

Roberto Kulpa

Re-Thinking “Europe” with Central-Eastern Europe: Towards Non-Occidental and Decolonial Epistemics in/of Queer Studies

Introduction

A simple question: *What is Europe?* is often focal for numerous disciplines such as area studies, cultural geography, history, postcolonial studies, and recently also gender and sexuality studies. Although richly diverse, perhaps one common thread among them would be an inclination to show that *Europe* – while surely denoting a continent, a place on a map (the *where* of it) – is also more than just a simple geographical indication of place. It is a specific *idea* of culture, of politics, of relations, of humanity, of the world order.¹

Connected, but less often asked, is another important question in thinking Europe: *When is Europe?* That is: What are the explicit and implicit temporalities that govern imaginations of that place? For example, how temporal signifiers of “progress/backwardness,” “civilization/barbarity,” “science/spirituality” designate telos of society and culture and re/inscribe racialized categories on the populations across continents; how specific time and temporality become, as I have just written above: “a specific *idea* of culture, of politics, of relations, of humanity, of the world order” itself.

In this chapter, I want to think more about these elusive concoctions of geographies and time: geo-temporalities, symbolically marked by a hyphen of connection, and yet still, a fissure of separation. It alludes to the inseparable nature of the place/location and cultural perceptions of time/temporality, and as a result, to the socio-political consequences of such collusions. In particular, the affirmation and contestation of what is gender, (homo)sexuality, and knowledge is the central focus of interrogation in transnational politics as a litmus test of “globalization,” “Europeanization,” the idea of Europe, and “civilization” itself. Gender, sexuality,

1 Katalin Miklóssy and Pekka Korhonen, eds., *The East and the Idea of Europe* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010); Lionel Gossman, “The Idea of Europe,” *Common Knowledge* 16, no. 2 (2010): 198–222; Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle, eds., *Ideas of Europe Since 1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen, eds., *The History of the Idea of Europe*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge and The Open University, 1995).

and (il)legitimacy of knowledge surrounding them has become the implicit and explicit battleground of political ideologies and strategies, variably expounded across the left–liberal–conservative–right continuum. The attitudes towards, understandings of, representations of, relations to, and perceptions of identities and/or practices of gender, sexuality (especially homosexuality), and the knowledge produced about them, have become the defining markers of what Europe might have signified, what it does signify, what it should have signified, what it will have signified. And the different grammatical tenses here are deliberately used to highlight the underlying temporality in our operationalizations of the symbolic and material dimension of ideas, practices, places.

As I take time and give space to revisiting how I and others have been thinking about geo-temporalities of Europe and homo/sexualities, I am guided by the question: What relations and convergences of power/knowledge can be observed when thinking towards a critical, queer-oriented, Central and Eastern European (CEE) epistemological perspective? And what decolonial frameworks emerge to destabilize occidentalism, and potentially re/compose socio-political agora, when CEE becomes not an afterthought of queer studies (or decolonial thought, or postcolonial studies, for that matter), but a minaret of enunciation of contemporary (queer) ideas, aspirations, practices?

To follow these questions, I have organized this chapter into clusters. Firstly, in “Coloniality of Intellectual Horizons” I draw on decolonial theories and philosophers to map out how the place on the map dis/en/ables one’s own legitimacy as researcher/thinker within the occidentalist framework of “science.” This opens up the space to summarize how CEE has been imagined as a space of “in-betweenness” betwixt the East and the West. Secondly, in “CEE Queer Feminist Decoloniality” I reflect on geo-temporalities of Europe in sexual politics to date, and the exciting decolonial epistemologies emerging from the post-state socialist hinterlands. Finally, I bring together the threads in the concluding section, speculating and daydreaming about the prospects of that which has been, is (though maybe not yet), and/or will (not) have been.

Coloniality of Intellectual Horizons

I want to start by focusing on the role of geography in maintaining frames of eligibility for recognition, which underpin the world-system of contemporaneity, and that through the nodes of relationality enmesh individuals in a coloniality of power and knowledge. In the following pages I use “discourse” as in the Foucauldian tradition, as a symbolic-material orchestration of performative rhetoric, actions, governing values, and principles that are not confined to language alone

but span the whole spectrum of socio-political communication and behavior, having both symbolic *and* material effects.

Walter Dignolo – one of the key thinkers of decoloniality and epistemic injustices – has titled one of his writings “I am where I think” (1999).² A snappy title that nonetheless contains deep wisdom and insight. I am *where* I think. Dignolo, of course, riffs on the Cartesian “je pense, donc je suis” – *cogito ergo sum*, ‘I think, therefore I am’ – and the choice is not only rhetorical to hook the reader’s attention. Descartes is considered one of the key Western European philosophers, whose work nowadays is understood as foundational to the (Western) European Enlightenment (philosophy) and to Modernity (socio-economic, cultural, technological processes deriving from Enlightenment principles). Importantly, Descartes also needs to be understood as a key facilitator of European coloniality, especially coloniality of knowledge,³ by which I mean the ongoing hegemony of the Western and Western European models, systems, and traditions of understanding and reflecting on human and non-human life. They are disguised as “universal” (displaced, dis-embodied, a-historical) and historically succeeded in devaluing other traditions of thinking, conceptualizing, ideating, imagining, writing, organizing, and preserving. The process started in the fifteenth century, with (wrongly labeled) “discoveries” that began the period of (Western) European colonial conquests.⁴

Dignolo in this one sentence – I am *where* I think – exposes the emperor’s nakedness; he shows the idealized and thus empty signification of this Cartesian dictum, pretending to be “universal” and “human,” “the philosophy per se,” while in fact being only a particular expression of a particular set of cultural and social circumstances in a particular place, that of Western Europe, mid-seventeenth century France. One’s own *loci of enunciation* – that is, from where one *thinks* – is always already manifesting one’s location, genealogy, language, and is what preconditions one’s recognizability in the modern world-system as “civilized”: cultured, knowledgeable, scientific. Dignolo thus helps us to understand how the role of geographical annunciation is obscured by the cunning pretense of universality in the Western European scholarship that underpins Eurocentric framings of “modernity” and the world-system we live in. A simple sentence, “I am *where* I think,” while exposing the pseudo-universality of eurocentrism, does something more profound as well. It shows that ontology (I am) is always already

2 Walter D. Dignolo, “I Am Where I Think: Epistemology and the Colonial Difference,” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 235–245.

3 Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” *Cultural Studies* 21 (2007): 2, 168–78.

