observes that the image of authenticity that Heidegger works with stems from what Bourdieu (1996) characterised as the “*volkisch* mood” that gave coherence and direction to the “revolutionary conservatives” of the Weimar Republic. The qualities that Heidegger targets for critique are in this sense the ‘shallow’ and ‘uprooted’ characteristics of liberal cosmopolitanism and calculative reasoning. Against this background, Heidegger’s conception of the confrontation with death and the groundlessness of being stands out as a way to reclaim and assert an existence for one’s self, one’s people (‘they’), and the supremacy of the German language against foreign and disabling forces of dissipation (Maldonado-Torres 2004). The political problem here is that, despite the insights that others have drawn from his work, Heidegger himself was concerned with the hollowing out and levelling down of a specifically ‘German’ (colonial) ontology (Maldonado-Torres 2004; Trawny 2015).

Heidegger's means of resolving the unsettling confrontation with the groundlessness of being, it seems, was to fold the experience back into the terms of a fascist, German supremacist political ontology.⁹

As indicated, Heidegger's philosophy offers a radical critique of metaphysics that opens up a number of avenues for revealing the onto-colonial designing of both substance ontology and Cartesian subjectivism. However, the question of Heidegger's political ontology is itself something that calls to be questioned in the context of a decolonial politics. As suggested in my reading of Wendt and Ahmed, part of the argument of this chapter has been that the danger of an uncritical engagement with Heideggerian ontology is the manner in which it designs a colonially normative or zero point reading of equipmentality.

With that said, what the engagement with Chanter and Leland reveals is the manner in which the ontology of a minoritised Dasein encompasses a radically different configuration of issues that are the expression of the ontological designing of the colonial difference. For the minoritised Dasein, norms are troubling not because they bear the risk of lulling one into an average everyday comfort but, as Ahmed's, Harris' and Moreton-Robinson's examples suggest, because they are racialised and gendered in such a way that frustrates or impedes the possibility of obtaining a basic sense of dignity, comfort, and safety.

Regarding this point, Leland draws upon the work of Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) to argue that part of the condition of being a minoritised Dasein is to contend with an experience of lostness or incoherence. Anzaldúa formulates the concept of the borderland as a way of thinking through what it means to embody an existence that is subject to the forces of denial and separation. The problem of identity for Anzaldúa is the problem of the borderland as the experience of a social or political conflict over questions of what is important, possible, and permissible. The ontology of the borderland is the

⁹ This particular point is derived from arguments made by Angela Mitropoulos in private conversations.

question of a way of being designed by the experience of negotiating barriers and passageways between multiple worlds. Likewise, it is the ontology of a Dasein that struggles not to achieve an authentic expression of its 'culture' in the Heideggerian sense, but, rather, a struggle to pull together a dignified and assured sense of the relational self under the pressure of the colonality of design, a force that is directed at devaluing and destroying the lives and experiences of minoritised Dasein.

This chapter has argued that 1) the ontological designing of colonality persists through the uncritical appropriation of Heideggerian thought and 2) that the danger of the ontological designing of Heideggerian colonality is possible to confront and to redirect through an engagement with critical feminist and decolonial thought. The point here is not that Heidegger's thought is necessary for decoloniality but that decolonial thinking is necessary for a responsible appropriation and redirection of Heideggerian thought.

This final point brings the discussion back to an acknowledgement that this confrontation is not the product of a general or universal need but a requirement of someone like myself who already has a history of learning with and from Heidegger. The situational context for this analysis, therefore, is an unsettling tension between my belief that Heideggerian thinking can disclose vital and important insights into the agency of design and an acknowledgement that Heidegger's fascism was consequential to the shape and direction of his thought. My analysis here, therefore, stands as an example of how I conceive the political value of being able to discern and remain-with things that are experienced as unsettling. My point here is neither to valorise Heidegger's error nor to suggest that the danger of his thought is now or can ever be resolved. Neither is it to suggest that the experience of unsettlement is either sufficient to critical thought or worthy of fetishisation. Rather, I suggest that what such a confrontation produces is a heightened sensitivity to the presence of the colonality of design and a valorisation of the work of decolonial thinkers. To put this another way, what I am talking about here is a question of using a confrontation with Heidegger to strengthen a sensitivity to the presence of colonality, a desire that is itself the product of a decision to be ontologically designed by decolonial thinking. What I have tried to enact here, therefore, is a

Heideggerian inflected process of disclosing a stance against Heidegger's coloniality, a task that would not be possible without the ontological designing of decoloniality thinking. It is in light of this point that I now turn to a more detailed examination of Mignolo's thinking on materiality, the coloniality of knowledge, and the locus of enunciation.

[...] a performative concept of cognition not only impinges on our description of the world, but also on the descriptions of our (human) descriptions of the world. We not only use a tool; we also justify its uses as selected from among many possibilities. The use of the tool is as ideological as the descriptions invented to justify its use. (Mignolo 1995, p.24)

I remember meeting once with a group of Latin American students, well versed in the terminology of Marxist liberation and terribly concerned by the suffering and unhappiness of their people in Argentina. They asked me rather impatiently if I had ever actually witnessed the utopian rapport with the other that my ethical philosophy speaks of. I replied, "Yes, indeed — here in this room." (Emmanuel Levinas, from Kearney & Levinas 1984)

3.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I turn to a closer reading of Mignolo's thinking. My purpose here is to analyse, firstly, how the course of Mignolo's thinking reflects the kind of problematic laid

out by Leland — namely, the question of stance-taking under conditions of coloniality. Secondly, my aim is to follow how Mignolo resolves this question for himself by reconfiguring an early interest in semiotic theory into what I argue is a materialist-symbolic reading of the coloniality of knowledge and the concept of the ‘locus of enunciation’. This reading underscores my suggestion that Mignolo’s concept of the locus of enunciation is a conceptual design that is designed to disclose the problem of the coloniality of design as a condition that is both designed and designs. Further, I argue that Mignolo’s conception of the locus of enunciation is well configured to disclose possibilities for the designerly reconfiguration of the locus of enunciation away from the influence of zero point epistemology and towards relational plurality.

3.1 MIGNOLO AND THE (DE)COLONIAL POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE

Mignolo’s body of work can be read as a complex and iterative interpretation of how 500 years of colonial processes and structures has affected the relationship between knowledge, knowledge production, and the ability of individuals, groups, and cultures to adapt and survive in the face of change. This is perhaps not the standard way of introducing Mignolo’s ideas but it is nevertheless still a part of the explanation that Mignolo himself has given concerning what is at stake in the question of knowledge, something that provides a point of connection and commonality with Tony Fry’s work on sustain-ability (as I discussed in the Introduction).

Mignolo does not call into question theories of knowledge in the same way that, say, classical Greek, early modernist European, or later poststructural thinkers have — not withstanding the various differences at play within and between these broad brush categories. The kind of questioning that arises in Mignolo’s work is distinguished, as Mignolo puts it, by the attention he gives to the geopolitics of reason and the colonial difference. A point of difference to trace throughout Mignolo’s work, however is that Mignolo’s own intellectual politics is definitively and explicitly not orientated by a desire to resolve the problems that modern/ colonial epistemology poses for itself. In keeping

more with Frantz Fanon's (1970) famous call to move away from European practices of thought, Mignolo's interest resides not in trying to accommodate his arguments and concepts into the prevailing categories and narratives of the 'Global North' but, rather, in articulating the presence and significance of differences that lie beyond the representative capacity of Eurocentric thought.

3.1.1 MIGNOLO AS A MATERIALIST-SYMBOLIC THINKER

Walter Mignolo's major contribution to the project of decoloniality has been to elaborate the terms and complexity of a decolonial politics of knowledge, something that he conceives as being indivisible from a politics of location. As I signalled in the Thesis Introduction, the dictum that Mignolo uses to convey and guide his own thinking is 'I am where I think', a phrase that is both a deliberate riff on Descartes' 'I think therefore I am' and which, as signalled in Chapters 1 and 2, has a strong resonance with Mary Graham Heidegger's distinct ways of privileging a situated account of what it means to know and act in the world. In Mignolo's language, the *locus of enunciation* forms both the condition of possibility for knowledge and the condition by which knowledge becomes a political force within the colonial matrix of power.

Mignolo's political-theoretical position embodies a commitment to the imperative that the condition of 'knowing' is to be situated in a way of living. As I intend to argue, this is a position that marks Mignolo out as a designerly, materialist-symbolic thinker whose ideas embody an unnamed but nonetheless active form of insight into the coloniality of design. Notwithstanding the limitations of Mignolo's privileging of epistemology over ontology, my suggestion here is that Mignolo remains close to the question of ontological designing insofar as the concept of the locus of enunciation implies a reference to a pre-ontological involvement with designed objects, sign-worlds, and systems. For Mignolo knowledge is connected to ways of living that — as ontological designing suggests — are always themselves the directional configurations of the already designed. In what follows

in this chapter I look to elaborate the meaning and significance of the coloniality of knowledge in view of this understanding.

3.1.2 ON SITUATEDNESS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Similarly to Moreton-Robinson's (2000) analysis of Indigenous women's life writings (see Chapter 2), autobiography represents a revealing point of entry into Mignolo's thinking. In Mignolo's writing, autobiography serves as a means both to situate and explain his intellectual project. In the way that Mignolo speaks about the relation between his life experiences and intellectual development, the reader is able to gain a sense for where Mignolo is speaking from; that is, a locus of enunciation defined not by an abstracted or disembodied conception of geopolitics but, rather, by the way the effects of coloniality shows up as a matter of everyday concern. In this way the place of autobiography in Mignolo's writing also serves to demonstrate how he himself faces and deals with the kinds of challenges that Leland brings to light in her critique of Heidegger's conception of Dasein; that is, the question of how to respond to a situation in which the available possibilities for being and acting appear limited to variations on the theme of one's own onto-colonial domination. The links that Mignolo himself makes between the concepts he adopts and constructs and the life that he lives and describes are strong enough to suggest that thinking through Mignolo's autobiography is an essential part of reading Mignolo on his own terms.

As Mignolo helps 'us' to understand, the relation between life and its description is complex, for while a life is relational and thus always something more than the way in which it is narrated, lives are at the same time scripted and oriented in and by language (Romesín & Verden-Zöllner 2009). As Winograd and Flores argue, lives are in fact ontologically designed in language and narrative (Winograd & Flores 1986). The accounts that Mignolo provides of his own history — a story that includes often conflicting and at times destabilising experiences of identity and identification — does something more than provide a sense of background or context. In Mignolo's view, the question of knowledge

is always a question of location, wherein location is as much a question of the experience and description of temporal change as it is the experience and description of the relations that constitute the perception of place. Mignolo thus relates to biography as a methodological component of decolonising knowledge; that is, as a way to think through and about the place in which you are, think, act, and design.

3.1.3 FROM SEMIOTICS TO DECOLONIALITY

Mignolo entered the university in Argentina in the mid-60s where he studied philosophy, literature and anthropology. By the late 60s his interests in structural and post-structural theory — which had a presence in debates in Argentina regarding dependency theory and liberation theology — drew him to Paris to study semiology under the supervision of Roland Barthes. Mignolo's world at this time was, as he puts it, “composed of two spheres: Third World issues and French intellectual debates” (Mignolo & Hoffmann 2017). The timing of his arrival in Paris was significant in this regard as it came after the period from the late 1940s to early-1960s in which French Leftist intellectuals had taken an interest in ‘Third World’ struggles. The journal *Les Temps Modernes*, for instance, whose editorial board included Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and, in its early years, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, published articles and debates on decolonial struggles, including articles by Vietnamese Marxist and phenomenologist Tran Duc Thao. Many of Thao's ideas can also be found in the thinking of Frantz Fanon, whose *The Wretched of the Earth* was published with preface a by Sartre in 1961 (Renault 2015).

By the time Mignolo arrived in the late 60s, however, circumstances had changed. The focus of European scholars had shifted to a more Eurocentric interest in the tumult leading up to and following the events of 1968, particularly the upheavals in Paris and Prague. In Mignolo's words, the intellectual climate had moved from an interest in ‘Third World’ problems to the problems of the ‘First World’ (France) and ‘Second World’ (Czechoslovakia), a shift that did not go unnoticed on Mignolo's part.

In 1974 Mignolo moved to the US. Living there he learned of what was referred to as the Hispanic population, a category in the minds of Anglo-Americans that was also now being applied to him. While Mignolo himself is fair skinned and blue-eyed, he was, as he puts it, betrayed by an accent that marked him as the member of a particular class of human. By his explanation, the form of racism he faced was epistemic, “a pre-packaged classification of people where some classify and the rest are classified” (Mignolo & Hoffmann 2017).

It was in this environment that Mignolo’s commitment to a disciplinary defined conception of semiology began to give way to a more concerted interest in colonialism and colonising structures. Elsewhere Mignolo describes how his early experiences in Argentina had taught him to see the world first and foremost as the son of Italian migrants; that is, as a European within a Latin American context. The experience of thinking and working in the European university throughout his doctoral studies, however, had instilled (designed) an identity and a way of seeing that came into tension with Mignolo’s non-disciplinary sense of self or, in Mignolo’s terms, his ‘hermeneutic identity’. The difficulty for Mignolo was that his hermeneutic identity — as designed by the experiences of his upbringing — conflicted with his experience within the North American academy (Mignolo 2009a, p.70). As each of these elements interacted they brought forth for Mignolo the image and desire for a different kind of intellectual project. As Mignolo puts it,

The encounter with the ‘Hispanic’ made me understand immigrant consciousness, which I couldn’t see in Argentina. I ‘felt’ that my family and myself did not belong to the country, but I did not have an explanation. At that point semiology became a tool to understand myself, and the history of people like me; that is, people dwelling in immigrant consciousness. (Mignolo & Hoffmann 2017)

It was in the North American academy that the tension between Mignolo’s hermeneutic and disciplinary identity began to undergo a process of deconstruction, out of which emerged his later contribution to the theory of coloniality.

Mignolo's experience of working in a European and North American context had brought to light a geo-racial politics of reason and interpretation that was of great interest and concern to Mignolo but for which orthodox semiology could not provide satisfactory insight. Mignolo's attunement to the onto-colonial designing of his situation — as revealed in his sense of being mis-identified and directed by European and Anglo-American agendas — was the basis on which the limits of orthodox semiology became unavoidably clear. Importantly, in moving to confront these limitations, Mignolo's strategy was not to abandon semiology but to reconfigure the terms of his own engagement. In doing so, Mignolo began to progressively modify, supplement, and experiment with the disciplinary knowledge so as to design a conceptual configuration that could illuminate the history, structure, and dynamics of his lived experience — a desire that semiology *qua* zero point epistemology was not designed fulfil.

A key support in Mignolo's shift throughout this period came from reading works by decolonial thinkers who had examined and given expression to their own experience of coloniality. In particular, Mignolo cites Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderland/La Frontera*, (first published in 1987) from which he derived the concepts of 'colonial difference' and 'border thinking'. An additional shift came in the mid-90s when Mignolo began his engagement with Aníbal Quijano, from whom he learned and developed the concept of coloniality as the darker side of modernity.

Importantly, this shift in thinking on the part of Quijano and others came at a time when the limits of previous decolonisation movements had become apparent, with the takeover of colonial state apparatuses by native leaders resulting not in decolonial liberation but, rather, the reimposition of a modulated form of imperial-/colonial designing. In Quijano's assessment the ignored or underappreciated factor within previous theories of decolonisation was the problem of the coloniality of knowledge. Decolonisation, in these terms, was an epistemic issue as much as it was economic or political. The task of decolonisation thus became a project of 'epistemic reconstitution',

something that, as Mignolo puts it, is as much a question of emotion and sensing as it is a question of reason.

3.1.4 DESCRIBING OURSELVES DESCRIBING OURSELVES, AND OTHERS

This biographical overview points to the connections between Mignolo's lived experiences, the development and direction of his intellectual interests, and the concepts that help to establish the basic terms of Mignolo's central problematic: the coloniality of knowledge. The terms of this problematic are made complex by the manner in which they call into question the very condition of knowing what knowledge is. The place that Mignolo gives to biography turns on this very issue insofar as Mignolo is concerned with denaturalising and deuniversalising the figures of both writer and reader. Mignolo's research into the interaction of Spanish and Amerindian writing cultures throughout the sixteenth century, for instance, is on the face of it an already complex investigation into how different textual philosophies associated with radically different cosmologies and social practices, supported by differing material substrates, all interacted in order to produce both a globalised system of epistemological coloniality and, at the same time, new forms of creative resistance on the part of colonised populations. Mignolo adds another layer to the significance of this study, however, by foregrounding the question of his own place in describing the interaction of cultures under conditions of colonial domination. This issue that comes to dominate his introduction to the study is that of description; that is, how 'we' describe ourselves, others, and, crucially, the politics of description itself.

The circular structure of this problematic — the question of describing ourselves describing ourselves, and others — reveals the hermeneutical nature of Mignolo's project. For Mignolo, the significance of history and theory (both of which are concepts derived from a European system of classifying semiotic artifacts), is not reducible to questions of correlation with an objective or certain reality. Rather, what is at stake is the designing of systems of sense, action, orientation, and classification that are shaped by colonial

ontologies, or, in other words, the coloniality of design. The process is hermeneutic because there is no place beyond this dynamic from which to establish a neutral understanding, and yet the work of interpretation, particularly that of negotiating the dissonance between one's lived experience and the means of making sense of it is, for Mignolo, also the means by which to set forth and pursue the idea of decoloniality and delinking from the colonial matrix of power.

In order to unpack the meaning of Mignolo's project, it is productive to take a detour through some of the arguments made by Quijano that are of particular significance to the direction of Mignolo's writing following his return to America.

3.2 QUIJANO AND THE COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Quijano's argument in 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality' (2007) is in a general sense about the structure of a global system of colonial power and in particular about the insufficiency of assuming that such structures disappear once formal political relations of domination cease. Formal decolonisation was of course a significant achievement of the various independence movements that took place in the Americas, Asia, and Africa over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the concept of coloniality suggests, however, imperial and colonial structures live on as "an association of social interests between the dominant groups ('social classes' and/or 'ethnies') of countries with unequally articulated power" (Quijano 2007, p. 168).

While colonialism may have ended, coloniality persists as a designing structure and ontology (Maldonado-Torres 2007). In Quijano's terms there is no longer an "imposition from outside" but, rather, an ongoing actualisation of "intersubjective constructions" of distinction and discrimination. Depending on the time, place, actors, and populations involved, these constructions have been codified in terms of 'race', 'ethnicity', 'anthropology', and 'nation'. Even with the elimination of formal political controls, the structure of colonisation continues to be enacted on the basis of these categorisations.

Coloniality persists too in the domain of culture and knowledge. The nature of cultural domination within the modern/ colonial system is to subordinate other cultures to the European ideal. As Quijano emphasises, however, rather than operating as an external imposition on colonised subjects, such a dynamic becomes more powerful to the extent that it affects (ontologically designs) the “internal” condition of colonised subjects. This amounts to is a “colonization of the imagination of the dominated”, a process by which colonisation becomes a part of an imagination and re-inscribes the coloniality of design as a condition of being-in-the-world (Quijano 2007, p.169).

The modern/ colonial world system was initiated through a process of designerly repression and expropriation. Ideas, beliefs, images, symbols or knowledge that were not considered to be useful to the task of colonisation were suppressed, while the knowledge products related to mining, agriculture and engineering were taken up and fed back into the colonising process. These acts of ontological and economic colonisation directly targeted the systems of knowledge and imagination of colonised people with the intent of redesigning the designing of the colonised according to the image and desires of ‘Western’ colonisers:

The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivised expression, intellectual or visual. (Quijano 2007, p.169)

The disruption of the pre-colonised imaginary was backed up by the imposition of the coloniser’s own “patterns of expression” and their associated cosmological images and beliefs (Quijano 2007, p.169). This project of imaginative replacement would become a valuable form of governmental control as forms of external repression began to subside. The extent of this effect is so pervasive that it is difficult for non-European cultures to exist and reproduce themselves without some form of relation to the coloniality of knowledge.

A key factor in this system of control was the emergence of race as a globalised system for the classification of human life as labour. On this point Quijano provides a concise summary of how race developed into a political, economic, and geographical system of thought:

During European colonial world domination, the distribution of work of the entire world capitalist system, between salaried, independent peasants, independent merchants, and slaves and serfs, was organized basically following the same 'racial' lines of global social classification, with all the implications for the processes of nationalization of societies and states, and for the formation of nation-states, citizenship, democracy and so on, around the world. (Quijano 2007, p.171)

A final step in this process noted by Quijano was the effort on the part of colonisers to mystify their own specifically colonial patterns of knowledge production. This mystification became part of a process of designing a desire for European forms of knowledge. Through this process, European knowledge became not simply 'a' way to know but 'the' singularly correct and legitimate model. The mystification of European knowledge thus underscored and facilitated its misrepresentation as a universal good.

In Quijano's view the effects of the coloniality of knowledge vary according to the period and the mode by which a culture is subsumed by the coloniality of power. The cultural repression in America was particularly brutal insofar as it was achieved through a genocidal mode of conquest. According to Quijano the Aztec, Maya, Caribbean, and Tawantinsuyana (Inca) civilisations together lost around 65 million people to war, disease, and hyper-exploitative forced labour (for more details see Chapter 5). As Quijano emphasises, this was as much a societal and cultural catastrophe as it was a demographic one as the once literate cultures of America were transformed into illiterate subcultures. In Quijano's words they were deprived "of their own patterns of formalized, intellectual, and plastic or visual expression" (Quijano, 2007, p.170). This process of ethnocide — the extermination of 'culture' (Clastres 2010) — left decedents of the colonised populations

with a diminished repertoire of material-symbolic designs, which would in time be supplemented by the more or less modified designs of the European colonisers.

The efficacy of this power lay not simply in the perceptions that Europeans had of their own supremacy but, rather, in the corresponding internalisation of European supremacy in the ontology of colonised peoples themselves. European powers imposed their “paradigmatic image” as the “norm of orientation” on all cultural production to such an extent that the coloniality of knowledge became “a constitutive part of the condition of reproduction of those societies and cultures that were pushed into Europeanisation of everything or in part” (Quijano 2007, p.170). Cultural colonisation in Africa was more intensive than in Asia but less so than in America, particularly as pre-colonial patterns of expression were not fully destroyed. That said, European powers controlled the positioning of African cultural expressions within the global cultural order, confining such productions to the category of the ‘exotic’ and, in this sense, a resource that was freely available for misappropriation by Europeans.

While differences that inhere in each case of cultural colonisation are significant, for Quijano, their sum effect expresses the power of (the) coloniality (of design) at large. While continuities might be drawn with examples as far back as ancient times, pre-modern/ colonial forms of domination were invariably limited to particular regions of the world and were not conducted under the same system of economic coloniality (capitalism), in which surpluses were invested in a process of perpetual expansion. The central point of Quijano’s argument is that the coloniality of knowledge and culture forms a foundational element of a global power structure, something that was unprecedented prior to the sixteenth century.

3.2.1 THE CRISIS OF RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

It is against this background that Quijano speaks of a crisis in the European “paradigm of rational knowledge” (Quijano, 2007, p. 172). The fundamental presupposition of this

paradigm is, in Quijano's view, the notion that knowledge is the product of a subject-object relation. In approaching a critique of this paradigm Quijano sets aside questions concerning validation or truth in order to raise an alternative set of objections. These revolve around three observations that Quijano makes of the subject-object paradigm:

1. That the 'subject' of the modern/colonial paradigm of knowledge is conceived as an individual who is thought to "constitute itself in itself and for itself, in its discourse and in its capacity of reflection" (Quijano, 2007, p. 172). As I discussed in the Chapter 2, this idea finds its most concise expression in the Descartes' formulation 'I think therefore I am'
2. That the 'object' is considered to be both different from and external to the 'subject'
3. That the 'object' is identical to itself because it is "constituted by 'properties' which give it its identity and define it, i.e., they demarcate it and at the same time position it in relation to the other 'objects'" (Quijano, 2007, p. 172)

Against the story of the self-constituting subject, Quijano asserts intersubjectivity and social totality as the actual "production sites" of knowledge. Knowledge in this sense is always social and always bound up with the relations and processes that characterise a particular form of society. With regard to the idea of the 'object', Quijano points to scientific research that supports the idea that 'properties' are "modes and times of a given field of relations" (Quijano, 2007, p. 172). Quijano's third objection concerns the implications of the radical divide between 'subject' and 'object'; namely, that it helps to structure a categorical distinction between realm of 'reason' and a realm of 'nature' (cf. the account of the coloniality of rationalist conception of nature in Chapter 2).

A European notion of the 'subject' was the achievement of a struggle by an emergent capitalist class against the designs of a pre-modern social order. Quijano acknowledges

the liberatory dimension of this shift but at the same time draws attention to the manner in which the modern/colonial concept of the 'subject' misrepresents the essentially social (relational) nature of both subjectivity and knowledge. For Quijano, the knowledge and identity of any individual is not constituted within and by the 'subject' but, rather, in the "structure of intersubjectivity" that is otherwise orientated towards collective practical purposes. The denial of the essential sociality of knowledge on the part of modern/colonial epistemology contributes to the conception of knowledge as property; that is, as a relation between an individual and their object rather than as a relation amongst people that contributes to the reproduction of a social configuration.

The individualisation of knowledge and the denial of its sociality is a condition for formation of zero point epistemology.¹ In Quijano's terms this amounts to a denial of any reference to a subject outside the European context; that is, a paradigm that could "make invisible the colonial order as totality, at the same moment as the very idea of Europe was establishing itself precisely in relation to the rest of the world being colonised" (Quijano 2007, p.172). Fundamentally this was a paradigm that designed the impossibility of respectful communication and exchange across the colonial difference.² From the perspective of the zero point European modes of thought became synonymous with thought and subjectivity as such, with all other modes of knowing reduced to nonsense, primitivism, curiosity, or as an object of scientific study. By these terms, non-European knowledge was something to be explained on European terms rather than as legitimate modes of knowing, being, and designing in and of themselves. Crucially, Quijano insists that in the way it renders other knowledges and systems of knowledge production as external to the proper task of knowing, the European paradigm of knowledge was not something limited to the event of colonial domination but is, rather, a part of the power structure that endures as the coloniality of knowledge.

¹ Quijano does not use the concept of the zero point in 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality' but I have decided to use the term here as a way to connect with and consolidating ideas previously introduced in the Introduction.

² For an account of respectful design see Sheehan's (2011) 'Indigenous Knowledge and Respectful Design'.

To summarise what has been covered so far, Quijano's argument moves from establishing the question of the role of knowledge in the formation and sustainment of colonial power to the question of the epistemological paradigm that structures both the commodification of knowledge (knowledge as property) and the exclusion from consideration of all non-Western paradigms of knowing. Just as is the case with Mignolo, Quijano's analysis moves across a range of interconnected processes, including

- 1) the relation between how knowledge is produced and how it is theorised,
- 2) what happens to this relation under conditions in which knowledge production is structured according to the coloniality of economics (capitalism)
- 3) that the coloniality of economics is configured by the racialisation of what knowledge is and who is presumed to be able to produce it

A central argument for Quijano is that European epistemologies of the Cartesian model treat knowledge as though it were the property of the individualised European self. As a counter, Quijano asserts that knowledge is irreducibly social and thus only able to be treated as enclosed or abstracted from its wider social relations on the basis of the coloniality of power.

3.2.2 THE COLONIALITY OF SOCIAL TOTALITY

Having presented an analysis of the place of knowledge, knowledge about knowledge, and the production of knowledge in the context of the coloniality, Quijano takes on the question of 'totality' as a rival paradigm to Cartesian style epistemologies. In doing so, Quijano knowingly invokes one of the most long-standing problematics of European

sociology, the debate concerning individualist vs. social totality paradigms.³ This argument is worth following for the significance that it has on Mignolo's own thinking.

Having discussed the problem of individualism, Quijano traces the theories of social totality from the writings of Spanish scholastic philosophers Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546) and Francisco Suárez (1548-1617) of the Salamanca School through to French social theorists of the eighteenth century. Quijano identifies French political and economic theorist Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) as a key figure in linking the idea of social totality to revolutionary change in opposition to atomistic conceptions of social existence.

With this variation in mind, Quijano makes the point that the idea of social totality was often developed in a way that led to a reductionist perspective on sociality. This reduction took two forms: 1) the image of social life was seen as either the structure of functional relations between parts organised according to a single logic — the origins of the sociological concept of structural functionalism — or 2) as an organic structure in which parts are hierarchically organised according to the image of the human body. In this later version, the position of the head or brain corresponded to the class of people of the highest intelligence who command authority over the lower organs or figures of labour. The ideological power of the organist conception, one in which each part is honoured for the part it plays in maintaining the life of the social organism as a whole, is deployed in support of the kind of hierarchical relation that Quijano observes in as varied examples as the classical Roman Republic (Menenius Agrippa) and Soviet Russia (Kautsky, Lenin).

