

## Decolonial Epistemology and the Future of Thai IR Theory\*\*

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### Abstract

This article aims to propose decolonial epistemology derived from an intellectual development of critical Latin American thinkers by suggesting it as a crucial lesson for the future development of Thai International Relations (IR) theory. It begins by addressing the limitations of postcolonial theory, and arguing that postcolonial theory does not connect its intellectual implications to the traumatised beings, either human beings or non-human beings, globally. Arguably, postcolonial theory is not instrumental for the construction of non-Western IR theories, including Thai IR theory. Therefore, the article deviates from postcolonial theory to highlight what Ramón Grosfoguel calls 'decolonial turn', a decolonisation from Western epistemology to advocate the world of 'the pluriverse'. This pluriversal world is emphasised as one of the core aspects for the future of Thai IR theory. In addition, another key figure of decolonial thinker, Walter Mignolo, also emerges as a critic of Western philosophy and the prominent thinker who can create his own terminology or concept in opposition to some Western thinkers. This article acknowledges these Latin American thinkers to submit as a crucial lesson to Thai IR scholars, in our desire to acquire a theoretical and epistemological recognition within the discipline of IR.

Keywords: decolonial epistemology, Thai IR theory, postcolonial theory

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนำเสนอญาณวิทยาต้านอาณานิคมที่ได้รับพัฒนาจากทางความคิดมาจากการกลุ่มนักคิดلاتนิอเมริกันเพื่อเป็นบทเรียนให้กับการพัฒนาทฤษฎีความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของไทยในอนาคต โดยเริ่มต้นจากการแสดงให้เห็นถึงข้อจำกัดของทฤษฎีหลังอาณานิคม และได้ย้ำว่าทฤษฎีหลังอาณานิคมไม่สามารถเชื่อมโยงนัยยะทางความคิดเข้ากับสรรพสิ่งต่างๆ ที่เชื่อมกับความทรมาน ทั้งที่เป็นมนุษย์และไม่ใช่มนุษย์ ทฤษฎีหลังอาณานิคมไม่อาจเป็นเครื่องมือที่ก่อให้เกิดการสร้างทฤษฎีความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของประเทศที่ไม่ใช่ตะวันตกรวมถึงของไทย บทความจึงหันเหลี่ยมไปสู่ญาณวิทยาแบบโลก 'พหุภพ' ตามที่ร่วมกัน ก่อตั้ง เรียกว่าเป็น 'การหันเหลี่ยมการต้านอาณานิคม' นอกเหนือนี้ วอลเตอร์ มิกโนโน่ นักคิดผู้วิจารณ์ปรัชญา ตะวันตก ได้สร้างคำเฉพาะหรือในทศนิยมของตนเองเพื่อเป็นการต่อต้านญาณวิทยาแบบตะวันตก นักคิดกลุ่ม ลัตินอเมริกันกลุ่มนี้มีขอบเขตเรียนสำคัญแก่นักวิชาการความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศของไทย ผู้บรรณาการได้รับ การตระหนักในเชิงทฤษฎีและญาณวิทยาภายในสาขาวิชาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศ

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## Decolonial Epistemology and the Future of Thai IR Theory

### Introduction

I would like to begin this article with a single story. It is about the lecture given by a Puerto Rican trans-modern philosopher, Ramón Grosfoguel at the University of California Berkeley in 2011 (Grosfoguel 2011). Grosfoguel was addressing about the widespread of Western languages and philosophies propagated across many universities around the world. These universities seem to adopt Western philosophies and ways of knowing the world (epistemologies) into their course syllabuses by not realising the hidden colonial agendas compacted with such ongoing knowledge. They often operate in five European languages in which most of the students in social sciences and humanities prefer to read the works of the continental thinkers from the following countries; notably, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States of America. It is implied in his lecture that philosophy of the pre-colonial era such as the ancient work of a Quechua nobleman, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (Wamán Poma), is entirely ignored by the young generation of Latin American students who enrolled in the taught courses in the department of English, arts, and literature in many universities in the U.S. and others.

This point made by Grosfoguel suggests one not to overlook the relation between dominant languages that govern the universities and the subjects' ways of understanding the world. Certainly, the two are caught in conflicts. For the subjects, one of the possible ways to deal with this colonial image of Western epistemology is to grasp the hegemonic formulation embedded in it. They will learn later that everything begins with a peculiar axiom. It is the Western axiom that produces super-narrative in which Westerners claim self-legitimacy in producing universal knowledge while in large parts of non-Western geographies still remain the Western myths. The inhabitants there are unable to register as members of the writers of the universal knowledge and unsuccessful in coming up with epistemological and philosophical productions. By less concerning on how the inhabitants view themselves and being more likely to abandon the inhabitants' native knowledge, the Western axiom affirms that non-Western geographies are originally mysterious until those areas are examined technically by Western epistemology, language, narrative, and description. At this point, if non-Western scholars as well as Thai International Relations (IR) scholars want to write their own particular

histories, narratives, philosophies, and theories in order to possess a universal status, they will have to deem this axiom to be reversible as a priority. It can be said that decolonisation of knowledge starts off with this reversibility and disillusionment. With this awareness, the epistemology that demands us to follow the Western origin can be rectified as a result.

Such decolonisation of knowledge that places an emphasis on the reversibility of Western axiom forms an essential part of the strategic-intellectual position called 'decolonial epistemology'. Although it is an intellectual revolution that shares the political and intellectual objectives with postcolonial theory, decolonial epistemology is different from postcolonial theory. Before highlighting the influential character of decolonial epistemology, the first section of this article aims to reassess postcolonial theory by re-examining the works of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Franz Fanon. What is central to this task is that those theorists pose limitations to the construction of knowledge, preventing an emergence of the epistemology of the non-West, including Thai IR theory. The second section moves to clarify the meaning of decolonial epistemology by displaying a quintessential thought of Latin American decolonial thinkers, namely, Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, and Ramón Grosfoguel, who, in my opinion, are adamant in critiquing not only postcolonial theorists, but also Western thinkers such as René Descartes, Giorgio Agamben, and Slavoj Žižek. Here, my presentation of decolonial thinkers' intellectual abilities does not mean to discredit those Western thinkers. Rather, it is aimed at informing Thai IR scholars of the rigorous necessity in daring to open a dialogue with Western philosophers in an academic manner. If Thai IR scholars are eager to have a theoretical position to be existential in the discipline of IR, we will need to open a constructive debate with Western philosophers, and in need of inventing our own vocabulary, terminology, and phraseology, apart from criticisms. By following decolonial epistemology obtained from decolonial thinkers, the final section proposes the strategic thinking for the future of Thai IR theory that comprises four lessons:

- (a) Thai IR theory should resist hegemony and not promoting herself as another form of hegemony by building up partnership with other non-Western IR theories.

