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RACE, DISABILITY AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF RADICAL AGENCY: TOWARD A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF DECOLONIAL CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS IN LATINX DISCRIT

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**RACE, DISABILITY AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF RADICAL
AGENCY: TOWARD A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF
DECOLONIAL CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS IN
LATINX DISCRIT**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate the present project as I do all my endeavors, great and small, to Amalia. You are my beloved blue flower, my Queen, my Dulcinea/ Quixotiza, the visionary beacon that enlightens my ideas and my dearest dreams. Because of you, my phenix rises despite so many ashes, so many burdening flaws, so many contrary winds.

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**Race, Disability and the Possibilities of Radical Agency:
Toward a Political Philosophy of Decolonial
Critical Hermeneutics in Latinx¹ DisCrit²**

by

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ABSTRACT

The present dissertation is a non-empirical methodology project grounded in political philosophy. As a practical exercise, it bridges knowledge workers (e.g., educators, action researchers and other engaged scholars) with activists to explore the situated emancipation possibilities of radical agency at the intersection of blindness and Latinidad. It does so in line with DisCrit and other bodies of literature within critical disability studies, works centered on trans-Latinidades and border-crossing, intersectional decoloniality theorizing, critical hermeneutics, critical race theory and blackness/ whiteness studies. It interrogates performative and movement building spaces for teaching and learning that foster radical exteriority trajectories of decolonial solidarity and emancipation-centered reflexivity. The driving questions that articulate the project are tackled metatheoretically and through a hermeneutic method quite common in critical race theory, the method of counter storytelling. This gets enacted in reflexive counter stories distributed throughout each of the five chapters of the dissertation. Some of the emerging practical lessons from the analysis include: (1) a

need to fight lovelessness and ossified modes of movement organizing; (2) the realization that trans-Latinidades often have difficulties conciliating their master ideologies and competing utopias; (3) the understanding that in the current context, LatDisCrit is a proto-utopia, one that remains within the power of the unnamed; (4) the conviction that LatDisCrit will only have meaning if it gets traction as a mutually edifying sphere between knowledge workers and activists in the trenches; (5) the need to avoid the framing of decolonial solidarity as a process circumscribed to communities of sameness; (6) the importance of empowering activists as true experts of their sense of situated emancipation and undoing disciplinary layers of hierarchy between knowledge workers and activists; and (7) a practical imperative for LatDisCrit's alliance building and organizing to flow through multiple trans-Latinx and pandisability relational links, being mindful to work especially along with those collectivities that generate more tension for the comfort zones of blind Latinx.

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Chapter 1. *Introduction*

Una voz no puede llevarse consigo la lengua
y los labios que le prestaron alas.
Una voz debe buscar el éter
Y sola, sin su nido,
volará el águila desafiando al sol. ³
(Gibran, 1996, p. 5)

To resist power relations that are too congealed, immobilized, is ... the necessary condition for creating the undefined possibilities of a transformation of the subject and for giving new impetus ... to the undefined work of freedom. (Foucault, as quoted in Cremonesi, Davidson, Ierrera, Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2016)

1.1. Thesis

The following bullet points capture the general sketch for the argumentative line I will follow in the present dissertation project. The purpose of the project is to explore the possibilities of radical agency in conjunction with spaces of intersection between Latinx identity/political subjectivity issues, which I also call *Latinidad* throughout the present dissertation, as well as metanarratives of blindness. The project provides a metatheoretical/political philosophy treatment. It centers on the potential of radical agency as a decolonial tool for the critical hermeneutics of emancipatory learning and radical solidarity at the intersections of Latinx and blind identities/alterities. The project's methodology is non-empirical. There will be a critical hermeneutic engagement that synthesizes and interrogates relevant bodies of literature to be

enumerated in the last portion of the bullet points that follow. There will also be reflexive counter stories that, in the tradition of critical race theory (CRT), will provide illustrative discussion grounds for the metatheoretical elements addressed in each of the five dissertation chapters (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

- Concretizing the work of freedom and love as mutually reinforcing, equity driven values is a metatheoretical project that encompasses the tense and dialogic synchrony of subaltern and decolonial thinkers and doers, knowledge workers and activists
- Yet, their focus on understanding, explaining and dismantling domination dynamics can cause burnout or trigger collectively diffused paralyzing habits
- To counteract these habits and rekindle the fire of hope within the everyday materiality of a critical existentialism for radical agency, it is paramount to bring emancipation back in as a core driving metatheoretical component that holds the antidote against the poisonous power of dystopia (Cervantes-Soon, 2016; Kyriakides & Torres, 2012; Sanders, 2016)
- Thus, I underscore the epistemological and axiological power of radical agency for intersectional spheres of resistance such as race and disability, blindness and Latinidad
- In doing so, I explore dialectical approximations between decoloniality and critical hermeneutics as tools for co/creation/co-authoring, loving dialogue and trans-ontology
- My aim is to come up with a metatheoretical framework that grounds a political philosophy, axiology and aesthetics of grassroots collective action (what I will

call radical solidarity throughout the dissertation) and situated emancipatory learning for blind Latinx radical agency in the 21st century

- To this end, the main bodies of literature I will engage include:
- (1) Works relevant to the formulation and critical examination of emancipatory learning and social justice education. Authors such as Antonio Darder, Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), Henry Giroux, Zeus Leonardo, Peter Mayo and Michalinos Zembylas are illustrative of this body of hybrid literature tendencies, particularly insofar as they address race based and postcolonial/ decolonizing dimensions of learning and domination.
- Given my strong desire to encompass and privilege spheres of emancipatory learning which take place outside schooling, the essays contained in the volume edited by B. L. Hall, D. E. Clover, E. Scandrett and J. Crowther (2012) and the special issue of *Studies in the Education of Adults* edited in fall 2011 by these same authors will get deliberate attention in terms of the ways radical agency intersects with social movement learning, ideology and performativity.
- (2) Selected works from postcolonial, decolonial and subaltern studies. Among these, I will engage early developments e.g., Fanon and C. R. L. James, coupled with established contemporary thinkers such as Santiago Castro-Gómez, Enrique Dussel, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Jorge E. Gracia, Ramón Grosfoguel, Walter Mignolo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Eduardo Mendieta, Aníbal Quijano, among others who are explicitly concerned with the making and re-making of Latinidad and the epistemologies of the global south that militate against the ontology, ethics and aesthetics of the power of coloniality through what Alejandro Vallega (2014) calls “radical exteriority,” a notion that will

acquire great significance throughout my exposition in the present dissertation.

- I also engage the feminist brand of these contemporary works which pursue powerful modalities of critical intersectionality as represented by major thinkers such as Linda Alcoff, Gloria Anzaldúa, Judith Butler, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Chela Sandoval, Ofelia Schutte, Gayatri Spivak, Silvia Winter, Iris Young, among others.
- (3) Selected works associated with the radical agency possibilities of LatDisCrit. Among these, are authors whose literature centers on phenomenological issues of access and the critical phenomenology of the body, e.g., Bill Hughes, Margaret Shildrick and Tanya Titchkosky, among others.
- There are also authors whose work explores metatheoretically issues of interdependence among people with disabilities as well as the implications of treating politically disability identities, especially in terms of their minority status and aesthetic representation. Examples of this brand of work includes thinkers as diverse as L. J. Davis, Mitchell and Snyder, Shakespeare, Siebers and Tremain.
- There is another group of thinkers who devote explicit attention to the metatheory of blindness. D. Bolt, Michalko, Omansky, Vidali, among others, are examples of this cluster of authors. In addition, despite representing middle range theory and a more empirical approach less concerned with political philosophy per se, I am interested in engaging critically the work on blindness carried out in the field of communication studies by J. W. Smith, a black blind Professor at the University of Ohio at Athens. To my knowledge J. W. Smith is

the first scholar who has dealt explicitly with issues of race and blindness in the context of organizations of the blind in the United States since the 1990s.

- Finally, there is a selection of authors clustered under The DisCrit volume edited by Connor, Ferri and Annamma which brands DisCrit proper with a focus on schooling as a primary setting of inquiry. Given their common reliance on critical race theory (CRT) as an epistemological source, I selectively engage works from that tradition. For example, I use Charles Mills racial contract ideas to interrogate the configuration of a disability contract in terms of its impact on radical agency at the intersection of race and disability.
- (4) Lastly, there is a set of authors such as A. Allen, Deranty, Gallagher, Geuss, Morrow, Roberge and J. Thompson, who are part of a body of literature that looks at the scope, concrete epistemology/methodology and limitations of critical hermeneutics. Like Roberge, although I touch on Habermas and Gadamer, as well as relevant concepts from Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm and Marcuse, I use an approach to analyze critical hermeneutics which gives preeminence to Ricoeur's and Foucault's contributions. Also, following Roberge, I open the label to social science authors such as Alexander who are grounded on the sociology of meaning and the critique of civil society with implications that impact the possibilities of radical agency.

1.2. Purpose and Driving Questions: The Role of Counter Storytelling, Assumptions and Core Interpretative Elements

People asked me: "What do you want to change? It's not possible." But, day by day, things changed. Then they asked me. "Where are you going with this?" and I said, "I don't

know." And it was true. I didn't know." (Franco Basaglia, quoted in Foot, 2015, p. 4)

Once again, as specified above (p. 2), the purpose of the present dissertation consists of exploring the possibilities of radical agency at the intersection of Latinidad and metanarratives of blindness in line with DisCrit and other bodies of literature within critical disability studies. The core philosophical questions underlying this dissertation are:

- (1) What dimensions of axiology and epistemology make situated, collective resistance possible?
- (2) In terms of a life course trajectory at the individual level as well as meso and macro level collective action, how are oppressive techniques of domination⁴ unlearned and strategically deflected?
- (3) What links micro level techniques of the self, as Foucault (2016a) defines them⁵ and radical solidarity as a long-term existential mode of becoming?
- (4) How do alterity relations and structural dimensions of race, disability intersectionality and postcoloniality interact in the making of radical agency?
- (5) More specifically, what is the intrinsic value of intersecting metanarratives of blindness with Latinidad for the enhancement or stifling of radical agency and emancipatory learning?
- (6) What are the limits of social justice education and emancipatory learning in relation to radical agency and radical solidarity?

Let me try to unpack these questions in a descriptive manner that gets at the sense unifying their relational whole. First, I am departing from the idea that values and knowledge paradigms make possible emancipatory learning and collective resistance.

Emancipatory resistance is not only an external manifestation but an embodiment of values. Therefore, understanding/explaining these underlying values and epistemological components allows for a hermeneutic analysis of the roots of co-authoring resistance that can lead to emancipation/liberation. In terms of the dynamic existential phenomenology perspective I defend in this dissertation project, emancipation/liberation by no means should be an outcome that actors achieve once and for all.

Second, my approach contemplates six pillars intertwined among the layers of processes involved in the oppressed struggle to learn how to counteract domination and hegemony: (1) the continuous unearthing of what and how emancipation becomes possible, sustainable and/or stifled which represents the substance of emancipatory learning; (2) the dynamic trajectory of non-linear change attempts and successes in an interplay between desire and resistance, freedom and unfreedom, learning and unlearning, will, memory, forgetting and betrayal, which constitutes the heart of radical agency; (3) the relational make up of alliance formation and networking towards collective decolonial modes of resistance and change making, which constitutes radical solidarity; (4) utopia as a pillar in these processes shows up in various degrees, from the basic level of desire for change to sophisticated forms of utopian liberation within the situated concreteness of oppressed actors, as they perceive it at a given point in time; (5) ideology as a pillar goes beyond the pejorative sense of distorting and alienating ideas to encompass the myths, beliefs, values and epistemological constructs explicitly and implicitly associated with the concrete utopian project pursued by co-authoring resistance actors; and (6) performativity as a pillar in these anti-domination processes provides what Goffman (1959) describes

extensively under the rubric of the “dramaturgical” presentation of self in everyday life. In this case, at its most basic expression, regardless of whether actors are aware of it, the dramaturgical presentation involves recruitment and retention mechanisms that try to give moral, ontological and epistemological coherence to the struggle towards the consolidation of their “movement.” This gives transcendence to situated collective resistance which might otherwise be perceived as meaningless or super-fluous by unaware actors as well as those outside the oppressive matrices of domination at stake in that utopian strand.

Third, as implied in questions 2-5, the self is historically developed and fluid. Its formation simultaneously contains domination and liberation components. They can be collectively activated through reflexive critique and alterity manifestations. These manifestations are conscious and unconscious. They are often triggered by external dimensions of the very dynamics of oppression and exploitation intended to perpetuate status quo modes of domination. They can either deepen hegemonic dynamics or awaken emancipation/ liberation utopias. Because of this fluidity of the self in the existential vicissitudes of relational alterity/radical exteriority (see below my definition for radical exteriority, p. 11), I see social justice education as a piece of the puzzle, not a panacea towards the activation of “successful” journeys of collective resistance and emancipation. Investigation of the concrete conditions for this activation at the level of situated emancipation for specific cases is an empirical question beyond the scope of the present dissertation project in its political philosophy emphasis.

Fourth, in question 3, I use existential becoming in the tradition of Kierkegaard (1985, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996; see also Davenport, 2001; Ferreira M. J., 2001;

Gouwens, 1996; Lawson, 1970; Nielsen, 1983; Perkins, 1994; Roberts R., 2003; Walker, 1972; Westphal, 1992; Tietjen, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). Critical theory thinkers such as Adorno (1940) and Marcuse (1948) challenge Kierkegaard's and other versions of existentialism because they find it incompatible with their Hegelian theory of emancipation. I like precisely the flow of epistemological and axiological ambiguity these approaches to existentialism introduce in a sort of proto-postmodern ethos, Especially in the political philosophy of "Latinidad." This kind of existential ambiguity has been intrinsic to Latinx radical agency as it relates the whole tradition to the aesthetics of "El Quixote" with its stubborn utopian character of resistance (Medieta, 2012; see also Valdez, 2016 which links this tradition to cultural hermeneutics through the work of Miguel de Unamuno).

It is important to underscore early in this exposition that, apart from a strong reliance on metatheoretical analyses, I tackle the six driving questions through a hermeneutic method quite common in critical race theory (CRT): the method of counter story telling (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) which often appears articulated among Latinx engaged scholars as "testimonios" (Flores & García, 2009). The dissertation contains five reflexive counter stories, one for each of the chapters. The distinguishing feature in my approach to counter storytelling is the unifying metatheorizing role played by Arturo. Like other critical race theory counter stories, mine recreate non-fictional situations. However, Arturo constitutes a sort of distanciation alter ego, a textual means to read through critical hermeneutics events which I have experienced firsthand but whose analysis is tackled throughout this dissertation in terms of Ricoeur's (1981b) assertion that authors are the first interpreters of their text. In this regard, Ricoeur allows me to enact his (1971 & 1974)

metatheoretical understanding of social/collective action as a text subject to multiple interpretations by its co-authoring partners.

This authorial/interpretation choice does not mean that the present dissertation is an autobiographical empirical case study or a qualitative analysis. My five reflexive counter stories are metatheoretical in nature. They represent an illustration of what Moraga (2011) calls theory in the flesh. They give a sense of existential embodiment to the conceptual and metatheoretical explorations that constitute the political philosophy spirit of the present Dissertation project.

There are several reasons for my distinctive authorial choice to let Arturo embody the narrative first person for articulating what, how and why things happened the way they did. First, this allows me to be congruent with the existential ethos I mentioned above. Second, through each of the reflexive counter stories, I check/deconstruct concrete techniques of the self both in their oppressive and liberating/unlearning manifestations. Third, I can model in the life trajectory spirit of the reflexive counter stories the comprehensive, border crossing ethos I demand from Latinx DisCrit (what I also call LatDisCrit throughout the Dissertation) in ways that allow LatDisCrit to be relevant to radical adult education, non-schooling, popular education and movement building metatheorizing and best practices at the heart of decolonial intersectionality. Forth, most importantly, this approach allows me to demonstrate my conviction that the exploration of radical agency possibilities is not a speculative/metaphysical exercise. The reflexive counter stories show how the non-linear performative enactment of life trajectories can serve to teach and/or cultivate radical agency possibilitarian spaces, often in contexts where racialized ableism's learned hopelessness has tried to impose its colonizing grip. The examination of this

performative relationality makes clear that radical agency possibilities are grounded on the love of freedom versus the fear of freedom, the love of life-giving things versus death enslaved modes of domination (Fromm, 1941, 1947, 1955, 1968, 1976, 1992, 1999 & 2013).

One of my core assumptions regarding the dynamicity that characterizes the unfolding of existential becoming throughout radical agency trajectories is that it is “multiversal,” to use Mignolo’s (2000a, 2000b; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006) descriptor. This multiversality of existential becoming means that identity and identification can orient the ontological and epistemological grounding for the self in multifaceted ways. However, especially in their intersectional manifestations, both the self and identity categories are fragile and transitory. As Fuss (1994, p. 20) warns,

Identification has a history—a colonial history... this colonial history poses serious challenges for contemporary recuperations of a politics of identification. I do not mean to imply that identification, a concept that receives its fullest elaboration in the discourse of psychoanalysis, cannot be successfully mobilized for a radical politics. I mean only to suggest that if we are to begin to understand both its political usages and its conceptual limitations, the notion of identification must be placed squarely within its other historical genealogies, including colonial imperialism.

Hence identification differs, depending on whether it is being framed within critical hermeneutics, intersectional or decolonial epistemologies. These are the main axiological and epistemological bodies I aim at comparing critically throughout the dissertation. Their epistemologies and ethical configurations are in tension. This tension gets built into my argument. In pursuing this critical comparison, I use race and

disability as the core matrices of hierarchization where situated emancipation will be evaluated.⁶

My second core assumption is that, following Levinas (1969, 1996, 1998, see also the political treatment of Levinas in conjunction to the ethics of performativity by Nealon, 1998) and many decolonial Latin American philosophers (e.g., Dussel, 2003, 2012; Vallega, 2009, 2010, 2014) an extreme sense of alterity, i.e., what they name radical exteriority, is the core driving relational force in collective action generally conceived, and in radical solidarity. Radical exteriority does away with the subject/object ontology intrinsic to interiority-based conceptions of alterity. Radical exteriority is the incommensurable space of difference, a difference so extreme that worldviews, ethical formulations and aesthetic conceptions are incompatible and require a meta-language of love. This meta-language must be such that it recognizes and transcends asymmetries (Matias & Allen R., 2013 & 2016; Sandoval, 2000).

In other words, radical exteriority is decoloniality in the making. This means that radical solidarity can only operate where the self engages its own radical exteriority in the difference it observes (and often dislikes) in others as well as in its own inner modes of alterity represented by the multiple layers of identity that constitute its non-linear dynamicity. These multiple modes of concurrent manifestations of selfhood are present in complex identity notions such as Latinidad, Chicanidad, impairment, disablement and 'dis'ability.

In terms of Chicanidad, for instance, Laura Pulido (2017) shows how the interrogation and acceptance of a Chicanx heritage of settler colonialism becomes hard to digest. It disrupts the core premises from which it derives its sense of peoplehood as a colonized, not a colonizer identity. The very idea that these two modes of identity

coexist in the conflating struggle of selves that perpetually remain in radical exteriority within the very heart of Chicanidad also takes away its claim to indigeneity. This also mudds the waters of its less critical and more linear/essentializing sources for political subjectivities (see also the expansive discussions of these issues in Calderón, 2014; Castellanos, Gutiérrez Nájera & Aldama, 2012; Contreras, 2008; Luna-Peña, 2015; Márquez, 2013; Pérez, 1999). I criticize Pulido's sharp contrast between Latinidad and Chicanidad as well as her deliberate weakening of the utopian/symbolic power of Aztlán within Chicana epistemological, axiological and aesthetic ethos. However, I praise her critical engagement with the practical dimensions of radical exteriority in the concrete historical making and re-making of Chicanidad from a sophisticated human geography and critical ethnic studies viewpoint.

This multivocal, alterity/radical exteriority based conception of the self problematizes what critical hermeneutic theorists such as Honneth (1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007c, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Honneth & Anderson, 2005; Honneth, Petersen & Willig, 2002) explore extensively under the nomenclature of "recognition" or "mutual recognition" in conjunction with the Hegelian heritage in domination analyses (Gutmann, 1994; Neuhauser, 2000; Pippin, 2008; Theunissen, 1991, 1999; Wellmer, 1991; Whitebook, 1995, 2001). As shown below (pp. 34 and following in this chapter), I also recognize that critical hermeneutics has spaces for enhancing radical agency possibilities in close connection to emancipation.

Gallagher (1992, pp. 241-246) discusses four principles of critical hermeneutics: (1) reproduction; (2) hegemony; (3) critical reflection with relevance to emancipation; and (4) emancipatory application. The first two are pre-critical, in the sense that

they describe conditions that preclude emancipation. The latter two principles express the power of interpretation to transcend these limiting conditions. Here interpretation works by unleashing radical agency in a utopian context where the interpreter is free from distorted perceptions of reality and domination language.

Particularly as developed by Ricoeur (1971, 1973, 1974, 1981a, 1984, 1986, 1991, 1992, 2004 & 2005), ideology is tied to meaning making in the forging of utopias. Therefore, it contains much more than reality distortions, as Marxian thinkers had contended. Furthermore, adding decolonial and critical race theory principles to this utopian theorizing from Ricoeur can take the exploration of radical agency to a point where not only the interpreter but also concrete agents of change can partake collaboratively and be active co-learners in emancipatory practices (Leonardo, 2003). The dialectical tension in this theoretical convergence will also address epistemological, ethical and aesthetic deficiencies inherent to Eurocentric modalities of critical hermeneutics as the framework has often been guilty of reproducing its own post-colonial sources of interpretative distortion.

My third core assumption, regarding both radical solidarity and emancipatory learning, is that the default mode of response is characterized by inaction. I expect this to be true even among those individuals and groups that get early exposure to social justice, critical or popular modes of education.⁷ On this, I subscribe to the psychoanalytical legacy of thinkers such as Fromm (1941, 1947, 1955, 1968, 1976, 1992, 1999 & 2013) who claim that there is an intrinsic fear of freedom in human beings.

Combating this fear entails for Fromm a social revolution that starts from within. This is a revolution driven by love of life-giving things, what Fromm calls “biophilia,” which in turn brings about the relational fruits of positive freedom (Lake & Dagostino, 2013). Because of its non-linear, lifelong vicissitudes, I am convinced that the everyday existential making of radical agency is the highest expression of emancipation-based transformational learning and transformational leadership (i.e., leadership not in a hierarchical sense but only insofar as micro-level transformational self-efficacy works at the relational level with the potential to become contagious in its emancipatory force and spark movement level change making initiatives).

By emphasizing life-long learning, I do not imply that episodic modes of collective resistance are meaningless or have nothing to do with transformational modes of radical agency. My point is that the current state of theory and research, with its segmented view of reality components such as schooling, adult life, social movement configuration, etc., lacks the wherewithal to approach the dynamicity, ambiguity and complexity inherent to the ontology, epistemology, axiology and aesthetics of a comprehensive and transdisciplinary political philosophy of radical agency in 21st century, intersectional contexts of emancipation. There is still not (to my knowledge) a longitudinal body of research explicitly devoted to tackling this issue. Nevertheless, I venture to hypothesize that age-based theoretical silos have less explanatory power than life course approaches in the analysis of radical agency in its situated emancipation manifestations.

In sum, while addressing the six philosophical questions enumerated above, the argumentative thesis I explore throughout my dissertation project brings together the following interpretative elements:

- The conceptual scope and relationship between radical agency and radical solidarity
- The relevance of alterity/radical exteriority in identity formation and political subjectivities
- The dynamic movement from an existential testimony of domination to political philosophy in the genesis of radical agency
- The significance of collectively engaging in what Owen (1999, p. 33) following Foucault calls “reflective indocility,” which simultaneously supplements and transgresses the rule based, neo-Kantian mode of critique espoused by thinkers such as Habermas and Honneth
- The practical connotations of distinguishing between power relations and domination both in terms of epistemology and axiology
- The role of ideology and utopia in collective modes of identity based radical agency
- The issue of universal versus contextual subjectivity in intersectional contexts of domination via decolonial/postcolonial theorizing
- The role of aesthetic performativity and meaning making in 21st century emancipatory learning for radical solidarity
- The uniqueness and relevant links of Latinx intersectionality in conjunction with critical disability and body centered existential phenomenology

My overall project’s thesis can be articulated as follows: the making of different kinds of radical agents in alignment with parallel collective endeavors of subaltern political subjectivities is influenced by a complex identity negotiation grounded in

radical exteriority between oppressors and their oppressed (in the understanding that these dynamics are not binary but often entail the coexistence and juxtaposition of multiple layers of oppression). Articulating the thesis in this manner has several metatheoretical implications in terms of both postcolonial theories and critical hermeneutics. Here I summarize a few. First, in alignment with the core argumentative thread of the present dissertation project, Robert Bernasconi (2012) corroborates the paramount significance of identity negotiations between oppressors and oppressed. He comes to this realization while analyzing one of Fanon's critical phrases toward Sartre: "It is the White man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates negritude." (Fanon, 1965, p. 47).

In other words, negritude becomes a concrete manifestation of radical agency with its own contextual contours. It is driven primarily by multiple modalities of black identity in a variety of postcolonial settings. However, in all these settings, the making of these agents in the concrete configuration of their political subjectivities depends on dialectical interactions with white oppressors and the systems of domination they create and operationalize. Bernasconi asserts that Fanon himself followed an intellectual trajectory already pre-articulated in 1952, when his first French version of *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon, 1967) was published. For Bernasconi, that trajectory is crucial because it establishes the basis for today's critical philosophy of race by transcending a situation-based story of oppression to embrace a systemic understanding of colonialism that encompasses racism and, as I shall defend through my dissertation, ideology frameworks such as that of 'dis'ableism. Even at the relational level, Fanon's story is illustrative of the practical implications of this intellectually infused radical agency process. Fanon had taken part of World War II as a soldier with

France and experienced in his black individuality the rejection of Arabs. However, instead of developing an anti-Arab identity, this moved him to pursue a broader scope of solidarity and start understanding the divisive effects of colonialism for people of color and the need to undermine its core domination premises.

... Fanon challenged the readers of *Black Skin, White Masks* by insisting that his observations were confined to a precise context and subsequently lifting that restriction: only insofar as it is lifted does existential philosophy open the path to a struggle against oppression that transcends situations, thereby indicating the ways in which we are all implicated. How we respond to that recognition explains why reading Fanon is to face the challenge of the question: Am I worthy of being loved? That is the question Fanon posed to all his readers, whatever their color; and so far as he was concerned, they answered it by determining with whom they were ready to show solidarity. (Bernasconi, 2012)

Secondly, Ricoeur (1973, 1986 & 1991) has demonstrated that meaningful collective action can be treated as a text where utopia and ideology merge. Therefore, by viewing radical agency through the critical hermeneutic metaphor of co/creating/co-authoring, one should involve oppressors as well as oppressed agents, along with a plethora of knowledge workers such as educators, organic intellectuals, emancipatory researchers and others whose critical analytical roles should remain in dialogue with the very dynamics at the heart of the emancipatory process per se in all its complex existential derivations. In terms of this kind of metatheoretical and practical exchange, I will argue for example that the dialogue between Fanon and Sartre in the 1950s not only mirrors the Foucault-Habermas dialogue but clarifies the epistemological and axiological value of decoloniality in 21st century situated modes of intersectional emancipation. This is particularly true in the unlearning of oppressive

techniques of domination because, as Owen (1999, p. 43) points out, Foucault and Habermas represent a powerful contrast “between two modes of moral education: teaching by and through rules and teaching by and through examples” in relation to radical agency and the critical thinking paths that make it possible or stifle it in contemporary contexts.

Third, I aim at persuading readers that the conflation of Latinx and disabled personhood identities is a unique intersectional combination grounded in what Vallega (2014), following Levinas, calls “radical exteriority” (see above, p. 11 for a definition of radical exteriority for the purposes of the present project). As evident in this chapter’s reflexive counter story below (pp. 26 and following), this is indeed a crucial identity conflation. It illustrates unique modes of intersectionally situated emancipation in the 21st century. It does so both in terms of what it makes possible and the alliance making limits as well as the types of recalcitrant ideological frames of sense making and performativity it exposes.

Finally, in terms of the political implications of decolonial epistemologies in concrete modes of sense making, I defend that there is radical agency potential in exploring a “pre-rational” aesthetics of alterity/radical exteriority based, meaning making and performativity linked to contextual collective action and intersubjectivity. I also invite the reader to interrogate very critically the strategic “liberation” risks of engaging in a complete post-enlightenment /postmodern sense of ontology, epistemology, axiology and aesthetics, particularly within the limits of what Foucault defines as Enlightenment, which contrasts with the formulations offered by Habermas and Honneth⁸ (see also the essays contained in Burwick & Douglass, 1992 and Coole & Frost, 2010, as well as the volume by Israel, 2001, for complementary discussions

associated with the so-called “radical enlightenment” and its implications for recent materialist and vitalist ontologies and epistemologies).

An example of this critical interrogation is provided by Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ (2002, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2016; see also Sajó, 2011) multilayered epistemological engagement with law’s emancipatory dimensions (to be addressed in Ch. 5 below). These dimensions are important because they help illumine some dilemmas associated with issues of disability rights and the existential materiality of exclusion observable in the global north as well as in the global south.

1.3. Scope of the Problem

Se echó al monte la utopía
Perseguida por lebreles
Que se criaron
en sus rodillas
y que al no poder seguir sus pasos,
la traicionaron;
y hoy, funcionarios
del negociado de sueños dentro de un orden...
(Serrat, 2017 [1992])⁹

The work of freedom is and should remain undefined. Concretizing it is a metatheoretical project that fuses learning and action, individuality and collective concerns driven in multiple ways by oppressed agents of change. In this open sense, freedom and love are one. Their unity expresses mutual reinforcement at the level of experiential difference in everyday situatedness which makes up radical agency. Therefore, this concretization process of freedom and love is intrinsically axiological and subversive. It embodies the values and utopian desires of those who seek change

from below. However, how does one find out what are the values guiding the learning journey to get there? Why fight? How should the fight make sense as a collective endeavor while remaining an original and authentic mode of authoring? How do dimensions such as utopia, ideology, meaning making, identity, performativity and power struggles play into the creative authoring equation of emancipatory/radical agency?

Very succinctly, as stated previously in my thesis articulation (see above, p. 15), radical agents are not born but made. Their making takes place over time. This happens in alignment with collective endeavors of subaltern critical existence that materialize their political subjectivities in relational processes of radical solidarity and emancipatory learning with other oppressed agents. Most significantly, their making, re-making and even their unmaking is by no means autonomous. They are influenced (although not driven) by complex identity negotiations between oppressors and their oppressed. Therefore, the dissertation project centers on the tracing of radical agency trajectories.

Understanding/explaining radical agency trajectories in their relationship to emancipatory learning is indispensable. On the one hand, it enriches the “dialogue between critique and genealogy” as thinking practices in action (Owen, 1999). In so doing, it rests on recognition and equality as core teleological principles for collective liberation that co-inhabit in ineluctable existential tension (Deranty, 2016). On the other hand, the quest for understanding/critically explaining this existential tension highlights what is to be learned from postcolonial, decolonial and subaltern literatures in terms of the epistemology, axiology and aesthetics of collective radical solidarity, social justice-based pedagogy and identity catalysts for change. Furthermore, it helps

the project's focus on the radical agency possibilities inherent to the unique contributions of Latinx post-liberation philosophy within these bodies of literature in alignment with critical disability studies and body centered existential phenomenology.

In significant ways, this choice of literatures is influenced by my blind Latino identity. At the same time, I am moved by a sincere intellectual concern to avoid a merely autobiographical or voice-based examination. I do want to confront face-to-face the deep ontological and political philosophy issues at stake in conciliating, delimiting or categorizing the relevant ideas and frameworks. Ultimately, I want to examine intersectional dimensions that are unique in the making of a radical blind Latinx's learning journey toward their social justice quest and the linking elements that align this quest with that of other people of color with various kinds of disabilities.

Traditional agency explorations (1) focus on event driven, rather than life trajectory modes of analysis; (2) use dualistic constructs, e.g., action/structure, thought/experience, individual/society to deal with phenomena in voluntarist and essentializing ways; and (3) are divorced from explicit examinations of situated emancipation and intersectionality. In this dissertation's approach to radical agency, I counteract these issues by relying very explicitly on the metaphor of authoring and co-authoring/co-creating. My goal is to use this notion to open spaces for bridging decolonial theories, critical hermeneutics and existential phenomenology in the development of a new kind of intersectional political philosophy that seriously considers the caveats of alterity/radical exteriority based subaltern relationality.

I view radical agency as an intrinsic (not a necessary) result of the existential destiny/journey of identity based oppressive relationships. I also see it as ingrained in fundamental intellectual and grassroots trajectories that differentiate these radical

agency modes of co-authoring from non-radical, i.e., conservative or insubstantial collective action (insubstantial from the standpoint of resistance by subaltern subjectivities). In other words, these journeys map texts collectively co-constructed overtime through nonlinear paths of resistance about which the co-authoring subjects are not always aware. Their resistance tendencies are not clearly radical from the outset. Thus, they demand a critical epistemology that engages actors in their meaning making, their utopian formulations and their performativity.

This dissertation project is much more interested in emancipatory learning than so-called emancipatory education structures and institutions. For instance, I am convinced that educational reforms and curricular interventions can indirectly impact radical agency, promoting some form of emancipatory learning by oppressed individuals and groups. Nonetheless, my approach privileges the examination of emancipatory learning even where it is least expected (e.g., prison education contexts, boarding schools, sheltered/secluded employment establishments for persons with visual impairments or intellectual disabilities, etc.) or when it does not lead to long term radical agency trajectories, so that one can indeed center on the emancipatory learning seeds that utopian, ideological and performativity dimensions of meaning making plant for actors in their resistance co-authoring under such adverse circumstances.

Having experienced boarding school education for the blind in Venezuela, I know firsthand what this kind of resistance entails. My knowledge work trajectory has been non-linear. I am neither a disability studies expert nor a philosopher. For many years, I kept my disability and race-based activism outside of my scholarship. My first disciplinary adventure was associated with law. In fulfilling my law degree requirements, I investigated the discursive links between legality and morality in corruption

cases. I focused on cases that had reached national notoriety in Venezuelan newspapers during the early 1980s. I found a paradoxical demand for ethical conduct from political figures along with signs of admiration for those who succeeded in “getting away” in an overarching climate of impunity that maintained their status relatively intact (Padilla, 1984).

This led me to pay attention to the theoretical and historical basis underlying the notion of structural autonomy in the Venezuelan judiciary (Padilla, 1988). My comparison of foundational social contract (e.g., Locke, 1988; Rousseau, 1968, 1984) and Marxian legal philosophy works (Fuller L., 1949; Pashukanis, 1989) shows that the autonomy of the judiciary is typically seen in structural terms. This is true whether works are inspired by an understanding of the separation of power throughout the branches of the state or simply in terms of the superstructure role that the judiciary is assumed to play in enhancing the control of the state by the ruling classes in the capitalist mode of production. None of these works links the analysis of autonomy to agency. They leave judges and magistrates at the mercy of external forces, pre-empting the structural independence of the judicial branch, particularly in peripheral societies within the layers of domination that world system and dependency theorists had underscored (see for instance, Cardoso & Faletto, 1979; Evans, Rueschemeyer & Stephens, 1985; Frank, 1990, 1998; Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1980; Martin W., 1990; Ramirez, 1988; Wallerstein, 1974, 1979, 1984; Wolf, 1982).

For my master’s thesis, I continued to look at issues of state autonomy using the lens of environmental law. I did so through a socio-historical analysis of the emergence of the Organic Law of the Environment in Venezuela (Padilla, 1991). In terms of civil society theorizing, what I found contradicts both Marxian and pluralist

frameworks. No strong environmentalist movement pressured in an instrumentalist or structuralist fashion state actors to come up with environmental legislation. The Venezuelan context was characterized by governmental forces that shaped, for the most part, in a very self-serving manner, the content and scope of the regulatory framework that has driven environmental relations since the 1970s. Environmental movements grounded in the civil society have since then reacted to the context that such arrangements created (for analogical sociopolitical developments in another Latin American nation with oil dependency see Hamilton, 2011, 2014; Hamilton & Harding, 1986).

During my first doctoral dissertation (Padilla, 1995), I set out to interrogate the everyday application of rules that contain numerical standards. Such rules, by their quantitative standards, are presumed to have objective content that guide the implementation of their regulatory mandate. Under the premises of the “law in action” perspective (Bardach, 1977; Bardach & Kagan, 2002; Hawkins, 1984; Kagan, 1981; Lipsky, 2010; Ross, 1980; Smith S. & Lipsky, 1993), my first doctoral dissertation demonstrates through qualitative methods that the level of discretion enjoyed by street level bureaucrats in charge of enforcing these rules is not substantially different from that exercised by law enforcement agents in non-standardized regulatory settings. Nevertheless, as anticipated by “capture theory” thinkers (Laffont & Tirole, 1991; Levine & Forrence, 1990; Stigler, 1971), the margin of this everyday discretion is asymmetrical. This means that discretion is often preempted by the negotiating and informal manipulation power of corporations as well as those that Galanter (1974) calls repeat players, who have a strong sense of how the process works and use this to their advantage in everyday interaction and adversarial litigation. Despite the variety of

contexts examined, individuals often see themselves via a quasi-victim-ization mirror. Police officers, housing inspectors, underground storage tank environmental enforcement agents, enjoy having a voice. They use every opportunity to explain how their job is made challenging by “politics” and how their achievements are not valued by the public or by those entities they regulate. At a superficial level, this might simply be interpreted as complaining. However, there could be in these expressions traces of what I will define throughout this dissertation as radical solidarity, i.e., the dynamic yet ambiguous potential to unite collective layers of frustration or perceived oppression into an ideologically driven, utopian co-authoring cause.

The germ of the present dissertation is a quest to treat radical agency as a practical conceptual problem within the critical philosophy of emancipation. Back in 1995, when I completed my first doctoral degree, postmodernity, critical hermeneutics and decolonial intersectionality were in full gestational motion (examples in the field of socio-legal studies at the time could include Cain & Harrington, 1994; Frug, 1992a, 1992b; see also Arrigo & Milovanovic, 2010 for an anthology). The positivistic constraints of the discipline of sociology as embraced in my department at the time, did not allow for anything other than timid social constructivists and pseudo functionalist examinations of “reality.” With the flourishing of the sub-field of public sociology (Nickel, 2016) and the mainstreaming of race and intersectional works in sociology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, Baiocchi & Horton H., 2008; Bonilla-Silva, Jung & Vargas, 2011; Gilroy, 1993, 2002), the potential for actionable epistemological and axiological richness in the practice of the discipline has grown. The intersectional experiences of overt discrimination that my brown, mestizo blind identity engendered in Venezuela and back in the US, pressured me in the direction of alternative trans-

disciplinary awakenings from the margins, where axiological and epistemological limits are often transgressed.

A. First Reflexive Counter Story: Vocational Rehabilitation and the Social Reproduction of the Ideology and Materiality of 'Dis'Ableism

This April morning was not so cold. Arturo got punctually to the appointment, as was customary for him. The receptionist announced his presence. The wait time involved a good number of minutes, but Arturo did not want to be nervous despite the urgency of his situation as a new comer to this strange town under job arrangements that looked now much shakier than what had been sold to him. At last, Thom, the rehab counselor came out and greeted him in a manner that felt colder than usual. At once, Arturo got the feeling that something was not quite right.

Arturo feels tired. He cannot endure any longer the feeling of being pushed around. The rehabilitation and immigration systems put him and his family through experiences of pseudo-choice that take them nowhere. Because of this, Arturo and his family have often wondered if it would be worth trying Canada. That would allow them to leave behind their decades-long US ordeal. For a couple times, they have taken active steps in that direction but nothing positive has transpired. The Canadian immigration system would allow them to work. Nevertheless, Canadian immigration consultants have repeatedly told them that Canadian immigration officers have the discretion to deny Arturo entry, even if his visa documentation is perfectly in order and approved. Within the Canadian legal context, Arturo's blindness links him ontologically as well as all persons with disabilities, regardless of their unique circumstances, to an overarching and untested assumption that their "impairments" will constitute a

“burden” to the provincial or federal systems (see Teklu, 2007, for an extensive phenomenological, firsthand experience/voice centered discussion of this situation from the perspective of blind African immigrants and their families in British Columbia). In one of Arturo’s exploratory interactions, one of these Canadian consultants, ignoring everything about Arturo’s individual achievements, went on and on about the medical and “guide dog keeping” expenses that the Canadian system would have to take into consideration while deciding on Arturo’s visa request (notwithstanding Arturo’s lack of a guide dog or his lack of medical expenses). It is a set of practices widespread throughout global north nations. It is certainly impregnated with a surrealist aura where the limits of injustice seem to delight in transgressing the everyday spheres of what might be possible within the absurd. In Australia, they have gotten to the point of denying permanent residency status to a legally blind female from India on the grounds of a putative disability pension she does not want to procure or has the need to request, since she was already working full time at that moment with a stable job in Australia and several of her family members were Australian citizens (Nader, 2017 [2010]; see also Capurri, 2018, for a recent scholarly analysis that ties these exclusionary dynamics to neoliberalism in the Canadian “Medical Inadmissibility” policy context). All seems to indicate that the ontology of disability misperceptions has long ago transcended the legal sphere and is now part of the way everyday Canadian, Australian and other global north affairs are likely to be embodied by common actors.

I choose to talk about choice in this reflexive counter story with a strong sense of irony. The ideology of choice underscores the ambiguities inherent to radical agency in situated instances of intersectional subaltern statuses such as those converging in Arturo’s personhood and life course trajectory. No one chooses misery. No one, having

real choice flexibility, opts for oppressive regulatory frameworks that impose long-term under/unemployment. In other words, the emphasis on choice highlights the deceitful nature of autonomous decision-making in the face of oppression and systemic discrimination.

But let us switch gears for a moment. In search for a better understanding of the layers of complexity beneath this deceiving metanarrative of choice, it helps a great deal to conclude this first reflexive counter story by introducing the reader here to Fatima. Fatima has indeed chosen to become the villain in Arturo's plight. Like Arturo, Fatima is blind and foreign born. Fatima is not a brown Latinx. She does not come across as white at all (Matias, 2012). Like many foreign-born women (and men for that matter), Fatima married an American, obtaining easier access to the citizenship pathways allowed/tolerated by the US immigration regulatory system. So, it is likely that Fatima has faced intersectional discrimination as a non-white, blind female.

However, as Ignatiev and Garvey (1996a) suggest in their discussion of the constitutive and collateral aspects of what makes a "race traitor," executioners of systemic discriminatory practices are often recruited among the rank and file of the oppressed. To be sure, Ignatiev and Garvey (1996a) portray a positive image of race traitors. Their acceptance of this label carries with it a badge of honor, a sort of Quixote trope of one who stands for humanity at all cost before consenting to the oppression of other groups or condoning injustices. This trope would probably coincide more with Arturo's deliberate departure from the dominant "pack" of blind oppressors, knowing that this will engender for him and his family a lot of suffering.