Quijano criticises the organist image not only for its hierarchical structure but for sustaining both a subject-object paradigm of knowledge and for presuming that society can be treated as an homogenous totality. The significance that Quijano draws here is that the colonised dimension of what was theorised as modern sociality was separated from and placed outside the question of totality. Moreover, at a geopolitical scale the

³ For some of the political implications of this theory see Svend Ranulf, 'Scholarly Forerunners of Fascism' (1939).

organic image underscored the concept of Europeans as the source of true knowledge of the conditions of other societies and their proper course of development. The picture that Quijano paints of the European conception of social totality is thus of a perspective that sees society,

as a closed structure articulated in a hierarchic order with functional relations between its parts, [that] presupposed a unique historical logic to the historical totality, and a rationality consisting in the subjection of every part to that unique total logic. (Quijano 2007, p.176)

3.2.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL RECONSTITUTION AND PLURAL TOTALITIES

Quijano acknowledges that in the wake of post-structural critique the idea of social totality is today largely discredited. Quijano's response to this point is of fundamental significance to understanding Mignolo's own project. While Quijano is clearly critical of the European tradition of theorising social totality, he is at the same time reluctant to follow a post-structuralist line of critique to the point of rejecting the idea of totality in general. Quijano's move is, rather, to assert that the concept of totality can be re-thought from a position outside the Eurocentric paradigm. Quijano's motivation for preserving the idea of totality is based on the claim that "all systematic production of knowledge", within and beyond the terms of zero point epistemology, "is associated with a perspective of totality" (Quijano 2007, p.177). The difference that Quijano wishes to assert, however, is that for many of these cultures the conception of totality includes within it an acknowledgment of ontological plurality.

For Quijano the problem with the European idea of totality is not totality itself but the designed disability of the zero point to cope with difference without either rejecting it or assimilating it into a functional part of a single social logic. The crucial point for Quijano is 1) that social totality can be thought of without closure, and 2) that difference can exist without the need to treat it in hierarchical terms. For Quijano, the path towards

addressing these limitations is “epistemological decolonization”, a process that opens up the space and possibility for an interchange of meaning beyond the logics of coloniality. A key element of this proposal is the embodiment of an alternative attitude with respect to who is able to produce useful and legitimate knowledge and the form in which this takes. As Quijano puts it, contrary to the 500 years of Western thought,

Nothing is less rational, finally, than the pretension that the specific cosmic vision of a particular ethnies should be taken as universal rationality, even if such an ethnies is called Western Europe because this is actually pretend [sic] to impose a provincialism as universalism. (Quijano 2007, p.177)

3.3 MIGNOLO'S EPISTEMIC RECONSTITUTION

Quijano's argument concerning the relation between knowledge, theory, cosmology, and power is significant for influencing the intellectual trajectory of thinkers who have taken up the idea of coloniality. For Mignolo, a key lesson was the concept of 'epistemic reconstitution'. In Mignolo's own words this implies the reconstitution of “ways of thinking, languages, ways of life and being in the world that the rhetoric of modernity disavowed and the logic of coloniality implement” (Mignolo & Hoffmann 2017)

The differences and structures instituted by coloniality are ones in which 'we' continue to participate in and reproduce, not least through the resources that 'we' turn towards in order to make sense of what matters to us. As I argue throughout Chapters 1 and 2, the process of becoming familiar with either an academic discipline or a theoretical discourse is one of ontological designing in the sense that it implies a structured transformation of one's socialised sense of being-in-the-world. For thinkers such as Fanon, Anzaldúa, and Mignolo, something important was missing in the space between European discourses and their own lived experiences, something that could only be accounted for by, as Quijano puts it, delinking from the coloniality of knowledge. What occurred in each of

these cases was not a total rejection but, rather, a reformulation of concepts, ideas, and language that was more appropriate to their respective problematics.

The work of each of these thinkers is therefore a response to the broader problematic (introduced in Chapter 2 through Leland) of how a colonised and racialised Dasein develops for itself a practice of sense making that refuses to conform to the coloniality of design. In the following section I provide a more detailed account of how Mignolo describes and responds to this problematic in the context of his reconceptualisation of the possibilities of semiology.

3.3.1 PREFACE TO THE ALTER-WORLDING OF 'AFTERWORD'⁴

In 1987 Walter Mignolo and Rolena Adorno agreed to collaborate on editing a special issue of *Dispositio* under the theme of 'colonial discourse', a concept associated with the work of literature professor Peter Hulme, specifically his 1987 book *Colonial Encounters*. As Mignolo (1989) describes it in an afterword to the issue titled 'Afterword: from colonial discourse to colonial semiosis', his own conception of colonial discourse underwent a significant change in the two years following the agreement to write for and edit the issue. Here I am interested in following Mignolo's description of what changed in his thinking at this point, not in order to evaluate the respective distinctions drawn between Hulme and Mignolo but to trace the movements by which Mignolo develops the terms of his own problematic. My suggestion here is that a close reading of the movements evident in what is perhaps a minor document within Mignolo's corpus can play a role in helping the reader to appreciate what Mignolo is attempting to accomplish in his more substantial works. To be precise, I am interested in the moments in which Mignolo articulates the inadequacies of the given terms and concepts of 'Western' semiology. Mignolo's movements here are, I suggest, registers of a desire to address and reformulate

⁴ For a useful explication of the Heideggerian conception of 'worlding' see Willis' 'Ontological Designing' (2007)

the problematics of the onto-colonial designing of literature studies.⁵ What the ‘Afterword’ makes evident is the extent to which Mignolo’s thinking proceeds by discerning, differentiating, and asserting new terms of significance on the basis of his own experiences and interest in decoloniality. This movement represents an effort on Mignolo’s part to delink and redirect away from the colonial designs of ‘Western’ literature studies. An important point to note is that Mignolo does this in the context of responding to a ‘Western’ theory of colonial knowledge, a point that highlights the extent to which the politics of decoloniality is addressed not just in the content of knowledge but also the terms and concepts of its production and dissemination.

With this in mind, it is worth stating upfront that my reading of Mignolo is inevitably and productively a question of what I bring to it in light of a combination of

- 1) a familiarity with Mignolo’s later works, concepts, and engagements with other thinkers,
- 2) concepts from those thinkers who constitute my wider area of inquiry,
- 3) my own ‘hermeneutic identity’, including but not limited to the experiences detailed in the thesis Introduction, and
- 4) a host of other implicit and misrecognised intuitions that reflect the ontological designing of my own locus of enunciation.

With this said, the account that I give is not an attempt to read against Mignolo but, rather, an exercise in tracing Mignolo’s own practice of signposting his thoughts and

⁵ On this point I am thinking in particular of Fry’s interest in the ontological designing of written texts first mentioned in the thesis Introduction. In particular I have in mind Fry’s study of how European concepts and attitudes concerning military technologies were taken up by Chinese thinkers via the work of reading and translating European texts in connection with the reverse-engineering of European weapons and other military technologies. Also relevant is Samer Akkach’s account of a comparable process with respect to how Renaissance and later modern/colonial conceptions of the architect changed thinking, practice, and social relations within Arab contexts. (Akkach 2014; Fry 2014a)

intentions throughout his own analysis. It is also in itself, as indicated in Chapter 2, an exercise in being designed by the agency of Mignolo's decolonial thinking.

To make the connection and relevance to design more explicit, what I believe Mignolo is concerned with is something of the order of what Deleuze and Guattari have called a 'conceptual plane', that is, a configuration of concepts that satisfies the desire for an adequate articulation of problems that arise within and as a result of the onto-colonial designing of sign formation and exchange — problems that are at the same time intellectual, emotional, practical, economic, and political (Deleuze & Guattari 1996). Thus, while Mignolo begins his thinking with a Eurocentric conception of 'literature' — a configuration that may not appear to be particularly designerly or decolonial — such an impression belies the designerly significance of both Mignolo's ideas and his practice of formulating them.

In this sense, I argue that Mignolo's knowledge of, on the one hand, the role of material-symbolic inscription practices in the formation of Amerindian borderland epistemologies (see discussion on Anzaldúa in Chapter 2) and, on the other, a recognition of the conceptual blindness of Eurocentric literature theory to the existence and significance of these practices, is what motivates Mignolo to invent a concept — 'colonial semiosis' — that, by design, centres and discloses Mignolo's specific and situated political-/intellectual problematic (Mignolo 1995). This work of disclosing a discernment for the coloniality of design is what allows Mignolo's own thought to act as a form of onto-decolonial designing.

In summary, therefore, my reading of Mignolo's 'Afterword' observes at least four moves that inform my own concept of the (de)coloniality of design:

- 1) The ontological designing of the attention that Mignolo gives to the materiality of semiotic practices within colonial contexts (specifically the Latin American context in this case),

- 2) Mignolo's consciousness of the design of his 'being-out-of-place' in the place of 'Western' semiology,⁶
- 3) The ontological designing of Mignolo's reading of, among others, Quijano, Fanon, Anzaldúa (addressed above in this chapter), and Edmundo O'Gorman (addressed below in this chapter); and
- 4) Mignolo's awareness of the need to design a way of disclosing this problematic in a way that also designs an unravelling of the zero point into a condition of relational plurality.

3.3.2 FROM COLONIAL LITERACY TO COLONIAL DISCOURSE

In the 'Afterword', Mignolo opens his discussion of Hulme's *Colonial Encounters* by crediting the concept of 'colonial discourse' with having provided an 'alternative distribution' to a field of research dominated by the concept of 'colonial literature.' The value that Mignolo sees in the concept of 'colonial discourse' *vis-à-vis* 'colonial literature' is that the former helps to address a particular set of problems that arise given,

- 1) the limits of what is taken to be the proper object of research within the zero point epistemology of Eurocentric language studies, and
- 2) a need to situate the concept of 'literature' itself as a thing that arises within, and remains connected to geo-politically designed epistemologies

The significance of the first point is that whereas 'colonial literature' defines a canon and corpus limited to the discursive criteria established in metropolitan centres, Hulme's

⁶ See my discussion of Ahmed's phenomenology of racial profiling in Chapter 2.

concept allows for the inclusion of “all kinds of discursive production related to and produced in colonial situations”, including the Capitulations of 1492, *The Tempest*, and Royal Orders and edicts (Mignolo 1989, p334). Mignolo’s initial valorisation of ‘colonial discourse’ is set against the tendency of ‘colonial literature’ to regard ‘literary’ production within the colonies and the languages of colonised people as a second-class form of production (designing) *vis-à-vis* the productions (designing) of colonising ontologies. Here Mignolo also points to the problems that arise from the un-reflexive transfer and ‘application’ of the concept of ‘literature’ in contexts where the meaning of ‘literature’ has no local history other than as a design of the colonising process.

As Mignolo argues, the concept of ‘literature’ — having been determined within a context that delimits its object to the products of alphabetised written language — works to exclude from consideration the significance of other forms of discursive production; namely, the oral, pictographic, and other discursive artifacts and practices of Amerindian societies. As Mignolo puts it, “literature is a regional and culture-dependent conceptualization of a given kind of discursive practice and not a universal of culture” (Mignolo 1989, p.334). The limit here is not simply in the inability to recognise different forms of literacy, but the designed blindness and misrecognition of the complexity of what occurs as different forms of literacy interact, particularly in case of colonialisng processes. This blindness — an expression of the colonality of knowledge, or, in other words, the onto-colonial designing of the zero point — is structured by design into the concepts that define the identity, disposition, and directional configuration of academic disciplines.

3.3.3 FROM COLONIAL DISCOURSE TO COLONIAL SEMIOSIS

For Mignolo, the concept of ‘colonial discourse’ is useful and valuable to a point, a point that delineates the terms and designing of the zero point. As Mignolo recognises, while the concept of ‘colonial discourse’ articulates a problematic that satisfies Hulme’s purposes, it is otherwise inadequate to articulating the problematic that Mignolo senses in

1) his lived experience as a Latin-American within an Anglo-American intellectual context, and 2) the questions that Mignolo derives from his study of the interactions between alphabetised and non-alphabetised communication systems-/practices under conditions of invasion and ontological domination.

While a reader habituated to zero point epistemology might be tempted to correct either Mignolo's conception of 'discourse' or the meaning of the term itself (so as to encompass Mignolo's concerns), I argue that such a move fails to grasp what is at stake for Mignolo in the process of his own thinking.⁷ Rather, it is an indication of one's investment in a terminology that speaks to one's own concerns, rather than that of Mignolo. By following the process of thinking that Mignolo himself regularly signposts it is clear that he is not concerned with differentiation for differentiations sake but rather, in articulating his sense for the ontological designing of the colonial difference.

Mignolo's sense for the designing of the colonial difference is derived from both his experience of racial profiling, his experience of being-out-of-place within the field of semiology, the ontological designing of his reading of decolonial thinkers, and the performative agency of his own research into the colonality of writing (Mignolo 1995). On this later point, my argument, following Fry (2014a), is that *the performativity of the artifacts of investigation themselves* — that is, the textual designs of both colonising and decolonising ontologies — plays a role in disposing Mignolo towards questioning what the concept of 'discourse' can or cannot do. Put differently, my point here is that Mignolo's discernment for the ways in which semiotic designs centre and marginalise different ways of thinking is itself the product of Mignolo having been ontologically designed by the semiotic designs that he researches.

⁷ This is an error that underscores efforts by critics such as Scott Michaelsen and Scott Shershow (2007) to bring Mignolo's thinking back into line with the designs, interests, and agendas of Eurocentric discourses. In the case of Michaelsen and Shershow, their reading of Mignolo's reading of Derrida misunderstands the significance of Quijano's critique of poststructuralism's Eurocentrism (see discussion above in this chapter), a design that is inscribed by Mignolo in the concept of the colonial difference (Mignolo 1999a, 2002, 2013).

It is, therefore, against this background that Mignolo finds a limit in the ability of ‘colonial discourse’ to observe and account for what is significant in the difference of Amerindian designs. It is Mignolo’s encounter with this limit — an encounter that arises specifically on the basis of Mignolo’s decolonial ontology — that directs him towards inventing the concept of ‘colonial semiosis.’ The designing performed by this concept is to disclose the problem of the colonial difference and the need for the concept of the locus of enunciation. As Mignolo puts it: “‘Colonial semiosis’ brings to the foreground the following dilemma: what is the locus of enunciation from which the understanding subject understands colonial situations?” (Mignolo 1989, p. 335). This is an important move insofar as it is the very designing of Mignolo’s differential disposition that enables him to articulate his situated sense for what he later describes as problematic of (the) coloniality (of design).

3.3.4 ON THE CORE VIOLENCE OF THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN

On my reading, the most significant and complex movement that Mignolo makes in the ‘Afterword’ occurs in the first paragraph on page 336. Here the account of the limits of ‘colonial discourse’ turns towards an articulation of what Mignolo finds inadequate in the theory of understanding that underpins the onto-colonial designing of literary studies; namely, hermeneutics. It is at this point that Mignolo presents an additional set of concepts that are designed to reformulate the terms of engagement with respect to both the object of research and the subject of intellectual exchange. The final line in the previous paragraph provides a useful entry into this argument:

I am concerned with the tension between the inscription of the epistemological subject within a disciplinary (or interdisciplinary context) and its inscriptions within a hermeneutic context in which race, gender, and traditions compete with the goals, norms and rules of the disciplines (Mignolo 1989, p. 335)

Against the background of my own experience of reading ontological designing in light of decolonial thinking, I read this “tension” as an indication of what Mignolo feels is at stake in the distinctions he looking to configure. Here Mignolo indicates that the issue that he both identifies *and identifies with* was brought to his attention through a process of reading Mexican philosopher of history Eduardo O’Gorman’s (1972) study on *The Invention of America*. Among the markers of influence that Mignolo names, including O’Gorman’s reading of Heidegger (the relational significance of Heidegger’s influence here was noted above in Chapter 1), Mignolo points to O’Gorman’s position as a “creole” thinker; that is, a thinker whose research practice became a vehicle for making sense of the experience of a being scholar of Mexican background within the context a Eurocentric historiography. The fact that Mignolo references O’Gorman indicates the extent to which Mignolo recognised and found validation in the way O’Gorman expressed and examined the terms of the Occidental problematic. While Mignolo takes the opportunity to observe O’Gorman’s lack of attentiveness to the Amerindian experience (a consequence of the onto-colonial designing of the discipline of history, Heideggerian thought etc.), O’Gorman’s radical reformulation of the terms of ‘Western’ historiography nevertheless provides a basis and a model upon which Mignolo asserts the terms of his own problematic.

In naming this tension, Mignolo signals his consciousness of the connection between his conceptual designing and his embodied experience, or, as he puts it, a dissonance between the designs of ‘disciplinary’ and ‘hermeneutic’ identities. In Mignolo’s case, the terms of the dissonance is a question of the coloniality of ‘Western’ disciplinary designs running into conflict with the designing of decolonial thinking. Caught between two forces of inscription; that is, on the one hand, the colonial design of the concept of ‘discourse’ and, on the other, a designed sense for what the Anglo-centric discipline does not understand about the Latin-American and Caribbean contexts, Mignolo chooses to design his own mode of articulation, one that brings his specific experience of this tension into the foreground of his own thinking and, as a consequence, that of his reader.

Having embodied this tension in the concept of ‘colonial semiosis’, Mignolo turns to address the question of the onto-colonial designing of disciplinary study. The problem that Mignolo poses here turns on the question of how a decolonial conception of semiotic artifacts is possible given the power of what he calls the disciplinary ‘image of the real’. Mignolo’s response to this question is to argue that while the disciplinary image of the real represents a genuine and powerful force of onto-colonial designing, its agency is nevertheless contested by the *locus of enunciation*, a concept that, as I indicated in the Introduction, refers to the ontological designing of the situated place from which an individual thinks, acts, and designs. In Mignolo’s analysis, the stakes of this question turn on the issue of how the ‘Western’ colonial locus of enunciation — notwithstanding its internal differences and variability — is able to sustain its specific political-epistemic designs as the prevailing and exclusive norm of academic discourse. On this view, the coloniality of knowledge is sustained by the capacity of the ‘Western’ disciplinary system to impose its singular, particular, and colonial locus of enunciation as the dominant image of reality, against and to the exclusion of designs for radical relational plurality.

Further, as Mignolo argues, given the politics that is inherent to the configuration of situated perspectives, such supposedly neutral acts as description and naming are, notwithstanding their necessity, always at the same time acts of authorising, giving license to, and designing a specific locus of enunciation. In the context of the disciplinary image of the real, the ontological designing of description is configured by the hegemonising designs of the coloniality of knowledge. The naïve empiricist view of description, therefore, belies its decidedly political significance. It is precisely by these terms that an otherwise plural condition of knowledge production is pressed into the anti-relational designing of the zero point. While my argument here is that the relationality of the locus of enunciation always exists in excess of zero point epistemology, and tends towards its unravelling, it is precisely the structural impetus of the coloniality of power to constantly reimpose the terms of its singular image of the real that represents the core violence of the coloniality of design.

3.3.5 ON THE RELATIONAL MATERIALITY OF THE LOCUS OF ENUNCIATION

Mignolo's concept of 'colonial semiosis' highlights how systems of knowledge operate on the basis of a material substrate of designs — including human bodies — amidst which knowledge is both designed and designs. What Mignolo has in mind here is that both the 'Western' conception of knowledge and the artifacts it indexes (books, universities, the internet etc.) together constitute a normative configuration of designs with an implicit capacity to be imposed upon loci that are composed of different material-symbolic configurations. I suggest that what Mignolo indicates in the concepts of colonial semiosis and the locus of enunciation is the manner in which the ontological designing of material-symbolic configurations is directive of the production, exchange, distribution, and regulation of knowledge.

The material substrate of semiotic designs, including the designed embodiment of a styled capacity to listen-feel-speak (Ortega y Gasset 1959; Winograd & Flores 1986; Romesín & Verden-Zöllner 2009), configures a mode of existence as the relationality of concrete situated practices of material-symbolic exchange. The coloniality of design manifests as the systemic configuration of configurations by the zero point image of the real, which, as argued above, is itself the hegemonised design of a particular locus of enunciation; namely, a racialised white, straight, affluent, Christian, man (Wynter 2003; Lugones 2007; Mignolo 2011; Mitropoulos 2012).

The point of this account of the material-symbolic substrate of the locus of enunciation is to make it clear that the zero point image of the real arises out of a certain relational configuration of material processes, as opposed to something that descends fully formed and complete from a Platonic-style realm of pure ideas. The implication of this reading is that,

- 1) the coloniality of power has to be understood as a design that exists within rather than beyond history and, thus, is always incomplete and subject to change, mutation, and disintegration; and
- 2) that the coloniality of power is not a spectral force beyond tangible reach but, rather, the always already compromised construction of a contest between the effort of imposing the coloniality of design as a singular global paradigm against the counter force of designs that manifest a relational and uncolonisable plurality.⁸

The fate of the designing of the zero point image of the real thus turns on the question of the designing of more or less exploitative or respectful relations amongst infinitely variable and dynamic loci of enunciation.⁹ In this sense I read Mignolo's concept of the disciplinary image of the real as the design of a locus of enunciation that has obtained an historically contingent power to configure other modes of designing towards its particular *conditions of expression* rather than simply the content alone. The basic point here is that the concept of the locus of enunciation does not allow for a categorical distinction between the ontological designing of content and the ontological designing of form or methodology; to design the terms of the discussion is, in effect, an act that (re)configures the balance of forces that determine the difference between the relationality of respect and the (anti-)relationality of domination, instrumentalisation, and exploitation.¹⁰ This is

⁸ This point is derived from arguments made by Angela Mitropoulos (2006b, 2012), Tony Fry (1999, 2011), and Arturo Escobar (2008, 2012, 2015, 2018).

⁹ Compare my discussion of Dilnot on design and-/as relations in Chapter 1. On the concept of respect that I mind here see Norman Sheehan on respectful design (Sheehan 2004, 2011).

¹⁰ My conception of the relation between content and methodology (form) is configured (designed) by arguments made by Angela Mitropoulos in private conversations that are otherwise implicit throughout her published work. See in particular *Contract & Contagion* (2012) and "Encoding the Law the Household and the Standardisation Of Uncertainty" (2017a). My understanding of the difference between relations of respect and relation of domination, instrumentalisation, and exploitation is informed (designed) by Sheehan (2004, 2011), Graham (2014), Rose (2013), Hage (2017), Bateson (2000), and Maturana (Romesin & Verden-Zöller 2009).

what leads Mignolo to draw a distinction between the agency of the “saying” and the “said”, as in, the form and the content, or, the enunciation and the enunciated (Mignolo 1989, p. 335). Thus, to give one’s attention only to the level of the “said” — as does Hulme and many other of Mignolo’s critics make the error of doing — is to misrecognise what is implied in both the coloniality and decoloniality of design.

3.3.6 FROM MONOTOPICAL TO DIATOPICAL OR PLURITOPICAL HERMENEUTICS

Mignolo’s conception of the locus of enunciation allows for a theory of knowledge that shows how it is neither incidental nor inconsequential that alphabetised writing systems, for instance, are asserted as the required mode of exchange within international systems of law, politics, economics, scholarly research etc. Mignolo’s arguments point to the fact that the hegemony of the alphabet is at the same time an accomplishment and a technique of the coloniality of design. Prior to the formation of the colonial matrix each distinct semiotic configuration constituted its own normative sense of being-in-the-world. Within the modern/ colonial system, however, the hegemony of the alphabet designs into being — at a global scale — a normative condition of marginality for all non-alphabetical systems of semiotic design. Furthermore, as Mignolo’s own studies make clear, the globalisation of the ‘Western’ alphabet produces a condition of exteriority for those loci of enunciation whose system of semiotic designing fall too far beyond zero point epistemology’s normative conception of ‘writing’ and ‘knowledge’. The same effect occurs at the level of the language and concepts that together design the hegemonic image of the real that inscribes the boundaries and normative force of zero point epistemology.

It is precisely this norm-boundary effect that Mignolo hones in on with his analysis of the concept of hermeneutics. Taking “hermeneutics” to be “not only a reflection on human understanding, but also as human understanding itself”, Mignolo goes on to suggest that the “‘tradition’ in which hermeneutics has been founded and developed [...] has to be recast in terms of the plurality of cultural traditions and across cultural boundaries”

(Mignolo 1989, p. 335). The ‘hermeneutical dilemma’ that arises in the context of colonial situations concerns the question of the particular ‘tradition’ within which a semiotic design is to be interpreted. The problem that Mignolo picks up on is that “hermeneutics”, as the product of a Eurocentric tradition of philosophical discussion derived from authority discourses of theology and law (Zimmermann 2015), gives rise to a “monotopical” interpretative effect.

To elaborate, as monotopical hermeneutics encompasses a sense for the problematic of the ‘exotic’ — that is, the colonial way of experiencing an encounter with a thing designed by a locus of enunciation that is not one’s own — its means of coping with such designs is to bend the performative force of their meaning towards the defence and accumulation of colonial power. As Mignolo and many others have argued, this is precisely the role played by such modern/colonial disciplines as linguistics, anthropology, history, the fine arts, and sciences, and expressed in such institutionally refined technologies as the museum, zoo, botanical garden, factory, plantation, ‘world-expo’, department store, school, military facility, prison, asylum, reservation, mission, concentration camp, and visa system (Mitchell 1991; Willis 1993; Foucault 1995; Mignolo & Vázquez 2013). Running through each of these disciplinary formations is a baseline will to domesticate, control, and profit from the exotic rather than allow for a more respectful and complex process of negotiation between different loci of enunciation.

If monotopical hermeneutics can be described as being directed by a will to power over the products, practices, and processes of another way of being, the alternative concepts that Mignolo puts forward — diatopical or pluritopical hermeneutics — represent the designs of an alternative mode of relating. In Mignolo’s terms, the image of colonial semiosis is not a universal or totalised project of understanding but, rather, a “*network of processes to be understood*” (Mignolo 1989, p. 336, emphasis added). The locus of enunciation is similarly imagined as a “*network of places of understanding*” (Mignolo 1989, p. 336). Diatopical or pluritopical hermeneutics thus names the relationality of *networks of processes to be understood* and *the network of places (loci) from which things are understood*. In these terms, what is revealed through Mignolo’s concepts of diatopical or pluritopical

hermeneutics is the “significance of the disciplinary as well as the cultural (race, gender, class) inscription of the subject in the process of understanding” (Mignolo 1989, p. 336). Insofar as diatopical or pluritopical hermeneutics implies a “plurality of traditions”, it is the means by which Mignolo can make sense of his desire to construct “the voices that have been suppressed and the history that has not been written in the process of colonisation” (Mignolo 1989, p. 337).

3.3.7 DESIGNING THE LOCUS OF ENUNCIATION

The path traced through ‘colonial literature’ and ‘colonial discourse’ to ‘colonial semiosis’ and from “monotopical” to “diatopical or pluritopical” hermeneutics marks a process of Mignolo identifying and bringing to the fore, by design, an experience of the tension that arises from a disjuncture between his disciplinary and hermeneutical identity, or, in other words, between the disciplinary image of the real and the lived reality of a raced and classed (and where applicable, gendered-/sexualised) practitioner. Included within my analysis is a theory of semiotic designing at play in the formation of both the disciplinary and hermeneutic identity that resonates closely with the approach and understanding of ontological designing. Mignolo’s thinking is designed to both disclose the problem of monotopical hermeneutics (zero point epistemology) and, at the same time, to disclose strategies for countering and undermining its effects.

Mignolo indicates as much with his reference to ‘Australian’ anthropologist Michael Taussig. Mignolo credits Taussig with having reconfigured his (Taussig’s) own locus of enunciation in such a way that addresses what Taussig himself finds inadequate within his chosen discipline of anthropology. Referencing Taussig’s (1991) study on terror and healing in a Latin-American context, Mignolo describes how Taussig “attempts to find a place within the Latin American intellectual tradition” via a careful study of works by Latin-American writers (Mignolo 1989, p. 336). While Taussig’s locus of enunciation is inevitably still ‘Australian’ and anthropological, his “openness” to “the voices of the

other”, as Mignolo puts it, configures Taussig’s ability to *be designed by* the performative designs of Latin-American literature.

The point, in short, is that Mignolo not only provides set of concepts that opens up the possibility of examining the interaction of processes and places of understanding but, also, a description of understanding that points to a generative mode of critique. Insofar as it is practiced in pluritopical rather than monotopical mode, this mode of critique aims at designing a form of relational plurality that facilitates a process of delinking from the ontological designing of the coloniality of knowledge.

3.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

One final thought that warrants disclosure in my analysis is the manner in Mignolo demonstrates a way of redirecting an experience of ‘unsettlement’ (the disciplinary-/hermeneutic tension) into the configuration of decolonising designs. In this sense, Mignolo’s thinking demonstrates his discernment for the presence and (decolonising) significance of the unsettlement as a means to disclose (design) concepts that embody a capacity to configure decolonial ontologies. By my reading, what is at stake for Mignolo’s is not the question of ‘capturing’ a ‘universal’ or ‘correct’ definition of such concepts as ‘discourse’ and ‘hermeneutics’ but, rather, the desire to design a conceptual configuration that articulates and, as such, redirects (Fry 2008) the tension that Mignolo senses in his life and his work into decolonising designs. Mignolo’s practice of responding to this tension by designing new concepts resonates with the account of a colonised Dasein discussed in Chapter 2, with Mignolo’s response representing a strategy of stance taking that manifests as the ontological designing of decolonising designs.

The form of designing that Mignolo enacts, therefore, is to generate or modify concepts that have a stronger correspondence to his own interests and problems. Mignolo thus produces a critique of ‘hermeneutics’ that aims not at replacing the concept in all contexts or traditions of thought but, rather, at generating a configuration that is designed to assist

him with both centring and reconfiguring his own locus of enunciation. This is to say two things, 1) that Mignolo's critique is a generative and designerly one based on being attentive to the requirements of his own problematic, and 2) that the generative process itself plays a role in designing Mignolo's own image of the real.

