

Rodolfo Kusch's 'Estar' as Seen from the Systemic Perspective of Humberto Maturana as a way of 'corazonar' Coexistence

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Sergio Holas

Spanish Studies, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia 5005, Australia

In this paper, I further develop Rodolfo Kusch's concept of 'negation'. I argue that it is an affirmative tool that enables us to sense and feel the other sides or domains of what we call reality and allows us to approach a plateau negated as a horizon of possibilities for conviviality and coexistence. Kusch's concept of negation brings forth an image of the emotions as being intimately interconnected to the values and ethos that form the basis of our behaviours. This paper also argues that Kusch's concept of negation must be considered together with Kusch's development of 'estar' as a philosophical concept which underpins 'América profunda' ways of being in the world (or the multiverse). Finally, I propose that this 'estar' requires a 'corazonar' of our ways of bringing forth ourselves and our territories to life.

■ **Keywords:** Estar, ser, emotions, decolonisation, negation as affirmation

Bringing Forth a Conversation. Trayendo a la mano una conversación

The question of beginning to speak, that is, of clearly articulating one's foundations may not be difficult for those who speak from a position of epistemic privilege and cannot sense the problem that the very act of speaking implies for the cultures that have experienced colonisation and who continue to witness its persistency in the colonial institutions under whose tutelage we still live. This is exemplified by the state of world politics today. The generalised blindness in relation to the conception and use of language — understood in an ample and systemic sense — by all those countries that aim to participate in world politics is paramount: we are still speaking in colonial terms. In the Amerindian and Latin American contexts any notion of 'dialogue' must take into account the 500 years since Columbus touched land and spoke in Spanish, Latin, Greek and other European languages to the Indigenous populations. But for those who do not blindly share the neoliberal glaucoma and have had enough of accepting the terms of the dialogue established by those very same institutions that claim to democratically represent 'all' and 'everyone', colonialist institutions whose foun-

dations emerged from imperial designs (Mignolo, 2000, pp. 3–45) and which have shaped the terms of 'dialogue' in order for it to make sense to the western ear, this language is highly problematic. Dialogue is not yet a true conversation because as its etymology points out, it means 'through logos', in other words, 'through reason'. That is to say that the notion of dialogue forces the terms of a given conversation through what the western disembodied universal subject has established as the standard logic: a form of thinking that corresponds to producing detached rational arguments. Dialogue, or 'thinking through logos' limits possible interactions by obscuring other logics or simply reducing them to the nonsensical or silly, thereby enacting a filter that consolidates the primacy of the rational whose image is the 'cool', the 'objective', the 'detached', which is in control of the processes and moods of the body or is untouched by its wants and desires. The 'cool' and the 'rational' become privileged ideals, as both terms have become strongly associated especially in media discourse

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Sergio Holas, Spanish Studies, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia 5005, Australia. Email: sergio.holas@adelaide.edu.au

with the positioning of the successful or VIP, which today is an equivalent to a kind of pseudo-nobility title you can pay for. Think, for example, of the ubiquity of images (mediations) of those who call themselves world leaders, who are always portrayed as being at a distance from their emotions or in control of them, allowing them, in this way, to justify everything and anything as if they existed apart from what they call distortions of everyday life. We have to remember that, in the west, reason is still strongly perceived as superior to the body and its affective capacities. To project a cool and detached image is somehow perceived as being rational, confusing domains of reality, therefore, allowing hypocrisy and contradiction into the mainstream. Accordingly, all other expressive gestures that do not fit into western expectations of the rational are considered to be irrational or emotional, and are invested with a series of chaotic properties, and devalued and considered waste (Sousa Santos, 2014, pp. 164–187). In doing so, the production of the rational blinds the observer to his/her own biological processes, therefore knowledge of self is minimised to the reproduction of the rational. Consequently, appearances, images and all sort of mediations have become a dominant 'second reality'. This negativity presents to the west a mirror image in which it can continue to see itself as 'cool', 'rational' and consequently, superior to all other populations and instituting the terms of any interaction with others, demanding obedience to western liberal standards. To have a dialogue on these terms means to operate in the domain of western rational disembodied arguments and the obscure logic that underlies it: the logic of epistemic coloniality. In other words, it demands the use of an incorporeal language, based on the calculus of efficiency, with a ghostly reference to life. From this perspective, 'dialogue' is a limited concept, compelling us to look for a more suitable term. I argue that we should turn to 'conversation'.