I am interjecting Ignatiev and Garvey's analysis as being intrinsically connected with a broader treatment of betrayal in its ethical relationality, very much in the way

Margalit (2017) does. Margalit's analysis will be expanded later in this chapter (see below, pp. 81-82). The multivocality of the notion of race traitors (see, for example, Collins, 2000, especially Ch. 1) raises interesting dimensions in the examination of unique aspects pertaining to intersectional spaces for radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in terms of race and disability identity confluences. Does Arturo's departure from the "vocational rehabilitation pack" represent a unique radical agency trajectory that forces folks like him to be at odds with the submissive organizational profile displayed by other persons of color with disabilities in the global north such as Fatima? If so, what triggers the specific kind of predisposition displayed by each of them? What are the barriers, apart from the existential materiality of deprivation, for radical agency to flourish in these intersectional situations?

Perhaps, there is a specific need to develop a dual/dialectical treatment of the notion of race traitor as it intersects with the realities of "vocational rehabilitation" in the US (and other global north settings). Could it be possible that, in certain instances like the one experienced by Arturo in this reflexive counter story, radical agency and radical solidarity do not go together? For the most part, I have always thought of radical agency as a trajectory that gets potentially strengthened through both emancipatory learning and radical solidarity relational supports and networking dynamics. These are the dynamics that allow emancipatory resistance to go from the micro to the movement level of interaction. They might or might not be sustainable over time. I also wonder if, on the contrary, it might be possible that Arturo's instance of Quixote-like departure from the pack illustrates a sort of trial stage of "existential purification" in this trajectory toward other, less submissive modes of radical solidarity. It is too early

to tell. Still, it would be helpful to keep these questions in mind, although they seem in principle peripheral to the gist of the project.

What seems clear at this juncture is that traitors like Fatima not only consent but understand their crucial legitimizing role in perfecting and perpetuating stratified domination mechanisms. Hence, it is not surprising that, by the time Thom, the rehab counselor met with Arturo that April morning, it was clear that everything was going to be in Fatima's hands and that she was adopting a micro-management approach toward the matter. Thom urged Arturo to meet with Fatima but implied that there was little hope. Suspiciously, Thom indicated that Fatima was available and ready at that moment to meet and discuss his case. Arturo was invited to come into a larger room where Thom sat in silence and let Fatima run the show. Fatima's demeanor toward Arturo was harsh and rushed. Without preamble, she hurried to say: "I've been reading your case; I haven't met a blind person with so much education," which, inexplicably seem to bother her at a superlative degree. Was it because Arturo was a Latino blind and like her, was not born in the US? She had made similar remarks in other contexts at the agency, but now she wanted to make clear that she held the power to prevent Arturo from thriving in terms of the benefits outlined by the Rehabilitation Act and other federal and state legal bodies (incidentally, Arturo's education, up to that point, had been funded by sources completely unconnected to vocational rehabilitation, and she knew that quite well, which seemed to exasperate her even more). Thus, she made sure to add with an air of self-sufficiency: "If it's up to me, you wouldn't get any benefits." She went on to point out that her Department had nothing to offer Arturo because he was beyond any kind of training they could offer him. It was as if training and education are incompatible in the world of vocational rehabilitation for the blind.

This is an idea that, of course, has no grounding. It merely serves to mask Fatima's power trip against this blind individual of color. Indeed, within less than a year, Fatima had succeeded in getting Arturo's case closed, making every effort to ensure that his life was as miserable as possible.

Arguably, under a frame of tangible manifestations of empowerment for the radical agency of blind individuals, the issue of proper training might have some legitimate dimensions as espoused by well reputed and experienced vocational rehabilitation expert practitioners such as Omvig (2014 [2002]). In practice, however, training resource allocation in individualized plans has become the source of numerous clientelist mechanisms of control for 'dis'ablism functionaries like Fatima. As many other species of traitors, Fatima profiles herself prominently in employment committees for the blind and loves to make herself look as an outstanding advocate for their cause. The paradox is that Fatima herself has recognized that the investment of thousands of dollars to "properly train" blind individuals outside the state through a network of Orientation Centers typically controlled by one of the national blind organizations does not pay off because upon returning, these blind individuals are not placed in jobs and fail to put into practice whatever "independence" skills they may have mastered. It is not uncommon for loyal adepts to these traitors to get generous benefit combinations of training, multi-year graduate level education along with a multiplicity of other intangible components in exchange for their undefiant loyal enslavement. About a year prior to this terrible April morning, Fatima had offered Arturo permanent employment at the agency for a long-standing vacancy under the condition that he would subject himself to out of state training.

This seems to indicate borderline conflict of interest situations. Fatima is the only surviving administrator who remains from people affiliated with this kind of training centered approach. The state where Arturo resides has been regarded as a battle ground for the two main organizations for the blind at the national level. One of them sees that state as its territory while the other sees it as an area for expansion. Hence, in the past couple of years, the media has been witnessing scandals that result from the confrontation between these organizations. Fatima has mastered these rocky times, keeping an alignment with the current administration, despite having been brought into the state by their opponents. One must wonder, what are the societal effects of such media coverage? How can a conflating dialectics of critical hermeneutics and decoloniality make sense of radical agency under such muddy waters of ideology and betrayal?

B. Meaning Making: The Relevance of Ideology, Utopia and Performativity

To be quixotic ... is to be an existentialist: the quixotic hero of modernity who refuses to subordinate the human to either history, nature, God, or reason. This quixotic hero is the 'I' that must be achieved through a ceaseless performance of the freedom to which we are condemned. (Mendieta, 2012)

In an inhuman world, the problem of education is the problem of articulating a human voice against the machineries of violence visited persistently upon persons—a voice against the truth of power, the dead and finished truth of what is decided, the truth of the inert and incontrovertible. The problem of education is the problem of unwinding the human body and soul from this intricate clockwork of not merely the correct and commendable but also the apparently self-evident and inevitable. It is the problem of rescuing *being* from *what is*, a *what is* that has

conquered every other possibility to give itself the status of fact and truth. (De Lissovoy, 2017 [2015], np)

It is in the existential suffering of agency and interdependent autonomy within marginality that my quest for understanding radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in intersectional situatedness begins. In naming “possibilities” within the very title of this dissertation, I want to be an optimist at will, as Gramsci (1994) would indicate in an epistolary self-portrait, despite the pessimistic outlook that intellectual/analytic contemplation seems to invite. In riding this tension, my work connects to other subaltern studies, decolonial and critical approaches aimed at understanding/explaining intersectional modes of domination with all their ambiguous contours. The connection also explains the need to formulate a comparative design as intrinsic to my dissertation project. This kind of comparison helps towards a clear presentation of evaluation criteria for the metatheoretical and axiological bodies of literature that will be addressed.

To be sure, having an open-ended, undefined conception of freedom and resistance allows for the examination of situated emancipation in unlikely places and actors, as in the dissonant voices of Fatima or those street level bureaucrats I encountered during my first dissertation. The oppressed must drive dialogical processes of situated emancipation and liberation. In qualifying the process as dialogical,¹⁰ I underscore its relationality and careful incorporation of oppressors through strategic alliances which can help move the emancipatory learning process along quantitative and qualitative transformations driven by the oppressed. However, this requires a rigorous treatment of the conceptual and practical limits and contours of ideology and utopia, along with a close preliminary examination of relevant meaning making and

performativity paradigms. To achieve this, in the foregoing pages I intend (1) to engage Raymond Geuss' (1981) writings on ideology critique in dialectical/disjunctive comparison with a subaltern studies paper on Indian peasants during the British colonial rule by Partha Chatterjee (2017 [2012]); see also Lazar, 2012 for an application of this idea of "disjunctive comparison" in the sub-field of social movement cultural anthropology); (2) to pinpoint and interrogate the radical agency implications of Ricoeur's explicit link between ideology and utopia, his call to merge the notions of understanding and explanation under the epistemological/ontological umbrella of critical hermeneutics and his treatment of social action as text; and (3) to briefly tackle the ethics and aesthetics of utopian performativity as it pertains to the making and re-making of radical agency and emancipatory learning in the kind of intersectional, alterity/radical exteriority based identity struggles unique to 21st century contexts.

B.1. Ideology Critique and Critical Hermeneutics: A First Approximation

In the case of Geuss' (1981) work, it is helpful to start by the end. His argument is that, to confirm whether oppressed agents are subject to ideological manipulation one should ask what their attitude and knowledge regarding the kind of suffering they are enduring because the critique of ideology is ultimately about understanding/explaining the agency of those under domination. Geuss (1981, p. 82) contemplates four possibilities: (1) agents who suffer know that they are suffering as well as the institutional or power arrangement at the root of their tribulations; (2) suffering agents do know that they are suffering but do not know the cause or adhere to false theories about the roots of their suffering; (3) agents seem happy with their state of

affairs but in analyzing their behavior one can detect that they hold hidden frustrations and deprivations of which they are not aware; and (4) agents are happy merely because they have been prevented from cultivating legitimate desires which they should have developed under normal circumstances and which, within their current social order, cannot be satisfied.

Next, Geuss talks about the role of critical hermeneutics (Geuss, following Habermas uses the expression “critical theory,” which I transpose here into critical hermeneutics for the sake of congruency with my dissertation’s terminology) in each of these four scenarios. To talk of ideology, Geuss argues, agents form of consciousness must be artificially limited, i.e., the perception of real possibilities for themselves are restricted to cause suffering, in satisfaction or deprivation, regardless of whether they are aware of the nature of this process. In this sense, the aim of critical hermeneutics ideological critique consists of reducing identifiable suffering (identifiable on the part of critical hermeneutics agents, at least in a preliminary stage for the process of emancipation that this suffering reduction process entails).

I need to interject an objection here, before continuing with Geuss exposition. If the role of critical hermeneutics requires outside experts, regardless of how concerned these experts might be with the emancipation of oppressed agents, what would prevent the consolidation of hierarchical power relations detrimental to the very agents that these experts purport to liberate? How would the sense of radical agency intrinsic to these oppressed agents be preserved?

When I talk of radical solidarity in the present dissertation project, I have in mind precisely this kind of predicament. Radical solidarity implies that in the relational paradigm that grounds this dissertation, it is strongly assumed that local manifesta-

tions of radical agency and emancipatory learning do not take place in isolation from other relevant experiential and even theoretical modes of resistance to oppression, which might or might not be given credit or be noticed by these emerging local radical actors. I do believe however that the intellectual seeds of resistance and radical agency can often be triggered by the very existential materiality of oppression and domination which leads certain folks to depart from the norm and start questioning things that most oppressed actors take for granted. Their metatheoretical/ideological richness comes afterwards. As I just indicated, it might not always be so explicit and clear-cut what are the real origins, broad knowledge or intellectual/ideological affiliations or sequence of events that precipitate resistance or emancipatory awareness toward radical agency and radical solidarity (on this complex dialectical duality of experience and intellect/spirituality in emancipatory processes and possibilities for radical agency trajectories in a wide variety of contexts and analytical frameworks, see for example, Baldacchino & Mayo P., 1997; Boff L. & Boff C., 1987; Brookfield, 1993; Bruss & Macedo, 1985; Carnoy & Samoff 1987; Clark, 1997; Coben, 1998; Cunningham, 1992; Da Silva & McLaren, 1993; Dalton, 2004; Escobar, Fernández & Guevara-Niebla, 1994; Foley, 1993 & 1994; Freire, 1997 & 1998; Freire & Macedo, 1998; Giroux, 1988 & 1992; Gustavsen, 2004; Hall, 1993 & 1998; Haughey, 1998; Hill, 1996; Hommen, 1986; Hooks, 2003 & 2004; Jules, 1993; Laclau E. & Mouffe, 1985; Melucci, 1996; Ledwith, 1997; Livingstone, 1995 & 1997; Macedo, 1993; Martínez, 1998; Mayo M., 1997; Mayo M. & Thompson J., 1995; Mayo P., 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1995, 1996 & 1999, especially Chs. 2, 5-7; Mcllroy, 1993; Mcllroy & Westwood, 1993; McLaren, 1991 & 1995; McLaren, Fischman, Serra & Antelo, 1998; Miles, 1989 & 1997; Morgan W., 1987 & 1996; Moriarty, 1989; Morrow, 1991; Morrow and Torres C., 1995; Mouffe, 1988; Pizzolato & Holst, 2017;

Said, 1994; Schedler, 1993 & 1996; Scholle, 1991; Senese, 1991; Shor, 1992; Simon, 1992; Sklair, 1995; Spencer, 1994 & 1995; Torres C., 1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b & 1994; Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997; Weiler, 1991; Welton, 1991 & 1993; Westwood & Thomas, 1991; Wexler, 2018; Zachariah, 1986; Zúñiga, 1993).

The point that I aim at highlighting in my objection to Geuss is the following. While I know that stratification cannot be eliminated altogether, the ontology, ethics and epistemology of the relations generated in procuring the concretization of freedom from suffering should be, as much as possible: (1) controlled and driven by oppressed agents, even if, for a brief period these agents consider it necessary to consent to establish clear rules for them to be under the guidance of knowledge workers such as critical hermeneutics theoreticians or researchers: (and 2) aimed at securing a real sense of self-determination by these agents about what are ultimately their real interests and the best strategies to attain them. Such self-determination should also make explicit the “risk” of being mistaken, a risk to which outside experts will never be immune. This, with the aggravating circumstance that their decisions as experts affect other people’s lives, which in this situated emancipation discussion context, are already wretched or suffering from multifaceted modes of deprivation (talking of deprivation here, of course, by no means implies lack of assets and common wealth among oppressed agents).

The picture I get from Habermas as portrayed by Geuss is one of critical hermeneutics experts that go around looking for oppressed agents who are suffering, analyze them without their consent and then come to tell them not only what their real interest is but also how they should pursue it. Even if this process were to “reduce a great deal of suffering” in various parts of the world, I would still object to its reifying

and essentializing character. Few things could be more in tune with the power of coloniality than the supposedly emancipatory picture offered by Geuss for the critique of ideology in critical hermeneutics. Remember Arturo in this chapter's reflexive counter story. Who and under what criteria would tell Arturo how best to define his real interest as a person with disabilities intersectionally trapped within a system that discriminates against persons of color and members of the diaspora from the global south? If a critical hermeneutics expert concludes that Fatima is going against her real interest, how could she be dissuaded from her happy alignment with the domination forces at the root of her intersectional oppression and that of her fellow blind foreign people of color colleagues?

Let us now return to Geuss' characterization of the critique of ideology. He recognizes that the fourth scenario in its extreme manifestation is highly unlikely. It is more the picture of a nightmare, not so much the picture of an actual societal form where people can be prevented from the formulation of desires via social control. Nonetheless, Geuss (1981, p. 84) goes on to recognize that it is possible for societal forces to prevent certain kinds of desires from emerging in targeted ways. He also warns that the emancipation work of critical hermeneutics is likely to be resisted by oppressed agents. Critical hermeneutics' role in these extreme cases of targeted suppression of legitimate desires is to make oppressed agents aware of their own suffering or, as Geuss puts it, "to make them dissatisfied with the limitations of their present mode of existence" (1981, p. 84).

This goes back to the critique I just outlined. If this role is carried out through a process of critique, what should be the criteria to engender this dissatisfaction? How would critical hermeneutics knowledge workers be accountable to the oppressed

agents, especially if their critical analysis was mistaken? More importantly, what would be the dialogical parameters of the process of critique to make oppressed agents' true owners of their destiny and determinations with the help of critical hermeneutics knowledge workers only to the extent consented, namely, without matrices of hierarchization that could add layers of oppression to those from which oppressed agents were being emancipated in the first place?

For Geuss (1981, pp. 6-14), the scope of the concept of ideology encompasses discursive and non-discursive elements. Examples of non-discursive elements could include rituals and ceremonies whose meaning require some critical hermeneutics process parallel to the one necessary for the analysis of texts produced by groups or organizations. The non-discursive sphere also encompasses social structure dimensions of oppression which demand a sort of interpretative structuralism that exposes the conflicts/contradictions at the root of these modalities of oppression. The two main senses of ideology are descriptive and pejorative. The descriptive sense includes (1) functional modes of ideology; (2) ideology as worldview; and (3) ideology as a programmatic protocol for action and change making.

The functional modes of ideology simply allude to the operational fields (religious, economic, political, racialized, etc.) where the ideological components are deployed in conjunction with an overarching logic, e.g., the so-called logic of the market, forgiveness of sin and the like. Ideology as worldview corresponds to all the beliefs and values that make up the worldview held by a given group, particularly in terms of the paradigms and overarching concepts that give this worldview a sense of internal coherence. The following are properties that Geuss deems crucial for one to talk of ideology in the descriptive sense:

a) the elements in the subset are widely shared among the agents in the group (b) the elements in this subset are systematically interconnected (c) they are 'central to the agents' conceptual scheme' in Quine's sense, i.e. the agents won't easily give them up's (d) the elements in the subset have a wide and deep influence on the agents' behavior or on some particularly important or central sphere of action (e) the beliefs in the subset are 'central' in that they deal with central issues of human life (i.e. they give interpretations of such things as death, the need to work, sexuality, etc.) or central metaphysical issues. (1981, p. 10)

The programmatic meaning of ideology alludes to what Bell (1960) and other thinkers labeled as the "end of ideology thesis." According to this perspective, ideology is "a way of translating ideas into action... a set of beliefs, infused with passion, and seeks to transform the whole of a way of life" (Geuss, 1981, p. 11). This means that this kind of total ideology (to which Geuss is highly critical due to its liberal character and its manipulative aim at pretending that liberals have no ideology) contains three defining elements: (1) it has an explicit program or plan of action; (2) it is based on an explicit theory of how society works or is supposed to work; and (3) it aims at a radical transformation or reconstruction of society.

The pejorative sense of ideology is for Geuss the most relevant because it has an explicit link to emancipation. Thus, Geuss prefers to call forms of consciousness all the descriptive modalities of ideology and reserves the use of ideology proper to its pejorative manifestations. Ideology in this pejorative sense is for Geuss (1981, p. 14) understood in terms of four sub-types from which oppressed agents should be freed: (1) the taking of value judgments as statements of fact; (2) the inaccurate consideration of social/subjective phenomena as natural or objective phenomena, i.e., something falsely seen as being completely outside their control ; (3) the false belief that the

particular interest of a sub-group is indeed the expression of the general interest of the whole group; and (4) the mistaken consideration of self-fulfilling prophecies as something other than that, deriving objectifying beliefs that shape the worldview of the group from such shaky ontological foundations.

There is in Geuss (1981, pp. 15-19), following Habermas, another more functionalist approach to understanding ideology which places his treatment closer to Marxian structuralist thinkers such as Althusser. From the outset, I must express my reservation toward all modes of functionalist views because of their dependence on teleological frameworks. In other words, by defining functions in advance, these kinds of frameworks become tautological. They need to wait for the function to be manifested to explain phenomena, which eliminates their predictive power. For example, to say that ideology's function is to legitimize the status quo, forces one to see all phenomena under the light of the function that has been predetermined. This, in turn, closes the door to other explanation possibilities (see for example, Huaco, 1963; see also the view offered by van den Berghe, 1963 who tries to synthesize functionalist and dialectical approaches).

The first functional meaning of ideology Geuss discusses consists of legitimizing, supporting, stabilizing and/or justifying domination, hegemony or so-called "surplus repression." The introduction of this concept of surplus repression by Geuss is interesting for this dissertation's focus on the possibilities of radical agency. Geuss (1981, p. 17) distinguishes between the way in which Habermas and Marcuse look at this notion of surplus repression. For Habermas, there is surplus repression only if "Herrschaft," illegitimate repression is exercised. Many egalitarian societies, Habermas argues, are highly repressive. However, if this repression is distributed equally, one

would not be in the presence of illegitimate repression. In contrast, this conceptualization does not match Marcuse's more radical, bulk rejection of repression mechanisms. For Geuss (1981, pp. 17-18), this distinction concerning the legitimacy of surplus repression should not be developed in abstract terms. Its justification should be scrutinized in terms of whether it is historically necessary for a given society to maintain and reproduce itself.

In terms of radical agency and emancipatory learning this discussion takes us back to considerations as to who should make this kind of historical determination and how. Most likely, this determination power would place critical hermeneutics knowledge workers in a quasi-priestly role above all other members of that society without securing a dialogical sense of accountability to oppressed agents. For example, the kind of critical hermeneutics embedded in Freire's version of critical pedagogy emphasizes in its talk a lot about historicity and "dialogical action" (Freire, 2002; Shor & Freire, 1987). Nevertheless, the fusion of historically relevant dialogue and action, particularly when it comes to emancipatory/revolutionary practices that honor and expand on knowledges produced by students (Delgado Bernal, 2002) versus those to which teachers opt to guide them, does not go beyond brief desiderata or even platitudinal statements which dovetails with the kind of functionalist legitimizing ideology that Geuss discusses in this first meaning of the term. Consider how Darder (2017, pp. 99-100) summarizes Freire's perspective on teacher directivity (i.e., power to direct students) and authority: "... it is ... the "possibility of directivity" ... that permits teachers to engage social injustice. The way they direct the content ... students' responses to the content, and the political consequences of practices and relationships within schools all influence the outcome. What does this mean in practice? What is it about the

directivity power of teachers that leads them to choose to tackle social injustices in the classroom? In practical terms, at the level of emancipatory learning, radical agency and radical solidarity, how likely is that a given learning/knowledge production “outcome” will be absorbed by students in their everyday experiences beyond what they are obliged to comply with in the classroom in their homework assignments? How would that link impact broader educational injustices beyond classroom dynamics in ways that truly empower students as emerging radical agents?

Let me provide just another brief quote from Freire himself (2002, p. 114) to corroborate the gist of this point: “... who are called to teach must first learn how to continue learning when they begin to teach.” I concur that teachers’ own thirst for continuous learning is important. However, how is this necessarily connected to an emancipatory/revolutionary use of directivity, authority and so forth? I do not think that all students are oppressed. The issue is that their positionality is interdependent with that of their teachers who, in turn, have a strong sense of interdependence with their corresponding educational leaders/administrators. That is the nature of the educational hierarchy. It has many contours associated with alterity/radical exteriority that Freire never touches in significant ways throughout his analytical contributions. I keep wondering how revolutionary practice (on Freire’s ambiguities toward revolutionary practice, consult Morrow 2013, who compares Freire’s intellectual trajectory to that of Habermas, stressing the progressive softening of their revolutionary rhetoric toward an emphasis on democracies) works with respect to everyday classroom dynamics such as those concerned with directivity, authority, knowledge production and distribution. Darder (2017, p. 98-99) claims that for Freire “revolutionary practice is concerned with the underlying intent and purpose of the

knowledge that is being presented and the quality of dialogical opportunities by which students can appropriate the material to affirm, challenge, and reinvent its meaning in the process of knowledge production.” What is the conceptual scope being used here to allude to revolutionary practice? What are its aims? Who drives it beyond initiatives carried out by isolated teachers who dream of impacting the concretization of freedom and knowledge production capacities of their students via learning? Is revolutionary practice simply to be equated with transformational learning in any of its multifaceted dimensions? Does it require consensus work along with oppressed actors beyond schooling contexts? If so, how do they become involved and empowered? Is that something that students undertake? It is my conviction that oppressed agents such as students in banking education contexts or people of color with disabilities subject to discriminatory practices in vocational rehabilitation settings throughout the global north are the only ones truly entitled to examine and adjudicate the legitimacy and appropriateness of the amount and quality of suffering they are supposed to endure to concretize their freedom. This is the sense of situated emancipation I espouse throughout the present dissertation project. For intersectional disability issues, for example, it is precisely this kind of outsider expert adjudication of legitimacy of repression mechanisms what has kept persons of color and global south migrants with disabilities perpetually marginalized within a system that decides in advance who is worthy of support and who is disposable.

The second functional meaning of ideology discussed by Geuss (1981, pp. 18-19) consists of forms of consciousness that operate in any way to hinder or obstruct the full development of the forces of material production, which many see as the key goal for humanity in the context of Marxian ideas. But just by linking this functional

meaning of ideology with issues of full employment for people with disabilities, one can see how problematic a materialist perspective of productivity in abstract functionalist terms could become. The core of ableism resides in presuming the inability of broad groups of individuals to perform at the same level due to physical or intellectual impairments. Their “tutelage” becomes a burden for able body individuals. Thus, their potential and actual contribution to the societal forces of production is a priori limited or nullified.

There is a third functional meaning of ideology in Geuss that might be relevant in this regard. It is aimed at rejecting forms of consciousness that serve to mask social contradictions. Geuss recognizes that the notion of social contradiction is too complex or vague. Yet, in some respects, one could argue that this manifestation of ableism as an ideology exists to mask the exclusion of masses of individuals who, under basic principles of justice should be entitled to enjoy the same benefits and opportunities granted to able body categories of individuals (see my discussion of issues of justice at the start of Chapter 2).

In sum, what is needed is a critical hermeneutics that can (1) build on the ideological red flags highlighted by Geuss, Habermas and other thinkers concerned with emancipation as a search for genuineness in collective action endeavors; (2) give real meaning to historically relevant dialogical action in ways that oppressed actors who are emerging as radical agents can work hand-in-hand with knowledge workers and have a sense of how the existential materiality of their knowledges as oppressed actors count toward their mutual resistance and emancipation work; and (3) fuse the understanding and explanation of ideology and utopian knowledges as they are experienced by radical agents in ways that can unify their role as change makers and the role of critical

hermeneutics knowledge workers. This would allow for both to be reading together in dialectical collaboration. This collaboration means being transformed by the ongoing manifestations of collective action as it plays out in real time, so-to-speak. Thus, collective action becomes both a text being jointly read and readjusted to feed their mutual sense of continuous creativity and self-examination. The ultimate advantage of this kind of relationally grounded critical hermeneutics is that it does not allow them (through a process of mutual watch in continuous co-authoring) to get trapped in the monotony engendered by either triumphalist self-complacency or defeatist/paralyzing pessimism. The works that I will be examining in the following sub-headings tackle in part components relevant to this kind of relationally grounded critical hermeneutics. Once I cover them, I will try to synthesize their contributions to elucidating the possibilities for radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in intersectional spaces of LatDisCrit decoloniality.

B.2. A Subaltern Look at Situated Emancipation and radical agency

In the critical hermeneutics outlined by Geuss (1981, pp 58 and following) the theory driven process of emancipation's aim is to enlighten oppressed agents to free them from false consciousness which engenders for them unfree existence and suffering that ultimately derives from their own delusion. In contrast to this kind of critical hermeneutics approach, subaltern studies focus on formulating deep historiographic processes for the understanding of situated subaltern struggles. Even in instances where these subaltern modes of resistance are "defeated," subaltern studies procure a critical sense of situated experiential analysis that allows to extract

concrete lessons for future instances of resistance. Because of methodological and substantive specificity, the epistemological stance of subaltern studies stresses the unique over the universal as well as the intrinsic ontological value of subaltern alterity/radical exteriority. This makes subaltern studies a metatheoretical parallel to postcolonial and decolonizing theories, some of which are deliberately developed to bridge subaltern and postcolonial epistemologies (see for example, Arenas Conejo, 2011; Ruíz-Aho, 2012; Santos, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2016; Schutte, 2004; Williams G., 2002, in the context of Latin American thought and its dialogue/dialectical tensions with subaltern movements beyond the region). A distinctive ethos of subaltern studies is its assumption that African, Asian and Latin American subaltern experiences are different. This often demands unique methodological and re-conceptualizing approaches to categories such as the peasantry, which in many other frameworks (e.g., Neo-Marxian studies) tend to be treated as generic and universal across the globe.

For this reason, I have chosen to examine in this section Chatterjee's (2017 [2012]) critical exploration of ideological constructs of the peasantry in India's decolonizing struggles as an illustration of where this kind of epistemological approach can take the analysis. I am particularly interested in demonstrating the value of trying to understand/explain situated emancipation with as much contextual rigor as possible. This kind of methodological approach contrasts with the universalistic critical hermeneutics' stance adopted by Geuss, Habermas and others. These critical hermeneutics thinkers take for granted a lot of the components of emancipation dynamics in action by relying on Eurocentric normative constructs which preempt the kind of emancipation experiences that can be possible for oppressed agents in specific contexts and, therefore, foreclose other modes of endogenous radical agency

possibilities for their concretization of freedom. I hope to make clear below that, in my view, Chatterjee's example is closer to the kind of critical hermeneutics espoused by Ricoeur, which, I am convinced is more attuned to the flexible modes of epistemology, ethics and aesthetics necessary to propitiate a meaningful dialogue between critical hermeneutics and decolonial theories.

Chatterjee starts by underscoring the binary extreme constructs plaguing the understanding of peasants in western Europe and the former Soviet bloc. Peasants are either perceived as an expression of everything backward, holding society from forward movement, or, on the other hand, romanticized as an ideal to which one needs to return to recover a fundamental sense of authenticity. This binary extremism has serious epistemological consequences, Chatterjee argues. Indian peasant interpretations are also filtered through the binary lens. This demands a critical hermeneutic stance that centers on peasants as subaltern agents who catalyze their emancipation dynamics through constructs much richer than those prescribed by binary interpretations. What is interesting is that, even within a plethora of historiographic sources controlled by imperial, Eurocentric and elitist actors and interests, it is still possible to unearth a subaltern perspective of decolonizing emancipation of peasants in India.

Chatterjee accomplishes this unearthing task of subaltern interpretation by examining the motivation and strategies of peasant participation in anticolonial struggles in India. Contrary to the claims of both nationalist and colonialist historiographies, this examination reveals that (1) there were two parallel political domains, the domain of bourgeois politics that aimed at supplanting the space left by the colonial state and the domain of peasant politics which remained

incomprehensible in terms of Eurocentric elitist political standards; and (2) the built in contradiction inherent to the superficial union and the substantive separation of these two domains as the peasant politics actors became aware of so many new possibilities for their practice and everyday performativity. Specifically, this contradiction expressed itself in the mistrust with which bourgeois politics regarded the participation of mass peasantry in the making of the new nation. It saw peasants as ignorant and thus as an agitational component but was willing by necessity to let them share limited levels of representational bourgeois politics, without meaningful involvement in state institutions. At the same time, and this is the most relevant for purposes of radical agency and radical solidarity, the peasant politics domain was processing bourgeois politics dimensions into its own language codes, transforming the discourse and the materiality of political practices. This, in turn, engendered a non-linear picture of peasant participation in nationalist processes throughout India.

Relying on the work of Ranajit Guha (1983), Chatterjee demonstrates how this unique identity formation process of political subjectivities emerged in the lives of Indian peasants in the colonial period from 1783 to 1900. This was a period characterized by peasant revolts, right before the nationalist mass movements unfolded in full flesh. Guha describes the identity transformation process experienced by the peasantry in terms of six elementary dynamics that made up the insurgent peasant consciousness: negation, ambiguity, modality, solidarity, transmission and territoriality. This is not the place to expand on the specifics of each of these elementary dynamics. What is most significant from the purposes of my concern with the epistemology of emancipatory learning, radical agency and radical solidarity is the way in which Guha could access this insurgent consciousness. He lacked sources that would

directly expose the knowledge and strategic approaches followed by the peasantry. Therefore, Guha was forced to use counter-insurgency works produced by the ruling classes about the peasants and then interpret the peasants' consciousness via oppositional readings of those reports. Such an approach required privileging the subaltern and making a deliberate effort to unearth their specific knowledge and ideological configuration, this time not thinking of ideology in the pejorative senses discussed by Geuss but in terms of consciousness formation by way of resistance and insurgency (while it is true that Geuss recognized a positive meaning of ideology with a so-called "programmatic" ethos, the bulk of his work is devoted to deal with pejorative meanings of ideology as for him as well as Habermas, those meanings are closely tied to emancipation issues. On the other hand, there is not in Geuss and Habermas a kind of subaltern knowledge privileging as the one observed in the methodologies employed by subaltern studies thinkers such as Guha and Chatterjee).

Here are some of the lessons that can be extrapolated from this subaltern analysis of Indian peasantry. It involves a level of engagement that transcends normative analyses of emancipation and ideology. Contrary to Habermas and Geuss, the kind of epistemological and axiological commitment shown by subaltern knowledge workers such as Guha and Chatterjee is qualitatively different. It privileges the consciousness formation and the communal perspective unique to peasants as subaltern actors in the making of their own emancipation journey. This commitment remains intact even when, in terms of pejorative meanings of ideology, the peasant outlook for progressive political striving seems far from promising.

On the other hand, given the historiographic nature of this illustration from the subaltern studies literature, it remains a mystery to ascertain how this commitment

would look like at the level of dialogical co-learning with oppressed agents. Would subaltern knowledge workers submit themselves to the guidance of insurgent peasants, persons with disabilities and so forth under those dialogical conditions? Would their analytical role seem to shine with the same emancipatory light?

B.3. Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Treatment of Utopian Action as Text and the Problem of Alterity/radical Exteriority Based Performativity

The need to center on the critical interpretation of what Kyriakides and Torres (2012) call the realm of possibility in a spirit of genuine optimism is made evident in Ricoeur's explicit link between ideology and utopia at the level of action. Radical agency is not viable in the absence of this realm of possibility. Terry Eagleton (2015) points out that there are many instances where hope exists without optimism, since hope is much more about tangible commitments than empty beliefs in the sense that, no matter what, things are going to turn out well. The realm of utopian synergy I have in mind in line with Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics is one that embodies the impetus which gives shape to oppressed agents sense of hope via informal dreams or more structured formulations aiming for what they perceive as a better arrangement of power relations or modes of material distribution, even when the readjustments this entails are incremental or perhaps superficial from the perspective of onlooking actors/knowledge workers.

In understanding the ontology and epistemology of Ricoeur's paradigm shift it is helpful to realize that, as John B. Thompson (1981b, pp. xiv-xix) thoroughly spells out, since his early philosophical career, Ricoeur had explored the depths of what it meant to sketch the development of a philosophy of the will: "The aim of Ricoeur's philosophy

of the will is to reflect upon the affective and volitional dimensions of human existence. This philosophy thus focuses on issues like action and motive, need and desire, pleasure and pain” (Thompson J., 1981b, p. xv). This exploration process takes Ricoeur in a journey from phenomenology to a philosophy of symbols and psychoanalysis, equipping him to transcend better than other thinkers of his time the limits inherent to the so-called Gadamer/Habermas debate (Thompson J., 1981a, 1984).

In this section, I will concentrate primarily on Ricoeur’s interrogation and dialectical reconstruction of Heideggerian hermeneutics via Gadamer and Habermas’ version of ideology critique as articulated in Ricoeur’s (1981b) essay entitled “Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology.” Ricoeur points out that his intent in this essay is not to integrate perspectives or procure a sort of overarching annexation of their views. Rather, his aim is to demonstrate that Gadamer’s and Habermas’ claim to universality is interdependent. Therefore, it is worth examining this interdependence as the source of innovative ways to look at both hermeneutics and ideology critique from ontological and epistemological reasons. For the sake of conciseness, I skip here the outstanding analysis Ricoeur offers of the viewpoints intrinsic to the controversy. Moving directly to Ricoeur’s solution suffices to realize the power of his perspective in enhancing the possibilities of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning at the level of action, which he regards elsewhere (Ricoeur, 1973, 1986 & 1991) as a text subject to all the critical hermeneutic concerns he addresses in the essay that occupies our attention at this juncture.

Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 47-48) argues that the critique of ideology is grounded on an “eschatology of non-violence” as its ultimate philosophical horizon. This eschatology is summarized in Marx’s famous dictum from the eleventh thesis on *Feuerbach*: “the

philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point, however, is to change it” (quoted in Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 49). Non-violent emancipation can only be concretized when this teleology of change has taken place beyond all modes of power struggle and interpretative distortions. Therefore, for Ricoeur, critical hermeneutics is bound to exist within two complementary gestures: the humble gesture of recognizing one’s historical conditions in the “reign of finitude,” an ontological conviction so significant for the Heideggerian ethos and, on the other hand, the proud gesture of wanting to defy the distortions of human communication, which defines Habermas’ ideology critique. Ricoeur rides this intrinsic tension of complementary gestures by presenting the reader with two questions: (1) What is the price that hermeneutic philosophy is to pay in trying to meet the demands of ideology critique? (2) What are the conditions that make the critique of ideology possible and, should those conditions entail that this critique must be detached from hermeneutic presuppositions? (1981b, p. 49).

In tackling these questions, Ricoeur offers a view of Heideggerian hermeneutics tied to the ontology of understanding, i.e. as a process of grasping the meaning of a text anticipated in the very being of that text. Ricoeur asserts that even Heidegger abandoned the quest of moving beyond understanding because doing so would require hermeneutics to go back to its epistemological roots concerned with knowledge as explanation, a role reserved to the natural sciences since the time of romantic philosophers such as Dilthey. The notion of prejudice is for Ricoeur (1981b, p. 40) A crucial concept in this regard, placing the hermeneutic process in close analogy to juridical modes of adjudication. Ricoeur clarifies that, in Gadamer, linking back to Heidegger and romantic philosophers, the notion of prejudice operates in two ways, as predisposition (when one’s anticipated interpretations stem from “fancies” or popular

conceptions) and as precipitation (when the interpretation is anticipated through one's sense of having a pre-understanding of the text itself). Heidegger evades dealing with the issue of prejudice by addressing Cartesian and Kantian cogito metaphysics as the root of the problem that plagues the epistemology of natural sciences. Gadamer, on the other hand, centers his evasive argumentation in refuting the idea of distancing in the process of understanding. This weakens Gadamer's position by creating a dichotomy between truth and method, as the title of his most famous work testifies (Gadamer, 1982). Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 51 and following) places the core of his argumentation in insisting that this dichotomy of truth and method is false because it entails separating understanding and explanation in the hermeneutic process. For Ricoeur, it would be much better to refocus the primordial question of hermeneutics to fuse understanding and explanation as a critical stance: "Would it not be appropriate to ... reformulate the question in such a way that a certain dialectic between the experience of belonging and alienating distancing becomes the mainspring, the key to the inner life, of hermeneutics?" (1981b, p. 52).

Ricoeur finds in Habermas' notion of interest a tendency analogous to how Gadamer employs the idea of prejudice. Interest is for Habermas in the critique of ideology a sort of conceptual anchor with respect to Marxian thought as it has been reinterpreted by Lukács and Frankfurt school thinkers such as Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Apel, etc. The notion of interest links Habermas to the critical social sciences and the search for explanation, instead of the humanistic ethos centered on understanding that prevails in Gadamer. Nonetheless, examining the matter more closely, one can see that interest is also a notion used by romantic legal theorists such as Savigny to justify an intuitive, historically grounded view of normative configurations

in line with each nation's emerging sense of peoplehood (see for example, Laclau, 2010).

Therefore, Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 52-56) looks for ways to rectify Gadamer's Heideggerian tendency to exclude critique and explanation by suggesting four conditions that would supplement hermeneutics ability to deal with ideology critique. The first of these conditions entails accepting that the moment of distancing is not foreign to interpretation but rather an indispensable condition for the autonomy/emancipation of the text (including the consideration of action as text). This autonomy via fixation involves for Ricoeur three important dimensions:

With respect to the intention of the author; with respect to the cultural situation and all the sociological conditions of the production of the text; and finally, with respect to the original addressee. What the text signifies no longer coincides with what the author meant; verbal meaning and mental meaning have different destinies. This ... implies the possibility that the 'matter of the text' may escape from the author's restricted intentional horizon, and that the world of the text may explode the world of its author... The emancipation of the text constitutes the most fundamental condition for the recognition of a critical instance at the heart of interpretation; for distancing now belongs to the mediation itself. (1981b, pp. 52-53)

The second rectifying condition Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 53-54) brings up is concerned with this mediation through the dialectical merging of explanation and understanding. To this end, Ricoeur appeals to semiological models in the field of the text. In his view, explanation belongs as much to the human sciences as to the causal/naturalistic sciences. Ricoeur centers on discourse in terms of works such as poems, narratives, etc. which transcend sentence level analysis and demand certain levels of practice, of labor with structure and form, making a categorical claim: "... in

contrast to the simple discourse of conversation, which enters into the spontaneous movement of question and answer, discourse as a work 'takes hold' in structures calling for a description and an explanation that mediate 'understanding'" (1981b, p. 54).

Ricoeur sees a parallelism between this kind of discourse work and reconstruction processes such as those found in the field of psychoanalysis when it comes to interpretative elements. The mediating merging between explanation and understanding Ricoeur alludes to is dialectical. It requires objectifying the discourse, text or action at hand. "The *matter* of the text is not what a naive reading of the text reveals, but what the formal arrangement of the text mediates. If that is so, then truth and method do not constitute a disjunction but rather a dialectical process" (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 54).

At this juncture, it is helpful to remember the textual contours of the reflexive counter story spelled out earlier in this chapter to appreciate the practical implications of Ricoeur's critical hermeneutic theory in this second rectifying condition for the possibilities of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. For Ricoeur, it would not suffice to understand the perspectives articulated by Arturo and Fatima. It would not suffice to merely try to explain them in purely causal terms either. Both processes of understanding and explanation should be tied to a formal examination of the structures and contextual determinants of their actions and ideas. In other words, ideological critique would be embedded in trying to understand and explain their choices and discursive rationalizations. Of course, this could never amount to a justification of oppression. On the other hand, this could never amount to a naïve hermeneutic adjudication that always favors oppressed actors, without examining critically the multiple layers and possibilities for transformation intrinsic to the very

dynamics of oppression that constrain these actors at a given moment. For instance, one could wonder, are the relational basis for radical solidarity between Arturo and Fatima in their mutual condition as foreign-born blind individuals for ever cancelled? Should the ethical consequences of Fatima's betrayal always drive Arturo's interactions? Should there be multiple readings for Fatima's betrayal considering the formal parameters proposed by Ricoeur or should critical hermeneutics be instead governed by emancipatory guidelines extrapolated from decolonial theories? How would these decolonial guidelines look like in alignment with the possibilities of radical agency and emancipatory learning specific to people of color with disabilities that reside and struggle in the global north?

Back to Ricoeur's exposition, let us look at the two latter rectifying conditions he proposes for Gadamer's Heideggerian hermeneutics. Ricoeur suggests in his third rectifying condition that the "referential moment" in the matter of the text should always entail an interrogation that transgresses the text or action at hand in terms of their internal sense. This merely allows for an exegesis that regurgitates and hardly amplifies the meanings they might contain.

What is sought is no longer an intention hidden behind the text, but a world unfolded in front of it. The power of the text to open a dimension of reality implies in principle a recourse against any given reality and thereby the possibility of a critique of the real. It is in poetic discourse that this subversive power is most alive. The strategy of this discourse involves holding two moments in equilibrium: suspending the reference of ordinary language and releasing a second order reference, which is another name for what we have designated above as the world opened up by the work. (Ricoeur, 1981b, pp. 54-55)

Of course, the opening of a new world of possibilities, is a great way to align Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics with the radical agency concerns at the core of the present dissertation project. This is particularly pertinent as one sees the theoretical and practical potential of treating collective action as a sort of poetic text with its own utopian parameters and guiding hopes. Hence, in looking at the final rectifying condition that Ricoeur imposes on Gadamer's Heideggerian hermeneutics one needs to realize that Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 55-56) aims at linking the status of subjectivity in interpretation with the critique of ideology by replacing all layers of subjectivity with the objective possibilities of emancipation, transgression and transformation present in the text or action under analysis. As he expresses it in radical terms:

The relation to the world of the text takes the place of the relation to the subjectivity of the author, and at the same time the problem of the subjectivity of the reader is displaced. To understand is not to project oneself into the text but to expose oneself to it; it is to receive a self enlarged by the appropriation of the proposed worlds which interpretation unfolds. In sum, it is the matter of the text which gives the reader his dimension of subjectivity; understanding is thus no longer a constitution of which the subject possesses the key. Pressing this suggestion to the end, we must say that the subjectivity of the reader is no less held in suspense, no less potentialised, than the very world which the text unfolds. In other words, ... in reading, I 'unrealise myself'. Reading introduces me to imaginative variations of the ego.