The significance of this observation is that Mignolo does not imagine the locus of enunciation as an immovable given. Rather, it itself is a designed configuration that designs the directional import and expression of design practices, including, in this case, intellectual practice. Insofar as it is a designed configuration, the locus of enunciation is not a static or unidirectional force but, rather, a relationally configured design that is open to conscious and designerly redirection (Fry 2009). In doing so Mignolo privileges a relational conception of the designing of *material* processes over and beyond an interest in phenomenal content. Mignolo's effort to break down the distinction between form and content — a distinction that persists in both design theory¹¹ and the academy in general as an expression of the colonality of knowledge — leads him to address the same rationalist Cartesian subjectivism that Willis identifies in Schön's concept of reflective practice (see Chapter 1). This implies that Mignolo's tacit conception of onto-decolonial designing is one that refuses the kind of detachment that could allow for a Schönian process of representing or 'laying out' the terms of the problem in full. Because 'our' ways of being/knowing/sensing/designing are themselves designed by the colonality of power, the practice of decolonial delinking and redirection must be a process that addresses the pre-intellectualist level of feeling, affect, and the pre-ontological. This is, again, a point that underscores the meaning of a politics of unsettlement; that is, of decolonisation as something that implies a designerly process of directing the experience of discomfort and unsettlement towards an unravelling of the colonality of power into a more relational mode of being/knowing/sensing/designing.

¹¹ On this point see Cameron Tonkinwise's 'Is Design Finished?' (2005).

My understanding of this problematic is informed by Mitropoulos (2006a, 2017a) who offers a critique of the tendency of the phenomenological method to foreclose on the question of the designing of phenomena.¹² While theorists of ontological designing such as Fry have tended to work against this propensity via recourse to the concept of relationality, I believe there is an argument to be made — one borne out in my critique of Wendt above but also embedded across other works of ontological designing — for highlighting this as an issue that requires more attention from design theorists, particularly in light of the colonality of design and-/as the ontological designing of the zero point. My argument here is that thinkers such as Mignolo, Mitropoulos, and others help to disclose a more radical perspective on the directionality of designing, particularly insofar as both of these thinkers assist with breaking down and disrupting the ontological designing of colonality that persists in design theory (see Chapters 1 and 2).

¹² This idea can also be found in the thinking of David Bohm (1983), Deleuze and Guattari (2004), Norman Sheehan (2004), and Patrick Wolfe (2010). The following quote from Wolfe's critique of humanist universalism is useful for drawing out what is at stake in the problem of attending only to what 'shows up' as opposed to the designing of the designs that disclose phenomena as such,

[...] there is nothing stable or essential about being black, since black people in Australia were targeted for biocultural elimination in a manner antithetical to the racial targeting of black people in the United States. On the other hand, Indigenous people in both countries, whether classified red or black, have been racialized in almost indistinguishable ways. What matters is not their phenotypical characteristics. It is not as if social processes come to operate on a naturally present set of attributes (in this case, racial) that are already given outside history. Rather, racial identities are constructed in and through the very process of their particular exclusion. In other words, just as, for Durkheim, religion was society speaking (in his terminology, through collective representations), so, I am arguing, race is exclusion speaking. *The process is prior. It produces the ontology.* (Wolfe 2010, p.120, my emphasis)

In English Imperial imagery England was mapped as Home (zero-point), and Australia was mapped as colony. (Rose 2004, p.43)

Arrayed beyond and around the obvious walls of migration control, the architectures and technologies of the border proliferate.
(Mitropoulos & Finoki 2008)

4.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In this section I move closer to home, to my locus of enunciation, the place from where I think, act, and design. In doing so my intention is not to conduct an investigation of my personal self but of the configuration of the coloniality of design as it operates in 'Australia'. This distinction, which I hold to be meaningful, is nevertheless representative of a more dense and complex relation of points and processes in tension rather than a stable or comfortable delineation. The problem is not simply that I am 'in' a thing that goes by the name of the 'Australian context' but, rather, that it is 'in' me, so to speak, as part of my being/ thinking/ sensing/ designing. The 'Australian context' in this sense is not so much something 'out there' but, rather, a part of the very manner in which I am and how I think.

Whatever critical distance I might hope to get on what 'Australia' is or what 'Australian' means, there is always a residual trace of recognition and identity that forms the condition for interpellation, the potential hail that runs ahead of and betrays any critical

cognition.¹ The effect is demonstrated, for instance, in my experience of observing liberal American pundits or comedians marking the apparent alienness of billionaire media mogul Rupert Murdoch by labelling him as ‘that Australian’. While I share no sympathy with Murdoch, this performance on the part of American media figures generally produces an involuntary spike of annoyance and the associated thought, “Ah, no he isn’t, actually. This arsehole has been an US citizen for as long as I’ve been alive.” While I feel that I understand and could explain perfectly well why American liberals feel compelled to ‘other’ Murdoch in this way, the process of my thinking is pierced by an internal voice that says, “You may be right, but why do you care about this as much as you seem to do?” While the answer to this question need not — and, in my case, does not — resolve into an affirmation of ‘Australian’ nationalism, the appearance of the question in my thinking *as such* discloses white settler nationalism as a possible (designed) interpretation of my existence. This experience, I suggest, stands as evidence of the extent to which my sense of being-in-the-world has been configured by the designs of the coloniality of power.

Linking back to my argument concerning the significance of unsettlement and in light of what I have already discussed regarding the work of writers such as Moreton-Robson, Harris, Fanon, Anzaldúa, and Mignolo, it is clear that any gesture towards the de-personalisation of critical thought and design is at best a troublesome fiction and at worst an practice of relational negation and political demobilisation. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, for example — a work that is specifically designed to generate “*actional*” intensities disposed towards preserving relations that constitute being-in-the-world — Fanon devotes the final line to a prayer that affirms the centrality of his embodiment in his own decolonial thinking: “O my body, always make me a man who questions!” (Fanon 1967, p.173, 232). While it is important to acknowledge the different perspectives and positions (loci of enunciation) from which Fanon and I speak — he a Black man from the Antilles writing on the experience of racism, me a white member of the ‘Australian’ settler class

¹ My use of the concept of the ‘hail’ here is a reference to Louis Althusser’s original formulation in ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ (Althusser 1971).

writing in the colonisers language on Aboriginal land — the resonant point here is that a discernment for the affect of thinking (and designing), in all their various expressions, is a core and positive dimension of decolonial thinking.

In this sense, all acts of intellectual and creative work emerge from and design a relational meshwork of other designs, feelings, desires, and sensitivities. Phenomenologically — notwithstanding the critical points I registered at the end of Chapter 3 — the work of critical thinking and writing can be described as a movement into the embodied self in which ‘we’ encounter ideas and associations that are always already both social and personal, public and private, familiar and strange, comforting and unsettling. This is an image in contrast to the Enlightenment ideal of a detached and depersonalised notion of rationality — an anti-relational relationality, alias: zero point epistemology — that designs the normalisation of colonial configurations of legitimate thought and proper conduct.

Susan Stewart touches on this tension between zero point epistemology and relational plurality when she describes Enlightenment thought as a “quest for detachment, for objectivity, [which] was struggling against the tendency of the world to create binding attachments, obligations and influences” (Stewart 2015, p.280). Stewart’s account recalls the figure of Descartes discussed in Chapter 1 who — notwithstanding the militaristised-theological culture that persuaded him to expel the senses from consideration — was himself not beyond recognising that the work of thought was “arduous”, an expression that signals how rigorous reflection exacts a physical and psychic toll, even on those who are anxious to deny the significance of the body and its relationality (Descartes 2005, p.100).

This thought leads to the question of what it means to think a thing or process that is a part of structuring one’s own thought and action, a question that is in some respects a quintessential concern of ontological designing. As Heidegger (1977a) once observed, this turning in on one’s self — the question of the ground of one’s being — carries the risk of unleashing an image of a vicious circularity, one that pitches the experience of thinking into the mood of the impossible and meaningless. The image of circularity as a

constricting spiral, however — itself a potential object of fixation — relies upon a theory of identity that ignores the knots, fissures, disjunctures, and cracks in thought-/feeling-/design, as well as the presence and value of critical estrangement. The constricting image of circularity assumes that the point from which the path of reflection departs and returns represents something always already coherent and totalised, as opposed to being decentred, dispersed, contingent, and incomplete. The nihilistic image of circularity fails to acknowledge that despite whatever groove ‘we’ might find ourselves in, the possibilities of experience that each of ‘us’ live are never reducible to a single logic or total image. There is always a surplus of meaning that runs ahead of and in excess of language and rationalisation, an excess of feeling and thought that acts to destabilise the surety of rational(ised) discourse.

In this light, my turn towards thinking the relation between ontological designing, coloniality, and ‘Australia’ aims at a critical confrontation with dimensions of what I find most unsettling about the social contexts that made me who I am; that is, a member of settler class who is disposed to find their time, place, and being-in-the-world unsettling. The experience of unsettlement I am trying to evoke is itself one that is both unsettled and unsettling, an experience that does not rest at any particular moment in the past, present, or future, but which modifies the experience of temporality itself. As this examination proceeds, my intention is not to treat the presence of this sense of trouble and estrangement as the ‘saving grace’ of a damaged, unsustainable, but otherwise ‘well meaning’ settler-colonial society. Rather, my goal is to do the best I can to stay with the sense of being unsettled so as to allow it to disclose something of the nature of settler-coloniality. This is an exercise in learning to think and work with unsettlement as a complex but, I argue, necessary response to the coloniality of design.

In this section my goal is to make sense of coloniality and design as the coloniality of design, and, further, to do so in a way that is relevant to an ‘Australian’ context. This task begins by situating my own concerns in relation to previous work by Tony Fry on ‘Australian’ design history and the political geography of marginalisation, and Anne-Marie Willis on the question of ‘Australian’ nationalism and identity. After clarifying points of

insight and significance in relation to these texts, my discussion moves to an engagement with the work of Ghassan Hage from whom — with the help of Harris, Moreton-Robinson, and Mitropoulos — I develop an argument concerning white nationalism as an expression of the colonality of design. After noting Moreton-Robinson's comments on Hage's under-theorisation of colonialism I turn to a critical discussion of Ann Stoler's remarks on 'colony as design' in order to disclose the difference of my own conception of the colonality of design. These remarks provide the theoretical set up (design) for my genealogical examination of onto-colonial designing in Chapter 5.

4.1 ON MARGINALITY AND THINKING FROM 'AUSTRALIA'

Fry completed his doctoral thesis on design history in 1984 at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. Shortly afterwards he relocated to the Power Institute (an arts research institute) at the University of Sydney. By the late 1980s he began publishing critical studies on the significance of practicing design history from and about the 'Australian' context. At the heart of Fry's concern was an interest in taking seriously the question of place, position, and its relation thought, experience, and design. In light of the previous discussion in Chapter 3 this can be read as the expression of a concern with the ontological designing of the locus of enunciation; that is, a concern not simply with the content of thought but with the positions and relations that are affected (designed) by speaking from as-/where you are ('I am where I think'). While this work comes before Fry's take-up of the notion of ontological designing it is still possible to read into Fry's concern a sensitivity to the design power of design discourses (what I described as 'meta-design' in Chapter 1)

In a paper from 1989, 'A Geography of Power: Design History and Marginality', Fry examines his interest in location through the theme of marginality. Fry's treatment of this theme encompasses a recognition that,

1. the discipline of design history — the place from which Fry himself takes up and directs his thinking — “exists in and produces conditions of marginality” (Fry 1995, p.15), and
2. that marginality, as the ‘other’ of centrality, has multiple modes of thought and configuration, including
 - a. space, as a location at the edge of empire or nation
 - b. power, whereby marginality marks a condition of powerlessness
 - c. as a condition of isolation, inbetweenness, and ineffectuality, in which the ‘other’ of marginalisation is “a network, a system of circulation, or a community of knowledge that can function in concentrated or dispersed forms” (Fry 1995, p.16)

This final configuration of marginality is perhaps the most complex to understand but for Fry it encompasses relations of exchange that makes use of “a material or a symbolic object, an agency, and a plurality of social actors” (Fry 1995, p.16). This arrangement can be configured as a geography because every element of the network of exchange exists as a relation towards others. Within this configuration marginality represents “being on the edge or outside of the relations exchange.” This leads on to a third point, that

3. writing from Australia means forming statements from a place that is at the margin of a discipline.

Australia is, as Fry puts it, “on the edge of the ‘developed’ world” (Fry 1995, p.16). Considering how design is dominantly conceived and taught through a focus on industrialisation (see Chapter 1), Australia’s size and historically peripheral position within globalised industrial supply chains places it well and truly at the edge of the Eurocentric story of the coming into being of ‘design’. To build on the critical points registered in Chapters 1 and 2, the coloniality of design highlighted here by Fry relates to the way in which the uncritical take-up of Eurocentric design discourses in ‘Australia’ have the effect of designing both a sense of marginality and a conformist desire on the

part of 'Australian' design theorists. The ability of design discourse to design marginality, inferiority, longing, and obedience on the part of 'Australian' design theorists is expressed through the attention given to events, movements, and ideas in Europe and the United States, but also in the appeals made by 'Australian' scholars, marketers, and popular writers to demonstrate the value of 'Australian design' by appeal to 'modernist' (colonial-/imperial) discursive conventions, including discourses of the iconic (the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge) and technical innovation (the stump-jump plough, the Victor mower). Far from making 'Australia' relevant to the central discussions of design studies, however, this mode of playing up to the conventions (designs) that originate from the zero point of the modern/colonial world system has the effect of designing 'Australian designs' and 'Australian design theory' as a derivative and inferior category within the field of design studies as a whole.² Thus, while Australian-based intellectuals, industries, and governmental players are able to generate profitable versions of modernist Eurocentric design discourses, in the context of 'Australian' design theory and education these discourses function as a means of disciplining interpretations of what design is conceived to be, how it works, what is said to be good or representative, and what is passed over as irrelevant, nonsense, meaningless, or impossible.

Moving on from this critique, Fry notes that, despite the power this structure the very act of disclosing it is something that can initiate a process of re-designing the meta-designing of design discourse:

What a critical view from Australia delivers is a consciousness of just how flawed is the universal model of knowledge and history upon which the assumptions of the history of design rests. (Fry 1995, p.16)

² This effect can be seen particularly in the work of 'Australian' design historians (see for example, Jackson 2006; Hughson 2012; Huppertz 2014) whose work adopts the frame of 'Australian design history' without disclosing how the process of playing up to zero point interpretations of design represents an act of affirming its power to design their own thinking and that of their readers.

In this respect Fry poses the question of the condition of ‘Australian’ marginality as a point of leverage from which to tease open assumptions that are foundational not only to how design and its study is conceived, but to the larger enterprise of theory itself. As he writes in one of his points of conclusion:

A nonuniversal design history is not simply an additional or supplemental approach within a plurality of positions. Rather, it is a fundamental challenge to the nature and authority of the current Eurocentric model of history writing. (Fry 1995, p.29)

4.1.1 CONNELL, EXTRAVERSION, AND THE COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Fry’s insight into the onto-colonial designing of ‘Australian’ marginalisation via design discourse foreshadows more recent work by the ‘Australian’ based critical sociologist Raewyn Connell (2007, 2012, 2014). In an echo of Quijano’s theory of the coloniality of knowledge, Connell argues that modern social theory has been structured according to an international division of labour in which Europe and Eurocentric (zero point) thinking acts as both a supply chain for accumulating research data (the design of extraction) and as an imperial authority on the terms by which this data is to be interpreted (designed for publication). The image at play here is a version of the world-systems model in which peripheral states (the Global South) are designed into the role of sourcing and supplying the raw materials for the work of theorisation within and by the affluent metropolises of the industrialised core (the Global North).

In making this argument Connell, draws upon the work of Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji to argue that this effect, as it impacts on subjects of the Global South, is one of epistemological *extraversion*; that is, a manner of thinking one’s marginal situation through the concepts, discourses, and designs of the zero point (Connell 2014, 2012). Quijano’s critique of modernisation theory (see Chapter 1) is again useful to understand the point being made here: just as the modernisation theory of development required economies of the South to fund the ongoing domination of the North through the

purchase of the Global North's more capital intensive technologies, so too are thinkers from the Global South epistemologically disabled by a system that posits capital intensive, 'Northern' knowledge as essential to the South's epistemological 'development'. The condition is one in which the peripheral or colonised subject is forced to interpret their experiences through ideas and concepts developed by and for the benefit of an economic core without the capacity to either answer back or enter into a more reciprocal mode of relating (Oliver 2004; Sheehan 2011; Rose 2013). The situation thus represents a case of both epistemological and economic domination by means of the coloniality of knowledge, economics, and (via) design.

4.1.2 EXTRAVERSION AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

Fry's analysis of the relation between the ability of design history to marginalise certain spaces, ideas, and actors, and the relative marginalisation of 'Australia' with respect to the world-system core has a strong affinity with Quijano's concept of the coloniality of knowledge, Hountondji's concept of extroversion, and Connell's description of an imperial division of labour. Something that warrants recognition, however, is some of the complexity and differential power relations at play within a settler colonial context such as 'Australia'. While 'Australian' thinkers in general can certainly be described as 'extroverted' with respect to European systems of thought, 'Australia', as a settler-colonial state, is not 'post-colonial' in the same sense as Hountondji's Benin.³ Further, 'Australia's status as a member of the 'Global South' is at best ambiguous if not entirely tenuous. In contrast to most of the loci that configure the 'Southern thinkers' drawn on by Connell, 'Australia' is a predominantly affluent, US allied 'medium power', governed by a settler class that continues to derive material comfort from its privileged position in

³ For an 'Australian' Indigenous critique of postcolonial discourse see Moreton-Robinson's *The White Possessive*. While Moreton-Robinson configures this a critique of postcolonial theory as a migrant centred epistemology the basic point remains salient: because the colonisers neither left nor gave up their power the terms of 'postcolonialism' in 'Australia' remains a possession of the white (settler) class (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.17). For more on the importance of attending to the material specificities of settler-colonial systems of domination, see the work of Patrick Wolfe (2016, 2010, 2006).

the modern/colonial world-system. To be clear, this point speaks specifically to the question of the settler class as opposed to Indigenous and other minoritised groups, each of whom articulate radically different positions of power within 'Australia' and the modern/colonial world system as a whole. The point I am arguing here, therefore, is that while 'Australian' thinkers may be subject to extroversion, those who occupy a position within the settler class do not experience extroversion as a problem in the same manner as other groups, and are not necessarily harmed or exploited in the same sense that Hountondji was concerned with in his own situation in Benin.

The contention here is that while the concept of 'extroversion' illuminates something that rings true with respect to the onto-colonial designing of design discourse, there is at the same time a risk of flattening important colonial differences if the concept is categorically applied to any position of thinking-/feeling-/designing outside of Europe or the US. Part of the difficulty here lies in the fact that — as Connell herself shows — Hountondji's concept took form in the context of contentious debates over the meaning and direction of 'African' philosophy and associated discussion concerning the prospects and meaning of alternatives to 'European' sciences and technology (Hountondji 1996, 1999; Connell 2007, p.96–106).⁴

These debates involved complex discussions over notions of epistemological autonomy, 'scientific' versus 'traditional' knowledge, and racial essentialism that, I argue, have not had an equivalent impact on the discourse of the 'Australian' settler class. This is to say that while there are certainly similar and important debates that occur within and about, for example, critical Indigenous studies, the point that requires acknowledgment here is that an equivalent level, tone, and direction of questioning to that of Hountondji has never been a significant feature of 'Australian' settler class intellectual discourse.⁵ The

⁴ My thanks to Raewyn Connell for directing me towards the work of Paulin Hountondji and for providing me with copies of sections of *Endogenous Knowledge* (Hountondji 1999)

⁵ While a number of valuable counter examples certainly do exist — such as, for example the work of Stephen Muecke (Muecke 2004; Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 2014) — my argument here is that they are the exception that proves the general rule. For work and debates on Indigenous knowledge see for instance

reason for this, I suggest, turns on the question of the ‘Australian’ settler class’ abiding investment in zero point epistemology as a means to sustain its (racialised) class interest.

The colonial limits of ‘Australian’ settler class ‘Southern thinking’ is expressed in the discourses that revolve around questions of ‘the national interest’, ‘our place in Asia’, the benefits of economic liberalism versus corporatism, and the perennial debate concerning ‘Australian’ republicanism.⁶ While these debates are not incidental to questions of design and coloniality, the basic point with regards to the prospects of ‘Southern Theory’ in ‘Australia’ is that such discussions are orientated (and are thus designed) by the self-involved interests, anxieties, desires, and imaginaries of a class that is ontologically invested in sustaining its position as an ally to, and beneficiary of, the coloniality of power. The ‘Australian’ settler class is, therefore, only dominated in the sense of a being conformist enabler to those with the power to direct the designs of the colonial matrix. ‘Australian’ settlers are thus ‘extraverted’ in a very specific and qualified sense, one that is not equivalent to the experience of Indigenous and minority groups within and-/or outside the ‘Australian’ context. The question of ‘Australia’s place within the ‘South’ and as a potential site of decolonial thinking can therefore only be taken seriously if the onto-epistemic divide between the settler class and its racialised others is taken into account.

These considerations are not intended to totalise the contradictions and ambivalences of settler class identity but, rather, to suggest that ‘Australia’ is a site in which lines of racial affiliation and fracture need to be accounted for when translating concepts from discussions in other locations. In this respect Connell provides a very useful description of

Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s *The White Possessive* (2015b) and Moreton-Robinson’s (ed.) *Sovereign Subjects* (2008) and *Critical Indigenous Studies* (2016), Michele Grossman (ed.) *Blacklines* (2003), Bruce Pasco’s *Dark Emu* (2015), Norman Sheehan on Indigenous Philosophy and Respectful Design (Sheehan 2011, 2004), Mary Graham on Aboriginal conceptions of relationality (Graham 2014), Rebecca Barnett and Tristan Shultz on Cognitive Redirective Mapping (Barnett & Schultz 2015), Bill Gammage’s *The Biggest Estate on Earth* (2013), and Catherine Laudine’s *Aboriginal Environmental Knowledge* (2009). While her thinking and work is set in an American context, Mei Zhan’s ‘Worlding Oneness’ is but one example of a study on how non-Western non-Indigenous knowledge interacts with and within a Western settler-colonial context (Zhan 2011).

⁶ See Clinton J De Bruyn’s (2006) study of ‘Australia’ within the world-system and Allaine Cervonka’s study of white settler ‘Australian’ territorial responses to late twentieth century Indigenous land rights movements and multicultural policies (Cerwonka 2004).

the ‘Australian’ settler class’ tendency to vacillate between the experience of the ‘cultural cringe’ — a term coined by ‘Australian’ literary critic A.A. Phillips to capture the sense of an impossible yearning for a Eurocentric mode of cultural performance and recognition — and “outbursts of nationalism and searches for local grounding” (Connell 2007, p.72). However, while this may ring true as an experience for those dealing with a sense of having been abandoned or forgotten by an object of identity, desire, and admiration, it is at the same time the experience of a class that systematically dominates and disrupts the ability of those who occupy the same territory — but with different forms of memory and affiliation — to experience safety and belonging. The tension between the ‘cultural cringe’ and ‘local grounding’ can thus be acknowledged as a something of ‘genuine concern’ to the settler class, but it is one that articulates the settler class *as such* and in difference and distinction from those whom it dominates.

My reading of Fry and Connell brings forth questions concerning the way in which the coloniality of design takes expression within an ‘Australian’ context. In this respect Fry’s discussion of marginality resonates very closely with Connell’s argument concerning the international division of intellectual labour and the associated extroversion this brings about. While this thinking is useful for gaining some perspective on the ontological designing of theorising design from an ‘Australian’ locus of enunciation, my contention at this point is that more work needs to be done to confront some of the problems that are specific to ‘Australia’ as a settler-colonial society. More precisely, I suggest that the question of colonial difference, as codified in a specifically settler colonial mode of domination and exclusion, warrants further attention within discourses of ‘Australian’ marginality.

4.2 THE QUESTION OF NATIONALISM

In addition to Fry’s writing on Australia, a second text that offers designerly insight into thinking in and from ‘Australia’ is Willis’ *Illusions of Identity: the Art of Nation* (1993). This text was published four years after Fry’s text on marginality but can similarly be

characterised as a contribution to a theory of the ontological designing of ‘Australian’ nationalism. An engagement with Willis’ text is particularly useful for setting up a discussion of the relationality that exists between configurations of racism, nationalism, and identity. In the section to come I am interested to follow the way in which Willis unsettles the image of (the) nation as a normative design and, as such, discloses the agency of design in the formation of nationalist imaginaries

4.2.1 WILLIS ON THE DESIGN OF ‘AUSTRALIAN ART’

Willis’ argument in *Illusions of Identity* is structured around an interest in rethinking the ways in which the visual imagery of nationhood is studied. In doing so Willis confronts a problem that is of relevance to my own interest in thinking the colonality of design both from and about ‘Australia’. In Willis’ case the problem is stated as a question of the sense in which visual imagery can be said to ‘belong’ to a nation. Willis probes this issue with a series of questions around what constitutes ‘Australian-ness’, the apparent complications of multiculturalism, and the value of addressing visual culture through the frame of nationhood in an age in which images appear to flow freely across borders. The most pertinent question that Willis offers for this study is the final one: “Is ‘nation’ the most appropriate and effective figure around which to cluster projects of cultural self-determination?” (Willis 1993, p.7).

The central object of study in *Illusions of Identity* is the meaning and effect of the category of ‘Australian art’ in the production of visual culture. In this sense the terms of Willis’ analysis are designed to address the question of how and what the category of ‘Australian art’ designs as opposed to accepting the category and its contents at face value. Willis’ purpose, therefore, is to question the coherence of ‘Australian art’ and, in the process, to place the problematic of identity and its effects in the context of a broader political-economic context.

As Willis (1993, p.13) puts it, to approach any form of inquiry through the concept of 'nation' is to 'become caught up in a web of assumptions' that are for the most part taken for granted, at least for those artists, audiences, and intellectuals with an ontological investment in maintaining the value and meaning of national identity. The kind of nationalism that Willis is looking to understand is not the 'surface,' explicit, or overtly chauvinist expressions so much as the deeper and more pervasive acceptance of the necessity and goodness of 'Australian' national belonging. This phenomena is, as Willis describes it, closely linked to the condition and effects of marginality introduced in my discussion of Fry: "An unstated nationalism, then, often operates as a taken-for-granted base for activities of intellectuals, this being particularly the case in cultures that have a sense of being peripheral" (Willis 1993, p.13).

4.2.2 'AUSTRALIA' DESIGNED

In thinking through the notion of 'Australia' as a designed category Willis argues that appeals to the idea and ideals of 'Australian' nationhood are often evoked with an air of simplicity and obviousness that fail to hold together under critical questioning. In turning over the question of what defines 'Australia' Willis contrasts 'concrete' notions (bounded territory, political entity, and unit of administration) with more idealistic or romantic tropes ('the land we love', 'one but many', 'united in common goals') so as to pose the question of which version of nationhood could be considered the most 'real'. Taking on the idea of bounded space, Willis questions the factual status the nation's border. Unlike most countries in the world, 'Australia' is typically understood to be an island nation whose borders trace a single and iconically shaped body of land. Willis notes, however, that this image of a cohesive and well-recognised whole is not the neutral product of physical geography but, rather, the design of a discipline of mapping that is deeply entwined with the history of imperial exploration and military strategy.⁷

⁷ For two seminal studies on the relation between mapping and the politics of imperial/colonial/nationalist imaginaries see Edmundo O'Gorman's (1972) *The Invention of America* and Thongchai Winichakul's *Siam Mapped* (Thongchai Winichakul 1994). For similar studies in relation to 'Australia' see Anne M. Scott et al.

The ‘bounded’ space in this respect is a convention of visual representation that has obtained the status of a symbol of identity and identification. As Willis (1993, p14) argues, this represents a “culturally specific competence in reading such signs”, meaning that this mode of visualising the nation as a bounded territory is the mark of a particular locus of enunciation and not a foundational certainty located outside the contestations of politics or economics. On the contrary, the image and ideal of the bounded national territory is itself the contingent and mutable product of contested practices of representation, political alliances, and economic interest. In this respect a brief look at the history of how European powers mapped ‘Australia’ is instructive.

4.2.3 THE DESIGN OF THE SARAGOSSA IMAGINARY

On the timeline of Quijano’s concept of the colonial matrix, the history of contestation over Australia’s borders begins neither with the British explorations in the eighteenth century nor with the Dutch exploration of the seventeenth century, but, rather, with the early construction of the modern/ colonial system of international law in the sixteenth century (Mignolo 2000). The critical event here is the Treaty of SaragoSSa of 1529 that secured agreement between the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs over rights to exploration and colonisation within the Asia-Pacific region (see fig. 1).⁸ The focus of the dispute between the European powers was a rival claim over rights of access to the Maluku Islands, an archipelago that is now part of present day Indonesia.⁹ More broadly, however, the terms of the dispute represent a logical development of the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas involving a similar contest between the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs

(eds.) *European Perceptions of Terra Australis* (2013) and Paul Carter’s study on ‘Australian’ spatial history *The Road to Botany Bay* (1987). On the politics of mapping as concept and practice of mapping that operates beyond the domain of territory as such see Mitropoulos’ ‘Encoding the Law of the Household and the Standardisation of Uncertainty’ (2017a)

⁸ The historical details of account that follows are taken from studies by Robert J. King, Leslie R. Marchant, and David Turnbull (King 1998; Marchant 2000a, 2000b; Turnbull 2005).