Conversation has a different, more interesting and useful foundation (Maturana, 1995, p. 20). Conversation is a fundamentally important term for people working in tertiary institutions since these maintain and enhance privileges enacting the 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2000). In other words, they externalise, brand, patent and sell knowledge (as object) in such a way that eventually the place from which this knowledge emerges becomes totally irrelevant to its application, thus fomenting dependency and a profound nondemocratic inequality in the terms of the exchange. This may seem an oxymoron as the west always presents/situates itself as the knower, the place from which people know better than people from other places, a place which produces epistemic advances for everyone to acquire and use. This 'coloniality of power' is the main tool undoing the value of situated knowledge and making people dependent on a knowledge that is discursively constructed as being more effective, superior, consequently, faster and more efficient. But this 'coloniality of power' reduces difference to one truth, one reason, in short, it

produces a shrinking of the multiverse into a universe in which there is no space for other worlds or other ways of being. It is a question of assimilation, in other words, of making similar, making alike or resembling: of putting an end to difference. Exploring this very same problem, Jorge Luis Borges wrote a short story called 'Fauna of Mirrors' (Borges, 1974, p. 67) in which he explores the problem of being removed from your own existence, placed inside a mirror and forced to reflect the appearances and life of someone who is situated outside of the mirror. Therefore, the person in the mirror is compelled to copy an existence that is not his/her own. Borges' short story makes it possible for the reader to experience colonisation and the damages it brings forth into the lives of those who suffer this displacement. This short story also suggests that these practices that remain and endure within the structures of the coloniality of power will, as a future consequence bring about a war of liberation. Likewise, I can assert that beginning in 1492 and as a result of the invasion of the multiverse by Spain, the populations from that territory (which became a periphery to Europe) have been forced to live inside a mirror, using Borges terms, as a fauna that reflects Europe, a fauna whose only life purpose is to devour what Europe commands to be consumed as objects, desires, ideologies, thoughts, ideas, and so on and so forth, so as to feel, perceive and represent themselves as copies. Consequently, through colonisation and its aftermath, the manifold ways of sensing, knowing and living that existed in pre-Columbian America have been contracted to almost zero in terms of visibility. This shrinking of the multiverse is the product of a process of stealing and accumulating/hoarding of all kinds of assets, material and immaterial, and a continuous expansion through the colonisation of land, bodies and minds on the European side, producing an imbalance which threatens to destroy our living planet. In part, we are facing the destruction of our planet because in shrinking our ways of feeling, sensing and living, we also reduce our capacity to effectively reflect on and respond to the problems this very same rationality has itself produced. The ecological cul-de-sac we find ourselves in today is of our own making. It is the endgame of a designed shrinking of our ways of sensing, knowing, and being, reducing our interlaced worlds, the anthroposphere (*antropósfera*) and the biosphere (*biósfera*), to fit the purposes defined/designed by the dominant abstract, imperial, capitalist free market rationality.

The imperialism and coloniality of neoliberal reason inscribes the laws through which institutions enact the law, thus generating hegemonic discourses in a self-regulatory way. Hence, the 'law' brings forth a world that enhances itself and from which there is no escape. In this way each determination must confirm the mono-logic of the system. Accordingly, the very concept of emancipation, of escape from this mono-logic, is perceived as nonsense. As a result, imagination is damaged and purposely reduced

to purely utilitarian and pragmatic ends. Simple enjoyment or play *per se* is considered to be a waste of time that needs to be controlled and those energies of life redirected towards an end within the design. Everything is reduced to the exchange value it receives in the market. In other words, there is no listening to other experiences of life coming from outside the imperial, colonial and neoliberal logic nor even from its very colonial borders. The question that emerges is that how we can weaken the hold that these colonial-neoliberal ways of thinking, living and feeling have over us? Maturana's assertion regarding the biology of love must be taken into account. I propose that we take a detour through second order cybernetics. Instead of maintaining the dichotomy subject/object in which the subject aims at controlling information about an external object, we must take a path through a second order cybernetics emphasising autonomy, autopoiesis, the capacity to reflect, consciousness and the observation of self. This is to say that in saying 'no' there is an opening that implies to change in a circular way or recursively. In other words, given the fact I cannot change others to fit my needs and views, I should learn Humberto Maturana's insights regarding the biology of love, which is what allows all living systems and, consequently, colonised peoples to persist in living. Is this emotion of love, which is the foundation of the relational behaviour, allowing me and others to persist in living as quasi-autonomous systems instead of becoming consumers and be fully assimilated into the market society? For instance, as a migrant who comes from the south I use a different sets of tools to keep on living even when struggling against a society that denies my legitimacy, autonomy, critical and epistemic capacity. In my experience, the beautiful rational cage of the west does not permit relationships with living beings and their worlds beyond the terms of western rationality and logic, in other words, in market settings and in the context of capital gains. Hence, I began to observe myself, my emotions, my thoughts and my doings and realised that I needed to let go of the certainties which contradicted my emotional intelligence and common sense. This process of self-knowledge, of observing the moods and emotions that were the fundamentals of my doings, made me acknowledge those differences that I enact every day and, therefore, I came to realise that I did not share some of the values which people living in the mirror of the west stand for. I detached myself from the discourses used to legitimise the actions and ways of relating to the biosphere and the multiverse of this construction called Australia. I recognised at the core of my being here in this present different emotions defining the domains of behaviour that I bring forth in my living. I resisted the historical pull of so many exclusionary practices that have helped to create an Australia driven by fear and distrust to such an extent that it is official practice in Australia to exclude and control ab-original people and asylum seekers. I saw the workings of the coloniality of power in these instances;