4 Madina Tlostanova, “Can the Post-Soviet Think? On Coloniality of Knowledge, External Imperial and Double Colonial Difference,” *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics* 1, no. 2 (2015): 39.

yoked to epistemology (I think), and it is the place (where) that acts as the synesthetic synapse; it undermines the very foundations of Eurocentric knowledge premised on the dichotomies of subjectivity and objectivity, of materiality and creativity/thinking, of body and thought, and so on. The sentence, which like a hyphen, brings ontology and epistemology together, as inseparable, declines the Enlightenment's paradigms of discrete and disconnected scientific classifications. Instead, Hamid Dabashi points to enmeshing and thinking otherwise – decolonial indeed.

Years after Mignolo's essay, Dabashi asked more bluntly on *Al Jazeera* online: "Can non-Europeans think?" and continued to elaborate his argument at length in a book that followed.⁵ He questioned the implicit (and explicit) relations of materiality and symbolism in how thinkers and artists are related and referred to, depending on where they happen to work and create. Dabashi poignantly points to epistemic injustices, much as Mignolo did, showing how intellectual production from non-European geo-cultural and linguistic traditions is deemed the subject of "ethnophilosophy" or "ethnomusicology" (rather than "Philosophy" or "Musicology," unspoiled and unmarked by adjectives that discursively mark them as "spin-offs," something of a lesser value).

Mignolo and Dabashi both show how geo-politics of knowledge production are fundamental to sustaining the coloniality of Modernity. Coloniality is the functional structure of the modern world-system and multitude of inequalities, intrinsic to the neoliberal software with which this world-system operates. Specifically, this system functions through a range of temporal and geographical narratives of backwardness/progress, center/periphery, female/male, white/black, Orient/Occident, civilization/nature, and Modernity; that is, thinking, relating, organizing, as underlying and enabling practices of recognized living, are the expressions and manifestations of power. Gennaro Ascione shows how Modernity manifests itself as a parallel modality: a racialized dynamic of white supremacy that structures the power of Western domination; as a mode of power, "it is implemented by multiple actors and subjectivities that are hierarchically distributed, moved by specific needs, put under determined pressures, yet transversally positioned in front of meta-geographical dualisms such as Europe/Others, West/East, North/South, metropolis/colonies."⁶ Coloniality/Modernity are often graphically linked with the forward-slash sign, highlighting the constitutive inseparability of both.

5 Hamid Dabashi, "Can Non-Europeans Think?" *Al Jazeera*, January 15, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/01/2013114142638797542.html>; Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

6 Gennaro Ascione, *Science and the Decolonization of Social Theory: Unthinking Modernity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 2.

These epistemic dynamics have very material dimensions that actively over-privilege anglophone scholarship, and by extension devalue non-English thinkers and their work, as has been extensively documented across a range of disciplines, from geography⁷ to biology.⁸ How to address these epistemic injustices is an ongoing debate, and one that surely is not to be settled soon, for the issues are more complex than a list of tasks on a to-do list. Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls such an epistemic project “The Epistemologies of the South”:

The South of the epistemologies of the South is not a geographical south. It is an epistemological South, a South heir of struggles for other knowledges and forms of being, a South born in struggles against the three modern forms of domination: capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. This threefold domination has for many centuries been legitimated by the power-knowledge privileged by the epistemologies of the North.⁹

Thinking with the “South” and “North” (as in, for instance, the “Global South/Global North”), or with the “East” and “West” is not just a semiotic game of words and metaphors; it does indicate certain intellectual affiliations, loci of enunciation, theoretical traditions, and political histories, and has been elaborated by many notable thinkers. Consequently, what *coloniality* and *decoloniality* refer to is not the same as colonialism, decolonialization, and postcolonial theories. As both epistemic fields are now well established, and their interconnectedness and divergences mapped, I will refer the reader to the work of Gurinder Bhambra (2014) for more elaborate reading. Here, let me just point out that thinkers of coloniality who originate in Latin American intellectual contexts focus on the epistemic structures of understanding the world that formed in the sixteenth century onwards. This early (Western) European colonial conquest of South and Central American populations and cultures laid the groundwork for occidentalist cosmology that later shaped (Western) European orientalism and military-political imperialisms across the globe. It imposed a particular – Western European – “modernity” as universal, delocalized, and disembodied “humankind” development. These political philoso-

7 Jerzy Bański and Mariola Ferenc, “International” or ‘Anglo-American’ Journals of Geography?” *Geoforum* 45 (March 2013): 285–295.

8 Tatsuya Amano et al., “The Manifold Costs of Being a Non-Native English Speaker in Science,” *PLOS Biology* 21, no. 7 (2023): e3002184.

9 Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Maria Paula Meneses, eds., *Knowledges Born in the Struggle: Constructing the Epistemologies of the Global South. Epistemologies of the South* (New York: Routledge, 2020), xiv–v; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Theory From the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa,” *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 113–131; Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

phies and the epistemic formation of “modern (i. e., European) science” peaked during the European Enlightenment’s long *durée* and the nineteenth century, serving as the rationalization of colonialisms and imperialisms. However, as such, coloniality as a structure of thinking permeates beyond the historical periods and geographies of Western European imperialisms, and is the condition of our contemporary living inasmuch as it was centuries back. Decolonial thinking engages with epistemic structures we use to understand the world, while decolonialization often refers to two issues: (1) historically, to a process of regaining independence; (2) more recently, to diversity and inclusion in education (for instance, “decolonizing curriculum”). And postcolonial theories, as the intellectual reflection on the consequences of (Western) European colonialisms and historical decolonialization, are also often focused on examples from the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa (and to a degree on the Western European imperial centers), and on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁰

Imagining Central and Eastern Europe

How then, in these two aligned but not alike contexts of postcolonial and decolonial theorizing, to think about Central and Eastern Europe, and eventually, also about gender and sexuality? *Where* and *when* is that locus of enunciation for “Central-Eastern” Europeans, from which we may want to probe, after Mignolo and Dabashi, into the ability of thinking and ideating in/from CEE (including knowledge/theories in/of gender or queer studies)?

There are numerous thinkers who have engaged with postcolonial perspectives to refine and conceptualize the dynamics of eurocentrism, occidentalism, and orientalism in the European southern and eastern borderlands.¹¹ Gerard De-

10 Madina Tlostanova and Walter D. Mignolo, *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 40; Roberto Kulpa and Joseli Maria Silva, “Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies: Section Introduction,” in *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, ed. Gavin Brown and Kath Browne (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 140.