⁹ For more on the significance of these inter-imperial disputes to the colonality of power in general and ‘Australia’ specifically see Chapter 5, particularly my discussion of the work of Hugo Grotius.

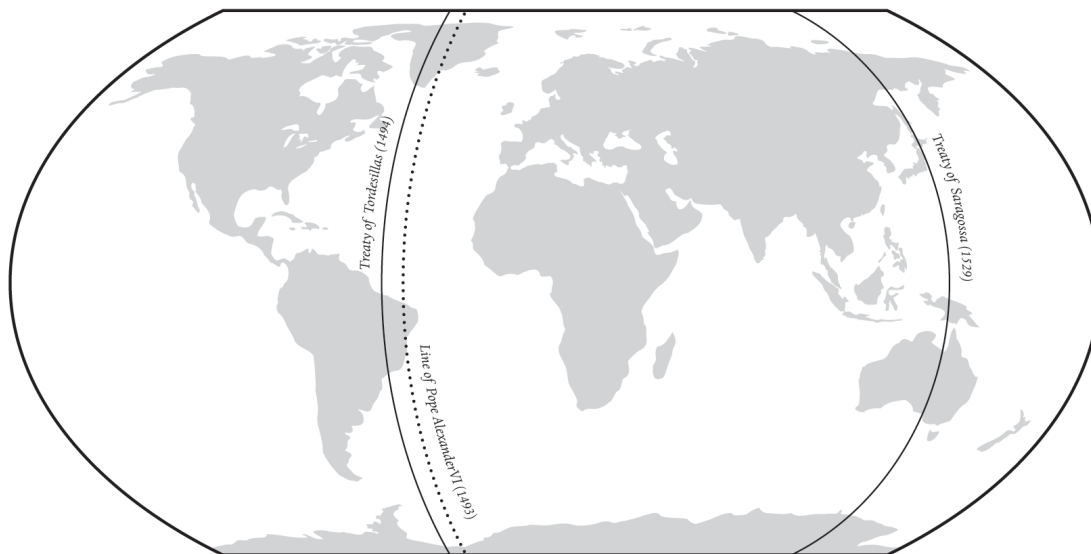


Figure 1: The global lines of the Tordesillas and Saragossa treaties between Spain and Portugal.

over rights of conquest in the Americas. This dispute had been resolved by Pope Alexander VI through the invention of a line that divided emergent modern/colonial Eurocentric representation of the globe into Portuguese and Spanish spheres of influence — the historical basis of ‘our’ contemporary conception of Western and Eastern hemispheres or, as Mignolo has argued, the origins of the invention of Occidentalism (Mignolo 2000). The Treaty of Tordesillas is commonly recognised as one of the foundational marks of the modern/colonial system of international law (Schmitt 2003; Mignolo 2011; Waisberg 2017; Turnbull 2005).

The lines of the Tordesillas and Saragossa treaties are examples of onto-colonial designing that continue to direct and configure contemporary modes of being-in-the-world (Willis 2012; Turnbull 2005). As Mignolo and others have argued, the function of maps within colonial practice has always been one of fantasy and imagination as much as strategy and calculation (O’Gorman 1972; Carter 1987; Mignolo 1995; Cerwonka 2004; Mignolo 2011; Willis 2012). These two dimensions of mapping — imagination and calculation — come together to underscore and direct colonial configurations of law, economics, identity, and

affiliation (see also the discussion of Cerwonka's account of racial profiling in Chapter 2). The Treaty of Tordesillas is of particular significance for being the mark that founded the first globalising system of order (Schmitt 2003; Mignolo 2011). While from the perspective of the zero point such a construction might be interpreted as a neutral form of instrumentation, perhaps even as a 'gift' of universal spatial equivalence, the acts of enclosure and delineation performed by Europeans were disruptive in ways that were of deep and enduring consequence.

The invention of global border lines by sixteenth century colonial powers functioned to design a colonising and (relationally) anti-relational frame of reference with respect to diverse configurations of plurality (Mignolo 2000). In this respect, these borderlines provided prefigurative direction to projects and structures of conquest and domination (see also Chapter 5). The late nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century stands out as a particularly intense expression of this form of violence as European powers set to carving up areas of Africa, the Middle East, and South-East Asia. These acts, however, ought to be seen as both resting and drawing upon the designs of the modern/colonial order whose embodied disposition and imaginary was first institutionalised through the Treaty of Tordesillas.

Notwithstanding its various complications and violations, the Saragossa treaty established a geopolitical division and implied right of possession in the minds of all European powers that has implications for the coherence of 'Australian' nationalism. As the power of Portuguese and Spanish influence declined, their stake in the imaginary that had come to represent the European system of international law was adopted and extended by Dutch, French, and British interests. The Dutch explorers had charted the western coastline and established a claim to 'New Holland'. When the British enacted their claim for possession of the eastern coastline in 1770 it was designed to extend only so far as the Saragossa line. The reasoning behind the decision rested upon the assumption that the division invented by the Spanish and Portuguese formed the basis of a common design through which European inter-imperial war and competition could be regulated.

The European imaginary of the ‘Australian’ continent and its law was thus constructed around a hemispheric and inter-imperial division. At the same time, this continental imaginary was unified by a notion of a right to possession that disregarded the law, visual culture, and spatial imaginary of the Indigenous populations (Sheehan 2011; Moreton-Robinson 2015b). While the precise positioning of the Saragossa line may have been subject to change — in 1825 the British shifted the border of their claim 6° westward — the image of the division itself continued to influence the territorial imaginary of the colonial administration. As such, the Saragossa line and its associated legal imaginary, as both image and affect, had been designed not simply *into* but *as* the ontological designing of European colonialism.

Dutch powers failed to establish a colony on the western coastline. By 1829 their claim was defeated with the founding by the British of the Swan River Colony, a move that effectively secured the British sole imperial possession of the continent. In 1832 the new colony was renamed ‘Western Australia’. Western ‘Australia’ and New South Wales would represent the two mainland colonial administrative regions until the creation of South ‘Australia’ in 1836. Over the years, as New South Wales continued to be divided into smaller territories and states, the line that defined Western ‘Australia’ as a single and cohesive state remained undisturbed.

The Saragossa line thus underpinned the play of division and identity that designed the European geopolitical imaginary of ‘Australia’. While there were many factors at play in the events leading up to the federation of the ‘Australian’ colonies in 1901, it is still of interest to note the extent to which the East/West division underscored competing visions of what ‘Australia’ would look like. By the time of the federation campaign the established Western ‘Australian’ settler class had developed a distinct identity that was grounded in an opposition between local “sandgroppers” and migrant “t’othersiders” who had moved from the eastern colonies to take advantage of a western mining boom (Hiller 1987). This fuelled a sharp political division on the question of federation. While the western federalists eventually won out, there were moments in which it seemed that the eastern states would decide to federate without the inclusion of Western Australia. The

issue erupted again in the context of the depression of 1930. A Western Australian state referendum held in 1933 established a two-thirds majority support for succession but was hampered by there being no legal provision for exiting the federation. The movement finally collapsed following a decision on the part of the UK House of Commons not to consider the matter after secessionists petitioned to overturn the Act that had initially established the ‘Australian’ Federation (Musgrave 2003). Today the image of Western ‘Australian’ independence continues to be mobilised in disputes over federal taxes and trade regulations, a performance that hints at both the endurance of the Saragossa division and the persistent contingency of territorial unity (Jones 2011).¹⁰ The story of the Saragossa line not only places the history of ‘Australian’ settler colonialism in the context of the early formation of the colonial matrix, it also demonstrates Willis’ point that while “Australia as nation” and “Australia as landmass” may seem to coincide the two are indeed distinct configurations that are capable of separation and disintegration, as image, affect, and law.

4.2.4 ON THE (ANTI-)RELATIONALITY OF BORDERS

Notwithstanding important differences between, for example, such events as the Partition of India or the Rwandan genocide,¹¹ onto-colonial border designing has played a no less

¹⁰ A 2013 *New York Times* article on ‘the end of the nation-state’ placed Western Australia amongst “Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom, the Basque Country and Catalonia in Spain, British Columbia in Canada, [...] and just about every Indian state” as “places seeking maximum fiscal and policy autonomy from their national capitals” (Khanna 2013).

¹¹ The Partition of India occurred in 1947 with the division of British India into the independent nations of Pakistan and India. The decision for partition emerged as British plans to dissolve the British Raj lead to a spike in tensions between Muslim and Hindu populations within and around the provinces of Bengal and Punjab. The process of partition lead to a displacement of between 10 and 12 million people, an estimated death toll varying between two hundred thousand and two million, and the kidnap of nearly 100,000 women as symbols of ‘honour’ (Talbot & Singh 2009, p.2). The border became known as the ‘Radcliffe Line’ after its British architect, the lawyer Sir Cyril Radcliffe. In the case of Pakistan it was perhaps the second most significant line of imperial disruption since the creation of the Durand Line in 1896 as part of a British ploy to establish Afghanistan as a buffer zone between British and Russian interests (Uradnik, Johnson & Hower 2011, p.18) The Durand line cut through the territorial domains of several ethnic groups, including the Pashtuns and the Baloch, creating an imperial wound that continues to underscore both regional and global tensions, grievances, and violence to this day.

violent or disruptive role in the configuration of ‘Australian’ settler nationalism, including the formation of white racial identity and governmental entitlement (Hage 2000; Rose 2004; Kiem 2013, 2015a; Mitropoulos 2015a; Moreton-Robinson 2015b; Wolfe 2016).¹² In drawing relations between these events and-/as structures I am conscious of the need to respect the differences of each situation while at the same time not affirming the zero point disposition to represent each case as categorically bounded or reducible to a calculus of abstract equivalence (Mitropoulos 2015a, 2017a). As an expression of relational thinking (designing) my interest here is less with the question of comparing discretely defined case studies than with disclosing the (anti-)correlational designing of the coloniality of power across time and place.¹³

The Rwandan genocide occurred in 1994 as a campaign of mass extermination led by members of the Hutu majority government against the minority Tutsi and Pygmy Batwa populations. An estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed and an estimated 2,000,000, mostly Hutus, became refugees and displaced peoples. The event can be read as a culmination of a civil conflict that had been underway since the emergence of Hutu resistance to the pro-Tutsi governance strategies of successive German and Belgian colonial powers. As Mahmood Mamdani notes, one of the more unsettling aspects of the genocide is the extent to which broad networks of the educated classes — “doctors, nurses, judges, human rights activists, and so on” — were active participants (Mamdani 2002, p.7).

¹² See the accounts of frontier violence and its associated ontologies in, for example, the works of Henry Reynolds (1987), Lyndall Ryan (1996), Deborah Bird Rose (2004), and A. Dirk Moses (ed) (2005). For accounts and analysis of ‘post-frontier’ modes of genocide, ethnocide, and racial-/colonial violence see the works of critical Indigenous scholars such as Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015b, 2008), Michele Grossman (2003); the works and influences of settler-colonial theorists (Barta 2001; Wolfe 2016, 2006; Veracini 2010); and the reports on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (Johnson 1991; Wilson 1997). For a useful account of ‘Australian’ white nationalist violence leading up to and in the wake of Federation see Michael Grewcock’s *Border Crimes* (2010). For a usefully unsentimental history of Australia’s treatment of displaced peoples — including its management of the West Papua-Papua New Guinea border in the time of ‘Australian’ colonial rule (1906-75) and treatment of West Papuan refugees during the volatile period of Indonesian independence — see Klaus Neumann’s *Refuge Australia* (2004). While the violence of the ‘Australian’ government’s policy of mandatory detention and deterrence with respect to ‘unauthorised’ asylum seekers is well documented, the material impact that this policy has on the safety and numbers of people journeying to other places such as Europe is less often acknowledged (Fleay & Hartley 2016, p.6). This detail is useful for demonstrating the manner in which ‘Australian’ bordering practices are significant not only to the supposed territorial space of the nation-state but to life and well-being of people across the world (Mitropoulos & Kiem 2015).

¹³ A useful concept here is Gregory Bateson’s (2000) ‘ecology of mind’, which Tony Fry uses to describe the patterned circulation of designs and designing ideas (Fry 1999, p.60, 2009, p.30, 2012, p.81). The resonance of Bateson’s ideas within decolonial thinking is further demonstrated in the work of Sylvia Wynter (Wynter 2003; McKittrick 2015).

With this in mind, my point here is that the onto-colonial designing of border violence in ‘Australia’ is designed by the interaction between localised histories in connection with the coloniality of design at large (Mignolo 2000; Mitropoulos & Kiem 2015). In this sense, the wounds of past and present border designs — Brisbane’s infamous ‘Boundary Street’ being but one obvious example — continue to underscore and direct (design) the terms of socio-political contestation within and beyond the state defined borders of ‘Australia’.¹⁴ Mignolo’s conception of the locus of enunciation is useful here for understanding the onto-colonial designing of ‘Australia’ in its plural particularity, difference, and connection with other experiences of colonisation. It is with this conception of relational (rather than rationalist) designing in mind that I argue that the Saragossa line is a design whose example provides a useful counter-point to the settler colonial image of ‘Australia’ as a ‘naturally’ fixed, coherent, and politically homogenous entity.

4.2.5 THE NATION AS IMAGE¹⁵

Willis’ questioning of the nation as a bounded space proceeds as a self-conscious movement between the image of the nation and the nation as image. The difference at stake in these two notions is an assumption that the image of the ‘Australian’ landmass

¹⁴ On ‘Boundary Street’: In the 1840s the settler administration of the city of Brisbane formalised a ‘civilized’ zone from which the local Aboriginal population were excluded after 4pm. The borders of the zone traced the limitations of the town as they were defined by surveyor Henry Wade and later clarified by James Burnett. Many of the streets that came to represent the edges of this zone became known as ‘Boundary Street’, a name retained to this day (Ashworth et al. 2013; Bellingham 2000; Greenop & Memmott 2007; Hegarty 2003, p.229–34). An additional expression of the settler-colonial bordering was the practice of assigning access passes to Aboriginal people who were otherwise disciplined by a range of onerous and paternalistic restrictions. In a 1968 Letter to the Editor published in the *Australian* newspaper, Charles Perkins, for instance, speaks of his experience under what he describes as a quasi-passport system:

many thousands of our people were forced to carry passes — much like passports — if ever we wished to mix in the white community. This carried ‘our’ photograph, plus character references. We were labelled as fit and proper Aboriginals to associate with white people. I was one of the few Aboriginals in Adelaide who refused to carry a pass or ‘dog ticket’ as we called it. All my life, before I graduated from the University of Sydney, I was categorised by law and socially as an Aboriginal. (Heiss & Minter 2014)

¹⁵ While I do not examine the relation in this thesis, my thinking on ‘the nation as image’ is, in part, influenced by Heidegger’s (1977b) concept of ‘the world as image’.

speaks to a coherent, quasi-natural or ‘common sense’ foundation to the nation-state, as opposed to a mutable and relationally configured sign without a stable or fixed meaning. The nation as image is “an unbounded collection of signs” without a ‘perfect form’ or ‘empirical reality’ to function as a reliable anchor or reference point (Willis 1993, p.15). The image of the nation is in this sense something that is always encountered intertextually; that is, as a situated re-presentation that obtains meaning both through the arrangement of elements in any visual design — which could be as varied as a tourist postcard, a business logo, a festival poster etc. — as well as pervasive visual conventions and associations that elements within a design might make reference to. Pushing the argument further, Willis argues against the assumption that the image of nation could ever stand as a ‘representation’ of a reality beyond the disclosive (designing) domain of the image itself. Rather than depicting the ‘truth’ of nation, the image of nation functions as a self-referencing field of discourse and convention that designs a belief in the ‘naturalness’ and coherence of the nation and national identity. The nation as image is thus a pliable economic and political resource grounded in nothing other than prefigurative power of the coloniality of design.

4.2.6 THE MATERIALITY OF NATIONALIST AFFECT

Having shown that the image of ‘Australia’ as a bounded space points not to a ‘natural’ kind but, rather, to a play of signification that designs a sense of being-in-the-world, Willis turns to the question of the nation as a political-economic entity. Here Willis makes a distinction between the ‘nation’, the ‘state’, and other corporate entities in order to argue that the notion of the state as the natural protector and defender of the organically formed nation ought to be revised: rather than being the protector of nation, the state is more a configuration of governing (designing) institutions in partnership with more power trans-national corporations, who together sustain a capacity to deploy the image and affect of the nation to political and economic effect. On this point Willis includes a salient line from Gellner, via Benedict Anderson’s landmark study *Imagined Communities*: “nationalism is not the awakening of the nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations

where they do not exist” (Willis 1993, p.19). Along with her assertion that the concept of nation functions as a designed symbolic rather than ‘natural’ object of reference, Willis maintains that nationalism, as the systematised designing of affect, identification, and belief, holds within it a potential for mobilisation that is of profound material consequence.

As Anderson observes, perhaps one of the more startling capacities of nationalism is a capacity to design a willingness not only to kill but also to die. In this sense nationalism manifests a power that seems to be at odds with the common prejudice against ‘mere’ symbolism. The confusion to unpack here is the difference between the efficacy of a rational critique of nationalism against the force of (other forms of) ontological designing. Anderson brings ‘us’ close to the issue in his reflection on the significance of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a convention of nationalist war memorialisation (Anderson 2006, p.9–12). Such memorials are significant not simply in and of themselves but for the role they play in public rituals of reverence and honour for those who have, it is said, made the ‘ultimate sacrifice’ for the sake of the nation and its values. The ritual dimension of memorialisation enables simple and austere objects to be imbued with deep socio-existential significance. As Anderson argues, the themes and affective structure that cohere around the Unknown Soldier suggests a strong affinity between nationalist and religious configurations of image and affect. In each case, stories and rituals configure a world of significance in which the nationalist experiences a sense of grave profundity and, as such, confronts the meaning of their own mortality. A further and significant element folded into the designing of the nationalist war memorial is a the call to contemplate an image (design) of virtue and glory that speaks to a life after death in the company of one’s ancestors. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier thus functions as a point of focus and intensification that designs a nationalist for-the-sake-of-which (see the Chapter 2 discussion on equipmentality for an explanation of this Heideggerian term).

This phenomenon can be considered in contrast to traditions of Liberal thought and idealist interpretations of Marx.¹⁶ As Anderson observes, there is something absurd in the idea of a “Tomb of the Unknown Marxist or a cenotaph for fallen Liberals”, an effect that speaks to the particularity of nationalist political configurations. For Anderson this has something to do with the way that nationalism designs the significance of death, mortality, collectivity, and other themes in a manner that is distinctly existential or experiential rather than philosophically rational. Nationalism differs from traditions of Liberal and Socialist thinking in not making any appeal to a mode of principled argumentation. While Marxist-/Socialism traditionally differs from Liberalism by staking its claims in the interests of the proletariat, its classical formulation is still grounded in an image of an objective or scientific mode of discourse.

A possible objection could be made to Anderson’s argument on the grounds that, whatever the claim, neither Socialism nor Liberalism operate as fully disembodied rational discourses, and, further, that both traditions of thought have inspired a range of equivalent imaginaries, rituals, and practices of memorialisation. On this point, while a committed Liberal or Socialist may try to interpret the world in objective terms, this does not mean that either figure is by this means alone lacking in any sense of embodied historical purpose. Further, in many cases there is no easy way to isolate nationalist tropes from various political movements that take their inspiration from either Liberal or Socialist discourse. While each tradition has its debates over the metaphysical and strategic tensions between universalist ideals and historic particularisms, there is an empirical case to be made for how expressions of both traditions draw upon and into the power of nationalist ideology (or similar existential tropes) as a dimension of political practice.¹⁷

¹⁶ My distinction between philosophically idealist and materialist interpretations of Marx is influenced by Angela Mitropoulos arguments across various texts against, for instance, Hegelian, Leninist, and Gramscian readings (Mitropoulos 2006b, 2012, 2013, 2017b).

¹⁷ Concerning (Eurocentric) Marxist discussions of nationalism see for instance Shlomo Avineri’s ‘Marxism and Nationalism’ (1991) and Ephraim Nimni’s *Marxism and Nationalism* (1991). For a more contemporary anti-nationalist Marxist position see the work of Angela Mitropoulos (Mitropoulos 2003a, 2006c, 2012).

What this objection misses, however, is the significance of nationalism itself having no equivalent intellectual tradition to Marxism and Liberalism. While various candidates might be assembled — Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Schmitt etc. — this is properly speaking a list of liberal or conservative theorists of law, politics, or statecraft. The point here is that nationalism itself is not organised as a rational discourse and so does not spring from or refer back to the designs of a philosophical canon. This difference invokes a useful distinction that Pierre Bourdieu draws between ‘scholastic’ and ‘practical’ modes of thought, a distinction that is arguably of as much importance to theorists and practitioners of design as it is for anthropologists (Bourdieu 1998; Hage 2017, p.6–9). Here the scholastic mode can be read as an yet another expression of the Enlightenment ideal of detachment, rationality, and transparency that underscores most forms of scholarly performance. In Bourdieu’s terms, scholasticism functions as a closed or autonomous field of practice that coheres around the exchange of a rationalist modes of discourse, one that is too often mistaken for a privileged or ‘correct’ point of perspective on ‘reality’. While the political significance of Liberal or Marxist discourse cannot be reduced to its scholastic expressions, the point that Anderson helps to clarify in his reflection on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is the extent to which the onto-colonial designing of nationalism lays waste to the assumption that social phenomena are best understood and addressed through the ideal of rational discourse. As Willis suggests, nationality is more often than not such an embedded part of person’s sense of self that it is effectively impossible, even for many critical thinkers, to gain an absolute sense of separation from it. The nation as image may frame the concept of nation as intangible and unstable but it would be an error to infer that the metaphysical incoherence of ‘the nation’ somehow negates the materiality of affect, a force that is always, as Mitropoulos argues, of political and economic consequence, regardless of how poorly it may be conceptualised. As Mitropoulos puts it: “We think of materiality as tangible objects when often the most intense material connection occurs through the intensification of affect” (Mitropoulos & O’Brien 2017, p.86).

Bourdieu’s notion of scholasticism carries within itself a certain self-aware or reflexive irony insofar as the distinction is itself the product of the scholastic locus of enunciation.

The term is thus significant not as an expression of anti-intellectualism but, rather, as an intellectualist way of marking out the terms and social conditions of both the success and limitation of its own mode of thought. The scholastic critique of scholasticism is an intellectualist way of reminding intellectuals that the categories and expressions of their practice are but one (socially privileged) way of making sense of ‘our’ position in experiences and processes that exceed the terms of any single mode of enunciation. In this respect it is no surprise to find that Bourdieu’s reflections on the nature of ‘our’ inability to think beyond or without the aid of naturalised-artificial orders of signification has found resonance in the work of both ontological designing and decolonial thinking (Fry 2008, 2009; Mignolo 1999b).

4.3 RACISM AND THE DESIGN OF WHITE NATIONALISM

Bourdieu’s call to theorise social dynamics from the perspectives of their embodied, unreflective, and practical logics, as opposed to explicitly known or rationalisable models of behaviour, provides the terms by which nationalism can be viewed as a mode of being-in-the-world that is both designed and designing. While Willis’ study provides a useful reading of both the constructedness and political-economic performativity of nationalist rhetorics, the question of how nationalism articulates with racial-/ colonial formations so as to design an embodied political ontology lies largely beyond the scope and thinking of *Illusions of Identity*. A more direct examination of this relation, however — one that links the concept of the nation as image to everyday practices — can be found in the work of critical anthropologist Ghassan Hage (1996, 2000, 2017). Hage’s seminal study *White Nation* (2000) is particularly useful for highlighting the question (design) of the nationalist spatial imaginary as an element that underpins and directs the feelings and actions of those members of the ‘Australian’ settler class whose ontology is defined by a racialised sense of entitlement and possession.¹⁸

¹⁸ My interest here is with how Hage describes the relation between a nationalist imaginary and racism as a practical ontology of the sort that resonates with ontological designing. It is worth noting, however, that Hage’s conception of nationalist domestication has been criticised for an insufficiently critical evocation of

Whereas this chapter has so far followed a path of thinking that leads from the question of nationalism to the question of racism, Hage's argument in *White Nation* unfolds in the reverse. In this respect, Hage argues that nationalism is necessary and functional to what are popularly described as instances of racial violence or oppression, most particularly public attacks upon people who are racially profiled as 'Third World looking'. This argument relates to what Hage sees as one of the crucial limitations of academic, intellectualist, or rationalist anti-racism; namely, that it tends to treat racism as though it were a set of badly formed ideas about the nature and meaning of human difference as opposed to an ontologically designed condition of social power. The intellectualist anti-racism that Hage has in mind here is a reflection of the rationalist tradition discussed in Chapter 2 in the sense that it purports to treat the phenomena of racism as though it were the product of a set of transparent and explicitly formulated beliefs about the world, rather than an embodied mode of understanding and dealing with other human and non-human beings.¹⁹

Hage's argument here is not that intellectuals are wrong to point out the falsity of racial theories and prejudices but that it is a mistake to believe that this kind of work is sufficient to impact upon the ontological designing of racism. As Hage suggests, the intellectualist approach assumes that the audience of any such a critique will be as affected and moved by the designs of academic speech.²⁰ This is to say that intellectual anti-racism tends to value and reproduce a mode of argumentation that turns on such questions as how racism is to be properly defined and identified — whether as a form of essentialism, othering etc. — so as to be countered and rebuffed in ways that are adequate to the terms

gendered concepts (Mitropoulos 2003b). Further, Aileen Moreton-Robison has suggested that while *White Nation* does address the relation between multiculturalism, whiteness, and Indigenous sovereignty, "it fails to consider how Indigenous sovereignty shapes 'Australian' politics and nationhood" (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.60). I take up Moreton-Robinson's observation in the later part of this chapter, albeit from the perspective of Indigenous displacement as the structural foundation of settler colonial ontologies. I addressed this argument more substantially in Chapter 5.

¹⁹ On the relation between racism and speciesism see Hage's (2017)

²⁰ Ellen Rooney (1989) expresses a similar and related critique of liberal pluralism in Anglo-American literary theory.

of academic discourse. While such an approach may come with its own sense of satisfaction, what is too often missed within this process is the sense in which the intellectualist debunking of racial theories is of limited relevance to the ongoing reproduction, mobility, and mutation of racism as an onto-colonial force. Academic anti-racism too often fails, Hage suggests, not because the arguments are ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’ but because they assume a liberal idealist conception of what racism is and how it functions.²¹

The difference at stake here is in confusing a debate about the nature of reality — e.g. as expressed in claims such as “race has no biological basis”, “migrants are not more likely to commit crimes”, “IQ tests are a culturally biased measure of intelligence”, “being Muslim is not predictive terrorist intent”, “immigration has a net neutral effect on wages” etc. — for an analysis of how ideas, categories, and imaginaries operate as designed/ designing elements of structurally configured social practices. With Hage’s theory of race as a social practice, however, what matters is not the question of whether or not a claim, idea, image, or feeling is ‘true’ or scholastically sound but whether or not it is functional to the practical objectives of the racist. To put this in Heideggerian terms, the question for Hage is whether or not a caricature, factoid, slur etc. is meaningful within the overall for-the-sake-of-which that constitutes the racist’s being-in-the-world. In Hage’s words, the function of racist conceptions of human difference within the world of the racist is not scientific or philosophical but a means to bring about (design) a desired outcome. As Hage puts it,

popular racist categorisations are not out to explain ‘others’ for the sake of explaining them. They are not motivated by some kind of academic yearning for knowledge. They are categories of everyday practice, produced to make practical sense of, and to interact with, the world. (Hage 2000, p.31)

²¹ For a more substantial materialist theory of race see Angela Mitropoulos’ ‘The materialisation of race in multiculturalism’ (2008)

Hage's recognition of the limits of mentalist conceptions of what racism is and how it works leads him to consider the function of racist categories, images, and imagination within social practices, a move that, as suggested, allows his conception of racism to resonate more closely with the concept of the colonality of design. Relatedly, Hage's argument poses nationalist imaginaries as a crucial motivational element in how racial thinking is practically expressed. As Hage puts it, the presence of a belief in the existence of races and racial hierarchy is not in and of itself sufficient to explain why someone would feel motivated to, for example, concern themselves with the numbers of certain (racialised) groups in certain areas, or to verbally abuse or physically attack another person in the street. "Racism on its own", Hage suggests, including the notion of hierarchy, "does not carry within it an imperative for action" (Hage 2000, p.32). The belief in races or a racialised conceptions of 'culture' or religion does not carry within itself a sense for a special relation between a self and a territory that would motivate an act of violence or aggression. The key point here for Hage is that such acts of racial violence have a spatial dimension to them that manifests both as a desire and a sense of entitlement to not only treat the racialised other in a certain manner but to do so as part of an effort to manage (design) and enforce the terms of the racialised other's access to a particular space. In practical terms, the relation between racism and nationalism is necessary because the practical logics of racist designs are at their core orientated by a spatially oriented sense of entitlement. It is because of this connection that Hage is led to redefine such acts of racial violence as a form of *nationalist* practice; that is, as a practice that is primarily concerned not with otherness or superiority/inferiority as such, but with the overall 'health' and 'direction' of a nation that is interpreted and experienced as a design of white possession.