Reading understood as critical hermeneutics in the revolutionary utopian manner outlined by Ricoeur is intrinsically transformational and performative in a way that demands its own ethics and aesthetics of engagement. In it resides the impetus for transformational and emancipatory modes of learning that propel radical agency

and radical solidarity. But what about alterity/radical exteriority? How does it play into this kind of utopian paradigm of ideology critique? The foregoing chapters will make clear that key components from decolonial, critical race and critical disability theories are indispensable to address the question of alterity/radical exteriority in its ultimate political philosophy value.

However, even within Ricoeur's internal paradigm, it is possible to ascertain hints of how utopia and ideology critique are permeated by alterity/radical exteriority-based considerations. For this, it suffices to mention briefly Ricoeur's (1981b, pp. 57 and following) critique of Habermas' theory of interest, which Habermas (1971) developed to condemn the epistemological biases he found in positivism and transcendental phenomenology. At this point, given the introductory nature of this first chapter, I am merely going to enumerate Ricoeur's critical theses. All of them demand that knowledge workers engage the other, e.g., authors, activists, oppressed agents, and so on, as they go about their processes of critical hermeneutics in concrete texts or instances of collective action. These critical theses will also make clear that Gadamer's and Habermas' perspectives are mutually interpenetrating. Ricoeur's critical thesis for Habermas' theory of interest can be articulated through five statements as follows: (1) all forms of consciousness are governed by internal and external interests which preempt prejudicially their fields of meaning; (2) the categories of these interests encompass three different types, technical, practical and emancipatory interests, which might operate simultaneously or in separate ways; (3) these interests are anchored in humanity's historical engagement with nature but demarcate its emergence out of nature through labor, power and language; (4) precisely because of labor, power and language, in self-reflection, knowledge and

interest become one; and (5) the unity of knowledge and interest is expressed through a dialectic which contains the historical traces of the repression of dialogue, which in turn, reproduces the very dimensions so suppressed.

Thus, it is worth ending this section by going back to the questions that occupied us when dealing with Geuss ideology critique and the Indian peasantry illustration from subaltern studies. Thinking back to this chapter's reflexive counter story, it seems clear that Ricoeur's paradigm would require a deep engagement with Arturo's and Fatima's ideas and actions in an interpenetrating sense of alterity/radical exteriority (even at the level of deep inner alterity/radical exteriority based critical reflexivity). However, if these ideas and actions are inspired by technical, practical and emancipatory interests, how would critical hermeneutics knowledge workers ascertain these interests in the absence of dialogue with Arturo and Fatima themselves? Moreover, how, why and under which ethical and epistemological criteria would knowledge workers engage the emancipatory interests represented by each of their "sides" of the reflexive counter story, especially if one assumes that these sides are in an incompatible/insurmountable sense of contradiction/radical exteriority with one another? How could the legitimacy of competing trajectories of radical agency be discerned, critically analyzed and eventually supported/discarded?

C. Summary of Problem Dimensions

Luna de los pobres siempre abierta
Yo vengo a ofrecer mi corazón
Como un documento inalterable
Yo vengo a ofrecer mi corazón.
Y u uniré las puntas de un mismo lazo

Y me iré tranquilo, me iré despacio...
(Páez, 2017 [2013])¹¹

The broad strokes of the conceptual and theoretical issues inherent to exploring the possibilities of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning become easier for me to articulate when I imagine how radical agents should look like. I immediately realize that the spectrum of radical agents shows, in one extreme, emblematic, non-repeatable activist figures such as that of Mandela and MLK. Their stature is like canonized sanctity, so unachievable that one runs the risk of engendering more hopelessness than realistic desires to imitate such heroism. Hence, I look to the other extreme of the spectrum. I focus on the mundane, the weak, often worn out figures of everyday oppressed agents wanting to make an enduring difference, even if their minutes of glory do not last more than thirty seconds. They are my audience in this dissertation project, especially if their plight falls on intersectional grounds. I am convinced that intersectional grounds hold unique spaces for liberation, or, at a minimum, spaces for learning about the factors and internal reasons that get in the way of concrete emancipatory instances of “success,” whatever that means at a given juncture in the provisional consensus terms agreed upon by a set of oppressed agents whose very collective composition is also subject to change at any minute.

Regarding this continuous quest for emancipatory learning, it does not really matter if people have been “trained” for radical democracy endeavors. Emancipatory learning can probably be enhanced through this preparatory training, as when one uses fertilizers to enhance a plant’s growth. Nonetheless, its eventual fruition does not depend upon the exposure to such training. I do not intend to imply that radical democracy is a simple, spontaneous affair. Precisely because of the complexity and

multilayered, even conflicting contours of radical democracy (Barber, 1984; Breugh, Holman, Magnusson, Mazzocchi and Penner, 2015; Bronner, 2004; Ciccariello-Maher, 2016; Little and Lloyd, 2009; O'Brien, 2001; Rancière, 2005), I have chosen to center the locus of my problematic for examination in emancipatory learning as a catalyst for radical agency and radical solidarity possibilities. The core issue of concern in the delimitation of this problematic is the gap that exists between knowing and doing when it comes to legitimizing their reciprocal interdependence in the making of radical agency. Another way to formulate this issue is by asking who should be regarded as the expert when it comes to emancipatory practices, process and outcomes? Which areas should be reserved as spheres of expertise of oppressed agents/activists versus those pertaining to the domain of progressive knowledge workers interested in fostering emancipation? More importantly, how could their interdependence be translated into meaningful dialogical/dialectical action at the level of strategy and analytical critique for emancipatory learning purposes?

Ciccariello-Maher (2016) represents an example of the kinds of epistemological errors I want to avoid in the present project. Ciccariello-Maher's entire argumentation is premised on the idea that one needs to have a macro collective experience of the communal for radical democracy to take place. As an abstract idea, this might be plausible, although it would constitute an overly prescriptive imposition of possible models for people all over the world to design and implement their version of radical democracy. However, Ciccariello-Maher does not remain in the realm of abstract political or merely definitional debate. He uses Venezuela as his nation state level unit of analysis for what a "revolutionary" communal experience of radical democracy is supposed to look like. Here is where knowing and doing get divorced. His empirical

framework not only lacks basic conceptual parameters to talk of “revolution” in the case of Venezuela. Venezuela’s “Chavista” experience does not even qualify as revolutionary in the sense proposed by Trimberger (1978) while talking of “revolutions from above” to describe certain regimes in Latin America, Asia, Africa and Eurasia during the 1960s and 1970s. In more precise sociopolitical terms, both the regime and certain components of their so-called counter-revolutionary opposition forces in Venezuela correspond to what Bill Robinson (2014) categorizes as “passive revolution.” The strategy of “passive revolution seeks to channel mass rebellions into ‘movement without change,’ often through the rhetoric and policies of ‘democracy promotion,’ that is, promotion of polyarchic systems of elite rule” (Robinson W., 2014, p. 228; see also, Robinson W., 2008).

Ciccariello-Maher’s untamed sympathy for the Chavista/Bolivarian regime prevents him from discerning clearly repressive features such as the diffusion of governmentally espoused and funded “auto-defensa” like militias. Ciccariello-Maher (2016, Ch. 4) wrongly reports that these militias were present in Venezuelan barrios during the 1980s. Having traveled extensively the country during that period and worked in many of such barrios I know this assertion to be false. Yet I also know that “Chavista” circles have deliberately created an urban militia myth that pre-dated the regime to try to justify many of its enduring human right violations against the very dispossessed populations it purportedly defends through “revolutionary” means. Ciccariello-Maher has acritically bought into this myth and closed the door to alternative interpretations of what he brings up as the evidence of the matter. It becomes imperative to come back to the question of why Ciccariello-Maher’s false report should hold more legitimacy than the reality of Venezuelan oppressed agents

because of its peer reviewed academic status? How could academic actors in the American higher education establishment be “experts” on radical democracy dimensions and communal experiences when both components are absent from their everyday life? Who and under what authority grants Ciccariello-Maher, or other knowledge workers for that matter, the power to treat a priori non-Chavista oppressed agent voices as counter-revolutionary and non-communal without recourse for appeal?

Introducing the dilemma of interdependence between knowledge and action along with an interrogation of sources of their binary legitimacy modes of hierarchy is therefore a crucial axiological and epistemological feature in the delimitation of my problematic. I depart from the premise that Learning as a process, and emancipatory learning by implication, is not a macro-level phenomenon. Even knowledge management systems that operate at the macro level treat learning in relational aggregate terms. Hence, I start my exposition in this chapter by using my own intellectual trajectory as an illustration. My aim in doing so is to show the reader how it is possible to subvert knowledge through action and vice-versa, rescuing spaces for radical agency trajectories that might eventually lead to emancipatory awakening and relational modes of embryonic radical solidarity with other oppressed agents and, why not, radical knowledge workers. This happens even under exposure to total institutions in one’s formation, as was the case with my segregated boarding school education for the blind in Venezuela, and despite positivistic epistemological impositions such as those still prevailing in the academic venues governing my sociology doctoral formation. Next, I followed the CRT tradition of introducing reflexive counter stories to disrupt naturalistic interpretations of the world based on prevailing modes of

domination (racism, 'dis'ablism, sexism, etc.). These interpretations are wrongly perceived as natural simply because they are intertwined with typical modes of knowing and learning and thus need to be seen through a different light.

I also use this first reflexive counter story to accentuate the relational dialectics of structure and agency. I want the reader to start getting familiarized with these relational processes and oppositional dynamics as they operate in the intersectional world of disability issues for people of color with disabilities residing in the global north and who are subject to what Foucault (2003, 2010, 2014) would call the "governmentality" of vocational rehabilitation. Remaining at the micro and meso level of analysis in these first pages of the dissertation project stresses the relational nature of radical agency as it unfolds into radical solidarity. Likewise, this relationality relies on modes of performativity confrontations with oppressors and those oppressed agents who opt to take side with those in power at the expense of their fellow intersectional co-learners. In this dialectical relationality sense, Arturo and Fatima are almost a sort of role play for an open script. The possibilities for radical agency are already present but not explicit or prescribed in this role play. It is up to readers to compose the ending lines of the argument script. This, in turn, makes readers co-authors of the emancipatory process.

In aligning successively, the theoretical formulations from Geuss, Chatterjee/Guha and Ricoeur, I present readers with an initial menu of ways to read and re-write the script through the concurrent meaning making filter of ideology, utopia and performativity that permeates the existential unfolding of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in real life situations. In Geuss, this menu emphasizes ideology critique by presenting pejorative, programmatic and functional

meanings of ideology as it might relate to emancipation, giving a preponderant role to the knowledge worker as a final arbiter. In Chatterjee/Guha, the menu privileges historiographic rigor to unearth the specificity of subaltern identities and counter-intuitive strategies, even as they might be wrapped in presumably ideological contours that should prevent progressive manifestations from emerging. In Ricoeur, for the first time, we are faced with the possibility that critical workers could be accountable and even shaped by the text/concrete action spheres they analyze in their historical/utopian limits. Thus, Ricoeur imposes rectifying conditions for knowledge workers in their hermeneutic moment of distancing. This distancing is intended to honor both the proud gestures of ideological critique and the humble need for them to acknowledge their risk as producers of knowledge via a combination of understanding and explanation. They must take precautions to avoid prejudicially interpreting what they are reading. Furthermore, they must adopt a meta-hermeneutic attitude to recognize that they are being transformed and co-mingled within their critical reading in a co-authoring process that makes them part of the utopian possibilities both as embedded in and as they transcend their necessarily humble analysis and critique.

1.4. Key Concepts

El amor y el temor deben estar unidos: el temor sin amor se vuelve cobardía; el amor sin temor se transforma en presunción. Uno pierde el rumbo”
(Pío de Pietrelcina, 2017).¹²

In this section, I wrap up the problem dimensions brought up in the chapter by discussing, as concisely as possible, the interaction among core concepts that make up the metatheoretical convergence implicit in the present dissertation project. I start with issues having to do with the delimitation of power in relation to domination and oppression from the perspective of a dialectical convergence of existential phenomenology of embodiment, critical hermeneutics and decolonial theorizing. Next, I dive into linking components pertaining to emancipation, liberation, freedom and love. Finally, I devote the remaining space in the section to revisit radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning considering what it means to build a radical exteriority based political philosophy linked to an explicit ethics and aesthetics of emancipation which couples thinking and doing in a multivocal conceptualization of emancipatory knowledge/ways of knowing.

A. Why distinguish between power relations and domination?

My conception of power throughout this project rests on a dialectical encounter between Foucault and de Sousa Santos. Through these authors' dialogue and disagreements (see for example, Santos, 2014, especially his direct and indirect dialogue with Foucault in Chs. 4-5), I am puzzled by the possibility that power holds the chaGins of the regulatory boundaries that make the modern self and, simultaneously, the keys for this self to emancipate its own ethos in the engagement with radical exteriority. Therefore, power and knowledge not only become one. In the multivocality of modes of knowing, they engender an infinite realm of possibilities for both oppression and relational efforts to concretize freedom through radical solidarity.

Hence, conceptually separating power and domination helps accentuate power's autonomous potential for undoing domination. Also, this differentiation allows oppressed agents and knowledge workers alike to remember that there are still power spaces available for them to use as wisely as possible within oppressive contexts. It is true that there is a wide spectrum of modes of domination, many of which are more hegemonic in nature while others rely on violent mechanisms of repression. Still, we are not necessary in the presence of an absolute binary confrontation of power against powerlessness. This would do away with agency (radical and otherwise) altogether.

Here is the point to take home. Knowledge workers' mission is one of humble cooperation with oppressed radical agents. In their mutual search for resistance mechanisms this mission should sensitize them for cultivating a critical yet open imagination. This would enable them to identify the spheres of residual power that remain in the hands of oppressed agents, articulating them into realistic alliance building and sustainable strategic change making mechanisms.

B. Emancipation, Liberation, Freedom and Love

Throughout this dissertation project, I combine situated emancipation at the everyday level with liberation and decolonization. I am fully aware that these are three very different concepts. Mignolo (2016 [2005], np) points out that "'Liberation' and 'decolonization' both carry a meaning that 'emancipation' doesn't. 'Emancipation' entered the vocabulary of secular Europe in the eighteenth century, and the abstract idea was, in Kantian terms (which he equated with Enlightenment itself) ... 'man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage.' (Nonage is the inability to use one's own

understanding without another's guidance).” Later, emancipation became entangled with the manifest destiny of a “civilizing mission,” particularly since post-Napoleon times. Mignolo continues with his critique of Kantian Eurocentric conceptualization of emancipation by emphasizing that, when this historical entanglement took place, “The “civilizing mission” was taken everywhere and equated with emancipation. All happened and still operates “under the presupposition that the further away you get from the heart of Europe (which for Kant and then Hegel was Germany, England, and France--and in that order), the less people are ‘prepared’ to reach the beautiful and the sublime... ‘Emancipation,’ at that point, slips into genocidal reason” (Mignolo, 2016 [2005], n.p.).

Liberation and decolonization, on the other hand, combat this pseudo civilizing mode of domination through their contestation of the power of coloniality in the spheres of knowledge and moral values/standards (Dussel, 1995). Conceptually and axiologically, these two notions are anti-European in their most fundamental strategic stance. They rest on a multivocal ontology of ways of thinking, knowing and expressing/articulating collective action. Critical theory frameworks imported from Germany which preach emancipation but do so under universalistic standards of truth, are to be regarded as suspicious (at best) in the intrinsic arrogance of their ultimate teleology horizons. It is helpful not to forget that critical theory was developed to counteract the global spread of Nazism and fascism through their hermeneutic understanding and critique, particularly as it impacted and manipulated the consciousness formation of workers with the aim of justifying the extermination of Jews, Gipsies and other ethnic and sociopolitical categories of individuals under tenets of white supremacy propaganda and dystopian dreams of “greatness” (not too

different from those currently espoused by the Trump administration in the US). These were extreme yet unique modes of oppression. They do not replicate the oppressive situations faced, for example, by people of color from the global south who deal concurrently with radical exteriority issues because of their intersectional disability identities and radical agency awakenings.

Therefore, universal applications of rigid emancipatory conceptions are not only epistemologically inappropriate. They are not strategically efficacious and could be premised under incorrect ethical and even aesthetical parameters. This does not mean that the notion of emancipation should be thrown out altogether. Throughout the dissertation, I give center stage to situated emancipation. I do so to emphasize the embodied materiality of a critical existential phenomenology of emancipatory resistance as it moves from the micro everyday level into collective action in various sorts of strategic modalities (although I prefer autodidactic grassroots and knowledge production/organizing over other, more formal modes of emancipatory relationality).

These modalities give shape to the multiple relational processes by which radical solidarity manifests itself. The learning and unlearning dynamics that take place in this situatedness of existential becoming make up what I call “the spiral of emancipatory learning.” This learning is spiral like in the sense that (1) it is already present at the genesis of radical agency trajectories; (2) it remains active in the relational manifestations of radical solidarity; (3) it culminates in the strategic and evaluative stages of collective resistance and emancipatory action; and (4) it has the capacity to resume its dialectical dynamicity in each new situated emancipation initiative. At the same time, it has an impending potential for interruption, dormancy and betrayal at every step of the way. Consequently, such a dynamic view of learning

and unlearning in radical agency trajectories toward emancipatory pursuits highlights the non-linear nature of the relationality triggers imbedded in radical solidarity. Many times, the chosen resistance path will end up not being emancipatory at all. Likewise, from a purely teleological standpoint, things done for the wrong (i.e., far from emancipatory or even altruistic) reasons may end up having unintended emancipatory consequences.

Regarding freedom and love, earlier in the chapter (see above, p. 19) I asserted that freedom (in its most open sense) and love are one. By that I mean that their axiology is interdependent. There must be love of freedom to pursue it. Conversely, there is no room for radical agency manifestations of love under the chains of oppression and nullifying modes of domination which might suppress one's basic sense of personhood and/or communal peoplehood. That is probably why love is a concept that some regard as extremely loaded or overly ambiguous in its semantic autonomy and practical implications.

There is a Frommian genesis in my conception of freedom and love under the rubric of what Fromm (1941, 1947, 1955, 1968, 1976, 1992, 1999 & 2013) calls biophilia, namely life loving external manifestations or positions that can be interpreted via psychoanalytic approaches. Biophilia works as the antinomy to death-loving/stifling/castrating practices. The overwhelmingly masculine images Fromm uses in this contrast are not incidental. As the reader knows, these practices indeed abound in formal and informal educational contexts because of their patriarchal, male controlled/colonizing knowledge regimes.

In sum, this theoretical treatment of freedom from a Frommian standpoint leaves us with three complementary meanings: (1) the ability to be

ontologically/existentially (even under conditions of suffering, marginalization and dignity deprivation) guided in a continuous yet ambivalent process of becoming by and towards life giving behaviors that express love and impact via reciprocal interactions one's heart, mind and body (bridging radical exteriority in pursuit of one's and other people's highest potential, see for example the definition of love I discuss in Chapter 2); (2) the quest to perform concrete acts that demonstrate emancipatory learning in reflexive and collective settings as well as ways to unlearn destructive/oppressive habits at the inner self and relational levels of everyday ethical praxis: and (3) the breaking away from fear-based fettering mechanisms imposed by systemic or colonizing modes of knowing, believing and acting that perpetuate the epistemology, ethics and aesthetics of domination. This latter sense of freedom, is particularly compatible with what John B. Thompson (1981b) calls, alluding to Ricoeur's life-long hermeneutical system of political philosophy, a "poetics of will," i.e., a quest that merges ontology and epistemology to understand/explain human capacity to do good to others and themselves, despite their innate tendency to will and be attracted via dynamics of evil doing in the telos of their desires. Finally, this conceptualization of freedom as love's capacity to overcome fear relates to how Darder (2017) reads Freire's understanding of love in the context of teaching others and walking with them the journey of liberation: "Love is an act of courage, not fear ... a commitment to others ... [and] to the cause of liberation" (Freire as quoted in Darder, 2017, p. 81).

There seems to be a strong dissonance between this emphasis on love's courage and the epigraph I quoted above (p. 58) from Pío de Pietrelcina. I do this on purpose. In so doing, I underscore the epistemological humility that Ricoeur talks about while dealing with the self-aggrandizement risks of one's hermeneutical engagement

with ideological critique for other people's actions. One sees strong signs of this self-aggrandizement in higher education settings. There, so many actors think that they know more than others, foreclosing their own and the collective potential for continuous learning. In this sense, knowing can obstruct emancipatory learning.

Fearing one's arrogance via learning stifling knowledge stance is probably healthy for the wellbeing of the entire body of oppressed agents at whose service (and practical guidance) one, as knowledge worker, should remain bound. This is how I understand/appropriate Sandoval's (2000) idea that love is/acts as meta-language. Another way to put it is by saying that, as a core value, love tames the proud gesture of ideology critique under a humble interaction of service to the cause of resistance and emancipation as driven by oppressed agents. This meta-language should perhaps turn into "tough love," In certain situations where the agents in question are made prey of open deception or manipulation. But the role of knowledge workers must always be premised under a relational paradigm that guarantees their accountability to the process of emancipation as oppressed agents see it. Therefore, their credibility in operationalizing the meta-language of love of freedom will always be perfected by self-scrutiny and a healthy dose of skepticism on the part of all agents involved.

C. Revisiting the Conceptual Boundaries of Radical Agency and Radical Solidarity and Micro and Meso-Level Emancipatory Learning

In sum, there is a complex mutuality of interactions among the concepts of emancipatory learning, radical agency and radical solidarity. Emphasizing emancipatory learning's role as catalyst, radical agency as trajectory and radical solidarity as relationality helps to give an overall picture of the interdependence and non-linear

dynamicality of their roles. Notwithstanding, the question arises as to what happens when any of these roles gets interrupted or simply goes off into a dormant or deadly silence. Does this mean that the emancipatory process has been aborted? Furthermore, how would one know which of the roles (learning as catalyst, the persistence in forging resistance or liberating trajectories and the value of relationality) should be considered as more or less relevant in the continuous propelling of the process of concretizing one's freedom and that of fellow oppressed agents?

The easiest and vaguest answer would be that this varies according to the contextual uniqueness of emancipatory processes at hand. This in turn leads to the development of typologies based on the preponderance of each of these three conceptual roles. But ontologically and epistemologically speaking from the standpoint of radical exteriority, it helps to place individual trajectories in their intersectional unfolding at the center of the equation. We are told so much about the exceptional breeding of categories of individuals who act as transformational/ transformative leaders (Blackmore, 2011; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 1993; Green M., 1988; Green P., 2001; Greenleaf, 2002; Madimbo, 2016; Oakes and Rogers, 2006; Parker and Villalpando, 2007; Quantz, Rogers & Dantley, 1991; Senge, 1990; Shields, 2003a, 2003b, 2009; Shields and Edwards, 2005; Terry, 1993; Thayer-Bacon, 2003; Weiner, 2003). It is hard to tell whether these individuals are self-made or the product of exceptional environmental circumstances. For the metatheoretical discussion that drives the present project, if many of them are relationally immersed in genuine instances of situated emancipation and thus fit the profile of radical agents (which by no means is always the case), one needs to link their individual level dimensions of unique trajectory configuration with meaningful emancipatory dynamics at the organizational and

movement level. Fulfilling this in conjunction with life course trajectories requires longitudinal empirical work beyond the limits of the present dissertation project. What I am accomplishing in providing this preliminary concept map is to set the metatheoretical basis to articulate a practical understanding/ explanation framework. This metatheoretical ground work will in turn enable both knowledge workers and emerging radical agents to examine their specific radical agency and alliance building possibilities. In addition, this framework will help connect emancipatory learning and resistance studies with ideology critique, utopia and performativity theorizing in intersectional spaces of decoloniality.

Hence, for example, placing this examination at the intersection of blindness and Latinx identities is very important. Doing so should shed light on both oppression and emancipation pathways. These pathways derive, among other things, from the structural constraints of exclusion that preempt the flourishing of people of color with disabilities in the everyday materiality of global north contexts where they are forced to survive under racialized and colonizing conditions used to justify the existential grounds of their pseudo-inclusive exclusion.

D. Political Philosophy and the Problem of Emancipatory Ethics

The next step in the analysis is to interrogate the ethical implications of this exclusion. How is its intersectionality ethically relevant in contrast to the kinds of exclusion experienced by white people with disabilities or other people of color without disabilities? Are there unique duties and/or hierarchy of values that should be considered because of this intersectionality?

This set of questions will receive extensive attention in Chapter 4. At this point, it is important to stress that there are indeed crucial axiological implications of focusing on the intersectional decoloniality possibilities of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. One of these implications corresponds to denouncing the hierarchies intrinsic to the world of blindness itself as articulated by the ideology of what Bolt (2014) calls “ocularcentrism” (see my discussion of his metanarrative of blindness on Chapter 4). So often, seeing is equated with knowing. The implication is that not seeing must amount to ignorance. Apart from issues of “political correctness,” the discursive implications of this epistemological hierarchy justify directly and indirectly the sort of exclusion being denounced here.

De Sousa Santos 2014, particularly Ch. 5). himself falls prey of this when he talks demeaningly of “epistemologies of blindness.” He contrasts them to “seeing” epistemologies which, not surprisingly, are superior in their internal logic and their ability to encompass and articulate multiple knowledges. This clearly translates into tangible issues of power in the materiality of justificatory strategies for exclusion. Here is a good example. I am not aware of an English equivalent for the popular adage in Spanish that says: “entre los ciegos el tuerto suele mandar,” which roughly translates as follows: “among the blind, the partially sighted is often in command, although the rendering of “partially sighted” here takes away the heavy pejorative load intrinsic to the word “tuerto” in Spanish, since it is commonly associated with other negative nouns such as “entortos,” i.e., things that are not straight (even in the moral sense of this qualifier) and need fixing. Aesthetically, the word “tuerto” carries negative/freaking connotations as well. It is the word in Spanish that would describe the famous trope of

the pirate with only one eye that so often brings about disastrous destruction in adventure works of literature.

When one unpacks the intersectional connections of this hierarchy with respect to racialized and geopolitical dimensions of knowledge legitimacy and “moral worth,” it is easy to realize how there are numerous axiological layers at work. The complexity is such that a dichotomy of global north and south does not honor even the most basic manifestations of the phenomenon. For instance, comparing the geopolitical materiality of being a Japanese versus a South Asian blind individual who resides in the United States one would find few components that are uniquely Asian. By the same token, Chicana and Latina identities, which in theory should be similar in their racial manifestations, might be extremely different (especially if the Latina identity in question has its origins in the geopolitics of certain South American or Andean contexts) in the materiality of their existential becoming and the unfolding of their emancipatory learning trajectory dynamics and available opportunities, e.g., in terms of their acceptance within leadership positions in major organizations for the blind and so forth.

This ethical picture is complicated by the non-monolithic manifestations of blindness itself. I have opted to use the word blindness in this dissertation to highlight the contrast with ocularcentric paradigms. However, authors such as Bolt (2014) recommend using the expression “visually impaired” to capture the many degrees of meaning and levels of sight encompassed under the blindness blanket nomenclature. Beth Omansky (2011), on the other hand, talks of “borderlines of blindness” to highlight the invisibility of so-called legally blind categories of individuals under a world discursively dominated by the material and perceptual contours of not seeing.

Finally, in closing this brief examination of the ethical dimensions of emancipatory processes, it is paramount to touch on a phenomenon that goes together with radical agency trajectories of struggle: the notion of betrayal as a fundamentally ethical, not merely moral phenomenon. Betrayal can be defined as an act or progressive process of breaking away from what Margalit (2017) calls “thick relationships,” i.e., relationships framed by love as a substantive linking force. As Margalit puts it, where “there is no love there is no betrayal, says a famous aphorism. My way of rendering it is: Where there is no thick relation there is no betrayal” (2017, p. xi).

Another critical existential element tied to betrayal is belonging (Margalit, 2017, p. xii). Belonging as well as identification are particularly relevant in terms of the ethics of radical exteriority. They expose the elusive nature of relationality. Thus, they call to mind the fragility of emancipatory processes of learning in resistance and their real impact on radical agency trajectories’ propensity for continuity or diverging pathways. To cite a dramatic example of the materiality and complex relational implications of this elusiveness it is worth noting that, in the case of blindness, it is not uncommon for individuals to undergo a long (often multi-year) process of “becoming blind.” This certainly challenges the stability of relational paradigms both at the inner and the outer radical exteriority manifestations of one’s self concept and sense of being.

Rod Michalko (1998, 1999, 2001), for example, is keen in his ability to dive into the complex phenomenological evolution of this process of becoming blind. Tanya Titchkosky, Michalko’s wife, also a renowned author with disabilities who cultivates a phenomenological metatheory of the body, has accompanied this process of examination from her unique vantage point (e.g., Titchkosky, 2002). The point that I

would like the reader to take home is that, under this extreme ambiguity of the self, it is likely for one to undergo periods of self-rejection that could lead to acts that fall under the relational rubric of betrayal. But how can one betray a membership category to which one has not yet subscribed any genuine allegiance? On the other hand, if the process of becoming blind makes belonging so precarious, would it not be true that the kind of emancipatory allegiance that takes place under such circumstances should also be regarded as transitory and fragile? Even more, given the added complexities inherent to the racial contradictions pertaining to Latinx identity evolutions on top of the existential becoming of blindness per se, would it not be feasible that other, hard to pinpoint modes of fractured self manifestations could plague the radical exteriority configurations inherent to the intersectional emancipation of blind Latinx that reside and try to resist oppression within global north contexts?

E. Thinking, Doing and the Problem of Emancipatory Knowledge

Coming back at last to the problem of thinking and doing's crucial sense of interdependence for an authentic inclusion of multiple ways of knowing, I want to explore here three extreme scenarios of relational epistemology. In the strict sense, these scenarios carry with them a significant ethical overtone. However, I have opted to analyze them in conjunction to the interdependence of thinking and doing because I want to emphasize the heavy sense of relational responsibility attached to critical hermeneutics and decoloniality work in emancipatory processes, and above all intersectional ones.

The first of these scenarios is concerned with the possibility that a cohort of oppressed agents might be composed of people with disabilities whose impairment or radical disablement, by their very nature are seeing by many as “demanding tutelage.” Think for instance of people with schizophrenia, even with catatonic symptoms. Let us depart from the principle that everyone is potentially capable of emancipation (e.g., people with Schizophrenia, autism, severe brain injuries, etc.). The potentiality of emancipation is intrinsic to one’s personhood. Denying it for certain categories of individuals would amount to denying their personhood. Therefore, I treat emancipation primarily as a process, not a fix outcome. For some, something as “simple” as smiling can be a milestone in their conception of a dynamic emancipation process. For others, only complex revolutionary processes at the political, cultural or socio-economic levels can satisfy. The very definition and redefinition of this emancipatory process should be part of the essence of emancipation in its critical existentialism, i.e., its everyday modes of becoming. A broad tutelage implementation should not be necessarily incompatible with the process of emancipation so understood. However, by its very nature, the who, the why and the how of tutelage must remain under the control, as much as feasible, of oppressed agents. To be sure, this condition of tutelage in its most detailed specificity should be continuously reexamined and adjusted to make sure that it does not contribute to duplicating modes of oppression or even hegemonic (i.e., soft, consensus-based forms of) manipulation that keep people busy in the tireless pursuit of change conditions that those in dominant positions make sure never happen. For this reason, when it comes to tutelage a concomitant principle should be at work. The greater the expertise, organizational capacity and power of knowledge workers involved, the greater should be the need for tutelage on the part of oppressed agents

for power boundaries to remain in a state of real accountability to those who should be benefited by the emancipation process. So many times, an exacerbated sense of deference or respect by radical agents leads to duplication of domination structures. Being on guard against this danger should be paramount; no precaution should be deemed as excessive.

The second extreme scenario relates to the issue of setting enmity boundaries. Accepting the principle that betrayal presupposes thick relations of love, it would follow that emancipation processes presuppose a clear delimitation of who is the enemy, namely, who or what is stifling the concretization of freedom in a given situated emancipation context. Even if one chooses to “love the enemy,” one should know who that enemy is and what it does or has been doing to stifle freedom. In terms of qualitative relationality, that kind of love should be differentiated from the meta-language of love that keeps radical agency and radical solidarity in motion. Otherwise, it would get confusing. This is particularly true since emancipation is relationally grounded. It is driven by utopian desires that give meaning to collective action. In addition, it is always surrounded by categories of individuals or groups whose interests could be threatened (even if it is merely at the perceptual level) by the possibility that such utopia might be materialized. The mapping of these interests and counter-interests is part of the role of critical hermeneutics and should be dialogically worked out by radical agents and knowledge workers.

The third extreme scenario is about the likelihood that, as Lisa Tessman (2017) says, “doing the right thing is impossible.” The implications of this realization are axiological and epistemological in nature. Ethically speaking, this realization opens radical agents’ stance to hopelessness. It opens the root or the justification for evil

doing and self-betrayal. Under such a collective profile neither emancipation nor radical agency seem viable. Of course, groups often come to momentary burn out feelings of this sort. So long as these are momentary and heroically resisted, there is not a major ethical dilemma.

But it is crucial to emphasize that, epistemologically, it is the responsibility of knowledge workers to explore all realistic venues for doing the right things in congruency with the utopian course and the emancipation process agreed upon by the group. They must provide an accurate diagnosis. They must help the group set red flags in advance. They must be responsible for enacting corrective strategies when chronic manifestations of hopelessness abound as justifications for abandoning one's emancipation cause. This is one of the few instances where the distancing of knowledge workers from the trenches of emancipatory action gives them a genuine advantage. Yet, as soon as hope is rekindled, the power balance should return to place radical agents at the top of the hierarchy of expertise. They are the true owners of emancipation's destiny and no one knows the situatedness of everyday existential materiality as they do.

1.5. Chapter Summary and Key Concept Map

In this initial chapter I have provided the foundational architecture for the dissertation project. I started by insisting that my purpose in pursuing the present metatheoretical quest is to uncover and interrogate the possibilities of radical agency at the intersection of Latinx/Latinidad identity/political subjectivity issues and metanarratives of blindness. The project's unfolding involves a political philosophy

treatment of the conceptual ability of radical agency to operate as a tool for the critical hermeneutics of decoloniality in spaces of emancipatory learning and radical solidarity. In doing so, I engage (1) key works relevant to the formulation and critical examination of emancipatory learning and social justice education; (2) selected works from postcolonial, decolonial and subaltern studies, including the feminist brand of these contemporary works which pursue powerful modalities of critical intersectionality; (3) selected works associated with the radical agency possibilities of LatDisCrit, e.g., authors whose analysis centers on phenomenological issues of access and the critical phenomenology of the body, authors who explore metatheoretically issues of interdependence among people with disabilities as well as the implications of treating politically disability identities and authors who devote explicit attention to the metatheory of blindness; and (4) the body of literature that looks at the scope, concrete epistemology/methodology and limitations of critical hermeneutics, keeping in mind that my approach gives preeminence to Ricoeur's and Foucault's metatheoretical contributions in this field, although I touch on issues for debate stemming from Habermas and Gadamer, while articulating relevant concepts from Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm and Marcuse into my overall metatheoretical formulation.

The core philosophical questions driving the project are:

- (1) What dimensions of axiology and epistemology make situated, collective resistance possible?
- (2) In terms of a life course trajectory at the individual level as well as meso and macro level collective action, how are oppressive techniques of domination unlearned and strategically deflected?

(3) What links micro level techniques of the self with radical solidarity as a long-term existential mode of becoming?

(4) How do alterity/radical exteriority relations and structural dimensions of race, disability intersectionality and postcoloniality interact in the making of radical agency?

(5) What is the intrinsic value of intersecting metanarratives of blindness with Latinidad for the enhancement or stifling of radical agency and emancipatory learning?

(6) What are the limits of social justice education and emancipatory learning in relation to radical agency and radical solidarity?

Conceptually speaking, the project rests on six pillars to which I should add radical exteriority. Radical exteriority is more than a metaphorical seventh pillar. It plays a fundamental role in delineating and moderating the interactions among the other six conceptual pillars. The six conceptual pillars are: (1) emancipatory learning; (2) radical agency; (3) radical solidarity; (4) utopia; (5) ideology; and (6) performativity.

I define emancipatory learning as the continuous unearthing of what and how emancipation becomes possible, sustainable and/or stifled. Radical agency is conceptualized as the dynamic trajectory of non-linear change attempts and successes in an interplay between desire and resistance, freedom and unfreedom, learning and unlearning, will, memory, forgetting and betrayal. Radical solidarity pertains to the relational make up of alliance formation and networking (often indirect and not always intentional) towards collective decolonial modes of resistance and change making. I define utopia for the sake of the project in terms of multiple degrees of expectancy at the micro and macro level, going from the basic level of desire for change to sophisticated forms of utopian liberation within the situated concreteness of oppressed actors, as they perceive it at a given point in time.

My definition of ideology stresses an expansive treatment of conceptions of one's utopian expectancies or circumstantial configurations that go way beyond the pejorative sense of distorting and alienating ideas. It also encompasses the myths, beliefs, values and epistemological constructs explicitly and implicitly associated with the concrete emancipatory process pursued by co-authoring resistance actors at any given moment. This expansive treatment of ideology means two things for the purposes of the present dissertation project. First, I remain concerned with issues derived from ideology as internalized truth distortions. These issues are strategically and axiologically very serious. They also exacerbate radical exteriority at the level of intersectional consciousness formation toward the enactment of radical agency trajectories centered on undoing the power of coloniality. Second, I want to explore very explicitly the positive dimensions of ideology as utopia in the making. This helps to fuse the relational/dialectical understanding and explanation of radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in intersectional, situated emancipation-based types of collective action. It translates hope into resistance and transformational/anticolonial movement organizing.

Finally, performativity is understood as the unfolding of the "dramaturgical" presentation of self (both collective and individual self) in everyday life. This involves, regardless of the extent to which actors are aware of it, recruitment and retention mechanisms that try to give moral, ontological and epistemological coherence to the struggle towards the consolidation of their "movement" and their everyday emancipatory processes. The aim of these mechanisms is to give transcendence to situated collective resistance which might otherwise be perceived as meaningless or

superfluous by external actors and bystanders who in turn could be approached as potential political subjects that might sooner or later join the cause.

I devoted the bulk of this first chapter to delimit and refine the problem of radical agency trajectory possibilities. I paid special attention to (1) the articulation of ideology critique as it relates to normative conceptualizations of emancipation; (2) the exploration of subaltern political subjectivities through historiographic approaches; and (3) the hermeneutic link between ideology and utopia in the textual examination of collective action. I have highlighted the value of this kind of critical hermeneutics. My argument is that it brings about a powerful process of understanding/explanation. This process catalyzes a radical transformation that impacts knowledge workers as much as it has repercussions on radical agents themselves.

Having done this, I came back to revisit key concepts such as power, domination, emancipation, liberation, freedom and love. I emphasized the interdependence of thinking and doing in a group's ability to embrace multiple ways of emancipatory knowing, articulating some of the ethical and epistemological implications of so doing. My aim in Chapter 2 is to critically survey and sharpen the methodological tools that I will employ in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 as I dive into the intersectional contours of racialized Latinx decoloniality, existential phenomenology of the body and metanarratives of blindness. Above all, I hope to stress in the foregoing chapter the need to do away with different forms of contractarian onto-epistemologies and ethics (Wexler, 2018). This is a fundamental pre-condition for outlining the intersectional requirements of decolonial critical hermeneutics as a method that can be applied in fruitful ways toward the understanding/explanation of

radical agency possibilities in the parallel unfolding of Latinidad and identity/alterity issues associated with blindness emancipation in 21st century global north contexts.

Chapter 2. *Methodology and Epistemology*

2.1. General Considerations on Political Philosophy, Applied Ethics and Methodology

The topic of betrayal provides ample beef to dissect, but not of the kind analytical philosophers were bothered to stab their steely knives into... with what knife, a reflexive answer is: with the analytical knife of making distinctions... with all the blades of a Swiss Army knife... True, none of the blades of a Swiss Army knife is as sharp as a scalpel or as sturdy as an axe, but the combination of all the blades is probably the best way of dealing with a rich and chaotic notion... (Margalit, 2017, p. xi)

This chapter deals with the methodology and epistemology of intersectionally situated emancipation. Its general aim is to critically examine ways to theorize oppressive myth making and love-centered dialogue as resistance paradigms of decolonial axiology and epistemology relevant to Latinx blind collective action. It centers on the methodological implications of exploring the possibilities of radical agency in relation to the six driving metatheoretical questions specified in Chapter 1. As has been stressed, I borrow in this dissertation project the methodological approaches of political philosophy via critical hermeneutics. Therefore, my methodological approach in this chapter conciliates the parameters of explanation and understanding as they pertain to radical agency and the other conceptual pillars alluded to in Chapter 1. As Avishai Margalit's epigraph suggests,

this fundamentally involves a healthy combination of analytical and synthesis tools. In doing so, I give preeminence to the role of critique.

Political philosophy also entails addressing questions of applied ethics. Therefore, it is paramount to give methodological meaning to the conceptual and interpretative formulations in terms of their values. This must be done in alignment with emancipation processes and utopia/hope driven matrices of change (Young I., 2007 & 2011). I aim to do this in contexts of situated concreteness rather than universalist abstractions. Hence, I have opted to bring in thematic layers of reflection at the start of each chapter through reflexive counter stories. To preserve the focus on the non-linear depiction of a single trajectory vantage point, all the reflexive counter stories are based on firsthand experiences I have undergone in relational encounters with other blind people of color (there is only one exception, where I engage through the interpretative vantage point afforded through Arturo's mediation, individuals of similar age who are not blind in a global south context outside the US). I present the reflexive counter stories through the lens of Arturo, a non-fiction blind Latino character. This serves to permeate my co-authoring sense of interpretative distancing from the actual experiences (very much in the way recommended by Ricoeur, 1981b, as I discussed in Chapter 1). Each of these reflexive counter stories is intersectional in nature. Each of them frames the discussion of metatheoretical issues as they pertain to epistemology, axiology and aesthetics in line with the items addressed in the content of each of the five chapters that make up the present dissertation project.

For example, Chapter 1's reflexive counter story highlights the everyday relational terms inherent to the theme of betrayal. It approaches betrayal through a critical hermeneutics' lens. It values betrayal as an integral and to some extent

inevitable component of the intersectional emancipation trajectory possibilities that befall people of color from the global south who are blind within the complex specificity of US “vocational rehabilitation” contexts.

The theme in this second chapter’s reflexive counter story shifts. It centers on micro and macro methodological implications for decolonial critical hermeneutics. It interrogates what it means to understand and explain the emergence of a modern intersectional self. By its very nature, in terms of radical exteriority, this intersectional self is faced with the need to project via confessional rites the acceptance of ceremonial belonging to tutelage categories. In this regard, the discursive power of coloniality that can be associated with disability related notions such as accommodations and race related processes of remediation such as affirmative action or school desegregation are similar. This is so at least in the sense that they are viable as spaces for intersectional analogy and performativity debates (see for example, Benhabib, 2000 & 2004; Berson, 2005; Moya, 2002; Moya & Hames-García, 2000; Nussbaum, 2006; O'Brien, 2003; O'Toole, 2000 & 2004; Perniola, 2004; Plummer, 2003; Potok, 2002; Putnam, 1990; Riddle, 2017; Sandahl, 2006; Sandahl & Auslander, 2005; Shapiro, 1993 & 1994; Siebers, 1998a, 1998b, 2003 & 2008, especially Chs. 4-6 and 9; Snyder & Mitchell, 2002 & 2006; Sollers, 1997; Somers, 2006).