11 See for example Epp Annus, ed., *Coloniality, Nationality, Modernity: A Postcolonial View on Baltic Cultures under Soviet Rule* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Milica Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–931; Timothy Brennan, “The Cuts of Language: The East/West of North/South,” *Public Culture* 13, no. 1 (2001): 39–63; Alfrid Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Violeta Kelertas, ed., *Baltic Postcolonialism* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006); Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Cristina Șandru, “Introduction: On Colonialism, Communism and East-Central Europe – Some Reflections,” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2 (2012): 113–116; Redi Koobak

lanty captures a common thread and complementarity in the diversity of arguments present in these writings, when he frames the “idea of Europe” as follows:

The idea of Europe remained the cultural model of the western core states. A major implication of this view is that the eastern frontier of Europe was above all a frontier of exclusion rather than of inclusion; it accelerated and intensified a process by which Europe became the mystique of the West.¹²

Larry Wolff further refined the development of the East–West axis, complementing the South–North one: while grounded in geography, Wolff found this to be more an outcome of the Enlightenment’s discourse of evolution and progress. Framed in the technological and economic terms, civilization and capitalism united, are the measures of progress/backwardness of the Self (Western Europe) and the Incomplete Self (CEE) or the Other (the “Orient”). Wolff uses the metaphor of a scale: “Eastern Europe was located not as the antidote of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism.”¹³ Melegh metaphorically visualized this scale as a slippery slope, adding the important vertical element to ensure that the horizontal East–West axis is not misunderstood as a continuum of equally positioned “East” and “West.”¹⁴ He also underlines the porous, flexible, and unfixed character of the borders not only within CEE, but also between the East and West, inviting ambiguity, ambivalence, in-betweenness, and transitionality as aligned word-concepts helping to capture the dynamic under discussion. Still other thinkers offer yet another viewpoint. Drawing on different sets of materials and locating her attention across a different timespan, Maria Todorova arrives at the divergent conclusion that “[in] the first place, there is the historical and geo-

et al., eds., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2021); Janusz Korek, ed., *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality: Poland and Ukraine from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2007); David Chioni Moore, “East Is South: Central Europe in Global Perspective,” *Macalester International* 2, no. 1 (1995); Martin Müller, “In Search of the Global East: Thinking Between North and South,” in *Geopolitics* 25, no. 3 (2020): 734–755; Lela Rekhviashvili et al., “Special Issue ‘Conjunctural Geographies of Post-Socialist and Postcolonial Conditions’: Introduction,” *Connections: A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists* (2022): <http://www.connections.clio-online.net/article/id/fda-133272>; Ana Vilenica, ed. *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe: A Lexicon of Reorientation* (Novi Sad: Kuda, 2023).

12 Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 48.

13 Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 13.

14 Attila Melegh, *On the East-West Slope: Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006).

graphic concreteness of the Balkans as opposed to the intangible nature of the Orient,”¹⁵ urging for new conceptualizations (such as “Balkanization”) in place of the “orientalism” frame. The same is true in yet another diverging perspective suggested by Milica Bakić-Hayden, who theorized orientalism as also relevant to/within CEE, and especially the Balkans (“Balkanism”).¹⁶ She observed the deployment of othering and orientalizing frames by peoples in the region against other populations in this region and termed it “nested orientalism.” Similar nesting orientalizing perspectives and debates are also present in other CEE contexts, such as Poland¹⁷ or Latvia.¹⁸ Finally, Plamen Georgiev expands on this intra-regional dynamic and also resorts to “orientalism” as a concept that captures and analyzes dynamics of self-orientalizing in south-east Europe as an accompanying dynamics of eurocentrism and occidentalism.¹⁹

Central and Eastern European Queer Feminist Decoloniality

Briefly sketched (and unavoidably flattened and oversimplified), the richness of the ways of engaging with CEE as diverse spaces and places, with “post-socialism” as a time period, and with postcolonialism as a conceptual frame (as I have tried to show above), is not, however, a testament to a conflict and competition. Rather, I would argue that it shows the complementary and dialogic nature of manifold power dynamics, enabling ever-changing resignification and destabilizing ideas about “development,” “modernization,” “civilization,” “race/whiteness,” “(dis)identifications,” and so on. This is a realization of what is already apparent: there is no single “Europe” and the colonality of knowledge not only molds the global world-system along the binary of Europe vs. Other, but also recreates dualisms within the continent and its populations. As Emanuela Boatcă wrote:

A hierarchy of multiple Europes with different and unequal roles in shaping the definition of Europe and Europeanness as opposed to the “New World” emerged alongside modernity and

15 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11.

16 Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms.”

17 See Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez, “Post-Colonial Poland: On an Unavoidable Misuse,” *East European Politics & Societies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 708–723.

18 Dace Dzenovska, “Historical Agency and the Colonality of Power in Postsocialist Europe,” *Anthropological Theory* 13, no. 4 (2013): 394–416.

19 Plamen K. Georgiev, *Self-Orientalization in South East Europe*, Crossculture (Cham: Springer, 2012).

coloniality in the 16th century – indeed, it was the premise for both (Boatcă 2010, 2013). What informed the reigning notion of “Europe” – and its corresponding claims to civilization, modernity, and development – was defined one-sidedly from positions of power mainly associated with colonial and imperial rule.²⁰

Boatcă hints at the process of not only othering the other, but also at identifying the self of the West in the Western European *imaginarium Europeum*. Inspired by decolonial thinking, she argues that the differentiation of Europe into two and ascribing “Central-Easterness” to one of them helped to veil the “Westernness” of the second, which has been made unmarked as “just Europe.”

This process is foundational for occidentalism, which – we need to remind ourselves – is not a mirror process of orientalism. It would be naïve to believe that the non-Western Others have the same discursive (symbolic and material) standing as the West, to issue a counter-discourse to orientalism. Occidentalism here, then, is a double of orientalism – Western self-identifications, self-images, and emerging formations, while othering the others.²¹ Occidentalism framing of CEE, not only vis-à-vis the Western self, but also vis-à-vis the orientalised others, helps enable us to appreciate the semi-peripherality of CEE as its defining quality in the Western imaginary. Orientalism inscribed a vocabulum of barbarism and mysticism, enclosed as Muslim traditions in the geographically distant lands, as the defining impediments of the oriental Other of Europe. But such assignments would not hold for the semi-peripheral CEE, due to its geographical proximity to the assumed “center” (effectively the west of Europe) and racialized whitewashing of European populations as predominantly “white” by virtue of Christianity. Occidentalism *imaginarium bestiarum* of CEE therefore contained it as an Incomplete Self of Europe, rather than its other.²²

Outlined above, the messiness of thinking about the material-geographical and symbolic-temporal discourses shows intricate entanglements and the ongoing processes constitutive of contemporary politics, power, and knowledge formations. Below, I want to reflect on my own work and the role of (homo)sexuality in imagining different Europes (plural intended), as well as on the role of the idea of Europe in sexual politics, complemented with a reflection on Central and Eastern European queerfeminist, decolonial epistemics.

²⁰ Manuela Boatcă, “Counter Mapping as Method. Locating and Relating the (Semi-)Peripheral Self,” *Historical Social Research* 41, no. 2 (2021): 248.

²¹ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “A Non-Occidental West?” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, nos. 7–8 (2009), 105.

²² Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 18.

Geo-Temporalities of Europe in Sexual Politics

In conceptualizing orientalism, Edward Said has shown the importance of gendered, sexual imagination, and especially desire, lust, and erotics in shaping the oriental phantasmagoria of sexuality. Likewise, the authors quoted above show in their discussions how gendered and sexual metaphors play a significant role in framing CEE as the Incomplete Self of (Western) Europe. My attention, much inspired by queer studies, drifts towards heteronormative presumptions underpinning both: occidentalist discourses of CEE, as well as the above theories grappling with them – and seeks to cast a more queer and feminist lens on the politics of modern Europe in the post-1989 era (following the fall of state socialisms in CEE) and the post-2004 era (which saw the largest EU enlargement with the accession of CEE countries). While inspired by and in dialogue with the above discussed works, my own writings (individual or collaborative) attempt to show how occidentalist temporalities and geographies are fused with the discourses of “gay rights” (secularism and the expansion of state-sponsored institutionalization of solutions and privileges to homosexual people) to reinvent and reinscribe various othering and distancing narratives, elongating and augmenting the prescribed disparity between the (Western) Europe and Central-Eastern (European) borderlands.²³

The in-betweenness of CEE is not only a descriptive analytics to conceptualize sexual politics in CEE vis-à-vis “The West.” It is a personal sense of dis/location, with the “personal” denoting not only a private life, but also a professional identity as an academic. It was personal experience of migration and settling in a new country and in a new academic system that has shaped and directed my intellectual curiosities. I started the chapter with Mignolo and Dabashi, for they capture so profoundly and in such crisp terms that feeling and sensation I had when I started developing my academic career as a Polish migrant to the UK, as a gay man from “oppressive” Catholic Poland in the supposedly “liberal” secular UK, and finally as a Polish gay migrant working intellectually in British, Anglophone, Western aca-

23 Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska, eds., *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Robert Kulpa, “Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood,” *Gender, Place & Culture* 21, no. 4 (2014): 431–448; Robert Kulpa, “National Menace: Mediating Homo/Sexuality and Sovereignty in the Polish National/Ist Discourses,” *Critical Discourse Studies* 17, no. 3 (2020): 327–343; Roberto Kulpa, “Queer Politics of Post-Enlightenment: Beyond the Horizon of the Present,” in *Hungarian Studies Review* 48, no. 2 (2021): 199–208; Roberto Kulpa, “Dangerous Liaisons: Neoliberal Tropes of the ‘Normal’ and ‘Middle-Class Respectability’ in the Post-Socialist LG(BT) Activism,” in *Mapping LGBTQ Spaces and Places: A Changing World*, ed. Marianne Blidon and Stanley D. Brunn (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 279–291.

demia on gender and sexuality in Poland and Central-Eastern Europe. This personal reflection accentuates experience in the spirit of queerfeminist self-reflexive methodologies to capture the situatedness of epistemic ability and legitimacy, on which Mignolo and Dabashi reflect. When reading them and thinking about the occidentalist framings of the othered intellectual, I felt that my individual experience, while meaningfully reflected in theirs, was still somehow elusive and beyond. The theorizations of CEE as the other Other of (Western) Europe, meaningful to me in capturing the sense of “incomplete European Self,” were still not able to explain how gender and sexuality become not just the auxiliary othering categories, but as I claim, the main dividers reinscribing the well-known tropes of progress to the west of Europe, and backwardness to the east of Europe. I wanted to better understand that place of in-betweenness that is familiar yet odd, that moment of feeling you belong yet are a stranger, being the same yet other, being on time and yet already late and delayed – that so often described not only my personal life history but also captured the socio-political imaginations of CEE when addressing issues of gender and sexuality.

So the idea of Europe and engendered claims of sexual secular politics (mostly articulated through “gay rights” narratives of political and non-governmental actors), in all its geo-temporal denominators of east and west, future and past, south and north, progress and backwardness, have been the focus of my attention, starting with the book *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, co-edited with Joanna Mizieleńska (2011). This made an intervention into queer studies by bringing CEE into focus and exploring how popular and academic discourses of sexual politics and especially LGBT and queer activism did not reflect or help us analyze the realities of CEE. We were especially interested in providing theoretical insights more attuned to our geo-temporal realities. In a way, the project turned to be about how predominantly anglophone historiographic/epistemic models of the LGBT activism were unintentionally re-implementing the occidentalist “rainbow curtain” between the west and the east (in and of Europe). While the existing research about genders and sexualities in CEE at the time was focused on empirical evidencing of its socio-political conditions and experiences, we wanted to go beyond simple descriptive narratives of “What’s it like to be ‘gay’ in CEE?” While such a witness-bearing, fact-telling format has its role and importance, we thought that “data mining” was not enough of an antidote to the void in the understanding of the sexual politics of Central and Eastern Europe. Looking back with the perspective of time, it seems to me that our deployment in the book of such concepts as “temporal disjunction,” “knotted temporality,” and “time of sequence vs. time of coincidence” was an attempt to unlink ourselves from the dominant *modi operandi* of the LGBT historiography and queer studies of the early 2000s. We tried to capture and name the underlying temporal frameworks in

thinking about geography and culture of “Central-Eastern” borders of the Europe when considering sexuality and sexual politics. In “Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe,”²⁴ I have further conceptualized this as a form of a leveraged pedagogy:

This discourse frames CEE as permanently “post-communist,” “in transition” (i. e. not liberal, yet, enough), and, last but not least, homophobic. [...] I suggest CEE is somehow “European enough” to be “taken care of,” but “not yet Western” so as to be allowed into the “First World” club. Yet I argue that this “taking care of” CEE is a hegemonic deployment of the Western European liberal model of rights as the universal one (as in the “universal human rights”). To sustain this model as superior (self-essentialising of West/ Europe as liberal), CEE is rendered as permanently “post-communist” (i. e. catching up on an uneven slope of progressive distance/proximity from the peak of the West/Europe ideal).

By pointing out that the occidentalist appropriations of “progress” are nowadays linked with “gay rights” as litmus tests and geo-temporal b/order-making in and across Europe(s), this mounts a challenge to the normative narratives. Showing the geo-temporal messiness of sexual politics in CEE interrupts the dominant representations and offers fresh perspectives that are not meant to replace one epistemological standpoint with another, but to pluralize prospects for co-existing in a non-hierarchical frame; consequently, unlinking from the coloniality of occidentalist, cognitive modalities of self (west of Europe), of the incomplete self (east of Europe), and the other (non-[Western] Europe).

It seems to me now, from this perspective, that we have tried to capture and name the position of CEE queer scholars as listened to but not heard, as the others located on the borders, in the global system of the coloniality of knowledge present in queer studies. In one article, echoing with Dabashi’s question, Todorova asked: “Can the Post-Soviet Think?” There she pondered what the inter-relation is between global production and circulation of knowledge and CEE’s geo-political locality. Specifically, it is the interplay of social sciences and Slavonic studies (in Western academia) that interests her, as she notices that (against the backdrop of the coloniality of knowledge) such a mashup either excludes “the post-soviet” or subsumes it under the post-colonial, in each case eradicating its subjectivity. In Tlostanova’s words:

The situation can be described as a general invisibility of the post-Soviet space and its social sciences and scientists for the rest of the world and the refusal of the global North to accept the post-Soviet scholar in the capacity of a rational subject. The reasons for this complex in-

24 Kulpa, “Western Leveraged Pedagogy,” 432.

tersection of the post-Soviet, postcolonial and other post-dependence factors are both internal and external, political and epistemic.²⁵

Her words strongly resonate with my lived experiences as the CEE scholar in British anglophone academia, and capture the uncanny standpoint of in/betweenness that many of my CEE colleagues experience and perceive (irrespective of their location, whether in “native” academic contexts, or in “migratory academia” settings), and also resonate with how Mignolo has expressed this tension and unease:

I shall mention once more that my discomfort with modernity and Western civilization (two faces of the same phenomenon) is not with Western modernity’s contribution to global history, but rather with the imperial belief that the rest of the world shall submit to its cosmology, and the naïve or perverse belief that the unfolding of world history has been of one temporality and would, of necessity, lead to a present that corresponds to the Western civilization that Hegel summarized in his celebrated lessons in the philosophy of history. *Both the political and the economic expansion of Western civilization have gone hand in hand with the management of all spheres of knowledge. Or, worded differently, Western civilization’s ability to manage knowledge explains its success in expanding itself politically and economically.*²⁶

This certainly speaks truth to public (including political) discourse inasmuch as defines the whole of academia and higher education more broadly, as well as research funding and the research and innovation sectors. After all, the invention of the whole field(s) of “area studies” or “international development” (for instance, “Oriental Studies,” “Slavonic Studies,” “African Studies,” “Latin American Studies”) exclusively encompasses the non-Western and non-Western European Others as the objects of examination. Some of these disciplines were directly related to imperialism and colonialism (as in the case of “Oriental Studies”). Others, like “Slavonic Studies” were sponsored by the military in the political effort to “know your enemy” (state socialist countries from the “Soviet Bloc”) in the post-World War II world order.²⁷ Likewise, critical studies (including gender and sexuality studies), being one of the contemporary scientific disciplines, are a product of the coloniality of knowledge, expressive of (Western) European occidentalism. This is why work inspired by decolonial theory in disciplines such as geographies,

25 Tlostanova, “Can the Post-Soviet Think?” 38.

26 Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), x (my italics).

27 Noam Chomsky et al., eds., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (New York: New Press, 1997); Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York: New Press, 1998).

temporalities, and sexualities is so urgently needed,²⁸ and my own (and our, where I have shared the joy of intellectual collaborations) wrestling with thinking about sexual politics that would escape the occidentalist and colonial narratives of teleological progress towards Western self-universalized “modernity” represents such attempts. (And I do not think the category of “failure/success” in doing so is a suitable approach for evaluating such work, for scuffles with coloniality of knowledge/power is a process, and not a zero-sum game.)

Furthermore, if breaking with colonial knowledge formations is (among other things) about fortifying the subaltern, marginalized outlook – to break the equivalency chain of subject and object, of the knower and the known, and to offer new figurations of knowledge – then reaffirming CEE epistemic and activist standpoints might do just that, as I suggest in “Queer Politics of Post-Enlightenment”:

Can this slippery slope of being neither here nor there actually be a source of the empowering, disruptive location for contemporary queer (geo)politics? [...] Could the ambivalent geotemporalities of CEE be for once a source of advantage that facilitates a movement beyond the legacies of the Enlightenment and Occidentalism? How can this in-betweenness of CEE, its queer supplementarity and its threshold porosity, geo-temporal (t)here, which is neither now nor then, be used?²⁹

Post-Soviet Epistemics

In weaving the various above-mentioned threads of geo-temporalities and geo-politics together with genders and sexualities and with knowledges and expressions of power, one may notice that much of this thinking is “reactive” in that it reacts and preoccupies itself with the “problem” and “obstacle” that presents itself, a priori, in these configurations of occidentalism, coloniality, CEE, and Europe. It could be described as mistrustful and skeptical, and could well be a manifestation of Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutics of suspicion” or Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s “paranoid reading.”³⁰ But I suggest that the concept of a “sociology of absences” developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos is more suitable and adequate to capture those brewing sentiments:

28 Kulpa and Silva, “Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies,” 13–142.

29 Kulpa, “Queer Politics,” 206.

30 Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 124–127.

The sociology of absences consists of an enquiry that aims to explain that what does not exist is in fact actively produced as non-existent, that is – as a non-credible alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is deemed impossible in the light of conventional social science, and for this reason its formulation already represents a break with it. The objective of the sociology of absences is to transform impossible into possible objects, absent into present objects, invisible or non-credible subjects into visible and credible subjects.³¹

De Sousa Santos’s words resonate very well with my assertion of the central tenets of what CEE academic scholarship (i. e., CEE scholars of gender and queer studies) and CEE *in* academic scholarship (i. e., CEE as the locus of reflection in gender and queer studies) can offer, as we search for ways of moving away from occidentalist epistemics and towards alternative, decolonial *modi operandi*. Notably, it articulates that which is actively produced as neither (Western) “Self” nor (orientalized) “Other;” and as suspended “in-between,” “incompleteness;” perpetual “becoming” without the prospect of, nor the need to be stabilized as an identitarian *idée fixe* of what is or should be, but only as what might be.