4.3.1 RACISM AND THE WHITE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENTAL BELONGING

As suggested, part of what makes Hage's argument of value to this study is that it connects the question of racism to one of nationalism in such a way that foregrounds the relevance of embodied ontologies over the designs of scholastic discourse. In Hage's

view, what makes the combination of racism and nationalism significant is that it underscores and directs a way of being-in-the-world that is defined by a sense of ownership over the nation, something that is itself defined as a certain relation between the self and a territory of belonging. Hage's argument thus connects with Willis' effort to reveal the constructedness of 'the nation' but in a way that shows how this configuration is nevertheless meaningful and directive of efforts to design the world on racist-nationalist terms. Racist-nationalism can in this sense be thought of as a mode of ontological designing, one that moves from the designing of racial-nationalist identity, disposition, and imaginary to the ways in which this ontology looks to configure the space of the nation according to its image of proper order and control. Whereas Willis spoke of the nation as image, in Hage's terms the point of significance lies in the image of national space as prefigurative of the nationalists' capacity to classify racialised others not, simply as inferior, but also as harmful or undesirable and, thus, in need of discipline or exclusion.

An important dimension of Hage's argument, one that relates in particular to the formation of a settler class interest, is the development of a mode of nationalist belonging that entails not simply a sense of belonging within a particular space, but also a sense of entitlement to determine the terms of how others occupy the same space; that is, an entitlement to 'racial' comfort that is premised on the submission, conformity and, as such, anxiety, discomfort, and precariousness of the racialised. Hage's describes this phenomena specifically from the perspective of a white nationalist's sense of governmental belonging, one in which the gaze is directed by a concern with managing the presence and conduct of 'Third World looking people'. As Hage suggests, underlining this sense of purpose is an assumption that the agent of the managerial gaze already embodies a position of ownership over the nation, one that warrants their interest and concern in the protection of the nation against harm or disintegration.

The notion of governmental nationalist belonging brings to light the sense in which the often unspoken or unmarked design of straight-/white-/male identity manifests as a property of possession ('my identity') that is used to legitimate a right to both appropriate Indigenous lands and to regard gendered-/racialised-/sexualised others as instruments to

one's own ends (Harris 1993; Mitropoulos 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2015b). As Moreton-Robinson writes:

As a form of property, whiteness accumulates capital and social appreciation as white people are recognised within the law primarily as property-owning subjects. As such they are heavily invested in the nation being a white possession. (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.xix)

To put this point another way, it is the property of whiteness-/maleness-/straightness that warrants and solicits a sense of entitlement to the land and labour of colonised others. On these terms, and from the perspective of the white settler governmental imaginary, the perception of colonised others as being either harmful or undesirable is an index of the extent to which they (the colonised) are viewed as being a threat to a property interest in whiteness, an investment in racism that is at the same time an investment in the colonial-/capitalist property form. While the significance of property in my formulation here is mostly derived from the writing of Harris, Moreton-Robinson, and Mitropoulos, it is useful to note the way in which Hage himself arrives at a similar idea in his thinking on the relation between racism and nationalist imaginaries:

As soon as I begin to worry about where 'they' are located, or about the existence of 'too many', I am beginning to worry not just about my 'race', 'ethnicity', 'culture' or 'people', but also about what I consider a privileged relationship between my race, ethnicity and so on, and a territory. (Hage 2000, p.32)

4.4 FROM THE 'COLONY AS DESIGN' TO THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN

While Hage helps 'us' to gain an understanding of how nationalism operates not only as an image as such but as a racialised mode of possessiveness, there is more that can be done to understand how design was involved in the development of such an ontology. This question of how the white 'Australian' sense of possessiveness was designed into

being is not answered by Hage insofar as he has relatively little to say on the question and the significance of colonialism in general, settler colonialism in particular, or the coloniality of power as a global framework of analysis (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.60). The relation between design, coloniality, and the formation of settler colonial entitlement will be the topic of more detailed investigation in Chapter 5, however as something of a preface to that work the final part of this chapter will be dedicated to unpacking some of the theoretical issues at play in the question concerning design and colonialism.

The argument I wish to engage here is Ann Stoler's claim that virtually all colonies are artifacts of design. In Stoler's terms, "Design is key for it announces how much the colony as a political concept commands the pre-emptive, calculates malintent, assesses future transgressions and potential breaches of security" (Stoler 2011). Design is of course no guarantor of success for any particular colony but the significance for Stoler lies in the fact that design is essential to how the colony is "imagined, implemented, and lived in its conditional, future tense" (Stoler 2011). While Stoler's insight speaks specifically to the concept of the 'colony', it is nevertheless a valuable point of reflection and departure for thinking about the role of design within colonial practice.

The questions I wish to work through here are closely related but slightly different to the way in which Stoler talks about design. While Stoler describes design as something that "works in the *subjunctive mood* and gravitates to the possible" my interest here lies in the process by which coloniality takes form as a force that is itself both designed and designing. The value of this shift in emphasis is that it brings to light the significance of thinking the subjunctive mood itself as a designed configuration within the coloniality of design. Insofar as the grammatical definition of the 'subjunctive' refers to verbs with the function of expressing contingent or hypothetical action — a question of the form 'what if ...' — my argument is that while design does indeed work in the subjunctive mood, the subjunctive mood likewise needs to be theorised as designed. In this capacity the subjunctive mood *qua* design calls to be read as an ethnocentric configuration that belies the onto-colonial designing of the zero point. The point to draw out here — one that arrives for me by reading relationally across Nietzsche (2009), Heidegger (1962) and Levinas

(Kearney & Levinas 1984), queer theorists Lauren Berlant (2011), Eve Sedgwick (2003), Angela Mitropoulos (2012), and Indigenous philosopher Norman Sheehan (2004, 2011) — is that no mood, no matter its ephemerality — the subjunctive included — is ever neutral, eternal, singular, or immaterial.

On this point Heidegger's discussion of mood in *Being and Time* (1962) is of particular value insofar as he saw moods as playing an essential role in the disclosure of everyday basic meaningfulness. For Heidegger, moods are not only a part of the world, they also reveal and dispose 'our' being-in-the-world as such (Heidegger 1962). This point is affirmed by Levinas who in a 1981 dialogue with Richard Kearney wrote that

Human moods [...] are no longer considered as mere physiological sensations or psychological emotions, but are now recognized as the ontological ways in which we feel and find our being-in-the-world, our being-there, as *Befindlichkeit*.²²

(Kearney & Levinas 1984)

Berlant's studies, meanwhile, reveal how the agency of even flat or low-key moods is directed to systemic-political effect via the agency of literary designs (Berlant 2011, 1991). Mitropoulos traces a similar insight into contemporary techniques of risk analytics, finding that imaginative practices play a vital role in helping investment managers "derive an estimate of value from speculations on uncertainty" by correlating the "intensities of divergent qualities" (Mitropoulos 2015a, p.167). Moods thus reveal something of the manner in which a locus of enunciation takes form (is designed) at the same time that it takes hold (designs or disposes). Just as Mignolo builds his theory of the locus of enunciation on the basis of a materialist-symbolic analysis of semiotics, so too do Berlant and Mitropoulos help 'us' to understand mood as a product and producer of material-symbolic configurations.

²² Van Deurzen and Kenward define 'Befindlichkeit' as "Literally, the state I find myself in, the term is sometimes translated as state of mind, at other times as disposition. This term indicates ontologically what attunement or mood (*Stimmung*) means ontically" (van Deurzen & Kenward 2011)

Relatedly, while there are fine technical or analytical reasons for delineating the subjunctive as a distinctive mood amongst others, critical perspectives on the function of grammars within colonial processes suggest that this term cannot be taken up or deployed without consequence (Mignolo 1995, p.29–67; González Stephan 2003). From a relational perspective, the category of the subjunctive is the design of a mind that divides and organises the meaning of affectual states and dispositions in an historical and ethnocentrically particular manner. In this sense the category of ‘the subjunctive’ represents a systematisation of intensities as opposed to a simple or technical definition of the particular use of verbs. This becomes clear once it is recognised that any activity that takes place in the mood of the ‘what if ...’ always already occurs in the presence of a feeling that enables and guides that activity.

As Tonkinwise has highlighted, the significance of mood design as a directive condition of design practice is attested to by the work that goes into forming, maintaining, and modulating the culture of a design studio, the professional field as a whole, and the styles and sensitivities of firms or individual practitioners (Tonkinwise 2011). The attention that is given to mood within design practice indicates that the subjunctive is not something that arrives naturally. Rather, it is the product of a particular practice of discernment, gathering, cultivation, and honing. Designers know — implicitly or otherwise — that their practice of developing ‘what if ...’ illocutions depends upon the regulation of a certain infrastructure of feeling. The category of the subjunctive is thus designed to index a quality that is tacitly known and valued for its designing agency. To define the subjunctive is to enact a particular way of partitioning, ordering, deploying, and directing the general flux of intensities. The meaning of the subjunctive as a distinctively defined mode of discourse or action is, thus, not grounded in any natural or supernatural kind. To link back to Mignolo’s critique of the form/content distinction, the notion of the subjunctive is as historical, contingent, and ethnocentric as whatever it is that makes up the content of the ‘what if ...’

Delineating the contours of the subjunctive from amidst the relational flux of intensities is, in this sense, and like my discussion of design discourse in Chapter 1, a form of meta-

design; that is, a way of defining and directing the very meaning of design. My point, to be clear, is not to suggest that design does not operate either in the subjunctive or in mood as such. Both are the case. Rather, the point is to recognise that the very notion of the subjunctive carries a range of metaphysical implications that are neither neutral nor universal. The notion of the subjunctive is a means of organising the relation between particular bundles of intensities, attachments, images, tendencies, dispositions, intentions, and purposes. While it holds meaning for the way design is understood, *it also holds that meaning in place*. For my purposes, the significance of this point is to bring to the fore the manner in which the ontological designing of the subjunctive configures the meaning and practice of design in the context of the colonality of design.

To draw some conclusions, Stoler's characterisation of design as working within the subjunctive presupposes the ontological designing of the subjunctive as a concept, as well as the ontological designing of the mood that the term is used to index. Some of the implications of this point are that,

- 1) the subjunctive is not given; it is reliant upon there already being a practice of design in place,
- 2) the subjunctive is not one but multiple, variable, and every case dependent upon situated practices of mood regulation, and
- 3) the stated relation between the subjunctive and design defines design against the background of an historically contingent and ethnocentric grammarology.

The significance of implication 1) and 2) is that what holds true for contemporary professional design practices is also the case for what Stoler has in mind with respect to the designing of eighteenth- and nineteenth century colonial ventures. This insight provides a way of following Stoler's lead in thinking about what colonisers designed while, at the same time, reflecting on how practices of colonisation gained momentum as a designing force in their own right. Implication 3), meanwhile, is perhaps the most

significant in terms of the (de)coloniality of design insofar as it opens the space and potential for seeing design otherwise or beyond the coloniality of design; that is, as something that does not have to mean what it does within the locus of enunciation of colonisers.

4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter I moved from my relational reading of ontological designing in light of decolonial thinking and decolonial thinking in light of ontological designing to the question of the onto-colonial designing of my own locus of enunciation; namely, white settler 'Australia'. The examination presented proceeded via a reading of some of the earlier thinking on this question by Fry and Willis, who together help to clarify the process of the onto-colonial designing of colonial marginalisation and nationalism. My turn to Hage, Harris, Moreton-Robinson, and Mitropoulos was necessary for clarifying how the relational designs of racial profiling and territorial possession give rise to an ontology of white nationalist governmental belonging that is itself both a designed and designing configuration. My critical examination of Stoler's comments on 'colony as design' was intended to clarify my sense for the difference and significance of the coloniality of design. In the next chapter I turn to a relational reading of the onto-colonial designing of the coloniality of power that places the event-/process-/structure of 'Australian' colonisation in the context of the onto-colonial designs of sixteenth century Occidentalist coloniality.

CHAPTER 5 |

THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN FROM THE 'NEW WORLD' TO 'NEW SOUTH WALES'

[F]rom the sixteenth century, North America and the Caribbean formed the reference point, the font of experience, law, and practice that defined British settler colonialism thereafter. (Ford 2010, p.5–6)(Ford 2010, p.5–6)(Ford 2010, p.5–6)

Imaginary constructions take on, over time, ontological dimensions; descriptions of an object become the object itself. (Mignolo 1995, p.237)

5.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION | WHO DID THEY THINK THEY WERE TO INVADE CADIGAL COUNTRY?

In this final chapter I bring my analysis of the coloniality of design into relation with Moreton-Robinson's imperative to think and, as such, reconfigure the ontological designing of 'Australia' as a condition of invasion, dispossession, and settler colonial entitlement. In addition to my reading of Moreton-Robinson, Sheehan, Wolfe, Mitropoulos, Rose and other critics of 'Australian' settler colonialism, it is important to recall that my analysis here is also directed by the performative designs of Darren Bloomfield and Lanz Priestly (see the Introduction).

My strategy for approaching Moreton-Robinson's imperative *vis-à-vis* the coloniality of design is to place the British invasion of Cadigal country — the present day location of the

city of Sydney, the capital city of the state of New South Wales, the ‘ground zero’ of ‘Australian’ settler colonial power, and the place where I live, think, and design — in the historical -/structural context of the colonality of power.¹ In this sense the question I am looking to answer is British imperial actors came to embody a sense of entitlement to the lands and labour of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The title of this chapter introduction is, therefore, not rhetorical but, rather, the very question that I am concerned to make sense of: who did they think they were to be able to do what they did? Under the influence of Fry and Dilnot’s mode of interrogating the agency of design in configuring of the twentieth century Nazi genocide (Fry, Dilnot & Stewart 2015), my analysis here takes the event of British invasion of Cadigal lands as a point of departure for analysing the designing of the means and possibility of colonial.² In the words of Patrick Wolfe (2006, p.388), the design of this chapter is to trace the ontological designing of ‘invasion as structure’.

5.0.1 ON THE ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING OF NON-BEING

My purpose for placing the invasion of Cadigal country in the context of the colonality of power is to disclose both *how* and *what* colonality has designed in the course of its movement from the European Christian invasion of the Americas in the sixteenth century to the British invasion of ‘Australia’ in the late eighteenth century. A critical

¹ This description of Sydney as the ‘ground zero’ of invasion and colonial power comes from the description of a speech delivered by an Aboriginal woman at a 2015 Invasion Day rally in Sydney. While I apologise for not having recorded or recovered the woman’s name, I have decided to include the reference here for the way it resonates with both my reference to the 9/11 attacks in New York in the Introduction, my use of Castro-Gómez’s concept of the ‘zero point’ throughout this thesis, and my inclusion of Deborah Bird Rose’s quote at the beginning of Chapter 4. This effect of connecting and resonating across the material-symbolic substrates of different loci of enunciation is precisely what I have in mind when I argue for relationality as my methodology and whenever I use the term ‘relational plurality’.

² My transposition of Fry and Dilnot’s method of analysing the Nazi genocide to the context of settler colonial genocide is done in awareness of the work of scholars of genocide, racism, and settler colonialism who disclose these same or similar forms of relational designs that I am interested to analyse in this chapter. For a sample of the literature I have in mind here see the work of Tony Barta (2001), Dirk Moses (2005, 2008), and Gary Foley (1997). For a more comprehensive list of ‘Australian’ genocide research see Gary Foley’s Student Resource Index at www.kooriweb.org.

concept that underscores and directs my account here is what Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) calls, after Mignolo (2007) and in relation with Sylvia Wynter (2003) — the *coloniality of being*. By my reading, Maldonado-Torres' conception of the coloniality of being names the ontological designing of violence and terror as it is relationally designed into the shifting (but always normative) condition of coloniality. This image of ontological violence relates to and expands on my discussion of the core violence of the coloniality of design in Chapter 3.

For Maldonado-Torres, the concept of the coloniality of being relates to an argument made by Fanon concerning the “zone of non-being” — something that is experienced by colonised people as a specifically colonised manner of being-in-the-world (Fanon 2008, p.xii; Maldonado-Torres 2007). Two passages from Maldonado-Torres' ‘On the Coloniality of Being’ (2007) are worth quoting in relation to this idea:

While Heidegger's focus on Being required reflection on Dasein's comportment and existentialia, reflection on the coloniality of Being requires elucidation of the fundamental existential traits of the black and the colonised. [...] Following Fanon, I will use a concept that refers to the colonial subject, equivalent in some way to Dasein but marking the aspects of the coloniality of Being: the *damné* or condemned of the earth. [...] The *Damné* is for European Dasein the being who is ‘not there’. (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p.253)

On my reading, Maldonado-Torres' critique of Heidegger marks him out as another thinker who, like Levinas, Arendt, Chanter, Leland, and others discussed in Chapter 2, are able to disclose a critical and decolonising moment of insight in the midst of Heidegger's deeply problematic and unsettling political ontology (see also Maldonado-Torres 2008). As with Leland, Maldonado-Torres' innovation is to shift the terms of Heidegger's radical (but ultimately fascist and Eurocentric) critique of metaphysics onto different grounds; namely, that of the experiences and concepts of decolonial thinkers. Concerning the quote above, Maldonado-Torres goes slightly further than Leland in calling for a replacement of Heidegger's concept of Dasein (being-there, see also Chapter 2) with

Fanon's concept of the *damné*, meaning the 'condemned' or 'wretched of the earth'. The difference that Maldonado-Torres' draws between Dasein and the *damné* is that whereas the former is concerned with how to 'be', the latter, as an expression of their ontological colonisation, suffers under the designing of their own ontological negation. In other words, what Maldonado-Torres identifies in the colonality of being is, on my reading, the ontological designing of violence as it designs both the coloniser and the colonised. My suggestion, therefore, is that the colonality of being names the (anti-)relational designing of, on the one hand, *colonising ontologies*, or, people who are disposed towards racialised-/gendered-/sexualised forms of killing, torture, rape, and dispossession and, on the other, *colonised ontologies*, or, people who are systematically and systemically brutalised into internalising a disposition of submissiveness to the colonisers' zero point identity. As Maldonado-Torres puts it:

'Killability' and 'rapeability' are inscribed into the images of the colonial bodies. [...] Black bodies are seeing [sic] as excessively violent and erotic, as well as the legitimate recipients of excessive violence, erotic and otherwise. 'Killability' and 'rapeability' are part of their essence — understood in a phenomenological way. (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p.255)

The settler 'Australian' historian Henry Reynolds — among others (Ryan 1996; Rose 2004)— has provided accounts of the experience-/process of settler frontier expansion in 'Australia' that bear out precisely the terms of Maldonado-Torres' conception of the colonality of being. In his interpretation of a 1869 settler newspaper editorial on the question of 'letting the Blacks in', Reynolds writes,

The Aborigines [sic] were by force of circumstances enemies; the hated white people, indeed they were consumed by an undying hostility which would never go away and which smouldered like a fire ready at any moment to burst into flame. Up till the time of writing the blacks had been kept in subjection by a reign of terror, by unhesitating recourse to ball and powder [firearms]. In order to incorporate the blacks into the town and bring the reign of terror to an end it was

necessary to teach those principles of submission which the [self-perceived] vulnerability of the whites rendered so necessary to enforce. The conquered blacks must be shown that the settlers were determined to enforce submission to their [the settler's] laws at all costs and by any means including such illegal proceedings as flogging a woman accused of very minor offence. (Reynolds 1987, p.65)

Addressing performative (embodied) affects (designs) of this process Reynolds writes further,

The frontier was a finishing school for white arrogance and brutality. For their part the Aborigines had 'learnt in the terror to submit to anything the conquering race' chose to do. [...] There were 'scores of unfortunate blacks' on the stations where they were worked like slaves for 'a reward of coarse food and mean clothing'. They were retain in such uncongenial service by 'a terrorism only possible among blacks' who had 'no knowledge of any alternative to submission. (Reynolds 1987, p.66–7)

While the coloniality of being names a condition of violence, terror, and brutality, it is not my intention here to suggest that its designs are able to extinguish the 'smouldering fire' that motivates decolonial resistance and redirection (for accounts that bear this argument out see Moreton-Robinson 2008, 2015b; Mitropoulos 2015b). As indicated in my discussion of Mignolo's disciplinary-/hermeneutic tension in Chapter 3, the coloniality of design is, ultimately, an anxious and self-negating effort to assert a single interpretation of order and sense upon an autonomous and dynamic condition of relational plurality (see also Mitropoulos 2006b). Rather than cede to the totalising designs of the coloniality of power, my point here is to say that the *modus operandi* of the coloniality of being equates to *the ontological designing of non-being*, or, in other words, the anti-relational relationality of the coloniality of being. In what follows I trace the ontological designing of the coloniality of being (alias the coloniality of design) from the colonisation of the Americas

to the decision of the British to invade the lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of ‘Australia’.

5.1 THE DESIGN OF COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE

In the analysis to follow, I trace the emergence and movement over time of *colonial knowledge*, by which I mean an embodied, material-symbolic tradition of thinking, sensing, and designing. My approach is influenced by Jan Kociumbas’ observation that at the point of invasion in 1788 the British had already accumulated an extensive body of colonial designs — as equipment, dispositions, images, and emotional investments — which are together an expression of the coloniality of design. As Kociumbas writes:

In terms of colonising knowledge, Britain’s “First Fleet” was particularly well equipped, since it carried not only 1,000 white people, but the latest scientific and technological information necessary to establish a colony in a faraway land.
(Kociumbas 2004)

My point here is that while the British decision to invade Cadigal country can be read *a la Stoler* as a *colonial design* — that is, a design for a specific colony — insofar as the British decision to invade already presumed a (designed) sense of entitlement to the Cadigal land, the decision itself was at the same time an expression of no less than 300 years of onto-colonial designing. The design of colonial knowledge, therefore, names the ontological designing of the knowledge that designs colonial designs.

5.1.1 INVASION AS THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN

British forces began their invasion of Cadigal lands in January of 1788. They arrived with a fleet of 11 ships carrying somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 people and a plan to establish a penal colony. The fleet was made up of two navy escort ships and six convict

transports that together carried the first shipment of just over 700 prisoners. They would be the first of what would be somewhere in the order of 160,000 people transported against their will to a sentence of exile and indentured labour. The fleet was accompanied by three food and supply transports that carried tools, medical equipment, prisoner restraints, farm animals, seeds, and prefabricated building structures — a cargo that was intended to provide for the initial phase of settlement. While these resources would prove sufficient — if barely — for establishing the first colonies on the continent, it was as much the ontology of entitlement and superiority in connection with a systemic drive for expansion that orientated the designing of this expression of ‘invasion as structure’ (Wolfe 2006, p.388).

In its specifics, the British venture to establish a penal colony in ‘Australia’ was motivated by a crisis of overcrowding within the British penitentiary system. The crisis arose after the American Revolutionary War (1775-83) forced the cessation of British convict transportation to the American colonies. Transportation had begun in the early seventeenth century after the introduction of an 1597 act that allowed for the shipping of British prisoners to the American colonies to work as bonded labourers, a move that facilitated the practice of jail owners selling prisoners to shipping contractors. The system was further formalised in 1717 with an act that allowed flogging sentences to be substituted for a seven year period of transportation and 14 years for those otherwise sentenced to death by hanging. The context for these draconian measures was a period of rapid urbanisation brought on by the intersection of a population growth linked to a declining mortality rate and changes to both agricultural practices and property law. These factors contributed to the rise of a landless and mobile class of people whose survival was dependent on their access to waged work within the burgeoning industrial sector, charity, or other criminalised means of subsistence (Hughes 1988; Razzell 1993; Wood 2002; Linebaugh 2003).

The sentiment that underscored the designs of the British authorities in 1788 is materialised in a remark by First Fleet naval officer Watkin Tench:

Our first object was to win their [the Cadigal peoples'] affections and our next to convince them of the superiority we possessed: for without the latter, the former we knew would be of little importance (Tench 1996, p.42).

As Tench indicates, the British had arrived in Cadigal lands with a prefigured interest in asserting a unilateral power to design (away) Cadigal people and their lands. Also of significance is the manner in which Tench describes this superiority as a possession; that is, the property of Britishness (whiteness) that stands as both a racialising mark of difference and as a sign of entitlement to the land and labour of the Cadigal people (Harris 1993; Moreton-Robinson 2015b, see also the discussion of whiteness as property in Chapter 4). The violence implicit in Tench's colonial ontology was borne out in the extreme measures taken by colony Governor Arthur Phillip to design the submission and conformity of Cadigal people to British law. In 1790, for instance, in response to the spearing of one of his servants, Phillip called for a punitive raid on Cadigal people that would involve the capture of two prisoners, killing and beheading ten others, and stealing their heads, all so as to "convince them [Aboriginal people] of our [British] superiority, *and infuse an universal terror*, which might operate to prevent farther mischief" (Tench 1996, p.168, my emphasis). While Tench managed to talk Phillip down to capturing six people — two of whom were to be hung and the remaining four to be deported to Norfolk Island — the intent of the action remained the same; that is, to deploy violence and terror as a means to instil subservience in British colonial designs.

While the ontology of the British invaders was clearly configured by the logics of the coloniality of being, my suggestion here is that the perceived non-being of Indigenous peoples by the British is a design that continues to configure 'invasion as structure' as the dominant, settler colonial ontology. Moving forward, my argument is that the perceived non-being of Indigenous people was itself designed into being by the iterative deployment and reconfiguration of colonial knowledge in a genealogy that stretches back to the Spanish invasion of Amerindian lands in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

5.1.2 READING THE COLONIALITY OF DESIGN IN TIME

What are the conditions in which coloniality as a mode of design makes sense? In asking this question I bear in mind the usefulness of the ambiguities at play. On the one hand I am interested in the question of how it would make sense to early colonisers to do the kinds of things they did in the process of invading and occupying other people's land. This thought can be broken down into questions of what made colonisers feel so driven and entitled to the land and labour of others, and so justified in the practices of theft, genocide, and ethnocide that these objectives implied. Put simply, this is a question of identifying some of the terms by which colonisers rationalised their desires and plans, and the violence required to implement them.

Another way of reading this question, however, is to consider the practice of colonisation itself as a form of ontological designing. This thought emphasises that colonisation is a practice that is made and remade in response to the obstacles of its implementation. My argument in this respect is that while coloniality has a certain directionality — one that arises from a systemic productivist drive to expand and accelerate the process of capital accumulation — it is a force that unfolds in history. Part of what coloniality is is an ability to reconfigure the terms of its own designing in response to resistance, change, and novelty. As it was applied in varied locations and under varied conditions, the practice of colonisation required the constant adaptation and regulation of sense. This implies that the ontological designing of colonisation is as much about the means by which desire, entitlement, and rationalisation are regulated as it is the designing of the objectified and non-relationally conceived objects of design historical research. This way of perceiving design as part of a relational rather than rationalist-/substantive ontology (see Chapters 1 and 2) is not simply a more powerful theory of design. Rather, I suggest that relationality or some other similar concept is essential to understanding how coloniality unfolds within and over time and place as a form of ontological designing.

Part of the argument I am looking to make in this chapter is that there is a relational connection between the ontological designing of the colonisation of the Americas and the onto-colonial designing of 'Australia'. In genealogical terms this relation was mediated by the manner in which the designs of European intellectuals added conceptual (designing) force to the colonality of power. My strategy for telling this story is to focus on a limited set of discourses on international law and property. While the major source of material for this exercise is a lineage of philosophical debate, the argument that informs this focus is that these artifacts of intellectual labour are the material-symbolic trace of a process of ontological designing that configures the form, force, and direction of colonality beyond the time and place of their production.

In keeping with my reading of Mignolo's concept of the locus of enunciation, my approach here is to interpret the significance of intellectual works as designs that emerge from (the designs of) colonial ontologies, or, in other words, ways of being-in-the-world that are directed by and invested in the colonality of being. In terms of a design theory, the rationale for reading the impact of intellectuals' works as a source of insight into design is grounded in a processual and relational conception of what design is and does (see Chapter 1). This is powerfully summarised in Abby Mellick Lopes' (2005) claim that ideas are a material force within the construction and destruction of worlds. The designerly significance of ideas are in this sense twofold: 1) they are evidence for examining the terms by which an existing mode of being is organised and directed; and, 2) they are the basis upon which prefigurative change, becoming, or an ontological shift can occur.

As a point of clarification, my intention here is not to suggest that the movement between the colonisation of the Americas and the colonisation of 'Australia' is smooth, simple, or determined. The story is not that of an essence unfolding in time of its own accord. Rather, my way of understanding the path that connects the Americas to 'Australia' is rooted in an image of people making use of the intellectual and material resources available to them in order to deal with whatever it is that emerges as an question of difficulty and-/or interest. By this account the path of historical movement is

determined by dynamic and relationally constituted configurations of interest, objective, and equipment, rather than a teleological essence or point of reference in the past or future (see the Chapter 1 discussion of ‘relationality’ for more on this). This is not *the* story of coloniality but, rather, a selected series of moments through which the ontological designing of coloniality in time can be observed.³

5.2 THE ELEMENTAL DESIGNS OF THE COLONIALITY OF POWER-/BEING-/DESIGN

In 1452 Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull *Dum Diversas* following the request of King Afonso V of Portugal. Afonso V was warring in North Africa at the time, and the bull he lobbied for fulfilled the role of providing papal legitimacy to his activities. The *Dum Diversas* provided that princes who were loyal to the cause of Christianity were permitted to invade lands occupied by Saracens, pagans, or other non-believing ‘enemies of Christ’. The bull also allowed for any enemies captured or conquered in the process of war to be reduced to perpetual servitude.