therefore, I understood that I was contradicting and consequently negating myself because I was not able to use in my everyday life those tools that Ivan Illich called 'tools for conviviality' in 1973, the very same year I lived in my own body the war against other ways of thinking, through the destruction of Salvador Allende's government in Chile. What kind of tools do we need to develop in order to solve the problems that imperial history has produced? Would we bring forth new weapons, new tortures, new words and new arguments to isolate boat people, Murri, Mapuche, Tanganekald, Meitangk First Nations people, the poor and the *other*? These are the kind of questions I have had in mind for a long time now. So I look for ways to open up the problem.

It is important for us today, people interested in unlearning the privileges the west has invested in us, to live in a truly democratic multiverse: a multiverse in which other worlds are legitimated and our cognitive capacities opened to expansion. Then, what are the processes that make a noncontradictory living possible? Our everyday practices of externalisation give rise to a very particular way of living, that is living towards the outside, which implies the expelling out and the emptying of the law written in our body, our emotions, our desires, a embodied knowledge, to the extent that everything becomes detached from our bodies, reified, and perceived and lived as objective, as a written law. This is the path, says Humberto Maturana, of a 'reality without parenthesis' (Maturana, 2004, pp. 20–22). This 'reality without parenthesis' shapes a compulsory path toward 'objectivity'. It is a compulsory path through a reality that is reified, expelled from the body and sent outside, a path in which there are no internal processes. Objectivity is measurable and brought under control thanks to a design based on statistics and shaped by the logic of the neoliberal economy in which we are forced to participate (as illustrated by the slogan: 'we are all in this together'). This in my view is dangerous in the sense that ethics, which is the basis of any democratic living, is externalised by phrases like 'It's the way the world works'. Any possibility of articulating difference or change is reduced and emancipation simply becomes unattainable. This is a path designed by the logos of imperial reason. In this 'reality without parenthesis' nothing is said about the knowledge of the processes that shape the self as a collective assemblage and the world it brings forth in one's doings. Rodolfo Kusch, during the 50s and 60s in Argentina, was asking similar kinds of questions.

Rodolfo Kusch's Negation Open up a World. La negación de Kusch nos abre a un mundo

What allows me to articulate sense? What emotions allow me to articulate sense? In Australia for instance the histories of peoples of non-English backgrounds are not considered relevant, unless they confirm the hegemonic image

of 'Man' or simply portray a negative of the other. We are not perceived as producers of knowledge, and are rapidly subsumed by clichés, stereotypes and common beliefs, reduced to abstract interpretations, detached arguments, silences and changes in dialogue. Finally, we are minimised to the role of masking concepts that reduce our alternative histories/stories and knowledge, to something placed outside time and irrelevant for the development of the nation-state and the idea of progress. Thus, from where can I begin to speak and articulate sense? I have come to the realisation that it is from a negation, a negation of this wall of arrogance, ignorance and blindness that I began to affirm my other experiences of life. Experiences of the world(s) I bring forth in my everyday doings.

Kusch's articulation of negation is a tool that allows us to push away from the centre of our being the obscurity brought in and made dominant by the colonisation of our ways of sensing, thinking and being. Kusch articulates this knowledge otherwise in his work *La negación en el pensamiento popular*. Because I live in contradictions, obscuring my alternate ways of sensing and doing in this world, I perceive contradiction as a necessary means of survival. The history of poetry claims that Baudelaire gave us contradiction. But to be true to oneself, contradiction in poetry is one thing and in other domains such as politics is another thing. Contradiction in poetry open up new territories, in politics and other social domains of reality it brings forth the corruption of character and the actual destruction of the social. It is modernity and its emphasis on the hegemonic political-economy that demands that we accept contradiction, in the sense that this dominant logic requires ideological uniformity placing today's neoliberal at the centre of our doings in all domains constituting what we call reality. I became aware that while at work, I do my work tasks in a mostly noncontradictory manner, but I have to create a second image of myself, a self-repressive one, to use when in meetings and official situations. I felt that the energy input used in this emotionally censured and contained self was doing damage to the base emotion of trust on which my life is founded (Maturana & Gerden-Zoller, 1993, p. 43):

La emoción que constituye la coexistencia social es el amor, esto es, el dominio de aquellas acciones que constituyen al otro como un legítimo otro en coexistencia con uno . . . /The emotion which makes possible social co-existence is love, it is the domain of actions that bring forth the other as legitimate other in co-existence with oneself . . .

This is why the pushing away of contradiction is important to people in processes of decolonising themselves from hegemonic discourses and ways of externalising internal processes through appearances, the law and the 'show and tell' of everyday politics. Because if I keep on living towards the mediation outside myself (the written pragmatic/utilitarian law), my emotional being shrinks and my living in this mediation begins to contradict the

core of my being that is based in the emotion of love and trust. I come, as a consequence, to clash with the common acceptance that the world is to be distrusted and that only through detachment, coolness and reason I will survive and fit into reality or 'the Australian way of life'. I saw in myself the already deeply damaged perception brought forth by this compulsory 'reality without parenthesis'. I saw and lived through this experience of having to deal in the everyday domains of a 'reality without parenthesis' which was not of my making, demanding me to submit to its force based on the externalisation of all processes and its fixed law of uniformity. In becoming aware of the obscure capturing of these processes, I now know that every man-made wall can be pulled down and that liberation, through the cleansing of the senses, must occur for any real change of self to begin to take place. I also know that this liberation from the cage that societies create in order to escape from fear is no less than the cages, enclosures, arguments, man-made separations, illusions.

Where to from here? What to do when the blockage is so strong that it demands the obliteration of all doors and bridges? Kusch's negation is the first insight I draw upon every time something does not fit properly, but requires a destructive force to intervene. It is as if in my mind — and bear in mind that the process of cognisance is not in the head (the brain is in the head) but somewhere between dualities — someone says: *no, there is another way to do this* and then I listen and learn that it is possible to enlarge my senses and multiply the paths almost *ad infinitum*. Negating the negativity on which 'reality without parenthesis' is built makes it possible to bring forth a way of thinking based on the emotions of trust and love, emotions that are the foundation for our social behaviour in which we can become transformed in coexistence. Of course, it should be possible for us humans who have been able to survive for a long time (more than 60,000 years of continuous living in Ab-original Australia), not just this short 500 years of western hegemony. Thus the emotion of trust is at the core of our being as well as the possibility of our persistence as living beings. I am referring to trust as a biologic inbuilt and as emotional intelligence (Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 2008b, pp. 214–215). Hence, this is an-other voice that tells me to trust, to act on trust first. This is an effect located no-where or everywhere in the body, but is produced by the interrelation between many factors, some visible and some invisible to my consciousness, which create this folding of my-self (Varela, 2000b, pp. 455–474). Thus, an-other voice says 'no'. Subsequently, force and negation go together. Thus, to negate is a positive force that helps to detach from mediations and illusions of all kind. Accordingly, to negate does not end in the negation itself, it is not a closing, but an opening, an unblocking and unfolding of space so that other realities may take place and begin to expand my perceptions. If you accept this assertion then to negate is positive and affirmative in the sense that it posits something and

in doing so it makes visible what has been rendered invisible and not part of the bourgeois consensus that brings forth that specific and compulsory domain of existence called 'objectivity without parenthesis' (Maturana, 2004) and its despotic law. Negation, then, opens our perceptive capacities to alter-natives. It is, in other words, affirmative in the sense that the negated possibilities are brought to the fore again so they can be seen and in doing so intensifying my body; hence, expanding what my body can do. In other words, those once irrelevant and invisible possibilities become tools for coexistence (Maturana, 1999; Watson, 2012), which is what the explanatory path of a 'reality without parenthesis' negated in the first instance. Then, there is the possibility of a different health. To say no to the negativity of this explanatory path of a 'reality without parenthesis' is to say yes to alternative explanatory paths. Negation understood, therefore, as a way of getting out of the blockage produced by a compulsory reality commanded by the consensus illustrated by the expression: 'we are all in this together'. I emphasise this as I have come, in this country, to see the emotions of distrust and fear underlying many aspects of everyday life. I remember that even during the dictatorship of Pinochet, I never felt and thought of distrust as important. Distrust, in those years, was not on the surface and people would engage in discussions of various kinds, even destructive ones, but none was as nihilistic as many conversations at present. This is the reason why today everything is so overregulated and externalised into law and commanded to even the most simple and obvious aspects of everyday life. Somehow in my displacement from Chile to Australia the sense of reality I lived in was displaced and as all knowledge that I brought with me became irrelevant and not acknowledged by fellow Australians, I became a barbarian. There is a second advantage in bringing forth this power to say 'no' to what is obviously an illusion: in saying 'no' the energy fluxes are unlocked again and these then change my perception of self and the present (Varela, 2000a). This is knowledge pertaining to a second degree of cybernetics. In other words, this is knowledge that I can change myself by observing myself, knowledge from within (Petitmengin, 2009; Varela, 2000b). This is knowledge that I have inherited from an alternate history. In this alternate history, the self is conceived as a collective assemblage (Guattari, 2011, pp. 71–82) emerging from the in-between of the actual biologic processes and the niche in relation to which it comes to exist. Hence, it requires an art of conversation in which there is no possibility to become trapped in the demand that 'this is the way the world works' or, as Maturana tells us, 'reality without parenthesis', since the world being brought forth requires skills in listening because it is based on trust in order to build an inclusive democratic society.