Dialectically, confessional adherence to tutelage could simply mean subservient surrender. Alternatively, it could become a catalyst for subaltern political subjectivities that might activate radical agency trajectories, radical solidarity relational opportunities and tangible manifestations of emancipatory learning. This is expressed within a concrete utopian ethos. This ethos has tremendous affinity with Soja’s (2010) conceptualization of what he calls “spatial justice.” Spatial justice evokes an ontology

of subaltern centered justice formulations. They go from “real” to imagined subversive spaces of continuous transformational becoming (on the ethical/political and epistemological implications of this ontology, see for example, Allen R., 1999; Foucault, 1986; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1989 & 1996). Its ideology and performativity (see my expansive treatment of ideology and the definition for performativity I provided in Ch. 1) has the potential to bring about spaces for liberation or innovative agendas for disability and race alliance building. Of course, it might as well represent a dead end/one-way path to radical agency’s dormancy with its characteristic deadly silence toward injustices.

The role for both knowledge workers and radical agents alike consists of decoding the canon intrinsic to this expressivity. They are to link the theme of expressivity/performativity of the self toward persons who are not categorized as having disabilities within broader categories of social justice examination. These categories of social justice criteria are embedded in the themes that will make up the counter stories of race, disability and decoloniality in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Once again, let us remember that the substantive theme in this methodology chapter is intersectionally situated emancipation. Yet, there is one realization that I want the reader to take home at the start of this chapter’s substantive discussion. For the most part, one does not think of ethics or social justice in methodological terms. This implies additional difficulties for the presentation of their methodological significance and complex underpinnings.

There are indeed ideological/metatheoretical constructs so intrinsic to our conceptualization of ethics and social justice that we take them for granted (Young I.,

2007 & 2011). Contractarian ideas are a good illustration of this. As Martha Nussbaum (2006, p. 5) puts it, the “common idea that some citizens ‘pay their own way’ and others do not, that some are parasitic and others ‘normally productive,’ are the offshoots... of the idea of society as a scheme of cooperation for mutual advantage.” For Nussbaum, there are three big unsolved problems of social justice that will require rethinking the way we see ethics and political philosophy in action during the upcoming decades of the 21st century: (1) disability justice issues; (2) expanding the enjoyment of justice standards to all world citizens without nationality and other kinds of artificial boundaries; and (3) non-human animal rights. The first two problems are at the core of my examination of radical agency possibilities. Therefore, it is worth quoting at length here what Nussbaum says regarding justice issues unique to persons with physical and mental impairments:

These people are people, but they have not as yet been included, in existing societies, as citizens on a basis of equality with other citizens. The problem of extending education, health care, political rights and liberties, and equal citizenship more generally to such people seems to be a problem of justice, and an urgent one. Because solving this problem requires a new way of thinking about who the citizen is and a new analysis of the purpose of social cooperation (one not focused on mutual advantage), and because it also requires emphasizing the importance of care as a social primary good, it seems likely that facing it well will require not simply a new application of the old theories, but a reshaping of theoretical structures themselves. (2006, p. 3)

A. Second Reflexive Counter Story: Blind Disability Disclosure and Braille Literacy as Intersectional Emancipatory Learning

... to live is one thing and to know is another ... we may say that everything rational is, not only

irrational, but antirational, and everything rational is anti-vital. (Unamuno, 1972, 39)

It is that time of the day when the smell of fresh Coffee resumes its morning force. The noise in the communal kitchen in front of his office starts getting distracting. Arturo is sitting at his desk. His hands are now moving from left to right through thick pages. Karen, one of the most consistent Coffee drinkers among the staff, comes out of the kitchen and stands at the threshold of Arturo's office: "hi Arturo," she says. "What are you doing?" "I'm reading the braille materials we'll be sharing with the students tomorrow," he replies. "Ha, those dots are neat!" Karen gets closer to stare at the pages. "Yes, they're very handy. What's amazing is that so many blind folks these days don't want to use braille," Arturo comments, lifting his hands from the thick pages resting on top of his lap. "Why is that?" asks Karen. "Well, for one thing, kids think that it's not cool to be singled out as blind and braille is such a visible marker, thick and heavy books and so forth..." There's a pause in his voice as if he's pondering the significance of what he just said. Then he goes on, "the other thing is cell phones. Nowadays, cell phones and other devices talk words from web sites and text messages. Blind folks, young and old, think that somehow by listening to those words they'll know how to spell well, which they don't (and they don't even know that they don't know). It's a literacy tragedy." "What about their teachers?" Karen asks, starting to gesture to express her incredulity, "don't they realize what's happening?" "That's another long story," Arturo says, shaking softly his head to give emphasis to his next comment. "Many school districts in this state, for example, don't even have a single teacher certified to work with the blind. There's not any program in the state's higher education institutions set up to that end. I've even heard that some rural districts have gotten a

waiver from the state Department of Ed not to provide teacher services for the blind and other folks with disabilities. The rationale is that they lack resources... It's such a mess because the blind movement in this and other states is often divided on key issues." "Wow!" exclaims Karen, "it sounds rough. I'll let you keep reading. I have to go prepare for the meeting at 3:00..."

The aim of this second reflexive counter story is illustrative. It centers on how the political philosophy of knowledge production via truth telling merges with the ethics and aesthetics of resistance in intersectional situatedness as experienced by people of color with visual impairments. I have opted to call them blind in the present dissertation project. I do so despite the existence of a wide spectrum of sight levels among those legally recognized as blind in the US and elsewhere.

These intersectional groups of black, brown, red and yellow blind individuals suffer unique disablement processes and socio-cultural/socio-historical disability barriers. Epistemologically speaking, I have chosen the examination of the practice of truth telling. I make this choice in response to Foucault's (2016a, 2016b) assertion that the hermeneutics of the self came about because of the practice of confession imposed by Christianity on western subjects. This idea suggests that there was not a sense of the self in antiquity. In two of his lectures delivered at the University of California, Berkley, on October 20 and 21, 1980, Foucault argued that truth telling and long-term obedience/submission were not a requirement under the ancient philosophical model of discipleship that prevailed in Greece and Rome. He argued that this practice came about because of the monastic penitential rules of the middle ages.

Because of my focus on radical agency as a trajectory with the potential to lead to emancipatory collective action, I find it interesting that Foucault restricts his

examination to the discursive. For instance, Foucault does not talk about the structural requirements of monasteries as “total institutions” in the sense that Goffman (1961) uses this notion. Doing so would have enriched the understanding of discursive mediations between agency and structure in the configuration of techniques of the self (see notes 4 and 5 in Chapter 1 for definitions and a brief discussion of these techniques as well as oppressive techniques of domination in conjunction with radical solidarity, emancipatory learning and radical agency). Another feature that strikes me in reading Foucault’s hermeneutic method in these two lectures is the fact that he treats as universal discursive contexts that involve disciples who, judging by many indicators, were privileged subjects. Monasteries were not open to everybody. Philosophy disciples were privileged, free males who were presumed by their masters to possess everything necessary to be philosophers in the first place, which might explain some of the practical features Foucault underscores.

Despite my apprehensive layers of critique for the interpretative path followed by Foucault, I borrow Foucault’s ideas concerning truth telling. Through them, I frame my epistemological and axiological observations in the present reflexive counter story. As director of a program set up to teach “employability” skills to adult persons with visual impairments or disabilities, in 2016 Arturo had the opportunity to observe and converse extensively with folks who, by their disability status, often under overt discrimination, have remained unemployed or underemployed for years. The cohort involved a large proportion of black women. In their experiences, these women voice the portrait of intersectional subaltern realities, looking (often unknowingly) for resistance pathways (see, for example, Kerschbaum, Eisenman & Jones J., 2017, for a

recent collection of essays devoted to the examination of issues of disclosure for persons with disabilities in higher education contexts).

Arturo understood that the focus on employment “skills” often tends to (1) blame people with disabilities for the skills they do not possess (McDonnall, O’Mally & Crudden, 2014); and (2) perpetuate a deficit model. In the case of people of color with disabilities, this model entails a much more complex and destructive conflation of oppression patterns. These patterns translate into multiple modes of micro aggression and marginalization (Connor, Ferri & Annamma, 2016).

The ideological frame behind employability assumes that, for businesses to thrive, senior managers must move beyond strategy, structure, and systems to a framework built on purpose, process, and people. (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2016). To this end, business strategies must retain control over the process while supporting a broader organizational purpose. In other words, a successful organization will provide ways for its members to identify with other employees, share a sense of pride, and be willing to commit. It is the senior manager’s responsibility to create committed members of a purposeful organization, which are no longer confined to a defined objective. The employees must be able to see the needs and opportunities available, while operating in a creative and innovative way to meet those needs. Thus, in theory, within the employability paradigm, fulfilling purpose, means tapping into the reservoir of knowledge and expertise distributed throughout the *workforce* (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2016), but to whose benefit? What about intersectional power dynamics that dovetail with this multifaceted reservoir of diverse knowledges?

Under current global capitalist dynamics of domination, non-standard employment and work arrangements are part of a world where the workplace in its

various relational connotations has become one of the primary means for personal fulfillment (Chari, 2015; Jaeggi, 2014; Jütten, 2010, 2015; Robinson W., 2014; Sayers, 2011). Employees feel that they need to belong to an organization where their personal sense of identity, affiliation, meaning and support are realized (should I say reified?). The employability concept developed by Sumantra Ghoshal (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2016) is a management philosophy that responds from a business perspective to this relational reification predicament. Its key premise asserts that the initiative, creativity and competencies of the market dictates performance, rather than the wisdom of senior management. This is certainly a very conservative stance compatible with the neo-liberal ethos. However, in practice, under the right relational context, for the employer this would involve an intentional determination to create an environment which provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. For the employee, this would involve greater commitment to continuous learning and development as an edge against the constant change and uncertainty in business today. Hence, employability has the potential to translate into a counter-intuitive proto-emancipation space. There, skills, understandings and personal attributes, could lead to relational interdependence for successful employment in a chosen occupation, even beyond the confines of a single organization. This could create an environment that benefits the employee, employer, workforce, community, local and global economies (Yorke, 2016), although it is unclear how it would incentivize critical spaces for oppressed agents to aim at interrogating the hierarchy arrangements behind this kind of relationality.

The notion of employability was not developed in association with disability or intersectional identity issues. Bringing its implications into the world of people of color with disabilities takes collaborative agency. It requires dialogue and imaginative work.

Ultimately, under that kind of dialogue and actionable imagination the many skills training courses available at colleges, technological schools, high schools, career readiness agencies, and job placement organizations would not only reduce the unemployment rate across all sub-populations of persons with disabilities but would open tangible empowerment spaces for them.

Indeed, the power of the transformation could go much further. It could in theory bring about social responsibility in businesses, not because of mere risk management/ compliance reasons. It could foster access and inclusion dynamics that would end up serving comprehensively the interests of businesses, workers in general, persons with disabilities, communities, etc. The truth telling requirement of disability/race disclosure would not be something to fear under such an ideal context. However, for the ideal to become real, disclosure must be a duty. How else would the dialogue start? Who would drive it and make it safe, or at least worth the risk?

Why treat disability disclosure as a duty of the self in its assertion of specific intersectional identities? Doing so bridges radical exteriority boundaries. It also links the discussion to the realms of axiology and political strategy. Reflecting on the dynamics that brought about the funding and short-term life of this employability program in a satellite campus context, Arturo himself has also wondered. Could it be that the absence of a generalized awareness about the potential emancipatory power of disability disclosure might have to do with a vacuum in leadership on the part of blind organizations? Their mission statements claim to tackle employment issues, but are they concerned with emancipation spaces?

At another level, it might reflect lack of radical agency maturity. The context has not yet acquired genuine organizing traction for collective resistance in this unique

intersectional space for radical solidarity. The point is that folks in this employability program agreed that disability disclosure is very risky. Many of the members of the employability cohort had a residual level of sight. Because of this, they made every effort to hide their visual impairment when going to job interviews. Hence, the ceremonial rite of disclosure has for them similarities to the notion of confession highlighted by Foucault. This is so particularly in the way disclosure shapes the unique interpretation of one's self in a radical process of existential becoming.

In this sense, disclosure is a sort of identity surrender. At the same time, this re-interpretation of the self has the potential to engender emancipation spaces of resistance. There is tremendous power in that existential ambiguity. One can use disclosure to link with radical disability leaders and/or grassroots movements. One can also develop a critical experiential re-interpretation of racialized dimensions ignored in the past. The intersectional mix of these tendencies could catalyze radical solidarity and emancipatory learning.

Hopefully, by now it should be clear that understanding in depth the epistemology, axiology and even the aesthetics of such transformations is paramount. Conversely, deconstructing the ways by which the intersectional domination of employability through disclosure as submission operate is also crucial. This serves to denounce and resist its underlying premises.

In terms of these confessional dynamics, something like the ritual of truth telling present in disability disclosure also happens with braille. Arturo is now in his fifties. He has been using braille since he was four. For him, there is nothing intimidating in the literacy-based spatial justice and identity experiences that braille offers.

However, Arturo has often been forced to keep being very mindful of the contrast with other people's experiences. Arturo vividly remembers how Edwina came to the point of tears when she had to talk with the employability class. That day she talked about her realization that she was undergoing the pain of facing the realities of embracing blindness. She said that day most categorically that she was not blind. She acknowledged having visual impairments which should be cured. Cure would allow her to go back to normal.

Edwina was a successful HR representative. She was the type of individual that would reject blind black folks when they applied to her company. Now she was excluded under the same parameters she had been using. She realized how painful and unfair the experience could be.

There was for Edwina an existential point when the reality of work as usual could not be sustained any longer. Edwina had not learned braille. Why should she do that? She even suggested that day to the class that she would have changed doctors simply to hear hints of possibilities that her evolution toward blindness was not irreversible. Socially speaking Edwina was already enduring the barriers that define blindness. Edwina was blind. Nevertheless, she could not cope with the radical exteriority pains of accepting that portion of her identity. Things like braille, cane usage and so on (which much more than mere addenda are, progressively becoming intrinsic to each blind person's identity and which can even trigger relational modes of collective belonging) were out of the question for Edwina up to that point.

Therefore, Edwina's journey shows how braille rejection is not merely a matter of adolescent immaturity. As far as an identity marker, braille represents a crucial component. It transcends the purely functional and linguistic dimensions. Its

implications are closely linked to the existential phenomenology of being (as Armendinger, 2009 shows with regards to the ethics of confession in the world of HIV witness bearing).

Braille's phenomenological ontology implications are qualitatively different. This difference acquires special relevance in the existential materiality of its intersectional complexity when one considers parallel alterity/identity issues such as racial hierarchies and decoloniality dynamics. What surprises is how little attention has been paid to these issues in braille literacy scholarly circles (see for example, *Amato, 2002*; Hehir, 2002; Johnson L., 1996; Lorimer, 2000; Mason, Mc Nerney and McNear, 2000; Miller S., 2002; Riccobono, 2006; Ryles, 1996; Schroeder, 1989, 1996; Spungin, 1996, 2003; Stratton, 1996; Wormsley, 1996; Wittenstein and Pardee, 1996).

Here is a last analytical layer in this reflexive counter story. It should help understand the complex relational and institutional culture implications of disability disclosure and braille literacy activism beyond micro level considerations of radical agency. Since arriving to the state, Arturo has worked to ground a solid movement toward the expansion of braille literacy, especially among Latinx blind individuals of all ages. The reception from blind organizations was at first favorable. However, given the history of divisions that characterizes their inter-organizational dealings in this state, the practical connotations of carrying out this quest for meaningful braille learning and usage soon started to show its most challenging shadows. Behind the scenes, leaders in these organizations admitted to Arturo that they had an ineffective outreach framework toward Latinx blind folks. Yet, a clear determination to address internally the concrete mechanisms that could alter this course did not become apparent.

On the other hand, there is the issue of state waivers for small rural districts mentioned by Arturo in the first part of this reflexive counter story. These waivers not only affect braille teaching. They impact many other educational initiatives that could benefit children with different kinds of disabilities, from autism to learning disabilities and so forth (see for example, the essays in Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995).

In retrospect, there is one emancipatory learning lesson that Arturo extrapolates from this activism excursion. He realizes that it would probably have made better sense to approach the issue of the waivers through a transversal pan-disability alliance building approach, rather than concentrating on mobilizing the main blind organizations. The power of a broader alliance to impact the state legislature and policy leaders was potentially greater. It was easier to sell in terms of the number of children affected and the qualitative long-term implications of routinely granting these waivers.

Of course, there were challenging dialogical implications of bridging the radical exteriority of so many disability identities. The lack of similar broad alliance building precedents could also have made the road somewhat bumpy. One possible advantage is that in this state, unlike other vocational rehabilitation contexts throughout the US, blind and non-blind disability divisions were under the same department. This had the potential of facilitating a pan-disability strategy, at least for transition age and adult categories of individuals, not so much among families with younger children with disabilities.

The way things turned out in Arturo's activist experience demonstrates that the greatest practical caveat, regardless of purely strategic considerations, is associated with the person specific nature of leadership styles prevailing in this agency. For example, the main administrator in charge when Arturo got to the state was blind and

a braille user. As soon as he was removed from the department, the scenario became adversarial. At that point, Arturo himself became the direct target of attacks of the sort described in Chapter 1's reflexive counter story.

B. Is an Intersectional Methodology of the Oppressed Possible?

Ways of viewing disability, of developing research questions, of interpreting research results, of justifying research methodology, and of putting policies and programs in place are as much about ideology as they are about fact". (Rioux, 1997, p. 102)

This section sets the stage for linking intersectional decoloniality and the need to decode mythologies such as the myth of blindness as tragedy that impacted so negatively Edwina's engagement with her own emerging blind identity which in turn exacerbated her radical exteriority existential experiences. Collins and Bilge (2016, pp. 11-13) offer an interesting stance for defining intersectionality. To understand/explain the complexity of human experiences in the life world, they claim that intersectionality is not defined so much via ontological considerations. It is not about what intersectional dynamics are but about what one does or intends to accomplish by choosing to use intersectionality as an analytic tool (see also, Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Castells, 2015; Chun, Lipsitz & Shin, 2013). In this sense, there is a multiplicity of potential analytical/strategic uses of intersectionality by oppressed agents.

The answer to the question that frames the present sub-heading should probably be no, if one has in mind a universal methodological model that could work in all scenarios of oppression and situated resistance/emancipation. Despite the

obviousness of this, certain authors such as Sandoval (2000) have deliberately tackled the development of methodological and epistemological guidelines that should be considered by oppressed agents and particularly knowledge workers interested in fostering their emancipation. My project, as outlined in the confines of this chapter, aims at going beyond a mere comparison of works like Sandoval's. I want to interrogate via Ricoeurian critical hermeneutics their relevance in terms of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. Part of what this entails is a sort of critically inflamed deep reading. This reading is aimed at decoding the ideological frameworks inspiring the foundational concepts of the works underlying the methodology of the oppressed. It is a fresh, context specific way to look critically at their applicability in the intersectional radical exteriority spaces unique to blind Latinx ontologies and political philosophy dimensions.

As enunciated in Chapter 1, my interrogation is embedded under a dialectical convergence of critical hermeneutics and decolonial theories. Sandoval's work dovetails with decolonial perspectives. Her approach compares critically Fanon (1967) and Barthes (1972). These thinkers developed two of the most significant formulations produced by early decolonial theorists. They correspond to the period when anticolonial movements were acquiring force throughout Africa, Asia and even Latin America.

Sandoval (2017 '1997') renders her critical observations on the dialectical emergence of a methodology of the oppressed between Fanon and Barthes. This shorter version is clearer and much more concise than her 2000 book length work (which encompasses other areas I am not going to deal with in the present sub-

heading). Sandoval starts by presenting Barthes articulation of a method. It could very well be called “emancipatory semiology.”

Barthes utopian hopes for an epistemological grounding of colonized/oppressed people’s emancipation is summed up in what both Barthes and Fanon categorize as the “open door of every consciousness” against the recurrently colonizing power of white supremacy and other forms of male, class based and, of course (although not mentioned by any of these authors), ableist supremacism. Sandoval (2017 [1997], N.P.) wonders how can “this shared but untraditional configuration of consciousness be incited? What are its modes and methods of agency? How can the new forms of human being it summons end supremacism for the twenty-first century?”

Barthes’ emancipatory mode of semiology aims at achieving (1) the recognition of differences in their ineluctable consequences for the subjugation and homogenizing supremacist identity of “well-behaved” patriotic citizens of western nation states; (2) the reconnection of history to objects which have undergone mythological speculation/defacement; (3) the “disallowal of pure identification” to engender a self-conscious relocation and reexamination of knowledge workers, i.e., what he calls practitioners of “emancipatory semiology” as they move through processes of transformation with a critical eye toward issues of meaning and power; (4) the deliberate undermining of authority, objectivity, facticity and science to reconnect with their true, pre-mythological origins via the unearthing of the history, power impositions and systems of meaning that made them possible; and (5) the constant reconstruction of the consciousness of emancipatory knowledge workers, along with the method for their critical analysis of myths, as both of them interact to produce a non-mythological

kind of reality with all the force of its liberating potential for colonized/oppressed people (Sandoval, 2017 [1997], N.P.). To understand the concrete critical hermeneutics implications of these aims in alignment with what I just designated as a methodology of “deep reading” for decoding sources of oppression and parameters of domination that might inhibit radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning, it is helpful to remember Edwina’s frightening attitude toward the prospect of blindness as described in this chapter’s reflexive counter story.

A great part of Edwina’s response as well as that of so many newly blind individuals is caused by the mythology of blindness as tragedy. Treating this existential sense of tragedy as a myth is not to deny the ontology of visual impairments. Christopher Riddle (2013 & 2017), for example, is one among many authors who argue that the ontology of impairment is intrinsic to the definitional essence of disability. He goes on to say that addressing issues of disability justice at the ethical, political and policy levels require recognizing this kind of impairment-based ontology (see also, Scotch, 1988).

To be sure, any drastic change is frightening. The unknown of the journey ahead can even be terrifying. At the same time, crossing that existential threshold has the potential to be liberating. This is because, the existential materiality of becoming triggered by blindness (both in terms of suffering and new experiential and reflexive spaces for emancipatory learning and radical solidarity) can allow radical exteriority to be bridged, embraced or at least tolerated as part of one’s complex sense of inner alterity.

In the case of Edwina, there is a set of questions left in semi-penumbra within the narrative plot of the reflexive counter story. For instance, it is not clear how Edwina

had dealt over time with her black womanhood identities (Collins, 1986 & 2000). Was she a black woman passing for white to align herself with management in the HR world she inhabited before blindness came about or became detectable via irreversible impairment manifestations? Was Edwina's inner sense of alterity and consciousness configuration thus alienated in the Marxian sense discussed by thinkers such as Sean Sayers (2011)? If so, could the existential becoming dynamics unleashed by blindness disturb and counteract this sense of alienation? Could the existential materiality of Edwina's blindness start a small spark toward kindling in her a non-linear radical agency trajectory of love for her own multi-layered self? Could it teach her to love the multi-vocal radical exteriority of other people of color who are blind or feel the becoming pain of an emerging identity centered on intersectional/decolonial contours of racialize experiences of blindness? On the contrary, could the existential pain of her emerging multi-vocal blind identity harden not only her class-based forms of alienated consciousness but also her perspective on black identity oppression? Could it end up making Edwina fit into the supremacist citizenship profiles underscored below by Barthes? What kind of factors and why would determine Edwina's journey to be tipped in one direction or another? Continuing with Sandoval's and Barthes' expositions in the sub-section that follows through a comparative exegesis approach might shed light on some of these and related questions.

C. The explanatory Power of Comparative Epistemology

And I am an old woman, and the years bend me
down. My people are no more and my race is
vanished. I saw Him but once again after that day,

and once again heard His voice. It was upon a hill-top when He was talking to His friends and followers. And now I am old and alone, yet still He visits my dreams. He comes like a white angel with pinions; and with His grace He hushes my dread of darkness. And He uplifts me to dreams yet more distant. I am still a field unploughed, a ripe fruit that would not fall. The most that I possess is the warmth of the sun, and the memory of that man. (Gibran, 2017 [2011], pp. 343-344)

Nadie vio la hermosura de las calles
hasta que pavoroso en clamor
se derrumbó el cielo verdoso
en abatimiento de agua y de sombra.
El temporal fue unánime
y aborrecible a las miradas fue el mundo,
pero cuando un arco bendijo
con los colores del perdón la tarde,
y un olor a tierra mojada
alentó los jardines,
nos echamos a caminar por las calles
como por una recuperada heredad...¹³
(Borges, 1995, p. 29)

Barthes methodology of the oppressed rests on the critical exposure of seven core poses or rhetorical figures/mechanisms that work together to reproduce the mythological essence embedded in the forms of consciousness of supremacist citizens. Before describing these figures, I want to call the reader's attention to the way Sandoval (2017 '1997', n.p.) introduces them. She claims that what "hails this rhetoric into the real is difference; once enacted, however, each figure becomes a machine, a deputy for the real that works to erase difference. Under present cultural conditions, the following figures are called on to shape and inhabit not only the most obedient and deserving citizen/subject, but also even the most rebellious agent of social change." Thus, I wonder, when Sandoval talks about "present cultural conditions," is she talking

about Barthes' present day conditions, hers or both? This matters a lot. Sandoval's ultimate critique against Barthes is based on her perception that his hermeneutic vantage point was biased by a sort of existential isolation. Sandoval claims that Barthes, being a white scholar, was thirsty to fit into the very academic establishment he was analyzing critically via his semiological myth decoding epistemology. This created an inner tension that condemned his rebellion to a solipsistic, vague longing exercise. As Sandoval puts it:

Barthes's pain over the recognition of this profound alienation as it determined psychic and social life brought him face-to-face with the languages and idioms of survival spoken by colonized peoples, and into contact with the methodology of the oppressed, which he at once affirms and asserts while blinding himself to its ongoing practices and practitioners. I am suggesting that the erasure from academic scholarship of Barthes's important contributions on the topic of supremacist and/or white consciousness is in part due to his own simultaneous recognition and repression of the methodology of the oppressed, a methodology that had been accounted for by Franz Fanon six years earlier, in 1951 (2017 [1997], n.p.).

Barthes (1972, p. 155-156) does indeed make a confession associated with pain and isolation when describing the "mythologist." One could merely read this as an autobiographical statement, as Sandoval seems to restrict her reading. Alternatively, one could see this as an ideal type, a role conflict examination on the part of Barthes. Perhaps he conceived it as a warning to other white academicians who might want to venture into this thorny terrain of myth decoding.

What I find hard to accept is that the cause of Barthes' "erasure" from 21st century academic discussions on decolonial thought is solely grounded on his ambiguity toward the methodology of the oppressed, his alienated contradictions and his

betrayals. So many thinkers famous in today's decolonial spheres have done worse in this regard without being penalized as far as their currency within an evolving decolonial canon. The case of Paul Sartre, another white scholar who was criticized directly by Fanon in the 1950s and 1960s, is very telling with regards to this capricious tendency of selective exclusion. Barthes' (1972, p. 156) own take on the innate isolation of the mythologist reads as follows:

The mythologist is condemned to live in a theoretical sociality; for him, to be in society is, at best, to be truthful: his utmost sociality dwells in his utmost morality. His connection with the world is of the order of sarcasm. One must even go further: in a sense, the mythologist is excluded from this history in the name of which he professes to act. The havoc which he wreaks in the language of the community is absolute for him, it fills his assignment to the brim: he must live this assignment without any hope of going back or any assumption of payment. It is forbidden for him to imagine what the world will concretely be like, when the immediate object of his criticism has disappeared. Utopia is an impossible luxury for him: he greatly doubts that tomorrow's truths will be the exact reverse of today's lies. History never ensures the triumph pure and simple of something over its opposite: it unveils, while making itself, unimaginable solutions, unforeseeable syntheses. The mythologist is not even in a Moses-like situation: he cannot see the Promised Land. For him, tomorrow's positivity is entirely hidden by today's negativity. All the values of his undertaking appear to him as acts of destruction.

As the reader can tell, Barthes preceding statement epitomizes what Eagleton (2015) calls "optimism without hope." For me, that is the real cause of his erasure. Barthes did not approach the colonized peoples of his time. He did not have hope for them. They were just making myths. His interlocutors were "truth seekers." Those, he thought, were only found among academicians.

Barthes seemed paradoxically biased against all other types of knowledges. With such epistemological/axiological intransigence, Barthes was contradicting in practice the very basis of his search for the pre-mythical sense of “unaltered” truths. But those are precisely the kinds of knowledges found outside the academia. They are often fresh because they are essentially pre-mythical and “pre-rational” in so many respects.

Here is the point that one should take home from this epistemological exchange between Sandoval and Barthes. The explanatory power of comparative epistemology resides and gets optimized in the creation of a single architecture of comparative analysis. This requires spelling out all the multiple layers of clustering that go into its architectural configuration.

This involves at least four steps: (1) broad identification of the multiple epistemologies that will go into the general architectural mix; (2) articulation and justification of knowledge clusters, without pre-judging or ranking their separate contents; (3) comparative contrast at the intra and inter-cluster levels of analysis; and (4) movement toward dialogical synthesis as a process always in the making (I will discuss in more detail this step in the section that follows).

Sandoval compares Fanon and Barthes. In doing so, she treats them as separate epistemologies and adjudicates the case in advance in favor of Fanon over whatever contributions Barthes could make. Therefore, the dialogical synthesis step is precluded. Within my clustering framework, the three of them, Sandoval, Fanon and Barthes, should be placed together at the same level of analysis (I will discuss Fanon much more extensively in Chapter 3). Then each of their epistemologies should be examined

through a decoding lens like that of the seven rhetorical figures formulated by Barthes, which I shall now explore in detail.

The seven rhetorical figures or poses are: (1) inoculation; (2) privation of history; (3) identification; (4) tautology; (5) neither-norism; (6) quantification of quality; and (7) statement of fact. Inoculation's purpose is to shield, limit and protect one's consciousness from the threat of difference. In this light, inoculation operates through homeopathic-like injections of cautiousness toward dissimilarity. Its "modest doses," in the manner epidemically espoused by affirmative action approaches, allow the middle-class average citizen to remain without change, without dealing with the "enormity" of real difference.

In the language I introduced and applied in Chapter 1, inoculation vaccinates supremacist citizens against having to come face-to-face with radical exteriority. "Middle-class, liberal, and Western citizen/subjects do admirably express a 'tolerance' of difference, Barthes insists, but such tolerance is only a means to control its final impact... this form of consciousness keeps its practitioners safe yet stimulated, for difference is treated as a controlled substance..." (Sandoval, 2017 [1997], n.p.). Its potency "immunizes" the collective imagination and culture as well (Barthes, 1972, pp. 149-150).

The privation of history works by dispossessing all cultural products from what has made them into what they are now. The aim of this process of "estrangement" is to deprive western consciousness from any responsibility for what has been and what will come about. I will revisit this theme from a different angle in Chapter 4. There, as I deal with decolonial modes of solidarity, I will touch on Zembylas' 2008, 2012 & 2013 treatment of shame, pride, empathy and other emotions as transformative learning

tools for intercultural education and social justice driven critical pedagogy. The ultimate effect of this process is tragic. It engenders the citizens' passivity in their soul and inner consciousness. Sandoval (2017 [1997], n.p.) wonders in her astute reading of Barthes: what happens "to the colonizing and white consciousness after it accepts and submits to this work of ideology, this estrangement and privation of history, this luxury-at-a-price? For the rhetoric of supremacy now colonizes the colonizers' consciousness as well."

Identification as the third figure in this semiological paradigm, is a concept common to Fanon and Barthes. In their unique usage, identification means to enact self-consciousness through a process of uplifting, comforting, or self-constituting of world perspectives that sees all otherness as sameness. There are contemporary applications of this notion in the context of policy and other types of social networks (see for example, Ingram M., Ingram H. & Lejano, 2015; Lejano, Chui, Lam & Wong, 2017; Lejano & Dodge, 2017; Lejano, Ingram M. & Ingram H., 2013; Lejano & Leong, 2012).

Here is how Barthes (1972, pp. 150-151) describes the depth of this pose of identification in supremacist/colonized consciousness. Notice that, above all, it acquiesces/desensitizes and enslaves consciousness to its own sense of pseudo-sameness with unavoidable political consequences:

In the petit-bourgeois universe, all the experiences of confrontation are reverberating, any otherness is reduced to sameness. The spectacle or the tribunal, which are both places where the Other threatens to appear in full view, become mirrors. This is because the Other is a scandal which threatens his essence... There are, in any petit-bourgeois consciousness, small simulacra of the hooligan, the parricide, the homosexual, etc., which periodically the judiciary extracts from its brain, puts in the dock,

admonishes and condemns: one never tries anybody but analogues who have gone astray... Sometimes--rarely--the Other is revealed as irreducible... There is here a figure for emergencies: exoticism. The Other becomes a pure object, a spectacle, a clown... This figure is chiefly petit-bourgeois. For, even if he is unable to experience the Other in himself, the bourgeois can at least imagine the place where he fits in: this is what is known as liberalism, which is a sort of intellectual equilibrium based on recognized places. The petit-bourgeois class is not liberal (it produces Fascism, whereas the bourgeoisie uses it...).

Tautology as a figure or pose in the making of myths entails taking refuge in inarticulation and lack of explanation, just as one deals with emotions such as fear, anger or sadness. Tautology synthesizes the previous three poses or figures by defining the dominant tautologically. That is, it allows to see the other as mere expressions of the dominant western ethos in other forms. It is a “double murder” as Barthes calls it, (1) it kills rationality because reality as an object resists its demands for explanations; and (2) it kills language because reality betrays it (1972, pp. 151-152). “‘History is History,’ ‘Truth is Truth...’ Tautology operates behind a badge of authority, where its rationality is hidden” (Sandoval, 2017 [1997], n.p.).

In this rhetorical context of power imposition of tautological “truths,” it is easier to understand the devices under which neither-norism operates. Neither-norism involves the creation of a sense of independent neutrality in the citizens’ consciousness. In this pose, as Sandoval (2017 [1997], n.p.) points out, “the citizen/subject reduces reality to two or more formal opposites, and each is relieved of its historically produced differences. Neither-norism thus enables a ‘final equilibrium’ for being that immobilizes values, life, and destiny.”

The last two poses or figures in Barthes model for decoding mythologies are explicitly methodological. They allude to dominant positivistic ways of portraying reality's ontology. Hence, the quantification of quality entails measuring the amount of effects produced by an image, a dream, a myth, a theoretical framework, etc., giving preeminence to those with larger quantities of effects. "The inexpressible goodness of quality, however, is reduced to quantity... the quantification of quality economizes scholarly intelligence itself, and even academic knowledge 'understands reality more cheaply' (Sandoval, 2017 [1997], n.p.).

Finally, the ideological figure of statement of facts means imposing on citizens/subjects the obligation of asserting their reality with absolute certainty, leaving no room for traces of ambiguity. This, according to Barthes, operates through the common reliance on maxims and aphorisms which end up becoming clichés, rather than true expressions of knowledge. Barthes contrasts these rhetorical devices with the revolutionary power of proverbs as epistemological tools whose inner force contains at once the depth of power and knowledge in action, often with contours of ambiguity.

Enacting its meaning as it is spoken, the proverb is transitively completed only by human encounter with the world. Insofar as the proverb expresses and demands human engagement with its surroundings, Barthes stresses that it represents a form of emancipatory speech, as opposed to the ideologically circumscribed forms of speech generated by the seven figures defined above. Barthes's example of proverbial speech in action is the statement 'the weather is fine.' When spoken by a hopeful farmer concerned with the crops, this statement is not meant to direct others how to view or feel about the weather. Rather, it is meant to be a 'technological statement,' meaning that farmers must draw today's weather into their farming labor every hour, through speech, to successfully farm and cultivate their crops and livestock. This kind of technological statement represents the innovative side of the proverb, which sends forth speech as (uncompleted) action—the results of which are hoped for, but still unknown (Sandoval, 2017 [1997], n.p.).

Now, let us return to the myth of blindness as tragedy as portrayed in the discussion of Edwina's predicament in this chapter's reflexive counter-story. In it one can see the immobilizing existential effects of mythologies in action. This kind of Mythology works via the inoculation of bio-medical omnipotence.

Edwina had experienced numerous eye surgeries without sight improvements; yet her faith in medical science was intact. No one knows where the myth of blindness as tragedy comes from. It has lost its roots in history. This, instead of weakening its mythological force, makes it much easier to enact. It lives via ocular-centric modes of identification, tautology and neither-norism language and commonsense devices. The existential quality of blindness as a mode of life is reduced to the quantification of sight left, the quantification of opportunities gone, the enormity of tragedy. At last, therefore, the power of maxims and clichés as statements of fact is simply a matter of pronouncement, of repetition, of surrender.

Thus, every day and everywhere, man is stopped by myths, referred by them to this motionless prototype which lives in his place, stifles him in the manner of a huge internal parasite and assigns to his activity the narrow limits within which he is allowed to suffer without upsetting the world... Myths are nothing but this ceaseless, untiring solicitation, this insidious and inflexible demand that all men recognize themselves in this image, eternal yet bearing a date, which was built of them one day as if for all time. For the Nature, in which they are locked up under the pretext of being eternalized, is nothing but an Usage. And it is this Usage, however lofty, that they must take in hand and transform. (Barthes, 1972, pp. 154-155)

Another way of thinking of the explanatory power of comparative epistemology is that of lasting impressions in the process of becoming. As uttered in Borges poem and Gibran's epigraph above, it often suffices to experience a radical downpour, or an

epiphany encounter to demolish myths and uncover hidden manifestations of beauty and emancipatory learning.

For this reason, using academic positions to desecrate the experiential knowledges harvested by suffering categories of individuals such as Edwina is so dangerous, so insulting, so terribly mystifying. Here is an example of what I mean. In his 2014 article “Defining Disability: Metaphysical Not Political,” Christopher Riddle argues that the definition of disability must be grounded on ontology. In principle, I can agree with that since it is not an innovative assertion. Notice, however, the irony embedded in the subtitle of his essay: “Metaphysical Not Political.” Is the refuge in metaphysics a claim to neutrality or philosophical superiority? Is it a tautology manifestation of pseudo-authority of the kind spelled out by Barthes?

Riddle’s piece is designed to attack the “false” ontology inherent to the British social model of disability. Again, those criticisms are not uncommon. My quarrel with his mode of argumentation is threefold. First, it implies that there is no ontology in politics. Second, through this, it fallaciously implies that only ontologically grounded knowledge is valid. Third, and this is the error that makes me bring it up in this subsection, in trying to demonstrate the ontology of impairment in the making of disability it ends up ridiculing via superfluous analogy the existential reality of disability.

Of all the illustrations Riddle could have used to back up his point, he opted to center on the “myth” of Santa Claus. Riddle (2013, pp. 382-384) claims that, just as dispelling the myth of Santa Claus would not hurt children, ontologically there is a duty to do away with any definition of disability that excludes physical or mental impairments. Riddle further points out that one’s answer to who Santa Claus is depends

on one's aims. However, ontologically, the only truth is that Santa Claus does not exist. That sole truth should preempt the entire nature of the discussion.

My issue with Riddle's argumentation is that his approach creates a hierarchical configuration of knowledges where ontological examination drives everything else. Riddle goes about his argumentation business as if there is no ontology in politics and vice-versa. Denying the ontology of ideology through a trivial analogy like that of Santa Claus is more than a fallacy. It is an insult to those people who struggle day in and day out through the discriminatory realities of ableism. Could one be morally correct in deleting through ontological argumentation the existential pain of Edwina as she fights the myth of blindness as tragedy in her own radical exteriority journey of becoming? Could one ontologically circumscribe the reality of blindness solely to vision impairment dimensions?

Certainly not; as Riddle himself recognizes by quoting Shakespeare (2006, n.p.), "there can be no impairment without society, nor disability without impairment". This statement is tautological if it stands alone. The same can be said of disability, particularly in terms of the ideological contours of ableism that make it so hard to endure for millions of individuals around the world. Accepting that ontology is not neutral would not hurt the interactional conception of disability that Riddle claims to espouse. His choice of such a trivial analogy in its ominous disrespect for the existential dimensions of disability suffering suffices to condemn the doom of his argumentation. Its academic/solipsistic hubris corroborates the seven rhetorical poses so dramatically that no more words would seem necessary, were it not for the hegemonic weight of academic knowledge.

There is one of Endó's (1969) novels titled *Silence*, which deals with the ambiguities of apostasy for catholic minorities in 17th century Japan. In it, there is a traitor character named Kichijiró. Kichijiró's very physical appearance and mannerisms were set up so repugnant as to denounce the moral fragility of his "innately" betraying nature. Such warning signs are not present in academic knowledge. The opposite is the case. The fanfare of its pseudo-praises often traps people into the perpetuation of mythologies, even those kinds of mythologies that paralyze them in their suffering and stifle their radical agency prospects.

In this context, it is helpful to remember Maldonado-Torres' (2007, p. 241) observation that in the radical ethics project of Levinas' sense of face-to-face encounters, the emphasis on pure ontology is synonymous with the coloniality of power. As such, it should be contested with all our strength.

D. A Preliminary Comparison of Blindness, Blackness and Latinidades

Many of them are foreigners simply because the greater part of the unskilled labor in this country is foreign. 'Scum of the earth?' Perhaps. I know they have never had a fair chance. They have been starved in body and mind, denied, exploited, driven like slaves from job to job. 'Dangerous?' Maybe. They have endured countless wrongs and injuries until they are driven to rebellion. They know that the laws are for the strong, that they protect the class that owns everything. They know that in a contest with the workers, employers do not respect the laws, but quite shamelessly break them (Keller, 2003, p. 45).

This part of the chapter is my first attempt at going from micro to macro comparisons. My goal here is to foster a simultaneous enactment of explanation and understanding of the potential of radical agency trajectories for Latinx blind collectivities as opposed to those of black blind or other ethnically-aligned sub-groups of people of color with disabilities in global north contexts. In unpacking this comparative attempt, it is helpful to realize that, despite all appearances to the contrary, the myth of blindness as tragedy is not universal in the critical existential phenomenology of its radical exteriority manifestations. Let us Think beyond Edwina's case and venture for a moment into an initial look at the radical agency possibilities of LatDisCrit for blind organic intellectuals or intersectional practitioners.

In this specific context, the power of comparative epistemology requires new dimensions of explanation/understanding. In conjunction with the ontology, epistemology and axiology specific to the multi-vocal manifestations of various modes of Latinidades, the experience of blindness as tragedy acquires complex underpinnings.

For contrast's sake, think for example of what is often written about black intellectual insurgency by those who experience it in the first person of action verb conjugation. In the opening lines of *Breaking Bread*, Hooks and West (1991) talk about the metaphoric power of breaking bread. They portray it as a communal, auto-critical and revitalizing process of love in dialogue:

we would often stand in a collective circle and sing, 'Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees,' and the lines in the song which say, 'When I Fall on My Knees with My Face to the Rising Sun, Oh Lord Have Mercy on Me...' mercy speaks to the need we have for compassion, acceptance, understanding, and empathy... Hence our desire to share these discussions with other people, with a community of faith, not to necessarily invoke a religious community, but a community of comrades who are seeking to deepen our

spiritual experience and our political solidarity, and others of us seeking primarily to deepen our understanding of Black life and Black political experience. (Hooks & West, 1991, pp. 1-2)

I am not naive to believe that all black intellectual discussions happen under this dialogical love and communal spirit. But the fact that they can be shared so openly as published material speaks of an undeniable realm of reality that deserves attention from the standpoint of radical agency in the making. I am much more skeptical about the kinds of dialogical processes underlying radical solidarity dimensions for Latinx blind individuals and groups.