(b) Thai IR theory should adopt the principle of 'the pluriverse' into her way of knowing the world by being conscious of the collective traumas or 'the colonial wounds' of all beings; be they human and non-human beings.

(c) Thai IR theory should take scepticism in a friendly manner towards postcolonial theory drawn from the works of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Franz Fanon, including being a constructive critique of some Western theorists such as René Descartes and Slavoj Žižek. She can ally with some Western theories that deny Western epistemology for the developments of her concepts when placed in the necessary circumstances.

(d) Thai IR theory should invent her specific vocabulary, terminologies, and words borrowed from English or from Pali/Sanskrit to represent herself in the discipline of IR.

## I. Reassessing Postcolonial Theory

This section provides a reassessment of the works of postcolonial theorists, whose works are insufficient for the production of the theory of the non-Western knowledge, including Thai IR theory. There is a difference between traditional postcolonial theorists and decolonial epistemology. Such difference occurs as a result of the former's lack of enthusiasm in pondering over the theory of the non-Western knowledge. Some seek to highlight the interrelations of power, hegemony, and knowledge within the context of colonialism that scales down non-Western knowledge to the non-universal status. Some attempt to identify a particular space of culture as a result of global cultural interactions, and some evoke national consciousness by highlighting the origin of culture. Although they challenge Western narrative by indicating its incomplete universalism, those postcolonial theorists are not enough to identify the epistemology of non-Western knowledge. In addition, with a cultural and territorial entrapment, some limit to only expressing their own pains and are not assisting much in articulating the pain of the living beings affected by Western expansion, e.g. global capitalism.

To begin with, Said's *Orientalism* (1978) brings Michel Foucault's 'power/knowledge' and Antonio Gramsci's 'hegemony' into analyses in order to examine the colonial relation between the

Occident and the Orient. Orientalism thematically shows “a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” in many dimensions of colonial practices (Said 1978, 4). Said’s emphasis upon the relation of knowledge production and colonial practice is relevant to the adoption of Foucault’s ‘power/knowledge’ into the textual formation about the non-West operated by the West. This shows that knowledge about the outsider is formed through textual formation operated by the insider. Orientalism highlights cultural and intellectual formation of knowledge based on unequal power relation. In other words, it is noted as a particular way of knowing and speaking about the Orient through the texts produced inside the Occident, the upper-hand. Said writes that “the orient was orientalised not only because it was discovered to be ‘oriental’ in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be made oriental” (Said 1978, 5). By adopting Foucault’s analysis of discourse, Orientalism shows this problematic point as well as unmasking power relation embedded in the cultural production of the West. Yet, Orientalism is so little in articulating the resource of knowledge about the non-West.

Postcolonial theory also draws on the works of Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha. One of Fanon articles that offers sharp and witty decolonising strategy is ‘On National Culture’, which is one of the collecting essays in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). A common attitude of Fanon and Léopold Sédar Senghor is a belief in ‘Negritude’, the belief in the existence of African national cultures across the continent. Culture of African nations must work together at a continental level for the collective decolonising process. Fanon succinctly writes that “the culture which is affirmed is African culture”. He continues that “the Negro, never so much a Negro as since he has been dominated by the whites, when he decides to prove that he has a culture and to behave like a cultured person, comes to realise that history points out a well-defined path to him: he must demonstrate that a Negro culture exists (Fanon 1963, 168). National culture is obtainable from the collective efforts of the black people in their decolonising actions and justifications of their own existence on earth (Fanon 1963, 172). Around 1960, Fanon’s praise of national culture was merged with a strategy of decolonising process by encouraging the unity of African people at the continental level. This idea of Negritude reflects his plea for African nativism.

However, Bhabha's argument emerged around 1990 to unsettle nativism promoted by Fanon. Bhabha's proposal on 'cultural difference' or 'cultural hybridity' opposes Fanon's 'nativism'. The idea is condemned by Bhabha as a lack of insight to the globalisation aspect of culture. Cultural difference is the immanent act of rewriting nation, to liberate cultures from binding to nationalism, and to separate 'people' from 'residents'. The 'residents' are conceptually the individuals who are bounded by the nation. They are simply nurtured, educated, and instilled by state ideology to be patriotic subjects. In contrast, conceptually, the idea of people is not the same as that of residents, who are subjected to state's national ideology. For Bhabha, people are the main agencies, who drive any modern cultural creations and reinventions. They are located in different dimensions of times and space. People are the contestants who oppose the discourse of nationalism. Bhabha sees culture in a globalising period as "a form of living that is less patriotic, less homogenous than hegemony, more hybrids in the articulation of cultural differences than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structure of social antagonism" (Bhabha 1994 200-201). In his opposition to Fanon, Bhabha challenges us to conceive 'people' who conceptually are the drivers of anti-nationalist discourses. The idea of people as agencies of cultural differences and cultural hybridities creates the political space of cultural antagonism inside the nation. This is what Bhabha calls 'dissemi-nation'. The concept refers to people's cultures that emerge from the marginality of nation. They are not bounded to the state's patriotic discourse. Eventually, they come to signify as the location of culture in which splitting, ambivalence, and vacillation in every globalised nation are unavoidable (Bhabha 1994, 211-212).

I suggest that the disagreement between Fanon's nativism dated back in 1960, and Bhabha's cultural hybridity emerged around 1980 marks a great debate in the intellectual history of postcolonial theory around 1990s. At minimum, such debate may direct postcolonial scholars to the two choices. That is to say, to consent with Fanon's proposal of seeing nativist culture as constitutive element in decolonising the nation. Or, alternatively, to consent with Bhabha's proposal that seeks to deconstruct nationalist discourses. Out of this discussion, the choices are made to select between to have faith in nativism or to believe that nativism is outdated. Nativism is completely destroyed by globalisation. Cultures are more hybridised, and most of the national cultures are rather in sharp decline because of a widespread globalising world and, to a certain extent, because of an undiminished world of

digitalisation. But, to my particular concern, the great debate is dismissive of the intellectual abilities of the (former) postcolonial subjects in speaking theoretically about their own knowledge and epistemologies. I understand that Bhabha and Fanon may have to concern on the historical contexts of which both are structurally situated in as a priority; the colonial conditions and the globalisations. However, those historical contexts discourage both from thinking over the theory coming from the non-West.