Kusch realised that in order to see and know, what was at the core of the difference between the immigrants that came to Argentina and the people already there and pop-

ulating it, he needed to go inland. We need to remember that many main cities were ports during the XIX Century, this due to the fact that the new Latin American republics needed to trade and this was done by sea, so immigration, which was mainly but not exclusively of European background, arrived and stayed in these port cities (Buenos Aires in Argentina; Valparaíso in Chile; Lima in Perú). Hence, these port-cities were perceived as progressive centres for culture, while the Indigenous populations retained some isolation where they maintained their ways of living without too much interference yet. Indigenous cultures were perceived through the negative semantic investment of the traditional and folkloric, in other words, of being fixed in the past. This dichotomy characterised the struggle to shape these then new republics, dividing the populations into modern (European immigrants living in the port cities) and traditional (Indigenous nations living inland). Thus, Kusch went inland in two senses: first, to the interior of the country and its mainly oral cultures and away from the 'lettered city' (Rama); and second, in that this was a journey of self-knowledge for him. Kusch went northeast and into the Andes, a road leading him to know the way to his own heart, in other words, to become aware of what he himself wanted to be. To be Argentinian, Kusch had to discover the specificity of what it was to feel to be Argentinian within himself. Being Argentinian was to intentionally balance both his European heritage and what was explicit of the land, to embrace the Indigenous specificity of it. It is in this sense that we can say that our country is in ourselves, much like aborigines teach us immigrants in Australia. Hence, what is it to be Australian? The specificity of being Australian has no way to avoid this question and the answer is, like Kusch's, intimately related to the aboriginal nations that still populate this country. So what is it to be Argentinian? To be Argentinian is something you find in yourself as you travel inland laying the path while you walk. In other words, in walking to the heart of the matter you become part of the territory while you bring it forth while walking about. Somehow in this walk inland, stepping in the land, dancing the land to life, Kusch is transformed by the land he is standing on and becomes part of. This becoming is related to the unblocking of space in the body or within yourself so the Aymara or Quechua or Mapuche First Nation person is coupled to you in coexistence. Both paths are connected in such a way that in travelling to the interior of the country Kusch was able to fold a place for the inland within himself, a room to live, a home in which he would be able to see and reflect on his own travel inland to the roots of what the new nations perceived, looking blindly towards Europe, as a problem. This very same travel constitutes and brings forth the self: self and nation are the same. Not an abstract self, but a situated one. The path to the heart of the matter was a route to his own place affirming that '(e)n Sudamérica es preciso asumir lo indígena.'/ 'In South America is important to assume that which is indigenous' (Kusch, 2003,

p. 309). This displacement away from the 'lettered city' (Rama, 1996) and into the inland/interior is what we today can call a second order cybernetic, Kusch turned into an observer of what was at the core of his own self. The tools provided by his western liberal upbringing were put to use and transformed into a new and able instrument in the contact with the Indigenous oral cultures. Kusch gave himself space to embrace the 'pueblo' and, in doing so, he developed his own plasticity: he situated himself in the barbarian territory and this experience allowed him to see the civility of the people populating the interior of the country. This travel inland allowed him to detach from the image imprinted upon his body by the coloniality of power and the discourses of the 'lettered city'. As I said above, Kusch articulates this knowledge otherwise in his *La negación en el pensamiento popular*, which can be read perfectly well as a travel to the heart of the matter. It is an examination of self through a recourse to a second order cybernetics, as well as a consideration of the legitimacy of the ways of the *other*: in Kusch's case, those persons living in inland Argentina with whom Kusch lived, at the end of his life, in a state coexistence that thus allowed him to rearticulate the notion of Argentinian identity.