The *Dum Diversas* represents one of several bulls published in this period that are significant for articulating the terms and rationale of invasion, subjugation, and enslavement that were carried over into the colonisation of the Americas. In this respect, what the Amerindians were confronted with as Europeans began their campaigns of conquest was not simply a hitherto unknown set of people, technologies, animals, plants, and diseases but a complex configuration of colonising practices, dispositions, attitudes, desires, and imaginaries. The totality of this designed-/designing configuration had been produced and shaped by centuries of warring between Christian and Islamic forces throughout the period of the European ‘middle ages’. As Lesley Simpson (1982, p.vii) puts it, those who carried out the conquest in the Americas “brought with them the

³ My reference points for this philosophy of historical writing include Nietzsche (2009), Foucault (1995), Fry (1999, 2015), Wynter (2003), and Mitropoulos (2012).

accumulated social habits of centuries and never relaxed in their long effort to impose them upon the indigenous population of America.”

5.2.1 ON THE DESIGNING OF THE *ENCOMIENDA* SYSTEM

One of the practices transferred by the Spanish that was particularly destructive to the Amerindian population was the *encomienda* system of forced labour (Blyth 2003; Bossio 2015). The *encomienda* system was first developed in the context of the seven centuries-long *Reconquista* (re-conquest) campaign by the Castilian Crown to recapture the Iberian Peninsula from Islamic powers who had established control over the territory following the Umayyad conquest of the eighth century. The *encomienda* system was designed by the Castilian Crown as an incentive and social control technique in which soldiers who had fought successfully on behalf of the Crown would be granted the right to extract tribute from wealthy Muslim and Jewish communities within the captured territories. In exchange for the Crown granting title to the riches and labour of the conquered, the *encomendero* (entrusted soldier) was obliged to educate any subjected non-Christians in the Catholic faith and social practices of the *Respublica Christiana* (the community of European Christendom). Additionally, the Crown granted special privileges to any of their loyal subjects who were willing to “settle towns near the ever-expanding frontier” of the *Reconquista* (Bossio 2015, p.3). This initiative was designed for the express purpose of putting “military pressure on the Muslim enemy” (Bossio 2015, p.3). The consequence of this policy was that while the Castilian Crown was able to expand and consolidate territorial control, Castilian soldiers grew not only more skilful and adept at warring but also became accustomed to obtaining “power, status, and wealth through conquest and the appropriation of tribute at the expense of the conquered Muslim and Jewish populations” (Bossio 2015, p.3). As Pedro Bossio argues,

These dynamics not only contributed significantly to the ethos of the conquistadors that arose immediately after the end of the Reconquista (1492, the

year of Columbus' voyage to the New World), but are also an important part of the institutional origins of Spanish-American towns. (Bossio 2015, p.3)

As the Spanish conquistadors carried the experience and methods of the *encomienda* system over to their invasion and occupation of the Americas, the impact on the Indigenous populations was devastating, both in physical and-/as ontological terms. In the same way that the local history of the Iberian Peninsula was formative to the ontology of the conquistadors, so too had the local histories of the societies of the Caribbean Islands and American mainland given rise to situated and unique configurations of meaning, technique, equipment, and practice. According to Bossio, many of the sedentary societies that were encountered by the conquistadors had fundamentally different views on work, land, and property compared with that of the Europeans. The Amerindians did not work for wages, nor is there evidence of a private property system equivalent to European custom. Economic activity was largely communal and organised through religious ritual, knowledge, and social hierarchy. For these societies, religion — a term I use here in awareness and wariness of its ethnocentric import — was, in a way not entirely dissimilar to the Europeans, an element of the economy that “mediated between the community and the gods, gathering and redistributing the production of the community in the form of divine tribute” (Bossio 2015, p.3). As the conquistadors proceeded to disrupt and repress Amerindian socio-religious practices, the previously dominant for-the-sake-of-which that had organised the Amerindian system of labour began to be substituted and reconfigured by the onto-colonial designing of the *encomienda* system. The conquistadors of the *encomienda* system — who were always fewer in number relative to that of English colonisers under the settler system — did not claim the land or the people of the Americas as their property so much as they did exclusive title to the products of their labour and the freedom to pursue the ‘salvation’ of their souls. In the aftermath of conquest the conquistador, now turned *encomendero*, became an overseer of those from whom the *encomendero* could extract such economic goods as agricultural produce, textiles, and minerals, as well as labour for public works or service within the boss’ estate. Practiced as they were in the violence of military enterprise, and driven by the expectation of accumulating great wealth and

prestige, many of the Spanish colonisers were brutal and extreme in their treatment of their assigned labourers.

As a case study in ontological designing, the development of the *encomienda* system was important not only as a technique of governance but also as a design that had relational, ontological, and directional effects. This can be seen in the impact that the system had upon the force and significance of warring, late medieval techniques of surplus extraction, and fifteenth to sixteenth century practices of town planning. In light of its complex and wide ranging effects, the development of the *encomienda* system represents an important event in formation of the coloniality of being-/ design

Drawing this discussion of the early period of the Spanish colonisation of the Americas to a summary point, the story covered so far suggests that Spanish conquistadors who imposed themselves in the Americas over the course of the sixteenth century were carried and directed by a mode of being-in-the-world that had been shaped by the specific history and experience of the *Reconquista*. Elaborating on this, I observe four factors that together constituted a core configuration of forces that designed the initial form and direction of an emergent modern/ colonial world system:

- 1) the knowledge and experience of war in the Iberian Peninsula;
- 2) the distinctions and legitimising narratives of papal bulls such as the *Dum Diversas*;
- 3) the regulation of incentive and ambition effected by the *encomienda* system; and
- 4) the Amerindians themselves who by their own acts of resistance forced innovations in the nature of colonial practice.

As I move forward, one element of this picture that will act as a guide to the shifts and mutations of the coloniality of power is the tradition of jurisprudential reasoning in connection with emerging theories of political economy. As I have indicated so far, it was

this tradition of discourse — based as it was in the theology of the *Respublica Christiana* and the experience of the *Reconquista* — that rationalised both the invasion and occupation of lands belonging to non-Christians, as well as the subsequent subjugation of conquered peoples by systems of economic exploitation and-/as ontological domination.

5.2.2 THE *REQUERIMIENTO* AS THE ONTOLOGICAL DESIGNING OF ENMITY

As explained, the invasion of the Americas and the subjugation of the Amerindians by the Spanish colonisers was initially rationalised on the basis of a jurisprudential tradition informed by the theology of the Roman Catholic Church — the sovereign authority of the *Respublica Christiana* — and the ontological designing of centuries' worth of warring with the perceived internal and external 'enemies of Christ'.⁴ As such, the Spanish were configured to encounter the Amerindians as non-beings; that is, as people who were positioned outside the community of *Respublica Christiana* and, as such, the legitimate and desirable targets of exploitation and ontological domination.

In time, however, a question arose for the Spanish as to whether or not the Amerindians could be properly regarded as 'enemies of Christ' in the same manner as Muslims, Jews, pagans, and other non-Christians. In the ideological sphere, a tension that gave rise to this questioning was the fact the Amerindians were, from the Spanish perspective, a discovery that had no reference within their existing knowledge of the world, including within their canon of religious and philosophical authorities. If the Spanish had no prior knowledge of the Amerindians then it was conceivable that the peoples of the 'New World' may not have been afforded the same opportunities as 'Old World' Saracens, Jews, and pagans to accept Christ as their Lord and saviour. If the Spanish had no record or memory of the Amerindians having consciously rejected the divinity of Christ it would seem possible, some argued, that they were not 'enemies' in the same capacity as Muslims. It was these tensions within the worldview of the *Respublica Christiana* that would be effectively

⁴ For more on the ontological designing of war see Tony Fry's *A New Design Philosophy* (1999) and *Design as Politics* (2011).

exploited by religious critics of Spanish colonisation, such as the Dominican friar and ex-New World *encomendero* Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) (for more on las Casas see Wynter 2003; Mignolo 2011; Dussel 2014).

An early solution devised to address the conceptual and theological problems that the Amerindians posed for Spanish colonisers specifically and the *Respublica Christiana* as a whole was the *Requerimiento* ('Requirement' or 'Summons'). Designed in 1513 by legal scholar Juan López de Palacios Rubios (1450–1524), the *Requerimiento* was a text, written in Spanish, that detailed the terms of Spanish authority in the Americas by appeal to the 1493 papal grant (the *Inter caetera*) and a history that connected the Biblical story of Genesis to the Spanish monarchs. The document was designed to be read to newly encountered — and no doubt baffled — Amerindian populations, who were encouraged to “take the time that may be necessary to understand and deliberate upon” the need to,

acknowledge the Church as the Ruler and Superior of the whole world, and the high priest called Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Doña Juana our lords, in his place, as superiors and lords and kings of these islands and this Tierra-firme. (López de Palacios Rubios 1513)

The *Requerimiento* also called on the Amerindian audience to consent to ongoing instruction (onto-colonial designing) by Catholic religious fathers.

Having received the declaration, the Amerindian audience was further advised that those who assent to the terms of Spanish authority would be received with “love and charity”, remain “free without servitude”, and would be left to decide for themselves whether or not to convert to the Holy Catholic Faith (López de Palacios Rubios 1513). Any refusal or “malicious” delay, however, would invite invasion, war, subjection, and the requisition of any goods (López de Palacios Rubios 1513). The deaths and losses that accrued would, in explicit and certain terms, be the fault of the colonised and not the colonisers (López de Palacios Rubios 1513).

In its designing, the *Requerimiento* amounted to a ritual in which a non-Spanish speaking audience was called upon, in Spanish, to enact an almost immediate transfer of allegiance to an absent and, to them, hitherto unheard of authority, based entirely on the reasoning of an utterly foreign legal cosmology. The manner in which the *Requerimiento* served as means of distributing liability for the costs of colonisation is significant to the moral- /juridical- /financial designs that would take form in the proceeding centuries (Mitropoulos 2012).

While the exercise of reading the *Requerimiento* was patently absurd, the consequences were nevertheless extreme, particularly insofar as the Amerindians had few effective means of avoiding the violence of its performative import. Both the document's author and the conquistadors themselves were apparently aware of how abusive it was to assume that the Amerindians would understand *Requerimiento*; they nevertheless felt compelled enough by the onto-colonial designs of the Church and Crown to follow the ritual through. This tension was, however, reflected in some of the details of how the *Requerimiento* was performed. Las Casas, for instance, provides one evocative account of how the conquistadors manifested the colonising import of the *Requerimiento*:

at dead of night, when the [Amerindian] inhabitants were all in bed and sound asleep and, once they [the conquistadors] got within, say, half a league of the town itself, read out the terms of this edict, proclaiming (and only to themselves): "Leaders and citizens of such-and-such a town of this Mainland. Be it known to you that there is one true God, one Pope, and one King of Castile who is the rightful owner of all these lands. You are hereby summoned to pay allegiance, etc. Should you fail to do so, take notice that we shall make just war upon you, and your lives and liberty will be forfeit, etc." Then, in the early hours of the morning, when the poor people were still innocently abed with their wives and their children, they would irrupt into the town, setting fire to the houses and burning the women and children alive and often the men, too, before the poor wretches realized what was happening. (Las Casas, as quoted in Beasley-Murray 2011, p.4–5)

As Jon Beasley-Murray suggests, the practice of reading the *Requerimiento* had little to do with facilitating Amerindian affirmation of European authority as the supposed audience of the design could “neither accept nor reject” the content of what the Spaniards had to say. As far as the Spanish were concerned, and as indicated in how they (the Spanish) actually used the *Requerimiento*, the Amerindians remained non-beings who were, as such, “beyond the pale of any possible community” (Beasley-Murray 2011, p.4–5).

As Beasley-Murray argues, while the reading of the *Requerimiento* was designed to produce a dishonest and abusive mode of relating with Amerindian people, it also played an important role in designing the conquistadors’ coloniality of being. In this sense the performativity of the *Requerimiento* was directed at reinforcing the onto-colonial designing of the conquistadors *qua* designs of the coloniality of power-/being.

The *Requerimiento* thus served the purpose of modifying the existing terms of distinction, identification, and entitlement of the conquistadors in a way that was designed to ameliorate and suppress the tension surrounding the question of whether or not the Amerindians were ‘enemies of Christ’ and, as such, the legitimate objects of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Thus, “[u]nder the guise of an appeal to the consent of the subjugated”, the performance of *Requerimiento* in effect consolidated and redesigned “the habits and affects of the subjugators” in the face of their inexperience and unfamiliarity with Amerindian societies (Beasley-Murray 2011, p.3).

5.3 THE COLONIAL DESIGNS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The case of the *Requerimiento* provides a sense for the context and means by which Spanish Renaissance intellectuals worked to reconfigure (that is, onto-colonially design) the cosmology of the *Respublica Christiana* so as to incorporate the experience and emergent reality of what they called the ‘New World’. The frame of reference that emerged was not only ethnocentric but distinctly colonial. As theorists such as Mignolo (2011), Dussel (2014), and Wynter (2003) have argued, this process of incorporating the

novelty of the 'New World' into European Christian understanding had such profound effect on the configuration of the *Respublica Christiana* that it precipitated (designed) a major paradigm shift in the structure of identity, knowledge, sense, and ontology. This shift can be characterised as a move from the provincial order of the *Respublica Christiana* to the global designs of the colonial matrix of power (see Chapter 1 for an explanation of the colonial matrix).

My next step in this genealogy of the colonality of design is to examine the terms and influence of Renaissance Spanish jurist and Roman Catholic theologian Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546) in the transition from the theological order of the *Respublica Christiana* to the proto-secular terms of the *jus gentium* ('law of nations', 'law of the peoples', or, 'international law').

In opening a discussion of Vitoria and international law it is important to bear in mind the significance of the second and third terms of the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality equation. As Mignolo (2011) argues, 'coloniality' and 'decoloniality' together signal the presence, knowledge, and agency of the 'darker side' of modernity. What emerged for Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a new sense of globality did so in the company and on the basis of equivalent transformations to the realities of those who were subjected to the violence of the colonality of design.

While the colonality of design forced its targets to see and experience the world in newly globalised terms, in each case this understanding developed by way of incorporating the novelty of European domination into the existing designs of local knowledge. The critical decolonial move in this case is to observe that the global designs of both European states and non-European non-state others are grounded not in a singular, universalist 'reality' but, rather, in localised modes of being and enunciation. While there are a multitude of global designs that are each case shaped by the trace of local histories, not every design of this sort configures the desire or capacity to impose itself in the same manner or extent as Europeans have with the colonality of power (Mignolo 2000). Thus, while my focus here is on Vitoria's contribution to the global-imperial designs of the *jus gentium*, the account

given is done so in awareness of the fact that the terms of the *jus gentium* are a product of a local history that sought to impose itself at a global scale as though it were the 'true' and eternal reflection of natural reason.

5.3.1 HOW THE 'NEW WORLD' UNSETTLED THE DESIGNS OF THE *RESPUBLICA CHRISTIANA*

Francisco de Vitoria is credited as one of the founding figures of the modern/colonial system of international relations (Anghie 1996; Mignolo 2011; Schmitt 2003; Vera 2012). Vitoria began his thinking on the rights and responsibilities of the Europeans *vis-à-vis* the Amerindians on terms that were similar to the tension that lay behind the development of the *Requerimiento*; namely, the question of what rationale could possibly justify invading and subjugating a hitherto unknown category of non-Christian. While many commentators on Vitoria have examined his thinking in view of the classical problem of international law — that is, how order is created amongst sovereign states — Antony Anghie (1996, p.322) makes the claim that this was not in fact the central or most pressing problem that Vitoria confronted. Rather, Anghie argues that the stakes for Vitoria were,

the problem of creating a system of law which could be used to account for relations between societies which he understood to belong to two very different cultural orders, each with its own ideas of propriety and governance. (Anghie 1996, p.322)

On this point, Vitoria played an important role in transforming the geopolitical cosmology that informed the meaning of the *Respublica Christiana*, effectively reconfiguring a colonial system of law to incorporate, account for, and suppress the unease that European Christians felt in the face of a people whose existence posed a direct challenge to the religious-/legal cosmology of the *Respublica Christiana*.

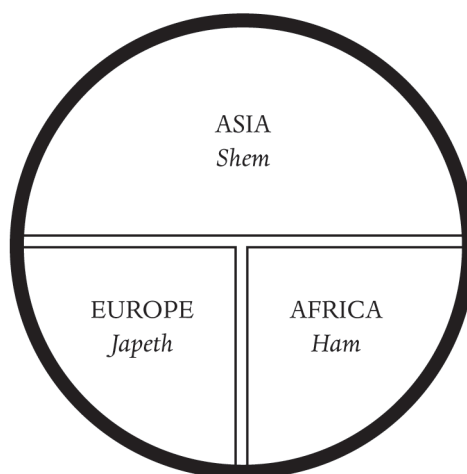


Figure 2: The T/O map, showing the earth divided into the three zones of the Table of Nations; Europe-Japheth, Asia-Shem, and Africa-Ham.

As Mignolo explains, prior to the Christian ‘discovery’ of the Americas the cosmology of the *Respublica Christiana* was informed (designed) by the T/O map (see fig. 2). The T/O map is made up of a circle divided by a ‘T’ that demarcated the three, and only three, zones of Asia, Europe, and Africa (Mignolo 1995). Each segment of the T/O map was further encoded as a taxonomy of all the people who were known to *Respublica Christiana*, as informed (designed) by the Biblically derived theory of the ‘Generations of Noah’ or ‘Table of Nations’ (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the onto-colonial designing of taxonomies). The theory of the Table of Nations held that the three major societies of the earth were respectively descendent from the three sons of Noah. Thus Asia was associated with the decedents of Shem, Europe with Japheth, and Africa with Ham. A particularly destructive interpretation of the story of Ham — one that was of consequence to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic perceptions of the non-being of darker skinned people — was that Noah had inflicted Ham with an hereditary curse, marked by the property of ‘Blackness’ that was passed on through Ham’s descendants (Goldenberg 2003). This form of racialised codification helped to design the legitimacy of the slave trade as a colonising mindset (Goldenberg 2003).

As far as European Christians of the fifteenth century were concerned, the image of the T/O map accounted for all lands of the world, its people and their origins. As a configuration of systemic-/cosmological thinking, the T/O map played an important role in designing both the identity of the *Respublica Christiana* and, as such, its perception of its place in the world relative to people of other regions and faiths. As suggested in my account of the *Requerimiento*, the cosmology attached to the image of the T/O map began to break down as questions were pressed as to how exactly the Amerindians and the landmass of the Americas could be placed within the geopolitical design of the *Respublica Christiana*. Whereas the *Requerimiento* had served the purpose of papering over some of these issues, the arguments presented by Vitoria enacted a decidedly more forceful unravelling of the *Respublica Christiana* into the designs of the modern/colonial world system.

5.3.2 VITORIA AND THE JURIDICAL DESIGNING OF THE COLONIALITY OF BEING

The works in question here are two lectures written and delivered by Vitoria in the period between 1537 and 1539. They were respectively titled *De Indis Noviter Inventis* (On the Lately Discovered Indians) and *De Jure Bellis Hispanorum in Barbaros* (On the Law of War Made by the Spaniards on the Barbarian). At this point the colonisation of the Americas by Castilian forces had been in process for over 40 years. The islands of Hispaniola (present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Cuba, and Puerto Rico had been secured and many of the Indigenous Taíno population had already been brought under the control of the *encomienda* system. Colonisation of the mainland was also underway, with settlements founded in the areas of present day Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina. Conquest of the Aztec Empire by Hernán Cortés had been completed in 1521 and Francisco Pizarro had initiated his campaign to conquer the Inca in 1532.

The juridical framework that underwrote and directed the exploits of the conquistadors and the design of the *Requerimiento* was based on two major premises:

- 1) that human relations were governed by divine law; and,
- 2) that the Pope exercised universal jurisdiction by virtue of his divine mission to spread Christianity (Anghie 1996).

Vitoria's first move in his reconfiguration of the coloniality of design was to undermine the legitimacy of these two premises. Vitoria determined that the principle of divine authority was not applicable to matters concerning relations with the Amerindians and, further, that the Pope's own authority was partial and limited to the spiritual dimension of the Christian world. Vitoria's reasoning was based on his own reading of relevant Biblical passages as well as the doctrine of natural law as derived from Aristotle and Christian scholastic philosopher St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74).

Vitoria's rejection of the divine law as a warrant for the universal jurisdiction of the Pope set the European Christian question of colonial rights *vis-à-vis* the Amerindians on new terms. By arguing that the doctrine of divine law was unfounded, Vitoria had in effect dissolved the *Respublica Christiana* framework as a means of regulating relations between Christians and non-Christians (Anghie 1996, p.325). The terms of Vitoria's problematic, therefore, shifted to a question of the means by which a system of law could be designed that made room for a category of non-believer whose status as 'friend' or 'enemy' of Christ was yet to be determined.⁵

Vitoria's solution to this consisted of two related elements. The first was an argument concerning Amerindians as rational beings. The second element built upon the terms of the first in order to establish a system of universal natural law. Regarding the first element, Vitoria reasoned that while the Amerindians were not followers of Christ this fact was not sufficient for them to be considered irrational. On the contrary, Vitoria argued that the existence of Amerindian practices of marriage, jurisprudence, authority,

⁵ For a twentieth century expression of this tradition of thought see Carl Schmitt's (2005) *Political Theology*, particularly the final chapter, 'On the counterrevolutionary philosophy of the state (de Maistre, Bonald, Donoso Cortés)'.

labour, and commerce counted as evidence of fact that Amerindians possessed the same ability to reason as that of Europeans. While these practices may have been wildly different and governed according to the terms of a false religion, the question of non-belief and sinfulness fell within the non-worldly jurisdiction of *divine* rather than *human* or *natural* law. As far as Vitoria was concerned, therefore, for the purposes of human or natural law, the Amerindians — by virtue of their evident capacity to reason — were to be regarded as members of the universal order of the *jus gentium*.

Vitoria's conception of the *jus gentium* was significant for replacing a system of divine authority administered by the Pope with a system of human or natural law administered by secular sovereign powers (Anghie 1996). Vitoria's juridical designs thus facilitated a levelling of the special status afforded the spiritual doctrines of Roman Catholic Church within the *Respublica Christiana*. In doing so, Vitoria shifted the locus of European Christian political authority from the divine and 'revelationary' power of the Pope to the rationalist and 'charismatic' power of state sovereigns. In this respect, the designing of the *jus gentium* instilled the imaginary of a system governed by supposedly 'rational' or 'natural' laws that represent both the 'common' and determining property of (human) being as such. Structured into Vitoria's juridical design, therefore, were the terms of the core violence of the coloniality of design; that is, the zero point disposition to speak for and design the being of all beings according to its singular image of the real. By Vitoria's design, a refusal to submit to the order of the *jus gentium* would mark a person or group as an irrational (non-)being(s) who could be legitimately subjected to the violence, terror, and hyper-exploitation of the coloniality of being.

5.3.3 ON THE DESIGNING OF COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE

As Mignolo (2011) observes, while Vitoria's arguments may have been posed in the language of nature, rationality, and universality, the process of his reasoning was, in both form and ontological effect, a unilateral mode of political designing (Mignolo 2011, p.86–8). While Vitoria recognised the rationality of the Amerindians, Vitoria's thinking and

designing did not provide for the legitimacy of the Amerindians' living and thinking within the (non-Christian) designs of their own material-symbolic cosmology. As such, Vitoria's juridical designing did not allow for a multi-lateral mode of relation(al) designing that would allow the local designs of Amerindian juridical practice to reconfigure European Christian cosmologies. While European Christian cosmologies were of course reconfigured in their encounter with the lands and peoples of the Americas, the point I am emphasising here is that the course of the transformation from the *Respublica Christiana* to the *jus gentium* was specifically designed to (re)institute (design) the singular and universalist authority of the European Christian zero point, the colonial difference, and-/as the colonality of being at a global scale.

While Vitoria's jurisprudential designs prepared the ground for later developments in liberal European conceptions of international law and human rights, the arguments that Vitoria derived from his theory of the *jus gentium* had both immediate and long-term implications for the way in which colonisation was imagined, rationalised, and practiced. As Anghie highlights, a key question that Vitoria ruled on was the right of the Spanish to travel and sojourn in the lands of the Amerindians. According to Vitoria, free and unheeded movement was a right of natural law since "from the beginning of the world (when everything was in common)" it had been permissible "for any one to set forth and travel wheresoever he would" (Vitoria, as quoted by Anghie 1996, p.326). The division of the world into forms of property, Vitoria argued, did not extinguish this right of travel for it was never the intention of those who created such a system to destroy the "reciprocity and common use which prevailed among men" (Vitoria, as quoted by Anghie 1996, p.326). Vitoria's appeal to the "beginning of the world" is a trope derived from the Biblical stories of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and Noah in the aftermath of the great flood, one that would inform later notions of the 'state of nature' or 'natural man' as they appeared in the later works of European legal and political theory. As Anghie argues, Vitoria's use of this trope was intended to naturalise and legitimate the process of Spanish penetration into Amerindian lands and the establishment of a colonial system of commerce (Anghie 1996, p.326).

While this argument provides a clear demonstration of the relation between the designing of legal concepts and (as) material-symbolic desires, Anghie makes the additional point that under Vitoria's reading "the particular cultural practices of the Spanish assume the guise of universality as a result of appearing to derive from the sphere of natural law" (Anghie 1996, p.326). By Vitoria's account, the process of exchange between the Spanish and the Amerindians occurred on the basis of mutual and equal benefit; that is, "by importing thither wares which the natives lack and by exporting thence either gold or silver or other wares of which the natives have abundance" (Vitoria, as quoted by Anghie 1996, p.326). In this case the effect of Vitoria's reasoning was of vital importance not only to the formation of new legal arguments but also components of what would become the modern/colonial discourse of liberal economics. As Anghie describes it,

The exchange seems to occur between equals entering knowledgeably into these transactions, each meeting the other's material lack and possessing, implicitly, the autonomy to decide what is of value to them. The Indian who enters the universal realm of commerce has all the acumen and independence of the market man [...] (Anghie 1996, p.326)

In this respect Anghie argues that Vitoria's "apparently innocuous" ruling on the Spanish right to travel and commerce in Amerindian lands had the effect of designing a system of norms that was "comprehensive, indeed inescapable", or, in other words, impossible for Amerindians not to fall foul of (Anghie 1996, p.326). Vitoria's treatment of the question of travel and commerce is significant for, in effect and by design, criminalising any form of Amerindian resistance to Spanish colonisation.

A final set of arguments that are of similar significance concerns the way in which Vitoria handles the residual differences of the Amerindians *vis-à-vis* the Spaniards after having earlier made the case for their ontological equality as 'rational' (non-)beings. By Anghie's account, Vitoria saw the Amerindian personality as composed of two parts:

- 1) that which represented a universal or common property of humanity (being), here codified as the ability to 'reason', and
- 2) those cultural practices that were seen to vary from the (Eurocentric) standard of 'universal' reason.

On these terms, Amerindians possessed enough rational 'being' (the essence of the metaphysical category of 'humanity') to be disciplined by the designs of the *jus gentium* but were lacking to the extent that their potential for perfection was as yet unfulfilled. In other words, in the eyes of European Christians, Amerindians were similar enough to fall under the jurisdiction of the *jus gentium* but different in a manner that called for corrective intervention. Vitoria's reasoning thus reached beyond the question of the designs by which the European Christians would (not) relate to the Amerindians and into an argument that declared it the duty of European Christians to design the conduct and presentation (submission, self-negation) of Amerindians, regardless of what Amerindians themselves might think or desire.

Vitoria's conception of the means by which Amerindians would be designed leads into his discussion on the legitimacy of war. By Anghie's account, war for Vitoria was "the means by which the Indians and their territory are converted into Spaniards and Spanish territory, the agency by which the Indians thus achieve their full human potential" (Anghie 1996, p.327). In Vitoria's system the warrant for war could only be derived on the basis of a natural law argument. However, because he had already reintroduced the designs of Christian norms on these very terms, Vitoria was able to make a case for the right of proselytising that had the same basic structure as his arguments for freedom of travel and commerce. As Vitoria himself puts it,

ambassadors are by the law of nations inviolable and the Spaniards are the ambassadors of the Christian peoples. Therefore, the native Indians are bound to give them, at least, a friendly hearing and not to repel them. (Vitoria, as quoted by Anghie 1996, p.328)

Anghie confirms that while the result of this argument is to affirm the legitimacy of practices that Vitoria had undermined in his earlier critique of divine law, the technical structure of the argument remains consistent with Vitoria's appeal to natural law. As Anghie explains, for Vitoria "resistance to conversion is a cause for war, because it violates not the divine law by the *jus gentium* administered by the sovereign" (Anghie 1996, p.328). By Vitoria's reasoning, war against the Amerindians is warranted in the event of any form of resistance to the Spanish presence, not by reason of divine law but by the standards (designs) of rationality that are supposedly 'common' to all nations. The sum effect of Vitoria's reasoning is, therefore, that the Amerindians are "included within the system only to be disciplined" (Anghie 1996, p.332). To rephrase this from the perspective of the coloniality of design, Vitoria's system is designed to both validate and facilitate the forced submission of Amerindians to the colonial designs (desires) of the conquistadors.

