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# Epistemic and Existential, E2-sustainability. On the need to *un-learn for re-learning* in contemporary spaces

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This paper contributes to a re-thinking, un-learning, and re-learning agenda by interrogating some core ideas and assumptions related to contemporary societal and planetary concerns, including concerns within the research enterprise. Transcending the first step that calls for pausing and re-thinking, this paper troubles universalizing vocabularies that naturalize conceptual framings and ways/waves-of-being in research and educational practices. Furthermore, it illuminates the ways in which scholarship has become complicit in re-cycling and re-creating reductionistic ideas that loop back into educational practices. Its overarching argument aligns with an emergent call within research and higher education for going beyond its universalizing monolithic ethos that has become naturalized in contemporary digital-analog entangled existence. Framed as alternative theorizing that is variously termed post/decolonial/southern thinking, these emergent perspectives are part of the introspection that is critically needed in mainstream academia, in particular in the Learning Sciences. This paper argues that this is needed to contribute to both *Epistemic* and *Existential* sustainability, i.e., *E2-sustainability*. *E2-sustainability* enables transcending issues of environmental-, economic-, social-, and cultural-sustainability: *E2-sustainability* assumes and includes these. Marked by alternative conceptual framings and pushed by a *mobile gaze*, this theoretical paper argues that major and minor shifts in thinking are needed for attending to contemporary societal and planetary challenges. *E2-sustainability* in the scholarly realm has relevance for transcending ethnocentrically framed biases and siloed framings of contemporary education and higher education, including teacher education. Troubling key, taken-for-granted universalizing truths and using the areas of language and educational scholarship as illustrative points of departure, this paper raises concerns regarding the outsourcing of important educational agendas to technologies, including digitalization on the one hand and concepts that build on contentious assumptions on the other hand. It is such *default* outsourcing that is troubled through a curiosity-driven *multiversal* and *global-centric* mobile gaze wherein both northern and southern knowledge-regimes need to be privileged. The theorizing presented in this paper builds on a Second Wave of Southern Perspectives (SWaSP) framing that has relevance for both north-centric and south-centric scholarship, including writing research. Explicitly multi/inter/cross/trans-disciplinary, this work is relevant to Epistemic and Existential sustainability given its non-allegiance to the imaginaries of mono-disciplinarity, nation-state essences, or universalisms.

## KEYWORDS

**E2-sustainability, epistemology, language, languaging, learning, multidisciplinary research, SWaSP**

“[S]cholarship has been virtually relegated to the dustbin of academic work that is practically useless. A drain on the public purse, and destined for obscurity [...] in the land of academia, curiosity has been divorced from care, freedom from responsibility” (Ingold, 2018a, p. 73).

The agenda of this paper is to contribute to a re-thinking, un-learning, and re-learning imaginary in order to interrogate some core ideas and assumptions of consequence to contemporary societal and planetary concerns, including concerns within the research enterprise. Transcending the first step that calls for pausing and re-thinking, this paper troubles universalizing vocabularies that naturalize conceptual framings and ways/waves-of-being and ways/waves-of-thinking in research and educational practices. Furthermore, it illuminates the ways in which scholarship has become complicit in re-cycling and re-creating reductionistic ideas that loop back into educational practices. The overarching argument here aligns with an emergent call within research and higher education for going beyond its universalizing monolithic ethos. The latter has become naturalized in contemporary digital-analog times. Framed as alternative theorizing that is variously termed anticolonial, postcolonial, decolonial, southern, etc., these perspectives are part of the introspection that is critically needed in mainstream hegemonic academia, in particular in the Learning Sciences. This paper argues that this is needed to contribute to both *Epistemic* and *Existential* sustainability, i.e., *E2-sustainability*. *E2-sustainability* enables transcending issues of environmental-, economic-, social-, and cultural-sustainability.

The paper opens by drawing attention to the need for re-focusing on multiversal humanistic agendas of education and research, not least in contemporary technology-infused times. Building on a “humaning” framing, i.e., a *becoming* rather than the *being* state, Section 1 illuminates the fallacy of hegemonic universalizing narratives that populate thinking in the universal framings of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Such a “humaning” framing offers hope in the form of alternative onto-epistomethodologies. Section 2 unpacks the two overarching and overlapping theoretical clusters within such a humaning outline: a Second Wave of Southern Perspectives (SWaSP) framing. Deploying *E2-sustainability* as a point of departure, SWaSP offers new vocabularies and ways/waves-of-thinking and ways/waves-of-becoming for enabling un-learning with the explicit purpose of re-learning in our digital-analog existence. The relevance of one of the SWaSP themes, *communication* (broadly conceptualized) or *linguaging*, is taken up more specifically in Section 3. Here the Language and Educational Sciences are actualized in contemporary digital-analog times with the specific intent of substantiating the need to un-learn for new learnings that an *E2-sustainability* agenda enables. Section 3 also ends by bringing the main agendas of this paper to a close. “Walking the talk” metaphorically, i.e., drawing on what *E2-sustainability* affords in how scholars/we write research, the paper concludes with a Coda that concretely embraces the many-ways-of-being-with-words that humaning multiversality enables. While reminiscing on the previous sections, it does *not* present a standard summary. This unconventionally framed Coda illustrates my dialoging with other thinkers, including on the contents of this paper, on what scholarly humaning implies in and through alternative writing genres.

## 1. On a quest *back* to humanity. Humaning on the analog-digital planet

Contemporary planetary challenges like the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war in Europe’s backyard and ongoing long-standing wars and turbulences in Yemen, Myanmar, and other parts of our planet mark the contemporary human condition at large, as do the global climate crisis, increasing political polarizations, rising racism—including right-wing fascism—increasing economic disparities and other forms of marginalization. Digitalization brings these crises to our analog doorsteps, drawing rooms, and straight onto our mobile devices. Thus, digitalization contributes explicitly to not only creating an acute sense of despair but also to busting the myths of linear developmental imaginaries. The salient issue here is that researchers, including what they/we do, can no longer continue to shield themselves/ourselves from the shifts and developments that mark the contemporary planetary scenario. Ecological/environmental sustainability and our very existence on the planet are no longer the sole prerogatives of politicians and the elite. The same holds for economic sustainability.

In this scenario, the crisis of K-12 education, higher education, and scholarly publishing—wherein increasing numbers of people across the planet and the life span have access to and are participating in institutions of learning, and more and more is being published of little or no *relevance* to contemporary challenges—is glaringly conspicuous. Such multiple challenges, as pointed to in Ingold’s opening quote in this paper, call attention to the “what” that is being taught and published, by “whom,” for “whom,” to “what” ends, “what” the guiding ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies are in such (ir)relevant educations, “what” has been and is being side-lined, and other slippery but nevertheless highly relevant issues. Building on an equity-social relevant agenda, *Existential* as well as *Epistemological* sustainability thus override *ecological* (or *environmental*) and *economical* dimensions of sustainability. *E2-sustainability* assumes and includes the latter.

