

The Descent of Thought and a Beginning of World Philosophies

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This essay invites the reader to engage in a path towards understanding philosophy in terms of “world philosophies” rather than mapping out thought to the already operative westernizing conceptions of what “philosophy” is. The question of “world philosophies” is taken up through the way that Latin American thought is situated inbetween lineages and traditions. The essay focuses on the transformative encounter between Heidegger’s thought during the period of Being and Time (1927) and the Argentine thinker Rodolfo Kusch. In contrast to Heidegger, Kusch finds a distinct path of thinking grounded in Latin American Indigenous thought, a thinking that remains to date in the pre-reflexive living of the popular classes in Latin America (workers, campesinos, people peripheral to the culture of the major coastal cities). Ultimately, the task of world philosophies arises from the concrete situation of the thought being developed, an attentiveness required that is found in aesthetic sensibilities rather than in reflexive rational thought alone or rationalist pragmatic subjectivism.

Key words: world philosophies; Rodolfo Kusch; Martin Heidegger; *conocimiento*; *estar*; attunement or disposition (*Stimmung*); Indigenous thought; sensibilities; living-thinking (*sentipensante*)

1 Introduction

One of the fundamental challenges for world philosophies is how to situate philosophical thought in terms of non-western traditions. When confronted with the question of philosophy in a non-western place, non-western thinkers seem to be immediately caught in a double exclusion from their lives and existence. If the person responds that they do have philosophy, this is taken to mean that it is the result of that way of western thinking that has been defined as “philosophy” at least since the beginning of modernity (for decolonial thought, 1492, and not the westernized historical date of Descartes’ works circa 1630). To have a local philosophy would mean to copy and follow the westernizing traditions. On the other hand, to assert that there is no philosophy suggests the absence of thought, of tradition, and ultimately of sense or meaning. This is the trap that the Congolese philosopher Valentin Mudimbe sees clearly in his work, and to which he responds with the idea of a *gnosis*: that philosophy, in the broader sense of understanding in Ancient Greek thought, leaves room for other traditions of thought, such as oral traditions for example.¹ I find this a powerful way to open up a space for other ways of thinking. Taking this broadening of understanding as a basic indication, in what follows I introduce a thinking that remains between western and non-western thinking and understanding. My aim is not to arrive at a synthesis, nor is it to offer a comparative study of their differences and similarities. Rather, I aim to engage and begin to open a manner of thinking from and with the entanglement of the two paths, in a way that may lead to understanding philosophy as a space of constant reconfiguration of the meanings, delimitations, and horizons of knowledges, a transformative dynamic that may be accomplished by remaining with the encounter of traditions in a kind of dynamic border living-thinking gnosis. Here

“living-thinking” intends to indicate the necessary inseparability of mind and body in border, liberatory, and decolonial thought. “Border thinking” refers to a thinking with and through the inbetween often obscured by binomial ontological and identity differentiations; this means engaging the life that occurs in being-inbetween rather than belonging to one side of the other of a binomial identity system. “Liberatory thought” sets out from below, from the excluded, and seeks ways of thinking that may delink from structures of power that appropriate and dismiss peoples and knowledges, while at the same time being able to go beyond critique by asserting those excluded knowledges and ways of being. Decolonial thought appears here as the underbelly of the first two, in the form of the coloniality of power and knowledge that under rationalist capitalist utilitarianism and globalization delimits all senses of things in the name of infinite progress and wealth production and accumulation. This inseparability of mindbody or heartmind is well indicated when one refers to a thinking that is “*sentipensante*” (to use Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui’s term), a way and sensibility of thought that does not sever reason from the pre-reflective dimensions of consciousness that situate our ways of being in the world. My essay is not an argument for such encounters, nor does it intend to introduce a new methodology of difference. The point is that through the encounter between various traditions of thought this essay opens spaces for thinking in ways that resonate with and at the same time go beyond westernized thought and its genitive supposed “other”—an “other,” I must add, that is always situated by a rationalism that is not touched by the other traditions it engages, in spite of what may be its deepest decolonial and liberatory intentions. Indeed, as Viveiros de Castro has insisted, only a thought that is transformed in its epistemic supposition by what it encounters may give way to liberatory affirmations of lives and existence.²