As part of concluding this discussion of Vitoria it is worth recalling that my purpose with this genealogy is to trace the conditions in which a tradition of colonial knowledge gains momentum and direction as a mode of ontological designing. What I have discussed so far is the economic, political, epistemological, ontological and — as Kim Benita Vera (2012) puts it — 'proto-racial' terms of the colonial matrix of power, and how they emerged, at least in part, from the efforts of Renaissance Spanish intellectuals to design the incorporation of the American continent and its peoples into a colonising frame of reference. In this respect my reading of the *Dum Diversas*, *encomienda* system, *Requerimiento* and *jus gentium* has emphasised the manner in which these are designs that were developed as 'solutions' to problems that arose in the course and experience of colonisation. As has been argued by Mignolo (2000, 2011), Dussel (1995, 2014), and Wynter (2003), the sum effect of this work of creative adaptation was a (designed) transformation in the European Christian image of the real from the designs of the *Respublica Christiana* to that of the *jus gentium* (alias modern/colonial world system). As Mignolo (2011) has emphasised, the shift that occurred at this time represents the emergence of a form of global linear thinking that misreads itself and the conditions of its own ontological designing as the expression of a singular, 'natural', 'rational', universal,

and, on this basis, necessary mission of design. This examination of Vitoria's seminal work on the foundations of European international law thus represents a case study of the coloniality of design in action. This has yielded insights that operate at three different levels at least; namely,

- 1) an account of the designs by which later colonists and imperialists would understand and respond to the conditions of their own time and place;
- 2) the process by which the design of Amerindian knowledge was systemically excluded from and by means of the Vitoria's juridical designs, and;
- 3) the process by which Vitoria designed the non-consensual incorporation of Amerindian people into a proto-racial system of unlimited physical and-/as ontological domination.

In the discussion to come I will be following the path by which Vitoria's designs helped to direct the configuration of colonial knowledge that designed the British invasion of Cadigal country. The next step in this story will be to cover some of the historical developments and theoretical precursors to the decision on the part of the British state to invade Cadigal country; namely, the ideas and arguments of the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and early English Enlightenment theorists of colonisation such as Francis Bacon, William Petty, and John Davies.

5.4 HUGO GROTIUS' IMPERIAL DESIGNS

Hugo Grotius is often cited alongside with Vitoria as one of the foundational thinkers of modern/colonial international law (Rabkin 1997; Mignolo 2011; Mitropoulos 2016b). A native of the Netherlands, Grotius was born two years after the Dutch Republic had declared its independence from the Spanish Crown in the context of a revolt — the

‘Eighty Years’ War’ — that had been underway since 1568. In his lifetime, Grotius would make a significant contribution towards rationalising and directing the interests of seventeenth century Dutch imperialists. In the process of doing so Grotius designed arguments and concepts that would be taken up by later theorists, practitioners, and designers of colonisation.

In the centuries before the revolt against Spain the coastal provinces of Holland and Zeeland were established commercial hubs within the network of European maritime trade. During the period of the revolt, the city of Amsterdam experienced a surge in the numbers of financiers and traders seeking refuge from the conflict underway in southern cities such as Antwerp. Thanks in part to these migrations, the city of Amsterdam grew to become a centre of shipping, banking, and finance, and by the 1590s various Dutch enterprises had begun trading in Brazil, West Africa, and the Indian Ocean. The financial success of early trading ventures to the spice islands of Maluku (the point of Spanish-Portuguese contention in the formation of the Saragossa line — see Chapter 4) led to a proliferation of new companies. Before too long, members of the Dutch ruling and commercial classes came to understand that competition amongst trading companies was a source of downward pressure on their ability to draw profit from the burgeoning imperial market. Concerns about this issue eventually lead to the founding of the joint stock Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VoC) in 1602. The charter awarded by the Dutch Republican government provided the VoC with monopoly rights to Dutch trade and navigation between South Africa (the Cape of Good Hope) and the Americas (the Straits of Magellan). The company was further empowered to establish fortresses, sign treaties, enlist army and navy personnel, and to wage war, meaning that the VoC effectively had the formal power and designing capacity of a state.

Dutch trading activity in the East Indies brought them into conflict with the commercial and supposed title interests of the Portuguese, who — as I mentioned in Chapter 4 — had been granted exclusive rights to the region in the *Inter caetera* bull of Alexander VI in 1493. As a result of the Iberian Union (1580-1640), the rivalry between the Dutch and Portuguese was further connected to Spanish interests, meaning that the contest of

European imperial powers in the East Indies played out as part of the war already underway in Europe.

In 1603 a Dutch fleet attacked and captured the *Santa Catarina*, a Portuguese merchant ship sailing near the coast of present day Singapore (Rajagobal 2015). Dutch captain Jacob van Heemskerck took the attack as an opportunity to seize the *Santa Catarina's* cargo of silk, porcelain, camphor, and other goods, which he then transported back to Amsterdam for auction. Back in Europe, a legal dispute erupted between the Spanish, Portuguese, and differing Dutch factions over whether or not such action constituted an illegal act of trespass or piracy. The dispute led the VoC to hire Grotius — who was already known for his interest and accomplishments in the 'liberal arts' — for the task of drafting a legal defence.

Grotius took the opportunity of the commission to produce a lengthy treatise entitled *De Indis* (On the Indies). While the full text of *De Indis* would not reach a public audience until its publication in 1868 as *De Jure Praedae* (On the Law of Prize), the twelfth chapter of the work was published in 1609 under the title *Mare Liberum* (The Free Sea). As Barbara Arniel (1992) argues, Grotius' reading posited that the issue stake was not simply the question of piracy but of the right (of Europeans) to free travel and trade within the territories previously claimed by the Spanish and Portuguese powers (Arniel 1992, p.84). Insofar as Grotius' arguments were directed at strengthening the ascendant Dutch imperial interests against the established interests of the Spanish and Portuguese, *De Indis* exhibits the effects of what Mignolo has called the 'imperial difference'; that is, the process and effects of European state powers competing amongst themselves for a share of control over the colonial matrix of power (see also my discussion of the 'imperial difference' in Chapter 1). In this respect the arguments that Grotius presents in *De Indis* and *Mare Liberum* are significant for the role they play in the shift from Iberian Catholic to Northern European Protestant domination of the colonial matrix, as well as the attendant eclipse in Northern European memory and sense for the sixteenth century foundations of 'Occidental reasoning' (Mignolo 2000). This is a shift that remains consequential for Northern European consciousness of the manner in which the relational histories,

experiences, thought, and designs of the Iberian peninsula and Latin America are conditions of possibility for what Mignolo has called the ‘Second Modernity’, or, the post-Reformation era of European Enlightenment and Romantic philosophies (Mignolo 2011; Dussel 2014). With this in mind, my argument here is that Grotius’ thinking enacted transformations in the colonality of design that prefigure the designing of the British invasion of Cadigal lands.

5.4.1 GROTIUS ON ENCLOSURE AND WAR

Grotius’ imperial designs were an explicit feature of his legal writings, as evidenced in his stated goals of defending the rights of the Dutch in the East Indies against the “savagery and cruelty” of the Portuguese, and to encourage his compatriots “not to withdraw a title from their manifest right” (Grotius, as quoted in Arniel 1992, p.85–6). Grotius’ description of the Portuguese as “savage and cruel” is a sign of the imperial difference in formation that corresponds with the later efforts on the part of British colonisers in North America to depict Spanish colonial practices as more barbaric and distasteful than themselves (Arniel 1992, p.143).

In *De Indis*, Grotius draws a foundational distinction between ‘movable’ and ‘immovable’ objects, a ruling that functions as a set up for Grotius’ claims concerning the freedom of the sea (this and what follows here comes largely from Arniel 1992, p.86–99). Whereas for Grotius the appropriation of moveable objects such as cargo is achieved via “attachment”, while the appropriation of immovable objects such as land must be achieved by some other mechanism. Grotius’ proposal in this respect is that the appropriation of immovable objects is conditional upon there being some form of enclosure, or, the “construction or the definition of boundaries” to demarcate the existence and extent of ownership (Grotius, as quoted in Arniel 1992, p.87). *Enclosure*, therefore, is for Grotius a necessary condition of private ownership and the right of exclusion. Grotius’ argument for enclosure as a condition of immovable private property had bearing on the question of the freedom of the sea insofar as the sea can neither be enclosed nor built upon. By these

conditions, Grotius claimed that the sea was to be considered free and open to all, with no single nation-state having the right to prevent others from traveling or trading thereon.

Like Vitoria, Grotius grounded his arguments in a doctrine of natural law that, again, presupposed that the principles, distinctions, concepts, and propositions that constituted Grotius' argument were universally and transparently available to any 'rational being'. Just as was the case with Vitoria's theory, however, the 'common sense' of Grotius' concept of the natural did not arise by force of a neutral, disinterested, or pre-political form of rationality. Rather, the terms and intent of Grotius' argument were a reflection of his particular locus of enunciation; one that included concerns and assumptions of his audience; that is, the international society of European imperialists. As Arniel puts it, in the case of the debates surrounding the issue of European imperial rights it was each person's "distinct colonial purposes [designs]" that allowed them to "draw [their] own conclusions from the same basic premises" (Arniel 1992, p.87).

Grotius' thinking in *De Indis* designed the terms by which European imperialists and colonisers competed amongst themselves for access to, and control over, the markets, resources, and labour of people of non-European world. Moreover, Grotius' arguments concerning the nature of what could be considered appropriable and appropriated would play a role in determining how Europeans who arrived in 'Australia' conceived and rationalised their right to the lands of Indigenous peoples (Moreton-Robinson 2015b; Robert 2016). A similar process can be seen at play in Grotius' later major work, *De Jure Belli and Pacis* (On the Law of War and Peace).

Published in 1625, *De Jure Belli and Pacis* was written at a time in which the English had joined the contest of powers and were challenging the Dutch in ways that were similar to what the Dutch had previously done to the Spanish and Portuguese. Against this background, Grotius took on the task of presenting his views on the nature of war and the reasons for conflict as based, once again, on the idea of natural law and the 'state of nature'.

In *De Jure Belli and Pacis*, Grotius declares that the first legitimate cause of war is the protection of “self and property”, a claim that, according to the rationalist tradition of thought, requires him to define property and provide an account of its origins (Arniel 1992, p.90). Grotius begins his argument with a conception of the primitive or simple state derived from Biblical narratives. This account is quickly followed, however, by the claim that such a state “may be seen among certain tribes in America which have lived for many generations in such a condition” (Grotius, as quoted by Arniel 1992, p.90). While I observed a similar concept at play in Vitoria’s thinking, Arniel identifies Grotius’ formulation of the ‘state of nature’ as being of particular significance for later theorists of colonisation insofar as the notions of ‘natural law’ and ‘natural man’ — as developed through European Christian thought from Cicero to Aquinas — was “wholly grafted [by writers such as Grotius] without consideration for its implications on to the European notion of America and its natives” (Arniel 1992, p.91). Grotius’ version of the state of nature thus becomes the condition for redefining the *jus gentium* from the law of nations to the law *between* nations, meaning that the relationship amongst states was to be thought as having “no overarching authority beyond God and natural law” (Arniel 1992, p.92).

After considering the natural state, Grotius enters into his account of the origins of private property. Here Grotius begins with the notion of an originary grant from God that is held by all people of the world in common. The terms of this common ownership are positive, meaning that “everybody owned everything”, as opposed to the negative form in which “nobody owns anything” (Arniel 1992, p.92). From this state of common ownership Grotius reasons that individual ownership arose as individuals took up possession of things that were *useful* to their own needs-/ desires. ‘Use’ was also the origin of property right in immovable objects, which on a “certain compact or agreement” took the form of a division into private title (Arniel 1992, p.93). Grotius goes on to argue that lands that remain “unoccupied” — that is, land “hitherto uncultivated” — remains available for appropriation in accordance with natural law (Arniel 1992, p.94). The precise wording of this claim is significant as an early definition of *res nullius* or *terra nullius* that would become part the ordinary vocabulary of colonial claims to legitimate

appropriation, including by the British in ‘Australia’ (Fitzmaurice 2007; Mitropoulos 2012, p.166; Robert 2016),

If within a territory of a people there is any deserted and unproductive soil [...] it is the right for foreigners even to take possession of such ground for the reason that uncultivated land ought not to be considered occupied. (Grotius, quoted by Arniel 1992, p.94)

A final aspect of Grotius’ thought that is worth examining in brief is his view on war. For Grotius there are strictly three conditions for a legitimate war: defence, recovery of property, and punishment. In this sense the reasons for war are a reflection of what can be legitimately acquired from war. In the case of punishment, Grotius argues that those free from offence are — by virtue of natural law — entitled to exact punishment upon offenders. In the hands of the state this right holds not only in the case of injuries committed against the Crown or its subjects, “but also on account of injuries which did not directly affect them but excessively violate the law of nature” (Grotius, as quoted by Arniel 1992, p.96–7). Entailed in this argument is a similar relation of power to that observed with Vitoria on the question of designing the Amerindians. As such, Grotius holds that war against the natives of the Americas and the East Indies is justified wherever they are found to be “like beasts” or engage in cannibalism. Once brought under the control of a righteous sovereign, a subjugated people would have no legal claim to freedom the enactment of this desire would constitute an “unjust cause for war” (Grotius, as quoted in Arniel 1992, p.97). The designs of this doctrine would be of eminent value to the interests of the society of European states (the *jus gentium*) and their state-like companies (VoC, British East India Company, etc).

5.5 ON THE DESIGNING OF ENGLISH SETTLER COLONIALISM

Arniel’s purpose in studying Grotius’ arguments is to provide a sense of context — both practical and theoretical — for the arguments later developed by the English political

philosopher John Locke (1632- 1704), a figure whose ideas (designs) — while not addressed directly in my analysis here — are nevertheless of consequence to the course of English settler colonial practice, particularly in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i (Moreton-Robinson 2015b). For my purpose here, however, I suggest that an analysis of the onto-colonial designing of the English colonisation of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provides an opportunity to enact a disclosure of the ontological (designing) structures of English settler colonialism.

The case of Irish colonisation can be distinguished from that of the Americas insofar as the island itself and its peoples had long been integrated as a marginal entity of the *Respublica Christiana* imaginary. This is to say that — notwithstanding the history of various waves of invasion, colonisation, adaptation, and resistance — the status of Ireland as a known entity within the sixteenth century European Christian image of the real meant that the campaigns of conquest that were designed and pursued by Tudor monarchs throughout this period did not have the same degree of impact on the European sense of being-in-the-world as did the Spanish ventures in the 'New World'. That said, in this section I argue that the English effort to colonise Ireland represents a significant event in the onto-colonial designing of coloniality at large and, importantly, settler colonialism in particular. My suggestion here is that the ideas, knowledge, affects, dispositions and other designs born of the interaction between Spanish-American, English-Irish, and English-American colonial practices are of consequence to the manner in which British-Australian colonisation was prefigured and executed.

In short, the task of the following section is to follow how the anti-relational designing of Spanish colonisation in the Americas played a role in designing the colonial practices of the English in both Ireland and North America. The argument of this chapter as a whole is that it is precisely this iterative (but not teleological) trajectory of onto-colonial designing that prefigured the coloniality of British designing with respect to the land and/as lifeworlds of the Cadigal people.

5.5.1 CONTEXTS TO COLONISATION I | IRELAND AND THE *RESPUBLICA CHRISTIANA*

Evidence of human inhabitation of Ireland is dated back as far as 12,500 BC. Celtic migrants arrived from mainland Europe around the time of 600 BC. By the fifth century interactions between the Celts and previously established Indigenous groups had given rise to Gaelic social formations and a collection of small, class-stratified kingdoms. At this time the mainland European conception of Ireland was informed by the accounts and records of classical Greek and Roman explorers, geographers, and historians. The Greek explorer Pytheas of Massalia (c.350BC-c.285BC), for instance, coined the reference *Iérnē* ('of Celtic origin') based on a proto-Celtic term for the goddess of Gaelic mythology *Īweriū* or *Īveriū*, which is itself the origin of present day Irish *Éire* or *Ireland*. *Iérnē* was later Romanised into *Hibernia* by the historian Tacitus c.98 AD, an indication of the fact that the land and people of Ireland were, despite being marginal, still recognised within the precursor formations to the *Respublica Christiana*.

The fifth century was also the period in which Christianity began its expansion into Ireland. According to William Scott (1967), notwithstanding its impact on Gaelic-Irish beliefs and practices — not least of which in the domain of gender and sexuality (Federici 2004, p.37) — the effects of conversion on Irish law were relatively restrained, having been achieved through the codification of, or adaption to, various pagan customs that caused little to no issue within missionary doctrines (Scott 1967). Christianity also brought with it the language of Latin, the technology of the Roman alphabet, and the practice of monastic scholarship. The quick success of Christianity in Ireland led to it becoming a centre for theological training, an exporter of missionaries to England and mainland Europe, and a sanctuary of Latin scholarship and the monastic arts.

While Viking raids of the ninth to twelfth centuries had a minor impact on Irish social formations, it was not until the invasion and establishment of the 'Lordship of Ireland' under the Norman Henry II of England in the later part of the twelfth century that the structural designs of English colonisation were first laid. By the fifteenth century,

centuries worth of resistance on the part of Gaelic-Irish factions combined with the effects of the Black Death and wars internal to England to effectively extinguish Norman control in Ireland save for a fortified zone in the region of Dublin that came to be known as ‘The Pale’. By the sixteenth century, the title of ‘the Lordship of Ireland’, the Pale, and a desire to expand the power and wealth of the English Crown together combined to configure Tudor designs for the reconquest of Ireland. The Tudor campaign would distinguish itself further from the Norman campaign in being configured by designs of the Spanish American colonisation that were circulating throughout Europe. In these respects, my suggestion here is that the Tudor campaign for the conquest of Ireland is significant for being an event that reconfigured the designs of both Spanish and Dutch colonial knowledge into a novel expression of colonial practice; namely, British settler colonialism.

5.5.2 SETTLER COLONISATION AND THE ONTO-COLONIAL DESIGNING OF IRISH NON-BEING

The sixteenth century Tudor campaign to reconquer Ireland occurred in the period 1565-76. While this particular campaign ended in failure, the terms in which it was conducted and the lessons that were learnt from the experience would be of consequence to the designing of subsequent ventures by English colonists in Ireland, the Americas, the Indian subcontinent, and ‘Australia’ (Canny 1973; Pawlisch 2002; Wood 2002, p.147–65; Ó Ciardha 2013). As Nicholas P. Canny (1973, p.576) puts it, the experience of 1565-76 “produced an outpouring of justifications for colonization and conquest” that were designed into a system of thought that motivated later, more successful campaigns. Such was the significance of Ireland in the development of English colonial practice that it has been referred to on many occasions as a ‘laboratory’ of empire (Ó Ciardha 2013; Ohlmeyer 2006; Wood 2002, p.160–1).

One of the designs configured by the English experience of Ireland that would prove significant to English colonial practice at large was the *settler plantation*; that is, the practice of transporting and ‘planting’ members of one’s own society within militarily

occupied territory for the express purpose of displacing or subduing the native population (Wolfe 2006).⁶ In Ireland, earlier efforts at settler planting were attempted as a means of defending the Pale against attack from Gaelic-Irish forces. In 1565, however, a design was developed by Elizabeth I to bring the entirety of Ireland under the control of the English Crown. The first attempts at establishing offensively oriented plantations began in Ulster in the north. This was followed two years later by similar efforts in the region of Munster in the southwest. These regions were selected according to the English perception that they were inhabited by an intractable variety of Gaelic-Irish population that was impervious to ‘rational’ persuasion, and who, as such, could only be brought under the control of English designs by means of force (Canny 1973, p.576). A further consideration for the English was their view that the southwest region of Ireland was vulnerable to the intrusion of competing imperial powers; namely the Spanish (Canny 1973, p.576).

The campaigns in Ulster and Munster are notable for being the sites of the most extreme acts of colonial violence throughout the campaign, including episodes of atrocity in which English authorities ordered the systematic slaughter of large numbers of Irish captives and noncombatants (Canny 1973, p.581–2). As Canny observes, the fact that such extreme practices were not recorded in the Norman invasion of previous centuries nor replicated against roughly synchronous rebellions within Tudor England is an indication that something had changed in the mindset of colonial knowledge of sixteenth century English colonists as compared with their Norman predecessors (Canny 1973, p.583).

The argument put by Canny is that the Tudors looked upon the Gaelic-Irish in a way that was fundamentally different from that of the Normans. To begin with, the Tudors of this time, unlike the Normans, were adherents of an extreme variety of Christian Protestantism that was estranged from and in many cases hostile to Roman Catholicism. Moreover, the English worked with a theory of civilisation that posed ‘civility’ as a

⁶ In records and literature on Irish context this is commonly referred to simply as the ‘plantations’. For my purposes, however, the term warrants distinction from the slave-based crop plantation model applied by European colonisers and imperialists in the Americas, East Indies, India, and North-Eastern ‘Australia’. In this sense I will refer to the former practice by way of either ‘settler plantation’ or ‘setter colony’ and latter as either ‘plantation colony’, ‘sugar plantation’, ‘cotton plantation’ etc.

necessary condition of being or becoming Christian. One of the problems for the Tudor colonists who hoped to gain glory, wealth, and power through colonisation of Ireland was that the Irish, *qua* ‘Christians’, were of necessity ‘civilised’ and could not, as such, be defined as non-beings in the same manner as Vitoria had done with the Amerindians. Given the terms of this problematic, it became the task of the Tudor colonists to design the non-being of the Gaelic-Irish.

In order to make the Gaelic-Irish and their lands available to colonisation the Tudors had designed a perception of the Gaelic-Irish as both non-Christian and uncivilised. The Tudors found grounds doing so in the fact that Gaelic-Irish religious practices “did not fully conform to Roman liturgical practice” insofar as many pre-Christian Gaelic designs had only been “slightly venerated” by the experience of Christian conversion (Canny 1973, p.583, see also; Scott 1967). Enfolded into this picture was a further, related perception on the part of the Tudors of the strangeness of Gaelic-Irish agricultural methods (Canny 1973, p.586; Scott 1967). While this was less of a problem for the Normans or their descendants in Ireland, for the Tudors — who were already hypercritical of Hiberno-Norman religious practices — such unorthodoxy placed the Gaelic-Irish well beyond the terms of the recognised Euro-Christian community. The Gaelic-Irish were thus codified as pagans who were culpable for their “heathen beliefs” and a “system of government that was antithetical to Christianity” (Canny 1973, p.586). By these means the Gaelic-Irish were effectively rendered as non-beings in the eyes of the English and, as such, legitimate targets for the most extreme forms of violence and total subjugation within the designs of the coloniality of being.

5.5.3 CONTEXTS TO COLONISATION II | IRELAND AND THE COLONIAL MATRIX

To readers who adopt a nationalist or British Isles centred methodology, the Tudor conquest of Ireland may appear to be merely parochial in both consequence and interest. My argument here, however, is that the designs of the Tudor conquest of Ireland are of relational consequence to the structure and direction of coloniality at large and, most

particularly, to the onto-colonial designing of British settler colonialism. As Canny notes, many of the English colonists who were involved in the sixteenth century campaign were members of a class of wealthy, well-travelled, and literate “adventurers”, some of whom had been involved in Continental wars against the Turks in Hungary, and others who had spent some time in the ‘New World’ (Canny 1973, p.586). All could be expected to be familiar with the latest discourses on the varieties of barbarian others that were being theorised by Europeans at this time. The influence of these factors appears in a comparison drawn by Sir Henry Sidney — English lord deputy of Ireland — between an Ulster chieftain and the Huns, Vandals, Goths, and Turks (Canny 1973, p.586). The Gaelic-Irish were referred to as cannibals and nomads, both of which were — according to the colonial imaginary of the *jus gentium* — definitive “proto-racial” markers of barbarianism (Vera 2012, p.453). Here the resonances with Spanish theories of Amerindian criminality are not only apparent but also supported by Canny’s evidence for the circulation of Spanish colonial knowledge within the social and intellectual contexts of the Tudor colonists (Canny 1973, p.593–5). A point to make here, as Canny (1973, p.587) puts it, is that “many of the colonizers came to Ireland with a preconception of what a barbaric society was like, and they found features in Gaelic life to fit this model”. As such, my argument here is that the intentions and outlook of Tudor colonists were relationally configured by the material-symbolic designs of Spanish colonial knowledge.

A final transformation worth noting is the manner in which English colonial knowledge and the designed perception of the non-being of colonial targets carried over into English colonial ventures in the Americas. While the colonial knowledge of the Spanish played a role in prefiguring the designs of Tudor colonists *vis-à-vis* Ireland, the image that the English colonisers took to North America in the seventeenth century was likewise configured by the English experience of the onto-colonial designing of Irish non-being. As the English had been designed by Spanish colonial knowledge, so too did early English experiments with the emergent designs of the colonality of being configure a more experienced body of English colonial knowledge.

5.5.4 ON THE DESIGNING OF ENGLISH 'ENLIGHTENMENT' THOUGHT

While the 1569-76 campaign ended in failure, the efforts and desire of the Tudor English Crown to bring Ireland under control was sustained into the seventeenth century. The Tudor designs for the conquest of Ireland were finally realised — though not perfectly or securely — in 1603 with the defeat of the Gaelic-Irish rebel armies and the submission of their leader Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. What followed over the course of this period was a local configuration of English colonial policy, theory, and designs that constitute a condition of possibility for English colonisation throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The seventeenth century colonisation of Ireland is remarkable for the number of early English Enlightenment figures who were either directly or indirectly involved, and whose subsequent designs would influence later developments in colonial-/imperial practices of law, science, and political economy. The influential English scientist, jurist, and politician Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), for instance, involved himself in the matter of Irish colonisation by providing private advice and counsel to English aristocrats concerning the various risks, benefits, and favourable courses (designs) of colonial action in Ireland. Bacon also played a public role in configuring English colonial designs through publications such as *Certain Considerations Touching on the Plantation in Ireland*, which was presented to King James I in 1609 (Crawford, Färber & Morgan 2011). While Bacon was an advocate for 'moderated' approaches to colonisation, his advice was offered in view of the strategic benefits of averting any interference from Spain, to configure native cooperation (submission, conformity, self-negation), and as a means to stoke divisions amongst the Gaelic-Irish confederates. Bacon was also a firm believer in the necessity of the 'civilising mission' and the efficacy of the settler plantation as a means to this end. In this capacity Bacon was expressing the designs of Vitoria's theory on the duty of Christian colonists to 'correct' (civilise) the perceived barbarism (lack) of the Amerindians, as well as both Vitoria's and Grotius' theories of war as a legitimate mechanism for designing the submission and conformity of conquered populations.

As demonstrated by critical feminist-/Marxist-/queer-/Indigenous-/decolonial writers, the designs of seventeenth century ‘Enlightenment’ (Northern European) sciences were as invasive, controlling, and mechanistic in specifically gendered and sexualised ways as were the colonial designs of pre-‘Enlightenment’ (Southern European) colonisation (Anzaldúa 1999; Mies 1999; Federici 2004; Lugones 2007; Merchant 2008; Mitropoulos 2012; Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2015b). With that said, I would suggest that the extent of Bacon’s involvement in the colonisation of Ireland suggests a more correlational instance of onto-colonial designing *vis-à-vis* the patriarchal and colonial designs of Bacon’s thought than is sometimes acknowledged (Merchant 2008). Devon Hodges’ reading of Bacon’s work on anatomy, for instance, describes Bacon’s overall mission as being

couched in a rhetoric of imperialism. [...] As explorers and colonizers anatomize the world, laying it open to master it, so Bacon will lay open the intellectual world. Such projects, as Timothy Reiss has pointed out, are often imaged [sic] as acts of sexual violence; the new scientist is ‘conqueror enforcing his will, a man ravishing a woman. ...’ Certainly, the act of vision described as an anatomizing process, to lay a body ‘widely open’ suggest the violence and disruption involved in such act of discovery. The conquering power of the eye cruelly violates the integrity of the body. (Hodges, as quoted in Merchant 2008, p.159)

The attitude of absolute entitlement to view, invade, and dissect a specifically gendered-/sexualised body is further contextualised by Federici, Merchant, and Mies in relation to the cycles of witch-hunts that persisted throughout this period and the emerging attitude of command and control *vis-à-vis* a distinctly gendered-/sexualised conception of ‘nature’ or ecology.(Federici 2004; Merchant 2008, 1990; Mies 1999; see also Mitropoulos 2016b)(Federici 2004; Merchant 2008, 1990; Mies 1999; see also Mitropoulos 2016b) These observations mark out Bacon as a key figure in the (anti-)relational designing of the colonality of being (Anzaldúa 1999; Fanon 2008, p.xii; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Lugones 2007; Mitropoulos 2012).

5.5.5 BACONIAN RATIONALISM, JOHN DAVIES, AND THE CORE VIOLENCE OF NON-BEING

My suggestion in this part is that Bacon's intellectualist designs configure and direct an English style enactment of the coloniality of being. As such, Bacon's designs underscore and direct the configuration of later and present day political-economic designs. One of the clearest examples of the onto-colonial designing of Baconian rationalism can be found in the work of the William Petty (1620-1687), an English economist, scientist, and one time personal secretary of Thomas Hobbes who served as Surveyor General in Ireland during the rule of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England from 1653-8. In Ireland, Petty worked on surveying lands on for the English state that were intended to be confiscated from Irish natives and awarded to English soldiers (cf. the origins of the *encomienda* system in the Christian 'reconquest' of the Iberian peninsula). In the course of this assignment, Petty developed a number of methods of measurement and calculation that configured the foundational thinking of the discipline of political-economy. Petty was also a faithful disciple of Baconian thought, a relational design that is expressed in Petty's description of Ireland in his study of natural history, *An Essay of Political Anatomy* (written 1671-2). As Wood details, Petty describes Ireland as his exemplary "Political Animal" which — as a reference to the dissection practices of Baconian trained medical students — would serve as a "cheap and common animal" upon which economic scientists could "practice their inquiries" (Petty, as quoted in Wood 2002, p.161).