I suggest that this great debate, a choice to be made between nativism and cultural hybridity, does not render much hope to the theory of non-Western IR, including Thai IR theory. The reasons are, on the one hand, Fanon's nativism is stressing on culture of African people, and on the other, Bhabha's cultural hybridity is indicative of cultural antagonism to a nationalist discourse. The latter usually downplays postcolonialism to the endless emergence of cultural identities while the former continues to promote nativism of the black and not others. Specifically, Bhabha's conceptualisation of 'people' does not highlight postcolonial people as people who can acquire the universal status in the same way as the West. I then suspect that through this postcolonial great debate where concepts are initially provided turn out to be something that is not so much different from each other. The two theses provided by Fanon and Bhabha do not take people of the former colonies as the theorists as the knowledge-producers as well as concept-producers. Consequently, it is crucial to note that all of the conceptual avant-gardes of postcolonial theory ranging from Orientalism, nativism, and cultural differences or hybridity are entirely the terms that recede from articulating and evoking the theory of the non-Western IR, including Thai IR theory.

## II. Decolonial Epistemology

By departing from the theses of postcolonial theory, this section highlights the essence of decolonial epistemology, which aims to form the understanding of the world in order to liberate human and non-human beings, and to extensively raise scepticism towards the European thought. Decolonial epistemology reflects political and cultural projects, which are intellectually developed through the works of some critical Latin American thinkers. Decolonial epistemology comprises twofold. On the one hand, it is proposed here as a bird-eye-view of a colonial wound of all species

on earth, either human or non-human beings, as a result of Western-capitalism expansion. On the other, as a disentanglement from Western epistemology, decolonial epistemology provides a sceptical viewpoint to the Classical European thinkers such as Descartes and European leftists such as Agamben and Žižek. Remarkably, a difference between decolonial epistemology and postcolonial theory lies in the latter's ignorance of Western-capitalism expansion, of a colonial wound of all species, and of their refusals of criticising European thought. With this consideration, rather than postcolonial theory, I suggest decolonial epistemology be a prototype of Thai IR theory in the future.

Decolonial epistemology at its core is a thinking of the world broadly and extensively. It is to dwell thought beyond the Western horizon while assuming that all horizons are interlinked and connected as part and parcel of universalism. Universalism in this sense has a different quality from Western universalism. We can follow the opinion of Hamid Dabashi, a post-Orientalism philosopher, who argues that the question of European universalism in relation to the universal theory institutionalised in the West is a boredom (Dabashi 2015, 33). Universalism is about how the non-European people can reach consciousness "for the purpose of offering alternative visions of reality more rooted in the live experiences of people in African, Asia, [and] Latin America" (Dabashi 2015, 34). Dabashi's opinion is bounded with the opinion of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a thinker of the 'epistemologies of the South', who highlights that "the emancipatory transformations in the world may follow grammars and scripts other than developed by Western-centric critical theory, and such diversity should be valorised" (de Sousa Santos 2014, 3). It is worthwhile to think of 'diversity' noted in the analysis of de Sousa Santos. Diversity in his account maybe interlaced with the opinion of Paulo Freire, which is clearly developed in **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** (1970), in which the struggle to regain humanity must not be predicated on one side. In **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, Freire's writing is pertinent to the idea of struggle that, for the true struggle to acquire valuable meaning, "the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity, become in turn oppressors of the [former] oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both" (Freire 1970, 21).

Universalism developed in the theses of anti-Western universalism thinkers shows that universalism in this new fashion is supposed to be an impartial universalism that (a) recognises the miserable experience of people in Asia, in some parts of Europe/North America, including in Latin

America and Africa, (b) realises the epistemology of the South and (c) believes that the true struggle is not only to liberate the oppressed but also the oppressors. However, it is observed in global politics and economics these days that the oppressed are not only human beings, but also non-human beings, which are destroyed by the expansion of global capitalism such as oils, animals, timbers, vegetables, forests, and so on. In our contemporary world, it is insufficient to highlight 'diversity' only in relation to the 'humanity of both' (the oppressors and the oppressed) as suggested by Freire. In a need to transcend this limitation rooted in Freire's analysis, it is vital to detach its meaning from a heavy focus upon the experiences of human beings to include also the traumatised experiences of non-human beings. And, in effect, universalism in the thesis of decolonial epistemology will be legitimately characterised as a 'theory of all species'. In other words, decolonial epistemology rooted in our analysis of universalism is a 'theory of all species'. The aim is to liberate humans and non-humans from traumas they continue to live within daily basis. In a small bit of contrast to Robert Cox's Western-IR assumption, theory is critically invented "for someone and for some purposes" (Cox 1981, 28), I follow decolonial epistemology to propose to Thai IR theory that her theory in the future is not 'for someone', 'not for the non-west', 'not for the developing countries', 'not for the poor', 'not for the diaspora', 'not for the immigrants', 'not for nationalism', 'not for the oppressors', 'not for the oppressed' but 'of all miserable lives'. In short, universalism we urgently need today is to address the problem not of someone but of all.

At this point, I observe that postcolonial theorists, namely Said, Bhabha, and Fanon, seem to develop theories in relation to a particular time and space in the same sense as Cox's viewpoint on theory as for some someone, and for some purposes. In contrast, decolonial epistemology is an anti-Western universalism that directs us to the experience of others who are effected by Western expansion. We can follow what Anibal Quijano, a Peruvian philosopher, terms as 'the coloniality of being' (Quijano 2000). The 'coloniality of being' illustrates domains where colonialism takes place. It is what Quijano calls 'patrón colonial de poder' or the 'colonial matrix of power'. There are four domains in Quijano's 'colonial matrix of power'. They are matrices from the bird-eye-view, which show a distressing situation of all beings, and which are not able to reverse a power relation. Those four domains can be applied not only in Latin America and Caribbean, but also in many parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania; "(a) the control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labours,

control of natural resources), (b) the control of authority (institution, army), (c) the control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and (e) the control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education, and formation of subjectivity) (Quijano).

Another key figure of decolonial epistemology, Walter Mignolo, sees the significance of Quijano's proposal of the colonial matrix of power, which intervenes in many different localities and territories across the globe. Quintessentially, the necessity is to understand the colonial matrix of power that reveals its influence in many forms of dominations as well as resistances to those dominations (Mignolo 2000, 22). There are different forms of dominations, because in the colonial matrix of power, empires have different views and means of oppressions. Alongside these, there are emerging forms of different resistances because there are ways of practices, educations, suggestions, prototypes, beliefs, customs, mythologies, and knowledge in different locations, which inform multiple options for resistances. More than reducing those complexities of colonial and decolonial situations as 'the clash of civilisations' as promulgated by Samuel Huntington, Quijano's and Mignolo's hypotheses suggest us that the colonial matrix of power leads to the prolonged 'clashes of ideas'.