In this article, I follow the encounter between the Argentinean philosopher Rodolfo Kusch’s engagement with Andean Indigenous thought and Martin Heidegger’s thought, mainly in *Being and Time* and also briefly in his essay *The Origin of the Work of Art*.³ I find such an encounter in Rodolfo Kusch’s *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, the only work by the philosopher translated into English.⁴ In order to introduce border thinking in this essay, my following remarks will focus on the first chapter of Kusch’s book. Central to this encounter with Kusch is his differentiation between the verbs “*ser*” and “*estar*,” two distinct forms of speaking of being in Spanish. For Kusch the first verb (*ser*) refers to being and identity as figured in terms of the egological subjectivist and rationalist world of production in westernizing thought. The second term (*estar*) indicates modalities of being in and with worlds, ways of being with the very movement of existence or cosmos. One may think of these as ways of knowing (*conocimiento*) that situate us pre-reflexively. As we will see, Kusch situates his own thought in-between the two verbal modalities. This introductory reading of Kusch is part of a book project based on his *Complete Works*, a compilation of all of his books and writings, edited in Rosario, Argentina by Editorial Ross between 1998-2003, under the title *Obras Completas Vol I-IV*.⁵ In the following section, I will discuss how Rodolfo Kusch resituates thought in a distinct experience he finds with Andean thought, and then, in section three, I will engage the kind of sensibility of thought that opens through such a resituating of thought and with it philosophy understood beyond westernized subjective rationalism.

2 A Thought Situated Out of Popular and Indigenous América

Rodolfo Kusch (1922-1979) was one of the founders of Latin American philosophy of liberation, and the one out of the group that from the outset was concerned with the place and dynamics of Indigenous América in popular contemporary thought. In one of his most well-known works, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, Kusch demonstrates the ways in which Andean Indigenous thought is latent in popular thinking in América. Ultimately, he aims to find a path towards a political thought that may arise from the excluded and erased foundations of American existence, which he sees operative as much in the interior or the Andes as in the coastal westernized cities. In the latter, Indigenous thought remains part of the consciousness of the poor, the farmers, and the working classes around the great cities like Buenos Aires.

The first chapter of *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América* offers a way into American thinking, more specifically into the distinct situation of its philosophical spacings, or the way philosophy takes form in Argentina and América. We begin by finding a circumstance between two ways of thinking. Philosophy in América has two faces: On the one hand, there is the official way found at the university or the academy, focused on European and North American problematics translated at philosophical level. This is the conceptual objectivity of the rational subject, transported and superposed onto América as it morphs into diverse models of being or identity, “order and progress” (an obvious historical example are these words on the Brazilian flag). On the other hand, one finds a living thought in everyday life in América. One finds this second way already in the saying Kusch uses in the very first sentence “*por decir así*,” “to say it in some way.” This translation may approximate the Spanish, but in the Spanish “*así*” is introducing a saying that points to a givenness through which one finds oneself. As we will see later, the world happens “*así*.” This term indicates a certain dynamic manner of the world’s situatedness, or in this specific phrase, exposes the transient and dynamic character of the differentiation Kusch is making: In contrast to the official way of thinking, “*así*” introduces what Kusch calls a private way of thinking. This givenness of the world is not a conceptual determination nor is it the result of an interpretative naming. To place understanding on the grounds of this givenness situates thought within dynamic approximation, an ambiguous indication of a way of living-thinking that is “private,” intimate, in one’s skin and marrow, and that occurs simultaneously in being exposed to and with the cosmological movement of the coming to pass of worlds and senses of existing. Hence, speaking of a private way cannot be identical with subjective rationalism, and therefore the indication of this manner of speaking can only be a passage towards the thought Kusch will develop. *Así* begins to expose one to the very disposition or tonality of one’s day-to-day living. Kusch is looking to concrete daily living because that is where he finds the millenary and deepest aspects of América, forms that now shape American realities from below. Throughout this essay I understand “concrete” along these lines, and out of its literal etymology in Latin: concrete from *con-crecere*, to grow with. Thus, when I use “concrete,” I have in mind to grow with other beings, to augment with other beings in partaking of a cosmological movement. But, again, Kusch is not choosing or arguing for one way or the other but placing us between the official and the private. Moreover, he does not aim to return to a prior idealized Indigenous reality as does much of *indigenismo*. At the same time, as he clearly states, the issue is not to simply negate western philosophy, but to seek an articulation closer to how it occurs in one’s live/s. Given the ambiguity of our circumstance, in how we encounter ourselves through Kusch’s analysis, and with it in how thought begins to be resituated, one must ask: How does one engage with and work through the sense and the operative elements in the westernizing dimension

of one's thought in a transformative critique, while seeking a thinking that has been denied and covered over precisely in the name of western modernity/progress in América?

First of all, in the most immediate and clear terms of one's living or one's circumstance, the circumstance of our thought today is such that we think between, in the irresolvable ambiguity of negotiating identities and borders, and this ambiguity is the space from which and toward which our thought comes to pass. To put it in today's terms: Americans are not pure African, European, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs), Chinese, Middle Eastern, or Indigenous peoples. We are between lineages, histories, and memorial dimensions that are pluriversal. And intellectually speaking, western thought is one of our points of orientation in the constellations in which we move: one among many others, and not the definitive *arche* (a leading principle or original unchanging beginning), unless power, economy, and force/domination are taken to be the sole and necessary determining delimitations of all existence for us, in which case westernizing power, in its violent and pernicious workings, is unlike any other that we know in América.⁶ To mark the strange zone of proximity in radical distinction I am touching on, one term that may be helpful is "syncretism," as I understand it, the term indicates an infinite ambiguity in which identities are constantly engaged and yet never brought into one single meaning. Here I am thinking in departure from the idea of syncretism as a gathering into synthetic unity of differences, which is a colonizing way of erasing the being-in-radical-distinctness that happens in syncretic experiences.⁷ I speak of an infinite ambiguity because in syncretism the terms remain separate and at the same time they are together, in a double truth without synthesis.

A simple example of syncretism, that I can only mention in its most evident form, can be found in such paintings as "The Virgin of Bethlehem" in Cusco (seventeenth century).⁸ Such images of the Virgin were painted from the beginning of the first painting school in the New World, the Cusco school. These paintings were meant to follow the traditional techniques and general composition of the Renaissance western works as taught by the Spanish mannerists and Italian painters of the time (such as Bernardo Bitti, who first arrived in Cusco in 1563). However, the Virgins become rounder and more massive than their European counterparts, and may be read as much like the images of mountains as they may be seen as images of the Virgin. To the Spanish eye, these images represented the Virgin and the Roman Catholic Church; to the Andean eye they appeared as *Apus*, the large mountains of the high Andes that share their name (*Apu*) with the meaning of grandfather/ancestor and ancestral wisdom. In this sense of the disseminating of images and signs, I take naming and conceptual determinations to be impossible necessities, since identities seem to always be needed at the level of "being" this or that, at the level of recognition, and yet in the naming, the given identities seem to already be beyond themselves (Derrida exposes us to this movement in westernized thought throughout and in *différance*). But, to return to the role of western thought in Kusch's discussion: What other factors besides power and history may continue to make western philosophy relevant to us? Why not simply negate, or ignore it on the way to new ways of thinking?



Negating western philosophy and thought, besides the obvious possibility of repeating the violence and nonsensical naming of the colonizer, would say nothing of the thought Kusch seeks (since the exclusion would affirm a binary way of understanding that is still to a large extent western in its logic). Not to mention that in dismissing western thought as well as in ignoring it, one would be disposed to ignore the way colonial history situates one's thought. This would leave us standing at the edge of the darkest night, imagining the very coloniality of knowledge that erases us to be a faint light in the horizon that in our willful oblivion we believe to be the coming of the day. But furthermore, and this is crucial to understand Kusch, every philosophical thinking that is genuine, in the sense of articulate and originary thought, begins with the engagement of its concrete living circumstance and memorial dimensions, a dimension of remembrance not dependent on History but rather on embodying and affective remembrances, as well as involuntary memory. Each style or way of living generates a style of thinking. This is what makes western thought relevant to a certain extent, and clearly in different ways for Europeans and for América. We are situated by it to a certain extent, which is not to say that this tradition should be taken as the origin and arche of all possible philosophical thought. Speaking of Kant, Hegel, and Descartes—and we may also include Heidegger and Kusch—reminds us that in western thought every generation requires the philosophical conceptualization of its path or passing anew; philosophy is always related to a specific living style/situation (Kusch 2010: 1). Kusch suggests in other texts that one may rethink western philosophers in light of the way of thinking and living one finds in the everyday and private forms of living thought in América. Philosophy will only happen in the transformative engagement of the delimitation of reality, and this only happens through a thinking that is *sentipensante*, lived concretely and beyond the mind-body binary.

The articulation of American thought requires a certain degree of “dis-torsion,” a twisting-free, a turning that goes beyond—and contradicts—the conceptual and emotional schemas and frameworks to which we appeal in making sense in terms of westernizing rationalist pragmatism. In our westernized project of a productive and progressive reality, one holds to meaning, representation, and identity as the constellation in which senses of existing and experience are possible. In departure from this constellation, knowledge, expectations, fears, and projections of desire—our demands and senses of limits and possibilities that underlie all senses of being—may very well have to be disjoined; then one turns towards thinking sensibilities that are *sentipensante*, towards a living-thinking. Indeed, as Kusch points out, the very conceptual frameworks that hold academic thinking in place, its language and modalities of engaging experience are put in question. But the turn is even more radical, since it digs into the very dispositions and sensibilities that sustain our world understanding: as Kusch points out, we must even make apparent and begin to think “the researchers’ fear of overcoming their own philosophical prejudices” (Kusch 2010: 2). The turn is not at the conceptual level but at the pre-conceptual and pre-linguistic level of affective, emotional, and concrete sensibilities.

Perhaps a helpful analogy would be to imagine a thinking that arises in remaining with the sensibilities that operate in the uncertainty of quantum mechanics: What if every day were experienced as the riddle of the mouse and the poisonous snake in the box? After a week of keeping them both in the box, what will one find in opening the box? The only way to know is to open the box, but that revelation only attests to that one time. And what if the tonality or affective disposition one would find in engaging the world were held in such uncertainty each time, without appealing to psychology in order to sustain an equilibrium that may go along with rationalism?

Here appears a fundamental distinction about “how” one thinks: Kusch does not intend nor does he expect us to develop the right theoretical methodology or critique in order to define or

describe Indigenous and popular thinking. This is because we are speaking of/with/out of modalities of cognition that occur with and in “*estar*,” a word that we may provisionally begin to understand as indicating a way of being-in-the-world-with its becoming in passing, in an originary temporalizing-spatializing concrete movement. At the same time, *estar* does not begin from rational subjectivity, identities, concepts, institutions, or ideologies—these latter terms that seem to be grounded on that *estar* that situates us pre-reflexively, i.e., before one “is” this or that (“*es*” from the verb *ser* rather than *estar*, a fundamental differentiation in Kusch). This means that the kind of conceptual abstract thinking we tend to identify with philosophy, even in the case of Heidegger and Derrida, remains somewhat removed from the logic of daily living one finds in América. Furthermore, abstract conceptual thinking in the academy perpetuates itself before attending to daily living, even when the claim is to engage in liberatory thinking. Kusch, one of the founders of Latin American philosophy of liberation, knew well the centripetal turning in a barrel of the academic minds. Even the most self-critical school of social-political thought must operate under the constant danger of falling into the trap of exercising its critical theory in order to sustain the reign of rationalism over knowledge and living. Even the most liberatory intentions may be tripped over by a thinking that interprets all senses and ways of existing as primarily determined by the presence of things, and the practical problems they present to the rational human mind. Indeed, even a phenomenology that remains with its theoretical issues, if it does not leave the classroom, cannot approach the thinking Kusch seeks to articulate. The turn Kusch seeks is therefore neither pragmatic nor theoretical. Kusch leads us into a turning that may only occur as sensibilities are transformed, and with them the very ways of attunement or tonality out of which, with which, and in light of which philosophical thinking may arise in América, and reach beyond to face living in its monstrous fecundity, with a consciousness that belongs to no-one, in what Walter Mignolo calls in his introduction to *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, “co-living and inhabiting distinct memories and therefore territories” (Kusch 2010: xxv).

3 Sensibility and Thought

Dis-positioning of Ground

In general, throughout *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América* Kusch operates in two moves in order to introduce the reader again and again, chapter after chapter, to the way of thinking that underlies Latin American consciousness. On the one hand, he always begins by unsettling the place and self-certainty of the reader. In chapter one this happens as the very way of traditional philosophy is put into question. This is not by dismissal but by pointing to a double life of philosophy in Latin American experience. This leaves us in between a way of thinking that we know well and that is insufficient to engage Latin American thought, and a way of thinking felt in our hearts and entrails, which remains concealed and yet like a feeling on one’s skin too proximate and liminally (from Latin *limine*, threshold) present (although in an impoverished manner, in the form of “my opinion,” the “I” feel that reduces understanding to a subject’s perspective when at best). On the other hand, once the displacement is at work, and having reminded us of a level of affectivity and immediate experience in which we dwell, Kusch introduces in that holding-between a dimension of the *sentipensante* thought he is after, thus getting us always in touch with the sensibility of dwelling—this, again, through displacement and exposure.

This last moment of letting go of one's epistemic ground is already anticipated when Kusch reminds us of the “fear” of the academic philosopher when confronted with possibly overcoming their own philosophical prejudices, and the way this fear makes the engagement with Indigenous Andean thought impossible. “All that would result from this practice is a version of Inca thinking entangled in the researcher’s fear of overcoming their own philosophical prejudices” (Kusch 2010: 2). It is fear that is put in front of the theoretical apparatus that holds in place subjective rationalism as well as its power over the very horizon as well as the structures and concepts that are considered knowledge and the kinds of experience that may be considered thought-worthy—fear of losing the very ground that secures one’s “*ser*” or the egological rationalist and reflexive structure that renders the world meaningful and determines all senses of identity in terms of westernized thought. Fear: the emotion is entangled with rational judgment, when experience does not fit the theory/power apparatus. Here, fear points to affective, emotional, and concrete aspects of experience. Kusch will introduce the affective and concrete character of the thought he seeks to introduce directly by pointing to the map of Peru drawn by Felipe Waman Poma de Ayala, in 1570, in his *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1600-1615, written to Philip the III of Spain).⁹

Un-Mapping Sense

Figura 2



Digital copy of the original, Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. (1660s) Discovered in 1908 by Richard Pietschmann.

The map from Waman Poma draws us into an image in which Peru appears in oval shape, with four couples (female-male) ruling each of the cardinal regions; the sun and the moon reign over the whole; and the land is surrounded by ocean in which appear sea-monsters, ships, and even a siren (on the top). Such a map, as Kusch explains, is viewed today as a “subjective,” and thus dismissible—and I would add, very imaginative—map of Peru. The map is, in short, “incommensurate with a modern map of Peru,” that is, incommensurate with the objective reality of science (Kusch 2010: 3). Several issues become apparent with this introduction of Waman Poma’s map.

Although Waman Poma’s map does not capture a scientific and objective view of Peru, it does encapsulate “all of its indigenous and Inca inheritance” (Kusch 2010: 3). The sun and the moon indicate the always double understanding of existence in Inca thought as well as the motion of seasons, etc. The cardinal regions always marked by couples again repeat the understanding of existence as never unilateral but always double. Moreover, the figures indicate the maternal protection within which Indigenous existence happens (as is the case with *pacha-mama*): existence and configurations of identities are always held/received by a female aspect that figures shelter and germination, “the material protection within which the ancient Indian found himself sheltered” (Kusch 2010: 3). Finally, the map articulates a concrete lived passage traversed by Waman Poma, a journey through which sense arises, and within a relational dynamic of a world-cosmos-community, always in a non-unilateral and fecund movement. Waman Poma’s drawing chronicles the distinct experience of dwelling in a cosmos-world-community and of traversing that time-space. The scientific map may give accurate coordinates, but it cannot articulate the affective concrete (from the Latin *con-crescere*, grow-with) passage, and the disposition that orients such passage. This disposition, this sensibility, is what Kusch wishes to introduce to us.

However, one must be very careful not to miss the fundamental clarification in the same passage: In our circumstance, having fallen into a way of seeing the world through a scientific objectifying and calculative subjective rationalism, the modality or disposition in the dwelling or passing that Waman Poma catches has been reduced, from a way of feeling-thinking with the time-space movement of cosmos-world, into the closed-in subjective feeling of a single rational subject, a weak obtuse decrying from a mind with little body but with a view. Thus, Kusch writes that Latin American thought oscillates between “a candid subjectivity that affects all of us and the scientific attitude whose rigidity is used precisely to mask in each of us a subjectivity we do not succeed in channeling” (Kusch 2010: 4). Affectively, its sensibilities are part of our sense of the world and existence, and yet they are almost never sufficiently taken as substantive elements, let alone as a dimension of thought and therefore understanding and knowing.

The failure then for Kusch is not that there is a “what” that must be analyzed, comprehended, and manipulated better; rather the issue is “how” one engages existence, the disposition or modality of *estar*, out of which and through which one comes to be (*ser*) this or that (in the sense of the distinction between *estar* and *ser*). Kusch moves in the next paragraph to Heidegger in order to get closer to and introduce the distinct sensibility he finds in Indigenous and Inca thought. At this point, Kusch aims to get to a sense of being-in-the-world or *conocimiento* (a way of understanding) that is engaged through a certain sensibility, a disposition or modality of dwelling, an attunement or, indeed, to use Heidegger’s term, a *Stimmung*. This is why Kusch goes to Heidegger, because Heidegger’s sense of being opens philosophy to a thinking not in terms of transcendental concepts or subjective rationalism, but out of the analysis of pre-conceptual dwelling or being-in-the-world, and this dwelling occurs as *Stimmungen*, or dis-positions, that is, as certain tonalities in which the world opens and with it all senses of beings. By taking Heidegger as a point of departure,

Kusch makes two basic observations that show clearly how he is thinking. One, Heidegger, like the other philosophers from the west already mentioned, engages his circumstance and thinks from it in his work. This is concretely the case: this is why Kusch says that Heidegger thinks with “an exactitude that befits the lives of the German middle class” (Kusch 2010: 4). Recall that for Kusch philosophy always begins from the concrete situation (and this does not mean in terms of a Marxist analysis, which he clearly puts into question over and over in the book). The second observation gets to the heart of the thinking sought by Kusch and concerns the distance between the word *Utcatha* in Aymara and Heidegger’s term *Da-Sein*: two terms that, in their distinct manner, refer to sensibility, tonality, and disposition in dwelling (Kusch 2010: 4).

4 *Da-Sein, Estar, Utcatha*

Heidegger’s term (*Da-Sein*), as interpreted by Kusch, refers to Being (*Sein*) and to “there” (*Da*). As Heidegger already separates from the history of metaphysics in *Sein und Zeit*, “*Da*” becomes the fundamental aspect for the recovery of the question of being. The “*Da*” of *Da-Sein* refers to the temporalizing movement of the distinct being that is *Da-Sein*, and this “*Da*” occurs as a pre-rational dwelling or being-in-the-world. And here is the crucial point for Kusch: this being-in-the-world or dwelling happens out of a being-thrown and fallenness.

