

Yesmar Oyarzun (YO): So, I'll just start, dive right into questions. And the first one is: at the 1994 4S conference in New Orleans you gave a talk called "Never modern, never been, never ever: Some thoughts about Never-Never Land in science studies," which is a fabulous title-- and some of that has been lost to history-- but can you tell us a little bit about the paper?

(0:27)

Donna Haraway (DH): Well I tried to reconstruct the paper. I actually wrote that one, which is unusual for me, but I think that the, you know, there were some Demons of Revenge because it's disappeared from all of my files, but I do remember that it was a kind of engaged friendship with Bruno LaTour in particular and his very generative little book *We Have Never Been Modern* which I, as well as many other people, learned a great deal from. And Bruno had become both a friend and a colleague and a kind of a, not a frenemy exactly, but a person to tussle with, a person who I love dearly and I think (uh, you know) we both really valued-- I *know* we both really treasured each other's friendship and it was very warm and very affectionate and also intellectually a kind of um, some very interesting frictions between us. And that this paper was my resp-, you know, "Some thoughts about Never-Never Land in Science Studies" was my engagement with Bruno that said "Yes, this is for a long time now you have been completely tone-deaf to intersection feminist theory, to feminist science studies, to non-Western thinking, in spite of an occasional example in your writing. You continue to draw on particular kinds of (?) scholarly sources, a sort of masculinist, individualist, war as the fundamental trope, and you (ruin?) what you're setting out to do." You can't do the kind of (vanity and ?? modern) and propose what he now call love of the earth. Love, I think Bruno was working toward very much in 1994. Do you need your practices and network-based thinking about knowledge making including the sciences unless you engage with the other social movements that are at the root of science studies, most certainly including intersectional feminist science studies-- the kind that I think Patricia Hill Collins, and myself, and Sandra Harding, and Evelyn Hammonds, and Leigh Star, and and and... And I think that at that time in Bruno's work (not true now, he's made some really big changes), at that time in Bruno's work he systematically did not cite any of us. People like Leigh Star and I and others were quite angry about the masculinism of it all and I, that paper was... I tend to work with laughter as my fundamental method and it's a genuine laughter at the absolute absurdity of all of us making these claims that sound like we actually know something. And you know the laughter is also a very serious method that tries, without thinking that I myself or any of us are innocent of the very things we're criticizing, a kind of an invitation to somehow join with each other in something better than what we've already done. And I think that the exploration of the device of the fantasy of being modern, with Bruno is an early think piece that's not turning into an English sentence. Bruno thought early and deep about that, but I really felt that his citation was, um, indicated a kind of brain damage, if that makes sense. So, you know, I think Bruno took it in a kind of angry, friendly vain, and we have remained very, if anything, ever deepening friends, but this has been a tussle for decades, this particular issue.

(4:37)

Aadita Chaudhury (AC): Okay. Basically I wanted to ask you about your talk from that year, which was described as "the star performance" and when you really, you know, took the STS

world by storm. Did you think, at the time, that you were making a serious field-disrupting intervention?

(4:59)

DH: Well, of course not and I still find it hard to get my mind wrapped around that. Although, I do know now, and I knew a little bit then, that when I speak in public performance, there is a kind of charismatic performance that goes on that sweeps people into some kind of shared emotional and intellectual experience and I don't know how it happens. But I think as we get older we each kind of learn what our gifts and weaknesses are and I, I knew that that, um I knew that that was how I worked even then and I was happy to use it as I could. And I thought, in spirit, that particularly in that period, Adele Clarke and Leigh Star and Evelyn Hammonds and me and Sandra Harding, I particularly in that period-- and Lucy Suchman (my god)-- [saw] that we were a "we" in some profound sense. We were coming into a power that we had created for each other and sustained for each other and it's not that in some way we were in profound opposition to the men in our field, we weren't, but that there was a kind of intersectional feminist power going on that I felt like several of us were performing by the mid-90s and bringing people with us.

(6:32)

YO: And so one of the few terms that I will steal from the software industry is "disruption" and part of what made that moment so important and so powerful and memorable is that it was a moment of Disruption where you were able to challenge big ideas that were widely accepted at the time and ones we kind of championed and not questioned. And so what current mainstream or mainstream STS ideas should we be challenging right now?