These clashes of ideas show us conflicts among empires such as capitalism, investments, aid packages, the Chinese infrastructure in Africa, the military-industrial complex, the Russian expansion in some areas of Europe, the NASA's colonisation over outer spaces, anti-Western science, technology, philosophy, and epistemology. Those clashes also illustrate lives of many oppressed majorities, who are affected by violence and traumas inflicted by those empires, such as the indigenous people, women, immigrants, villagers, the displaced people, the victims of genocides, and animals. Furthermore, those clashes also highlight infinite debates about the practical and intellectual solutions of colonial resistances such as multiculturalism, feminism, liberalism, Marxism, postmodernism, the coup d'état, protectionism, patriotism, and eco-activism. These 'clashes of ideas' in which many parties with different viewpoints hold onto are somewhat related to what Mignolo describes as 'the world views in collision', or 'the border linking', where lives on this earth face a common factor, that is, the expansion of Western colonialism, capitalism, and empire. 'The world views in collisions' demonstrate many unsolved tensions in scenarios of global politics. They illustrate,

one the one hand, conflicts among empires, and on the other hand, the collective trauma of human beings and non-human beings, whose lives are affected by empires in different locations. Besides his thinking of ‘the border linking’ at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Mignolo also creates the term ‘dispensable lives’ by opening a gap in, and, then, separating his own term from Giorgio Agamben’s ‘bare lives’ (Mignolo 2009). Mignolo examines lives that are exploited by structure of political economy. His analysis unfolds the existences of lives that are not able to subvert the dominant mode of a neoliberal economy. Mignolo explains ‘dispensable lives’ as forms-of-lives that “became dispensable in the domain of economy and the state – that is to say, as technologies for controlling economy and authority two spheres of the colonial matrix of power linked to racism and patriarchy” (Mignolo 2009, 77).

Mignolo’s ‘dispensable lives’ are lives that are demolished by political economy to be less valuable, are made to be desolated, and are made to be imbecile (Mignolo 2009, 81). These so-called ‘dispensable lives’ are lives in which humans are made as **commodities**. It is a castrating process that affects living autonomies of human and non-human beings, most of them living in the Southern part of the world. The castrating process exerted by Western expansion transforms them – their energies, bodies, minds, natural qualities and resources – into economic commodities. This economic structure leads to a deprivation of their humanities, it even clouds them from any alternatives to capitalism (Mignolo 2009, 81). It is implied in Mignolo’s struggle to transcend Agamben’s outlook that Agamben’s ‘bare lives’ has stressed too much on the negative aspects of western legal and political apparatuses. In addition, Agamben’s focus is only on human beings, by casting non-human beings aside, and by neglecting the economic structure. With a racist attitude in implementing those state apparatuses in Western social and legal prejudices, the results are what Agamben calls ‘bare lives’, or lives which are deprived of citizenships and nationalities; **the Homo Sacer** which is meant to be lives that can be killed without sympathy paid on a dignity to live (Agamben 1998).

Mignolo opens a theoretical dialogue with Agamben’s analysis, especially the latter’s ignorance of the relation between dispensable lives and a structure of political economy, e.g. global capitalism that produces it. Through Mignolo’s observation, Agamben’s analysis is inadequate to

envise different imaginations to forms of 'bare lives' of humans and non-humans that are traumatically widespread outside Western Europe. Agamben's bare lives are only involved with a living condition of people in the European history, especially the Nazi concentration camps that reflect Nazi's state of exception while European Jews are bare lives. For instance, more broadly, Agamben is not interested in examining biological and technological lives that are forced to relate with advanced technology at the present such as 'Bioastronautics', a study developed out of the area of biology that aims at governing humans in space where lives of the astronauts are at risk of being killed by the unknown non-human entities in outer space. Agamben is not interested in a structure of geo-economics, which is controlled by a power of corporate privatisation, and which produces enormous impact on non-human beings such as oils (Bartolovich 2016, 236), forests, icebergs, octopuses, etc. Agamben's analysis neglects consideration on bioethics of the non-human being such as dolphins when they are controlled by capitalisms and by the scientific operations of biogenetics. Specifically, dolphins are discovered as an animal with complex intelligence, which can develop psychological traumas, especially when they are forced to perform in front of tourists in the marine business industry. Following Mignolo's analysis, it can be emphasised that decolonial epistemology is a universalism that concerns trauma of all species in which human and non-human beings are forced to live in the colonial matrix of power.

In addition, the works of critical Latin American theorists show scepticism towards the classical and the left European thinkers. This scepticism can be observed in the work of Grosfoguel, who reveals all the way long a racist attitude of the European thinker. This point is useful to begin with Grosfoguel's article on 'Decolonizing Western Universalisms' (2012). Grosfoguel's central argument is to unveil a racist attitude constituted in Western universalism. For Grosfoguel, the concept of universalism in Western philosophy from Descartes to Hegel is an 'abstract universalism' (Grosfoguel 2012, 89). The idea of 'abstract universalism' in Descartes is based on a production of positivistic knowledge by 'the epistemic subject', or, meaningfully, the subjects capable of knowledge. In theory, the epistemic subject can be anyone from all territories, languages, races, and genders. But in practice, this epistemic subject is partial. It is implied in Descartes and Hegel that not all of the subjects are enabled with reasons, logos, and knowledge productions because such privilege belongs to the European people (Grosfoguel 2012, 92). Such privilege over the white men

consequently shows the dark side of ‘abstract universalism’. From Descartes to Hegel, including Marx, Western knowledge and Western universalism are only able to colonise and occupy over this space of knowledge and of epistemological foundation (Grosfoguel 2012, 90).

As for the means to challenge, Grosfoguel evokes Aimé Césaire’s decolonial epistemology based on the latter’s Afro-Caribbean experience. For Césaire, decolonisation is practical on the basis of negating Western’s (deceitful) abstract universalism by affirming a proper universalism in which those outside the West are democratically and epistemologically respected. This aspect of ‘proper’ or ‘concrete universalism’ leads to what Grosfoguel calls ‘pluri-versalism’. Pluri-versalism designates the cosmological and epistemological determinations, which are spread and formed in many parts of the world, to which one of its commonplace is to oppose Western universalism (Grosfoguel 2012, 95-96). Here, I introduce the work of Grosfoguel to Thai IR theory because of its significance in opposing the racist attitude embedded in Western universalism and in promoting pluri-versalism in which all epistemologies and cosmologies are equally respected. Thus, this is valuable to Thai IR theory in a sense that she can choose to avoid authoritarianism and racism inherent in Western abstract universalism. This means that she must avoid her future theory to be authoritarian or hegemonic to others. By inventing her own theory, she may find useful to adopt Césaire’s concrete universalism as one of the crucial elements in her theory because Césaire’s proposal contains more democratic values than Western epistemology (Grosfoguel 2012, 96).