When considered alongside Maturana's insights about love and trust as two of the basic emotions from which the social emerges, Kusch's insights become expanded. Kusch and Maturana were active at similar times, but in different locations (Kusch in Northeast of Argentina and Maturana in USA during the 60s and Chile afterwards); however they both bring into their search the openness of their own alternative extensive conversational backgrounds which, consequently, takes them to findings that required great plasticity and directedness in their way to explain what they were exploring. It is this systemic situated background that makes this connection possible.

Restoring the Balance between 'Ser' and 'Estar'. Restaurando el balance entre 'ser' y 'estar'

Kusch begins to see the expansive wave of understanding that makes possible his displacement from the certainties of his upbringing in the city into what was conceived as the unlettered inland. He was indeed moving away from the weak certainties established by the routines and regularities of city living and the westernised perception of the city as a place of security, development and better living. He began to listen and converse with people and peasants from inland and in doing so he made himself perceptive to the forms of humanity and civility that these people populating the interior of the country, then everything began to change: what was negative became positive and a door to another world opened. Kusch saw there a different sense of space and time: sacred space-time and articulated this experience in the term 'being' and the specificity of the Spanish verb 'estar'.

Kusch's articulation of 'estar' is related to 'la negación', because he saw that what the 'pueblo' did was to enact a distinction in the Spanish language between the verbs 'ser-estar'. In Spanish, the verb to be takes two forms: 'ser', which is to be conceived as in English as an active principle to which all positive semantic investments are attached; and 'estar', which entails an apparently passive principle to which mostly negative semantic investments are attached. This is due to the language dichotomies by which a world is brought to hand in the west, a world which aims at seeing itself in an image of a man of action. In doing so the world brought forth is divided in two and both parts receive opposite semantic investments. Hence, the unity of all life is divided into parts that receive different and contrasting semantic charges, such as subject/object, high/low, white/black, pure/impure, beautiful/ugly, sacred/profane and so on. In the Indigenous worlds of inland Argentina, when these dualities fall out of balance this brings about a chasm, a profound separation between the parts, creating all sorts of inequalities in all domains of language and domains of reality that are brought forth. Kusch saw the effects of this problem especially as it refers to the history of colonisation in Argentina. Kusch's ample capacity of observation, in both domains of biology (Kusch, 2003, p. 365) and language, expanded his capacity to see and comprehend the 'estar' of the Indigenous and 'pueblo' ways and, in doing so, he was able to empty 'estar' from the negative passivity attached to it by western discourses colonising the mind-body of lettered people. Kusch stated, based in this plasticity of the Spanish verb, that 'estar' is at the core of the Indigenous population as well as the Argentinian 'pueblo' ways of being in this world. Furthermore, Kusch specifies that both 'natura' (nature) and 'Dios' (the sacred) are seminal operators (Kusch, 2008, p. 48) that allow people 'estar' (to be) without contradiction and without falling into the unbalances and dichotomies of western languages. This is very important because it means that the dualities of the Indigenous languages do not necessarily become dichotomies. These dualities require, contrary to dichotomies, balance between the opposites. In other words, the aim of dualities is not to control-destroy one (the bad) with the power of the other (the good), but to maintain the fragile balance between them so the world does not go extremes destroying itself. As Quiroga-Kusch's main informer in *La negación en el pensamiento popular*—clearly states, it is about the avoidance of taking extreme positions, to reject them so there is no imbalance between the forces. These above mentioned seminal operators are tools that show how Quiroga's rationality is coupled to his emotional roots so he does not contradict himself. Language and, consequently, rational explanations are coupled to emotions. Humberto Maturana, the biologist who has reflected on this observation in depth, states that this coupling constitutes a systemic law: 'The path of living systems in general, and the path of human history in particular, is guided by

emotions, not resources [because] (a)ll rational systems are grounded on basic premises, accepted through preferences, a priori. So rational systems are grounded in emotions' (Maturana, 2001, p. 6). In other words, the speaker in Quiroga's perspective must be careful to not unbalance these forces. His/her main aim is to always be aware of what emotions and moods need to be avoided so as not to produce any imbalance between the forces. It is not about peace or war because peace and war are the products of extreme positioning. To do this reflective act requires self-observation. Quiroga, when stating something, does so by connecting to these seminal operators which make him aware of his emotional being instead of the detachment that the west gives priority to. These seminal operators reconnect actions to their biologic foundation in the emotions. To act is to sense in your body the emotions which are expressed in behaviours, so you may observe yourself when breaking the balance; hence, these observations provide him with the existential stability needed in order to live in balance, that is, respectfully of his/her relationship with Pachamama. In this way everything is connected, or, in Maturana's terms, Quiroga is coupled to the niche that arises from/in his doings.

This deep awareness of the role emotion plays in his own behaviour brings forth an '*estar*' (being here) which couples the two domains of reality (the biologic and the cultural) whilst the dominant discourses of the west untie them by taking explanations (abstractions) as the biologic processes they describe, in other words, by confusing the two domains. Kusch quotes Anastasio Quiroga saying that '*... los hechos son los que demuestran la verdad y no los dichos, y del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho*'.⁶ ... facts show the truth, not the sayings about it. Between facts and saying there is a gulf (Kusch, 2008, p. 26). For Quiroga, there is a long and insurmountable distance between sayings and facts. In asserting this distance between the concept and the action, Anastasio Quiroga is operating from a noncontradictory positioning based in self-observation. Therefore, truth is associated with a total absence or no-distance between facts and sayings. This lack of distance takes away the possibility of contradicting yourself. There is no place for rhetoric here. Quiroga is very clear and straight forward about it:

'Si yo no me venzo a mí mismo' no podré lograr la convivencia, ni logro el acuerdo para vivir todos en paz. 'Es lógico que usted tenga más fuerza que yo. El otro tenga menos. Pero no tenemos que ir a ese extremo. Todos los extremos son malos.' (...). 'Yo vivo a mi manera y como puedo. A mí no me macanean más.' Y si hiciéramos así 'siempre nos veríamos envueltos en unos laberintos sin salida y a sufrir sin saber para qué y por qué es el mundo.' 'If I do not conquer myself I will not be able to coexist with others, nor will I be able to reach agreement so that we can all live in peace. It is logical that you are stronger than me and that another person is still weaker than me. We don't have to go to that extreme. Extremes are bad.' (...). 'I live my way and as I can. I am not being trashed

again. If we were to act like this 'we would always be lost in labyrinths without a way out and suffering without knowing the why and how of the world.' (Kusch, 2008, p. 26)

Kusch understands that this knowledge is the foundation stone from which a sense of identity of *América profunda* may arise. This knowledge states that it is from a noncontradictory relationship between biology (trust of being able to maintain the balance of the duality) and culture (the appropriate behaviour so as not to produce imbalances [going to extremes] within the duality). This allows *América profunda* to comprehend that for life to persist in all its forms a compromising balance is required between the forces. Kusch understood that to retain this balance of the duality of forces there must be a negation, a capacity to say no to the negativity of hegemonic discourses, its colonising powers and the contradictory emotions and behaviours they produce. In other words, he comprehended that he needed to be fully involved in undoing the contradictions and the negativity within the self. It is in this way that Quiroga can affirm that he has to conquer his desire to go into extremes because coexisting requires balance between all members of society (human and nonhuman). Kusch understands that to maintain the balance of the duality of forces a negation must be enacted. Quiroga's statement clearly shows this displacement from the observing objects (conquer others; first cybernetics) to the self-observing ('conquer myself; second cybernetics) process. At this point Kusch realises that an *América profunda* observer acknowledges the emotional relational basis of his/her own behaviour/actions (including language). In other words, he/she knows what his/her body can do. In holding this knowledge, he/she does away with the interference of mediations aimed at destroying his/her autonomy. To know oneself, one must not contradict the emotional intelligence at the basis of his/herself. Noncontradiction does not bring separation into self. He/she finds his and her autonomy as a living system in this profound knowledge.

Maturana confirms Kusch's assertions. In this paper I have related the biologist's observations of living systems to the philosopher's discourses and have seen how they echo each other creating resonances which are full of sense for the ear. The '*es así*' (it is as it is), to which Kusch refers, is the basis on which to say 'no' to mediations, consolidating the knowledge coming from the intelligence of the emotions that affirm my being here. In this way, Anastasio Quiroga, Kusch says, suspends the mediations so the '*es así*' takes priority over disembodied rational arguments that bring in all sorts of abstractions and, therefore, contradictions. This is a very potent knowledge a practice which recurrently produces and takes care of living systems. This shows the circularity by which popular thought always refers back to its own core noncontradiction experience. Maturana calls this the biology of knowledge or the biology of love.

From this suspension of the value of the mediation (which is contradiction) Kusch goes on to make a series of connections with the sacred in popular and Indigenous American thought in such a way so as to assert that thinking is doing, in other words, thinking is enacting the balance required for living in a living Pachamama. This is exactly what is sacred: the balancing act, which is what Indigenous populations of *América profunda* do in their living: to keep the balance between forces. If we are able to see this in all its insightful force, which Kusch articulates in words expressing the sacredness of living, then we can see the horror (if the balance is broken) and the beauty (if the balance is maintained) that this insight implies.

Everything has a Heart. Todo tiene corazón

I must acknowledge the precious knowledge articulated by Rodolfo Kusch, because this knowledge makes living in coexistence conceivable and our 'estar' in this present something workable. Once you experience this you would be able to grasp within your body that one is submerged in the totality we call existence and that this existence is larger than self, and that self is just one more effect of living in coexistence with the body of the Pachamama.

To come to an end I would like to bring in the words of the Tojolabal and the Tseltaetik of Chiapas, southern México, that say that everything has a heart, '*todo tiene corazón*'. To have a heart, to be alive, equates to maintaining the balance between forces. Every imbalance destabilises and confuses the sense of self (self as a dispositive), contradicting and destroying the possibility of the coexistence of living systems shaping the Pachamama. This is what Carlos Lenkendorf, in referring to the Tojolabal world, says:

La convicción de que todo vive es típica de los tojolabales y se explica a partir del término 'altzil', corazón. Se habla del yaltzil ja'iximi, el corazón del maíz. En efecto, el maíz tiene corazón, porque no hay nada que no tenga corazón que corresponde al principio vida, al alma. Por tanto, las cosas pueden ser sujetos de verbos. Nosotros, los humanos habitamos, pues, en un cosmos que vive. No hay naturaleza muerta./The conviction that everything is alive is characteristic of the Tojolabal people and is explained in relation to the word 'altzil', heart. It is said that maize has a heart, yaltzil ja'iximi. In fact, maize has a heart because there is nothing without heart, which is the main principle of life, the soul. Therefore, things may be the subject of verbs. We humans live in a cosmos that is alive. There is no still life. (Lenkendorf, 2004, p. 54)

Hence, to have a heart is the principle of life. The negation from which Kusch started makes it possible to affirm that particular way of being in the world which Kusch names as '*estar-siendo-así*', being without justifications, without extremes, without abstractions, without contradictions. It is in this sense that there is no such thing as a still life, a life without change and movement. Every-

thing takes place in the processes of living, including '*estar*', therefore, everything has a heart. Hence, Kusch found this knowledge, this principle of life while studying and teaching about *América profunda*, and this knowledge transformed him.

I have argued in this paper that to negate the negativity in the everyday is an affirmation of life that confirms the positivity of what has been negated and cancelled by the forces of death and its grand narratives such as salvation by assimilation as in the saying 'we are all in this together'. To negate allows me to conserve the balance between the forces of the duality. I also have argued that the concept of '*estar*', as understood by Kusch, is a tool that opens up the concept of being as used in the west, helping to reestablish the balance, allowing a better understanding and restoration of the duality coupling the forces that shape life. In third place, I have concluded that the heart of the matter takes, consequently, a different and affirmative form enabling the subsumed ('*estar*') to emerge onto the surface of discourses; hence, bringing forth a previously hidden horizon of possibilities. It is in this sense a set of enabling tools which would be useful when wanting to enact a way out of the cul-de-sac in which the modern image of self is encaged. Finally, emotions will necessarily take their rightful place, side by side, with the rational and will be restored to fulfil their necessary role in the movement of life. This awareness of the importance of the emotions is already present in the Spanish expressions '*corazonar*' and '*sentir-pensar*' (Guerrero Arias, 2010), which denote what Maturana calls '*autoconciencia*' (Maturana & Dávila, 2015, pp. 473–481), a recursive reflection which implies a knowledge that comes from the observation of self by which, if we do not like what we see, we can change ourselves. In terms of Francisco Varela, a knowledge that comes from within. This is where we are standing now; therefore, we cannot dismiss this knowledge that demands from us an ethical response to the problems arising from everyday negativity and nihilism.

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About the Author

Sergio Holas was born in the port town of Valparaíso, Chile and migrated to Australia in 1988. He has published five books of poetry (*Distancia cero*; *Ciudad dividida*; *Paisajes en movimiento*; *Rayo de tiniebla o el pajarito indones* and *Adelaide, Ramblin on My Mind: Meditations Upon Anomalies as Emergent Occasions*, all by Ediciones Altazor, Chile), co-translated *Poetry of the Earth. Mapuche Trilingual Anthology* (Brisbane: Interactive Press, 2014) and a study of the short stories of José Donoso, *Racionalidad e imaginación* (Madrid: Pliegos, 2001). His poetry has been published in *Babab* (Spain), *Letralia* (Venezuela), *Arena* (Melbourne), *Social Alternatives* (Brisbane) and others. Sergio currently teaches Spanish Language as well as Latin American Culture and Literature in the Department of Spanish at University of Adelaide.