(7:07)

DH: Well I know. I mean, that's a thing. Anna Tsing is my close friend and colleague and you know, *Mushroom at the End of the World* is to die for. And anyway, Anna and I were doing a joint gig recently and we joked with it. You know, you know something about something and you put it out there for a public and then you get lots of questions about other things you know nothing whatsoever about and you have to pretend like you do. And so I feel a little bit like that. That said, and I have lots of opinions about this question. I think that we live in very scary times, profoundly scary times of a kind of resurgent, racist, misogynist, nationalist, murderous world in which the forced migrations of so many human beings are almost uncountable and the forced migrations of the more-than-humans as well; the forced homelessness; the forced destruction of pathways and ports and welcome; the forced destruction of refuge. And there has never been a time where forced [?], trying to understand other times of forced migration and genocide, and the role of the sciences in that, the ongoing role of the sciences in militarism. But I don't- that's not my fundamental focus here. I think that it's very important to try to understand what we've inherited, "we" meaning Earthlings, and what is unprecedented, And science studies, along with just about everybody else, I think every serious person certainly ever serious scholar needs to be paying serious attention, again going back to Bruno, his landing on Earth, that most recent book of his (most recent one I've read since I started this engagement with him) is his ferocity and attention and urgency around the dilemma of massive formations of people in power and

practices have, or an active denial what it would actually take for us to share this Earth in some way that is for flourishing and ongoingness. And I'm avoiding the word "sustainability" because it's so contaminated, but it's not a bad word. It's this kind of ongoingness, committedness to sharing this Earth. There are astonishing forces arrayed in active denial and we three all live in Trumplandia right now, and so we wake up in the morning to an offer to buy Greenland so we can exploit fossil fuels and uranium, to a removal of the rule that limited the incarceration of migrant children, to the dismantling of one more conservation measure, to on and on. We wake up on a daily basis and I mean I have deep friends and former students in Brazil who write me about Bolsonaro, and we can look at Turkey, and Hungary, and for that matter France. On and on we go. You know I just got back from Columbia where my colleagues and friends are in still hope, but deeper and deeper worry that the hardwon, flawed, but real peace agreement with the FARC that muted the paramilitaries for a time is unraveling and there is heightened danger. And I think science studies has a great deal to offer in this, including thinking hard about what constitutes safety, what constitutes order for some people and [?] people, how to work with what we've got, but also how to design and think and develop practices with each other. And science studies scholars, as a group, are oftly good at knowing how to describe, theorize, work with, offer an understanding of practices, both old and new. And so I think we should just get on with it.

(11:54)

AC: And I think this is a really great place to ask you the next question, understanding that science studies has a place, an emergent place, in the global order of knowledge making and knowledge-based practices. In 2016, you published your two most recent books, *Manifestly Haraway* and *Staying with the Trouble*, and in them, you refer to this moment that we're in as part of various "-cenes", so the Capitalocene, the Chthulucene, etc., where others have been using "Anthropocene." Would you say that you're calling for a complete turn away from Anthropocene discourse or are you somebody who is adding to it or challenging it?

(12:41)

DH: I thought a lot about that. I wish the term had never been invented, but it was, and it has been adopted by many communities of practice. It does a huge amount of work. There is no, I think it would be foolish to pretend that one, a person situated such as I am could operate without that term. And I'm always a little of a both-and kind of girl. I want the litter to get bigger rather than produce a kind of prohibition on something and kick it out of the litter. And I'm interested in other ways of thinking of events, time-space we're in where it channels a thick present, not an instantaneous one, a present of indefinite boundaries. [?] Clearly, if I had to choose between Anthropocene and Capitalocene, I would choose Capitalocene because I think it makes it very clear we're talking about a real system that was invented about 500 years ago (that's a horrible cartoon version), but it's not all the time everywhere and it's not all of the people swept into capitalist practices and modes of value creation and value extraction. But a serious understanding of the Capitalocene in the way Jason Moore does is absolutely necessary. And then Anna and I and colleagues in Denmark thought we had invented the term "Plantationocene," but I know because there were [?] feminists and African American feminists who pointed out ferociously that how dare we use that term without bringing Hortense Spillers

and Sylvia Wynter back into the conversation that we alluded to slavery-- I anyway I think I'm more guilty about this than Anna-- alluded to slave gardens because I knew they were very important, but I didn't cite the named scholarship of the folks who had done the work. Or that the Plantationocene is choosing somehow, that is, not just the word but the conceptual understanding of the absolute, fundamental, Earth-changing worlding of (thickly) the Atlantic-based slave trade and all that it brought with it can't be named this, of forced labor and substitution, and displaced plants and broken ties of generations. See I think what characterizes the Plantationocene is the breaking of care of generations, that what human beings and other-than-human beings are robbed of is the capacity to take care of their children, or the breaking of generations so as to extort, to force them into systems of reproduction rather than generativity and the [?] of production are the apparatuses for creation and extraction of value and the plantationocene was a fatal invention. So, for example, you guys probably also read the amazing series in the New York Times last week or in the last couple of weeks, uh "1619" [?] in relation to the importation of hereditary forced West African slavery into the continent to the English colonies. There was a piece on the plantation that was really really important and I think it should be required reading for everybody. From a science studies perspective, what this piece was doing was explicating [?] showing how many critical technologies, this thing called [?], were invented, and practiced, and consolidated, in the period of Caribbean slavery, Brazilian, Caribbean, or in the period of slavery in that area, in that worlding: double-entry book-keeping, the hierarchies of wards and punishment in labor camps, the particular kinds of relocation of labor so it's never home, the state can define family, the breaking of family. Anyway, I think thinking with the plantation really is really important. And there's a way in which the Anthropocene, and the Capitalocene, though they kind of acknowledge it while rushing right over it and also don't emphasize the absolutely contemporary issues of plantations, most certainly (I mean, obviously) the oil rigs, the deforestation and then supposed reforestation, even carbon budget credits even with the devastation of human beings and other-than-human beings. [?] So Chthulucene from mythology, again a little freakish, not the Chthulu of Lovecraft but from an evocation of the earth, the critters of the earth. The Chthulucene is not over and it's not safe, it's not innocent, but it's also not... There's a way in which Plantationocene, Capitalocene, at a time of critique, the Chthulucene is a time of embracing, being embraced by the ongoing generativity of things. All of these words make a hash out of what, I would call it, a serious ethnographic sensibility. I think we talked about this at the conference in Santa Cruz a little bit. For example, climate change is a concept, Anthropocene is a concept, is a southern importation or less hostile, certainly in the circumpolar north who have perfectly good idioms, languages, conceptual apparatuses, historical reflections for dealing with changes in refraction, of stars, changes in the sea ice, the changes in weather organized around the concept of "cilla" or breath, translated that.. these translations don't work. What would it take for the southerners (Canadians, United Statesians) and the northerners to form serious contact zones with their conceptual apparatuses in a way that really lets [?] participate? To really look (at the issue on its face?) and identify who is in the most trouble, be they human or nonhuman. So all of those words don't even begin to discuss things. Some people don't have the words for the emergent categories, indigenous and non- and more-than-indigenous other persons.

[Video switches to different panel orientation]

(19:52)

DH: You guys have switched orientations.

YO: Yes, you are too.

DH: But you didn't actually switch because you're in different places. Oh well, never mind.

(20:03)

YO: I will be presenting at 4S for the first time this year and 4S is also creating better avenues for undergraduate participants to present their work and so do you have any advice for us first-timers who may still be working out the kinks in our presentations?

DH: Oh well, first of all, what are you presenting on? I was curious what your work is.

YO: Sure! So um, I'm presenting on work that I did actually in my masters which is a slightly different type of what I'm working on now, but the presentation is called "Race, Modernity, and Hospitality" and it's a play on hospital and hospitality. I studied international clinical volunteerism in Tanzania.

DH: Oh, where?

YO: I'm sorry?

DH: Where? International volunteers where?

YO: Oh, um in Tanzania.

DH: In Tanzania. Okay, really interesting. And Aadita, are you presenting this time too?

AC: Uh yeah.

DH: What on?

AC: This is my, actually an early dissertation draft, an early dissertation chapter draft. It's going to be about modes of attention and boundaries of ecosystems when it comes to wildfires.

DH: Ah, are you paying particular attention to wildfires in like Alaska, California, Indonesia? Where are you?

AC: Um, I'm currently based out of Toronto, but I did much of my fieldwork in California which is why I was in Santa Cruz.

DH: Did you do any fieldwork last summer?

AC: Uh, not last summer. I actually did all of my fieldwork this year. And, yeah, so I've been thinking about fires, both in ecosystems and outside of ecosystems and the discrepancy of the attention and the modes of attention through which they are filtered and brought forth into the public imagination. That's one of the things that I'm looking at and thinking about. So modes of attention that is entrained when it comes to fire ecologist when they pay attention to the Earth and sort of forensic ways that they reconstruct fires.

(22:13)

DH: Well, I don't exactly have any advice. It's more like my own experience was when I just leapt into what I really cared about, I just did it. It worked because I made it a point very fiercely in my career that if I didn't care about, I didn't write about it; and if I didn't care, life is too short; that finding those points of generativity with and for each other; and forgetting about saying whether it is part of a masters or a dissertation or what have you. Who cares? Rather, leap right into the stuff because that's what matters, that "I'm really passionate about the questions of hospitality that affect international volunteers in health type situations, particularly in East Africa" or "the wildfires that have been burning across so much of the world, most certainly practically all of North America, from [?] to [?], from California to Yellowstone and then down to Zion or right not Zion, but the Grand Tetons. There wasn't a single minute without smoke. And remembering the history of fires that slammed this land that I'm on right this exact minute when they the Amah Mutsun were doing controlled burns and the whole thing with fire. I think of *Born in Flames* too, that little film back when um, mind is blanking on the filmmaker, but you can probably put... Anyway, so my only advice for you and everybody else is that real my only advice is for you and everybody else is not to tell people where you are professionally particularly unless they ask or what this is part of was part of. "The questions that interest me in this situation are..." You know, go for it. And this also goes back a little bit back to the Chthulucene question from before. I continue to take seriously that little piece I wrote in both friendship and some friction with Sandra Harding that's situating what we know so as to be accountable and responsible for it. And then another kind of little add on is that actually the last book I wrote was the alliance with Adele Clarke and Michelle Murphy and Kim TallBear and Ruha Benjamin and Chia-Ling Wu, and Yu-Ling Huang, and I have this awful feeling I'm leaving someone out, called *Making Kin not Population* which grew out of a 4S presentation where, collectively and from very very different points of view and some real disagreement in our group and some important friction in our group, we felt that we just had to raise again outside boundaries and parameters, the question of human knowledge: distribution, unequal extractions. We had to learn to do it in an anti-racist, non-misogynist, non-Malthusian way because if not us then who? So I feel that way about a lot of our work: if you're not going to do it, then who will?

(25:47)

AC: Yeah I guess in this context, and this touches on pretty much everything we've talked about so far, what do you see as the future of STS, specifically feminist STS? And do you see it as contained by the academic world or going beyond it? And how does this 4S conference and how *can* 4S as a society in general shape this future.

DH: Well it's never been contained by the academic world, but the academic world is a very important... I've never been one to diss scholarship and teaching and, you know, research and the space that universities make and the reclaiming of public universities and holding them to account especially. Private, so called "private" ones too also are heavily subsidized but that's another set of issues. I feel that university-based scholarship and teaching and mentorship and camaraderie remain really important. And intersectional feminist science studies has never been restricted to that space. Quite the opposite. It's always been highly permeable. And many of us have felt that our largest job was to make available the resources of the university to groups with fewer resources. Not all of us feel that way nor do we have to, but to be in connection with the kinds of knowledge-making and action in other communities of practice-- be they policy or water defenders or international volunteers or--- that being that having attachment sites in other communities really matters. And I think science studies, as a whole, has been pretty good at that. And I think feminist science studies, in particular, has been especially good at it and will continue to be. And I have an origin story about that: science studies, not just feminist science studies. It's not the Edinburgh School and the whatever what have you. It's in activities like science for the people, and activities against chemical and biological warfare, and the Boston Women's Health Collective. Those are *my* origins as a science studies scholar and that way predated the official, you know the really important scholarly work, for example by Steve Schankman and other really really wonderful man scholars. I'm not dissing it at all, but I've got a pretty strong sense about how science studies have also and have always been found in many communities of practice. By the way, there's one other little piece of that and that goes back to your question earlier about do I, a 75 year old lady, have any advice and that is: hold on to your peers, the writing groups, the ways you mentor each other. Hold on to your cohort and those collegialships and friendships even if they get really quite difficult. Don't let them dissolve into antagonisms or indifference. Those are the most important lines of sustenance in the next few years. It's gonna come from your cohort. Your mentors are well and great. If you're lucky, you'll have really great mentors but the folks who really are gonna matter the most are your cohort. This is a great place to hook up.

YO: Thank you so much. This is a great conversation and I think it's going to be very helpful for new and old 4Sers, or returning 4Sers in the future and in light of this conference. And so thank you so much for sitting with us and yeah.

DH: And while you're in New Orleans be sure to say hello to Tania Perez and Lucy Suchman for me and others too, but I'm not going to get to be there and I'm missing all my friends.

YO: We will miss you at the conference but thank you for phoning in for us.

DH: And thank you for the interview.

AC: Thank you for your time.

DH: Bye.

(30:10)

End