First, Latinidad is a fragmentary mode of identity formation. Eduardo Mendieta, for example, stresses that in the current context of 21st century's vanishing public spheres, a new kind of public intellectual is needed. Coincidentally, for Latinx intellectuals, Mendieta sees West's black radical democracy work as a good model to follow. For Mendieta, West embodies core features helpful in bringing the postcolonial/decolonial agenda of anti-imperialism and globalization to the forefront of practical intellectual discussions in the everyday arena of critical dialogue and transformation.

According to Claude (2003, pp. 259-261), the reliance on such a model by Mendieta is paradoxical. On the one hand, it attempts to establish a pan ethnic vision for intellectual dialogue among Latinx public intellectuals. On the other hand, it highlights a black intellectual model for someone who embodies both Marxism and Christian heritage components in a quasi-prophetic ethos that Claude categorizes under the banner of a "tragicomic sensibility." Thus, Claude wonders why Mendieta opts to ignore intellectual phenomena such as theology of liberation. In the case of

Latin America, theology of liberation is often seen as a failed attempt to galvanize precisely the sort of intellectual dialogue and critical consensus of dynamism in the generation and regeneration of relevant ideas that Mendieta seems to have in mind.

I would like to delay my final pronouncement on the substantive scope and merits of this debate between Mendieta and Claude for Chapter 3. Here, I simply want to invoke it as an illustration of the kinds of issues that have been part of the agenda so far as a response to the evident sense of fragmentation that plagues Latinx radical intellectual and movement building performativities. While writing this chapter I had the opportunity to watch once again the Spanish TV series titled “Descalzo Sobre la Tierra Roja (RTVE.es, 2018),” which I had originally seen in 2016. The series is set in two episodes. It details the struggle of liberation Theology Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga through two parallel perspectives: (1) as the unfolding of the repressive questioning of his work by Vatican authorities under Pope John Paul II (one of the most ardent opponents of the liberation theology movement with ostensible gestures such as the public reprimand of Ernesto Cardenal during one of his visits to Nicaragua in the 1980s); and (2) as the precipitation of persecution against three distinct oppressed groups: land movement collectives, indigenous tribes and *facenda* workers in the region of São Felix do Araguaia in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso (see, Casaldáliga, 2018, for a first person version of the events in a diary style; for a book length biographical account, see, Escribano, 2002; for a broader survey of Casaldáliga’s ideas and pronouncements, see the wide variety of writings by Casaldáliga made available at www.servicioskoinonia.org/Casaldaliga/). The plot in the television series helps understand the situated specificity under which a lot of the collective action and

thinking typically encompassed under the blanket label of liberation theology took and still takes place.

This situatedness gives the movement a tremendous level of epistemological, strategic and even axiological plurality. It is incorrect to regard liberation theology as a monolithic, stagnated endeavor whose failure or success can be evaluated under simple single-handed criteria (Barryman, 1987; Rowland, 2007). At times liberation theology projected the contagious colorblind constructs that Marxism often displayed throughout Latin America in the last four decades of the 20th century (often due to merely proselytizing and reductionist reasons under the banner of Soviet communism toward which some liberation theology actors displayed ambivalent postures). In the case of Casaldáliga, as portrayed in the series, there is a clear decolonial ethos (although he was born and raised in Europe, not a Latinx prototype considering purist identity standards). This ethos is interwoven through an explicit exposition of racialized matrices of hierarchy linked with land ownership and dispossession issues in Brazil. These multilayered issues are very much at play right now in Matto Grosso and beyond. They are still impacting in various ways other neighboring countries such as Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Secondly, my skepticism also relates to the sense of intellectual/spiritual isolation and apparent barrenness of blind Latinx movement building throughout the Americas. There is a threefold set of analytical considerations in ascertaining the causation of this barrenness. They are concerned with political spaces, political subjectivities and love's dialogical practices.

In the United States, this barrenness stems from the absence of a sociopolitical space of practice for the radical agency of blind Latinx emerging leaders. There are both

unintended discriminatory tendencies of leadership formation and open exclusionary practices. They reflect a clear sense of animosity and repugnance to the prospects of Latinx leadership visibility among blind organizations of nationwide and international scope. Empirical work in this area is urgently needed to pinpoint the qualitative and multi-varied dimensions of these exclusionary processes.

Perhaps the issue would not be so serious if there was room for emerging Latinx blind leaders to carve a unique social movement space that would catalyze modes of situated emancipation specific to blind Latinx constituencies. Yet, the very identity level fragmentation of these prospective constituencies makes radical solidarity and emancipatory learning dynamics hard to spark. One needs to keep in mind that blind identities are also very fragmentary and conflicted. They are often incompatible with pan-disability coalition building endeavors. Perhaps for this reason, rehabilitation entities in various US jurisdictions opt to have separate rehabilitation infrastructures for the blind, organizationally independent from those of all other kinds of disabilities.

Of course, the reverse is also possible. It is likely that, this organizational choice is deliberately conceived. It might be designed to divide pan-disability coalitions. It might aim at creating artificial hierarchy levels of pseudo-autonomy. This in turn may engender a false sense of empowerment for the blind in opposition to other disability populations. I will expand on these considerations in Chapter 4.

Now, let us look at the causation of this radical agency barrenness from a hemispheric standpoint that encompasses the multiple realities of blindness found throughout the Americas. At that level, one can see that political subjectivities specific to blind populations conscious of their Latinidad are virtually non-existent. Dimensions such as *mestizaje* (a phenomenon that I will discuss more extensively in Chapter 3 in

terms of its sociopolitical and radical exteriority implications), stifle radical political agendas specific to Latinx blind constituencies.

The phenomenon of *mestizaje* operates by creating a schizophrenic sense of divided selves. It gets enacted under racialized and meta-racial intellectual and practical spheres of life (de la Cadena, 2000; Dueñas, 2010; Miller M., 2004). These tendencies often get extrapolated into pendular identity patterns for persons with disabilities (See, for example, Jones E., 2018, who develops a textual analysis of Frida Kahlo's diary in this regard).

Even identity frames such as those of *Chicanidad*, which is not explicitly centered around the racial superiority of *mestizaje* (see, for example, Saldívar, 1991 & 2012), have an ethos that combine hierarchies of predatory identities such as those of European settlement and indigeneity. These modes of identity formation remain in violent alterity within the self. In this sense, they keep *Latinidades* and Latinx radical agents in a perpetual state of utopian exile and critical re-examination (for contemporary examples of these predatory relations of alterity beyond inner selfhood formations specific to *Chicanidad*, see, Maldonado-Torres, 2001, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c & 2007). The root of these exilic struggles lies on the adherence to dehumanizing epistemologies and axiology's of war operating at the inner self through what Maldonado-Torres (2018 [2008,] n.p.) calls a "master morality of dominion and control."

Of course, This dehumanizing master morality impacts blind radical agency just as it gets expressed and redefined within various kinds of western and colonizing *Latinidad* identities. Hence, in poor global south contexts of extreme precariousness, for instance, disability's ideology of 'dis'ableism works intersectionally with class

marginalization and lumpen subaltern identities. Their conflation serves to isolate and alienate selfhood through “begging” and informal economy modes of livelihood as the only option left for persons with disability (Garvía, 1997, 2007 & 2017; Kerddaen, 2018). The generalized perception is that there is intrinsic worthlessness for disabled selfhoods. These masses of individuals are not good for anything else in society (Ferrante & Joly, 2017; Goodley & Swartz, 2017; Grech, 2017; Hanass-Hancock & Mitra, 2017; Staples & Mehrotra, 2017). Blind Latinx actors do not escape the rigor and often ambiguous unfolding of these intersectional identity dynamics.

As a matter of fact, the proverbial global north emphasis on independence for persons with disability can have further isolating implications for Latinx blind radical agents in the global south and marginal global north arenas. This happens as a byproduct of rejecting the power of interdependence as a fundamental ethos of love and dialogue. Interdependence has the potential of fostering practical manifestations of an often spontaneous ethics of care. This practical ethics and caring sense of political subjectivity can at times transcend the social justice biases intrinsic to social contract, utilitarian and Neo-Kantian conceptions of axiology (Nussbaum, 2006).

Therefore, lovelessness emerges here as the third crucial component in understanding/explaining blind Latinx radical agency’s sense of barrenness. Arturo has traveled through various global south contexts. He has often found that opportunities for blind Latinx collective action in radical solidarity and broad emancipatory learning are devaluated. In practical terms, they are turned into power structures where “casiquismo” and nepotism reign. They typically work under a zero-sum game mentality. These opportunities are thus viewed through a utilitarian ethos for those in charge. This means that resources get sequestered and used in a clientelist manner.

They serve to preserve the sphere of influence of small organizations. In other instances, they simply operate via personalistic clusters of dehumanizing manipulation.

As mentioned above, a broad, presumably positive quality such as the pursuit of one's independence, can become the excuse to further alienate blind Latinx individuals or groups from their family support networks. This in turn makes them easy prey to this kind of manipulative clientelism. Its clientelist power gets exacerbated by being "purified" through dialectic processes. These processes involve a discursive alignment of collective action within exclusively blind networks of support. There, only one or few core collaborators have the upper hand.

I devoted the present section to highlight comparative ways to decode these destructive relationality myths. In the following section, I go a step further. I examine in detail the implications of relying on the epistemological richness of comparative epistemology. I explore what it means to be able to bring about the revolutionary fruits of love embedded in a dialogical ethics of power/knowledge for cultivating tangible radical agency possibilities of undoing and unlearning the pernicious effects of these myths.

2.2. From a Comparative to a Dialogical Stance on the Epistemology of Radical Agency

We all must discover for ourselves that love is a force as real as gravity, and that being upheld in love every day, every hour, every minute is not a fantasy.
(Hooks, 2001, p. 156)

From this point onward, this chapter centers on defining in detail and articulating the metatheory of three core interdependent notions which play a

preponderant role in the entire dissertation project: love, dialogue and coloniality. Let me start the section by recapitulating in broad strokes. This is what I said in the previous three sub-sections about intersectional and comparative epistemologies. They are multiple knowledge epistemologies enacted by oppressed agents in their radical agency trajectories through emancipatory processes. Intersectional work is not so much defined in terms of ontology, i.e., the way things under analysis are in their intrinsic complexity. Instead, it is a matter of what one does or intends to accomplish by emphasizing their intersectional nature. One consequence of this is the paramount significance of comparative and dialogical epistemologies.

The present section devotes attention to dialogical epistemologies. They represent an articulation of the axiology of love in collective action dynamics. Regarding comparative epistemologies I emphasized that the explanatory power of comparative epistemology requires creating a single architecture of comparative analysis. This is true independently of the many layers of complexity involved in an intersectional process of emancipation, ideological critique, utopian formulation, strategic evaluation, etc.

This means spelling out all the multiple layers of knowledge clustering that go into its architectural configuration. In practice, this entails adhering to at least four steps: (1) broad identification of epistemologies; (2) horizontal articulation and justification of knowledge clusters; (3) comparative contrast at the intra and inter-cluster levels; and (4) movement toward dialogical synthesis of unfinished emancipatory becoming.

I cited Sandoval's vertical treatment of Fanon over Barthes as an example of what can happen when one judges in advance the comparative interaction of separate

epistemologies. Next, I devoted extensive attention to Barthes myth decoding. I then transposed its application to the analysis of radical agency in black blind and Latinx blind comparative contexts of identity formation in their potential for emancipatory enactment.

In framing the articulation of their own dialogue, Hooks and West (1991) identify dialogue with love. Hooks brings up Freire to this end and invokes the cliché phrase attributed to Che Guevara that there is no revolution without love.

Merely taking these kinds of opaque and noncommittal treatments of dialogue and love as faith value cannot help in the exploration of radical agency possibilities for subaltern oppressed peoples. One needs to transcend comparative or dualistic modes of epistemology and relational ontology. This aides in approaching the explanation/understanding of an ethics of love as dialogue in its practical implications and vice-versa.

For example, what is it that makes love revolutionary? What are its defining characteristics and how do they become intertwined with the existential and phenomenological challenges of making dialogue possible across radical exteriority's insurmountable spaces of difference? In terms of radical agency, what are the axiological and epistemological consequences of dialoguing/debating without love? How can these habitual consequences be unlearned and deactivated? These are the sort of questions that I am trying to introduce in the present section as a roadmap sketch for the alignment of theoretical issues to be dealt with in the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 1, I had indicated that love and freedom are one. I also pointed out that love contains a meta-language that helps actors recognize and transcend

asymmetries. Third, I asserted that love is fundamentally axiological and subversive insofar as it embodies values and utopian desires held by radical agents who seek change from below.

Yet, this does not mean that those in power will reciprocate such values and desires. They might in fact try to sabotage them. It is thus paramount to find an operational definition of love as dialogue that circumscribes the scope of its revolutionary dynamicity while considering the opposing forces of hegemony and the tangible implications of radical exteriority.

Hooks (2001) rescues us in this quest. She singles out the definition of love provided in M. Scott Peck's (1978) *The Road Less Traveled*. Through a Frommian lens, Peck frames the essence of the concept of love in terms of "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth" (Hooks, 2001, p. 4).

I find it comforting that this definition is openly framed in Frommian terms. This makes it much more compatible with the ideas I have presented about love and freedom in Chapter 1. I also appreciate the actionable emphasis of this definition. It stresses that "love is an act of will — namely, both an intention and an action. Will also implies choice. We do not have to love. We choose to love" (Hooks, 2001, pp. 4-5).

In this sense, it follows that (1) love is not purely instinctive/accidental; (2) that love is not circumscribed to affection; and (3) that love is a complex compendium of operational qualities which include, apart from concrete affectionate manifestations, care, mutual recognition, respect, trust, commitment and honesty insofar as open communication is deliberately cultivated by loving agents. As Hooks (2001, pp. 5-8) stresses, in terms of love's role in fostering the unlearning of destructive/abusive,

deadly/enslaving habits of relationality (which peck 1978 calls cathexis), it is counter-productive to assume that men and women love differently. This, by the way, extends to assuming that people of various races or disability categories would have to love differently. In practice, this kind of assumption could justify relational power as expressed through differential modes of behavior within love dynamics. Phrases such as the proverbial “Do not expect caring behaviors,” or “do not expect quality communication” from males creates room for men to get away from operational characteristics of love. Eventually, this nullifies the possibility of unlearning patriarchy’s heritage of unloving relationality.

To what extent do we do something similar with notions such as white privilege? What about impairment or disability? Regardless of bio-psychological profiles, should one justify for example abusive behavior from someone who has undergone brain injuries? Could ocularcentrism or haptic assumptions justify unloving/instrumentalist attitudes or behaviors for blind individuals?

The preceding paragraphs do not imply that the manifestations of love should be universal and monolithic in their interpretative reading through cultural or even epistemological lenses. Octavio Paz (1993), for instance does an excellent job of decoding the interpretative parameters of western love. Paz (1993, pp. 96 and following) points out that in conceiving love as eroticism, love’s idea in the western world has been framed around the views developed by Provençal poets in Southern France during the late middle ages. These views seem to be connected to their interpretation of Arabic courtship and "courtesy" rituals learned by barons in Muslim Spain throughout the crusades. The behavioral aspects of love that emerge from these interpretations are shaped in sharp contrast to Platonic love (in its anti-erotic ethos) or

friendship, which expresses a sort of “inferior,” i.e., less emotionally charged type of fidelity/loyalty.

Paz (1993, Chs. 7-8) also stresses that the evolution of love’s interpretative tendency is coupled with an incremental shrinking of the spheres attributed to the soul and an expansion of what belongs to the mind/psyche. This, in turn, has progressively leaned toward machinist conceptions of humanity, namely, less loving, more dehumanizing perspectives on the relational essence of human nature.

Paz’s apparently pessimistic outlook seems to invite for a reversal of this trend via the rescuing of the poetic power of love as eroticism and vice-versa. Insofar as love highlights enduring relationality at the inter-individual level which cannot be replicated in universal patterns of modes of relating with other human beings, Paz’s definition of love seems at odds with Peck’s spiritual growth emphasis. Spiritual growth could also be interpreted as enacted differentially within these relations of exclusivity under the poetic parameters of loving eroticism. At the same time, by focusing on the humanizing power of love via emotionally charged poetic performativity, Paz’s approach shows links with Fromm’s idea of biophilia as I briefly described it in Chapter 1.

A. What about dialogue as love?

Love has two inseparable components: the need for closeness and constancy and the dramatic imperative of desire that can lead to infidelity. The love relationship is this subtle blend of fidelity and infidelity... Everything that defines our civilization, in terms of its meditations on sex and feeling, is based on the faithful/unfaithful axis. (Kristeva & Sollers, 2016, n.p.)

If love as revolutionary relationality involves radical dialogue, what definitions of dialogue would be most valuable to enact the radical nature of this kind of spiritual growth or impossible to replicate inter-individual modes of relationality? In this subsection, I consider briefly three dialogue traditions: dialogue as structured complexity, dialogue as plurivocity and dialogue as trans-ontology or as a fundamental face-to-face inter-subjective encounter.

Before diving into the analysis of the axiological and onto-epistemological significance of these traditions, I want to highlight something important to ponder for the reader. Notice that the voluntarist emphasis of love as choice as Peck indicates or exclusive relationality framed under poetic eroticism, as Paz describes could also represent a radical exteriority problem. If people have indeed the choice to love and do so only by centering on those alter ego images which satisfy them, what would preclude their unconscious (or perhaps deliberate in an expression of innate arrogance) search for sameness? This could express a sort of narcissistic desire to erase otherness by loving one's whiteness to death, as Cheryl Matias and Ricky Lee Allen (2013) put it.

Considering internalized racism, it could be argued that there is also an absurd sense of narcissistic whiteness for alienated people of color which drives them to love the unlovable otherness of those archetypes of whiteness who they think are embodiments of their own kind. What about the prospect of extending this analogical perspective into the terrain of internalized ableism as well?

A.1. Dialogue as Facilitated Structured Complexity

First, let us look at dialogue from the perspective of quantum physics. Through the contributions of physicist and relational philosopher David Bohm (e.g., Bohm, 2014), thinkers such as Bill Isaacs (1999, p. 9) conceive dialogue as "... a living experience of inquiry within and between people." This, following Bohm's ideas, translates into structured interventions. These interventions agreed upon by radical agents but implemented by dialogue "experts" are aimed at bringing about a new order out of relational chaos and fragmentation.

For Isaacs (1999, p. 41) the core behaviors that make up dialogue are listening, respecting, suspending and speaking our authentic voice. These behaviors require the artificial creation of free spaces for conversation. It is precisely the artificiality of this utopian vision of relationality what makes this approach to dialogue paradoxically popular among managerial circles. In my view, this kind of popularity is an indication of its symbolic dependence on facilitation and organizationally imposed conditions. It is not so much about communal spontaneity.

Thinking specifically of the axiology and epistemology of dialogue as love, this tradition seems too aligned with artificial power suspension mechanisms. It operates under very exceptional situations that could perhaps work "relational miracles." Yet, it might be unreliable for durable behavioral transformations once the artificial conditions are lifted.

In terms of radical agency, this approach is a helpful experimental ground. It demonstrates the need to focus on mechanisms that can engender a transformational

trajectory of love. This means that one must not aim at creating a mere event driven manifestation of the power of conversation in artificial settings.

A.2. Dialogue as Plurivocity

Second, let us look at the dialogue tradition centered on plurivocity. This tradition is linked to Bakhtin's ideas. For years I have been intrigued by the explanatory power that Bakhtin ideas could offer in conjunction with the everyday change dynamics inherent to dialogue. My attention has been drawn to the centripetal/centrifugal tension that Bakhtin highlights in terms of micro/macro connections within institutions, systems and macro-social entities.

Although Bakhtin focuses on literary theory, linguistics, philosophy and socio-political thought, his emphasis on centripetal/centrifugal tension provides the perfect analogy to talk about core and periphery within systems, institutions, or social movement/change dynamics. Bakhtin makes power analysis and discourse dimensions very explicit. Recent research has started to apply Bakhtin ideas to organizational and other collective action dimensions (Kroeger, 2005; Roberts J., 2004; Rule, 2004).

In understanding the axiological implications of Bakhtin's theory, it is helpful to depart from his essay titled *Art and Answerability* (Bakhtin, 1990). Originally published in 1919, this is Bakhtin's earliest known piece. Bakhtin starts his essay with the problem of the mechanical/external unity of the self. Bakhtin (1990, p. 1) points out that "The three domains of human culture-science, art, and life gain unity only in the individual person' who integrates them into his own unity. This union, however, may become mechanical, external. And, unfortunately, that is exactly what most often happens."

Answerability is for Bakhtin the quality that brings true unity in the self. It is more than ethics in its axiological set of principles. It is a life centered unifying triangle that, although converging in the individual self, responds to life in its complexity. However, it cannot be mere life response since it requires a reciprocal answerability with science and the arts. At this early stage of Bakhtin's career, he shows great interest in aesthetics and axiology as individual level explorations of the creating self both in the artistic realm and in terms of overarching values.

In their moral demands, Buber (1970, 1975 & 1998) and the Neo-Kantians stimulate in Bakhtin a thirst for understanding the responsibilities involved in creation. Thus, answerability and guilt go hand in hand, especially insofar as creativity may fail to converse, so-to-speak, with the inherent language of an individual's life world. This aspect, although not explored explicitly by Bakhtin in this early period, pertains to the domain of scientific inquiry as well, as much as it involves analogous creative processes. Thus, when Bakhtin asserts that "Art and life are not one, but they must become united in myself-in the unity of my answerability" (1990, p. 2) one can easily imagine this sort of statement transposed into the world of science's answerability at the level of the creating and inquiring individual scientist, social change agent, catalyst, educator, organizer, critical hermeneutics scholar, etc.

But the focus on plurivocity and dialogic authenticity, rich as it is, is insufficient to ground the axiology and epistemology of dialogue as love. This becomes evident in the work of Baxter, who applies Bakhtin's ideas in the specific context of interpersonal relationality. Relationality as a concept is broader than reflection and dialogicality. Yet, it builds on both. It is the potential for long-term relations: learning, romantic,

professional or other kinds of relationships. It includes very explicitly antagonistic relationships.

Relationality presupposes that no relationship is linear, constant, always positive or negative. Even though it is a potentiality, it is not universal. It depends on what Bakhtin (1981) calls chronotopy, the fourth dimension of space, where space and time together make something possible or impossible. Chronotopy explains why two farmers, or communication theorists in the same country, or students in the same campus, for that matter, may never meet, or if coinciding in a given place never relate.

The meaning of dialogicality, although narrower than that of relationality, is somewhat more complicated (e.g., Marková, 2003 & 2016; Marková & Foppa, 1990). Following Bakhtin (1965, 1981, 1984, 1986, 1990 & 1993), Baxter identifies five different meanings as part of the multi-vocal nature of dialogue in Bakhtin's comprehensive intellectual legacy.

(1) The constitutive turn of dialogue as epistemology which refutes the Cartesian heritage of ego cogito as limited and monological. Bakhtin assumes instead the simultaneity of sameness and difference in the relationality of subject/other.

(2) The dialectical turn of centrifugal/centripetal forces propelling relational change and dynamicity. This means something very counter-intuitive for those who associate dialogue with "nice" relationality. For example, enmity relationships can be based on an implicit dialogical tension. This is especially so, in cases where self-declared enemies appear to need each other for symbolic reasons. Another example is the constant relational tension between rights and obligations among couples and close friendships (Baxter, 1987, 1990 & 2004; Baxter & DeGooyer, 2001; Baxter, Dun & Sahlstein, 2001; Baxter & Erbert, 1999; Baxter & Simon, 1993; Baxter & Widenmann,

1993), or what Baxter, Braithwaite, Golish and Olson (2002) identify as a “presence/absence” emotional link between certain elderly couples with disabilities.

(3) The aesthetic turn of dialogue as a momentary completion by which Bakhtin rejects the Hegelian emphasis on dialectics as a teleological process toward the absolute World Spirit (Hegel, 1977). For Bakhtin, Hegel’s privileging of the synthesis is yet another monological misconception. Bakhtin views “social life as a fragmented, disorderly, and messy interweave of opposing forces. In such a social world, order is not given; it is a task to be accomplished” (Baxter, 2004, p. 118). Therefore, despite any apparent pessimism in his writings, Bakhtin (1990) encourages the celebration of momentary fulfillment, precisely because people are to be proud of such profound dialogical achievements.

Baxter and her associates (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2002; Baxter, Braithwaite & Nicholson, 1999; Baxter & DeGooyer, 1993; Baxter & Gullis, 1986; Baxter, Mazanec, Nicholson, Pittman, Smith & West, 1997; Baxter and Pittman, 2001) theorize these moments as “turning points” in inter-personal relations. However, their transformational momentum can also apply to macro-level processes, not in the perpetual harmony picture of Hegel’s synthesis, but as a fragile, momentary and ever-changing process full of propelling tensions.

(4) The discursive turn of dialogue as utterance in the language in use. Ferdinand de Saussure claims that the study of language must restrict to *la langue*, i.e., the system of language, because this is the only way to insure the scientific ethos of linguistics as a discipline. Bakhtin as well as representatives from the Prague school of linguistics attack this view. Not only is it monological. It creates a false sense of epistemology (Marková, 2003: Ch. 3). Bakhtin’s Understanding of utterance

underscores the dynamic relationality of logos in action, with all the “incorrectness” and messiness of everyday life. A phenomenology of utterance goes beyond text-based deconstructive (Derrida, 1997) and hermeneutic (Gadamer, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1985 & 1989) epistemologies. It does not start with a static text and goes back to analyze it and deconstruct it to find an ontological expression of its minimalist sense. It already starts with something very dynamic: logos, with relational speech--including cyber-speech and interactive visuality, with utterance in its profound ontological, axiological, and epistemological implications.

In the Bakhtinian legacy, these implications are even more complex as he places the accent on multi-vocal utterances. These are expressed through multiple speech genres with their internal/heteroglotic contextualities whose listening counter-part is found in the addressee and super-addressee interpretations, reactions, and so on. This corresponds to the contemporary picture of diverse multi-leveled identities and their dialectical interplay.

(5) The critical turn of dialogue as critique, by which Bakhtin obliges every subject to adopt a vigilant sense of contestation toward dominant voices. It is here that Bakhtin has a closer resemblance to the axiology of emancipation defended by critical theorists such as Habermas and Honneth. However, Bakhtin does not share their normative conceptions. Here is where Bakhtin closes the dialogical circle that he opened in his first known essay. He comes back to living answerability in the critical exercise of agency.

Despite this critical ethos, Bakhtinian plurivocity does not address issues concerned with the enactment of love, particularly as its enactment relates to concrete behavioral manifestations of relational decoloniality. It is indispensable at this point to

introduce a definition of coloniality that makes explicit its links to a dehumanizing negation of dialogue and love in the trans-ontological tradition espoused by Emmanuel Levinas and other Jewish philosophers, e.g., Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig.

A.3. Political Philosophy Notes on Dialogue, Liberation and Decoloniality

Compared to Bakhtin, collectively this brand of Jewish philosophy adopts a much more prescriptive/redemptive approach to dialogue and love's behavioral manifestations in terms of liberation. They center on one's responsibility for the other (Putnam, 2008). Nelson Maldonado Torres (2007, p. 247) defines coloniality as "a radicalization and naturalization of the non-ethics of war. This non-ethics included the practices of eliminating and slaving certain subjects — e.g., indigenous and black — as part of the enterprise of colonization. The hyperbolic expression of coloniality includes genocide, which is the paroxysm of the ego cogito..."

In the colonial world, that is, all the worldly spheres forever changed by colonizing practices, the ego cogito justifies all forms of war-like and genocidal behaviors. It aspires to exist alone, tolerating the other only insofar as it can conquer it, use it and manipulate it to its own aims. As Enrique Dussel points out, the ego cogito is preempted by the ego conquiro embodied in an epitomized way in the genocidal figure of Hernán Cortés (1996, p. 133). This is true not only in the sense that the "conquista" of the Americas pre-dates Cartesian meditations and the rationalist/machinist subjectivity it ensued. It is especially true in the sense that the ego conquiro went way beyond the invention of racially based ontologies and

epistemologies by imposing the non-ethics of war as normal, not as an exceptional set of practices.

The invention of the Americas not only meant the invention of the modern conception of race under the premises of white European supremacy. It engendered a kind of subjectivity based on certainty (see above my discussion of the seven poses of mythology formulated by Barthes). In the case of the *ego conquiro*, this certainty was linked to the power dynamics of abuse and nullification inherent to the “*conquista*.” This, in turn, imposed on the Cartesian rationalistic ethos a certainty of the self in contrast to the other, the inferior, the nullified one.

For Maldonado-Torres, this meant the configuration of three fundamental modalities of coloniality which encompass the whole of modern philosophical thought from Descartes to Heidegger: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being. As will be seen, out of these three, in terms of the negation of dialogue and love, the most crucial one is the coloniality of being. Just consider what is at stake in the famous Cartesian maxim: *ego cogito ergo sunt* (I think; therefore, I exist). According to Maldonado-Torres, this maxim translates into a colonial subjectivity maxim that rests on the absolute dehumanizing certainty that racialized others do not think and do not exist.

The Cartesian methodic doubt expresses the fundamental skepticism about the humanity of the racialized other, the enslaved, the inferior, the colonized. “Misanthropic skepticism provides the basis for the preferential option for the *ego conquiro*... The imperial attitude promotes a fundamentally genocidal attitude in respect to colonized and racialized people... colonial and racial subjects are marked as dispensable” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 246).

It is in this sense that one can also think of the colonality of being as central to the ideology of 'dis'ableism. It justifies the dispensability of persons with disability, particularly those intersectionally marked as racially inferior or geopolitically belonging to the margins of the globe, the so-called global south.

Maldonado-Torres credits Walter Mignolo for having come up with the idea of the colonality of being. While the colonality of power and the colonality of knowledge are much more closely related to the heritage of Cartesian suspicion/skepticism about the humanity of the other, the ontological dimensions of the heritage associated with the colonality of being are fundamentally linked with Heidegger's philosophical system. Under Heidegger's framework, being means a sort of "Being of beings, that is, something like the general horizon of understanding for all beings... He refers to the distinction between Being and beings as the ontological difference" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 249).

For Heidegger, the core issue with western philosophy in general and western metaphysics is that it is essentially framed in terms of a forgetfulness of being. It rests on a denial of the ontological difference by resting on what he calls onto theology, namely a dependence on the godhead, the absolute, the divine. Such dependence entails a betrayal of the true understanding of being and needs to be overcome (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 74-75).

Furthermore, this true understanding of being can only be unearthed by centering on human beings as the new point of departure for ontology. Heidegger excludes things in themselves (e.g., animals and inanimate matter), because they cannot grasp their own meaning. Only human beings can do so. By way of this new point of departure, Heidegger aspires to do away with all traces of epistemologically-

based philosophy. Hence, he also excludes traditional conceptions of man and humanity. “The concept that he uses to refer to human beings—quabeings for whom their own being is in question is Dasein... Dasein is simply the being who is there... fundamental ontology needs to elucidate the meaning of 'being there' and through that, articulate ideas about Being itself” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 250). But despite being projected to the future, Dasein always exists in a historical context where laws and even subjectivity are collectively/anonymously preempted (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 32-35). This presents for Heidegger a problem of subjective authenticity like what Nietzsche (1989) articulates through his characterization of the “herd” or the mass of people.

Hence, in *Being and Time* Heidegger tries to tackle the question of how can Dasein relate authentically to itself by projecting its own most possibilities, not those predetermined by the they, the anonymous collectivity of beings. Heidegger’s response focuses on genuine resoluteness which can only be achieved by facing the only possibility that is truly one’s own, namely death. “In death one is fully irreplaceable... Death is a singular individualizing factor. The anticipation of the death and the accompanying anxiety allow the subject to detach herself from the They, to determine her own most possibilities, and to resolutely define her own project...” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, P. 250). Death is at the core of Heideggerian existentialism (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 279-304).

Through this individual level death-centered paradigm of authenticity Heidegger takes up the issue of macro level authenticity. He argues that its resoluteness is embodied by the authentic power of the nation’s leader, the one who crafts its destiny. As the reader can guess, this argumentative subterfuge allowed

Heidegger to praise Hitler's role in Germany, justifying his own enthusiastic participation in the Nazi administration and his support of its ideological tenets.

It is important to realize the link that this argumentation mechanism establishes between war and authenticity (see, for example, Gray, 1959; Losurdo, 2001). In war individuals can have an encounter with their authentic self through the reality of death and at the same time the people as a collective realizes its authentic destiny as predetermined by the leader.

This picture... seems to reflect more the point of view of the victor in war, than that of the vanquished. But it could be said that the vanquished can also achieve authenticity through the confrontation with death in war. Anybody can... if the previous account of coloniality in relation to the nonethics of war is plausible then it must be admitted that the encounter with death is no extra-ordinary affair, but a constitutive feature of the reality of colonized and racialized subjects. The colonized is thus not ordinary Dasein, and the encounter with the possibility of death does not have the same impact or results than for someone whose mode of alienation is that of depersonalization by the One or They. Racialized subjects are constituted in different ways than those that form selves, others, and peoples. Death is not so much an individualizing factor as a constitutive feature of their reality. It is the encounter with daily forms of death, not the They, which afflicts them. The encounter with death always comes too late, as it were, since death is already beside them. For this reason, decolonization, deracialization, and des-generacciOn (in sum, decoloniality) emerge not through an encounter with one's own mortality, but from a desire to evade death, one's own but even more fundamentally that of others... For some subject's modernity changed the way of achieving authenticity: they already live with death and are not even 'people'. What Heidegger forgot is that in modernity Being has a colonial side, and that this has far-reaching consequences. The colonial aspect of Being, that is, its tendency to submit everything to the light of understanding and signification, reaches an extreme pathological point in war and its naturalization through the idea of race in modernity. The colonial side of Being sustains the color-line. Heidegger, however, loses from view the predicament of subjects in the darker side of this line and

the significance of their lived experience for theorization of Being and the pathologies of modernity... He forgot that if the concept of Man is a problem, is not only because it is metaphysical, but also because it does away with the idea that, in modernity, what one finds is not a single model of human being, but relations of power that create a world with masters and slaves. (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, PP. 250-251)

Building on his discussion of the dehumanizing character of coloniality which at once precludes love and genuine dialogue, Maldonado-Torres defines the coloniality of being in terms of the missing link in both Cartesian and Heideggerian philosophical systems. Both systems were concerned with the same maxim: I think, therefore I exist/I am. The Cartesian emphasis was placed on the first part of the maxim: I am/exist only because I think.

Let us remember that this thinking truly rests on *ego conquiro*, namely, on one's power to conquer inferior races in contrast with which one's ability to reason/think can shine with full certainty. The Heideggerian ontological revolution consisted of placing the emphasis on the latter portion of the maxim: I am only able to think because I am. In other words, if I am not an authentic being, I do not think. The real question that matters is the question of one's authentic being.

Both systems (Heidegger's and Descartes') missed the crucial issue of neglected epistemologies and ontologies via *ego conquiro*. If I am an authentically thinking being because I conquer, my own thinking and being denies conquered/inferior peoples' epistemologies and ontologies, making them perfectly disposable (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 252).

The coloniality of being is tantamount to ontological exclusion. Here is where Fanon's decolonizing system comes in to reveal the full force of radical exteriority for

the purposes of hierarchical modes of relationality (which remain in place even after formal ties to the imperial metropolis appear to have faded away). "... in a colonial anti-black world the Black does not have ontological resistance or ontological weight in the eyes of the white... when the black person is going to speak with whites, reason flees away and irrationality imposes the terms of the conversation. So, the lack of ontological resistance is linked with the absence of rationality and viceversa" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, P. 253).

Maldonado-Torres categorizes as sub-ontological difference the kind of hierarchical contrast engendered by this ontological/epistemological exclusion and disposability. Of course, this sense of sub-ontological difference extends to all non-whites in the global context of the power of coloniality as it plays out today. Intersectionally, this sub-ontological difference also extends to all nullified/subaltern populations, i.e., persons with disabilities, particularly persons of color with disabilities residing in the global north.

Now, what kind of questions should orient our inquiry of the coloniality of Being... the elucidation of the coloniality of Being requires an analysis of the existential modalities of the damned. For Heidegger Dasein... is thrown toward the future, and it achieves authenticity when it anticipates his own mortality, that is, the very end of his future. This position contrasts sharply with Fanon's description of the existential reality of the damne... the damne confronts the reality of its own finitude as a day to day adventure... The extraordinary event of confronting mortality turns into an ordinary affair. (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, pp. 254-255)

A.4. Dialogue as Ethical and Trans-Ontological Responsibility

Having discussed coloniality in detail, we are now in a position to examine the last dialogue tradition, i.e., the radical Levinasian tradition. The discussion of coloniality is an important prerequisite because it lays the foundation for a new understanding of ethics as well as giving the tools to value the full political philosophy implications of treating love and dialogue in terms of trans-ontological difference. Along with the pessimistic ethos of this Fanonian idea of sub-ontological difference, there is a dialogical alternative grounded on Levinas' ethics of radical responsibility. This ethical stance has been latent in what I have presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. It informs the axiology that lies beneath the conceptual formulations of radical solidarity, radical agency and emancipatory learning I have articulated in the present dissertation project. This alternative ethical stance attacks very explicitly Heideggerian ontology. It highlights the need to evolve toward what Maldonado-Torres, following Levinas calls trans-ontological difference.

Trans-ontological difference exposes the gap between the colonizer/conquering being and the unique ontological status of the damned. As Emile Benveniste (1997) has demonstrated, the term damned is epistemologically linked with the word giving. The damned cannot give or have. Their very being has been taken away.

Dialogically speaking and in terms of the subjectivity intrinsic to love, this entails that the damned is deprived via conquest and ontological obliterating from the capacity for relating and being in the world. Without having anything to give, one ceases to be, one leaves no trace. This is what happens to the damned through the coloniality of being. Likewise, Emmanuel Levinas argues that "gift-giving and reception are

fundamental traits of the self. Giving... makes possible the communication between a self and an Other — as transontological — as well as the sharing of a common world. Without giving to an Other there would be no self just as without receiving from the Other there would be no reason” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 258).

For Levinas, the trans-ontological is the foundation for ontology. Only the trans-ontological realm allows for the restoration of justice into the asymmetries of giving and receiving built upon the ontological realm conceived by thinkers such as Heidegger. The Heideggerian ethos presents a false image of being as the foundation of reality. Ultimately, this false image legitimizes a philosophy of power. In it, an anonymous being is given priority over the self/other relationship that lies at the core of radical responsibility.

This ethics of radical responsibility does not depend on Heideggerian authenticity. It depends on a foundational role of giving and receiving. Only through this exchange of gifts in radical love for the other the responsible subject transcends the asymmetries and relationality limits imposed by radical exteriority which correspond to a solipsistic sense of ontology. True ontology becomes possible after trans-ontology has restored justice, measure and synchronicity into power relations. Their relationality operates at a fundamentally diachronic level of pseudo-interaction (Levinas, 1974).

Here is the foundational problem with being. From its metaphysical birth, it displays an ineluctable tendency to preserve itself and to impose its presence as autonomous. This happens at the expense of trans-ontological relationality.

On the one hand, it expresses through philosophical accounts that portray the self/other relationship in reductionist terms of mere knowledge or being. On the other

hand, it operates through modes of thinking, historical projects and concrete social policies that attempt to nullify the significance of core relational values such as social justice, hospitality, givenness and generosity. In this respect, Levinas viewed Nazism and the Jewish Holocaust, which he experienced firsthand, as radical manifestations of trans-ontological betrayal the very meaning of humanity. Here is how Putnam (2008, pp. 74-75) puts it, in terms of the operationalization of radical love as an infinite responsibility for the other in Levinas' primacy of practical ethics over abstract normativity or even horizontal reciprocity:

The fundamental obligation we have, Levinas is telling us, is the obligation to make ourselves available to the neediness (and especially the suffering) of the other person. I am commanded to say **hineni!** to the Other (and to do so without reservation, just as Abraham's **hineni** to God was without reservation) and this does not presuppose that I sympathize with the other, and certainly does not presuppose (what Levinas regards as the self-aggrandizing gesture) of claiming to "understand" the other. Levinas insists that the closer I come to another by all ordinary standards of closeness (especially, for example, in a love relationship)... the more I am required to be aware of my distance from grasping the other's essential reality, and the more I am required to respect that distance... Levinas believes, if the taking on of this fundamental obligation is not present, then the best code of behavior or the best theory of justice will not help. In contrast, according to Buber what I should seek is a relation that is reciprocal. But Levinas stresses the asymmetry of the fundamental moral relation: 'I see myself obligated with respect to the Other; consequently I am infinitely more demanding of myself than of others.' Before reciprocity must come ethics; to seek to base ethics on reciprocity is once again to seek to base it on the illusory "sameness" of the other person.

B. Power and Dialogue as Intersectional Political Philosophy

The Hebrew word “**hineni**” invoked by Putnam in the quotation that ends the previous subsection in the analysis of Levinas’ primacy of ethics over metaphysics and abstract normativity has a core distinguishing role. This role has to do with dialogical prescriptions for one’s emptying of all power for the sake of the other in every sphere of relationality. It is precisely this radical/infinite responsibility what separates Levinas’ ethics even from frameworks developed by other Jewish philosophers such as Buber or Rosenzweig.

For Levinas, one’s redemption is contingent. It depends upon complying with the practical implications of this radical/infinite responsibility for the other. Levinas deals explicitly with the issue of power through a voluntarist submission to the other.

Putnam (2008) highlights the superlative significance of this radical responsibility prescription. Putnam notices that this Hebrew word “**hineni**” is the same one used by Abraham when talking with God at the time of Isaac’s sacrifice in whom rested the fulfillment of the promise of infinite blessing (see the expression typically translated as “here I am Lord” in the latter part of Genesis 22:11). This does not mean worshipping the other. It implies a radical giving of ourselves.

Furthermore, it implies placing the other above our own self. It conditions the promise of our very redemption, i.e. our true sense of liberation and self-realization to radical loving relationality. This relationality is premised on the asymmetry one is voluntarily required to cultivate to transcend the ontological and axiological barriers predetermined by radical exteriority.

In the present sub-section, my aim is to take this idea a step further. Here I want to explore in a preliminary fashion the implications of dealing simultaneously with dialogue and power dimensions as part of implementing the methodological parameters of critical hermeneutics. Before going there, let me reiterate that Levinas' radical responsibility is existentially intertwined with the decolonial project from its origins in Fanonian utopia.

Maldonado-Torres synthesizes Fanon's telos. Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 260) asserts that decolonization should "restore or create a reality where racialized subjects could give and receive freely in societies founded on the principle of receptive generosity... Receptive generosity involves a break away from racial dynamics as well as from conceptions of gender and sexuality that inhibit generous interaction among subjects."

Today, this utopia of radical relationality of love grounded in the dialogicality of receptive generosity should extend to intersectional disability categories such as those of blind Latinx identities. This is particularly so in their existential materiality of suffering and marginalization. Likewise, this pertains to their transontological search for self-realization through the radical agency potential intrinsic to their giving and receiving in infinite spheres of responsibility for the other (Coles, 1997).