Apart from promoting the idea of ‘pluri-versalism’ and ‘concrete universalism’ by critiquing modern philosophers, Latin American decolonial thinkers also challenge the new left thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek, who is popularised in the field of social sciences across the globe. Mignolo is a prominent scholar who identifies himself clearly as a critic of Žižek. In my view, Mignolo’s criticism raises scepticism towards Žižek’s theoretical standpoint from the position of decolonial epistemology. Evidently, in his article published with *Aljazeera* in 2013, Mignolo introduces us to the exchanges of opinions between Santiago Zabala, a supporter of Žižek’s idea, and Hamid Dabashi, a harsh critic of Žižek (Mignolo 2013). Zabala is explicit in worshiping Žižek’s idea of communism and has a fidelity to one of the most ambiguous concepts of Žižek’s, divine violence. In Zabala’s own words, “being a communist in 2012 is not a political choice, but rather an existential matter. The global levels of

political, economic, and social inequality we are going to reach this year because of capitalism's logics of production not only are alarming, but also threaten [ing] our existence" (Zabala 2012). In retrospect, Zabala's opinion in turn illustrates his fidelity to Žižek's 'systemic violence' and 'divine violence' to which those two forms of violence are the Hegelian 'forced choices', simply in different fashions.

According to Žižek, systemic violence is different from direct violence since the underlying character of the former is an intangible form of violence (Žižek 2008, 1). For instance, capitalism is a factor that identifies an increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere. We all do know this fact, but we tend not to believe it because global warming as the effect of capitalist violence is not as tangible as a political crackdown, which is one of the features of direct violence. Yet, anti-capitalism is a forced choice of being a communist. In large part, capitalism is a globally living condition for many distressing individuals who must endure with it. The majority of people refuse to take a risk in transforming capitalism to another because they are already familiar with capitalism in their everyday life. Thus, they prefer to continue living with this same forced choice to guarantee their own certainties. However, Žižek introduces another forced choice from the perspective of Marxism and from his taking into account of Fanon as a revolutionary theorist (Žižek 2016). And the explicitness of this Žižekian's forced choice has its effect in Zabala's expression; "being a communist in 2012 is not a political choice, but rather than an existential matter" (Zabala 2012). Apart from the view that capitalism is a forced choice, the idea of being a communist is another form of forced choice. Zabala's opinion inspired by Žižek implies that all existential livings on this earth are useless, even worth not living, unless they are to undertake the communist path.

In contrast, Mignolo argues that communism is not a sustaining forced choice. His standpoint is affirmative of that 'communism is an option' (Mignolo 2013). In his words, "recognising the (global/capital) problem does not mean that the only way to go is to be communist. There cannot be only one solution simply because there are many ways of being, which means of thinking and doing. **Communism is an option** and not an abstract universal" (Mignolo 2013, *my italic*). Mignolo's opinion in contrast to Zabala's is that being a communist is one option among other alternatives to overcome the current traumatic situations by which the means of resistance are also diverse. Mignolo's opinion

in 2013 is consistent with his idea on border linking which he proposed in 2000 and consistent with Grosfoguel's recommendation to us to attend to Césaire's concrete universal. This precisely means that despite a diversification of a traumatic situation across the globe, there exists the links among many forms of dominations and many forms of resistance in different territories and localities whereby communism is only one option among others.

Moreover, Jamil Khader's essay in *Žižek Now*(2013) shows Žižek's infidelity to Lenin's advocacy of the 'Second International'."Lenin's writings increasingly re-inscribe the subject of the national liberation movements in the colonies" (Khader 2013, 161), which means that Lenin's Second International is explicit in accounting of 'the revolutionary potential of the postcolonial subject' (Khader 2013, 161), and which for a Palestinian thinker as Khader is certainly the radical and revolutionary politics performed by the Palestinian. As a philosopher who is known as a worshipper of Lenin, it remains largely sceptical why Žižek refuses to be careful to the link between postcolonial subjects and revolutionary internationalism. It is problematical that Žižek often reduces postcolonialism and decolonial philosophy to multiculturalism and cultural politics. Such reduction prevents him by all means from considering postcolonial subjects as the prominent revolutionary agency. Perhaps Žižek's unfair reading of Lenin, as Khader points out, is not as serious as his Eurocentric tendency in neglecting people from the former colonies as the potentially revolutionary agents. Thus, apart from his and other European companions such as Badiou, Balibar, and Rancière who are now indulging in only one option of devoting their intellectual and political lives as communists (Mignolo 2013), Žižek's refusal of the former colony people to register fully as political members capable of international revolution, makes him repeat the same old mistake as Descartes's 'abstract universalism' noted in Grosfoguel's scepticism to the origin of European philosophy.

To remark, Žižek may respond to Mignolo and Khader regarding to his confusion of postcolonialism and decolonial thought by giving one of his experiences with a black man. He told about his experience with the black man during his book launching event when one black man walked to him and told him, "you can call me negro". Žižek took this gesture as an act of breaking cultural barrier as if to accept 'the Real in the symbolic order'. He hugged that black man to show a sign of intercultural friendship. But this scenario is far from clear whether it will lead to his reconsideration on

postcolonialism including his revision of postcolonial agent as capable of logos in acts of political resistance. Our questions are; what would Žižek say about the segregationist's violence in the Southern provinces of Thailand? Do we think what Žižek would say about the violence and real scenarios of struggle in the Gaza where those traumatic situations are far from his living area? With all due respect, but from the decolonial epistemology standpoint, Žižek has a tendency to treat people's actions as leading towards nothing, without respecting the revolutionary people's decision in relation to their own situations, resources, times, and spaces which are not necessarily conducted in the same manner as communism and as the old left.

For the concluding remark to this section, decolonial epistemology highlights universalism in order to address global problems that all beings face and promptly offer liberation to all species; the theory of both human and non-human beings. This point owes much in large part to the efforts of Latin American thinkers such as the works of Anibal Quijano and Walter Mignolo. I introduce their works with a reason that this may serve as a role-model for Thai IR scholars to desire for Thai IR theory and have a theoretical and conceptual formation at the global scale in the future. I emphasise that decolonial epistemology is also a *déjà vu* of deconstructing Western knowledge and epistemology to propose theory of all species; not for someone and for some purposes. This point was shown in my description of Grosfoguel's recuperation of Césaire's 'concrete universalism' and of his critique of a Cartesian 'abstract universalism' that governs Western philosophy from Descartes to Marx and to, eventually, Žižek. From this consideration, I highlight the debates between Mignolo and Žižek at some points in order to urge Thai IR scholars to begin challenging those dominant Western thinkers. Criticism rather than being the conformists to Western thinkers, I argue, is the very beginning act to which Thai IR scholars should anticipate to speak and discuss in order to acquire academic recognition. I am optimistic about the prospect that if we are serious on these arguments altogether, there will be a Thai IR theory within the discipline of IR and social sciences at the global scale in the future.

### III. Towards the Future of Thai IR Theory

This section aims to inform four lessons with regard to the future of Thai IR theory, notably, (a) resisting hegemony with a refusal to create another hegemony (b) adopting the principle of pluriverse by being sensitive to the wound of all living beings (c) dare to launch a critique over postcolonial theory as well as Western philosophies but can make use of some Western theories when necessary (d) inventing and self-manifesting terminology, concept, language, words drawn from English or Pali/Sanskrit to represent Thai IR theory.