Re-articulations<sup>1</sup> of planetary categories such as east-west, south-north, and third-first worlds that map onto binaries such as impoverished-rich, savage-civilized, developing-developed have emerged from many different disciplinary lenses across time. Dichotomies such as the global/south/east majority/southern and global north/west/empire/northern constitute vocabularies that point to *territories*, *humans*, and *ideas* wherein the former have been marginalized at best and erased at worst from the grand narratives of north-centric enlightenment and modernity. The geographies or territories of the south literally map onto the new worlds that Europe claimed to have discovered, has de facto appropriated, and colonized since at least the 15th century, and whose peoples and ideas Europe continues to colonize cognitively. Drawing on what Ingold offers as a humaning

1 A “Re-.” agenda points to the complicit vocabularies we live by in the educational sciences (Bagga-Gupta, 2023b). This is marked theoretically by hyphenating concepts like re-search, re-thinking, re-articulating, and so on.

frame, an ever-*becoming* rather than *being*, expands on what these vocabularies encompass and/or delimit:

“[T]he grammatical form of the human is not that of the subject, whether nominal or pronominal, but that of the verb [a person’s] humanness is not given from the start, as an a priori condition, but emerges as a productive achievement—one, moreover, that they have continually to work at for as long as life goes on, without ever reaching a final conclusion” (2015, p. 117).

Such a non-essentializing framing also suggests that humans conceptualized as belonging to the east/south include—in addition to people in the territories that were colonized, marginalized, and oppressed—individuals, communities, and peoples in the margins *within* western/northern territories. Thus, migrants, functionally othered, racialized people, those marked through non-mainstream sexualities, etc., across the planet are part of the *idea that creates* the binary south-north. From this, it follows that the south-north exists within the bounded territories that constitute the north-south, and that issues of Epistemic justice and Existential sustainability allow for recognizing a *diversity of diversities* within and across territories. This fundamental idea shapes knowledge-regimes. At the same time, it becomes precarious to point to territorial units as homogenized constructs, since regions within nation-states and nation-states themselves in different geographies may be hegemonic.<sup>2</sup>

Challenging the hegemonies of territorially framed binary conceptualizations, Said’s writings (Said, 1978, 1986) have drawn attention to the critical need for re-visiting historical narratives and experiences which continue to be based on naturalized imagined dichotomies and separations of territories, peoples, and ideas or what gets glossed as culture. Others like Anderson (1996) and Subramanyam (1997) have also highlighted the gross inadequacies of using nation-states as naturalized units of analysis in the scholarly enterprise. We may here reflect on scholarly complicities, including the uncomfortable irony of the ubiquitous naturalization of our ways/waves-of-thinking in *nation-state* units and the return of right-wing *nationalism* in European spaces and beyond in the 21st century. Calling for “connected histories” and the need for “rescuing history from the nation,” Subramanyam (2005) suggests that historians need to disengage with national boundaries and narratives while focusing on the local and regional. In relation to the continuing fallacy of engaging with nation-state units, of interest for present purposes is Gilroy (1993), Landri and Neumann (2014), and others’ emphasis on *mobility* as a lens to destabilize the fixed nature of hegemonic naturalized scholarly gazing.

Furthermore, the idea dimension of the binary east/south and west/north attests to the struggles of people whose epistemologies continue to be erased and who are positioned as *in need of*

*education* and *treatments*; such thinking rests securely on the grand narratives of integration, inclusion, and other myths entrenched in the mainstream enlightenment rhetoric. Thus, rather than hegemonic knowledge of empire, it is the epistemologies that have been sidelined, considered traditional, and that are born in struggles that have salience for the arguments posited here. The global south (or whatever vocabulary is used to point to such territories, peoples, and/or ideas) is diverse and its diversities shape knowledge generation and circulation. While there is a decisive taken-for-granted voice and gaze regarding places, peoples, and/or ideas entrenched within global north academia, as highlighted above, diversities within the global north too shape knowledges. Digitalization muddies the waters of such binaries even further. Digital-analog entanglements in contemporary human existence need recognition here, in that they constitute dimensions of mobility and constitute aspects of the mundane for a large majority of the planet’s peoples (albeit not everyone). These issues constitute key points of departure for emergent and new discussions regarding places, peoples, and ideas that this paper aligns with in its agenda of contributing to the intersections of sustainability, digitalization, and learning.

Asante and Dove (2021) invite considerations on “how to become humans being human [through dismantling] the *House of Race* to erect the *House of Humanity*” (p. 169, emphasis in original). They argue that dismantling onto-epistemological naturalizations and, when required, discarding the dismantled “pieces into the trash heap of history” calls for believing in people’s capacity for “seeing truth and then transforming themselves and their societies”<sup>3</sup> (2021, p. 169). This paper invites us to consider what such thinking means for sustainable research and higher education itself. Asante and Dove characterize the *House of Race*, which is declining given its *sandy foundations*, in terms of:

- Patriarchy,
- White supremacy,
- Hierarchy of “races,”
- Hierarchy of gender,
- Highlighting alterity,
- Weaponizing physical traits,
- Assertion of Anglo-Germanic or Aryan superiority,
- Belief that race is approved by nature and deities,
- Toxic relationships with all other people,
- Self-centered greed,
- Exploitation of non-white people, and
- Deceitful interactions (2021, p. 175).

In contrast, they suggest that the ascending *House of Humanity*, built on a *rocky foundation*, is characterized by

- *Homo sapiens*,
- Commonalities outweigh differences,
- Acceptance of differences,
- Respect for life,
- Dignity in being human,

<sup>2</sup> Comparing demographically skewed nation-state framed units has become naturalized to the extent that social scientists assume that creditable issues can be discussed through comparisons between territories like the nation-state of Sweden (with a population of circa 10.5 million inhabitants) and the nation-state of contemporary India (whose over 1.4 billion people make up almost one-fifth of the planetary population).

<sup>3</sup> Among other issues, they call for “taking the concept of whiteness out of the default position in discourses.”

- Humility facing difference, and
- Cooperation over competition (ibid, emphasis in original).