Now, let us turn to our preliminary discussion of power dialogicality within critical hermeneutics. Keep in mind that in critical hermeneutics, unlike Levinas relational ethics of infinite responsibility, there is a chief concern with understanding and explanation as methodological channels toward truth as a component of emancipation.

To my knowledge, Hans Herbert Kögler (1996) is the only critical hermeneutics thinker who tackles issues associated with linking power and dialogue in the process of interpretation of collective action toward emancipation. As a student of Habermas, Kögler does so by providing a detailed critique of Gadamer. Kögler uses Habermas and Foucault selectively to ground a power conscious conception of understanding and explanation in dialogical interactions.

An example of the relative fruitfulness of this eclectic hermeneutic approach is found in Kögler's reconceptualization of dialogue. Kögler (1996, pp. 113 and following) points out that Gadamerian subjectivism integrates too quickly the understanding of the meaning of the other into a monological and hence false sense of hermeneutic consensus. This happens by assuming a common linguistic grounding of meaning. In practice, this precludes critique. "Either one reaches a substantive consensus that, for the most part, is achieved within the framework of one's own ontological premises, or this strong understanding of meaning does not obtain, and then one has to explain why the other remains, so to speak, in the untruth" (Kögler, 1996, 114).

This reflects an operationalization of power centered on one's own conception of the world which gets applied in universalist fashion. Kögler grants that Gadamer's linguistic approach can provide the normative basis for recognizing the other but notices that Habermas is not very helpful in this regard either. Habermas attempts to make some methodological progress toward freeing truth-oriented understanding from traditionalism. Nevertheless, his approach is equally grounded on idealist and universalist assumptions about a commonly shared set of standards for meaning making and evaluation.

For Kögler, the solution lies in making a core distinction. This distinction involves separating content-based dialogue which possesses universalist dimensions from its ontological basis for meaning making. These ontological meaning making components demand an explicit exposure of issues of power and an exploration of the concrete discourse analysis methodologies at work at the levels of situated contextuality and relationality.

Like Ricoeur (as I analyzed in Chapter 1), Kögler is concerned with the need for distanciation. In Kögler's case, this distanciation aims at separating oneself as interpreting subject from one's own existential sense of being. That is, he centers on one's singularity in terms of interpretive patterns, one's orientational "habitus." Kögler uses the word habitus in the complex sense that Bourdieu 1977a & 1984 uses this notion (see also, Clifford, 1988 & 2013). Clifford incorporates issues of power and coloniality into the mix, making the discussion even more aligned with the sort of radical agency possibilities I address in the present dissertation project.

Kögler also centers on sharpening a sense of distanciation that encompasses one's forms of life generally conceived. In this regard, Kögler's approach emphasizes methodological concerns aligned with critical existentialism and self-critique. Kögler aims at freeing critical hermeneutics from being driven exclusively by truth seeking in terms of the "thing in itself." This kind of truth seeking is a dual heritage from both Gadamer and Habermas. This heritage, Kögler (1996, pp. 160 and following) asserts, is objectifying and leads to ethnocentrism.

Once again, Kögler's solution consists of separating content-based dialogue dimensions from purely evaluative processes regarding the validity of meaning making. The purpose of this distinction is to open the way for pluralistic approaches for truth

examination, preserving a dialogical ethos even in cases where agreement or mutual understanding are not possible.

In my view, although this appears to “respect” the other as other and perhaps might allow for multiple interpreters with divergent views which do not have to be “adjudicated” at the evaluative level of their validity claims, it has two major flaws. It (1) takes away the issue of infinite responsibility underscored by Levinas, emptying the dialogical process from its axiological/loving weight, and (2) ignores the practical connotations of power asymmetries for the sake of social justice transformations. This, in turn, does away with practical consequences of situated emancipation (except perhaps for mere procedural realms, which I am not sure could genuinely account as emancipatory if they lack a substantive counterpart).

Kögler does indeed contribute to the discussion by enriching the critical hermeneutics circle via Foucault and Bourdieu. From Foucault, Kögler borrows the explicit recognition of the so-called thesis of incommensurable meaning systems. In line with thinkers such as Kuhn, Feyerabend and others, this thesis emphasizes the plurality of evaluative mechanisms in science, history and other contexts through the notion of conceptual schemes (e.g., Feyerabend, 2010; Foucault, 1971; Kuhn, 1977 & 1996; Rorty, 1991, parts 2 and 3, 2009 & 2016). Their point is that, at times, conceptual schemes are so incompatible that choosing one over the other demands a paradigm shift for the purposes of truth evaluation. However, none of the conceptual schemes are presumed a priori to be superior as far as their truth-seeking role is concerned.

From Bourdieu, Kögler borrows the notion of symbolic orders tied to habitus. Symbolic orders help frame the meaning making constraints of the modes of domination that circumscribe one’s interpreting patterns. These patterns encompass

symbolic, practical and individual level layers of meaning. All of them are preempted by our unique habitus perspective. Therefore, they need to be understood and transcended in a deliberate fashion to achieve a comprehensive sense of critical interpretation. "Our position within a particular yet holistically structured context makes possible the disclosure of other, structurally analogous and still substantially disparate contexts... this kind of explication of other symbolic premises... enables us to gain distance from our own customary assumptions..." (Kögler, 1996, p. 172).

Kögler (1996, pp. 173-175) insists that, complementing Foucault's archeology of multiple discourses and Bourdieu's exposition of symbolic orders, one can develop a radical self-critical stance toward dialogic experiences. This radical self-critical stance addresses three distancing dimensions concerned with one's own hermeneutic sources of possible bias: (1) pre-understanding; (2) content-based issues at stake in each concrete dialogue process; and (3) other-centered distancing self-critique. The idea is that one needs to recognize the unsettling effect of other people's meaning by looking at ourselves through the eyes of the other.

The purpose of critical dialogue acquires a threefold transformational role. It operates in reciprocal ways to propitiate "self-distancing, power critique, and the formation of new, reflectively aware concepts" (Kögler, 1996, p. 172; see also, pp. 211-213).

Notice, however, that Kögler's critical dialogue conception has left aside the core concern for emancipation displayed in Geuss' critical hermeneutics framework (as I discussed in Chapter 1). This is a major drawback as far as radical agency possibilities are concerned. Whereas one must admit that Geuss' analysis is indeed monological in

nature, one must also praise the epistemological and axiological virtues of his emancipatory analytics.

For Kögler (1996, pp. 216 and following) the hermeneutic examination of power relations is exclusively concerned with issues of explanation and understanding. This concern was also paramount for Ricoeur. Yet, as demonstrated extensively in Chapter 1, Ricoeur's treatment of collective action as text, preserves the close link with emancipation via his pivotal concern with ideology and utopia as driving notions in the ontological and epistemological configuration of hermeneutic agency.

An example of the consequences of Kögler's non-emancipatory approach to critical dialogue is his apparent disregard for decolonizing methodologies. In note 8 (within Ch. 6 of his book), Kögler (1996, p. 218 along with p. 306) implicitly treats decolonial ethnological approaches (which he categorizes as "posthermeneutic" in their concern with power from the perspective of colonized peoples) as analogous to radical historicism. Kögler implies that both perspectives nullify attention to the other by providing a one-sided understanding of meaning in history and foreign cultures, respectively.

At the same time Kögler implies that, because decolonial approaches in ethnology are concerned with "primitive" others subject to oppressive domination, their ability to systematically analyze power relations is seriously undermined. Kögler's position in this regard not only legitimizes the power differential intrinsic to colonial oppression. It grants equal weight to the meaning structures of oppressors and oppressed. This, of course, entails choosing to ignore that, in their subaltern asymmetry, the latter is often made invisible and exists only as preempted by the internalization of ego conquiro values. These values then translate into ways of thinking

whose conceptual schemes are not genuinely recognized as one's own because they derive from the power of coloniality itself.

2.3. Hermeneutic Critique as Methodology

Poetry has a form, the novel has a form... research, the research in which the movement of all research is in play, seems unaware that it does not have a form or, worse still, refuses to question the form that it borrows from tradition. 'Thinking,' here, would be the same as speaking without knowing in which language one speaks or which rhetoric one employs, and without even sensing the meaning that the form of this language and this rhetoric substitutes for what 'thought' would determine for itself. (Blanchot, 1993, p. 4)

Having discussed the link between power and dialogue through Kögler's critical hermeneutics, I would like to start this section by introducing concrete applications to show how these abstract ideas can operate in the analytical decoding of tangible instances of things one typically finds in institutionalized educational contexts where intersectional spaces get enacted. Therefore, at this point, I present the reader with two situational scenarios. In these scenarios, intersectional radical agency possibilities get enacted in proto-dialogical ways. These enactments are clearly demarcated by power differentials.

I do not want to call them dialogical yet to avoid confusing the reader. The emancipatory relevance of their dialogic prospects will be tested through the metatheoretical ideas discussed. As I just said, these scenarios are presented and constructed to bring concreteness into the abstract level discussion of multiple

metatheoretical perspectives on dialogue and their interplay with critical hermeneutics as a specific methodology, in line with the arguments presented in the two preceding sections.

On the other hand, they will serve to recapitulate ideas and bridge into the remaining sections of the chapter. Both scenarios are set in schooling contexts with broad communal ramifications outside school. However, to make them more intertwined with the plot I initially developed in this chapter's reflexive counter story, let us pretend as if each of the school principals in the two scenarios are blind black individuals. Let us say that one of them is Edwina. The other principal is male. Let us call him Bruce.

Incidentally, I am yet to run across a public-school setting, apart from schools for the blind, where blind individuals are permanently hired for the role of principal. Chances decrease even further when one adds the criterion of finding a blind principal who is also a person of color. Because of this, I talk below of quasi-poetic justice/[fictional] dimensions which pertain to epistemology, axiology and performativity.

In the first scenario, there is a cadre of Hispanic parents. Several of them have children in the school with moderate and intermediate level disabilities. Some of these children have not even had detailed diagnosis, which blurs the definitional line of disability a step further.

Edwina as the principal displays an authoritarian leadership style. Edwina is backed up by various executing frontline level bureaucrats (the kind theorized by Michael Lipsky as "street level bureaucrats." See, for example, his 2010 book-length analysis in this regard). No one can come and go into the school without her explicit

authorization. The situation gets to the point that Hispanic/Latinx (mostly monolingual Spanish speaking individuals with limited education) mothers of pre-k children are unable to see their children at lunch time as they used to a few weeks earlier.

The situation turns very conflicted via acute anxiety episodes of certain children. This triggers external advocacy intervention. Arturo happens to play a limited observational role as an ad hoc consultant for the advocacy group. Arturo's critical insights on the process are permeated by this conjunctural, rather precarious positionality of participant observation whose empirical gaps are suspended here. They represent a quasi-poetic justice/[fictional] set of residual points for further reflexivity on the nature of dialogical critique as it relates in practice to radical agency and radical solidarity.

In the second scenario, Arturo happens to attend a large community gathering. The community gathering takes place in a public high school where Bruce works as the principal. This high school is in a portion of town where African American heritage is carefully guarded by historical victims of oppression. This group is famous for its concerted work in search for emancipatory mechanisms. They often work via resistance and social justice awareness raising through careful exposition of the role of memory in public conversations.

The community mobilization is evident. Not only is the gathering very well attended, their interrogating voices are congruent. They all highlight long-term lack of trust due to historical deceitful practices by the district. The district's superintendent is in attendance. She has been placed in a defensive position and is trying to calm the waters. The local press, so ubiquitous in other meetings, has not been permitted to

remain in the room. This could be read as an indicative sign that this is not business as usual.

On the surface, it seems that the present controversy has to do with consolidating middle and high school populations for this area of town. However, listening to community leader interventions, it seems that the process in question has made fresh painful memories of manipulation and programmatic single-handedness which the community is not willing to tolerate for this decision-making instance.

In sum, what is at play here amounts to a controversial dialogue about dialogue in its teleological essence. For instance, while district officials repeat the mantra of “rich dialogue,” community leaders reiterate the non-viability of trust. While district agents claim to be there to listen, the bulk of questions raised by community leaders go unanswered and no clue is provided as to the fate of these questions in the long run.

Assuming that it indeed has critical hermeneutics value, let us take up the question of “rich dialogue.” In doing so, let us consider the various metatheoretical perspectives discussed so far. In Isaacs (1999, pp. 6 and following) case, the structured complexity of “thinking together” requires achieving a conversation with a “center,” a conversation where sides are willing to disappear for the sake of transformational collective thought and decision making. “Another word for ‘not thinking’ is ‘memory...’ Memory is like a tape recording... Like a tape, memory is limited. The parameters of its responses are already set. The emotions are already defined. Thus, when we face novel situations where the instincts of our memories don’t apply, we don’t know how to respond” (Isaacs, 1999, pp. 6-7).

for Isaacs dialogue’s richness is equated with thinking together in innovative ways via the transcendence of memory. Therefore, the power of emancipation gets

seriously deflected. Who would benefit the most by leaving memory behind? At the affective/emotional level, this process favors forgiveness and lifts heavy burdens from the soul's shoulders of those who have suffered at the hands of oppressors. Yet, what is the transactional price of this "forward movement" ethos at the axiological and ontological dimensions of existence? Where and how is the transformation of oppressors enacted? What triggers their corrective/restitutive disempowerment? I am convinced that Only the oppressed have the key to open such a door.

Furthermore, the door could lead to various types of pathways. For example, in the case of the African American community leaders observed by Arturo at the high school gathering, memory plays a pivotal role. The district superintendent would certainly prefer to dialogue without it. But can it be removed without guarantees? Can the guarantees be accepted without trust?

Of course, another pathway is co-optation. In the case of the Hispanic families with children potentially labeled as disabled, the process seemed to reflect such a collective journey. It might be the proto-dialogical door toward something deeper. Yet, as it plays out in this first scenario, the sense of ownership on the part of oppressed agents seems absent. Upon the intervention by advocates, a meeting is convened. A few middle-level managers come together. Realizing the risk management potential of the situation engendered by Edwina's leadership style, they order Edwina to back off and a good number of external changes take place in this school setting in a rather abrupt manner. The group's core indignation and capacity to disagree, to use Rancière's nomenclature (see, Rancière 1991, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b, 2014 & 2015, for a detailed evolution of his ideas on the politics and aesthetics of dissensus) gets

deflected. It seems pointless and the group dissolves without addressing anything major. The only folks who appear to gain power in the process are the advocates. Their mediating/gate keeping role increases in visibility for future reference. It is likely that contending actors will have recourse to their help if things start getting conflicted once again. Memory for the oppressed in this case does not even get a chance to percolate. It simply gets erased, not transcended in any significant fashion.

In Bakhtin's case, dialogue's richness is tantamount to plurivocity or multivocality. What does this mean in practice in terms of the two scenarios? Well, it seems that, in a superficial interpretation of Bakhtin's ideas, it would simply suffice to bring many voices to the table, regardless of the purpose or the emancipatory role in which they might engage with each other.

Hence, it would not matter so much that questions go unanswered and that trust remains unachieved, as happened in the community gathering at Bruce's high school. However, thinking of dialogical agency as co-authoring, this interpretation of dialogue's richness is not satisfactory. As Marková (2016, pp. 203 and following) points out, dialogical relationality is axiomatic to the human mind. It is intrinsic to human action. This means that the relational nature of our thinking and the unfolding of all our interactions is to be presumed as an ontological feature. It is not something to be demonstrated/discovered via heuristic methods (particularly as incremental improvements of existing empirical methodologies that depart from monological conceptions of the self).

There are, of course, levels of dialogical engagement in various situational contexts. Their self/other examination can even be carried out through well-designed single case methodologies that combine qualitative and quantitative elements (e.g.,

Moscovici 2008, who analyzes social representations of psychoanalysis under the premise of interdependence between ego and otherness in the interaction of communist and catholic actors in France during the 1950s, or Jovchelovitch and Priego-Hernandez, 2013, which studies actors in Rio de Janeiro's favelas under the interdependent notion of development as freedom within communal culture patterns of interaction). The task of the researcher/interpreter is not to test dialogue, it is to flow dialogically as part of the unfinished project of co-authoring radical agency.

Bakhtin did not pose the question whether multivoicedness exists. Presupposing it, he showed its properties and specificities... Independent voices are in a constant tension, but they always remain autonomous: their unification would be a flat monological voice... Nothing is finished in a dialogue, tension is orientated towards new events, towards new interpretations of the other's words. The hero's inner dialogues clash among themselves, the inner dialogues conflict with external dialogues with the others, all leading to new discursive possibilities. Bakhtin views the problem of polyphony not as a search for method but for understanding the unfinalised human existence, Self- and Other-consciousness, whether in daily life, art or science. (Marková, 2016, pp. 203-204)

With Levinas, at last, the issue of dialogue's richness acquires a qualitatively new dimension. It becomes intrinsically tied to the ethics of relationality via infinite responsibility. Because one is responsible in love for the other's redemption, any failure to cooperate with their emancipation is a betrayal to one's own redemption possibilities.

In this kind of trans-ontology, the typical idea of reciprocity gets transcended in counter-intuitive ways. It gives way to a dialogical experience where the emancipatory well-being of the other in full recognition of their capacity and willingness to give and receive drives the entire flow of interactions, silences and gestures. Unlike the Kantian

and contractarian conceptions of justice as conditioned by reciprocity, in the context of Levinas' ethics one's responsibility to remain in giving disposition does not depend on the other's respect for our own being. It indeed rests on our very difference. This, in turn, propitiates an additional redemptive layer of responsibility.

Its sense of liberatory responsibility comes back to us as dialogical actors only to the extent that we comply with our duty to cooperate in love for the other's emancipation and self-enhancement. This is true, even in those cases where we cannot understand the rationale or existential dimensions intrinsic to their emancipation. Under the existential trans-ontology of Levinas (which extends to Fanonian and contemporary perspectives on decoloniality) one's self-denial in dialogue entails: (1) power release; (2) recognition of thinking/knowledge differentials even in renunciation of our ability for understanding; and (3) submission to the other's being by receiving/valuing gifts, giving ourselves genuinely in return.

Coming back to the situational scenarios described in this sub-section the question arises: what should I do when the other expresses an inability to trust me? In the Levinasian ethos, I must first become vulnerable. Keep in mind that this is an ethics of face-to-face encounter. I cannot hide behind institutional/bureaucratic artifacts. Secondly, even within this vulnerability, I must own the mistakes of those who came before me. How else could I earn trust toward future face-to-face encounters? Third, I must realize that I am responsible for mistakes or wrongdoings that might be perpetrated even in my future absence and in perpetuity.

Institutionally, who could endure such a challenge for decolonial dialogicality? Conversely, how could one fake it? It is so radical that, once initiated, its transformational effects would be plain to participants and bystanders alike. One

would be able to sense it right away. It is either there or simply not there. Of course, nothing precludes in theory its future emergence within the existential becoming of parallel non-linear trajectories of dialogical radical agency possibilities.

A. Habermas, Foucault and Ricoeur on Critique

Essentially, what an emancipated person can do is be an emancipator: to give, not the key to knowledge, but the consciousness of what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself. Emancipation is the consciousness of that equality, of that reciprocity that alone permits intelligence to be realized by verification. What stultifies the common people is not the lack of instruction, but the belief in the inferiority of their intelligence. And what stultifies the "inferiors" stultifies the "superiors" at the same time. For the only verified intelligence is the one that speaks to a fellow... capable of verifying the equality of their intelligence. The superior mind condemns itself to never being understood by inferiors... (Rancière, 1991, p. 66)

This brings us back to Kögler's ideas on dialogical critique. If one can ground Kögler's dialogical critique solidly on emancipation as a priority in the manner discussed by Geuss, enriching it with the radical dialogical perspective brought forth by Levinas, it can certainly have a tremendous potential in terms of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. For instance, in the scenario where Edwina displays an authoritarian personality in her role as school principal, this kind of dialogical critique would allow for ways to transcend co-optation.

As espoused by Kögler, dialogical critique requires a reciprocal engagement with the other's position and conceptual schemes. Its aim is to examine critically the

weaknesses in one's own approach. Ethically and epistemologically speaking, this would require both the district's actors and the advocates to go back to the Hispanic parents and unmask before them the co-optation tactics at work in this scenario (even if these were not intentionally planned as such in a conspiracy theory way).

This unmasking would be done in a non-patronizing way, assuming equal intelligence in this cadre of parents and giving them full critical worth as dialogical partners. It would mean treating the parents as trans-ontological beings with giving and receiving capabilities. But how could this be possible without an epiphany of love in the Frommian conceptualization formulated by Peck? In other words, how could this happen without a genuine commitment to secure the other's growth and well-being, even at the expense of one's own power and sense of epistemological pseudo superiority?

Most institutional actors are by no means ready for something like this. In principle, perhaps some individuals would wish to be ready to embark in a transformational journey of this sort. However, they are not ready to give up their institutional attachments. Thus, their cooperation with the colonality of power, knowledge and being remains intact.

It is important to revisit here the meaning and implications of the notion of critique as exercised by hermeneutic actors. I will summarize five complementary critique perspectives in this sub-section. They correspond to Habermas, Foucault, Ricoeur, Honneth and Rancière.

A.1. Habermas' and Foucault's Views on Critique as Genealogy

In analyzing Habermas' and Foucault's views on critique it is paramount to understand their relationship to practical reason. Their perspectives in this regard are framed within the axiological and epistemological confines of genealogy as critique. Here critique is viewed in terms of how both Foucault and Habermas understand the contemporary implications of enlightenment for counter-modernity.

My comparative reflections on Foucault and Habermas reciprocal critique through genealogical dialogue in this sub-section are closely linked to the argument developed in Conway (1999). Conway interprets Habermas' (1987a) critique of Foucault as an application of the same kind of genealogical method Habermas sets out to attack. Conway claims that this genealogical choice should be read as an indication of the collaborative status Habermas attributes to Foucault in the parallel agenda for forging a contemporary political philosophy of counter-modernity grounded on the heritage of the enlightenment (see also, Bernauer & Mahon, 1994; Bernauer & Rasmussen, 1988; Foucault, 1977b; Ingram D., 1995; Kelly, 1994; Owen, 1995; Scott C., 1990).

To be sure, neither Habermas nor Foucault relies on a dialogical epistemology in the sense highlighted by Marková (2016). Nevertheless, they play out a performative engagement of their arguments via the methodological constraints of genealogy. This could be interpreted as a kind of asynchronous dialogue.

Habermas (1987a) places Foucault in the post-Nietzschean philosophical lineage. This is a privileged categorization. It means that Habermas excludes Foucault from the deconstructive epidemic that afflicts thinkers such as Heidegger and Derrida.

Foucault descends from Nietzsche via Bataille. This entails a proclivity to what Habermas perceives as irrational excesses (see, for example, the essays in Bataille, 1985).

Yet, Habermas also grants that Foucault possesses a significant self-corrective capacity. This is illustrated by his attempt to deliver his writings from the archeological period from a subjectivist conceptualization of power via an ethical turn present in his latter writings (something that Habermas deems as a failed attempt). According to Conway (1999, pp. 68 and following), Both Habermas and Foucault share aims and concerns broadly associated with extending the project of enlightenment. This means to articulate a “rational critique of scientific knowledge and authority; to defend... an immanent critical perspective; to explore the limits of the prevailing regimes of power; to retrieve forgotten and excluded claims to knowledge; to cultivate alternatives to subject-centered reason... to take the measure of modernity...” (Conway, 1999, p. 64).

In terms of critique as resistance, Habermas and Foucault indirectly share various tendencies. First, Foucault’s idea that one is always implicated in the regimes of power that one opposes at the very same time that one is opposing them is analogous to the suspicious views on ideology and emancipatory hermeneutics that one finds in Habermas’s early writings (1971 & 1989) and even in certain aspects of Habermas’ theory of communicative action (1987 & 1990). Second, like Habermas, Foucault’s suspicion toward subjectivation leads him to simultaneously treat agents as patients (not in the sense of cultivating patience, but as categories of individuals who need healing and skill enhancement toward the crafting of their emancipatory spaces for liberation). Therefore, “the freedom displayed in self-constitution always also reflects the implacable influence of normalizing disciplines” (Conway, 1999, p. 69). This

calls in Foucault and Habermas for a careful sense of self-critique even as one attempts to enact radical agency and radical solidarity, cultivating an emancipatory learning ethos.

Third, there is an important corollary to Foucault's and Habermas' common opposition to subjectivism in the critique of power dynamics of domination. Even when Foucault openly avoids the kind of epic utopian postures that one at times finds in Habermas, both thinkers share a conviction that dominated subjects preserve a residue of power to resist the very same power dynamics that once placed them in their current oppressive positionality. This is a core principle that I have defended throughout the present dissertation project. It is what provides the freedom and utopian change spaces for radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning to be possible in all contexts, even in extreme situational modes of domination and violence.

A.2. Revisiting the Conceptualization of Critique in Ricoeur

Comparing the conceptualizations of critique found in Ricoeur, Honneth and Rancière, one realizes that (1) explanation and interpretation are "indefinitely opposed and reconciled" (Ricoeur, 1981b, P. 128); and (2) the way in which the reconciliation process takes place through critique at the methodological level is subsidiary to one's axiological and aesthetic emphasis. Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 107-108) distinguishes between text and speech. For the purposes of critique, both in the attitude of explaining or interpreting, text and speech are discursively equal with respect to language since text and speech are realizations of language at the situational discourse level of human interaction.

Ricoeur (1981b, p. 107) defines text as “any discourse fixed by writing.” One must also consider that, as I discussed in Chapter 1, Ricoeur sees meaningful collective action as a form of text subject to the attitudes of explanation and interpretation. For him, the point of caring about text as something separate to speech is the possibility that it can capture the meaning of what has not been said. “Fixation by writing takes the very place of speech, occurring at the site where speech could have emerged. This suggests that a text is really a text only when it is not restricted to transcribing an anterior speech, when instead it inscribes directly in written letters what the discourse means” (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 108).

Ricoeur (1981b, pp. 109 and following) goes on to distinguish between explanation and interpretation. He points out that, especially in the relationality afforded by reading, the latter operates as a sub-component of understanding. The relationality at stake has nothing to do with the relational basis of dialogue: “The reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading. The text thus produces a double eclipse of the reader and the writer. It thereby replaces the relation of dialogue, which directly connects the voice of one to the hearing of the other” (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 108).

If one transposes this core premise to the explanation and interpretation of collective action by those who do not participate directly in its conception and enactment, one perceives the methodological depth of what Ricoeur is getting at through his analysis of written texts broadly understood. How should explanation and interpretation be carried out by these distant hermeneutic actors?

When the text takes the place of speech, something important occurs. In speech, the interlocutors are present not only to one another, but also to the situation, the

surroundings and the circumstantial milieu of discourse. It is in relation to this circumstantial milieu that discourse is fully meaningful; the return to reality is ultimately a return to this reality, which can be indicated 'around' the speakers, 'around', if we may say so, the instance of discourse itself. Language is, moreover, well equipped to secure this anchorage. Demonstratives, adverbs of time and place, personal pronouns, verbal tenses... Thus, in living speech, the *ideal* sense of what is said turns towards the *real* reference, towards that 'about which' we speak. At the limit, this real reference tends to merge with an ostensive designation where speech rejoins the gesture of pointing. Sense fades into reference and the latter into the act of showing. (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 110)

Because this referential space fades away or, as Ricoeur likes to say, gets intercepted by the absence of direct dialogue, the functions of explanation and interpretation embedded in the enactment of critique involve a core realization. The author's relationship to the text is also fundamentally disrupted by this absence of direct dialogue. The author's relation becomes one in which "the author is instituted by the text... he stands in the space of meaning traced and inscribed by writing. The text is the very place where the author appears. But does the author appear otherwise than as first reader?" (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 112).

Therefore, the analysis of reading becomes paramount when it comes to addressing issues associated with explanation and interpretation. This also extends from reading to considerations of validity/scientificity. Since Dilthey's time, explanation had been expelled from the purview of the human sciences. They were primarily concerned with understanding. Explanation was exclusively ascribed to the so-called natural sciences (e.g., Dilthey, 1976).

For Ricoeur, the contradiction inherent to this separation gets embodied in interpretation itself. It carries with it a dual meaning. On the one hand it has an intuitive,

unverifiable character attuned to the psychologizing ethos attributed to understanding in the human sciences. On the other hand, it has an “objective” aspiration. This aspiration becomes especially evident in the notion of critique, in this case equated to hermeneutics. Under the influence of Husserl (e.g., Husserl, 2001; Ricoeur, 1967), the tension deepened.

Hermeneutics... proceeds from the objectification of the creative energies of life in works which come in between the author and us; it is mental life itself, its creative dynamism, which calls for the mediation by ‘meanings’, ‘values’ or ‘goals’. The scientific demand thus presses towards an ever greater depsychologisation of interpretation, of understanding itself and perhaps even of introspection, if it is true that memory itself follows the thread of meanings which are not themselves mental phenomena. The exteriorisation of life implies a more indirect and mediate characterisation of the interpretation of self and others. But it is a self and another, posed in psychological terms, that interpretation pursues; interpretation always aims at a reproduction... of lived experiences. (Ricoeur, 1981b, p. 113)

A.3. Conceptualizing Critique in Honneth and Rancière

In Honneth and Rancière, one can see how this hermeneutic reproduction is determined by the prioritization of values set up by the author as first reader. In that capacity, the author of a text also acts as first interpreter. Honneth privileges normative autonomy as the prerequisite of dignity via recognition (Honneth, 1992a & 2007a; Honneth & Anderson J., 2005). Rancière, on the other hand, privileges equality before knowledge as the democratizing force that gives sense to dignity in subaltern modes of relationality (Rancière, 1991, 1998, 2010a & 2011a).

Despite this core difference, both thinkers are committed to emancipation:

Emancipation consists in the removal of obstacles to the realization of freedom for all individuals and is generally viewed as a possibility inherent in modern society, whichever way that possibility is then conceived (as an existing normative principle, a utopian potentiality, a defining ethos, and so on). The negative formulation of the goal of emancipation is significant because it provides this progressive form of theory its inherent critical character, namely, to identify the hurdles to freedom or social justice. (Deranty, 2016, p. 36)

It would seem that freedom and social justice are values in which Honneth and Rancière naturally coincide. Part of the problem is that this conceptualization of emancipation is far too simplistic. If one knows what to remove, what does removal mean to talk about genuinely emancipatory processes?

As an example of the multifaceted nature of emancipation, Diana Coole (2015) points out that there are at least three emancipatory dimensions that need addressing in 21st century contexts: the legal realm, the sphere of subjectivation/identities and the economic/material segment of reality. Another example of the practical ambiguities involved in translating these abstract conceptions of emancipation is provided by Brigitte Bargetz (2015). Bargetz transposes Rancière's conceptualization in the aesthetic realm to what she calls the politics of affective or emotional ambiguity.

What I want to underscore here is that Honneth's and Rancière's views of what needs changing or removing are differentially predicated on the ranking of their axiological principles. Rancière talked of a struggle for recognition in his *Althusser's Lesson* (Rancière, 2011a), more than ten years before this concept became the driving component of Honneth's critical paradigm. The genealogical, equality-centered ethos of Rancière's approach expresses the ontological and axiological convictions he developed by conducting archival studies of France's 19th century labor movement

figures during the 1970s. These convictions are probably articulated most systematically in Rancière's critical treatise on disagreement (Rancière, 1998).

On the surface at least, one could think that the old epistemological debates around genealogy between Habermas and Foucault are being re-hashed in Honneth and Rancière. Nevertheless, the intellectual nexus that one can establish between Habermas and Honneth in terms of the primacy of normativity for critical theory does not have an equivalence when it comes to describing the relation between Rancière and Foucault. On the contrary, Rancière's critical theory project is built in deliberate opposition to the French intelligentsia that acquired prominence after 1968, particularly as represented by post-structuralist thinkers such as Foucault in his "archeological period" and cultural determinist thinkers such as Bourdieu (Ross K., 1991).

The conceptualizations of critique in Honneth and Rancière show two universalizing modes of constructing the world. They embody political philosophy gestures. These encompassing gestures corroborate the role of authors as first readers who, consciously or unconsciously, aim at imposing their interpretative standpoint on subsequent readers. For them, equality and normative autonomy are portrayed as opposing values at the root of one's struggle for recognition as a first step in the way to freedom.

In terms of radical agency, are these critical axiological frameworks necessary incompatible? More importantly, thinking of the decolonial ethos of radical exteriority explored throughout this dissertation project, is a universal stance the only way to tackle critically emancipation possibilities for all actors under dynamics of domination all over the world? What about intersectionality? Could the premises of equality that

moved labor movement organic intellectuals in the 19th century apply neatly to the emancipation struggles of blind Latinx in the 21st century within the fluid identity contours of global north hegemonic contexts?

This takes us back to remember the discussions on justice with which I started the present chapter. Rancière's equality emphasis seems similar to the capacities framework underscored by Martha Nussbaum (2006) in opposition to contractarian notions of justice. Nussbaum builds on Amartya Sen's (1979 & 1992) original formulation. She then points to the capacities framework's unique applicability to persons with disability (see, Broderick A., 2018, for a discussion specifically centered on the capacities approach and its link to the human right to education instituted in article 24 of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disability, CRPD).

The difference with Rancière's critical theory formulation is that the capacities approach (1) does not deal with emancipation and (2) does not place an emphasis on marginalized peoples' power for disagreement and resistance. Rather, the capacities framework is tied to consensus building mechanisms. This certainly limits its strategic applicability for change making purposes, at least from the standpoint of subaltern individuals and groups as drivers of the process. Its utopian aim is to get the powerful and oppressed segments of the globe to come to consensus around the basic capacities presumed to be present in all human beings as well as in specific kinds of unique populations. This, paradoxically, resurrects in the capacities framework a quasi-contractarian spirit, not so divorced from those frameworks that it was designed to transgress (Bérubé, 2009; Broderick A., 2018; Mutanga & Walker, 2015; Nussbaum, 2009; Saito, 2003; Terzi, 2005, 2007 & 2014; Walker, 2006; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Therefore, some researchers (e.g., Puar, 2012; Vandana, 2018), have linked

capacity and “debility” frameworks in specific ways. These conceptual linkages are designed to explain the structural exclusionary dynamics unique to neoliberal modalities of the capitalist state around the globe. These dynamics are such that they often exacerbate inequality matrices of hierarchy and selective spheres of relational materiality that deepen the marginalization of some subaltern groups over others, adding artificial layers of material discursive and relational intersectionality.

B. Critique in Connection to Decolonial and Subaltern Perspectives

The history of freedom
begins with evil,
for it is the work of man
(Kant, 1970, p. 227)

To be sure, there is a material inequality dimension to disability in general and blindness. This probably calls for framing their analysis under the light of a materialist critique. The issue of work, for example, is especially relevant in dismantling ableist ideologies and ocular-centric paradigms. Would this justify framing everything under the master/slave model of relationality that has driven Hegelian models (e.g., Honneth, 2014a; Honneth & Anderson J, 2005; van den Brink & Owen, 2007) of recognition as the normative base of dignity in vulnerability towards the pursuit of emancipation?

In this sub-section I touch on this question through the lens of Amy Allen’s (2016) critical stance toward normative critical theory approaches in her *The End of Progress*. Then, I use Mitchell and Snyder (2010) treatment of disability as multitude, Renault’s (2010) idea of “social suffering,” Erevelles & Minear’s (2010) intersectional

decoding of race and disability and a couple of LatCrit inspired essays (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Flores & García, 2009). These examples serve to illustrate the epistemological and methodological intricacies of tackling intersectionally how these material dimensions link with identity/radical exteriority in the enactment of radical agency possibilities, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning for subaltern/oppressed actors.

B.1. Progress, Critique and Decoloniality

Amy Allen starts her analysis by showing that a teleological conception of history is at the root of critical theory's universalist incompatibilities with decolonizing axiologies and epistemologies. This leads her to highlight an over-emphasis on progress as the driving force of modernity by critical theory thinkers such as Habermas and more recently Honneth (Allen a., 2016, pp. 7 and following). Amy Allen (2016, pp. 8-9) points out that it was not until the 18th century that an idea of historical progress as the comprehensive perfecting and material advancement of humanity became established. In antiquity and in the middle ages, progress was always seen as partial, contingent, circumscribed to local spheres, temporary and relative to what was in the past, not in a "better" future. In Christianity, there was always a look to a better future, but its crystallization was beyond time, in the realm of the eternal, the meta-historical. Furthermore, it was contrasted to a decline, a moral as well as material decomposition of the temporal realm.

The distinctive features of the modern concept of progress include (1) a view of the future as an infinite horizon which breaks with the analogy between the age of the

world and the aging decay of human beings who get older, that is, somehow humanity as a whole is immune from any manifestation of material decay in the natural realm; (2) the capacity of progress to subsist as “a world historical category whose tendency is to interpret all regressions as temporary... as the stimulus for new progress” (Koselleck, 2002, p. 227); (3) Christianity’s striving for perfection now acquires a temporal/historical character, which means that progress is understood as an ongoing, never-ending, dynamic process of collective transformation; and (4) the idea that progress conflates technical/scientific and moral/political spheres. This is the overarching conceptualization of historical progress that we find in the classical philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Marx. For these classical modernity thinkers, progress gets to be “understood in the strongest possible terms, as a necessary, inevitable, and unified process” (Allen A., 2016, p. 9).

Therefore, the ideological weight of progress is still very much alive in contemporary thinking, in the left as much as in the right side of the spectrum. This is particularly so since “these classical philosophies of history rested on metaphysically loaded conceptions of the goal or telos toward which progress aimed, whether that was understood as the realization of the kingdom of ends on earth, the attainment of the standpoint of Absolute knowing, or communist utopia” (Allen, A., 2016, p. 9).

Amy Allen goes on to emphasize that neither Habermas nor Honneth adhere to a strong, deterministic view of progress. Progress for them is “contingent rather than necessary, disaggregated rather than total, and postmetaphysical rather than metaphysical” (Allen, A., 2016, p. 10).

Their postmetaphysical interpretation of progress is especially important (Thomson J. & Held, 1982). It entails viewing progress as evolving toward ends that are

understood in a “deflationary, fallibilistic, and de-transcendentalized way, as a hypothesis about some fundamental features of human sociocultural life--the role that mutual understanding plays in language, or that mutual recognition plays in the formation of identity--that stands in need of empirical confirmation” (Allen A., 2016, p. 10).

At the same time, Amy Allen argues that there are vestiges of traditional teleology in Habermas and Honneth. These teleological remnants are illustrated by notions such as “sociocultural development,” “historical learning” and “moral-political progress” (2016, p. 11). Through these notions, Habermas and Honneth show their commitment to a common core interpretation of overall social progress. This interpretation assumes that “if a society can be said to have progressed then this will be because that society has followed a certain developmental, unidirectional, and cumulative moral-political learning process” (Allen A., 2016, p. 11).

Habermas (2013, n.p.) goes so far as to assert that, as epitomized in the Enlightenment, progress has become naturalized and irreversible in the sense that it has engendered a “de-centering of our perspectives when it comes to viewing the world as a whole, or to making considered judgments on issues of justice.” Grounded in Weberian and Parsonian ideas, Habermas (1984) also claims that there is a separate, disaggregate modality of progress which pertains to the scientific and technological realm. This realm does not impact moral-political dimensions of social progress because “the ability to separate truth validity from normative validity claims is one of the hallmarks of the post-conventional autonomy that becomes possible in posttraditional societies; thus, it is one of the key features distinguishing modernity from myth” (Allen A., 2016, p. 11).

Amy Allen's concern targets exclusively moral-political progress. She sees it as much more relevant when it comes to explicating the normative incompatibility between Habermas and Honneth's contemporary critical hermeneutics and decolonial theorizing. Yet, she still points out that even this Weberian version of progress is to be doubted. As Bruno Latour (1993) shows, we have never been modern "in the sense that we have never really accomplished the purification of the realms of truth and normative validity" (Allen A., 2016, p. 12).

Amy Allen (2016, p. 13) articulates her critique of progress-infused, normative critical theory as represented by Habermas and Honneth in terms of their relationship with postcolonial/decolonizing epistemologies. She underscores that there are two distinctive pathways concerning normative progress in contemporary critical theory. Both share the idea that critical theory needs a conception of progress for it to be truly critical. One of these perspectives looks to the future. It highlights the idea of progress as an imperative to strive toward the good, toward a more just society. "Progress understood in this sense is a moral-political imperative to strive to improve the human condition, and is connected to Kant's famous third question, what may I hope for?" (Allen A., 2016, p. 14).

The other perspective looks to the past. It sees progress as a judgment of fact concerning the developmental or learning steps that have led social actors to arrive to our modern, rational state. "To say that progress is a 'fact' is typically to say that the normative ideals, conception of practical rationality, and social and political institutions that have emerged in European modernity--in particular, in the Enlightenment--are the result of a cumulative and progressive developmental or historical learning process" (Allen A., 2016, p. 14).

The question that remains is whether it suffices to purify contemporary critical hermeneutics from this factual/normative conception of progress to make it compatible with postcolonial/decolonial epistemologies. Is this purification at all possible without shaking the very foundations of Habermas' and Honneth's epistemological and axiological paradigms? Amy Allen (2016, p. 15) sheds light on a possible interpretative response to these questions. She shows that in Habermas' and Honneth's postmetaphysical stance, it is paramount to escape the twin traps of foundationalism and relativism (see, Owen, 2002, which discusses Habermas' version of this postmetaphysical mandate for a historical interpretation of progress).

Foundationalism alludes to the desire from both Habermas and Honneth to avoid any regression in critical hermeneutics to "the purism of pure reason" (Habermas, 1987a, p. 301). Habermas and Honneth escape Relativism by sticking to the idea that not everything can be counted as overarching progress (Honneth, 2007c), which calls for a fix stance on what progress means in an evolutionary way. Hence, along with this commitment to avoiding foundationalism and relativism, both Habermas and Honneth ground their frameworks immanently in the actual social world (Stahl, 2013).

This creates for their versions of critical hermeneutics a special kind of normative tension. Grounding one's critique on the actual social world could entail ascribing to conventionalism and relativism, i.e. endorsing social norms just as they are and going along with the arbitrariness of social life, no matter how oppressive its domination dynamics may seem. According to Amy Allen, For Habermas and Honneth, the way out involves combining the two perspectives of normative progress described above. They do so in such a way that the conception of progress as an imperative to

pursue the good and more just options in the future of society is dependent on the factual conception of progress as grounded in a specific developmental approach toward modernity. In the case of Habermas and Honneth, this model is represented by the European Enlightenment, which, in their view, provides an evolutionary, paradigmatic manifestation of sociocultural learning for humanity as a whole.

Amy Allen (2016, p. 17) clarifies that "... it is conceptually possible to retain the idea of progress as a moral-political imperative without rooting that conception of progress in a developmental-historical story about progress as a 'fact.' For example, the Kantian-constructivist strategy for grounding the normativity of critical theory advanced recently by Rainer Forst articulates a universal moral-political standard..."

Amy Allen is alluding here to Forst's basic right to justification (Allen, Forst & Haugaard, 2014; Forst, 2002, 2012, 2013 & 2014). This principle is not grounded in backward-looking notions of sociocultural learning. Rather, it uses "what Forst characterizes as a freestanding account of practical reason" (Allen A., 2016, p. 17).

