International Workshop

Reclaiming Sustainability through Humanities-Science Pathways: Transdisciplinary Co-Production of Knowledge on Climate-Energy Futures

Date: December 1-2, 2022

Venue: South American Institute for Resilience and Sustainability Studies (SARAS)
Maldonado, Uruguay
Levers to trigger discussion

Can we teach ontological flexibility?

Why does ontological flexibility matter for sustainability transformations?

Warm-up exercises to flex the ontological “muscles”
Ontological flexibility

Rooted in **Indigenous paradigms and methodologies** (e.g., Zapatistas, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Shawn Wilson, Two-eyed seeing, Bagele Chilisa, Pedagogy of Mother Earth, …)

… and **Decolonial/Pluriversal** scholarship (e.g., Walter Mignolo, Boaventura Sosa de Santos, Arturo Escobar, Gloria Anzaldúa,…)

Ontological **flexibility, competence, agility**… gaining traction in International relations (e.g., Tamara Trownsell, Cristina Yumie Aoki Inoue), or evaluation science (Jennifer Billman)

Potential for sustainability science & knowledge co-production towards sustainability transformations
Can we teach Ontological flexibility?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogate</th>
<th>Continuously interrogate our ontological stance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open to changes</td>
<td>Be open to changes in our ontological stance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Be knowledgeable and respectful of the ontological stance of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commit</td>
<td>Commit to not privileging our ontological stance over that of others</td>
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Why does ontological flexibility matter for sustainability transformations?

- Not an inclusion-based project that seeks to add voices to the pot, but engaging across and through pluriversal worlds in meaningful ways

What is real?

- Matter & objects
- Relationships
- Consciousness

Primordial condition of existence

- Separation
- Relational
- Unity
Why does ontological flexibility matter for sustainability transformations?

Through **Onto-epistemological crises**:
- Realizing that something is off
- Meaningful interactions with non-Western cultures

How did you become a transformations practitioner?

VIJNETTE # 1

Making room for

Onto-epistemological diversity
Vignette #2
Vignette #3

Excerpt interview to Matthew Sakiestewa, Hopi & University of Arizona Professor
Vignette #4: Sargassum in Quintana Roo

- Norma Muñoz (Interdisciplinary Research Center of the Mexican Polithecnic Institute) is leading research on health effects of the macroalgae:

- “People are not well-informed about the [health] effects from Saragassum. They say ailments are sent by God”
Ontological Flexibility in the Anthropocene

“Natural scientists extend their worldviews to society and attribute to Homo sapiens the responsibility for these changes. From this perspective, Humanity then becomes the doom-bringer, but also the saviour: it is through the newly formed hope of creating a planetary stewardship in modern technology and science that humanity can overcome these huge challenges (Neyrat 2018: 59–67). On the other hand, this forces us to look at those whose alterity is actively denied by this project, and whose very existence has been historically oppressed and actively made invisible by a particular ontology.”

Vignettes

- #1: Animals do not disappear
- #2: There are animal cities
- #3: Hopi Runners
- #4: Sargassum & God