A second Baconian configured English colonial theorist is Sir John Davies (1569-1626). Davies was an English poet, lawyer, and one-time Attorney General of Ireland who is significant for having designed and practiced a formative theory of English settler property entitlement. As Hans Pawlisch argues, Davies' purpose in Ireland was to develop a framework (design) for understanding and implementing colonial designs of the English Crown (Pawlisch 2002). In Davies' writing, the settler plantation was promoted as an essential technique of English colonial design in Ireland. As Wood argues, English designs in Ireland were configured as an effort

to establish an English-style commercial order, a new kind of economy based on new social relations on the land, new relations between the landlord and tenant, like the ones that were driving [productivist] improvement in England. (Wood 2002, p.153).⁷

Throughout the violence that followed in the course of the seventeenth century colonisation of Ireland, a factor that distinguished the Tudor and Cromwellian campaigns from the Normans — in addition to, as I discussed above, the import of knowledge from Spanish-American colonisation — was a design to bring the land and population of Ireland under the rule of a rationalist ontology. English colonists sought to achieve this by using the settler plantation as a means to design the ontological colonisation of the Gaelic-Irish population. Davies' designs are significant in this respect for reconfiguring the English conception of property rights as a mechanism for extracting a specifically capitalist (colonial) form of value from the lands and people of Ireland. In doing so, Davies codified a restricted⁸ and, as such, decidedly capitalist-/colonial conception of 'improvement' in a manner that conforms to the designs of Vitoria's theory of the European Christian duty to eliminate Amerindian 'irrationality'. The results of Davies' thinking on this problem were materialised in a letter written to the Earl of Salisbury in 1610 in which Davies explains the arguments to be used as justification for a settler plantation in Ulster, the eviction of the Irish, and their replacement with English and

⁷ For an explanation and design theory critique of productivism see Fry's *A New Design Philosophy* (1999). See also Angela Mitropoulos 'From precariousness to risk management and beyond' (2011) and *Contract & Contagion* (2012).

⁸ As I noted in the Introduction, for more on my sense for the meaning of 'restricted' in this context see Fry's writing on George Batailles' concept of the 'restricted economy', particularly this passage from Fry's 'Aeonic Economy':

The 'restrictive' economy can be taken as the identity of a rationalist, productivist and iconic system of 'mastery' that seeks (but always fails) to command and employ the resources 'of nature' by turning them into commodities that meet the utility and, in consumerist biased capitalism, symbolic needs of a market. (Fry 1994a, p.160)

Scottish settlers. While the initial arguments refer to the supreme rights of the king over the land, for my purposes a more notable set of ideas (designs) are introduced as Davies turns from an argument of entitlement to the land to one of obligation. The relevant passage is worth quoting at length:

Now civility cannot possibly be planted among them by this mixed plantation of some of the natives and settling of their possessions in a course of Common Law; for if themselves were suffered to possess the whole country, as their septs have done for many hundreds of years past, they would never, to the end of the world, build houses, make townships or villages, or manure or improve the land as it ought to be; therefore it stands neither with Christian policy nor conscience to suffer so good and fruitful a country to lie waste like a wilderness, when his Majesty may lawfully dispose it to such persons as well make a civil plantation thereupon.

Again, his majesty may take this course in conscience because it tendeth to the good of the inhabitants many ways; for half their land doth now lie waste, by reason whereof that which is habited is not improved to half the value; but when the undertakers [the settlers] are planted among them [...], and that land shall be fully stocked and manured, 500 acres will be of better value than 5000 are now.
(Davies, as quoted in Wood 2002, p.159–60)

These two paragraphs from Davies' letter include a remarkably dense collection of the same ideas (designs) that configured the 1788 British invasion of Cadigal lands and the establishment of 'Australian' settler colonial designs. In short, my argument here is that Davies' letter details a set of blueprints for the onto-colonial designing of 'invasion as structure' (Wolfe 2006, p.388). As Wood notes, at the core of Davies' argument is a design for capitalist-/colonial 'improvement' (invasion, subjugation, exploitation) justified on the basis of the perceived 'lack' (non-being) of the Gaelic-Irish (Wood 2002, p.160). In Davies' case — as with the Amerindians in the Americas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of 'Australia' — English colonialist perceptions of Gaelic-Irish non-being

were codified through inherently racialised interpretation of local Gaelic-Irish dwelling, social, and agricultural designs (Vera 2012; Kiem 2013; Gammage 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2015b; Pascoe 2015). From an outsider perspective, Davies' evidence for a lack of 'civilisation' on the part of the Gaelic-Irish may appear arbitrary, but in the context of English colonial designs Davies' arguments served the desired purpose (design) of facilitating the political subjection and economic exploitation of Gaelic-Irish land and labour.

The non-being of the Irish was, by Davies' view, disclosed by the manner in which they allowed their land 'to lie waste like a wilderness'. In this context the meaning of such terms as 'waste' and 'wilderness' can but only relate to the colonial-/productivist sense for the presence of unrealised exchange value held hostage by a barbaric, criminal and intransigently 'unproductive' people. As with Vitoria's designs for the 'improvement' of the Amerindians, a key dimension of Davies political-/economy ontology is that it makes no allowance for the ontological designing of deviance or difference. From the perspective of Vitoria's and Davies' zero point epistemology, the equation for the targets of colonial designs is configured as a choice between physical and-/or ontological annihilation; alias, the coloniality of being.

The relational designing of Vitoria's and Davies' arguments demonstrates that, from the perspective of the coloniality of being, the right to care, sustenance, respect, and protection on the part of colonial (non-)beings can only be obtained by submission and conformity to the designs of zero point epistemology. As demonstrated through the writing of decolonial thinkers such as Anzaldúa, Fanon, Harris, Moreton-Robinson, Mignolo, and Maldonado-Torres, the ontological implications of submission and conformity to the zero point amounts to a process (design) of indefinite self-negation. To take the story of Harris' grandmother's experience of 'passing as white' as but one example (see Chapter 2) — including both the emotional toll of the experience and the bitterness with which the memory is recalled — it becomes clear that the stakes for the coloniser *vis-à-vis* the coloniality of design is the ability to configure and proliferate an anti-relational mode of designing; that is, a mode of designing that designs the extraction

of a metaphysical (capitalist) conception of being (value) from an otherwise intransigent, or — to displace the zero point perspective for moment — materially *autonomous* condition of relational plurality (Mitropoulos 2006b, 2012; Escobar 2008, 2012, 2015, 2018; Sheehan 2011; Graham 2014; Deleuze 2001a).⁹

By my relational reading of the onto-colonial designing from Vitoria to Davies, therefore, it becomes clear that the core violence of the coloniality of design is expressed as the configuration of designs to sever, diminish, and undermine relations of respect and affection in favour of designs to configure (anti-)relations of abuse, violence, dishonesty, resentment, entitlement, shame, paranoia, and anxiety (Sheehan 2011; Rose 1996, 2004, 2013; Nietzsche 2009; Sedgwick 2003; Anzaldúa 1999; Oliver 2004; Fanon 2008; Maldonado-Torres 2007). In this sense, my reading has disclosed the unsettling designs of nihilism — the metaphysics of (self-/relational-)negation — as a key expression of the core violence of the coloniality of design (Nietzsche 2009; Fanon 2008; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Fry 2012).

5.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter began with the provocation from Moreton-Robinson to think and, as such, reconfigure the designs of English settler colonialism. My strategy for doing this has been to trace the relational designing of the coloniality of being from the event of the European Christian colonisation of the Americas (the ‘New World’) to the event of the English invasion of Cadigal country for the purpose (design) of founding the penal colony of ‘New South Wales’. In enacting this analysis I traced the relational designing of the coloniality of being from the publication of the *Dum Diversas* to the formation of the *encomienda* system, the practice of the *Requerimiento*, Vitoria’s designs for the

⁹ While this point represents a rather concentrated expression of my thinking with and through concepts from a wide configuration of thinkers, I would like to pay special tribute to Angela Mitropoulos’ writing on ‘autonomy’ and ‘proliferating borders’ as essential concepts in design of my thought. While I regret that my perception of this influence has come too late in the process of this thesis to do justice to Mitropoulos ideas, given a ‘second pass’ I would hope to give them a more prominent position in my argument.

transformation of the *Respublica Christiana* into the *jus gentium*, Grotius' arguments for the enclosure definition of property, the influence of Spanish colonial knowledge on the Tudor conquest of Ireland, and the configuration of English colonial thought in the works of early 'Enlightenment' thinkers such as Bacon, Petty, and Davies. A major finding of this process is the disclosure of the core violence of the coloniality of design as the condition of configuring and proliferating anti-relational designs in service of a metaphysics of self-/relational negation. Linking back to my discussion of Fry on the design as the 'ground of being' (see the Introduction), my analysis of this present chapter suggests that the condition of the coloniality of being is one in which designing is structurally configured to negate the otherwise autonomous presence of a positive, generative, exuberant, and respectful condition of relational plurality. As suggested in my reading of Mignolo's locus of enunciation, the light of possibility that continues to shine through the manifold cracks and disjunctures of the coloniality of being is an expression of the power of decolonial thinking to reconfigure the designing of negation into designs for enacting the relations that sustain material-symbolic conditions for life, creativity, growth, divergence, movement, learning, difference, and change.

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To bring this chapter to its final conclusion, I suggest it is useful to discuss a point of relation that provides a more direct connection between my analysis of English 'Enlightenment' (colonial) thinkers, the invasion of Cadigal country, and the subsequent configuration of 'genocide-/invasion as structure' that constitutes the existing condition of settler colonial designing in 'Australia'. While there are a multitude of routes and candidates for this task — one of my initial ideas, for instance, was to trace the configurations of onto-colonial designing from Locke through to Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and on to Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796- 1862) and his theory of 'systemic

colonisation¹⁰ — it is sufficient for my purposes to note the influence of Bacon’s ideas on the colonial designs of Joseph Banks (1743-1820).

Banks was a British naturalist trained in the Baconian scientific methodologies who, in 1788 was appointed as president of the Royal Society of London following his return as a participant in Captain Cook’s joint Royal Navy/Royal Society expedition to the Pacific in 1768-71 (Sargent 2012). By the time Banks took on the role of president of the Royal Society of London the institution itself had already been configured by the designs of Bacon’s philosophy, with Bacon being a key figure of influence in the founding of the Society in 1660. In addition to his role as a bio-colonial surveyor, Banks is significant for having been one of the strongest advocates of British designs for establishing the penal colony of ‘New South Wales’¹¹ — based on, it should be noted, a decidedly superficial and (colonially) entitled interpretation of the period he spent trespassing on Cadigal country¹² — and for his contributions to the science of commercial sheep breeding — a colonial mode of bio-designing that underscored and directed the genocidal-/ecocidal expansion of pastoral colonialism in ‘Australia’ throughout the nineteenth century (Carter 1964; Banks 1979; Reynolds 1987; Ryan 1996; Rose 2004; McMichael 2004).

As Moreton-Robinson argues, the present day expressions of the colonial designs that I traced throughout this chapter are to be found not simply in the most obvious and extreme expressions of racist-/colonial violence but, rather, in the everyday equipmental circumspection of the colonality of design. In an account that speaks to her experience as

¹⁰ For an analysis of this kind I recommend Hannah Robert’s *Paved with Good Intentions* (2016). For a useful comparative study of ‘Australian’ and North American settler colonialism see Lisa Ford’s *Settler Sovereignty* (2010)

¹¹ In his submission to the 1779 Bunbury Committee on Transportation, Banks suggested that the location that Cook named ‘Botany Bay’ (Cadigal lands) was “best adapted” for British designs to establish a secure and economically self-sufficient penal colony. Banks added further that he apprehended “little probability of any opposition from the Natives” (Great Britain House of Commons 1803, p.311).

¹² Cook’s *Endeavour* expedition arrived in Cadigal country on the 28th April 1770 and departed several days later. Bank’s entitlement to talk about and propose designs for Cadigal country, despite his lack of sincere connection with the Cadigal people and their lands, is — as Moreton-Robison indicates with her analysis of Cook — an expression of the ontological designing of the colonality of being (Moreton-Robinson 2015b).

a Geonpul woman living within, despite, and against the nihilistic designs of settler colonialism, Moreton-Robinson writes,

For Indigenous people, white possession is not unmarked, unnamed or invisible; it is hypervisible. In our quotidian encounters, whether it is on the streets of Otago or Sydney, in the tourist shops in Vancouver or Waipahu, or sitting in New York, we experience ontologically the [designed] effects of white possession. These cities signify with every building and every street that this land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded [as-/by design] everywhere in the landscape. (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.xiii)

[...] texts are not consumed, rather they produce in the act of reading. (Fry 2014a, p.27)

It takes a great deal of work to maintain Canada, the United States, Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Australia as white possessions. (Moreton-Robinson 2015b, p.xi)

6.0 THESIS SUMMARY

I introduced this thesis with a question of what it means to think about *design* in light of *decolonial thinking* and decolonial thinking in light of *ontological designing*. In doing so I established a framework of inquiry that involved a process of reading with and from the perspective of two theoretical discourses, both of which I take to be valuable sources of insight into the politics of design. I constructed the framework of inquiry in this way so as to reflect the differing contexts of origination and interest that are embodied within these two discourses. In doing so I posed the equation of 'coloniality' and 'ontological designing' as an exercise of reading through and across multiple discourses of differing origin that nevertheless share a resonant (rather than common) interest in rigorous reflection on the relation between designed things (including texts and ideas) and ways of being-in-the-world.

One of the requirements of this process was the need to be explicit about the politics of intellectual inquiry and to incorporate this mode of critical awareness into the process of reading itself. The major point of reference for this idea was drawn from Mignolo's arguments concerning the effects of Castro-Gómez concept of *zero point* epistemology. In this respect an argument of Mignolo's that was of particular interest to me was the

potential of the dictum ‘I am where I think’ to act as means of disrupting the designs of the zero point. On this point I examined the manner in which Mignolo’s arguments call into question the ‘grounds’ upon which I proposed to conduct an inquiry into the relation between decolonial thinking and ontological designing. I interpreted this finding as implying a need to examine both the formation of design studies and the condition of ‘Australian’ settler colonialism. The *relational* methodology of my inquiry thus amounted to a process of reading across and in light of the discourses of decolonial thinking and ontological designing. This was to be done in a way that incorporated a critical examination of both the discipline of design studies and the structural logics of ‘Australian’ settler colonialism.

The complexity of this framework reflected an attempt on my part to produce a reading of the relation between coloniality and design that embodied an awareness of the significance of the *locus of enunciation*. I put this awareness into practice 1) through the manner by which I read across different texts and concepts, and 2) in the way in which I incorporated a (necessarily partial) awareness of the terms of my own interests and experiences into my analysis.

In the Introduction I discussed this process through the concept of *unsettlement*, which has been developed as a minor theme throughout Chapters 2 (my discussion of Heidegger), 3 (my discussion of Mignolo), 4 (my discussion of thinking in and from ‘Australia’) and 5 (my discussion of the transition from the *Respublica Christiana* to the *jus gentium*). As I argued in the Introduction, my claim here is that the ability to discern and remain open to the unsettling experience of critical inquiry — both one’s ‘own’ and in one’s relation to ‘others’ — holds political utility as a means of disrupting the naturalisation of zero point epistemology and for reconfiguring the nature of one’s own political ontology. In this manner I argued with Willis against Schön’s notion that everything that is significant about a practice or way of being can be made explicit and available to conscious and purposeful manipulation (see my discussion of Willis’ critique in Chapter 1). Further, I indicated that a critical ‘intellectual’ practice was not in and of itself a sufficient to the imperatives of decolonisation. Rather, the basic argument of this part was that the

ontological designing of decolonial thinking manifests in the practice of discerning and remaining with what one finds unsettling about decolonial thinking, such that one's sense of self and world is able to be reconfigured (designed) by the experience of unsettlement. As such, the agency of unsettlement has been configured in this thesis as the design by which the ontological hold of zero point epistemology may be disrupted such that it unravels into a disposition that is (designed) to receive the presence of a 'world of many worlds' with honesty, respect, care, and generosity.

6.0.1 MOVEMENTS OF THOUGHT

This thesis has unfolded in two major movements of thought. The first is a relational reading of 'ontological designing' and 'coloniality' that discloses the meaning of the 'coloniality of design'. The second is a relational reading of the ontological designing of the coloniality of being (the coloniality of design) as 'Australia'.

In Chapter 1 I provided a first pass on the origins and meaning of both ontological designing and coloniality. In doing so I presented an argument concerning the ontological and political limitations that are inscribed into contemporary discourses of design. The terms of my critique are that design studies was developed as a rationalist mode of discourse that was directed towards and managed as a service component of the capitalist mode of production. Notwithstanding my political disagreements with Winograd, Flores, Spinoza, and Dreyfus, my argument here is that the discourse of ontological designing — particularly as developed and extended by Fry and Willis — represents a radical intervention within and beyond design studies that aims to disclose ontological designing as the hermeneutical process of inscribing decision and direction in all things. By this understanding, ontological designing discloses design as both the condition of design discourses and, more significantly, as the condition of normative socio-technical configurations in general.

Coloniality was introduced as a heterodox discourse configured in the context of twentieth century anti-capitalist social movements of Latin America that was first materialised in the thinking of Quijano before being elaborated and extended by the members of the Modernity/Coloniality Project. From the other members of this project I chose to engage most closely with the work of Mignolo. Following my elaboration of the concept of coloniality I presented Mignolo's notion of colonial difference and marked its emphasis on the politics of perspective as a valuable complication with respect to my ability to disclose a resonant conception of the coloniality of design.

With the questions of ontological designing, coloniality, and the colonial difference in mind I turned to the concept of *relationality* as a means to elaborate the philosophical basis of a methodology, that as I argued, is necessary for the prospect of doing justice to the insights of both ontological designing and decolonial thinking. Here I presented and connected across the classical Chinese notions of *correlation* and *propensity*, David Bohm's conception of *reality-as-process*, Mary Graham's explanation of *Aboriginal perspectives on relationality*, and Kelly Oliver's concept of *response-ability*. The result of this analysis was a relational reading of relationality that I designed as a way to both explain and practice relationality as a mode of ontological designing. A crucial insight of this process was my recognition of perspective and its designing as something that I was not required to 'overcome' but, rather, something that was essential to attend to in the course of disclosing a resonant conception of the coloniality of design.

In Chapter 2 I turned to developing a critical reading of ontological designing in light of coloniality. My strategy here was to take the problematic political ontology of Martin Heidegger — ontological designing's most significant philosophical influence — as a point of departure to ask how the coloniality of design expresses itself within the work of both Heidegger and ontological designing. This strategy involved situating Heidegger's thinking as a radical critique of the 'Western' metaphysical tradition that discloses a powerful way of rethinking the agency of design against the influence of the rationalist tradition. Further, I argued that several of the terms of Heideggerian critique — namely, substance ontology and Cartesian subjectivism — are useful for revealing the force of

onto-colonial designing throughout both the ‘Western’ philosophical tradition and the broader contexts of onto-colonial designing such as, for example, racial profiling.

My critique of Heideggerian thinking and ontological designing proper centred on the argument that, notwithstanding its value, Heidegger’s thinking is undeniably configured and directed by his fascist political ontology. Further, by comparing Wendt and Ahmed’s different descriptions of airport security design, I argued that an uncritical appropriation of Heidegger’s thinking configures a tendency towards eliding the manner in which the coloniality of design functions to inscribe ‘Western’ norms and, by structural implication, the *colonial difference*, into equipmental configurations.

The later part of Chapter 2 was devoted to rethinking Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics in light of feminist-/decolonial readings of the limits and possibilities of Heidegger’s ontology. This was done primarily by engagement with critiques developed by Chanter and Leland and further informed by examples from the work of Harris, Moreton-Robinson, and Anzaldúa. The purpose of this discussion was to provide an alternative reading of the meaning of *Dasein* (being-there) based on the experiences of gendered and colonial domination. The result of this analysis is the picture of a distinctly politicised conception of resistance to *onto-colonial* violence that stands in contrast to Heidegger’s seemingly apolitical but ultimately fascist conception of the existential confrontation with the groundlessness of being. As noted in the conclusion of this chapter, the very manner in which I sought to enact a confrontation with Heidegger ought to be read as the product of a contextually defined tension in my own thinking. My reading of Heidegger was, therefore, directed at making an issue of the fact that I have found his thought to be both useful and — both as such and in light of Heidegger’s fascism — deeply unsettling. Importantly, the work of confrontation that I enacted in this chapter was specifically directed at allowing the designs of decolonial thinking to disclose the coloniality of design, as opposed to an effort of determining the terms by which Heidegger’s thought could be rendered safe or unproblematic. My intention, in short, was not to resolve the problems of Heidegger’s thought but to design a discernment for reading and acting upon the presence of coloniality.

In Chapter 3 I turned to reading Mignolo's concept of the *locus of enunciation* in light of ontological designing. My main argument here is that the process of how Mignolo developed the concept of the locus of enunciation represents an example of the problem identified by Leland concerning the question of stance-taking in conditions of coloniality. Moreover, I argued that Mignolo's ideas stand not simply as a reflection of Leland's ideas but as a unique configuration of concepts that are designed to disclose a materialist-symbolic interpretation of Quijano's concept of the coloniality of knowledge. For Mignolo, the concept of the locus of enunciation is put forward as a means to make sense of the tension he experiences between the coloniality of the discipline of semiotics and his experiences as a Latin American living in Europe and the US. By my reading, therefore, the locus of enunciation is a design that configures a more adequate conception of how knowledge and sense is designed by the material-symbolic substrate of social existence, an insight that is also of significance for making sense of the process of intellectual (semiotic, ontological) colonisation.

My reading of Mignolo underscores my argument that Mignolo's concept of the locus of enunciation is a conceptual design that is designed to disclose the problem of the coloniality of design as a condition that is both designed and designs. Further, in addition to arguing that Mignolo's disclosure of the problem of coloniality is distinctly designerly, my argument is that Mignolo's materialist-symbolic conception of the locus of enunciation is further configured to disclose possibilities for the designerly reconfiguration of the locus of enunciation away from the influence of zero point epistemology and towards *relational plurality*. I concluded this chapter by once again noting the significance of unsettlement, albeit this time as theorised in relation to how both Mignolo and Mitropoulos conceptualise processes of change, and a critique of the form/content binary within academic and design discourses. This was done in view of critical comments on how the phenomenological method is disposed to obfuscate the materialist-/processual nature of the (de)coloniality of design, a point that warrants further attention from theorists of ontological designing.

In Chapter 4 I engaged the question of what it means to think, speak, and design from the perspective of a white settler ‘Australian’ locus of enunciation. My strategy in this chapter was, firstly, to provide a reading Fry and Willis’ earlier work on marginality and nationalism. My intention with these readings was to allow the relational designing of the previous three chapters to disclose insights in these works that help to inform my understanding of the onto-colonial designing of ‘Australia’. The second part of this chapter was devoted to a similar reading of Hage’s theory of white nationalism that was intended to draw out the question of racism as a material-symbolic practice; that is, as a mode of (anti-)relational designing. With the help of Harris, Moreton-Robinson, and Mitropoulos I argued that the onto-colonial designing of ‘Australian’ nationalism was directed at instituting and sustaining a racialised property investment in ‘whiteness’ as a condition of colonial entitlement to the racialised-/gendered-/sexualised lands and labour of colonised peoples. In the final section of the Chapter 4 I engaged Stoler’s concept of ‘colony as design’ as part of an effort to respond to Moreton-Robinson’s criticism of Hage’s tendency to elide the distinctly *settler colonial* dimension of ‘Australian’ white nationalism. Here I argued that while Stoler’s conception of ‘colony as design’ is innovative and useful, for my purposes her manner of presenting the ‘subjective mood’ as a universalist concept does not go far enough towards disclosing the material-symbolic affect of grammatical moods as a mode of onto-colonial designing. Thus, while Stoler touches on the *design of colonialism*, my sense here is that her analysis does not amount to a disclosure of the coloniality of design.

In Chapter 5 I took up Moreton-Robinson’s provocation to think and, as such, reconfigure the designs of English settler colonialism. My strategy for doing so was to bring my conception of the coloniality of design into relation with Maldonado-Torres’ conception of the *coloniality of being*. In so doing I proceeded to analyse the course of the (anti-)relational designing of colonial knowledge from the event of European Christian colonisation of the Americas in the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century British invasion of Cadigal lands, the place now occupied by the city of Sydney and where this thesis has been predominantly researched and written. In the process of this analysis I traced the (anti-)relational designing of colonial knowledge from the publication of the

Dum Diversas, to the formation of the *encomienda* system, the practice of the *Requerimiento*, Vitoria's designs for the transformation of the *Respublica Christiana* into the *jus gentium*, Grotius' arguments for the enclosure definition of property, the influence of Spanish colonial knowledge on the Tudor conquest of Ireland, and the configuration of English colonial thought in the works of early 'Enlightenment' thinkers such as Bacon, Petty, and Davies.

A major finding of this final chapter was the disclosure of the core violence of the coloniality of design as a condition of configuring and proliferating anti-relational designs in service of a nihilistic metaphysics of self-/relational negation. In doing so I linked this finding back to my discussion of Fry on the design as the 'ground of being' (see the Introduction) — along with Angela Mitropoulos and Arturo Escobar's respective conceptions of *autonomy* — in order to argue that the condition of the coloniality of being is one in which designing is structurally configured to negate the otherwise autonomous designs of a positive, generative, exuberant, and respectful condition of relational plurality. In the wake of this final explication of the meaning-/designing of the coloniality of design, I reconnected with the notion of relational plurality as a mode of ontological designing that exceeds and disrupts the monotopical designs of zero point epistemology. My suggestion in this sense is that while the coloniality of design is configured to instil anti-relational designs as a condition of its nihilistic ontology, the designed discernment for the presence and agency of (decolonial) designs for relational plurality holds the key to unravelling the designs of ontological negation.

6.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

To summarise the major arguments and findings of this thesis:

- My overriding argument is that 'design' — as configured by the rationalist tradition of zero point epistemology — is an ontological force that normalises (anti-)relational designs of colonial forms of domination and exploitation.

- The name that I give to this condition, including as it configures a colonising interpretation of ‘design’, is the *coloniality of design*.
- The concept of *relationality* — as configured by a philosophy of correlation, process, embodiment, respect, and response-ability — is the most appropriate methodology for disclosing a resonant conception of the coloniality of design.
- In addition to the concept of ‘relationality’, a crucial skill in the task of learning to discern, disclose, and redirect the coloniality of design on specifically decolonial terms is to receive and think both critically and response-ably about the experience of being unsettled.
- The meaning of the ‘coloniality of design’ encompasses 1) the manner in which both designs and designed practices are directed by and towards normalising (anti-)relations of domination and exploitation, and 2) the manner in which ‘Western’ intellectualist discourses of ‘design’ are themselves configured by the coloniality of design.
- The coloniality of design is structurally configured to negate the relational conditions of life, creativity, growth, divergence, movement, learning, difference, and change. As such, the core violence of the coloniality of design is a condition of configuring and proliferating anti-relational designs in service of a nihilistic metaphysics of self-/relational negation.
- As observed in the thinking of expert decolonial thinkers, the practice of learning to discern, receive, and response-ably reconfigure the experience of unsettlement is a key element in the process of generating the kinds of designs for relational plurality that are able to counter the core violence of the coloniality of power.

- The designs of the zero point *literally mean (design) nothing as a configuration of existence (life)*, alias sadness, negation, confusion, abyss, *ressentiment*, bad faith, emptiness, selfishness, *akrasia*, non-being, darkness, anxiety, paranoia, wastelands, zombies.¹
- The designs of relational plurality *design respect and connection as configurations of existence (life)*, alias joy, courage, clarity, generosity, care, affinity, resonance, wisdom, grace, love.²

¹ For my sense of the terms ‘abyss’, ‘*ressentiment*’, and ‘bad faith’ see both Nietzsche (2009) and Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche (Deleuze 1983, 2001a). On sadness see Deleuze on Spinoza (Deleuze 2001b). On ‘darkness’ see Fanon (1967), Mignolo (2011), Rose (2004) and Fry (2012). On ‘negation’ see Fry (1999). On ‘non-being’ see Fanon (1967) and Maldonado-Torres (2007). On *akrasia* see Stewart and Lorber-Kasunic (2008). On ‘wastelands’ see Rose (2004) and Fry (2012). On ‘paranoia’ see Sedgwick (2003). On ‘zombies’ see Fela Kuti (1976)

² For my sense of the terms ‘respect’ and ‘resonance’ see Sheehan (2004, 2011). On ‘joy’ see Deleuze on Spinoza (Deleuze 2001b). On ‘care’ see Fry (1994a). On ‘wisdom’ see Rose (2013). On ‘love’ see Fanon (1970) and Rose (2013).

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