Once again, thinking of postcolonial/decolonial epistemologies, Amy Allen points out that Forst's principle of basic right to justification is not immune from charges of disguised Eurocentrism. The idea of a "free-standing" practical reason also falls into the trap of foundationalism. By being free-standing and universal, Forst's approach becomes yet another form of applied ethics. It lacks the emancipatory distinctiveness of contemporary critical hermeneutics. Thus, she favors a return to Adorno's critical theory in combination with a targeted focus on Foucault's heritage, who has been regarded as Adorno's "other son" (Allen A., 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c & 2015).

As is probably clear up to this point, I concur to some extent with Amy Allen's view of Foucault as a helpful vehicle for linking critical hermeneutics and decolonial epistemologies, especially in the Levinasian version of coloniality of being spelled out by Maldonado-Torres which I covered earlier in this chapter. In Chapter 5, I will go over the critical dialogue that Boaventura de Sousa Santos develops with regards to Foucault from the vantage point of global south epistemologies. I then extrapolate their emerging epistemological insights into preliminary notes toward a decolonizing radical agency perspective for persons of color with disabilities who reside and struggle in global north contexts.

B.2. Exploring Decolonial Radical Agency: Illustrating Intersectional Critique Via Specific Examples

I need to go over a few examples in what remains of this sub-section. They help assess the extent to which critical hermeneutics and decolonial modes of intersectionality in a dialectics of convergence and incompatibility apply to the existential materiality of disability and non-white racial domination. I start with Mitchell and Snyder's (2010) idea of disability as multitude.

Mitchell and Snyder borrow from Hardt and Negri (2000, 2005 & 2009). It is helpful to mention at the outset that Negri (2013) subscribes to a materialist conception of political philosophy. It is one that links him back to Spinoza's sense of immanence, which he contrasts with Cartesian metaphysics at the root of capitalism and the kind of modernity that it engendered.

Mitchell and Snyder criticize traditional Marxist conceptualizations of people with disabilities as "surplus labor." This designation means that people with disabilities

are masses of non-productive labor power. Being regarded as “unemployable” due to the extremely high percentage of unemployed and under-employed persons in their ranks (Pieper & Mohammadi, 2013), these masses have a lowering effect on everybody’s wages. This happens by creating pressure via fear of unemployment for those able-body folks who work.

As an alternative, Mitchell and Snyder use Hardt and Negri’s definition of multitude. The concept of multitude involves a dual manifestation of (1) “affective labor” (to differentiate them from purely effective/economistic conceptions) networks of sociality that play into late capitalism’s transformational sense of productive becoming and (2) social and community sites for resistance incubation and political subjectivity. Based on this dual definition, Mitchell and Snyder argue that having a “active engagement with concepts of corporeality (i.e. the body as active mediator of the world rather than passive surface of imprintation) is critical to a more fully politicized realization of disability” (2010, p. 179).

Like Negri, Mitchell and Snyder aligned with Spinoza’s sense of immanent materiality that looks towards the “radical potential of true democracy” (2010, p. 179). They point out the tremendous material wealth has been generated by persons with disability in the US alone. For example, one can think of the Federal resources mobilized for decades to take care of ill and disabled Cambodian refugees. These individuals went all the sudden from being viewed by federally funded clinics as a “burden” into giving these same clinics a sense of financial livelihood in a neoliberal era characterized by cuts.

All of this involves immense contradictions (Harvey, 2007). Yet, there is no doubt that “capitalism necessarily and always creates its own ‘other’” (Mitchell & Snyder, 2010, p. 180).

Let us pause to reflect about the implications of this first example for radical agency possibilities, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning in terms of spaces for convergence between critical hermeneutics and decolonial metatheory. On the one hand, the fact that Mitchell & Snyder talk in passing about global south refugees in the global north context of US capitalism, provides an opportunity to discuss the specificity of blind identities as intersectional spaces linked to various kinds of race hierarchy matrices. How different is the Latinx blind existential materiality compared to that of South Asian refugees? Given their common grounding global south populations of subaltern intersectionality, how can their trans-racial radical solidarity be enacted under their identities as persons with visual impairments?

In principle, the notion of multitude as re-conceptualized by Mitchell and Snyder shows potential under the premises of existential materiality and anti-capitalist resistance. However, in lacking an explicit trans-racial and decolonial ethos, it seems insufficient to propitiate radical solidarity approximations. As a matter of fact, even within South Asian refugee communities, it is unclear how the strategic mobilizing force of the notion of multitude could be put in motion. It is primarily an intellectual exercise. As such, it represents a step forward. Yet, once again, without a direct link to the community leaders in these populations, the idea of multitude might simply be an interesting abstraction.

Not much has been written about concomitant spaces of blindness and race. One interesting exception is the 1994 piece that J. W. Smith (2018 [1994]) published in

the Braille Monitor, a periodical ran by the National Federation of the Blind in the US. I will go over this piece in greater depth in Chapter 4 to show the link between blackness studies and the plight of blind folks in global north contexts. Here, I would like to underscore that J. W. Smith portrays his dual identity as blind and African American as one which constitutes a double-minority status. He goes on to assert that this “double minority status presents me with both obstacles and opportunities--fortunately, more opportunities than obstacles” (Smith J., 2018 [1994], n.p.).

J. W. Smith does not clarify what he means by these opportunities. J. W. Smith points out that his intention in writing that piece at the time was to dispel two myths: (1) that there is no racism within that specific organization of the blind (the largest in the world by all numeric standards and the one with most influence within the World Blind Union, which at the time this dissertation is being written is presided by a prominent leader of this US blind membership organization); and (2) that “everyone in the Federation is a bigot and that most of the organizational decisions made are racially motivated and designed to keep one group from succeeding in the movement” (2018 [1994], n.p.). J. W. Smith words are brave and unique. He does not use euphemistic approaches in engaging the issue of race through the channels of this institutional periodical. I do not know of many other instances when race dynamics were openly discussed in this or other institutional blind venues (for an expansive treatment of theoretical and methodological issues associated with institutional ethnography and institutional analysis broadly conceived, see, Smith D. E., 1990, 1997, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2005 & 2006; Smith G. 1988 & 1990). Above all, his words make explicit the race-based fragmentation that affects the blind movement.

Using this intersectional instance of blackness within blindness movements as a reference point, how could one bridge Latinx and South Asian blind positionalities of identity for the purposes of radical solidarity and radical agency? In terms of emancipatory learning, what can one gather as preliminary lessons toward a quest of this sort? For instance, knowing a priori that, in part, what J. W. Smith's analysis gets at is colorblindness, how can one devise radical solidarity strategies that openly ground the racial components in their intersectional relevance for blindness issues? Furthermore, if one succeeds in grounding this intersectional positionality, how does one combine it with decolonial movement building strategies?

Now, let us move into the second example. In this case, I analyze the notion of social suffering developed by Emmanuel Renault (2010). For the purposes of the present dissertation project, the examination of collective suffering is important in the analysis of radical agency possibilities for two reasons: (1) the need to transcend collective suffering as passive lamentation as a prerequisite for a critical hermeneutics of collective action as text; and (2) the need to connect with intersectional spaces of hope that address specifically the structural and existential materiality dimensions that cause social suffering for persons of color with disabilities and blind Latinx specifically.

Renault (2010, p. 223) starts by recapitulating the original project of critical theory as it was articulated by Horkheimer in the 1930s (e.g., Horkheimer, 1972b & 1993) and renewed in Marcuse's 1960s writings (e.g., Marcuse, 1964). This project involves (1) the explicit link between a theory of society and social critique, both of which require a theoretical awareness of social positioning and political implications; (2) the enactment of a kind of social critique that adopts the vantage point of actors interested in the practical transformation of society; (3) the development and

consolidation of an interdisciplinary theory of society where disciplines such as economics, sociology and psychology aim at identifying areas for emancipatory potential as well as emancipatory obstacles; and (4) the pursuit of political and metatheoretical coherence for social critique and interdisciplinary programs through an overarching incorporation of epistemological principles of immanent social philosophy. This program has special significance for addressing issues of social suffering due to the need to approach their analysis and intervention through a combination of psychic, sociopolitical and cultural realms of agency and human experience (Fischbach, 2009; Renault, 2008; these interdisciplinary conceptions contrast with historical materialist constructs of the working class, e.g., Thompson E, 1968).

Renault (2010, p. 222) also points out that the problem of social suffering is at once metatheoretical and political. It is metatheoretical insofar as its contemporary manifestations transcend the research programs of any single social and human science discipline, including philosophy. It has political relevance as it demands considering all the psychological and existential dimensions at the level of collective action for those under painful domination structure and discursive arrangements. Renault alludes to the suffering of workers and long-term unemployed masses under neoliberal capitalism as examples of this multilayered complexity in the emergence of new work conditions and enduring patterns of social exclusion (Bourdieu, 1999; Castel, 2001; see also the discussion of employability in this chapter's reflexive counter story).

Renault points to the suffering of workers and indicates that it has a dual implication for social critique in (1) the pathological kinds of new organizational and collective action dimensions it reveals; and (2) the subjective effects of individualization

and guilt complexes it engenders, which become obstacles for practical modalities of social change. In the case of the social exclusion grounded in long-term unemployment, a reality that befalls a large majority of blind and persons with other types of disabilities, Renault states that “feelings of shame and depressive affects are consequences of a social situation as well as factors that make their situation worse” (2010, p. 224).

There is a warning sign that pops up in reading Renault’s psychologizing language. It pertains to the need to recall the myth of disability as tragedy. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this myth indeed has paralyzing effects via shame and the like, unemployment being one of its naturalizing assumptions. Yet, at the same time, the challenge of decoding and demolishing its pernicious consequences at the individual and group levels, should fuel radical agency spheres of utopian hope where collective action as text gets co-authored and reinterpreted by persons of color with disabilities and their allies.

Overemphasizing the psychologizing model of actors as patients can be counter-productive. This would be especially true if the separation between emancipatory experts and suffering victims who wait to be liberated exacerbate the messianic ethos of false emancipation. Hence, I would rather favor participatory and emancipatory models of critical psychology (e.g., Seedat, Suffla & Christie, 2017 as well as critical psychoanalytical works by Fromm, 1941, 1968, 1976, 1992, 1999 & 2013), always embodying the spirit of interdisciplinarity espoused by Renault concerning social suffering. One of the most interesting interdisciplinary models which Raymond A. Morrow (1994) associates with critical hermeneutics is critical realism (Bhaskar, 1979, 1986, 1989, 1991, 1993, 2008, 2011, 2012 & 2016; Bhaskar, Danermark & Price, 2018). Importantly, it should be noted that critical realism has been employed

specifically to deal with the ontology and epistemology of disability (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006).

The third example centers explicitly on intersectionality as articulated by Erevelles & Minear (2010). Erevelles & Minear's (2010) argument is especially powerful and pertinent to the critical hermeneutics and decoloniality discussions I have developed in the present chapter. Erevelles & Minear underscore the paradoxical nature of constitutive dimensions of intersectionality as they point out that individuals "located perilously at the intersections of race, class, gender, and disability are constituted as non-citizens and (no)bodies by the very social institutions (legal, educational, and rehabilitational) that are designed to protect, nurture, and empower them" (2010, p. 127).

Erevelles & Minear look critically at the notion of "spirit murder" (Williams P., 1997) which, in the context of critical race feminist (CRF) theory targets the analysis of spaces of intersectionality. Nevertheless, certain constitutive dimensions (e.g., disability characteristics) remain hidden or neglected by this brand of hermeneutic analysts. Erevelles & Minear distinguish three ways in which intersectionality gets to be treated in various literatures: (1) anticategorical frameworks which regard race, class and gender as fictional/social constructs; (2) intracategorical Frameworks which look critically at "additive" categories of difference as layered manifestations of stigma; and (3) constitutive frameworks that aim to describe in depth the structural conditions "within which social categories in the above models are constructed by (and intermeshed with) each other in specific historical contexts" (Erevelles & Minear, 2010, p. 127).

Erevelles & Minear open their article with an illustration from Patricia J. Williams' (1997) piece. In it, Williams tells the story of a black woman with disabilities (a 270-pound, arthritic, sixty-seven-year-old individual) who got evicted from her Bronx apartment on October 29, 1984. In the process of resisting eviction, this woman got killed by the police. As portrayed by Erevelles & Minear "Williams reads this murder as an unambiguous example of 'racism [experienced] as ... an offense so painful and assaultive as to constitute ... 'spirit murder'" (2010, p. 128). However, Erevelles & Minear stress that Williams' configuration of disability in this description corresponds to a mere matter of magnitude and context, not a constitutive feature of the structural domination spheres associated with the state violence phenomenon in question.

Erevelles & Minear compare Williams approach to the notion of "nuance theory" developed by Angela Harris (1997), another prominent CRF scholar. Nuance theory is predicated under the premise that black women's oppression is simply an intensified manifestation of the kind of oppression experienced by white women. It only expresses how bad things can get for all women, regardless of their race. Erevelles & Minear add that, while agreeing with nuance theory and the need to condemn feminist analyses that ignore the qualitative uniqueness of black women's oppression experiences, they also emphasize that CRF employs a similar analytical tactic by refusing to analyze disability as a matrix of domination when it intersects with race, class or gender (For contrast's sake, see for example, the kind of analytical linkages developed by Connor & Ferri, 2005 who look at the phenomena of integration and inclusion from a historical perspective).

To be sure, I feel obliged to point out that there is a large proportion of disability studies works that can be read as colorblind. They represent a sort of reversed nuance

theory version (or incorporate into their approach elements of race, class and gender as additive components; for an interesting hybrid piece infused with sociological characterizations of these analytical matrices see, for example, Gordon B. O. & Rosenblum, 2001). They inadvertently privilege disability over race-based and other modalities of oppression.

Apart from noting that both types of analytical imbalances are to be strongly criticized, there is a methodological lesson to take home in terms of radical agency and emancipatory learning. This lesson centers on rehashing the deep reading metaphor I mentioned when discussing Ricoeur earlier in this chapter in conjunction to the textual nature of collective action. His and Bakhtin's emphasis on co-authoring should remind us that intersectional oppression also has an embedded multi-textual material ontology. This means that its critical hermeneutics requires multiple interpretative readings able to highlight the qualitative textures of constitutive realities of oppression. Yet, as stressed with respect to the idea of social suffering, one should be careful not to let the myth of disability (or race for that matter) as tragedy resurrect under a disguised form, paralyzing radical agency and radical solidarity possibilities across the multiplicity and entanglement of matrices of domination.

Lastly, let us discuss the final examples for this sub-section. They come from LatCrit theory. They are concerned with the epistemological and practical applications of "testimonios" as unique modalities of counter storytelling.

In her (2002, p. 107) essay, Dolores Delgado Bernal emphasizes that "the concept of epistemology is more than just a 'way of knowing' and can be more accurately defined as a 'system of knowing' that is linked to worldviews based on the conditions under which people live and learn." There is a crucial link Under this

definition of epistemology. It stresses the nexus between the everyday enactment of one's ability to know and issues of identity. Thus, it makes the value of decoloniality especially relevant as a way to free one's knowledges from settler/colonial ways of seeing the world, pursuing more "authentic" ways of knowing what one really knows and how one learns to learn in alignment with one's multifaceted sense of being (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Dillard, 2000; Gordon B. M., 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995 & 2000; Scheurich & Young M., 1997).

Delgado Bernal uses testimonios from Chicana college students. Their testimonios make evident an emerging sense of critical consciousness among those students about the knowledge illegitimacy and deliberate marginalization to which they have been exposed within institutionalized educational settings as well as a fundamental sense of strategic resistance where they want to be active players in reverting such pernicious trends. In this context of radical agency possibilities, I think it is appropriate to leave room for trajectory prospects such as those of epistemological mestizaje which might reveal modalities of situated emancipatory learning that derive from the geopolitics of where and how they take place.

Specifically, I have in mind González's (1998 & 2001) metaphorical use of the notion of "trenzas" or "braiding." She uses this conceptual metaphor to explicate the entanglement of mestiza consciousness and feminist epistemologies in the making of Mexicanidad within global north academic/institutionalized settings. Earlier in this chapter I had alluded to the pernicious effects of mestizaje for Latinx blind political subjectivity configurations. Yet, at least in principle, still reserving a skeptical attitude as far as Latinx blind spaces, it is important to recognize that González's conceptual

treatment presents an interesting epistemological predicament. I will revisit the discussion of epistemological versus ontological modalities of mestizaje in Chapter 3.

There is in this case political philosophy speculation on my part. It is inspired in decolonial metatheories. The field lacks empirical analysis of longitudinal processes of this nature where intersectional identities make so evident the paradoxes of radical exteriority. I would venture to hypothesize that mestizx consciousness configurations could serve as steps in a radical agency trajectory. Provided favorable emancipatory learning and radical solidarity conditions, this trajectory could very well lead to more decolonial positionality groundings which involve the critique of mestizaje as ideology.

On the other hand, there is potential for resistance in the mestizx ethos within US geopolitics (especially in states that were once taken by force from the 19th century territory of Mexico; Nieto-Phillips, 2004). Considering this, one should keep in mind that mestizaje's political subjectivity groundings could be expressed in multifaceted ways. They can have different meanings depending on where, who, with/against whom and how it gets evoked, developed, defined and redefined in the dynamic process of dealing with one's interior sense of trans-ontology (i.e., as it pertains to one's self-estrangement and reconciliation through the existential materiality and identity transformations propelled by radical exteriority).

There are two questions that remain. What definitional features distinguish testimonios from other kinds of storytelling methodological devices? What is the unique relevance of testimonios for bridging critical hermeneutics, decolonial metatheorizing and concrete forms of LatDisCrit radical agency and emancipatory learning explorations?

In addressing briefly these questions at the end of this sub-section, I rely on Judith Flores' and Silvia García's (2009) critical analysis of the process of creation of what they call "a Latina space" embedded within a predominantly white institution (PWI; see also, The Latina Feminist Group, 2001 for an expansive book-length rendition of this Latina Telling Testimonios [LTT] project as a way for articulating Latina feminist experiences). Flores and García make clear that their project follows in the footsteps of the wisdom sharing approach set up by the Latina Feminist Group. Their LTT project involved about 20 "mujeres (women) from the University of Utah and the surrounding communities" (Flores & García, 2009, p. 156). The strong intergenerational and communal spirit of the LTT project provides guidance on the definitional distinctiveness of testimonios as an organizing, agency-grounding epistemological tool:

We came together as a means to help us cope with issues of alienation in a predominately White campus and as a means of forming una colectiva de mujeres (a women's support group) to connect also across communities and beyond the university campus... We set out to learn from each other's differences and to theorize the complexities of our communities. This gathering for the purpose of learning from each other... was not free of tensions, pain, tristeza (sorrow), and love... concepts such as borderlands, mestiza consciousness, intersectionality, educación (informal education instilled in the home and communities), consejos (shared advise that draws from wisdom based on lived experience), and mind-body-spirit has informed our inquiry and our voice in the LTT group. Our testimonios... are framed by ideas that 'take a holistic approach to self that includes spirit and emotion, and recognizes our individual/communal struggles and efforts to name ourselves, record our history, and choose our own destiny' ... These concepts... guide us to see ourselves in relation to family, community, the current sociopolitical realities, and a commitment to social change. (Flores & García, 2009, p. 156)

Testimonios are very much a form of existential/vitalist embodiment (see, for example, Trinidad Galván, 2006 for an engagement with these matters of vitalist spiritual embodiment from a “campesina” [peasant women] subaltern identities and survival tactics standpoint; I discuss Trinidad Galván’s 2006 contribution in a targeted way in Chapter 3). In this sense, testimonios constitute a “theory in the flesh,” to use Cherríe Moraga’s expression (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, n.p.). Therefore, it is an understatement to merely call the LTT a support group (a notion so loaded with psychologizing connotations). Too much would be lost in translation if one renders in English as “support group” the Spanish expression “colectiva de mujeres.” In this case, the literal translation “women collective” is not only more accurate. It engenders in the reader the communal feeling of trans-ontological cooperation that underlies this modality of mutual organizing (see the multifaceted LatCrit feminism approaches represented by the essays contained in Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez & Villenas, 2006; see also, Arredondo, 2003; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002; Villenas, 2005).

While living in the state of New Mexico (USA) Arturo was involved very extensively with similar communal/intergenerational Chicana collective epistemological experiences. They were modelled after northern New Mexico’s “Resolana” traditions under the direction of now deceased social science Prof. Tomás Atencio. Deprived from the feminist ethos observed in LTT, Resolana (Montiel, Atencio & Mares, 2009) alludes to a metaphorical conceptual extrapolation. It re-lives northern New Mexico’s villagers’ practice of convening next to communal south facing walls (usually near the town’s plaza). The Spanish word Resolana literally means the place where the sun shines (often indirectly) and where folks can warm up and converse without predetermined agendas during cold days and summer mornings. “Every

culture has a *resolana*, a place where the *resolaneros*—the villagers—gather, dialogue, and reflect on society, culture, and politics. The buried knowledge that emerges from this process may be ‘pure gold,’ or *el oro del barrio*, a metaphor for the culturally contextualized knowledge gathered at the *resolana*” (University of Arizona Press, 2018, n.p.).

There was something that Arturo always found both intriguing and striking during his *Resolana* facilitation and conversational experiences. While several of the gathering individuals could be categorized as persons with disabilities, disability issues never became part of the golden knowledge that emerged in *Resolanas*. There were stories about usages of *Resolana* for awareness building in public health. However, Arturo never saw the enactment of a session that would take up (even tangentially) disability matters.

Looking at this peculiar knowledge exclusion in retrospect, it is possible to suggest a few preliminary points of reflection. First, Arturo noted that it was permitted for aging folks to joke in public about their “*achaques*” (aging ailments of various sorts). Yet, this never evolved into a serious interpellation of disability issues. Let me venture here one possible explanation which highlights once again the paradoxical nature of radical exteriority in intersectional spaces.

Disability and race share an oppositional sense of ontology that defies hierarchical matrices of domination. Both are often framed in opposition to white supremacy or ableist supremacy. Thus, both also entail the risk of alienation via the adoption of identity positionalities that align with supremacist ideologies.

Second, one needs to also realize that, unlike race, there is a special sense of sequential temporality unique to disability, especially in its association with aging.

Based on this unique feature, authors such as J. W. Smith, Stephanie Döhling and Katherine Rush (2017) address disability issues by contrasting the “differently abled” with the “temporarily able-bodied,” underscoring the fact that materially speaking and in terms of ideology, ability is always contingent, transitory and subject to either abrupt or incremental changes that defy its status. Every person can become dis/abled in a matter of seconds. A car accident, an illness, etc. they can all engender impairments and trigger dis/ablement othering dynamics even from folks close to one’s heart, folks who used to link in terms of sameness/full inter-subjective alignment and for whom one becomes all the sudden a perfect stranger. Whether one acknowledges this explicitly, its ethos is in the back of our souls, a sort of specter, a silencing ghost.

Third, one should be open to the possibility that there are painful kinds of intersectionality spaces that can lead to silencing and exclusion. Consider for instance what Flores and García (2009, p. 170) state in the fifth end note of their paper in conjunction to dimensions of meta-dialogical silence: “We have had ongoing dialogue on different ways of addressing the silence, pain, and struggle to name and remember suffering that we have suppressed. We refer to this as a messy process because even though we are Latinas we are very different, and these differences produce a variety of feelings and emotions that we often do not address. However, we understand that this process is critical to our praxis.”

Fourth, hence, to at least some extent, it is possible to argue that the myth of dis/ability as tragedy (which does not entail neglecting painful aspects of impairment for the sake of oversimplified conceptions of agency) resurrects in these silences and tacit taboo subjects. The enactment of LatDisCrit as emancipatory learning for radical agency possibilities will need to tackle these kinds of silences very explicitly. In doing

so, it will need to adopt a multi-modal engagement approach. It will need to proceed in the understanding that there is partial epistemological legitimacy in these dynamics.

Lastly, one must keep in mind that for some folks, evasive denial is but a stage in a broader trajectory of liberation. There is something counter-intuitive about this kind of intersectional emancipatory process. *La cultura del miedo* (the culture of fear) can at times be dialectically intertwined with freedom itself (in terms of the notion of *biophilia* advanced by Fromm, to which I referred in Chapter 1). Therefore, one needs to know when and how to raise these kinds of questions at a conversational/radical solidarity level. Perhaps, groups such as LTT and Resolana could be good trial sites. Starting there, one might find out whether they are mature and ready to rip the transformational harvest that will help *LatDisCrit* awaken from sleep, unearthing its golden knowledges berried for so long under layers and layers of fear and silencing pain.

There are other kinds of perils. Bureaucracies also like to appropriate *el oro del barrio y del campesinado* (the Golden knowledge of urban neighborhoods and Latinx peasantry).

Thinking of this, Arturo recalls attempts by some activists in New Mexico to get an Office for Hispanic Affairs created inside the state bureaucracy. They thought that was a good organizing strategy. However, they ran into opposition. In New Mexico certain forces prefer to question the minoritizing status of Latinx, Chicanx and Hispanx identity groups. They realize that this status does not serve their numbers game.

Without any desire to nullify the efforts of Latinx at the University of Utah, Arturo keeps in the back of his soul a warning sign. Can the “allowance” of this communal microcosm be another minoritizing tactic by white supremacists operating

via a selective letting be approach? Can the LTT be an illustration of supremacist attempts to appease more radical modes of resistance inside the campus? Can this be something of the sort of inoculating strategy highlighted by Barthes in his mythologies metatheorizing? Let us hope for the best but let us also keep a healthy dose of cautionary skepticism for the benefit of those radical agents whose souls feed on the wisdom enacted by this exceptional learning space, this bracketed microcosm.

2.4. Summary and Concluding Remarks on Methodology and Epistemology

The hostility to theory as such which prevails in contemporary public life is really directed against the transformative activity associated with critical thinking. Opposition starts as soon as theorists fail to limit themselves to verification and classification by means of categories as neutral as possible. (Horkheimer, 1972a, p. 323)

To the extent that interpretation becomes a constitutive part of ideology critique, meta-analysis of the conditions of interpretation is a necessary step... if ideology is the problem of domination, then studying it is the problem of interpretation... At the heart of educational research is a hermeneutical structure where interpretations collide or complement one another. (Leonardo, 2003, p. 329)

Amar, de cualquier manera, es ser vulnerable. Basta con que amemos algo para que nuestro corazón, con seguridad, se retuerza y, posiblemente, se rompa. Si uno quiere estar seguro de mantenerlo intacto, no debe dar su corazón a nadie... evitar todo compromiso; guardarlo a buen recaudo bajo llave en el cofre o en el ataúd de nuestro egoísmo. Pero en ese cofre —seguro, oscuro, inmóvil, sin aire— cambiará, no se romperá, se volverá irrompible, impenetrable, irredimible. La alternativa de la

tragedia, o al menos del riesgo de la tragedia, es la condenación. El único sitio, aparte del Cielo, donde se puede estar perfectamente a salvo de todos los peligros y perturbaciones del amor es el Infierno.¹⁴ (Lewis, 2017, p. 100)

In this second chapter, I have centered on methodological and epistemological issues relevant to emancipatory learning, radical solidarity and radical agency possibilities. As I said at the start of the chapter, my core goal was to critically examine ways to theorize oppressive myth making and love-centered dialogue as resistance paradigms anchored on decolonial axiology, aesthetics and epistemology with special significance to Latinx blind movement building and collective action. I have highlighted throughout the various sections of the chapter the need to converge toward an intersectional decoloniality and critical hermeneutics approach that can decode core paralyzing myths and open freedom spaces for LatDisCrit ontology, epistemology, axiology and aesthetics to start making sense.

First, I stressed the need to conciliate explanation and understanding as concurrent methodological aims in the enactment of critique and ideology interrogation which drive the present dissertation project. I then made explicit how political philosophy requires an ethical engagement with tangible issues of social justice which demands making explicit theories of justice. In that regard, I noted how contractarian conceptions of justice serve to validate ableist assumptions, i.e. the idea that certain groups of individuals such as persons with disabilities do not deserve an equal share in the distribution of social goods because they do not contribute as able-bodied individuals do. Chapter 3 will revisit contractarian philosophies and will

emphasize how they also serve to justify race-based modalities of exclusion and marginalization.

In the second sub-section of the chapter, I developed a new reflexive counter story. This time I centered on disability disclosure. I noted the parallelism between Foucault's confessional metatheories of the formation of the self in modernity with respect to the risks of making explicit one's disability identity in employment related settings. I also viewed braille literacy issues under a similar disclosure light and pointed out strategic and existential ambiguities associated with the need to fight the myth of disability (blindness in this case) as tragedy.

I devoted a third sub-section to address the extent to which a methodology of the oppressed is possible. To this end, I relied primarily on Sandoval's and Barthes' epistemologies, looking at them especially in terms of semiological analysis of myths and the power implicit in being able to decode those myths for emancipatory purposes. Hence, I interjected several illustrations that linked the discussion back to the reflexive counter story I had presented in the preceding section.

In the fourth sub-section, I expanded the analysis to examine what is involved in the formulation of comparative epistemologies where critical hermeneutics and decolonial theories have a preponderant role. I explicated Barthes seven rhetorical poses involved in the decoding of myths: (1) inoculation; (2) privation of history; (3) identification; (4) tautology; (5) neither-norism; (6) quantification of quality; and (7) statement of fact. In the process, I also addressed the intellectual and existential risks of trying to tackle this decoding in isolation from the masses who struggle to make radical agency possible outside the academy. Finally, I suggested four steps to make sure that comparative methodologies lead indeed to substantial progress in the

simultaneous explanation and understanding of issues under scrutiny: (1) broad identification of the multiple epistemologies that will go into the general architecture of one's comparative project; (2) articulation and justification of knowledge clusters, without pre-judging or ranking their separate contents; (3) comparative contrast at the intra and inter-cluster levels of analysis; and (4) movement toward dialogical synthesis as a process always in the making.

I devoted the last sub-section in the first part of the chapter to compare issues of blackness and Latinidad that pertain to blind identity configurations. I stressed my skepticism with respect to blind Latinx radical agency possibilities. Apart from underscoring the fragmentary nature of Latinidades, I focused on three dimensions: (1) the absence of political spaces for leadership development, especially in the US; (2) the scarcity of helpful conditions for radical political subjectivities among blind Latinx individuals and groups at the hemispheric level especially due to the pernicious effects of ontological ideologies of mestizaje; and (3) the preeminence of lovelessness over love-centered epistemologies and axiologies in the everyday relationality faced by blind Latinx throughout the Latin American region and in global north contexts.

Next, I incorporated a full section aimed at spelling out the epistemology of dialogue, love and coloniality. Following Hooks (2001, p. 4) who quotes a Frommian definition of love developed by Peck, I conceptualized love's epistemological and axiological scope in terms of "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." For dialogue, I used various approaches: dialogue as structured complexity interventions; dialogue as multi-vocality; and dialogue as trans-ontology. Relying on the latter, especially on its radical emphasis on ethical responsibility, I examined coloniality primarily through the lens of Maldonado-

Torres' three-fold distinction between coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being. The section ended with a critical look at Kögler's work to understand the link between dialogue and power dynamics.

The last full section dealt with the need to incorporate dialogical and decolonial epistemologies into critical hermeneutics. Here, I interrogated the applicability of the dialogical perspectives I had gone over in the previous section through two situational scenarios recently observed by Arturo in school settings. I then dived into the examination of the notion of critique in Habermas, Foucault, Ricoeur, Honneth and Rancière. The notions of genealogy, author as first interpreter, recognition and equality were emphasized, reflecting to possible implications for an emancipatory theory of justice. At last, I provided a critique of normative critical hermeneutic perspectives from the standpoint of decolonial theories through the metatheory of progress summed up by Amy Allen. The section ended with four concrete conceptual examples: (1) disability as multitude; (2) the trans-disciplinary treatment of social suffering; (3) spirit murder at the limits of intersectionality; and (4) the emancipatory potential of Latina testimonios beyond the confines of Latinidades to bridge dis/ability modes of emancipatory learning and radical agency. Through these conceptual examples, I was able to explore critically the viability of convergence between critical hermeneutics and intersectional decoloniality toward explaining and understanding LatDisCrit radical agency, emancipatory learning and radical solidarity spaces of hope and utopian performativity.

I could probably synthesize the lessons offered by these extensive reviews indicating that critical hermeneutics has an implicit link to emancipation through its emphasis on the interpretation of dynamics of domination. Nevertheless, in these

interpretative processes, there is risk in over-stressing the structural dimensions of totalities such as race and disability as well as their interactional variations. This could lead back to the epistemological and ontological limitations of non-dialogical meta-theories such as traditional Marxian and positivist functionalism. Keeping in mind the decolonial ethos at the levels of power, knowledge and above all being (in its trans-ontology), is a core objective that should guide the journey, especially when it has a comparative epistemology mandate.

Epistemology is the realm of metatheory and philosophy specifically concerned with knowledge production, reproduction, discovery, verification/validation or dissemination. Metatheory simply means the theoretical study of theory, e.g. theory building, testing, etc. Within metatheory there are at least four important areas of practical interest under which one should examine any theoretical paradigm to expose its grounding assumptions: (1) ontology, the study of reality; (2) epistemology, especially as it sets parameters for knowing and analyzing critically what one considers to be reality; (3) logic; and (4) ethics (Morrow, 1994, p. 48). To these four categories I would probably add aesthetics, especially in terms of the power of performativity to convey the moral aesthetics of one's identitarian stance in a chosen political arena (which might very well change as one's trajectory evolves toward new forms of radical agency possibilities).

As stressed throughout the chapter, the crucial distinctive feature of critical hermeneutics as espoused by thinkers such as Habermas and Honneth (and even social science thinkers such as Giddens, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991 & 1992) is the simultaneous pursuit of empirical and normative research programs that ultimately serve the purpose of emancipation through ways of

knowing that expose the roots and deliberately try to undo specific modes of domination (Morrow, 1994, p. 149). This emancipatory quest sets apart critical social theory in its embodiment of critical hermeneutics. When that is missing, as made evident in Forst's principle of basic right to justification, social theory turns into yet another neutral version of applied ethics among many, another universalizing version of *ego conquiro*, to use Dussel's decolonial language.

Domination rests on asymmetrical power relations. Emancipation presupposes knowledge production and dissemination frameworks that can understand, interpret, explain and analyze critically the ontological, epistemological, axiological and aesthetic assumptions that serve as the foundation for these power relations to be perpetuated. Therefore, knowledge production and dissemination are inherently political (Habermas, 1983, 1987a, 1990; Leonardo, 2003). Under this political philosophy agenda, thinking of emancipation as a universal process with identical requirements in all contexts is as detrimental as positivism's neutral objectivity claims. Emancipation must be approached as a contextual process. This is the only way to start dismantling power relations. Domination totalities such as race, class, gender and ability centered hierarchy matrices need specific modes of interpretation, explanation and critical analysis that would then allow for relational change making. Radical agency trajectories that procure emancipatory learning and radical solidarity horizontal power rearrangements become possible and new horizon of utopia and hope start making better sense. For this reason, the examination of intersectionality is paramount, not merely as an additive set of layers of complexity but as meaningful approaches of practice that incorporate the multi-modal dimensions of identity/alterity engendered by radical exteriority.

Unlike race (especially in the current post-affirmative action era where restitutive arguments have gotten silenced under a fascist aura), disability power hegemonies are premised upon the assumption that only some people have disabilities (which means that they are literally impaired) and thus need compensation. This often works as a justification for this people's double exclusion: (1) as people without "ability" and (2) as people who are a burden because they demand special attention/accommodating circumstances (Pothier and Devlin, 2006). Everybody has a racial make-up ordered by the hierarchical arrangements set up by the creators of the racial contract. This is true even for those who might pretend to live within a colorblind ontology (for whom this racial contract probably has more weight). Yet, people with disabilities live under a constructed reality set up by others exclusively for them and cannot escape the stigmatizing implications of this externally imposed designation. As persons with disabilities, they have a lesser chance to have common or analogical basis for challenging ability-based epistemologies. Their alliance building/radical solidarity prospects are significantly undermined (at least at the intra-ontological level of relationality).

In the following two chapters, I look at race and disability as matrices of domination that remain enacted within multifaceted intersectionality manifestations. In doing so, I preserve critical hermeneutics co-authoring and emancipatory emphases. I also explore ways for this ethos to converge with decolonial practices in conjunction with power, knowledge and relational being. The final chapter will give us the synthesis of this exploration, opening the way for LatDisCrit's auto-critical claims for a distinctive material and discursive existence at the levels of trans-ontology, epistemology, axiology, utopia and performativity.

Chapter 3 *The Decolonial Metatheory of Race and Latinidad*

3.1. Introduction

Con vos se fue la voz de los pobres,
los desposeídos y los oprimidos,
los sin voz.
Con vos se fue la conciencia de América Latina,
y también una gran parte de nuestra dignidad.
Con vos murió el mito en vida,
el que luchaba con sus contradicciones,
el que educaba con sus parábolas,
el que seducía con su sonrisa...
Con vos nacimos al vigor de una educación
utópica...
Con vos gozamos al profeta que denunciaba y
anunciaba.
Con vos supimos que el peregrinaje por este
mundo
sólo tiene sentido en la lucha...
Con vos quedó tu invitación a que no te
celebrems o repitamos, sino que te
reinventemos... (Torres C., 2018, n.p.)¹⁵

“Since these mysteries are beyond us, let's
pretend we're organizing them.” (Cocteau, 1972,
n.p.)

If the previous chapter delved on epistemology, the present chapter is more of a poetics of decolonial anti-racism and anti-ableist expressions in spaces of radical exteriority and intersectionality. Hence, there is already something of tango, morriña (i.e., an especially dramatic and rather addictive kind of nostalgia), hyperbolic proverb, trans-truthful desperation in the epigraph from Carlos Alberto Torres I just quoted in Spanish. Its performativity goes beyond race, beyond ethnicity, beyond cultural ethos. Fortunately, Latin America's consciousness and dignity are far from being dead. They

are not embodied by any heroes, no matter how extraordinary their contributions and originality.

However, it is so common in Latin American expressions of pain and admiration to go beyond all the boundaries of hyperbole. So much of Latinx mythology is thus built. Bolívar, Rodríguez, San Martín, Juárez, Martí; the list is long. They all share this untouchable aura, this pseudo-divine meta-historicity. It is as if all our nationhood, all the sense of integrity in our collective and individual being would depend on preserving their mythical memories as insects in alcohol. The more we do it, the greater the ephemeral evidence of their bracketing pseudo-reality, as when a soap bubble is about to be blown away.

In the realm of political aesthetics, a paradigmatic example that comes to mind is Tomás Martínez's literary work which often transgresses the historical fiction genre (e.g., Martínez T., 2014a, 2014b & 2018). His political exploration of Evita's critical mythology as nationhood in the Argentinan context (Martínez T., 2015) is so full of layers and contours that one can appreciate the powerful hermeneutic symbolism of her deification for collective action and inaction as a living social text.

The present chapter and the following are two sides of the same intersectional coin that binds and separates race and disability. In the present chapter I look at several borderline works in the aesthetic and metatheoretical realms. The chapter explores race, ethnicity, meta-racial and decolonial dynamics as expressions of radical exteriority. I contend that these expressions are enacted for the making and un-making of radical agency and radical solidarity possibilities as well as spaces for emancipatory learning. The literature is so vast. Hence, a careful sense of selectivity must guide my exposition.

It is poignant for me to start outside race. I want to examine the so-called ontology of new materialisms (Coole & Frost, 2010; Reddington & Price, 2018) and the dynamic vitalist vision of what could be characterize as a “mystical society” (Wexler, 2018) where trans-ontology prevails. In doing so, I aim to tackle critically the post-racial quest that occupies certain thinkers driven by postmodern epistemologies. I plan to deal with this right after this chapter’s reflexive counter story.

First, let me clarify from the onset my reluctance to accept the very idea of radical post-racial constructionism. In this deep south context where Arturo lives, he experiences everyday the existential materiality of racism and intersectional marginality. If post-racial reality is in full swing, how does post-racism look like? Is post-racism a parallel dimension of reality that people of color cannot fully ascertain, occupied as they are with the asphyxiating oppressive force of what remains of racial domination? (I would also venture to contend that there is a similar “post-institutional” ideology with pernicious consequences for disability rights struggles; see, to this effect, the discussions in Bogdan & Taylor S., 1982 as well as Szasz, 1974 in conjunction with the experiences of persons with intellectual/mental disabilities which, in my view, have indirect/analogous implications for blind individuals who have undergone institutionalized educational treatment in global south and global north contexts)

Second, irony apart, I want to prepare the reader for the contractarian analysis that illumines this chapter’s reflexive counter story and subsequent discussions in the second section. To do so, as I said, I interrogate in the first part of this chapter the material ontology of post-racial or rather, to be more precise, trans-racial modes of radical exteriority grounds for radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. If any framework can allow for such an exploration is new materialisms due

to their roots in the egalitarian monism that traces back to Spinoza via what Jonathan Israel (2001) calls the radical enlightenment.

Third, for the sake of discursive unity, I ground my preliminary reflection work for the understanding of Latinidades in this chapter and throughout the remainder of the dissertation within blackness studies (primarily through the outstanding decolonial work of George J. Sefa Dei, 2017). I do so cognoscente of the tendency in Latinx racial hierarchy analyses to try to make invisible blackness dimensions (1) in a positive light to explore the intersectional “gray areas” that LatCrit sought to uncover (Perea, 1997; Valdes F., 2000); and (2) paradoxically as it might seem, as an effort that is hopefully unconscious by certain Latinx intellectuals to preserve their European (or symbolic settler) soul, spirit and mentality. Let me explain what I have in mind as I think of the latter of these tendencies. I am thinking of the paradoxical way in which indigeneity gets exaggerated by a group of Chicanx authors and activists (e.g., Moraga’s 2011 deliberate effort to equate her reflection writings from the first decade of the 21st century with ancient Mayan codices, going way beyond the merely metaphorical). To me, in terms of a critical hermeneutics of the limits of intersectionality, this kind of exaggerated self-attribution could engender a great deal of decolonial debate. Does it constitute a compensation mechanism, a sort of mechanism of defense of the ego (to put it in psychoanalytical terms, e.g., Freud, 1960 & 2002) toward trying to erase the existential materiality of radical exteriority in conflicting multilayered identities?

Fourth, there is yet another quest that moves me as I start preparing the reader to deal with Giroux resistance theory (which I cover in the third section of the present chapter in opposition to social reproduction ideas). It has to do with what Senese, 1991 calls in a critical light the “possibilitarian” ethos. A lot of what I regard as constitutive of

the present dissertation project falls into this possibilitarian ethos. Thus, I found Senese's warning edifying and intriguing at the same time.

Senese's core argument is that possibilitarian thinkers such as Giroux and McLaren are right in emphasizing social justice concerns as they define the core function of education. However, he contends that they also need to, on the one hand, take seriously Gramsci's teacher-centered pedagogical call for an exposure to liberal education for the working classes (Senese, 1991, pp. 14-16) and, on the other hand, explore very seriously the demanding possibilitarian pedagogies hidden in movements such as surrealism (Senese, 1991, pp. 17-19). Here is how Senese's radical surrealist invitation gets framed:

There are a variety of... themes in the Surrealist preoccupation which appear to be decidedly counterpedagogical. Violence, fascination with 'objective chance,' dreams, drugs, hypnotism, automatism, and other extreme states, these characterize the program of the Surrealists. These states and the activities leading to them are part of a faith, a faith that has human emancipation... at its heart. The Surrealists were deeply suspicious of institutional and political means of change in the modern world, yet their 'artistic' program was maintained as a method of achieving social revolutionary change (Senese, 1991, p. 20).

In Latin America, surrealism has often been linked with the so-called "realismo mágico" (magical realism) that characterizes the aesthetics and axiological meta-theory behind the literary work of authors such as García Márquez (1998), Carpentier (2013), Cortázar (2018 [2004]), Rulfo (2003) and others. Yet, there is an important differentiating feature in *realismo mágico*. Although a lot of its narrative is fictional, its liberation aesthetics is strongly grounded in often exaggerated reality tendencies unique to the defining postcolonial materiality and discursive paradoxes of identitarian

modes of radical exteriority observable in the region. This will be evident for example as I discuss in this chapter's second to the last section Vallega's and Saldívar's contrasting interpretations of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from different standpoints which nonetheless depart from decoloniality and radical exteriority as core analytical components.

A. Third Reflexive Counter Story: Two Blind Trajectories in the Global South

Siempre que viene el tiempo fresco, o sea al medio del otonio, a mí me da la loca de pensar ideas de tipo esétrico y esótico, como ser por egenplo que me gustaría venirme golondrina para agarrar y volar a los paíx adonde haiga calor, o de ser hormiga para meterme bien adentro de una cueva y comer los productos guardados en el verano o de ser una bívora como las del solójico, que las tienen bien guardadas en una jaula de vidrio con calefacción para que no se queden duras de frío, que es lo que les pasa a los pobres seres humanos, que no pueden comprarse ropa con lo cara que está, ni pueden calentarse por la falta del querosén, la falta del carbón, la falta de lenia, la falta de petrolio y tamién la falta de plata, porque cuando uno anda con biyuya ensima puede entrar a cualquier boliche y mandarse una buena grapa que hay que ver lo que calienta, aunque no conviene abusar, porque del abuso entra el visio y del visio la dejeneradés tanto del cuerpo como de las taras moral de cada cual, y cuando se viene abajo por la pendiente fatal de la falta de buena condupta en todo sentido, ya nadie ni nadie lo salva de acabar en el más espantoso tacho de basura del desprastijio humano, y nunca le van a dar una mano. (Cortázar, 2018 [2004], n.p.)¹⁶

For me, oppression is the greatest calamity of humanity. It diverts and pollutes the best energies of man-of oppressed and oppressor alike. For if colonization destroys the colonized, it also rots the colonizer. (Memmi, 1991, p. xviii)

Asdrubal walks into the classroom. His thick glasses precede him as a banner. He is here to see Arturo. Arturo has no idea. He does not know that this kid from the boarding school where both had spent years of their lives as institutionalized blind children has come to talk with him. It is not even Asdrubal's idea. Somebody with teaching power has decided that this blind guy needs to see a "successful" blind student. That somehow will set things straight for Asdrubal.

Asdrubal's academic performance is way below what these educators had expected. Their expectations are based on what they had seen from Arturo, a long-time student at that same high school. Worse for Asdrubal; he, unlike Arturo, has some residual vision. Somehow, this engenders harsher, less forgiving expectations. Teaching bureaucrats blame Asdrubal for his "failure." No amount of explanation attempts from Arturo (or anybody else for that matter) can tame or dissuade them. The setting does not matter too much. For the sake of analysis, let us say it is a global south, working-class, brown geopolitical segment in the Americas. The year is 1979.

For some reason, when Arturo tries to remember the content of this conversation nothing specific comes to mind. Arturo merely remembers a sensation, a repulsive sense of injustice. He was not 14 yet. Nevertheless, the nonsensical nature of that forced encounter was plain for him at that moment.

Arturo suddenly wonders, if inclusion is not tied to emancipation, how can it be relevant to peoples with disabilities in an existential materiality sense? Here is a paradox. As it gets enacted by institutions in the global north and in the global south alike, inclusion, by its discursive, structural and material connotations, stifles emancipatory agency. There is no inclusion without concomitant exclusion. This is particularly true in intersectional bureaucratic contexts of domination (Ahmed, 2012; Iverson,

2012; Niemann, 1999). In these contexts, the layers of inclusivity are tied to intersectional power asymmetries that make inclusion less and less “enabling” through the hegemonic agency concessions it entails. For the sake of theoretical richness, this chapter focuses on the intersectionality of race and disability, linking Charles Mills’ conceptualization of the racial contract (1997) with specific dimensions of critical hermeneutics in their application to disability theorizing and alternative knowledge production.

If one talks about inclusion and disability issues, why should one dive into the examination of something apparently so unrelated as the racial contract? Considering that Charles Mills premises his racial contract framework on the exclusionary epistemology and politics of white supremacy, the association is not unfounded. Many of the moral and naturalistic claims inherent to the white supremacist social contract are replicable as justifications for ableist policies and practices, particularly in multi-racial, intersectional contexts of domination.

This chapter’s reflexive counter story centers on radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning considerations as derived from Mills’ racial contract dystopia. Mills’ framework makes the paradox of inclusivity as an exclusionary ontology and epistemology understandable. Through it, exclusionary ideologies become more likely to be deconstructed, challenged and addressed for the pursuit of emancipatory transformations.

Mills analogy of the racial contract exposes white supremacy. It demonstrates that the philosophical basis of the classical sociopolitical and moral ethos of the social contract in authors such as Hobbes (1991), Kant (1991), Locke (1988) and Rousseau (1968 & 1984) is like the structural issues of patriarchy that radical feminist had de-

nounced in the 1980s. These radical feminist thinkers exposed a pre-existing sexual contract for the perpetuation of male domination (Pateman, 1988). Yet, there is another question that rings in Arturo's heart. If the racial contract is a dystopia, an ideological entrapment, how would trans-racial modes of radical solidarity be possible? In many respects, the core task of the present chapter is to tackle this emancipation conundrum.

For Mills, Rousseau's discussion of inequality makes the paradox of the racial contract perhaps clearer than any of the other contractarian theorists. According to Mills (1997, p. 5), Rousseau justifies the social contract as a naturalist expression of the primordial sense of equality of humans, while rejecting the technological and governmental mechanisms that transform this into artificial modes of hierarchy and social exclusion; "... this nonideal/naturalized contract explains how an unjust, exploitative society, ruled by an oppressive government and regulated by an immoral code, comes into existence... So the point of analyzing the nonideal contract is not to ratify it but to use it to explain and expose the inequities of the actual nonideal polity and to help us to see through the theories and moral justifications offered in defense of them" (Mills, 1997, p. 5).

Ontologically, the contract presupposes that only white Europeans have the personhood attributes necessary to be signatories. Non-whites are the object, not subjects of the contract (Mills, 1997, p. 17). "The establishment of society... requires the intervention of white men, who are thereby positioned as already sociopolitical beings. White men... encounter nonwhites... who are savage residents of a state of nature" (1997, p. 18).

Back to Asdrubal's and Arturo's forced encounter, one needs to realize that, in similar ways to the racial contract, the ableist ontology objectifies people with disabilities, often in an intersectional interplay with the very terms of the racial contract described by Mills (Arneil, 2009). The layers of domination/exploitation also create multi-racial modes of hierarchy justification within disability organizations, ways of knowing/ignoring, and so forth. Therefore, the more one complies as a non-white or "disabled" person or collectivity with the terms of the contract for inclusion's sake the more one perpetuates the exclusionary epistemology, axiology and political ethos that sustains its unjust paradigm.

Think for a moment about disability rights. Imagine a global south context where inclusivity legislation has not been enacted (which corresponds to what Asdrubal and Arturo faced in 1979). Would that context be necessarily more unjust than a context where the contractarian rules of legally imposed inclusivity are in full swing?

Well, since the ideological sources that sustain the hierarchical power of ableism do not differ so much in both contexts, the comparison is more about what unites them instead of what separates them. I am not saying that all the struggles to bring about disability rights at a global scale are pointless. However, and this is also paradoxical, the most genuine transformational power resides in the radical solidarity spaces that this long struggle has engendered for peoples with disabilities all over the world. It has been an existential kind of emancipatory struggle. It has come about with the concomitant realization that there is as much precarity in the global north as in the global south (although the intersubjective dimensions of relative deprivation in terms of per capita wealth and anthropological characteristics complicate this conversation, see for example, Hickel, 2017; McGill, 2016; Milanović, 2016). Precarity does not go

away magically with the enactment of inclusive legislation. Often, the roots of precarity are legislative in nature.

In concluding this reflexive counter story, I would like to stress the following. While Asdrubal's and Arturo's forced encounter takes place incidentally in a schooling setting, I aim to place the accent in the trajectories followed by these individuals as divergent manifestations of equally legitimate radical agency possibilities within the parameters of diasporic global south contexts. Asdrubal and Arturo in their allegorical trajectories illustrate how contextual emancipation could work in the face of exclusionary modes of inclusion and their domination mandate.

Asdrubal plays an allegorical role. As such, he represents at once the malice of social exclusion and the global positionality of peripheral global south (Wolbring, Mackay, Rybchinski & Noga, 2013). Asdrubal eventually drops out of high school. He stops meeting with Arturo or anybody who might remotely link him with an organized counter-narrative of "successful" social inclusion. He is pushed away. His existence continuously moves toward the ineluctable destiny of destitute materiality, to the "non-plus-ultra" of exclusionary realities.

The last remembrance that Arturo holds in his soul shows Asdrubal selling lottery outside the legally prescribed distribution networks. Here and there, he was simply engaging in multiple forms of informal economy underemployment without getting to surpass the threshold of survival. Somebody said that Asdrubal had started drinking more than he should. He was becoming a de facto homeless, an addition to the demolishing dehumanizing statistics of his peripheral nation state. No wonder, he was so hopeless, angry, self-defeated.

How much could be said to confirm that Asdrubal epitomizes social exclusion? Of course, given the extent of today's dramatic humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the meaning of this extreme social exclusion acquires terrible connotations. Babies are dying for lack of basic medical services. Absence of food and even minor supplies are an integral part of everyday survival struggles for Venezuelans of all races and class strata. Hyper-inflation is rampant. Working folks are unable to survive. A massive exodus is under way which is likely to change forever the demographic and proto-institutional face of the country (Uzcátegui & Broner, 2018). It is impossible to imagine what could be the fate of lumpen proletariat individuals with disabilities under such circumstances. Where could Asdrubal go? What means would allow him to survive? Would it be unreasonable to imagine that Asdrubal has passed away? Could he be another unnoticed, anonymous, hidden number among the thousands of victims of this pseudo-revolution with its nonsensical race to get nowhere?

Arturo's fate is not necessarily better. His plight is allegorical as well. He symbolizes the migrating non-white disabled in the age of disposable/diasporas of 21st century globalization. Though seemingly more integrated by ableist and racial contract standards than someone like Asdrubal, Arturo's archetype remains at the margins of social "inclusion." Could perhaps this limbo state be best called exclusionary social inclusion or pseudo-inclusionary exclusion?

Seen from the outside, in his native land Arturo's fate looks at first glance successful; particularly based on his marginal, working-class brown origins. He gradu-

ates from high school with the best grades in his state. He goes on to law school and graduates with honors, well above the second in his class. He then ends up moving to the United States and completes a doctoral degree, among other academic “achievements.” However, Arturo’s story as a brown individual with disabilities starts getting thick and sour. As prescribed by his High Performance doctoral scholarship, he returns to seek a teaching position at his law school alma mater. There, under the legal premises of the Napoleonic Civil Code, still deeply embedded in his country’s legal system (as in most of Latin America, see for instance, Brewer Carías, 2009; De Vries, 1965; Merryman, 1978;), Arturo is denied the appointment he had earned through a public credential contest.

It is very fitting to bring up Albert Memmi’s (1991) work at this early juncture in the chapter. Not only does it shed light on how the racial contract operates in contemporary postcolonial environments; it has the advantage of explicating the kind of relational intricacies of intersectional layers of domination, even among oppressed individuals and sub-groups (very much in the way the portraits of Asdrubal and Arturo show complementary trajectories of subaltern identity making and differential relationality with oppressors). Memmi’s preface is very helpful as a metatheoretical guide as it points out how psychoanalytical and political economy dimensions play into other spheres of intersectionality for the operationalization of coloniality’s features in common across multiple contexts throughout the globe from North Africa to Latin America, black US history and the plight of French Canadians. Memmi’s own writing trajectory exemplifies how what started as a personal soul-searching journey ended up becoming a snow ball process of inspirational resistance for so many categories of oppressed individuals and groups.

Memmi was a Sephardi Jew born and raised in Tunisia prior to the North African independence movements against French imperialism. As Memmi (1991, p. viii) indicates, his first novel *The Pilar of Salt* as well as his second literary attempt, *The Strangers*, were written around his ideas around the married couple (a mixed marriage in the case of the second of these novels which has special significance to the representation of coloniality's own micro-relational and structural contradictions). More than a century ago, Georg Simmel, another Jewish social philosopher, had argued that Jewishness embodies the ideal of the "perfect sociological stranger," especially in European contexts because of their unique exilic sense of outsider ethos, even when the group in question might be composed of "native" born individuals (Simmel, 1971, pp. 145 and following). Something similar, yet contextualized to his time, is described by Memmi:

My portrait of the colonized, which is very much my own, is preceded by a portrait of the colonizer. How could I have permitted myself, with all my concern about personal experience, to draw a portrait of the adversary? Here is a confession I have never made before: I know the colonizer from the inside almost as well as I know the colonized. But I must explain: I said that I was a Tunisian national. Like all other Tunisians I was treated as a second-class citizen, deprived of political rights, refused admission to most civil service departments, etc. But I was not a Moslem. In a country where so many groups, each jealous of its own physiognomy, lived side by side, this was of considerable importance. The Jewish population identified as much with the colonizers as with the colonized. They were undeniably 'natives,' as they were then called, as near as possible to the Moslems in poverty, language, sensibilities, customs, taste in music, odors and cooking. However, unlike the Moslems, they passionately endeavored to identify themselves with the French. To them the West was the paragon of all civilization, all culture. The Jew turned his back happily on the East. He chose the French language, dressed in the Italian style and joyfully adopted every idiosyncrasy of the

Europeans. (This, by the way, is what all colonized try to do before they pass on to the stage of revolt.) For better or for worse, the Jew found himself one small notch above the Moslem on the pyramid which is the basis of all colonial societies. His privileges were laughable, but they were enough to make him proud and to make him hope that he was not part of the mass of Moslems which constituted the base of the pyramid. It was enough to make him feel endangered when the structure began to crumble. The Jews bore arms side by side with the French in the streets of Algiers. (Memmi, 1991, pp. xiv-xv)

Toward the end of the present chapter I will discuss the shifting positionality of the so-called Bravos de Apure in the 19th century struggles for independence in Gran Colombia and today's Peruvian and Bolivian territories. These subaltern peasants came from the southern region of today's Venezuela. Given their extreme marginal positionality and their shifting ties to successive caudillo leaders, they ended up taking turns in fighting with and against the Spaniards. Their historical case might seem to contradict what Memmi describes in the preceding long quotation. However, it is still possible to draw important parallels between the relational plight of Sephardi Jews and exilic Latinidad identities, especially since many of them got incorporated into Latinx segments as part of crypto-Jew shifting experiences of pseudo-members of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas, who, when discovered ran the risk of becoming inquisition victims (for extended discussions of Crypto-Judaism Ladino linguistic identities and Sephardi experiences in the Americas, see for example, Balbuena, 2016; Brodsky, 2016; Gerber, 1992; Hordes, 2005; Perelis, 2017; it is worth noting here that even in present-day Latin American fluid times of globalization, the word Ladino [the Spanish language dialect still preserved among a good number of Sephardi Jews] is filled with pejorative connotations connected to stereotypical

constructs such as *uusura* [excessive interest lending,] theft and deceiving duplicity). Above all, for the purposes of my radical agency possibilities examination on the grounds of radical exteriority, there are two qualities that stand out: (1) the sense of homeless exilic struggle for identity's sake within marginal subaltern relations; and (2) the underground expulsion ethos that keeps coming up even after many generations. These are features very much in parallel to what contemporary illegal immigrants (and also legal visa holders with and without disabilities) from Latin America into global north contexts undergo. They will become more relevant as we dive into the metatheorizing work of black studies and decolonial thinkers such as George J. Sefa Dei, Fanon, James and Du Bois, as well as into the analysis of ontological versus epistemological conceptions of *mestizaje*. For the time being, let us return in the following sub-section to a micro-level discussion of the interactional interplay of racial and sexual contracts with disability experiences of blind Latinx such as Arturo.

B. Comparing Racial and Gender Contracts Via Disability's Intersectional Power

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a writer and part-time English professor. I am American, married, middle-aged, middle class. Like you, I am blind, though not deaf. But the most important thing you need to know about me, and the reason for my letter, is that I grew up hating you. Sorry to be so blunt, especially on such short acquaintance, but one of the advantages of writing to a dead person is there's no need to stand on ceremony. And you should know the truth from the start. I hated you because you were always held up to me as a role model, and one who set such an impossibly high standard of cheerfulness in the face of adversity. 'Why can't you be more like Helen Keller?' people always said to me. Or that's what it felt like whenever your name came up. 'Count your blessings,' they told me. 'Yes, you're blind, but poor

little Helen Keller was blind and deaf, and no one ever heard her complain.' (Kleege, 2006, p. 1)

When Arturo looks back at his experiences growing up blind he notices that there are remarkable differences with the things emphasized in the preceding epigraph. He does not remember anything mentioned by anybody concerning Helen Keller. She was invisible in his world. It was not so much the kind of invisibility that neglects. It was a sort of reverential, rather mythical silence. It was something like the silence of the untouchable, the unreachable (to use a non-feminine ableist trope, more like Super Man with his white guy super powers). Helen Keller was present in movies, in the world of white Americans. Thus, nobody in Arturo's world ever had the temptation of naming her as a role model for him, a brown guy from the barrio. After all she was a girl, right? Plus, she was white, college educated, etc. Those were features not necessarily expected of him or folks like him (whatever that means in the complex hierarchical arrangements of global south relationality reserved for lower-class, people of color with "sensorial" disabilities).

Hence, we are at this juncture of the chapter before a sort of identity triangle. It is one that highlights three contractarian ideologies: ableism, racial and gender (should I say sexual) hegemonic contracts of domination. Hegemony unites them. But the way this hegemony works is very telling. For instance, up until Arturo graduated from law school, he did not hear any stories of blind girls having gone to college, not only from the school he attended but nationally. Since the school's foundation till 1974, it was run by a female. She was not blind, although she was married to a blind man who also taught at the school. For the 1975-1976 academic year, the sociopolitical conditions changed dramatically in ways that would be too long to share here. At that

point, a new principal was appointed. Once again, it was a sighted female who played that role. Despite this positional power of women, there were not back then special incentives that Arturo was able to identify for outstanding academic performance in the case of girls. Unwritten, symbolically silenced rules of patriarchy probably operated in the opposite direction.

Up until 1974, there was a physical separation of boys and girls in the school's building. Most likely, this separation worked in practice against blind girls. An illustrative image in Arturo's memories for that period is represented by the visits of blind alumni to the school. In every instance, these visitors were male. They tried very proactively to play a mentoring role for boys. Arturo benefited a great deal from this intangible relational incentive. Nothing like that was in place for girls.

There is another aspect that has meso and macro relevance. For anybody familiar with Latin America and "charitable" work for persons with disability in many parts of the world, it is not a surprise the need to underscore for analytical purposes the significance of classism (Liu, 2011; by contrast, see Pomerleau, 2013 book size analysis of Califia Community in southern California as an outstanding [although not associated with disability issues] grassroots example of the struggle against the sexual contract in the US 1970s context). In this respect, Arturo's school for the blind was exceptional. At the time he attended, it was the only school for the blind in the country that was genuinely free, without uniform and extraneous requirements that would prevent poor families from registering their children there. Therefore, the concentration of brown, poor, peasant, blind students at this school was much higher than that of other schools for the blind (which at that time were not more than four nationwide and were circumscribed to elementary level). For blind girls, this kind of

educational access was not more than a symbolic consolation prize. Yet, it was meaningful. It is unlikely that most of the blind girls there would have had access to the most basic level of literacy under that context).

After 1975, the number of students at the school for the blind increased. However, during the time that Arturo was there, the proportion of blind girls was never higher than a third of the number of boys registered and active. Yet, of course, the ableist materiality of the sexual contract is by no means a global south phenomenon. Especially for blind girls of color the proportional distribution of resources and opportunities is, from what Arturo can tell not fair at all. The evidence on college graduation rates for people with disabilities is not readily available. However, in a recent presentation, it was reported that among teachers, a profession dominated by white women, the most recent statistics were that only 3.6% admitted their identity as persons with disabilities (despite an estimate that at least 21% of individuals in the US have some disability). Assuming that the majority of those represented in this percentage are women, one can try to pinpoint the map of material possibilities awaiting a girl with disabilities in the global north. Yet, adding to the equation racial contract exclusion considerations, can anybody ascertain the extent to which girls of color with disabilities experience material and other instances of disparity?

C. Contractualism and the problem of Agency

It is common sense that agency should be conceived anthropocentrically - how can it be otherwise? We are center-stage in our lives, not these artefacts, however mundane, or indeed intelligent... this anthropocentric worldview means that the material or environmental

counterpoints to human agency have generally been given short shrift in scholarly discussion. Indeed, while agency is a much-debated theme across the social sciences, the terms of the debate have remained rather narrow, focusing overwhelmingly on the relationship between agency and structure... Arguments go back and forth over the degree to which agents... are free to act in the world. (Knappett & Malafouris, 2018 [2008], n.p.)

Keep in mind the definition of radical agency I have employed throughout the dissertation in terms of non-linear trajectories. One of the lessons to be extrapolated from this conception of radical agency is that one's amount of formal education does not insure any particular inclination toward emancipatory endeavors (which is true for persons with or without disabilities as well as those under the sexual and racial contracts; and by the way, this is probably a good point to note that, for reasons that have escaped Arturo's careful scrutiny, none of the male or female students who coincided with Arturo during the years he spent at the boarding school for the blind completed college, unless they have done it during the 21st century while Arturo has been outside the country). Something similar could be said about radical solidarity. The propensity to link with others for grassroots social movement building in emancipatory learning pursuits is not directly proportional to one's formal instruction (for example, although the cohorts of blind students prior to Arturo's time in the boarding school had a higher rate of college completion, their organized efforts were never galvanized in a movement or concretized in a small organization for the blind that could carry out collective agendas; thus, their "success" was individualistic and fragmentary). Therefore, it is important to consider once again Asdrubal's predicament. Could he have cultivated paths toward radical agency and radical solidarity? What kind of factors would have stirred him up in that direction?

Both Arturo and Asdrubal were subject to the racial contract. Both experienced the oppressive chains of ableism as brown male blind individuals in the same global south environment and during the same regulatory framework as contemporary students of the same total institution (although it must be said that Asdrubal did not experience his entire elementary instruction at the boarding school). Asdrubal's visual impairment was probably detected while he was attending a rural elementary school and he only spent two years or so of instruction for the blind. Identity wise, this must have had an important differentiating effect. Yet, how could one know if this was a crucial factor as far as radical agency is concerned?

This is probably a good context to talk about the ontology of new materialisms in connection to agency. The question of how much freedom one possesses to act in the world was indeed one of the elements that inspired Marxian conceptions of historical (Plekhanov, 1940) and dialectical materialism (as spelled out by Marx himself in his early writings or by structuralist thinkers such as Althusser who favored Marx's late writings as the only ones truly scientific due to their dialectical grounding in objectivity, e.g., Althusser, 1969, 1970 & 1971; see also, Balibar, 2009 for expansive discussions on Althusser's political philosophy). When talking about new materialisms, thinkers such as Coole and Frost (2010) underscore the need to transcend the limitations of these old materialisms which, ontologically, were dualist in nature. They were dualist because their sense of economic and even cultural (e.g., Williams R., 1989 & 2005) materiality was aligned with evolutionary, teleology-centered, primarily linear modes of idealism that preempted historical and humanist conceptions of individual and collective action. Here is how Coole and Frost (2010b, n.p.) frame the relevance of these new materialist conceptions:

How could we ignore the power of matter and the ways it materializes in our ordinary experiences or fail to acknowledge the primacy of matter in our theories? Yet for the most part we take such materiality for granted, or we assume that there is little of interest to say about it... materialism has remained a sporadic and often marginal approach. For there is an apparent paradox in thinking about matter: as soon as we do so, we seem to distance ourselves from it, and within the space that opens up, a host of immaterial things seems to emerge: language, consciousness, subjectivity, agency, mind, soul; also imagination, emotions, values, meaning, and so on. These have typically been presented as idealities fundamentally different from matter and valorized as superior to the baser desires of biological material or the inertia of physical stuff. It is such idealist assumptions and the values that flow from them that materialists have traditionally contested.

There are two relevant concepts associated with this contestation. They are (1) the monist understanding of material causality and (2) “the significance of corporeality,” which Coole and Frost do not define but whose ontological sphere connects with the reality of the body and material dimensions. These two concepts are paramount for explaining the innate capacity of physical beings (not just human beings), to engender and be channels of change.

Keeping these concepts in mind, the first thing I want to stress in linking materialism and radical agency is the following. Rather than thinking of agency exclusively in terms of one’s freedom to act in the world (especially thinking of freedom as a subjective realm of the immaterial world invented by idealist dualisms), it is more productive to think of it as a journey, a non-linear trajectory toward the exploration of one’s freedom within emancipatory learning spaces. These spaces might be circumscribed, oppressive, apparently emptied from any hint of agency-like political subjectivities. In their exploratory, intrinsic contingency, they are always filled with

agency prospects in the materiality of their utopian potential. In this sense, agency is always within one's reach in the realm of potentiality, of mystery, of the miraculous stubbornness that keeps alive hope's revolutionary flame.

Here is another relevant example as Arturo once again resurrects memories from his time at the boarding school. There is one character he has been remembering a lot these days. Let us call him Emeterio. In Chapter one I stated that (1) radical agents are not born but made; (2) their making takes place over time in alignment with collective endeavors of subaltern critical existence that materialize their political subjectivities in relational processes of radical solidarity and emancipatory learning with other oppressed agents; and (3) their making, re-making and even their unmaking is by no means autonomous because they are influenced (although not driven) by complex identity negotiations between oppressors and their oppressed. Often, the nature of these "negotiations" is non-intentional. This sounds like a contradiction in terms because of the anthropocentric, voluntarist set of preconceptions inherited from idealist dualisms.

Do you remember Fatima? Just as somebody like her is key in perpetuating oppression through relational modes of betrayal, there are equivalent counter-parts in the realm of the oppressors. Their role is much more ambiguous. It is often tied to circumstantial aspects of the specific type of utopia pursued or needed at a given time by subaltern agents. Yet, in general, their behavior corresponds to what authors like Coole and Frost would probably call material causality at the relational level. Stories such as that of the "Schindler's List in Nazi Germany are good examples. Perhaps their unfolding is not as heroic as the myth portrays things with the passing of time (Crowe, 2007; Keneally, 2007 & 2013; Leyson, 2015; Pemper, 2005).

Another historical example full of voluntarist ironies in the non-linear unfolding of imposed pseudo-agency trajectories is provided by Spain's "División Azul" (the Blue Division). This army division was set up by the Franco regime. It was sent to fight in the Soviet Union during World War II to compensate Germans for their help during the terrible years of the 1936-1939 Spanish civil war (Jurado, 2009). Blue Division men were recruited among right wing fascist, although these constituted a smaller proportion, left wing militants who were forced by the regime to "clean" their record by serving in the armed forces, and individuals who were affiliated with neither right or left ideologies, i.e., mere starving folks in need of income for their families and perhaps a bit of adventure during so much turmoil. Despite such a divergence of wills, all of them were bound under the existential materiality of their war time fate.

Emeterio's story was a bit like that. At least that is how it felt to Arturo in the contingent fate of their relationality within the boarding school. When I wrote in Chapter 1 that my approach privileges the examination of emancipatory learning where it is least expected such as in the total institution spaces of prison education contexts, boarding schools, sheltered/secluded employment establishments for persons with visual impairments or intellectual disabilities, etc., it was Emeterio's story which was lingering in the back of my mind.

Emeterio was totally blind. He was brought to the boarding school when Arturo was in second or third grade. He was large, rather fat. He was probably twice as old as Arturo at the time. Yet, what Arturo remembers the most is Emeterio's night time routine. He would simulate that he was a radio announcer and would play popular music (making noises and becoming rather centered on this activity, disregarding the rest of the world around him for long periods, perhaps as much as an hour each time).

There is another thing that strikes Arturo as he looks retrospectively at Emeterio's plight. Arturo cannot remember any family member who would come to visit Emeterio throughout the several years he spent at the boarding school. Arturo vaguely remembers Emeterio mentioning an uncle or so, but he does not remember anybody physically present to pick Emeterio up, drop him or anything else. Perhaps Arturo did not pay attention. The thing is that he can remember other incidental encounters with family members of students during that period. Why is it that he cannot identify relatives for Emeterio? Even as adult, when he asked about Emeterio the responses were not rich in details.

During the first few months at the boarding school Emeterio was playful. Arturo remembers him as being quite awake. However, at some point, probably during the 1975-1976 school year, Emeterio started becoming isolated. Everything feels unclear to Arturo except that by the end of that school year Emeterio was already catatonic. He would stand for hours completely mute. It was as if he had turned into another of the few trees that coexisted with them in the secluded spaces of the boarding school.

At the same time, Arturo has the conviction that there was a material link (idealist would call precisely this kind of link something immaterial and spiritual). There is a dimension of spirituality in this relationship, but Arturo is certain that the source was material in nature. For instance, Arturo remembers afternoons when he would get close and touch Emeterio's back. Somehow Arturo feels that they were able to sustain a form of dialogue during those exceptional moments. Arturo probably spoke, although he does not remember anything about the specific content of what he articulated under those circumstances.

In Chapter 2 I mentioned how Octavio Paz's Double Flame essays expressed his regret that the sphere attributed to the soul has been shrinking in modern times. At first, it could be interpreted that Paz's lament goes against what Coole and Frost claim with regards to new materialisms. Nevertheless, Paz's attack was directed against Cartesian machinist forms of dualism which see the mind in command of the body very much in a computer-like sense of hierarchical obedience. He sees that as a soul-less dualism.

It is important to mention Paz's attack here because it indirectly points out a sense in which the new materialisms are not so new. Jonathan Israel (2001) argues that there were competing modes of Enlightenment. The Cartesian version of Enlightenment ended up being triumphant at the expense of what Israel calls radical Enlightenment. Israel (2001, pp. V-VI) stresses that there are discrepancies among intellectual historians with respect to the proper way to characterize the phenomenon of the European Enlightenment. A first group grounds it in a French context from which everything projected into Europe as a whole, with an emphasis on authors such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, D' Alembert, d' Holbach, and Rousseau. A second group grounds it in the science and ideas coming from England, particularly through the writings of Locke and Newton. A third group asserts that there was a constellation of Enlightenments all of which were related yet distinct, spreading in secluded ways throughout numerous national compartments. A fourth perspective insists that there was a core moderate version and a peripheral/circumscribed/relative irrelevant version of radical Enlightenment. Israel criticizes the French perspective neglects the extent to which 18th century French thinkers borrowed ideas from other European authors. Although the English version seems plausible insofar as Voltaire's original ideas

were strongly influenced by Locke and Newton, it is not congruent with the slow diffusion of and often resistance against English ideas found throughout Europe. Israel's critique against the constellations perspective is that it takes the wrong stance by looking at the phenomenon exclusively within a national historical framework. Lastly, the moderate/radical perspective projects a false image of intellectual equilibrium.

According to Israel, the primary evidence on the radical Enlightenment shows a strongly unified cultural phenomenon. In it, there was a steady diffusion of radical Enlightenment ideas in parallel coexistence with moderate ones "displaying differences in timing, no doubt, but for the most part preoccupied not only with the same intellectual problems but often even the very same books and insights everywhere from Portugal to Russia and from Ireland to Sicily" (2001, p. V). Furthermore, what follows is the gist of Israel's core argumentation in his work concerning the radical Enlightenment:

The Radical Enlightenment, far from being a peripheral development, is an integral and vital part of the wider picture and was seemingly even more internationally cohesive than the mainstream Enlightenment. Frequently, the moderate mainstream was consciously, even desperately, reacting to what was widely perceived as the massively dangerous threat posed by radical thought. Many scholars will, I assume, be rather surprised by the prominence given here to the role of Spinoza and Spinozism not only on the continent but even in the British context where, historiographically there has been a persistent refusal to acknowledge that Spinoza had any influence at all... Spinoza and Spinozism were in fact the intellectual backbone of the European Radical Enlightenment everywhere, not only in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, and Scandinavia but also Britain and Ireland. (2001, p. VI)

The radical Enlightenment was grounded in the monist materialism of Spinoza and Spinozism. As such, its ontology assumes that “motion is inherent in matter... Nature is self-moving, and creates itself” (Israel, 2001, p. 160). This kind of materialist monism was not only the most important intellectual force behind radical Enlightenment, but it also shows great congruence with ideas prevailing in contemporary physics and bio-genetics (Cox, 1999; Gladwell, 2002; Gould, 2002; Grosz, 1994, 2004 & 2005). It prefigures in many ways some forms of neo-vitalism (Bakhtin, 1992; Bergson, 1921, 1946, 1988 & 1998; Driesch, 1908 & 1914; Esposito, 2004; Fraser M., Kember & Lury, 2006a; Glissant, 1997; Greco, 2005), certain forms of transformative postmodernism (Ebert, 1996; Guattari, 1995) and elements of what Coole and Frost (2010; see also, Frost, 2005, 2008 & 2016) highlight as new materialist paradigms. It is fitting to mention here that Fraser M., Kember and Lury (2006b) insist on the need to build upon the tension between new forms of vitalism and rigid modes of materialism grounded in the physical and biological sciences. This tension rests on vitalism’s core concepts such as process and relationality:

The significance of relationality in process thinking... is that it acts as a ‘lure for life’, an enticement to move beyond the conflation of life with the (life) sciences, to conceive life as not confined to living organisms, but as movement, a radical becoming. In process thinking, relations and relationality cut through and across all spheres, regardless of the distinctions that are drawn between them (between the cultural, the natural, and the artificial, for example) ... (Fraser M., Kember & Lury, 2006b, p. 4)

When Arturo remembers those conversations with Emeterio he senses the power of this ontology with its emphasis on relational processes for grounding Emeterio’s personhood. Arturo also thinks of the trans-materiality of those experi-

ences they shared. Far from being metaphysical, those experiences had such a real flavor of existential becoming. There they were: two brown, materially dispossessed children. They could not see each other, and they did not need to do so; it was pointless. Both were native Spanish speakers living in the “home” environments.

The paradox was that they were bound to talk beyond words in a setting that was far from home (in the physical as in the symbolic sense). Yet, who could deprive Emeterio of his innate right to explore freedom and emancipatory learning in his own terms? What could nullify the proto-relational power of these conversations as a mode of resistance within the confines of a total institution? Perhaps it does not get to be defined as radical solidarity in the sense I delineated in Chapter 1. Yet, remembering Levinas, who could refuse the axiological power of adopting a trans-ontological materiality in the sense of giving and receiving as the relational basis for a performativity of radical agency that recognizes one’s redemption in the radical exteriority of beings completely foreign to who we think we are? We cannot really know or understand these beings. Nonetheless, our sense of relationality remains in the mysterious purview (Barad, 2003; Braidotti, 1991 & 2002; Brennan, 2004) of potential embraces.

D. Contractualism and Intersectionality

Where are you from? La pregunta, repetida en cualquier situación y a toda hora, puede ser desquiciante. No si vienes de Europa, de Europa Occidental, se entiende. Pero si llegas a EU de un país del Tercer Mundo se vuelve una pregunta retórica, para la cual sólo hay un tipo de reacción posible. Era 1988, acababa de llegar a EU a estudiar literatura comparada con una beca Fulbright y entonces parecía no haber otra salida. Cada vez que me preguntaban "de dónde eres" y yo respondía, hacía surgir en el otro una gama de

prejuicios sobre lo que es ser mexicano seguida, por mi parte, de una interminable defensa. De inmediato, mi interlocutor fruncía el ceño, decepcionado porque contradecía su idea de la mexicanidad y me desdibujaba. A sus ojos, me volvía un virus mutante, algo peligroso de lo que hay que huir. De mis sorpresas más grandes al llegar a EU fue oír lo que yo era o lo que debía ser por ser mexicana, por ser mujer, por ser cualquier cosa en la que uno se convierte al cruzar una frontera y ser vista por los otros. Y fue saber, sobre todo, que yo no era yo, sino que yo era y siempre sería "otra". Lo segundo fue entrar en una librería y encontrar que autores como Gabriel García Márquez y Jorge Luis Borges, quienes para mí habían escrito cada uno 'el libro,' aparecían en los anaqueles como ethnic literature. Quizá ambas cuestiones eran en realidad parte de lo mismo. Where are you from? Esa pregunta encierra el origen del crimen. (Beltrán, 2018 [2015], n.p.)¹⁷

The origin of the crime to which Rosa Beltrán's epigraph alludes to is clearly grounded in the contractarian roots of othering which frame the basis of white supremacy. Being from anywhere but Europe places you as an outsider (and even this outsider nature has its hierarchy). Yet, in terms of agency, it could be extrapolated by looking at these kinds of new materialist ontologies that they allow contemporary humanity to transcend once and for all oppressive hierarchical dimensions such as those prescribed by the racial contract (Gilroy, 2002). Thus, they could be seen as serving the interest of post-racial thinkers, authors who claim that there is no value in maintaining race as a relevant analytical (much less existential or structurally relevant) category (for discussions, see for example, Fluker, 2016; Smith T., 2012; Squires, 2014; Tesler, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010; Vickerman, 2013; Wise, 2010).

I contend that, on the contrary, Spinozist monism and other forms of materialist ontologies help underscore the co-authoring metaphor of relational agency to which I alluded in Chapter 1. As a matter of fact, this ontology takes the metaphor a

step further, treating it as the crucial manifestation of being in action (or motion if you will). Take as an example the depiction of mindfulness by Andy Clark (2018 [2008], n.p.) in the passage that follows:

The brain fascinates because it is the biological organ of mindfulness itself. It is the inner engine that drives intelligent behaviour. Such a depiction provides a worthy antidote to the once-popular vision of the mind as somehow lying outside the natural order. But it is a vision with a price. For it has concentrated much theoretical attention on an uncomfortably restricted space; the space of the inner neural machine, divorced from the wider world which then enters the story only via the hygienic gateways of perception and action. Recent work in neuroscience, robotics and psychology... stresses the unexpected intimacy of brain, body and world and invites us to attend to the structure and dynamics of extended adaptive systems – ones involving a much wider variety of factors and forces... I believe there is much to be learnt from this broader vision. The mind itself, if such a vision is correct, is best understood as the activity of an essentially situated brain: a brain at home in its proper bodily, cultural and environmental niche.

Thinking of home in this context is important for decolonial intersectionality purposes, taking intersectionality even beyond the merely human into the mindfulness terrain of other complex organisms (which I am not going to explore at all in this dissertation, but which corroborates the power and added value of interacting with and giving co-authoring status to say, catatonic individuals such as Emeterio). This idea of a situated brain at home in its proper meaning making niche highlights at once the relevance of exilic home building mechanisms, stressing relational alterity for marginalized identities as well as well-rooted community building traditions from which radical agency's core sense of non-linear innovation can spark (i.e., the emblematic dialectics of roots and wings at the core of desiring and making change possible, both of which are presently being cut off from "unauthorized" families in the US as they get

detained and separated against all humanitarian parameters, fully cognoscente that they can act in full impunity, see for example, the article by Jonathan Blitzer 2018 recently published in the New Yorker; see also, Benhabib, 2000 & 2004). It is also a kind of radical ecological vision of humanity that grounds a political philosophy and scientific picture that reminds co-authoring actors and analysts alike their need to keep the heart in mind as they think of and enact mindfulness. This heart-centered epistemology and axiology is very helpful to understand/explain the critical hermeneutics and moral aesthetics of co-authoring in trans-ontological love's giving and receiving. Only this trans-ontology of mindfulness in action can allow actors and analysts to make durable meaning of radical solidarity, even when its interactional expressions may appear to be incidental or circumscribed to single events.

There is one interesting metatheoretical example to this effect among the materialist agency essays compiled by Knappett and Malafouris (2018 [2008]). The essay by Tim Ingold (2018 [2008]) engages critically with actor network theory (ANT; see for example, Bennett, 2004; Fuller, S., 1994; Latour, 2005; Law, 1992 & 1999; Law & Hassard, 1999; Lee & Brown S., 1994; Sørensen & Ziemke, 2007). Ingold criticizes ANT's tendency to see agency exclusively as coming about through an interlocking network of objects. To do so, he develops a metaphor where ANT dialogues with SPIDER (which in Ingold's metatheoretical nomenclature stands for "Skilled Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness"). In other words, Ingold's emphasis is placed on the relational web of skilled practices of various organisms, very much like the notion of co-authoring defended in this dissertation for the inter-textual unfolding of alterity-based collective action. "The skilled action-perception of an organism as it moves through an environment creates a kind of mesh, but this does not

mean that agency is distributed evenly between the organism and its mesh (which could be a fish with water, a butterfly with air, a spider with web or a potter with clay)...” (Knappett & Malafouris, 2018 [2008], n.p.). Ingold’s preferred metaphor is that of “meshworks,” of relational embodiment in opposition to merely distributive networks (Ingold, 2007) which may help to explain/understand the intersectional alliance building processes pertaining to persons with disabilities and persons of color, e.g., blind Latinx unique meshworks of embodied interaction among themselves, other constituencies, braille literacy, STEM struggles, orientation and mobility, employability issues, etc.

There is yet another example much more in line with the need to circumvent the ideological confinement of the racial and sexual contracts alluded to in the present chapter. Fraser M., et al. (2006b) would typify them as stubborn facts insofar as they remain despite processes of co-authoring in relational becoming. However, as construed by Fraser M., et al. there is still substantial ground for hope:

At the same time that facts are irreversible, they are able to be undone; that is, they are not closed. They always give rise to – they are always enfolded in – novel interpretations (new facts). Every time a ‘rupture’ is identified, a new series of relations are established. Each fact or entity might thus be said to be the resource or potential out of which new entities emerge. A further implication here, then, is that critiques of the social world that come out of process thinking cannot be conceived of solely in terms of ‘taking things apart’ (deconstruction), for every taking apart is at the same time a reconstruction of relations and relationality. But this reconstruction may be done in different ways, in ways that may be more or less inventive. (2006b, p. 5)

The inventive metatheoretical example I want to highlight is provided by Lisa Adkins’ (2006) essay on the uniqueness of personhood and relational modes of

property in the new economy. Building on Pateman (1988 & 2002) Adkins questions the traditional social contract assumptions concerning the intrinsic link between property and personhood. Adkins argues that, in the new economy, property and personhood have gotten separated and it is even possible to talk of a new stage in the development of personhood. The tendency in the new economy is such that it links property to branding given its unfolding as a “virtual, reflexive or network economy” (Adkins, 2006, p. 112).

Overall, the new economy no longer operates within the parameters of the old modes of ownership instituted by contractarian thinkers. This ends up impacting, among other things, the interaction between people and the virtual and material consequences of their labor via knowledge/service intensive dimensions of relationality and trans-ontological materiality (see for example, Adkins, 2000, 2001 & 2002; Adkins & Lury, 1999; Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994; Callon, 1998; Callon, Meadel & Rabehariosa 2002; