

DECOLONIZING THE CURRICULUM

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OVERVIEW

01 THE CALL FOR DECOLONIZATION

02 UNDERSTANDING DECOLONIZATION

02 BROADER APPROACHES

03 CLASSROOM APPROACHES

04 CONCLUSION



KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **Understand** what the call for decolonization is and what targets
2. **To be familiar** with the concepts of reconstruction and deconstruction and the idea of connected sociologies
3. Practical tools that help assist in the **integration of** decolonizing strategies

01. 'THE CALL FOR DECOLONIZATION'





'RHODES HALL', OXFORD UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY

- Whether we acknowledge the history of the university plays a key role in how we respond to the call.
- 'By the West' and 'For the West'
- Knowledge production as intimately tied to power



Payback time: academic's plan to launch Free Black University in UK

Melz Owusu has crowdfunded £60,000 to start a decolonised institution. Will existing universities agree to help fund it?



▲ Melz Owusu, who has launched a crowdfunding campaign, says: 'Black students leave university traumatised.'
Photograph: Alicia Canter/The Guardian



Young Universities
Future of Europe



Maastricht
University

Decolonizing the Curriculum

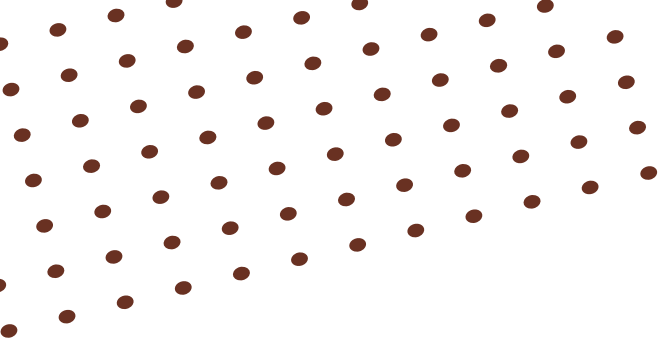
Practical Pathways for Educators
and Practitioners

September 9th



Aindre Maame-Fosua Evans
Teaching Fellow
Maastricht University



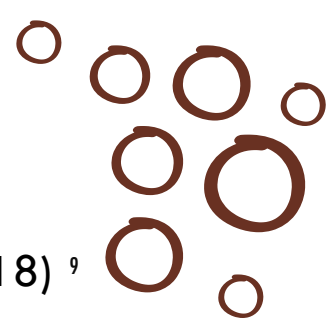


Universities as
infrastructures
of empire

Interrogating and
disrupting the
Western project
of civilization

Presenting a
Eurocentric canon
as the 'truth'.

Recognizing this
is integral to
understanding
the call



(Bhabra, Gebrial, and Nisancioglu, 2018) ⁹

02. UNDERSTANDING DECOLONIZATION





DECOLONIZATION

"This multiplicity of perspectives should not be surprising given the **various historical and political sites of decolonization** that span both the globe and 500 years of history. There are also important **methodological and epistemological** reasons to emphasize contestation of definitions of 'decolonising'."

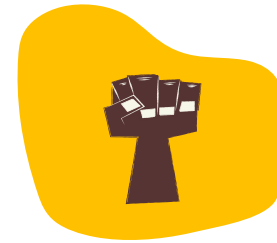
DECOLONIZATION WITHOUT DEFINITION

- Decolonizing' involves a multitude of definitions
- Decolonization as **process** not destination
- Racism framed as a '**historical accident**'
- Unveil and recognize the intentionality, mass wealth, and labour **invested** into the colonial project
- Underplaying the intentionality of the colonial project is to **underplay the violence with which it operated**

MOVING FORWARD



The point is not **only** to deconstruct knowledge and knowledge production mechanisms, but to **transform** them.



Knowledge and institutions that are more geo-politically **inclusive** and that decenter .



03.

BROADER APPROACHES



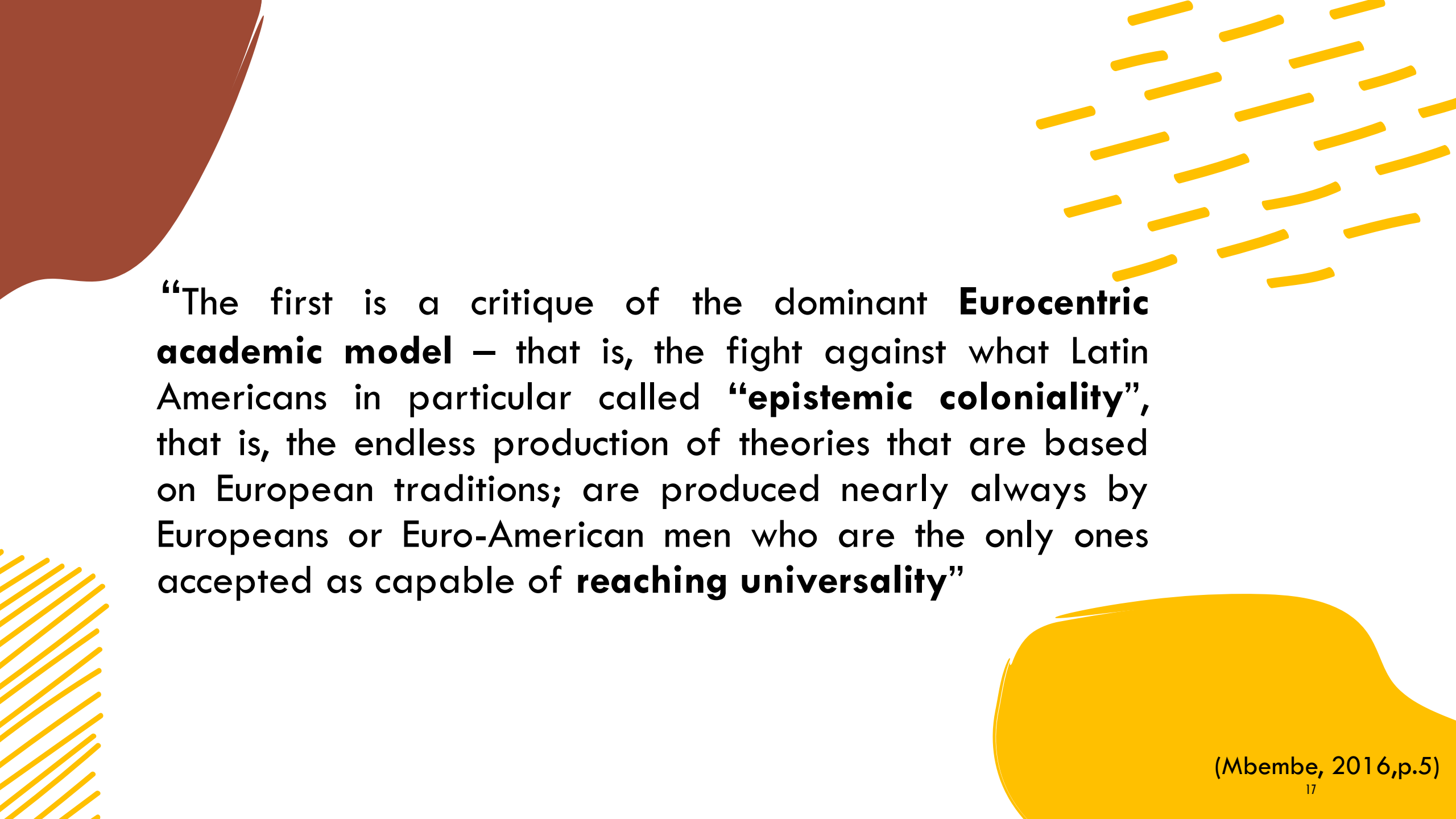
ACHILLE MBEMBE

Cameroonian Philosopher,
and author of 'On the
Postcolony'