The first lesson for Thai IR theory is to resist Western universalism for the purpose of the acquisition of the universal status of knowledge by devoting herself as one of the multiple narratives. In this consideration, we may follow what Mustapha Pasha suggests that “one of the stubborn features of Western international relations (IR) is its refusal to embrace its own peculiarity. It allows a particular intellectual practice with particular imaginaries and rationalities to serve as a universal reference for all IR theoretical practices with alternative imaginaries and rationalities. Difference must emerge against of this universal reference. Negation of its own peculiarity creates a general narrative in which other particularities can be effectively subsumed or discarded. In this manner, a naturalised meta-narrative is also deployed to manage internal dissent” (Pasha 2011, 217). Pasha’s suggestion converged with our discussion about the lack of universal status of the non-Western IR, including Thai IR. In order to challenge Western IR theory, Thai IR theory should start from revoking Western IR theory as ‘a universal reference for all IR theoretical practices’ by creating and imagining difference in order to emerge as one of the resisting forces to the universal reference. Avoiding repeating Western IR theory that emerges as an omnipotent reference for all, the new presupposition is that dissidence and antagonism are indispensable to universalism. The all-inclusive universalism is naturalised based on multiple yet interlinked narratives and not on meta-narrative that suppresses other voices. At this point, Thai IR theory should emerge not as another hegemonic voice but as one of the multiple narratives among other Southern countries whose knowledge and philosophies are excluded by Western colonialism to counter Western hegemony.

Precisely, to counter Western IR theory that attempts to predominating universalism without considering the existences of others, Thai IR theory should avoid creating itself as another mode of hegemony. She should bond partnership with her neighbours such as the Indonesia IR, the

Philippines IR, the Latin America IR, and the African IR by way of immersing herself as one of the multiple voices to share the same objective. There are many subaltern theories that are not known to the West and us because of the exclusion operated by Western colonial knowledge. Among others, Thai IR theory is supposed to be one of the intellectual voices that remains hidden, or to follow Pasha's reflection, "the non-West is not an immutable, but disruptive category; it refutes the self-subsistent character of Western IR, but more crucially, it gives voice to silence" (Pasha 2011, 219). Once this silence is broken, it will compel Western IR's one-dimensional universalism to rebuke itself. Specifically, Thai IR theory will need to register as one of the multiple narratives, voices, forces, and philosophies by cooperating with her partners in reshaping universalism in another direction; from hegemony to difference; from totality to multiplicity; and not from counter-hegemony to another pillar of hegemony. In short, this will be a new imagination for the principle of universalism where Western and non-Western knowledge are mutually constituted.

The second lesson for Thai IR theory is that the theory should position itself in the philosophy of the pluriverse, that is, to conceive and understand the world by dwelling critical thought into the furthest regions on earth according to the principle of dispersion of times, opinions, occurrences, existences, emergences, eruptions, and ultimately traumas inherent to human beings and non-human beings in the distant lands. Thai IR theory should follow the principle of pluriverse, the theory of the pluralistic world pioneered in the poem of Ernesto Cardenal Martinez, a Nicaraguan Catholic priest. **Pluriverse** (2009) illustrates the co-existence and mutual progression of the universe, the Earth, and all beings. The poem shows the relation between man and man, man and earth, and man and cosmos based on the principle of equality, liberty, and non-anthropocentrism. While Western universalism is the supreme form of anthropocentrism that strives to make itself as a universal reference of all others, the poem is explicitly devolved from such anthropocentrism by promoting a natural relation between man and cosmos;

Our cycle follows the star cycle: stars are born, grow, die; our cycle is short - theirs too.

They seem stable

But like us they're slowly dying. If the universe is expanding

From which center is it expanding?

Or is every point the center?  
So then the center of the universe  
Is also our galaxy,  
Is also our planet  
(And the girl who once was for me).

(Martinez 2009, 199)

The poem shows that there is no specific geography that can start off itself as the centre of the universe; be they London, Washington, Madrid, Lisbon, Paris, New Delhi, Tokyo, Dubai, Beijing, and of course Bangkok. Bangkok is not the centre of the universe, not in a sense that it is less developed countries in economics compared to others, but because of the mystic character of the poem that asks 'from which centre is it expanding?'. The centre of the universe is our galaxy and our planet where all inhabitants dwelling in the Milky Way's bubble called Earth. As a package of colonial expansion, Western anthropocentrism violates this natural quality of Martinez's pluriverse, not only because of its self-endorsement of its geographical, epistemological, and cosmological foundation as the centre of the universe, but also of their self-aggrandising universalism that based on matrices of racial (black and brown), sexual (women, transgender), and ethnic (Asian, African, Latinos, Hispanics) discriminations by ignoring traumas of human beings as well as non-human beings (animals, plants, etc.).

It is compelling to read Martinez's pluriverse in conjugal with Mignolo's 'border-thinking'. Border-thinking is set on the assumption that the expansion of Western civilisation since the Renaissance until the Post-Industrial era has brought about the open wounded to a majority of living beings on Earth (Mignolo 2011a, xxi). It is the 'link' across borders not in a sense of geographical proximities among neighbouring countries, but that the commonality and collective experience shared by the living beings inhabited in the planet is the globally negative impacts, namely the magnitude catastrophe as a result of the colonial expansion of Western civilisation such as the economics, the military expansion, global capitalism, the ecological crisis, violence, knowledge, concepts, and others. With those negative impacts stand as the backdrop, decolonial epistemology

is meant to be a disengaging and delinking from Western epistemology (Mignolo 2011a, xxvii). Decolonial epistemology is meaningful as a way of knowing and understanding the world by being cognizant of the expansion of Western civilisation that is constituted with coloniality, a collective trauma, 'an open wounded' in Mignolo's expression, and its global discontentment that all borders affected by such operations are linked and mutually engaged in this unwelcomed expansion. This assumption is not new and still has no turnarounds. Quijano introduces the term 'coloniality' aimed at urging us to include pessimism in our perception towards Western civilisation and modernity. The so-called 'patrón colonial de poder' (the colonial matrix of power) comprised of four matrices, namely, the control of economy, the control of authority, the control of gender/sexuality, and the control of knowledge and subjectivity where it is assumed that our lives are fell into one matrix or probably more than one out of these four.