Let us briefly make the difference between Kusch and Heidegger more explicit: As Kusch explains, according to Heidegger, being-there (*Da-Sein*) occurs as a temporal dynamic in which our consciousness and pre-reflexive ways of being are oriented by what lies ahead of our immediate present and behind it. Particularly, one is “thrown” in being born, a being born that is always already a being-towards-death—a specific and distinct death that situates the present beyond itself (in ecstatic being). As for fallenness, this is our fallenness from the question of being, which results in our society out of our attention to the present, reproduction, and production of things, and the delimitation of all senses of beings in terms of such economy or metaphysical ontology (the history of metaphysics would deal with the concepts that support and perpetuate the obsession with things present and produced that begins at least with Plato and Aristotle). Both being-thrown and fallenness occur in terms of ecstatic temporality, in which *Da-Sein* is always already ahead of and in-dwelling—thus, the existential angst that opens *Da-Sein* as a distinctly concerned being-towards-death. Fallenness, thrownness, and the anxiety of being-towards-death seem to orient *Da-Sein*’s dwelling. In other words, *Da-Sein*’s dwelling happens under and as a modal or tonal being-in-the-world that involves fallenness and thrownness.

Kusch then moves to discuss tonality or sensibility in Inca and Indigenous Andean thought. A word in Aymara that seems “an equivalent” to *Da-Sein* is *cancaña*—the term means “being,” “barbecue spit,” “essence,” and is also linked to “flow of events” (Kusch 2010: 4-5). Here, Kusch is speaking directly to Heidegger’s thought: *cancaña*, the word sounds out, the very opening of being, “the hearth,” “essencing,” and “event,” or “the temporalizing-spacing of being.” All of these terms refer us in distinct ways to Heidegger’s sense of *Da-Sein*. That is to say, Kusch knows Heidegger’s path of thinking well enough to extend it through in his calling out the meanings of *cancaña* in Aymara. At this point, having found great resonance between *Da-Sein* and *cancaña*, the seeming ease of a translation or travelling between Indigenous thought and Heidegger’s analysis of the temporality of the concept of being, or *Da-Sein*, the seeming continuity collapses. This occurs as Kusch introduces a new term: “*Utcatha*.” Kusch introduces it saying that it is “a term much more fitting” of Indigenous “feeling or sensibility.”¹⁰ The opening Heidegger makes with his analysis of *Da-Sein*, in

terms of the sensibility of the disposition or attunement in dwelling has not been abandoned, rather extended, accent in the “*ex*,” that is taken out, beyond Heidegger’s *Da-Sein* analysis and the question of Being. The new term, *Utcatha*, sounds out a tonality of dwelling distinct from Heidegger’s thought.

The “*ut*” in *Utcatha* relates us to “dwelling at home” (*estar en casa*), and in the form “*utcaña*,” “to the seat or chair and also the mother or womb where woman conceives” (Kusch 2010: 5). The term, concludes Kusch, reflects the sense of mere *estar*, “but linking it to concepts of shelter and germination” (Kusch 2010: 5). This is how Kusch introduces the term *estar*, central to his thought, and distinct from the concept of “being” in Heidegger. The dialogue Kusch sustains with Heidegger is as intense as it is long and intricate. Indeed, more than one third of the third volume of his collected works is dedicated to the distinction between *estar* and *ser*, to a great extent in a dialogue with Heidegger, and later Derrida.¹¹ Here I wish to only note the distinctions Kusch makes, and the way he introduces *estar* in this first chapter.

Estar, unlike *Da-Sein*, indicates a way of being that is always a situated *estar*, “*estar* at home.” Moreover, *estar* at home is felt as a givenness, a dwelling in a world-cosmos-community already there, already installed, or as Kusch puts it, “a mere givenness, or better a mere *estar*” (Kusch 2010: 5). This *estar* shelters, and in the relation to the womb, it welcomes as one participates with a germinal movement or cosmological movement of being at home. As Kusch points out in the next paragraph, the Indigenous does not experience a fallenness or thrownness into an inhospitable world. Rather, one finds oneself in the already given which occurs as sheltering, as being held in the daily concrete passing of living-dying or germinality. Whereas for Heidegger, as is the case for a poet like Novalis, thinking would mean always not being at home (“Philosophy is actually homesickness—the urge to be everywhere at home.”),¹² in Andean thought a welcoming situates one’s very becoming in a movement that is an originary being-at-home.

In terms of spatiality, *estar* does not mean *Da-Sein*’s dwelling in which being opens up or is given, nor is there the inside-outside division one finds in westernizing modern thought, and which still remains in a semi-transcendental way in Heidegger’s *Da-Sein* analysis in *Being and Time*. Rather, *estar* refers to the specificity and concrete (*con-crescere*) living that comes to pass as one finds oneself in an already installed dynamic cosmological circumstance: in living, one finds oneself always already in the “*así*.” “It is a question of the *así*, which imprisons man in his totality and implicates him completely” (Kusch 2010: 153). The world of everyday living is not a fallenness from being but a dwelling in a mere givenness in the face of a cosmos-community already installed, there, *así*. For Kusch *estar* is the standing in that already given, which, I must add, is not a closed totality or Being, but a movement in which one must attempt to keep a certain equilibrium or tonality, since living and existence may turn out at any moment auspicious or inauspicious. It is a question of seeing to feel and of feeling “*el signo fasto o nefasto de cada movimiento*,” the auspicious or inauspicious indication in each movement (Kusch 2010: 11).¹³ Thus, this is a staying with the movement of cosmos-community in a manner that must always be negotiated. The negotiating of one’s circumstance Kusch calls “*siendo*,” the gerundive of the verb *ser*. Thus, one may speak of *estar-siendo*. For example, speaking of the *Origin of the Work of Art*, and the famous Van Gogh shoes, Kusch points out that whereas for Heidegger the issue is the way in which the sense of Being is disclosed, opened, and sustained by the shoes, by the work of art, in Indigenous and popular thinking the issue is how in mere daily life the woman wearing the shoes negotiates living in the face of a cosmos-community that is already there. In Indigenous and popular thinking—in terms of the world defined by the economy of things and their presence, representation, and production, and its separation from Being—this being caught in ontological difference misses the way of *estar*. In Indigenous and

popular thought, objective presence is not a failure or fallenness from being but only an indication of the movement of the cosmos-community. Things, words, images indicate the tonality of the movement of the cosmos-community. This occurs as one finds oneself engaged in and with an *estar* in the sense of an *estar-siendo*, of a being-with in and as played out with the concrete movement of existing (in a gerundive sense of continuous flow and transformation). The trap is to believe that things order or open the World and that the world is a manifestation or event of Being, rather than being attentive to the movement and power encountered in *estar*, the installation beyond beings and humans, which is already given. Indeed, things are ghosts that refer us to the dynamics of the already installed cosmological movement.

Kusch uses the example of a fox that crosses the road in front of someone and the understanding of the event as a negative indication. The fox crossing the road is an indication of the circumstance one has in the movement of cosmos-community, and not the subjective interpretation of an animal according to one's whim and imagination. For Kusch *estar*, or in my terms *estar-siendo*, means finding oneself in holding in encounter with the power of the cosmos-community already there: there is cohabitation in the installation of cosmos-community. This is why he speaks often of the pressure exercised by the unnamable. This pulsation or pressure is not from a God separate from "man," but in the encounter with the pulsating cosmological movement beyond human rationality, and therefore beyond the reflexive mediation offered by rationality in the form of history, institutions, identities, concepts, facts. Indigenous and popular thinking occur in a face-to-face encounter with becoming beyond the human, but the encounter does not hold back a mystery—rather it occurs in dwelling-being or *estar-siendo*, in the concrete everyday business of living, negotiating. And the mystery transpires in that concrete living negotiation. This means that one is not outside of the power of the installed but in it, and that one's actions affect the movement of the cosmos-community. Instead of being prey to a power, one is playing and played out in its movement. This negotiation is living, and it happens through ritual, repetition, tradition, listening, dance, oral traditions, weaving, stone cutting, and building. In short: Through the sensibility Kusch is trying to introduce with "*Utcatha*," "*estar*," "dwelling"—three terms that are not simply equivalent or even analogous but that indicate our circumstance with respect to this Indigenous and popular thinking—we find our thinking space entangled and held in between ways of being on the way to dwelling-being.

Before moving on, I would like to refer for a moment to a couple of paragraphs in chapter 17, "The Cross Roads of Mere *Estar*" (Kusch 2010: 160-1), where the proximity of Kusch's thought and Heidegger's thought appears. In this text, in an interesting turn, Heidegger appears as a quixotic figure. In short, the great catastrophe of Don Quijote is that he represents the desire "to be," "*ser*," a knight. It is this that tears him apart, and it is by virtue of this desire that he is incapable of engaging his *estar*, or concrete living circumstance. Ultimately, "His drama is drawn from his not being able to choose a being adequate to his *estar*" (Kusch 2010: 161). For Kusch this is not merely Don Quijote's problem, but "of man in the twentieth century" (Kusch 2010: 161). Then he writes: "This is what Heidegger says in *Being and Time* [...]." Something analogous to Don Quijote happens to Heidegger in his first book from 1927. But then, Kusch goes on about Heidegger's thought: "The great majority of his work reflects a philosophy of *estar*" (Kusch 2010: 161). In my view, this is an excellent place to begin to read about the close relation of the two thinkers in their work. Particularly since we find ourselves entangled with the quixotic impossibility, removed from *estar* as we strive to be ("*ser*") this or that: a drama in which most of us seem to be caught and sold.

To return to the paragraph we are discussing, Waman Poma's map indicates his articulate way of engaging his *estar*—articulate in that he has a sense and sensibility, ways of dwelling with the

cosmos-community, that remain with the concrete givenness of each day's living, living on the face of a movement or becoming beyond the "human" and the rational. This is neither an ontic nor an ontological way of thinking, rather it is a discipline of negotiating living with a wisdom that does not rely on abstraction and reason as the medium for understanding. *Estar* happens, dwelling with the atrocious mystery of the movement of cosmos-community-stirring and in one's naked exposure with a non-human becoming (or germinal birthing-dying), and it is in such fecund intensity that sheltering also occurs, simultaneously, in the negotiation that sustains salvation. Kusch attempts to remain with a differentiation between living and abstraction, where abstraction figures a lifting off from and concealing of life, as the subjective reflection on life and its concepts about things with their abstract and practical logic runs away, looks away from the brutal and wondrous encounter in *estar* he sees in Indigenous and popular *sentipensante* life.

Utcathá figures lived daily reality by each person, as does Waman Poma's map. This is what Kusch is indicating already in the prologue to the third edition when he writes that "the peasant personality, just like his cultural world, rotates around a different axis" (Kusch 2010: lxxvi). Along with *estar*, elemental to *estar*, is another differentiation that already appears in the same prologue between *estar* and the logical delimitation of the world as the world of production and things or "*ser*." The latter is grounded on causal thinking, on subjective rationalism applied to things and grounded on the law of the excluded middle. This law of identity defines the sense and meaning of all beings through the exclusion of ambiguity, precisely the ambiguity that orients the dynamic engagement with the cosmological movement that Kusch finds in Andean and Indigenous thinking, and slightly under the surface of popular thinking in América (Kusch 2010: lxxvi).

5 Exordium

In a chapter of *Sketches of an American Philosophical Anthropology*, titled "The Importance of the Philosophical Place," published in the Third Volume of his *Obras Completas*, Kusch writes about the mere givenness of *estar* and philosophical reflection:

Then, what is *estar* about? It is not transferable to the tradition. Nor does it refer to an abstract fall [...] [t]o investigate all of this is to reflect in the sense of a radical self-reflection. It is to invert the will to be, in order to discover that what is grounded does not refer to being (*ser*), but to the given that *está*. At the bottom, it concerns the problem of grounding (*fundamento*). The grounding's requirement demands that we find it in something strange to being (*al es*), to a certain extent in that other, that *está*.

One could think that the given (*lo que está dado*) which makes the ground of *estar*, is the hell into which reflection should descend. There dwells (*ahí está*) death, non-life, and disorder in the sense of the unusual. It is the descent of thought to the bottom of the place of philosophy, where what I am dissolves, that being to which I clench, and where I am not able to determine what is that *está*, but where all that which *está* weighs with all of its mystery (Kusch 1998-2003: Vol. III, 390; my translation).

These words do not tell us the what, where, or whence of philosophy; they do not promise salvation or appeal to a pragmatic logic, neither historical nor abstract. And yet, with the most intense sharpness they entice one to depart, to take flight, as Kusch's words remind us that we dwell already nearly at the beginning of thinking, a thinking that now returns towards the unthought, in, with, and

towards world philosophies: ways and path of articulate being-in-worlds and thinking at the limits and always already in departures from the operative delimitations, movements born of one's attentiveness and being with concrete modalities of *estar-siendo*.

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- ¹ Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988). See also Walter D. Mignolo's discussion in Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 10.
 - ² The point for Viveiros de Castro is specifically that the position of the investigator in anthropology and the social science should be changed by that which is studied, rather than remaining an analytical point zero that will tell the studied how they know. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (Chicago: Hau Books, 2015), 6.
 - ³ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen, Germany: Niemeyer Verlag, 1986), "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," *Holzwege*, GA5 (Frankfurt am Main: Victor Klostermann, 1977), 1–74.
 - ⁴ Günther Rodolfo Kusch, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, trans. María Lugones (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
 - ⁵ Günther Rodolfo Kusch, *Obras Completas* (Rosario, Argentina: Editorial Fundación Ross, 1998-2003).
 - ⁶ The distinct issue with such view is that it only affirms the economy of emptying of existence and humanity of all sense that sees Heidegger in what he calls *machination* or *Machenschaft*, an infinite production and domination of senses of being by calculative rationalism and its economic capitalist life of accumulation.
 - ⁷ Omar Rivera and Patrick Hajovsky, "Visual Epistemologies of Resistance: Imaging Virgins and Saints in Contemporary Cusco," in *Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo*, Special Issue, "Epistemologías indígenas e imaginación artística" (forthcoming).
 - ⁸ Image is in public domain, and its reproduction does not intend any profit.
 - ⁹ El Primera Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, ed. Rolena Adorno, Complete digital facsimile of Guaman Poma 1615 [GKS 2232 4], 2001.
 - ¹⁰ "Pero mucho mas propio del sentir indígena seria el termino *utcata*" (Kusch 1998-2003: Vol. II, 268).
 - ¹¹ Kusch (1998-2003: Vol. III, 335-551).

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- ¹² Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997). Cf. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. Will McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 5–9. Also see Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign Vol. II* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- ¹³ Kusch (1998-2003: Vol. II, 280). English page 11.