Eurocentricity as a canon that
disregards other epistemic traditions

Decolonization of the institution and of the
knowledge itself





“The first is a critique of the dominant **Eurocentric academic model** – that is, the fight against what Latin Americans in particular called “**epistemic coloniality**”, that is, the endless production of theories that are based on European traditions; are produced nearly always by Europeans or Euro-American men who are the only ones accepted as capable of **reaching universality**”

(Mbembe, 2016,p.5)

GURMINDER BHAMBRA

Professor of postcolonial and decolonial studies. Author of *'Connected Sociologies'*

Decolonizing processes needs to be accompanied by 'deconstruction' and 'reconstruction'

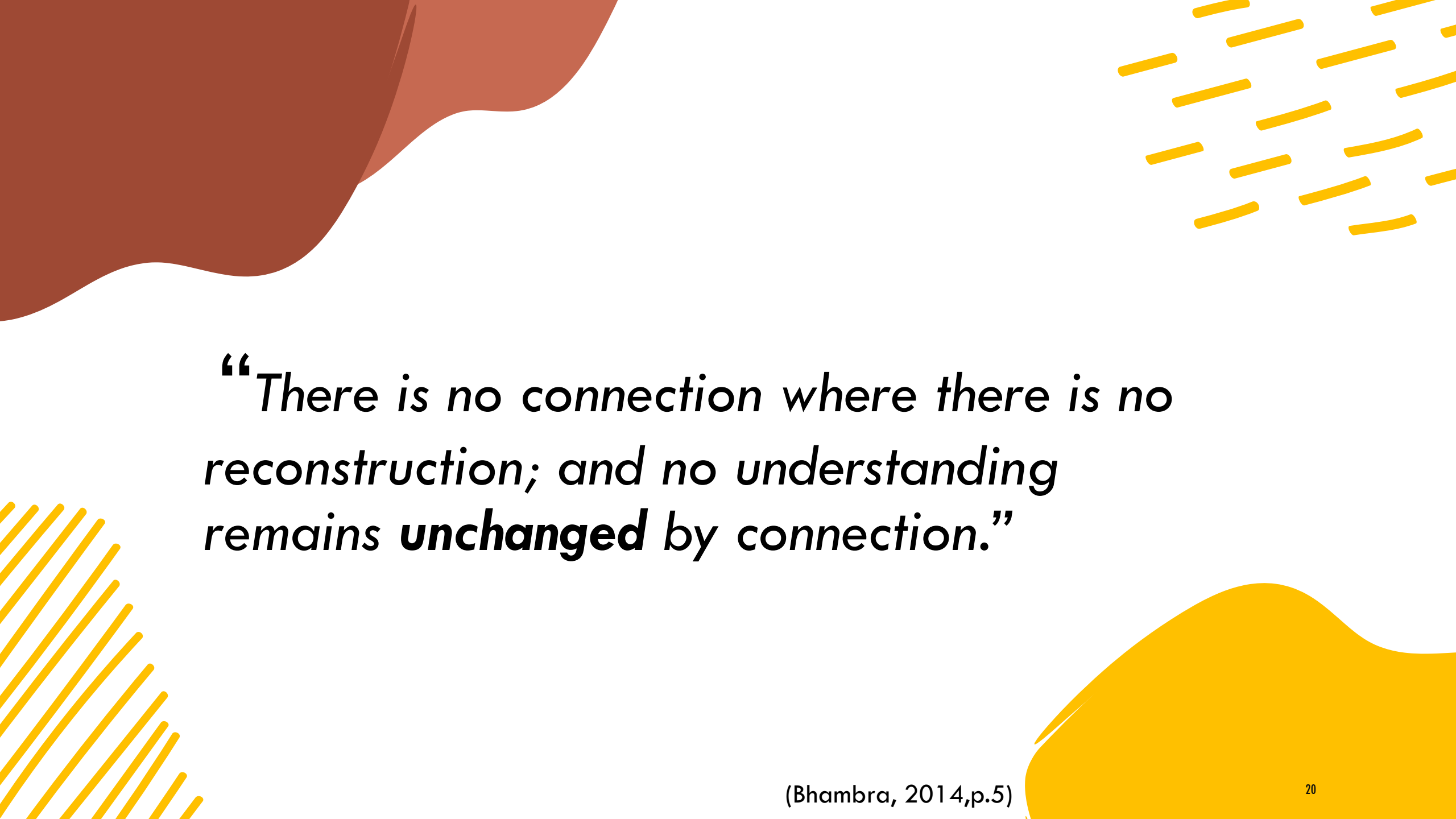
Reconstruction as a shift from a focus on comparative sociologies to connected sociologies



DECOLONIZATION THROUGH DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

“While knowledge can never be total, the selections we make have **consequences** for its ordering”

- Deconstruction to be taken as unpacking the canon
- Reconstruction can be taken as reconfiguring narratives
- The concept of connected sociologies



*“There is no connection where there is no reconstruction; and no understanding remains **unchanged** by connection.”*

CONNECTED SOCIOLOGIES

Particular sets of connections lead to particular forms of understanding

Systematic reconsideration of Eurocentric grand narratives



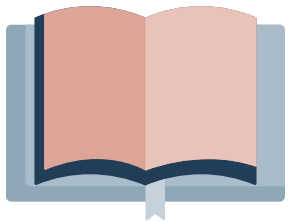
Connections are not decided on whim, but on concrete arguments for why

Politics and intellectual engagement will always take place in particular moments

THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION



STORY TELLING AS A DECOLONIZING APPROACH ?



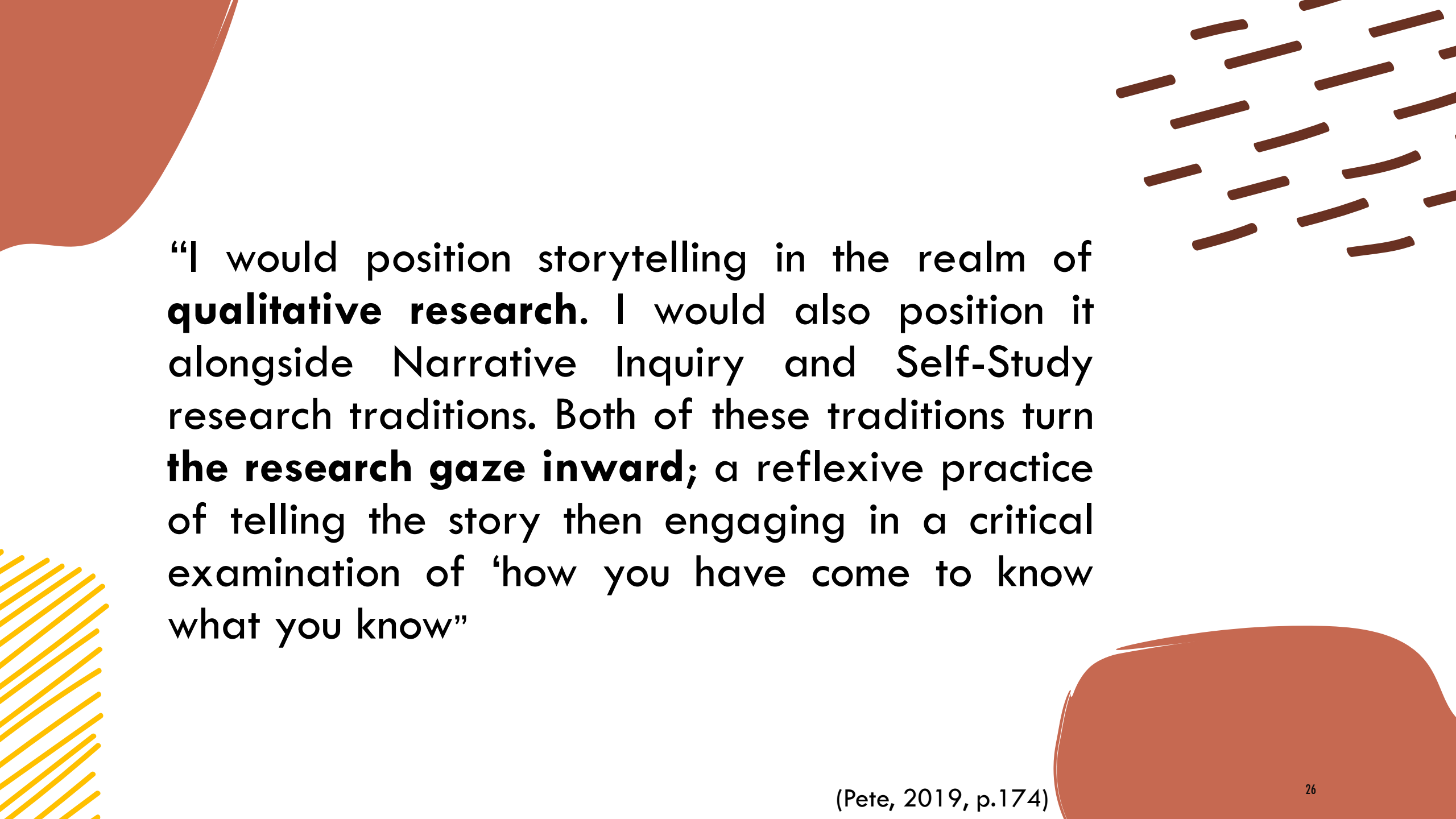
- Unpacking the **methodology** that we use to teach is part of decolonization
- Placing narratives and stories in conversation can create a depth often missing
- Allows for reflexivity and relatability
- More **complete** conversation

DECOLONIZATION IN METHODOLOGY

- Workshop on African Feminism
- **'Changes'** by Ama Ata Aidoo
- Using and unpacking narratives
- More intersectional and complete conversations
- Critical discourse into the concept of African feminism as a framework







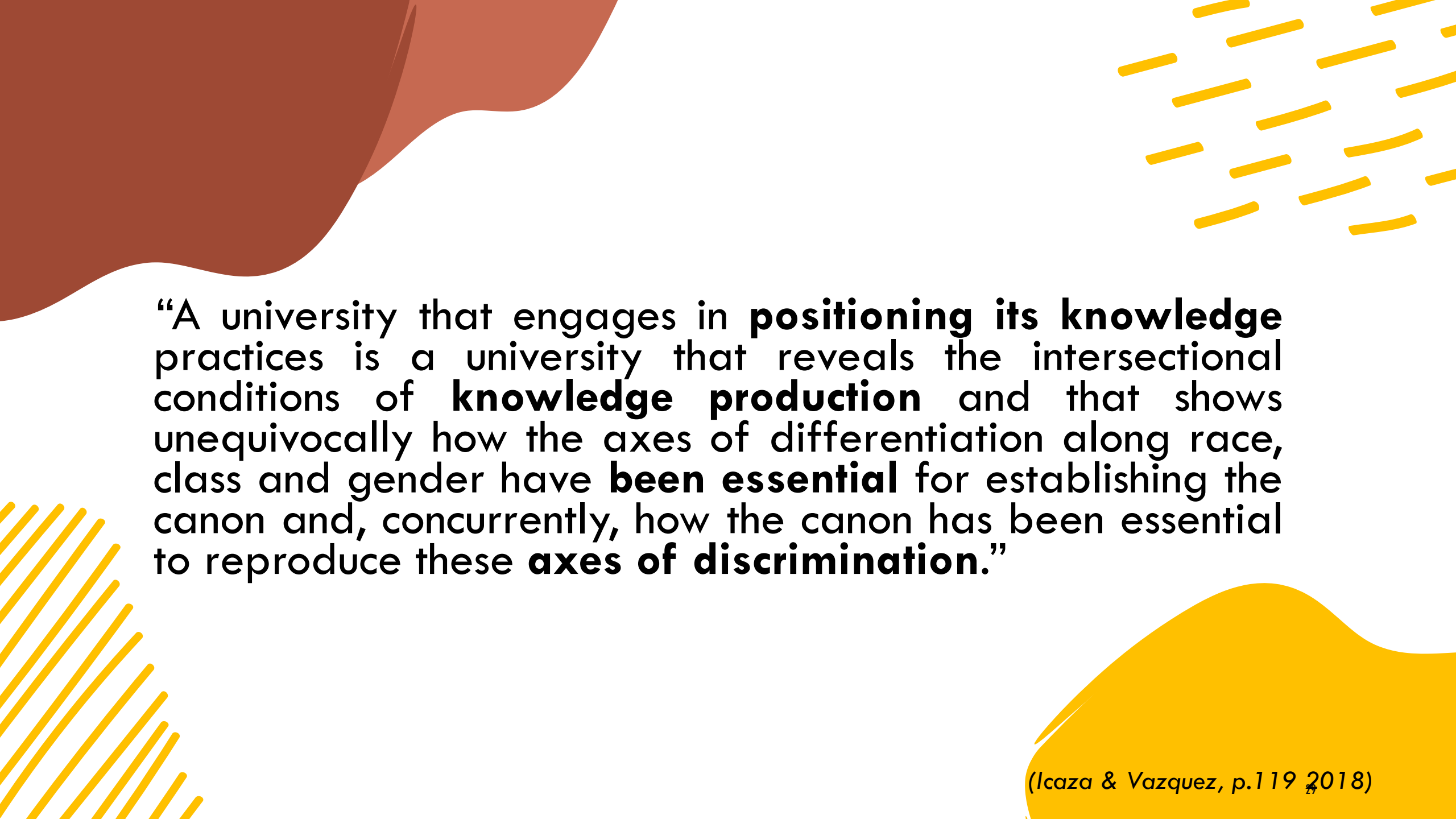
“I would position storytelling in the realm of **qualitative research**. I would also position it alongside Narrative Inquiry and Self-Study research traditions. Both of these traditions turn **the research gaze inward**; a reflexive practice of telling the story then engaging in a critical examination of ‘how you have come to know what you know’”



04.
OUR INTERACTIONS IN
THE CLASSROOM

POSITIONALITY

- Situate the knowledge you teach
- Practices that reveal the **geo-political location** of knowledge
- Important in overcoming “**the mono-cultural approach to knowledge**”
- Be open about **incomplete narratives** – particularly in course titles and content



“A university that engages in **positioning its knowledge practices** is a university that reveals the intersectional conditions of **knowledge production** and that shows unequivocally how the axes of differentiation along race, class and gender have **been essential** for establishing the canon and, concurrently, how the canon has been essential to reproduce these **axes of discrimination.**”

REFLEXIVITY

- Encourage difficult and safe conversations
- Communication tools in the classroom
- Teaching as meaning making
- Students will interact with your content differently
- Lived experiences as adding value to classroom settings

AS A TEACHER OR LECTURER

1. Be open to learn in your teaching spaces
2. Encourage difficult conversations and spend time facilitating the communication tools necessary to conduct those conversations
3. Do not represent knowledge in your course through tokenism, but meaningfully construct your narratives
4. Be honest about what it is you are teaching and what you decided not to
5. Unlearning is difficult and takes time



CONCLUSION

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"OUR WORLD IS NOT THE 'MODERN WORLD', IT IS THE COLONIAL WORLD, BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT YET RECONFIGURED THIS"

- GURMINDER BHAMBRA

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