The theoretical underpinning of decolonial epistemology requires us to have different epistemology, to turnaround Western anthropocentrism, in order to open a vision of life in which subjects, knowledge, institutions, science, and technology are decolonised from serving the few in order to secure and rescue many miserable lives either human being or non-human being that lacks of the negotiating power against the upper-hand (corporate) people. At this point, I anticipate the future of Thai IR theory to have her concept and knowledge. But the theory should be based on full consciousness of decolonial epistemology, to realise an unfinished colonialism that comes not only in a form of progress and development, and to recognise that the discourse of Western civilisation also has a material and immaterial traumatising effects embedded in it. The particular concept that Thai IR theory should frame up must be based not in power politics, but on being sensitive to lives of all miserable lives, either human beings or non-human beings dwelling not only in a womb of Siam but also in the distant lands. The suggestion is that Thai IR theory's self-inventory concept and knowledge submitted to the discipline of IR in the future must be sensitive not only political issues that occur in her boundary such as the political crackdowns, a coup d'état, a royal succession, populist policies promoted by the two major parties, and many others, but also to dwell on her thought by connecting her pains and traumas to those traumatised living beings across the world.

Only in this way that Thai IR theory will avoid identifying herself as another hegemonic knowledge and will by all means avoid being criticised as cultural entrapment. That is to say, to negate levering the Thai traditionally typical culture to be a resource of fruitful knowledge within the discipline of IR. In this consideration, Thai IR theory will have to show a quality of pluriverse, that is, to recognise pain, agony, and trauma of the unknown others/strangers who yet proximate with us', who indeed inhabited in the land far away from Siam but whose experiences in need of enduring with the pain and agony of forceful Western expansion such as capitalism, science, and technology appeared to share with us. In addition, Thai IR theory should negate Western epistemology and colonial expansion resulting in a collective trauma of many living beings under the context of global capitalism. Therefore, it is impractical to deny Western theories that mutually condemn Western epistemology rather than to reinforce it such as Judith Butler's 'melancholy and grieve ability', Jean-Paul Sartre's 'existentialism of the black man', Susan Sontag's 'regarding the pain of others', and Noam Chomsky's tough criticism towards American empire abroad, to name a few. At this point, I hope that Mignolo and other Latin American colleagues will spare their criticisms and bear with me if the self-insistence here is that the future of Thai IR theory is still possible based on some Western theories that condemn Western epistemology, including colonial expansion.

The third lesson for Thai IR theory, given that she wishes to mark her existence in the discipline of IR occupied in large part by Western theories such as Realism and English School, is the act of scepticism and constructive criticism towards traditional postcolonial theorists and Western philosophers. Some reasons that I described at length in the previous sections of this article are (a) the territorial entrapment without incorporating other non-Western experiences and (b) cultural hybridity as a result of global interaction of the diasporic people, people of the former colonies without making a clear acknowledgement to knowledge(s), cosmologies, and epistemologies of those non-Western people which are the treasures being destroyed by Western imperialisms. With all due respect, I encourage Thai IR scholars to raise a doubt against Edward Said's notion of Orientalism not because of his reliance on Foucault and Gramsci to form up his own theory. My scepticism towards Said is rather because of his obsession with Palestinian problem, which will prevent him unfortunately to look more broadly into the miserable lives of others in other traumatic incidents such as those living in the Obamacare's Dead Zone, the experiment of dolphins, the deforestation in

Amazon, the Rohingya people living on the border of Myanmar, the automation that deprives of the factory workers' jobs, and the Ukrainian villagers who are anxious of Russian military expansion. Apart from a lack of this globally collective trauma as a result of Western colonialism/capitalism, it remains unclear whether Orientalism provides a specific concern on knowledge of the non-Western countries that are disrupted by colonialism around the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries; it is unclear whether Said's theory aims to bring back such disrupting knowledge into public consideration.

Second, this same quality of scepticism also places on Bhabha's evocation of cultural hybridity that seems to me only informing of his observation of the third space of culture as a result of cultural interaction among the diasporas in the US. This is problematical because Bhabha never excavates into the past to bring back the knowledge that remains hidden to us as a result of Western colonial expansion that buries it. The problem is Bhabha only locates that third space of hybridised culture as something omitted from national discourse. Pessimistically, if postcolonialism is only a concern on this third space culture, identifying with the hybridisation of culture, this will not be intellectually sufficient in leading us to have Thai IR theory as long as critical thoughts about Thai cultures and politics are all entirely reduced to observe Thai's third space of culture, the point that I devote my analysis in opposition to this issue elsewhere. While Žižek condemns Bhabha's hybridity that his postulation does not lead the old leftist to undertake the revolutionary task, my anxiety and politics is different from his. My critique of Bhabha is rather because of his analysis that does not give a birth to the theory of Thai IR in which I evoke here as a politics of knowledge, whereby Thai IR scholars are encouraged to devote their time to invent theories and concepts with a robust support from IR community in Thailand as well as a national funding on research to challenge, and to open a friendly dialogue with Western IR theory. Bhabha's hybridity does not render much help to Thai IR theory as it is just a theory that illustrates the space of hybridised culture that is peculiar and distinct from what is commonly known culturally among Thais and Westerners.

Finally, Fanon's writing on 'National Culture' is a territorial entrapment. One should keep in mind that Fanon's decolonial strategy under the context of French colonialism is aimed at identifying the root of black culture across the African continent, which is different from European, especially French culture; a strategy that is effective in his time of decolonising mission. But this strategy and

way of thinking have a limitation in a time of global trauma in which the miseries around the world are not only experienced by the black people but also by some European people who despise capitalism, by animals that are forced to be guinea pigs in Western science and technology, by the problem of immigration in Europe, by sexual violation, by the displaced people, and by many globally related issues. Fanon's national culture seeks to identify with culture of the black people. This identification with national black culture is provocative and harmful to Western imperialism. This national consciousness is effective for a time when most countries struggled to liberate themselves from Western imperialism, but the limitation is that his hypothesis has a gap between his time and our time of the present. What Thai IR theory needs in the future is not national culture, not a collective consciousness of what is Thai culture, and not to promote that nationalistic discourse as Thai IR theory because doing so will repeat Fanon's cultural and territorial entrapment. Instead, what is required for Thai IR theory is the production of concept, terminology, and phraseology that displays understanding of perilous circumstances, affecting lives of human beings and non-human beings in both domestic and international politics. This can follow what Mignolo calls 'epistemic disobedience' to Western epistemology. Mignolo explains epistemic disobedience as "a decolonial option as set of projects that have in common the effects **experienced by all inhabitants of the globe** that were at the receiving end of global designs to colonise the economy (appropriation of land and natural resources), authority (management by the Monarch, the State, or the Church), police and military enforcement (coloniality of power), to colonise knowledge (languages, categories of thoughts, belief systems), and beings (subjectivity)" (Mignolo 2011(b), 46 , italic is mine). Precisely, what Thai IR theory needs is a self-manifesting concept that creates proximity with the global effects of Western expansion/colonialism 'experienced by all inhabitants of the globe'; she should avoid promoting Thai culture as Thai IR theory at all cost.