Such a quest *back to humanity* challenges the linear and universalizing imaginaries of knowledge-regimes and development. Instead, the back-to-humanity pursuit builds on multiversal/pluriversal onto-epistemologies. It has, in other words, epistemic and existential dimensions at intersecting multiple points of departure: individual, societal, and planetary scales. The ideas offered in this paper—including how these ideas are operationalized in its organization<sup>4</sup>—thus build on the intricately entangled nature of *Epistemological* and *Existential* issues, not least when our gaze is on *sustainability*. My deployment of “E2” in this context attempts to both point to the inseparable nature of Epistemic and Existential issues in relation to sustainability, and as a call to shift our collective naturalized gaze away from what we may call “e2,” i.e., ecological/environmental and economic-sustainability narratives. Hegemonic e2-sustainability imaginaries need to be replaced with E2-sustainability way/waves-of-thinking. To reiterate a key point: e2-sustainability is assumed in E2-sustainability framings.

In this light, there exists an imperative need for disrupting the unsustainable trajectories of how “single grand stories” have and continue to frame the deployment of planetary resources, including the “single grand stories” that naturalize European intellectual framings *as* universal framings.<sup>5</sup> Such disruptions are emerging from and within different quarters in the 21st century, a process that is being accelerated through the contemporary digital-analog existence. Awareness regarding ecological/environmental sustainability has significantly increased and vociferous calls by activists have long been made across the planet calling for more serious political efforts to safe-guard conditions for life to co-exist on “our home planet.” In sharp comparison, subdued but nevertheless critical challenges can be noted with regard to epistemic erasures, what Santos (2017) calls “epistemicide.” While scholarly activism and challenges against universal linear (western) Eurocentric thinking and colonial epistemic extractivism have existed for decades, if not centuries, in some academic quarters, contemporary scholars across the scientific spectrum can no longer shield themselves/ourselves from the *waves of challenges* that question universalisms, in the face of the many ways/waves-of-being on the planet. Challenges posed by the “epistemologies of the south” that point to “the end of the cognitive empire” (Santos, 2018) find resonance in E2-sustainability framings wherein a *global-centric* framing is a way to trouble and end the naturalized cognitive empire.

In likeminded vein, and related to long-standing critiques of disciplinary silos and ossification, Gordan (2006), Bhambra (2007), Pandey (2011), and other critical post/decolonial scholars of color<sup>6</sup> point to the need for re-examining boundaries and the naturalization of *difference*.

“Processes of classification necessarily entail an emphasis on difference and separation over connections and, even today, given that our access to knowledge can only ever be partial and provisional, we have to locate our intellectual endeavors within particular boundaries” (Bhambra, 2007, p. 32).

Recognizing research *as* a human activity, and researchers *as* humaning, makes it thus possible to re-examine difference and boundary-making/marking as a fundamental dimension of an E2-sustainability project. Troubling the assumptions and naturalizations of how difference is collated with diversity, Pandey (2011) too draws attention to these multiple grids and the fluidity of difference that is fundamentally and importantly “a history and politics of *becoming*—not of the already normalized, stable and relatively immutable” (Pandey, 2011, p. 1, emphasis in original); here, foregrounding differences in *itself* constitutes the naturalizing of the other. Over time, calls and rights for sameness that build on recognition as equals therefore morph into calls by people and scholars “for an acknowledgment and even privileging of certain kinds of difference” (p. 3). The key issue for present purposes is that enunciations of differences are far from innocuous scholarly projects; they are, borrowing from Bhambra (1994), critical significations wherein articulations of *of* and *on* ideas, or the gloss we know as culture, are based on political ideological naturalizations.

Navigating issues of relevance with regards to alternative ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies nevertheless calls for a delicate balancing act, if epistemic, democratic, and sustainable research work is to circumvent continuing erasures in newer (dis)guises. Such a stance recognizes the challenges and inherent tensions that guide such scholarly attempts. While there is need to bring in global representation when global-centric multiversal perspectives are aimed for, such efforts risk instrumental coverage and tokenism through scholarly representations that are territorially fixed. A *global-centric gaze*, from an E2-sustainable lens, calls for both going beyond a tokenistic geographical representation, and furthermore creating inclusive spaces for northern stances rather than erasing them altogether. Here a global-centric stance, recognized as a decolonial turn, and borrowing from Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020), calls for *all* scholarship *everywhere* to “turn a new leaf.”

Such ideas call for non-straight-jacketed theoretical and methodological framings to which we now shift our attention.

## 2. On epistemological entanglements and existential needs

From what has been argued for so far, and with the aim of revitalizing the learning enterprise, re-imagining research and education from global-centric mobile lenses calls for an un-learning to re-learn based on the researcher’s humaning state. Thus, given that “the existence of a thing or substance is indistinguishable from its activity” (Ingold, 2015, p. 116), research itself needs scrutiny. Openness, critical reflections, and curiosity-driven work are some epithets that characterize the doing of research, a searching that needs to transcend a re-producing ethos. This centrally calls for non-programmatic scholarly routines. This section outlines the salient features of an inclusive global-centric

4 For instance, the creative, curiosity marked layout offered in Section 4.

5 See Bagga-Gupta (2018).

6 I position myself and my writings within such framings.



framing that incorporates such thinking. Called SWaSP, a *Second Wave of Southern Perspectives*,<sup>7</sup> this framing draws attention to the emerging shifts toward a solidarity-based research endeavor. SWaSP raises issues from and contributes conceptually toward two broad theoretical orientations that benefit from coming into dialogue<sup>8</sup>:

- On the one hand, perspectives such as those labeled sociocultural/sociohistorical, activity theory, social theories of mind, dialogism, integrationism, sadharanikaran, and ubuntu, and
- On the other hand, framings that are variously called anti/post/decolonial studies and southern theories and whose trajectories are long and complex.

The thinking in the entanglements of these two orientations has salience for not only the doing of research in non-programmatic ways, but also for writing and publishing scholarship, in the scholarly review process, in how research is consumed within institutions of higher education,<sup>9</sup> and in scholarly referencing habits. SWaSP builds on five overarching and overlapping themes. How *linguaging* is actualized in the areas of learning and digitalization from E2-sustainability framings is attended to in Section 3. The remaining four themes are discussed here in Section 2: a multiversal *epistemological-methodological* perspective that has salience for scholarly re-imaginings of *time-spaces* from global-centric *positionalities* and *ethical* dimensions of taking onboard a mobile gaze in the research endeavor. The overlapping nature of these themes means that many premises intersect and feed into or anticipate one another. The discussion of the epistemological-methodological theme (the largest of the five) is dealt with in more depth in sub-section 2.1. Deploying E2-sustainability as a framing, SWaSP offers new vocabularies<sup>10</sup> and ways/waves-of-becoming for enabling un-learning to re-learn in the contemporary digital-analog existence.

## 2.1. Multiversal theoretical-methodological premises

Recognizing the complexities or messiness of human existence draws attention to the problems of using programmatic straight-jacketed methodologies to create data, analyze data, write results,

7 SWaSP tenets align with and go beyond the important (ongoing) work in what can be framed as a “first wave of southern thinking” (Bagga-Gupta and Kamei, 2022). By making visible the continuing hegemonic *colonial-order-of-things* as the *naturalized-order-of-things*, SWaSP contributes to an E2-sustainability agenda. For more on SWaSP see Bagga-Gupta (2023a,b), Bagga-Gupta (2022a,b,c), Bagga-Gupta and Carneiro (2021), Bagga-Gupta and Messina Dahlberg (2021), and Bagga-Gupta and Vigmo (2023).

8 Given that the agenda in this paper is not a SWaSP framing in itself, I do not explicate each of the many different analytical perspectives that contribute to the two theoretical clusters. It is the five themes that emerge from the entanglements of the two clusters that are dealt with in this and the next section.

9 Including in teacher education.

10 See in particular Bagga-Gupta (2022b,c).

etc. (Bagga-Gupta et al., 2019; Bagga-Gupta and Messina Dahlberg, 2021). Paraphrasing Law (2004), if humaning, i.e., the nature of human existence is “an awful mess,” then simplifying and boxing it into streamlined categories makes a greater mess of its hues and textures. Approaching such complexity head-on meets the scholarly need for not merely systematicity, but also recognizing the many-(possible)-ways-of-doing/writing/producing research insights. Thus, making sense of what scholars/we call, for example, data, analysis, results, writing, and publishing necessitates *creative stances*, including going beyond contemporary theoretical-methodological hegemonies of mainstream Social Sciences and Humanities and the routine tendency of keeping digital spaces separate from so-called real-life spaces in the scholarly enterprise (see Bagga-Gupta and Vigmo, 2023).

Highlighting the centrality of (western) European thinking and conceptual framings (both in theories of modernity and multiple modernities) in the very DNA of the Social Sciences and Humanities, Bhambra (2007), Bhambra and Holmwood (2021), and others—as also argued for in Section 1—illuminate the need for re-visions and re-articulations of the many-ways/waves-of-humaning. SWaSP framings here call attention to global-centric mobile gazing as an important way ahead. Learning how to notice, feel, and research others’ “rememories” across time-spaces, geographies, and named-languages (Rhee, 2021) draws attention to the fallacy of continuing to equate (western) European epistemologies as global epistemologies. Such a stance opens a Pandora’s box by raising fundamental questions about how modernity and enlightenment are entangled with colonialism. This stance enables dismantling naturalized points of departure, enabling key new ways of re-imagining science and the doing of science. Mainstream hegemonic episto-methodologies do not build on value-neutral agendas. Neither do alternative episto-methodologies. Collating two largely different theorizing lines of scholarship through SWaSP therefore enables a broader global aperture that has a more robust chance of engaging with contemporary challenges at the local, regional, and global scales across analog-digital existence. Far from attempting to constitute a new value-neutral stance, SWaSP thus explicitly calls attention to scholarly positionalities (one of its five themes; see 2.4 below). In contemporary digital-analog existence, scholars (and others) positionalities are always both situated and mobile, and these can enable only *partial* gazing possibilities.

Earlier paradigmatic shifts allowed scholars invested in the Social Sciences and Humanities to see through the fallacies of controlling variables in their research. The turn toward what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call “naturalistic inquiry,” as relevant to researching humaning, appears to have waned or has morphed into highly specialized siloed research areas.<sup>11</sup> While few would today endorse a view that controlling *socio-cultural* variables is possible, let alone desirable, approaching the entanglements of epistemology, methodology, and analysis when the object of study is the

11 Super-specializations in the Social Sciences and Humanities risk becoming ends in themselves, distracting from the primary task of creating knowledge of relevance to contemporary challenges. They tend to become associated with specific methodologies and theoretical framings and their trajectories are upheld through publishing regimes that are reminiscent of echo-chambers.

unpredictable wilderness of humaning, not least *by fellow humans*, i.e., scholars, calls attention to delicate agendas. Here, turning toward alternative approaches enabled by foregrounding erased or marginalized episto-methodologies can function as important opportunities. Thus, onto-epistemologies and methodologies of the south, as outlined in the works of [Asante and Dove \(2021\)](#), [Chilisa \(2020\)](#), [Khawaja and Kousholt \(2021\)](#), [Kohn \(2013\)](#), [Mpofu and Ndlovu-Gatsheni \(2019\)](#), [Pandey \(2011\)](#), [Santos \(2017, 2018\)](#), [Springgay and Truman \(2019\)](#), and others, need attention with the intent to trouble the organization and habits of mainstream education and research. Their treatises can, for starters, be seen as complementary to mainstream imaginaries. Such an approach would constitute a global-centric mobile gazing stance that draws attention to episto-methodological work as *ways/waves-of-seeing*, not just (neutrally framed) *observing* or *looking*. In contemporary times, this traverses not only geopolitical places but also the permeable spaces of the analog-digital, as can be seen through the works of [Cohen and Duggan \(2021\)](#), [Horst and Miller \(2012\)](#), and [Pink et al. \(2022\)](#) among others. The critical point is that where scholars' mobile situatedness and gazing is, and has been, always shapes what they/we can see, and what they/we see can never be anything but partial. Such multiversal theoretical-methodological premises highlight the performative, the doing dimension of humaning, including the doing of research, i.e., *humaning scholarship*. In the doing of research this upfronts the entanglements of Epistemic and Existential sustainability, pointing to scholarly languaging and positionings, i.e., *ways/waves-of-being-with-words* that need attention, rather than the noun-ness of scholarly language and scholars' territorially based identities.

Rather than knowable, clear, or definite, it is the vagueness, non-coherence, multiplicities, complexities, and indeterminacies of humaning that are in continuous need of a deeply personal inquiry or re-memory in the episto-methodological enterprise. Thus, engaging with unpredictability, perspectival, and multiversal views calls for going beyond entrenched ideas regarding both objectivity and subjectivity in fieldwork and in data-creation. Challenging naturalizations of mainstream universal calls, some like [Law \(2004\)](#) have suggested the need for a disciplined "lack of clarity" if scholars are to do justice to the complex-heterogeneity of humaning. Languaging, humans' (including scholars') central cultural tool, as we will see more explicitly in Section 3, plays a key role here. But before that some brief commentaries are presented regarding the remaining three SWaSP themes.

## 2.2. Across time-spaces in the here and now

Principles of identifying patterns across time-spaces and in the here and now, irrespective of a territory's colonial heritage, and acknowledging the non-neutral agendas of all knowledge creation, constitute key dimensions of SWaSP. Furthermore, SWaSP tenets that relate to this second overlapping theme point to the necessity of going beyond Cartesian dualisms regarding, not least, those of the south/east/majority and north/west/empire. Complexified by alternative episto-methodologies and contemporary analog-digital

existence, the theme of time-spaces upfronts the re-noticing of the mundane *everywhere*, including in digital-analog spaces and the non-linear trajectory of colonial imaginaries. This relates to moving beyond the givens, de-naturalizing premises to enable re-noticings anew in territories that are not commonly seen as marked by colonial heritage. Going beyond more commonly accessible and naturalized ideas, a mobile gaze opens in-between border-spaces for exploration wherein a scholar's gazing is understood as being analytically-methodologically steered (implicitly or explicitly) and partial, rather than neutral and complete.

Geographies of thinking (in the plural) have the means to "crack the colonial structure of the intellectual enterprise," as the work of the African Studies Global Forum led by [Makoni et al. \(2022\)](#), p. 16 suggests. Geographies of thinking are complicated, not least since time-spaces are shaped by digitalization and scholars' lived trajectories are anything but linear. Such humaning itself calls for the cultivation of a mobile gaze in the researcher's educational and work trajectory. Furthermore, since marginalizing and marginalized peoples and ideas co-exist in all spaces and in the here and now, it is the marginalized and minoritized spaces and ideas that are of relevance. This highlights the connectedness of histories and knowledge genealogies across time-spaces. It is through movements away from spaces of the givens, established truths of scholarly domains, and in reflexive, creative, and unexpected collaborations, including joint seeings, that the decolonial movement can offer ethically viable sustainable meanings.

## 2.3. Ethical framings

The third of the five SWaSP themes brings together different propositions that focus on ethical dimensions of humaning, in particular scholars' humaning. Doing science sustainably requires a re-thinking of prevailing assumptions that trouble the given, as has been argued so far. Ethics in scholarship goes beyond formal requirements, including clearance from research ethical committees and boards. It involves and requires critical reflexive thinking of the mundane doings during the entire scholarly trajectory of conducting and producing research. Acknowledgment of sources, acknowledgment of inputs by other scholars—particularly marginalized peoples' contributions—constitute key dimensions of ethical framings within a SWaSP agenda.<sup>12</sup> Ethical tenets can also involve inviting the gaze of marginalized researchers on issues of relevance for northern territories, rather than relegating them to positions of passivity or restricting their gaze to work related to personal issues vis-à-vis territories of their birth or (former) citizenship or their functionality, social class, etc. Working on relevant streams of scholarship that are significant to contemporary planetary challenges as well as

<sup>12</sup> It is here relevant to ask whether ideas regarding multilingualism, post-humanism, post-materialism, etc. in north-centric scholarship constitute newer appropriations that naturalize the *colonial-order-of-things* ([May, 2014](#); [Pennycook and Makoni, 2020](#)).

contributing to epistemic justice constitute ethical dimensions that are critically important.

## 2.4. Scholars and others' positionalities

Lewis and Baderoon importantly suggest that “*what* kind of knowledge matters is linked to the question: *Whose* knowledge matters?” (Lewis and Baderoon, 2021, p. 2, emphasis added). A mobile gaze constitutes a critical dimension regarding *who* is being focused upon and *by whom*. Thus, in addition to scholars, the positionalities of people who are or who become interesting in a scholar's gaze constitute relevant issues that need reflective attention in research. Transcending territorially fixed affiliations—place of birth or current/previous citizenship or employment—to locate a scholar or a human being for eternity, it is the mobile human condition in analog-digital time-spaces that is relevant analytically. The fallacy of terms like south/east-north/west notwithstanding, mobility has and continues to shape scholars' lives and academic trajectories. Mobility frames scholars' gazing possibilities and its potential multi-directionality through their living and working in digital-analog entanglements.<sup>13</sup> Contemporary analog-digital existence also shapes the living and working of humans more generally, i.e., those whose humaning whet the interest of scholars. Popular as locating people into categories a priori is in the research enterprise, such standard stances go against the humaning ethos that SWaSP builds upon. Humans, including other animals, plants and things, exist only in relation to activities: “their *becoming* is continually overtaking their *being*” (Ingold, 2015, p. 118, emphasis added); as Ubuntu and numerous indigenous philosophies espouse, humans exist in relation to one another, other living beings and non-beings—interdependence and interbeing are key.

Scholars' positionality commentaries enable an engagement with their reflections from peripheries and in-between spaces. Of interest may be their entanglements of historically framed privileges/marginalities, rather than their embodied characteristics (e.g., skin color, marked functionalities, height, clothing preferences), localities of birth, current/past citizenship, or places of studies or work. Thus, scholars' mobility-marked positionalities go beyond their analog-digital situatedness in the present or past. Positionalities are always storied, whether explicitly or implicitly in terms of demographical statements, or snippets of personal/private biographies outside of or within academia. This trend, as Deumert and Makoni (2023) suggest, is seeing calls for

more reflective positionality commentaries. Always entailing a movement, scholars *learning to see* is enabled/disabled in terms of a collaborative enterprise. Given that the far majority of scholars have been socialized into mainstream ways of hegemonic thinking, irrespective of the locality of their birth, citizenship, place of studies or work, positionality commentaries are not neutral statements. Building on Piller et al.'s (2022) reflections on the global academic knowledge production scene, scholars privileged in terms of historical, material, or territorial markers need to understand their task in terms of greater responsibilities to contribute to global-centric multiversal scholarship. Constituting an ethically viable epistemic sustainable stance requires *all scholars*, those who are privileged as well as those who are racialized/marginalized, to story their positionalities, thus, debunking the former's neutrality. Such thinking troubles the static naturalizations of colonially framed praxis wherein marginalized scholars are those called upon to upfront their positionalities, not least to check their purported neutrality.

In the next section, we visit the fifth and final theme, *linguaging*, that is salient in a SWaSP framing that contributes toward an E2-sustainability agenda.

## 3. Linguaging and the language and educational sciences

The fundamental nature of *linguaging* is what makes humans human. Issues regarding the doing of language and how tenets related to communication (broadly conceptualized), are actualized in the areas of learning and digitalization from E2-sustainability framings are salient here: “humans humanify themselves, one another, the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and indeed the entire universe” (Ingold, 2015, p. 117). The key argument this paper has put forward so far is that Epistemic and Existential, i.e., E2-sustainability, as compared to ecological/environmental and economic, i.e., e2-sustainability, is needed as a primary thrust in order to tackle the many challenges humanity faces currently. e2, as well as other dimensions of sustainability (such as social and cultural) are here understood as being covered within an overarching E2-sustainability.

While linguaging or communication orders human experiences, humaning orders linguaging. *This holds for scholarly linguaging too*. The performative dimension of humaning relates to meaning-making; paraphrasing sociocultural theorists like Vygotsky (1934/1962), Wertsch (1998), Säljö (2010), and others, meaning-making takes place within the entanglements and embeddedness of peoples situated-distributed living where *cultural tools* like language and *material tools* like sticks, pencils, watches, and laptops across time-spaces are salient. These tools are *not* add-ons to human behavior. It is only for heuristic purposes that people and cultural, physical tools, and time-spaces are discussed apart. Recognizing the boundary-marking reinforcements of language (by scholars and lay people) is also crucial here, as is the ableist, gendered, colonial nature of knowledge-making work that takes place implicitly or knowingly *through* language. Drawing on the work of Harris (2009, 2002/2013), language—in a SWaSP framing—does not exist outside human happenings; it constitutes

<sup>13</sup> Working on this paper, for instance, has been framed by my locally situated mobile existence in different spaces in Sweden (and the planet) across digital-analog spheres. While I consult physical literature at my home and university office shelves, including digital writings saved in cyberspaces accessed through digital devices, the entire processes of writing and submitting, dialoguing with reviewers, etc., takes place in digital spaces of what we call the world wide web. Parallel tasks of teaching and co-writing with students and colleagues across physical-digital spaces inside and outside Sweden have also influenced the thinking and the writing of this paper.

inseparable dimensions of the entanglement of signifying practices. This way/wave-of-thinking has important consequences for scholarly *linguaging*, which loops back to the significance of attending to whose gaze is privileged, why, when, and on what.

The episto-methodological erasures across time-spaces discussed in this paper's first two sections are centrally related to what constitutes the mainstream within the Language and Educational Sciences. These scholarly areas are used here as illustrations that can substantiate the important need to un-learn for re-learning that an E2-sustainability agenda affords. Demarcations within the Language and Educational Sciences have contributed to a mess of sorts. The genealogies of areas related to the Language and Educational Sciences, such as sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, educational linguistics, and linguistic anthropology, appear like a maze that a multi/inter/transdisciplinary scholar smitten by mobile gazing will likely find unattractive. The necessity of going beyond dichotomizing and naturalized stances in the Language and Educational Sciences can further be based on the organizing principles that need troubling related to language in research, institutionalized K-12 education, and higher education. Here *separated* areas of expertise have become fossilized. Consider for instance the boundary marking inherent in the following organizing principles at play in the Language and Educational Sciences:

- *modalities* in terms of demarcated oral/written/signed languages, multimodality of communication,
- *spatiality* differentiated in terms of digital-analog/national/regional/home/institutional languages,
- *relationality* marked in terms of mother tongue, foreign/native/indigenous languages,
- *numericity* highlighted in terms of first/second languages, L1, L2... , bi/multi/plurilingual, etc.
- *gender* in terms of mother tongue, home language,
- *embodiment* in terms of language produced from the mouth and accessed from the ears (oral languages), language produced in the hands and accessed by the eyes (signed languages), and so on.

Specializations in language scholarship also include demarcated *domains*, *language subject areas*, and student (and teacher) *identity positions*.<sup>14</sup> Such taken-for-grantedness is itself complicit in the creation of bounded areas of expertise that continue to shape how language gets conceptualized, including the organization of institutional teaching and learning of named-languages within

14 In addition to the separated expertise areas related to modalities, spatiality, relationality, numericity, etc. learning of demarcated named-languages has given rise to identity positionings of humans in the mainstream Language and Education Sciences scholarship. The named-languages English and Swedish, for instance, have given rise to identity positionings of native speakers of English or Swedish, users and learners of English as a Second/Additional language, Swedish as a Second Language, Swedish as a Second Language for Deaf (individuals), Swedish (as a second language) for (migrant/refugee) Adults, etc. (Bagga-Gupta, 2022b,c).

higher education as well as K-12 schools. We may ask whether these demarcations and areas of scholarship constitute homage-paying institutional enterprises that pursue their scholarly discussions in silos based on specific gurus or tenets. Can science progress in any other manner? Particularly salient is the framings, or rather skewed framings, regarding learning that mark these demarcated specialist areas.

Against this backdrop it becomes worthwhile to reflect on southern thinking that has recently made inroads at the very centers of the former *and* contemporary colonial empire. Outside of *decolonial scholarship*, this is most evident in the disciplinary domains of *sociology* and recently in some parts of the *language scholarship*. An increasing awareness regarding the multiversal—rather than the universal—nature of ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies, is thus increasingly disrupting the taken-for-grantedness of what has been framed as the given or the naturalization of the colonial-order-of-things. The *Educational or Learning Sciences*,<sup>15</sup> and institutional education in particular, seem in large measure to live a parallel existence, eclipsed from these critical discussions.

Contemporary scholarly mobilities, including the ways in which digitalization frames scholarly endeavors,<sup>16</sup> shape new problematizations of the *naturalization of the colonial-order-of-things*. In other words, the ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies that have framed mainstream language scholarship from the centers of empire are being forced to acknowledge not just that alternative knowledges exist and emerge in the majority world, but also their own role in the continuing marginalizations and/or erasures of these alternatives. This understanding is emergent and is not uniformly distributed across *either* language scholarship or the spaces that constitute the global north.

Furthermore, emerging scholarship can also be understood in terms of a mismatch: peoples' performances, i.e., humaning, in terms of how the deployment of meaning-making resources plays out, is increasingly recognized as being at odds with how scholarship in the mainstream Language and Educational Sciences routinely conceptualizes this thing we call language (this includes its taken-for-grantedness regarding boundaries between named-languages, named-modalities, embodiments, tool-deployment, etc.). Calling for the need to interrogate what key concepts one's own scholarship re-imposes on ways/waves-of-thinking (and at the cost of other locally situated vocabularies) highlights the importance of nodal multiversal frontlines (Bagga-Gupta and Carneiro, 2021; see also Bagga-Gupta, 2022b,c).

15 For present purposes, a heuristic distinction has been made between the Educational and the Learning Sciences. The former can be understood as being broader, while the latter may be subsumed within the former.

16 In addition to mundane university administration work (that is conducted through e-mails, accounting apps, and teaching platforms), regular global seminars and entire conferences have become digital in contemporary post-pandemic times. Furthermore, all contemporary research writing, publishing, reviewing, editing, etc., is handled by humans who are connected digitally. This paper is but one such illustration of contemporary research work that is accomplished digitally.



Frontline scholarship needs, thus, to recognize the *many different ways/waves-of-thinking*.

Contemporary calls for multi/inter/transdisciplinary scholarship notwithstanding, another challenge that can be noted is that the decolonizing of the Language and Educational Sciences is curtailed by monolingual writing habits and publishing traditions where a one-English-at-a-time text-only (general) ethos and primarily linear text divided in paragraphs specifically is the holy grail<sup>17</sup>; here languaging that gets glossed as multilingual or multimodal where multi-tool deployment takes place is invariably reduced to English-only-text-transcripts of oral communication. The many-ways/waves-of-being-with-meaning-constructions continue, thus, to be peripheralized in digital-analog existence despite what digitalization potentially enables.<sup>18</sup> Marked through alternative conceptual framings and pushed by a mobile gaze, an E2-sustainability agenda draws critical attention to the need for shifting perspectives in research and educational work across K-12 and higher education. It may be posited that *major* and *minor* shifts, as pointed to in this paper, are needed for E2-sustainability so that scholarship in areas of relevance to contemporary challenges may be addressed in contexts like K-12 and higher education, including teacher-education, enabling a critical move beyond ethnocentrically framed biases and silos. Troubling key taken-for-granted universalizing truths and using the Language and Educational Sciences as an illustration, the salient concern here relates to the outsourcing of important agendas to technologies, including digitalization, and concepts that build on contentious assumptions based on demarcated expertise related to modalities, spatiality, relationality, numericity, etc. It is this *default* outsourcing that is troubled through a curiosity-driven *multiversal* and *global-centric* mobile gaze wherein northern and southern knowledge-regimes need to come into dialogue.

These tensions can be further illustrated through E2-sustainability issues with regards to the nature of the Language and Educational Sciences scholarship wherein language and learning seldom align fruitfully. Focusing upon them separately makes evident that while the multidisciplinary domain of the Educational Sciences is well established, it has barely started to engage with the domain of language scholarship (broadly conceptualized). For instance, the flagship Learning Sciences organization in Europe, EARLI,<sup>19</sup> lacked a Special Interest Group (SIG) in the Language Sciences domain at the end of 2022.<sup>20</sup> While the second European organization that is dedicated to the area of education, EERA,<sup>21</sup> had one network (of its 33 networks) that focuses on “language and education” in 2022, its (north) American counterpart AERA<sup>22</sup> had one Special Interest Group

(of over 158 existing SIG’s in 2022) that focuses on language (called “Language and Social Processes”). This cursory overview in itself suggests that it is the Language Sciences that have been interested in the area of “education,” rather than the other way around.

While the area of Language *Studies* continues to be rather open, without the historicity related to (traditional) linguistics attached to it, the area of Language *Sciences* builds on a specific historicity of over half a century of entanglements with the mainstream trajectory of how language has been conceptualized. An instance of this can be seen in the historical reflection presented in 2017, titled “*Language sciences: half a century on the linguistic frontiers*,” in the journal “Language Sciences” that was launched at the end of the 1960s. Of relevance here is what Sune Vork Steffensen, Carol Fowler, and Graeme Trousdale, the editors of the journal, highlight to commemorate the journals 50th anniversary:

“[The journal] is not wedded to any single linguistic area (be it pragmatics, semantics, phonetics, syntax, or one of the many hyphenated disciplines), [...] the journal’s selection criteria do not follow disciplinary boundaries” (Steffensen et al., 2017, p. A2, emphasis added).

Here, we can note that these editorial reflections do not present the Learning Sciences in terms of a disciplinary node in the second half of the second decade of the 21st century. One may ask whether the areas of learning and/or education have been subsumed within a “hyphenated discipline.” This state of scholarly affairs is striking given the major shifts in human mobilities and demographics, visibly recognized within western/northern territories<sup>23</sup> and normalized across the majority planet, including internal mobilities everywhere. It is the impact that these mobilities have had in relation to language and communication across preschool, K-12, and higher education that is of specific interest here. A critical need exists for illuminating issues of learning specifically and issues related to what language is and what it has become in educational and research spaces from multiversal perspectives more generally in the 21st century.

The above issues notwithstanding, hyphenated domains within the Language Sciences that include education into their folds, are not without issues either. For instance, controversies regarding the trajectories, similarities, and differences between applied linguistics (that emerged in the 1940s) and educational linguistics (that emerged in the 1970s) and their overlaps aside, theorizing related to learning is implicit for the most in these hyphenated domains; the Learning Sciences do not constitute an explicit point of departure in these domains. Neither have they advanced alternative/southern/post/decolonial framings in

17 This paper, so far, contributes to upholding this holy grail. An attempt is made in Section 4 to disrupt these scholarly genre tendencies.

18 Such thinking can create revolutionary shifts in both the doing of scholarship, but also how institutional learning gets organized across K-12 and higher education.

19 European Association of Research in Learning and Instruction, [www.earli.org](http://www.earli.org).

20 EARLI has 28 SIG’s (<http://www.earli.org/sig>, 18/10/2022).

21 European Educational Research Association, <https://eera-ecer.de/>.

22 American Educational Research Association, <https://www.aera.net/>.

23 Terms like superdiversity and hyperdiversity emerged in European spaces and European language scholarship in the first decade of the 21st century. That the term superdiversity was coined in England, a colonial superpower, is itself ironical.

any explicit manner.<sup>24</sup> It would thus not be incorrect to suggest that a universalizing northern scholarly trajectory marks this scholarship.<sup>25</sup>

This brief overview calls for demarcated scholarship in the Language and Educational Sciences domains to move beyond universalizing siloed existence and engage with alternative framings (like SWaSP) in order to contribute to key emerging areas that have E2-sustainability relevance. Moving beyond the rhetorics of, including the calls for, multi/trans/inter/cross-disciplinary scholarship, such an E2-sustainability agenda builds on attempts to shift toward multiversal frontlines that aim to contribute to what is being discussed in terms of “undisciplinary” scholarship. Undisciplinarity does not mean that there is an “anything goes stance” in research work; rather the concept has been offered recently in some scientific domains as a disappointed but constructive response that looks ahead since the earlier prefixed solutions of multi/inter/cross/transdisciplinarity do not seem to have delivered. This then constitutes what lies at the frontline of the Language and Educational Sciences discussions that aim to push for unconventional curiosity-driven science for meeting planetary challenges related to demographic displacements, ethical and moral imperatives, etc., and the *quest back to humanity* in the research enterprise.

As outlined in the earlier sections of this paper, decolonial perspectives critique the universalizing linear ethos of colonial and (western) Eurocentric knowledge-regimes. This has involved both the erasures of other knowledge-regimes through colonialism and the view of others as lesser beings. Multiversal perspectives, in contrast, acknowledge different knowledge-regimes and invite dialogue between them (what R'boul 2022, calls *epistemological polylogue*). Thus, for instance, peoples' languaging repertoires in southern spaces constitutes a fund of knowledge that needs to be acknowledged (and studied) with the intent to inform languaging in both the mainstream scholarship as well as in institutional education in northern territories.

Here, we can return to the areas of the emerging trajectories of multiversal knowledge-making that are being discussed in terms of, for example, the end of the cognitive empire, epistemic (in)justice, epistemic caring, southern epistemologies, and the global economy of knowledge. At the core of such thinking lies the very decoloniality of knowledge-making and the roles that universities and institutions of higher education can play in solidarity-based E2-sustainable digital-analog presents and futures. The framings of the research and teaching entrusted to institutions of higher education thus constitute critical areas that need to be interrogated with the intent to contribute to epistemic justice, caring, and sustainable science. The offerings made by Becher and Trowler (2001), Connell (2019), Hall (2021), Rodríguez (2018), and others are highly significant in these efforts.

24 However, an emerging shift can be noted in the Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics domains.

25 My own co-edited 2019 volume in the Springer's "Educational Linguistics" series may constitute an illustration of this hegemonic issue.

It is here that a troubling of hegemonic *ossifications* regarding language itself in the Language and Educational Sciences becomes necessary: despite recognition accorded to the fluid meaning-making nature of human languaging and interrogations regarding existent hegemonies of north-centric framings, mainstream language scholarship itself continues to be marked by divisions, essentialist practices and universalistic stances (Bagga-Gupta, 2022b,c). As discussed earlier, mainstream research continues to be organized within bounded areas of expertise that have become naturalized through universal dichotomies and labels. Key here is that such critical discussions continue to circumvent contemporary emerging mainstream scholarly discussions in the language scholarship. Thus, it continues to be important to raise questions related to, for example, “what” language is, “who” frames the narrative on “what,” “who” gets constructed in these narratives, and from “where.” These types of troubling queries have started emerging in mainstream north-centric language scholarship recently. However, given that this mainstream has excavated and drawn from both the territories of the majority/global south and the white/global north hegemonic spaces on the planet, including naturalizing vocabularies everywhere, such research risks continuing complicity in marginalizing and/or erasing alternative thinking.

From the above, it follows that questions related to K-12 and continuing education, and learning more specifically, continue to be framed primarily, if not solely, from north-centric thinking. Here, the territories of the majority/global south continue to function as sites of excavation and exploitation on the one hand, and settings where mainstream northern thinking is exported to, on the other hand. This constitutes the continuing one-way flow of taken-for-granted ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies. It is here that scholars who find themselves discomfited in their humaning within universalizing myths can find support from an E2-sustainability shift toward multiversal framings. Revisiting the opening quote of this paper, “in the land of academia” who but scholars can re-nurture a caring curiosity in their craft if they/we are to be able to make relevant contributions to mitigate the many challenges humanity faces? How can they/we align to a humaning freedom that is entangled with their/our core responsibilities as scholars? Even though languaging itself constitutes a mobile trajectory that is resistant to singular universalizing clear mappings of research narratives, we scholars continue to language in monolithic traditional ways in the writing of our own research. The many ways of human languaging continues, furthermore, to be curtailed to specific named-Englishes (or specific other colonially named-languages, such as Spanishes, Frenches, Germans) in scholarly writings that are presented as prose written linearly (often from left to right) across pages (as has been the case in this paper, so far).

Taking openings enabled through E2-sustainability agendas as concrete inspiration, the final Coda section in this paper transcends scholarly hegemonic languaging habits. It concretely embraces the many-ways/waves-with-words that humaning multiversality enables. It illustrates my dialoging with other inspirational sources on what scholarly humaning can imply in relation to the ideas presented in this paper through other writing genres.

## 4. Coda. Dialoging on humaning multiversally

“How should we live?”

No doubt human[s... ] have always pondered this question”

*Do we really know whether that is the case?  
Did our nearest extinct relatives, the Neanderthals  
and Denisovans, ponder this question? Wonder  
what Svante Pääbo would say...*

“Perhaps it is *the very pondering that makes us human*”

*I imagine that this is what Pääbo would say.*

“For other animals, it seems, the question scarcely arises.

Each is more or less absorbed in its own way of doing things”

*Do we really know whether that is the case?  
Wherein lies the boundaries between humans and animals?  
“it seems,” is from Tim Ingold’s positionality of humaning*

“But human ways of life—ways of doing and saying,  
thinking and knowing—are not handed down on a plate;  
they are not pre-ordained, nor are they ever finally  
settled”

*From my humaning mobile gaze,  
that is the case!  
The question of scholarly boundary-marking  
resurfaces again:  
what makes Homo Sapiens distinct from their  
nearest extinct relatives?*

“Living is *a matter of deciding how to live*, and harbors  
at every moment the *potential to branch in different  
directions*, no one of which is any more *normal* or  
*natural* than any other”

*It surely is too deterministic to suggest  
that living is “a matter of deciding”!  
Is this not a privileged scholar’s pondering?  
Would a pauper who must live on the pavement  
in the megacity of Mumbai agree?  
The potential to branch off in different  
directions at every moment  
or at some moments...*

“As paths are made by walking, so we have continually  
... to improvise ways of life as we go along, breaking  
... trails even as we follow the footsteps of predecessors”

*Emancipation a la Paulo Freire and Antonio Machado  
... how difficult it is to break set thinking habits  
ingrained in the scholarly path...*

“We do so, however, not in isolation but in the company  
... of others”

(Ingold, 2018b, p. 1, emphasis added)

*Ja, which is why we (occasionally)  
Need to un-learn for learning anew  
(Bagga-Gupta in reflection 2022)*



“People are not born. They are made when they become human beings  
within ritual, tradition, purpose, responsibility.”  
(Simon Ortiz,<sup>26</sup> from the poem *Becoming Human*,  
in *After and Before the Lightning*<sup>27</sup>)

*Why search for harmonious futures  
when challenges abound  
and despair lurks all around*

*Why re-search at all  
within monolithic hegemonic truths  
that have erased, silenced many  
humaning ways*

*Why re-visit, re-imagine, re-vise  
futures for multiversal  
thinking*

*What choice  
when the being  
of the researcher-human  
morphs into a becoming  
(Bagga-Gupta in reflection 2022)*

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

<sup>26</sup> Photo credit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>; Simon Ortiz is a leading figure in the Native American literary renaissance that emerged in the 1960s. He is a faculty member at Arizona State University, USA.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/154284/becoming-human>

## Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The handling editor SV declared a past co-authorship with the author SB-G.

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