Resurgence as a Method to Overcome the Abyssal Line: Challenging Notions of Epistemology and Ontology

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how Indigenous practices of resurgence challenge Western assumptions of a hierarchical ontological and epistemological divide. Colonization constructed a Euro-centric, dichotomous conception of knowledge that marginalized (appropriated and erased) Indigenous communities and their approaches to knowledge production. This article first reviews a secondary literature concerning how Western thinkers such as Kant, Descartes, and Newton posited a limited understanding of epistemology and ontology. I then highlight alternative understandings generated by Indigenous practices of resurgence and propose that resurgence articulates ontology and epistemology as entangled while centering a community-oriented and politically poignant framework of knowledge creation. In so doing, I place the value framework of Indigenous resurgent practices into conversation with quantum social science theories of entanglement to argue that a resurgent approach challenges the Western-centric ontological and epistemological divide, generating alternative ways of knowing and being. I suggest that resurgence is one way for quantum theorists to engage more deeply with Indigenous theorists and contribute toward a decolonial, ethically oriented epistemology and ontology framework.

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AN ABYSSAL LINE

European colonization is often characterized by its outright brutality and genocidal tendencies and while such cruelty requires our attention, violence is not the only marker of colonization. Along with the domination of colonialism "a European/ capitalist/ military/ Christian/ patriarchal/ white/ heterosexual/ male arrived in the Americas and established simultaneously in time and space several entangled global hierarchies," including a hierarchical ordering of knowing and being (Grosfoguel 2011: 9). This hierarchical dichotomy between knowing and being was developed through colonization and became ingrained in Western notions of epistemology and ontology.

This article builds on a growing quantum social science literature, particularly Laura Zanotti's (2020) work, that challenges dichotomous understandings of epistemology and ontology in Western-centric political thought. It also demonstrates, through the scholarship of Indigenous authors including Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk), Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee), and Leanne Simpson (Mississauga Nishnaabeg), how practices of Indigenous resurgence offer a politically oriented framework that reorients quantum social science research. In Zanotti's words, "the prevalent ontological imaginary within Western political thought broadly relies upon three theoretical foundations: the Kantian dichotomy of reason and nature, the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, and the ontological assumptions of Newtonian physics" (449). By employing her descriptions of these works I aim to show how each has typically been taken up in western political thought.

The dichotomies highlighted above establish what Martin Savransky (2017), in his extension of Boaventura de Sousa Santos's (2007) concept, referred to as the "abyssal line, just as modern, just as western, which is the very distinction between epistemology and ontology, knowledge and reality" (15). A separation that is at times reproduced without interrogation, creating a seeming unsurmountable abyssal line between epistemology and ontology. This division furthers the notion of epistemology and ontology as opposed to one another instead of emphasizing the interdependent relationship between the two. Further, such a division limits the way we understand reality by situating knowledge as separable from the context for which it is created and within which it appears. However, this abyssal line is challenged in some decolonial scholarship and praxis. As Grosfoguel (2011) has argued, European colonization brought a specific set of worldviews to bear upon Indigenous worlds, but alternative views existed and continue to exist. Indigenous peoples have been revitalizing these views through resurgent practices (Alfred 2005; Corntassel 2012; Simpson 2017).

I begin with a brief review of a selection of quantum social science and decolonial scholarship that analyzes how dichotomous readings of Kant and Descartes and individualist readings of Newton have perpetuated an abyssal line. That said, several criticisms have been levelled against the turn to quantum in the social sciences. For some analysts, this turn further positions scientific rationalism as a necessary guide for social research, while others have pointed to scaling problems due to the microscopic focus of quantum theory (Jaksland 2023). Nonetheless, in its growing popularity, quantum social science has brought attention to and critiqued the tenacious Western ontological and epistemological divide. This critique opens a space to pluralize the social sciences, including through an engagement with Indigenous resurgence and its understandings of knowledge production (Peat 2002). This, I argue, can be generative for quantum social theory because it offers a space from which to envision alternative ways of knowing and being that are politically and intellectually committed to decolonization. Decolonization in resurgence literatures manifests as everyday actions of resistance to colonial power structures; including, but not limited to, land-back actions, practicing of traditional languages and ceremonies, and/or rebuilding traditional relationships to self, community, and land (Corntassel 2012; Simpson 2017). Decolonizing resurgent practices break from colonial practices and systems and valorize politically committed Indigenous practices.

After analyzing these dichotomous readings of epistemology and ontology, I turn to the Indigenous scholarship on resurgence. That research generates alternative understandings of epistemology and ontology built upon Indigenous value systems. Thereafter, I place resurgence and quantum theories into conversation to develop a resurgent framework that extends quantum

theorizing beyond a critique of the abyssal line and toward a prefiguration of decolonial relations to community and land. I conclude by reflecting on how resurgence pushes the boundaries of epistemology and ontology in Western political thought to provide space for envisioning alternative ways of life and knowing.

SITUATING ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Karen Barad's (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway* provides a brief introduction to Western, mainstream notions of epistemology, "the nature of knowledge," and ontology, "the nature of being" (18). Barad has written that "the ontology of the world is a matter of discovery for the traditional realist" (2007: 41). That is, ontology is something out there, a naturally occurring state of being for the universe that can be studied as separated from the self. Conversely, epistemology comes from within the self, it is created by the mind. Barad describes epistemology as a "representationalist triadic structure of words, knowers, and thing" (2007: 138). In her assessment, epistemology typically comprises a conceptual framework, ideas, that is deemed to be neither shaped by nor to influence a separately identifiable reality.

For Zanotti (2020), the foundational theoretical dichotomies described above assert a similar distance between the creation of knowledge and its creator. For her, the "Kantian dichotomy of reason and nature," for example, can be summarized as the belief that human thought is caught between the natural, a space of tactical and embodied practice, and reason, a theoretical and abstract way of knowing (Zanotti 2020: 449). In Kant's work, she has contended, questions of ethics, intelligence, and knowledge, are tied to the world of reason, and the natural world is an enemy of that reason. This conception results in a sense of hierarchy within Kant's work, who viewed reason as superior to nature since reason "frees human beings from such constraints and brings them closer to God" (Zanotti 2020: 450). Furthermore, for Kant, this separation of reason and nature manifested a gendered character; he associated reason with masculinity and a sense of power or control over the self and over nature through reason, whereas nature in his view was feminine, less valuable, and a phenomenon to conquer (Grosfoguel 2011).

In a similar fashion, one must contend with "the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter" (Zanotti 2020: 449). The Cartesian separation of knowing and being posits that the body cannot know and is therefore subservient to the mind (Grosfoguel 2011). Such a conception of the body, of being, removes from it the ability to process and create knowledge with the mind—it transforms the body instead into simply a physical object. The relationship between reason and the mind becomes further entangled through heteropatriarchal structures. The mind, like reason, becomes endowed with such conceptions of masculinity and power while nature and the female body are subjugated, and deemed to be objects and irrational (Grosfoguel 2011).

Lastly, there is the question of "the ontological assumptions of Newtonian physics" (Zanotti 2020: 449). There are two distinct points to be made about Newtonian physics in connection with epistemologies and ontologies. First, this conception views the universe as comprised of individual bodies that interact in distinct moments and, second, that assumption yields a belief in predictable cause and effect relationships (Barad 2007). This universe lends itself to individualistic conceptions of self, other, and knowledge positioning each as distinct objects that can be parsed apart.

As both Barad (2007) and Zanotti (2020) have highlighted, the Kantian and Cartesian frameworks posited that knowledge is generated from individual reasoning concerning a so-called universal experience and, because that knowledge is assumed to be universal, it must also be irrelevant to consider people, place, and culture. Paired with this hyper-individualistic reading of Newton, ontology similarly ends up devoid of context. Instead, there is an assumption of an external natural world that can be studied and quantified without considering the observer's position. As Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018) as well as Enrique Dussel (2012) have argued, such a dichotomy of knowing and being was produced through the colonial encounter, but its origins have often been obfuscated to fit into a Eurocentric narrative of the scientific revolution that implies that only a select few can construct knowledge and that only certain types of understanding may count as scientific.

Colonial and imperial difference were/are not *epistemicide* as the metaphor circulates today, for if they were, we would not have the potent and energetic resurgence of Indigenous thinking and doing through the Americas; and we would not have the legacies of Afro-Caribbean philosophy and politics that we have today. 'You cannot kill ideas' is a dictum whose source is not well known. You can kill people—genocide—but you cannot kill ideas. The analogy is misleading for you could sideline and repress praxis of living, doing, and thinking but you cannot kill them. That is why resurgences and re-existences are flourishing today; there cannot be resurgence from death. (Mignolo & Walsh 2018: 191)

Essentially, Indigenous groups resisted, maintained, and adapted their knowledge systems, communities, and cultures to survive the brutality of European colonization. One such form of resistance is resurgence.

PRACTICES OF RESURGENCE

The term resurgence has been utilized in many movements and in a vast array of scholarship (Alfred 2005; Corntassel 2012; Dussel 2012; Mignolo & Walsh 2018; Peat 2002; Red Nation; Simpson 2017). When writing about resurgence, Indigenous scholars build upon their own, diverse cosmovisions, cultural understandings, and identities. Nevertheless, there are significant similarities, especially shared values, that contextualize the purpose and process of Indigenous resurgent knowledge production in a manner distinct from mainstream Western political thought (Saunders & Hill, 2007; Marchant 2002). For Leanne Simpson:

Resurgence [i]s a lens, critical analysis, a set of theoretical understandings, and an organizing and mobilizing platform [that] has the potential to wonderfully transform Indigenous life on Turtle Island. Nishnaabeg intelligence propels me toward this fundamental transformation because I know that the current man-made global structures of the world are killing the planet and exploiting everything and everyone that is meaningful to me within my own nation. Resurgence is hope for me because of its simultaneous dismantling of settler colonial meta-manifestations and its reinvigoration of Indigenous systemic alternatives—alternatives that have already produced sustainable, beautiful, principled societies. Yet we need more visioning, thinking, acting, and mobilization around these Indigenous systemic alternatives because creating the alternative is the mechanism through which freedom can be achieved. Engagement with Indigenous systems changes Indigenous peoples. It is a highly emergent and generative process. This requires less engagement with the state and more presence within Indigenous realities. This requires struggle and commitment. (2017: 49)

As Simpson has described it, resurgence may take many forms and manifest a complex and nuanced significance in decolonization processes, at the personal and political levels. For Simpson, decolonization includes land-back actions, political and cultural recommitments to Indigenous practices, rights of self-determination, and embodied practices that challenge colonial, capitalist structures while developing alternative visions for self, community, and planet. Resurgent practices express alternative understandings of epistemology and ontology that do not simply critique the abyssal line, but also hinge on their interconnection. Simpson (2017) has described resurgence epistemologically as "a set of theoretical understandings" and ontologically as something that "requires struggle and commitment" (49). That is, her definition of resurgence demands an epistemology that is inseparable from people, place, and culture. Resurgent epistemology is specific because it arises through experience as part of the world, and it is political because it comprises a "mechanism through which freedom can be achieved" (Simpson: 9). Therefore, resurgence is premised upon an ontology that is not only about an external state of nature, but also of a nature in which the theorizer is actively engaged. The ontological is not merely a physical practice, but also contains a theoretical component that questions how people live, how knowledge is generated, and what purposes knowledge serves.

Resurgence encompasses an array of everyday practices that revitalize Indigenous ways of being that are specific to distinct Indigenous nations and that contribute toward a liberatory project (Alfred 2005). These include growing traditional foods or speaking traditional languages (Corntassel 2012) and, centering land-based pedagogy or participating in land-back actions (Simpson 2017), for example. For scholars examining these practices, epistemological questions are embodied through their praxis and "premised on kinship, free of borders and notions of ownership" (Red Nation: 7). That is, epistemology is no longer separate from ontology; both are developed through embodied practice. Growing traditional foods, for instance, regenerates Indigenous communities' relations to land and food systems, which prefigures, at the local level, broader goals of decolonization, such as land rematriation and community revival:

> I recently requested seeds from the Cherokee Nation Heirloom Seed Project, including rare types of corn and centuries-old strains of tobacco, in order to revitalize ceremonies and traditional foods, while also producing more seeds for future Cherokees. This is [a] small-scale, initial effort that might work toward regenerating the old trade networks between Indigenous communities as well as building healthy relationships by increasing food security and family well-being. (Corntassel 2012: 98)

Resurgence is thus understood gradually to grow through generative time with family and friends. By intentionally creating a small break in individual and everyday relationships with food, resurgence creates space for larger projects, such as sustainable food systems, calling on all to rethink their relationships to food, to self, to community, and to land. Critically, the intervention is not simply about growing food sustainability. It also enacts a political commitment to decolonization (Corntassel 2012). Centering the political stakes of knowledge and knowledge production rejects the idea that these can be separated from individuals, communities, and land.

Simpson's description of land-back movements as resurgent practice invokes the same political commitment to decolonization:

> I am also thinking of the resurgent organizing and daily embodiments of Indigenous practices taking place on the land around occupations such as the Unis'tot'en Camp and the ongoing blockade at Grassy Narrows. I am interested in thinking about how to build upon these place-based resurgent mobilizations to build a network of resurgent struggle. Everyday acts of resurgence tie us to original creative processes that create networks across time and space and generate doorways for new theoretical understandings to emerge. (2017: 195)

As she says, resurgent actions prefigure relationships with/to land based upon collective Indigenous practices and the restoration of their communities to their land (Simpson 2017: 195).

These relationships to land challenge both the exteriority and feminization of land (Grosfoguel 2011; Red Nation; Simpson 2017). Resurgence "refuses dispossession of both Indigenous bodies and land as the focal point of resurgent thinking and action. It continues the work of dismantling heteropatriarchy as a dispossessive force" (Simpson 2017: 34). Land, categorized as nature and/or matter in a Kantian and Cartesian divide respectively, and women, categorized as unreasonable and/or irrational, are both objects within heteropatriarchal structures of knowledge. They are inherently less capable, if at all, of producing knowledge or meaning, but these situated land-back actions generate new understandings of land and body. By focusing on the intra-action of epistemology and ontology, land-back practices turn away from gendered and dichotomous assumptions of land and embodiment and refuse heteropatriarchal divisions between knowledge and being, enabling a challenge to Western divisions of masculine and feminine (Simpson 2017). Simpson (2017) has contended that resurgent practices rearticulate understandings of land, body, self, and community relations in ways profoundly linked to the values of relationality, responsibility, and reflexivity.

We find this commitment to refiguring the role of knowledge and prefiguring decolonization across many examples of resurgence, which together constitute a shared value system. Cash Ahenakew (Ahtahkakoop Cree), Vanessa Andreotti, Garrick Cooper (Ngāti Whanaunga/ Hauraki and Ngāti Ranginui/ Tauranga Moana), and Hemi Hireme (Ko Ngāti Hokopū, Ko Hāmua, and Ko Ngāti Mōtai) have defined this ethical framework:

We tried to articulate the principles of such an ethics, fully aware that the very articulation of it goes against its practice. This is an ethics that emerges from being, rather than knowledge, thus ethical principles are lived, not talked about. These principles are not based on the Cartesian premise that thinking can engineer predictable behaviour, which requires the repeated declaration of belief in moral principles and engenders a normative morality. In contrast, kuia/kokum ethics is based on an ontology that decenters the (anthropocentric and Cartesian) self, engendering a practice of attention and observance in terms of nurturing balance and allowing the world to teach. In some North American traditions, this is framed as principles of non-judgement, non-interference, and acknowledgement of everyone's wisdom and right to learn with/from every relation and experience in life. (2014: 225)

In this description, mind and body are entangled; they inform one another in a context inseparable from reality and nature. Furthermore, relationships are central to the generation of knowledge, which is itself guided by relationality, responsibility, and reflexivity. Simpson's description of a resurgent value system likewise emphasizes land, relational processes of learning, and an active political commitment showing "theory isn't just an intellectual pursuit." Instead, it arises from relationships, community, praxis, spirituality, the body, and the mind (Simpson 2017: 151). She positions land as central and essential, as "both context and process," to the creation of knowledge (Simpson 2017: 151). Her description of knowledge creation directly challenges the Kantian dichotomy of reason and nature and emphasizes how resurgence may generate a new space from which to interrogate colonial assumptions and from which to develop alternatives to the dualism of that conception.

These spaces of resistance are informed by and built with a commitment to community, land, kinship, and liberation (Red Nation). These practices reflect a revitalization of Indigenous ways of being and knowing and "a disruptive and a deliberate act of turning away from the colonial state" (Simpson 2017: 198). The act of refusal in resurgence, a refusal to accept a colonial state or understanding of epistemology and ontology, is generative. Simpson (2017) has described resurgence's refusal and creation as "reciprocal, continual, and a way of generating society" (Simpson 2017: 185). Traditional western epistemology presupposes knowledge is generated by the individual and expanded to a universal concept, but a resurgent epistemology is inextricably tied to people, place, and culture and those elements become part of the knowledge generated, not incidental to it. If knowledge is generated relationally and contextually, it cannot fit into the isolated and hierarchical structure of the foundational dichotomies of western political thought. Simply put, resurgence reconfigures the epistemological and ontological divide into an inseparable onto-epistemological understanding that prioritizes an ethics "of how to live" in the production of knowledge (Harawira 2005: 155).

ENTANGLED RESURGENT ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGIES

A resurgent onto-epistemology challenges the dichotomies presented by Descartes, Kant, and Newton, but should not be mistaken as a response to those thinkers. In borrowing the term onto-epistemology from quantum social theorists, I aim to capture the entangled and complex understanding of relationality in lifeways now starting to be recognized by quantum theorists and demonstrate how an engagement with resurgence can extend their framework (Barad 2007; Bowman 2019; and Zanotti 2020). Norah Bowman (2019) has described the importance of an onto-epistemological schema through her analysis of how the Newtonian, individualistic colonial worldview is reproduced through settler-colonial, socio-cultural, and legal structures:

My intervention is to suggest that, first, we describe and recognize the lineage of Newtonian determinism on the settler-colonial worldview, and second, that we consider how altering that worldview, especially in consideration of the very non-Newtonian worldview presented by Indigenous peoples, will produce a more intellectually inclusive and materially responsible state onto-epistemology. (Bowman 2019: 173)

That is, a resurgent onto-epistemology creates space for an alternative worldview, shaping both material and metaphysical realities. Resurgence carries a commitment to community, embodiment, and relationality across an entangled understanding of epistemology and ontology, positioning epistemology and ontology as one intra-action rather than separate functions. Put succinctly, a resurgent onto-epistemology imagines and works toward enacting a liberatory project that carries onto-epistemologies, as entangled, in its core.

For a resurgent onto-epistemology, neither epistemology nor ontology can be prioritized, as they generate one another. This is a central distinction of a resurgent understanding, as a space wherein "the very distinction between epistemology and ontology becomes *obsolete*" (Savransky 2017: 22). This obsolete-ness is a fundamental intervention. In this sense, resurgent onto-epistemology is not about questioning current possibilities or nuancing them, but about creating entirely new political possibilities from an alternative apparatus premised on relationality. Barad's (2007) definition of apparatus is essential to understanding the relationship between resurgence and quantum social science theory. She describes the apparatus as, "material-discursive practices that are inextricable from the bodies that are produced and through which power works its productive effects" (Barad 2007: 230).

Dussel's (2012) notion of trans-modernity provides insight into the characteristics of such an alternative apparatus. Resurgent practices unfold in the entangled reality of a colonial world, in which Indigenous traditions, narratives, and practices were marginalized and erased, as well as reinterpreted and revived. They can never be what they once were, they can never be what they would have been if colonization had never happened, they are always tied to the legacy and impact of colonization *and* resistance. As Dussel has contended in describing trans-modernity:

> These universal cultures, asymmetrical in terms of their economic, political, scientific, technological, and military conditions, therefore, maintain an alterity with respect to European Modernity, with which they have coexisted, responding in their own way to its challenges. They are not dead but alive, and presently in the midst of a process of rebirth, searching for new paths for future development (and inevitably at times taking the wrong paths). Since they are not modern, these cultures cannot be *post*-modern either. They are simultaneously *pre*-modern (older than modernity), *contemporary* to Modernity, and soon, *trans*-modern as well. (2012: 42)

Indigenous onto-epistemologies have been sustained and adapted by their populations. They thus demonstrate these trans-modern qualities. That fact challenges practitioners of resurgence to consider their entanglements with modernity carefully (Dussel 2012). This approach cautions against attempts at a new universal and against a rejection of all modernity. Instead, it requires careful consideration of how Indigenous peoples have also contributed to modernity, or of how they are modern, as well as of modernity's shortcomings and promises, and the revalorization of Indigenous cosmovisions through resurgent practices (Dussel 2012).

David Peat (2002) has offered one illustrative example of this trans-modern approach in his differentiation of Indigenous cosmovisions and science, on the one hand, and Newtonian epistemologies, on the other. Peat has argued that Indigenous science is a "science of harmony and compassion, of dream and vision, of earth and cosmos, of hunting and growing, of technology and spirit, of song and dance, of color and number, of cycle and balance, of death and renewal" (2002: 8). Peat's descriptions of Indigenous networks of knowledge creation echo Corntassel (2012) and Simpson's (2017) descriptions of resurgence. Indigenous science is tied to its context and people, rather than segregated as "objective" (that is, detached or purely abstract) knowledge. And through these connections, Indigenous science emphasizes reciprocity and community. Peat does not reject objectivity outright, but expands and restores Indigenous cosmovisions and an understanding of objectivity as empirical while rejecting its disembodied understanding in traditional Western sciences, to create contextual and relational knowledge systems that are impossible to imagine within Western notions of epistemology. For Peat (2002), there is no separability, no abyssal line, between knowledge and being, nor between knowing/being and responsibility. They are all intimately connected.

This understanding has also been articulated by some quantum scholars, whose work pushes against the limitations of Newtonian physics. For example, Karen Barad (2007) employs Niels Bohr's "insistence that our epistemology must take account of the fact that we are a part of that nature we seek to understand" (184). This entangled approach to epistemology challenges the Newtonian conception in which individual bodies interact independently in favor of a worldview comprised of interrelated bodies that depend upon one another even in their nominally independent actions. Linking this approach to Peat's (2002) understanding of Indigenous science, I seek to underscore that resurgence deepens and expands the project of reframing epistemology and ontology via its emphasis on responsibility and reciprocity:

> It is sometimes said that Native people pray upon a hilltop so that the sun will rise on the following day. To anyone who believes that the movements of Earth and the other planets are the blind results of gravity and Newton's laws of motion this is pure nonsense, or wishful thinking. Indigenous science, however, does not talk in terms of causal influences. The sun, Earth, and The People are not separate actors, mechanically and mindlessly obeying impersonal laws. Rather, all things connect and are the manifestations of underlying powers and beings. The rising of the sun is one expression of the harmony of all things, a harmony that extends from sky to earth and can never be fragmented into separate domains. (Peat 2002: 286)

A Newtonian understanding of physics and the universe would suggest the sun rises because of the rotation of the Earth and its tilt. While this offers a technical explanation, it obscures the fact that a sunrise happens in relationship to the Earth. A quantum approach may argue that a type of sunrise or sunset we see results from our positionality, it is not universal or constant, but just as tied to our place in the universe as we are to it. The empirical phenomena of the sun rising or setting is consistent, but its meaning is different. And further still, Peat's (2002) Indigenous science approach forefronts an ethics of relationality and responsibility. Barad also recognizes the relationship between people and the knowledge they produce, but does not bring to the forefront a structural value system,

> Which is not to say that human observers determine the results, the data doesn't come out however we want, but rather the specific nature of the material arrangement of the apparatus is responsible for the specifics of the enactment of the cut. (Barad 2007: 264)

To simplify, while the observer cannot control the outcome, their intra-action is a part of the phenomenon they are observing as well as the way they approach it; the apparatus or worldview they use, allows for certain possibilities, and forecloses others. Within Bohr's work, an apparatus may be a specific set of physical or mathematical tools used for distinct calculations or observations of particles such as a microscope (Barad 2007). In Barad's (2007) work, the apparatus is also part of the phenomenon. For example, in the context of Newtonian physics, Barad's apparatus would include the assumptions of the nature of the universe as made up of individual bodies as part of the phenomenon and not simply a given state of the world. Accordingly, the apparatus has an impact on phenomena and how we come to understand them and, when left uninterrogated, those assumptions influence the knowledge being generated and potentially foreclose certain imaginaries.

Essentially, the apparatus is inextricably tied to our bodies, our assumptions, and our onto-epistemologies, thereby creating the context and boundaries of theory and practice. The dichotomies and hierarchies that mark hegemonic concepts of epistemology and ontology are reproduced through an uninterrogated apparatus, or, at the least, that apparatus will be biased towards those unquestioned foundational dichotomies. This quantum framework offers a bridge for Western theorists of epistemology and ontology to overcome the division. Resurgence, in turn, offers a political underpinning and urgency to such conceptual work.

Resurgent practices challenge the unquestioned assumptions of the present apparatus—the foundational dichotomies—and give rise to alternative apparatuses—a resurgent onto-epistemology based upon relationality, responsibility, and reflexivity. As such alternative apparatuses question the boundaries of Western political thought, they offer understandings of knowledge and being intimately tied to relationships and land.

While the quantum turn recognizes the situated nature of knowledge and its ties to practice, resurgence takes that reconceptualization further by prefiguring decolonizing relationships among knowledge, community, and land. In this way, a resurgent onto-epistemological understanding helps lay the conceptual foundations for decolonization at the epistemic, ontological, and material levels. In a resurgent onto-epistemological understanding, thinking and being are intertwined; they are active and resistant, foreign and familiar, imaginative and concrete (Simpson 2017). Recognizing and prioritizing resurgence's value system extends quantum social science critiques of Western epistemology to engage with decolonial imaginaries of self, community, and land. Quantum social science's critique of the divide between epistemology and ontology opens a theoretical space that resurgent practices can occupy to demonstrate alternative understandings of epistemology and ontology.

CONCLUSION

Resurgence centers the connection between knowledge and action long obfuscated by the Western epistemological and ontological divide. As Mignolo and Walsh (2018) have argued, "you cannot decolonize knowledge if you do not question the very foundation of Western epistemology. And you cannot decolonize being if you do not question the very foundation of Western ontology" (136). Furthermore, neither knowledge nor being can be decolonized without the material conditions of decolonization, in particular land rematriation. Simpson (2017) and Corntassel's (2012) shared emphasis on land and land-back actions are central to the distinct forms that resurgence assumes. Challenging western notions of epistemology and ontology theoretically is not enough, resurgence's prefiguration of decolonial aims and relationships is central to understanding the importance of material conditions in the decolonizing process. Resurgence calls for both the critique and action. It prioritizes embodied and place-based knowledge production, recognizes the connection between knowledge and being, and calls for engaged, relational, and responsible individual and collective action. Resurgence carries within it a possibility of living at the edge of the foundational dichotomies of Western hegemony, not exterior to modernity, but instead in a space of alterity from which one may envision other ways of being and knowing that deconstruct and/or disengage with modernity's conceptions of knowledge (Mignolo & Walsh 2018). This alterity points to the difficult work of excavating questions of hierarchy and dichotomy, situating them, and thereafter, opening new possibilities.

Resurgence reframes the way we approach questions about knowledge production and offers an alternative understanding of reality. As Savransky has observed, it "may enable a global sociology to move beyond the very abyssal line that bifurcates knowledge from reality, or 'epistemology' from 'ontology', and to reorient itself not just toward a decolonisation of knowledge, but also of reality" (2017: 13). Since Western knowledge systems hinge on the privileging of reason over nature, mind over matter, and individual actors over communal ones, it follows that the political possibilities produced by such knowledge systems are biased toward those assumptions. In this sense, Barad's (2007) description of the apparatus can be a crucial bridge between Western political thought and Indigenous onto-epistemologies, which suggest that the growing body of quantum social science research not shy away from the value system and political commitments of decolonization. Resurgent practices push the boundaries of our relationships with knowledge and being, compelling a reorientation of self and community. Extending quantum theories of entanglement via resurgence provides possibilities, solutions, and relationships otherwise inaccessible from Western epistemologies.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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