There is also a counterpart to the “sociology of absences”: that of a “sociology of emergences,” and it seems to me that this is already en route, with many inspiring initiatives such as networks³² or issuing call for papers.³³ Here, two journals are especially notable, in my opinion, for their publication ethics, epistemological direction, and editorship: *Feminist Critique: East European Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies* / *Критика феміністична: східноєвропейський журнал феміністичних та квіп-студій*,³⁴ a Ukrainian initiative led by Maria Mayerchuk and Olga Plakhotnik; and *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics*,³⁵ based in Budapest. Both have published articles and embrace the mission expressing what might be called a “post-soviet, decolonial, and queer and feminist epistemics.” There is a growing number of inspiring philosophers, writers, researchers, thinkers, and scholars who have gained prominence in the last decade, as they offer exciting new outlooks on queerfeminist, decolonial post-socialist studies, skillfully combining these intellectual traditions, traversing decolonial thinking

31 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond* (London: Zed Books), 15.

32 For example, Postdependence Geographies in Central & Eastern Europe (PostCEE), <https://postcee.com/about/>, accessed March 23, 2023.

33 Call for Papers: Decolonising Central and Eastern Europe, for the Central European Journal of International and Security Studies, <https://cejiss.org/decolonising-cee>, accessed March 23, 2023.

34 <https://feminist.krytyka.com/en>, accessed March 23, 2023.

35 <https://intersections.tk.hu/index.php/intersections/>, accessed March 23, 2023.

and CEE standpoints.³⁶ The shift in thinking presented by these writers and their works is exemplary of that “sociology of emergences,” defined by de Sousa Santos as:

The sociology of emergences is the enquiry into the alternatives that are contained in the horizon of concrete possibilities. It consists in undertaking a symbolic enlargement of knowledges, practices and agents in order to identify therein the tendencies of the future (the Not Yet) in which it is possible to intervene so as to maximize the probability of hope vis-à-vis the probability of frustration. Such symbolic enlargement is actually a form of sociological imagination with a double aim: on the one hand, to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope; on the other, to define principles of action that favour the fulfilment of those conditions.³⁷

For instance, the exciting possibilities of thinking otherwise and cracking the epistemic paradigm in order to move beyond hegemonic occidentalism are further exemplified in the works of Alyosxa Tudor³⁸ and Marina Yusupova.³⁹ Drawing to

36 See, for example, Catherine Baker, “Postcoloniality Without Race? Racial Exceptionalism and Southeast European Cultural Studies,” *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 759–784; Marina Blagojević, *Knowledge Production at the Semiperiphery. A Gender Perspective* (Belgrade, Serbia: Institut za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja, 2009); Agnes Gagyi, “‘Coloniality of Power’ in East Central Europe: External Penetration as Internal Force in Post-Socialist Hungarian Politics,” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22, no. 2 (2016): 349–372; Maria Mayerchik and Olga Plakhotnik, “Ukrainian Feminisms and the Issue of Coloniality,” presented at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, December 11, 2020; Müller, “In Search of the Global East”; Koobak et al., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*; Kulpa, “Queer Politics”; Iveta Silova, Zsuzsa Millei, and Nelli Piattoeva, “Interrupting the Coloniality of Knowledge Production in Comparative Education: Postsocialist and Postcolonial Dialogues after the Cold War,” *Comparative Education Review* 61, S1 (2017): 74–102; Tlostanova and Mignolo, *Learning to Unlearn*; Madina Tlostanova, “The Janus-Faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race and Religion in the Russian/(Post)Soviet Constructions of the ‘Orient’,” *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2, no. 2 (2008): 11; Madina Tlostanova, *What Does It Mean to Be Post-Soviet?: Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Alyosxa Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies?: Teaching Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Times of the Rise of the Global Right,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2021): 238–256; Marina Yusupova, “Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge: Rethinking Russian Masculinities in Light of Postcolonial and Decolonial Critiques,” *Sociology* 57, no. 3 (2023): 682–699.

37 Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left*, 31.

38 Tudor, “Dimensions of Transnationalism,” *Feminist Review* 117, no. 1 (2017): 20–40; Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies.”

39 Marina Yusupova, “The Invisibility of Race in Sociological Research on Contemporary Russia: A Decolonial Intervention,” *Slavic Review* 80, no. 2 (2021): 224–233; Yusupova, “Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge.”

varying degrees on the work of Maria Lugones,⁴⁰ both have invested in re/conceptualizing gender, sex, and race (ethnicity) in the post–state socialist contexts of Russia and CEE broadly. Lugones extended Aníbal Quijano’s formulation of the coloniality of power to include gender (“coloniality of gender”) as the inherently divisive concept that obscured, annihilated, and re/formed non-European societies and sexual cultures to align with occidentalist binaries.⁴¹ Lugones also showed how conceptualizing “gender” is inseparable from conceptions of “race” and how both processes facilitated (Western) European imperialist colonialization of populations and lands outside of Europe. Yusupova’s focus on masculinities in Russia and (Western) Europe show intersectionally how cisgender and heteronormative masculinities are inherent in and inseparable from the idea(l)s of “Europe” and occidentalist narratives of the world order and race permeating cultural and political practices across the continents.⁴² Tudor, on the other hand, focuses on trans- sex and gender categories more broadly as fields of knowledge production (trans and gender studies).⁴³ Playing with “transing” as a performativity-driven conceptualization to underplay inadequacy of static understandings, Tudor “intervenes in forms of minority nationalism that reproduce racism, sexism, heteronormativity and gender binary as the norm of Western national belonging.”⁴⁴ Both thinkers draw creatively on decolonial premises to think with CEE and offer new approaches across gender and queer studies and race/racism studies. Similarly, the work of Redi Koobak and Raili Marling,⁴⁵ and all the authors gathered in the impressive volume *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice*,⁴⁶ should be named as examples of the emerging CEE decolonial queerfeminist work. Here, a gesture to the work of Bogdan Popa⁴⁷ is also very important in showcasing the “so-

40 Maria Lugones, “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System,” *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186–219; Maria Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism,” *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742–759.

41 Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.”

42 Yusupova, “The Invisibility of Race”; Yusupova, “Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge.”

43 Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies.”

44 Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies,” 20.

45 Redi Koobak and Raili Marling, “The Decolonial Challenge: Framing Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe Within Transnational Feminist Studies,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 330–343.

46 Koobak et al., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*.

47 Bogdan Popa, “Trans* and Legacies of Socialism: Reading Queer Postsocialism in Tangerine,” *The Undecidable Unconscious: A Journal of Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis* 5, no. 1 (2018): 27–53; Bogdan Popa, *De-Centering Queer Theory: Communist Sexuality in the Flow During and After the Cold War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

ciologies of emergence” across post-soviet decolonial knowledge-making. As he observes, “[t]ransgender/queer theory and postsocialist theory have not been often theorized together, but here I want to think about their alliance to suggest their potential for future anticapitalist politics. [...] [My] aim is to show that trans* politics and a legacy of socialism emerge together as a common danger to racialized US capitalism.”⁴⁸

The writers mentioned here delegitimize the contemporary occidental knowledge-making moment in their engagement with post- and de- gender-colonial-queer-socialist-trans-race theorizations that refuse to treat legacies of “post-socialism” and “the Cold War” as the problem only of CEE. Instead, they argue for novel ways of thinking about race, racialization, and racism in the Western and Central-Western Europe(s) that are inseparable from gender/sex/sexuality, evidencing decolonial analysis as they wrestle with the task of re/theorizing Western European and North American cultures and politics as having equally experienced “post-socialist transformations” and “Cold War” consequences, just like any other state-socialist or neoliberal, capitalist part of the world (for there is no contemporary neoliberalism free of the specter of Marxian communism, the history of state socialism, racial capitalism,⁴⁹ and colonialism).

Conclusions

This chapter has engaged with ideas that are so tightly knit together that oftentimes the very process of writing, and by necessity, of straightening things up (ahem!) becomes antithetical to the very nature of the object of reflection, the process of thinking, and the stampede of thoughts rushing through the writer’s mind. These uncanny temporalities of writing, a meta-layer of temporalities in a chapter about geo-temporalities, are another example of the complex messiness of time and temporality and how they infuse thinking about CEE, epistemics, and queerness.

In my writings I grapple with “Central-Easternness” and “Westernness” of Europe as geo-temporal markers of time and place that disturb but also recompose the relations of what we know, how we know, and why we know (especially in connection to gender and sexuality). These attempts (always partial, usually unsatisfactory, intentionally uncomplete) of thinking of a queerfeminist account of CEE

⁴⁸ Popa, “Trans* and Legacies,” 27.

⁴⁹ Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

as an “Incomplete Self of Europe,” offer a promising potential contribution to the wider project of epistemic decoloniality.

I maintain that one catalyst for this emerging synergy could be the revalidation of the “inbetweenness” of CEE and queer politics in the region, which has been so far seen as a hindrance to be dealt with (whether in scholarship, in activism, or in politics). Instead, I argue that re-engaging the unruly geo-temporality that is framed as willfully spilling over the boundaries of (neo)liberal democracies, and frustrating occidentalist self-fulfillment, may become a characteristic of decolonial hope.

If we sideline the occidentalist systems that produce neatly delineated hierarchizations and categorizations of ideas and practices as the desired outcomes or as main references, then we accept the opportunity to thrive in between the incompleteness of the occidentalist frames that ground and systematize the coloniality of knowledge and power. Engaging the gerund tense in referring to the so-called “post-communist transformations” of CEE as perpetually transitioning/transiting/transing (in itself a form of “leveraged pedagogy” of CEE⁵⁰) emboldens the reconstituting of the premise of CEE and its always-in-the-making temporality – no longer as a hindrance, but as a source of an empowering step away and step towards.

Critical regionalism in/of CEE matters to the project of epistemic decoloniality (especially in queerfeminist thought) because it can refocus attention away from “the West as a point of reference” towards “the West as a point of meeting”⁵¹ and perhaps “the West as a point of passing/exchange.” It is where queerfeminist thought creation and knowledge-making (in activism or academia, or elsewhere) turn towards each other, margin to margin, rather than being preoccupied with the occidentalist center alone, addicted to the center–margin dichotomy that serves occidentalist coloniality.

References

- Amano, Tatsuya, Valeria Ramírez-Castañeda, Violeta Berdejo-Espinola, Israel Borokini, Shawan Chowdhury, Marina Golivets, Juan David González-Trujillo, et al. “The Manifold Costs of Being a Non-Native English Speaker in Science.” *PLOS Biology* 21, no. 7 (2023): e3002184. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3002184>.
- Annus, Epp, ed. *Coloniality, Nationality, Modernity: A Postcolonial View on Baltic Cultures under Soviet Rule*. New York: Routledge, 2019.

⁵⁰ Kulpa, “Western Leveraged Pedagogy.”

⁵¹ Credit for this inspiring idea goes to Olga Sasunkevich (University of Gothenburg), who made this observation in our informal conversation.

- Ascione, Gennaro. *Science and the Decolonization of Social Theory. Unthinking Modernity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Baker, Catherine. "Postcoloniality Without Race? Racial Exceptionalism and Southeast European Cultural Studies." *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 759–784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2018.1492954>.
- Bakić-Hayden, Milica. "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia." *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–931.
- Bański, Jerzy, and Mariola Ferenc. "'International' or 'Anglo-American' Journals of Geography?" *Geoforum* 45 (March 2013): 285–295. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.016>.
- Bhambra, Gurminder K. "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues." *Postcolonial Studies* 17, no. 2 (2014): 115–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2014.966414>.
- Blagojević, Marina. *Knowledge Production at the Semiperiphery. A Gender Perspective*. Belgrade, Serbia: Institut za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja, 2009. https://www.academia.edu/20029506/Knowledge_Production_at_the_Semiperiphery_A_Gender_Perspective?email_work_card=title [November 19th, 2024].
- Boatcă, Manuela. "Counter Mapping as Method. Locating and Relating the (Semi-)Peripheral Self." *Historical Social Research* 41, no. 2 (2021): 244–263.
- Brennan, Timothy. "The Cuts of Language: The East/West of North/South." *Public Culture* 13, no. 1 (2001): 39–63.
- Bustanov, Alfrid. *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Chomsky, Noam, Richard C. Lewontin, Laura Nader, Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, Richard Malin Ohmann, and Howard Zinn, eds. *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*. New York: New Press, 1997.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. "Theory From the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa." *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 113–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2012.694169>.
- Connell, Raewyn. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
- Dabashi, Hamid. "Can Non-Europeans Think?" *Al Jazeera*. January 15, 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/01/2013114142638797542.html>.
- Dabashi, Hamid. *Can Non-Europeans Think?* London: Zed Books, 2015.
- Delanty, Gerard. *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995.
- Dzenovska, Dace. "Historical Agency and the Coloniality of Power in Postsocialist Europe." *Anthropological Theory* 13, no. 4 (2013): 394–416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499613502185>.
- Gagyí, Agnes. "'Coloniality of Power' in East Central Europe: External Penetration as Internal Force in Post-Socialist Hungarian Politics." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22, no. 2 (2016): 349–372. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2016.626>.
- Georgiev, Plamen K. *Self-Orientalization in South East Europe*. Crossculture. Cham: Springer, 2012.
- Gossman, Lionel. "The Idea of Europe." *Common Knowledge* 16, no. 2 (2010): 198–222. <https://doi.org/10.1215/0961754X-2009-087>.
- Kelertas, Violeta, ed. *Baltic Postcolonialism*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006.
- Kołodziejczyk, Dorota, and Cristina Șandru. "Introduction: On Colonialism, Communism and East-Central Europe – Some Reflections." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2 (2012): 113–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2012.658242>.

- Koobak, Redi, and Raili Marling. “The Decolonial Challenge: Framing Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe Within Transnational Feminist Studies.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 330–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506814542882>.
- Koobak, Redi, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, eds. *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice*. London: Routledge, 2021.
- Korek, Janusz, ed. *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality: Poland and Ukraine from a Postcolonial Perspective*. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2007.
- Kulpa, Robert. “Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood.” *Gender, Place & Culture* 21, no. 4 (2014): 431–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.793656>.
- Kulpa, Robert. “National Menace: Mediating Homo/Sexuality and Sovereignty in the Polish National/Ist Discourses.” *Critical Discourse Studies* 17, no. 3 (2020): 327–343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2019.1584578>.
- Kulpa, Robert, and Joanna Mizielińska, eds. *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.
- Kulpa, Roberto. “Queer Politics of Post-Enlightenment: Beyond the Horizon of the Present.” *Hungarian Studies Review* 48, no. 2 (2021): 199–208. <https://doi.org/10.5325/hungarianstud.48.2.0199>.
- Kulpa, Roberto. “Dangerous Liaisons: Neoliberal Tropes of the ‘Normal’ and ‘Middle-Class Respectability’ in the Post-Socialist LG(BT) Activism.” In *Mapping LGBTQ Spaces and Places: A Changing World*, edited by Marianne Blidon and Stanley D. Brunn, 279–291. Cham: Springer International, 2022.
- Kulpa, Robert, and Joseli Maria Silva. “Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies: Section Introduction.” In *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by Gavin Brown and Kath Browne, 13–142. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Lugones, Maria. “Heterosexuality and the Colonial/Modern Gender System.” *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186–219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2007.tb01156.x>
- Lugones, Maria. “Toward a Decolonial Feminism.” *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742–759. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x>.
- Mayerchuk, Maria and Olga Plakhotnik. “Ukrainian Feminisms and the Issue of Coloniality.” Presented at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, December 11, 2020. https://www.academia.edu/video/IBgMrk?email_video_card=title&pls=RVP [November 19th, 2024].
- Melegh, Attila. *On the East-West Slope: Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2006.
- Mignolo, Walter D. “I Am Where I Think: Epistemology and the Colonial Difference.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 235–245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569329909361962>.
- Mignolo, Walter D. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Miklóssy, Katalin, and Pekka Korhonen, eds. *The East and the Idea of Europe*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.
- Moore, David Chioni. “East Is South: Central Europe in Global Perspective.” *Macalester International* 2, no. 1 (1995): <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macintl/vol2/iss1/23/>.
- Müller, Martin. “In Search of the Global East: Thinking Between North and South.” *Geopolitics* 25, no. 3 (2020): 734–755. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477757>.

- Pagden, Anthony, ed. *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Popa, Bogdan. "Trans* and Legacies of Socialism: Reading Queer Postsocialism in Tangerine." *The Undecidable Unconscious: A Journal of Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis* 5, no. 1 (2018): 27–53. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ujd.2018.0002>.
- Popa, Bogdan. *De-Centering Queer Theory: Communist Sexuality in the Flow During and After the Cold War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021.
- Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–580.
- Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 168–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601164353>.
- Readings, Bill. *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Rekhviashvili, Lela, Kasia Narkowicz, Nikolay Karkov, Zhivka Valiavicharska, and Ovidiu Tichindeanu. "Special Issue 'Conjunctural Geographies of Post-Socialist and Postcolonial Conditions': Introduction." *Connections: A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists* (2022): <http://www.connections.clio-online.net/article/id/fda-133272> [November 19th, 2024].
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond*. London: Zed Books, 2006.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. "A Non-Occidental West?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, nos. 7–8 (2009): 103–125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409348079>.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa, and Maria Paula Meneses, eds. *Knowledges Born in the Struggle: Constructing the Epistemologies of the Global South*. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Silova, Iveta, Zsuzsa Millei, and Nelli Piattoeva. "Interrupting the Coloniality of Knowledge Production in Comparative Education: Postsocialist and Postcolonial Dialogues after the Cold War." *Comparative Education Review* 61, S1 (2017): 74–102. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690458>.
- Simpson, Christopher, ed. *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War*. New York: New Press, 1998.
- Snochowska-Gonzalez, Claudia. "Post-Colonial Poland: On an Unavoidable Misuse." *East European Politics & Societies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 708–723. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325412448473>.
- Spiering, Menno, and Michael Wintle, eds. *Ideas of Europe Since 1914*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Tlostanova, Madina. "The Janus-Faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race and Religion in the Russian/(Post)Soviet Constructions of the 'Orient'." *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2, no. 2 (2008): 1–11.
- Tlostanova, Madina. "Can the Post-Soviet Think? On Coloniality of Knowledge, External Imperial and Double Colonial Difference." *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 1, no. 2 (2012): 38–58. <https://doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v1i2.38>.
- Tlostanova, Madina. *What Does It Mean to Be Post-Soviet?: Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire. What Does It Mean to Be Post-Soviet?* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.

- Tlostanova, Madina, and Walter Mignolo. *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012.
- Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Tudor, Alyosxa. “Dimensions of Transnationalism.” *Feminist Review* 117, no. 1 (2017): 20–40. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0092-5>.
- Tudor, Alyosxa. “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies?: Teaching Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Times of the Rise of the Global Right.” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2021): 238–256. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-8890523>.
- Vilenica, Ana, ed. *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe: A Lexicon of Reorientation*. Novi Sad: Kuda, 2023.
- Wilson, Kevin, and Jan van der Dussen, eds. *The History of the Idea of Europe*. Rev. ed. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- Yusupova, Marina. “The Invisibility of Race in Sociological Research on Contemporary Russia: A Decolonial Intervention.” *Slavic Review* 80, no. 2 (2021): 224–233. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.77>.
- Yusupova, Marina. “Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge: Rethinking Russian Masculinities in Light of Postcolonial and Decolonial Critiques.” *Sociology* 57, no. 3 (2023): 682–699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380385221110724>.