The fourth lesson for Thai IR theory is to invent her concept, terminology, word, and be brave in expressing different opinions to Western philosophers. To attain such purposes, we need to address two main problems as priorities. First, Thai students and some university scholars do not want to express their views about Western philosophy by official means. Chatting privately and whispering their views among colleagues, they avoid publishing their views in the journals to avoid embarrassments and criticisms. If such unprofessional attitude continues, it will be impossible for us

to acquire constructive debate in Thai IR theory. Moreover, I mentioned earlier that one of the main problems lies in Thai's culture of reading. Most of Thai scholars and students tend to view Western philosophers as the immaculate as the gigantic intellectual persons who show minor mistakes. With this attitude, all they prefer to do is to understand what their Western gurus write and talk in their seminal works, some even read the sentences line by line to ensure of all accuracies, without thinking about challenging those Western philosophers. The second problem is that Thai students and university scholars in philosophy in Thailand remain faithful to the attitude that Western theories are vehicles for the intellectual advancements in Thai social sciences and humanities. It is observed that most of the journals, textbooks, and articles about philosophy and critical theory in Thailand are based on Western knowledge because Western knowledge, epistemology, and theory are accepted by them as the superiority. With such attitude, those Thai scholars do not think about challenging Western epistemology or to indicate limitations embedded in that Western thought. Problematically, most of them never think about how to elevate themselves to be (Thai) thinkers, philosophers, and concept-creators, by representing themselves as Thai theorists, and by way of treating Western philosophies as the bases that assist them to create their own concepts, theories, words, and vocabularies. Crucially, these are remarkable lessons for Thai IR. She needs to avoid those problems at all cost.

In contrast to those two main points, I showed earlier that Mignolo demonstrates his criticism towards Žižek as well as specifies that Grosfoguel's criticism of Descartes's *Cogito* as the (pretentious) abstract universalism. With all due respect, I refer to Mignolo of his criticism of Žižek not because my academic position is totally against a Slovenian philosopher but because I cogently want to privilege and encourage Thai IR scholars to 'dare to criticise' Western philosophers. I also refer to Mignolo's self-inventory conceptualisation of 'the dispensable lives', a term that he struggles against Agamben's 'bare lives'. This is to show that Thai IR theory needs such self-inventory conceptualisation in a way that challenges and creates a constructive theoretically dialogue with Western philosophers. Accordingly, it is not doubtful that Mignolo's work is a distinct example for us. The same goes to Grosfoguel in his scepticism towards Descartes's *Cogito* in which according to Descartes people who are privileged to undertake the rational thinking are not the Western people, but Descartes seems to hide this racial discrimination in his philosophy. Therefore, what are indispensable for Thai IR in

the future are her own terminology, self-conceptualisation, words, and vocabularies, including criticism of Western philosophers in order to represent herself in IR community overseas. There will be no dawn of the Enlightenment for Thai IR theory if she never gets rescued from the entrapment according to the same, old, two problematical points outlined earlier.

## Conclusion

To integrate all issues in a single section, this article begins with a lecture given by Ramón Grosfoguel in 2011, where the philosopher cautions of the five European languages that dominate universities around the world. Grosfoguel's lecture opens a strategic position of 'decolonial turn' (Grosfoguel 2007), which is meaningful as a strategic position of non-Western knowledge to decolonise from Western universalism and to insert non-Western knowledge as one of the key accounts in universalism; a universalism in which all are mutually constituted, integrated, and shared. But in order to accomplish the mission of decolonial thinking, the priority is to scrutinise or to re-examine the existing literature in postcolonial theory, whether postcolonial theory and decolonial thinking can collaborate with each other. I discovered eventually and argued in the first section that postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Franz Fanon have different positions from decolonial thinking. The reasons are, first, the three postcolonial theorists show less concern about the knowledge that is excluded from the status of universalism as a result of the coming of Western colonialism. And what we do need is not only to bring back-in the specific subaltern such as Indian woman articulated by Gayatri Spivak (Spivak 1988) because in the present there are many subalterns, the traumatised living being on earths effected by global capitalism, that must also be brought back in to our attention. Second, I observed that postcolonial theorists have specific concerns on their territorial and cultural backgrounds. This attitude prevents them to have an initial contact with the traumatised living beings on earth. To illustrate yet again, Said seems to fix his mind onto the problem of Palestine and his Orientalism is an analysis that seems to neglect the relation between capitalism and its effect onto the living beings on Earth. The same reason goes to Homi Bhabha's cultural hybridity that has a small concern over the knowledge of the non-Western people

to challenge Western epistemology; so too Franz Fanon's national consciousness that only refers to the consciousness of black, Negritude, and African culture.

Accordingly, I suggest Thai IR theory to begin her intellectual-strategic thinking in a different position from postcolonial theorists. Thai IR theory in the future should begin from what I call 'decolonial epistemology' and to share with the critically Latin Americanised way of thinking of the world. Decolonial epistemology is not my own creation without histories embedded in it. In fact, the term is inspired by the works of Anibal Quijano, a Peruvian thinker, who proposes the term 'patrón colonial de poder' (the colonial matrix of power), which comprises four matrices, namely, the control of economy, the control of authority, the control of gender/sexuality, and the control of knowledge and subjectivity. These matrices allow us to grasp the traumatised lives on Earth that are affected by global capitalism/Western expansion more vivid than postcolonial thinkers. Walter Mignolo's border thinking serves as a supplement to this issue. The 'link' in his border thinking is not only a geographical and territorial border of the neighbouring countries, but also is meant as a commonality and a mutual mentality of a colonial wound that all living beings relatively share as a result of Western expansion.

In addition, I encourage Thai IR theory to open a constructive debate and intellectual engagement in a proper manner with Western philosophers. At this point, my admiration goes again to Grosfoguel whose publications in the journal called **Transmodernity**, a journal that is interested in publishing a peripheral cultural production of the Luso-Hispanic World, and it is also open to criticisms towards Western philosophers such as Descartes, Marx, etc. Such criticism operated by Grosfoguel becomes a lesson learn for Thai IR theory in a way that his intellectual action initiates a strategic point for Thai IR theory in her desire to acquire a theoretical position within the discipline of IR dominated by some Western theories such as Realism and English School in the future to come.

Ultimately, what is essential for the future of Thai IR theory with the lessons suggested by Latin American decolonial thinkers comprises four main ways of strategic thinking, including (a) to resist hegemony with a refusal to create another hegemony (b) to adopt the principle of pluriverse by being sensitive to the wound of all living beings (c) to dare to launch a critique over postcolonial theory as well as Western philosophies but can make use of some Western theories when necessary

and (d) to invent and self-manifest terminology, concept, language, words drawn from English or Pali/Sanskrit to represent Thai IR theory.

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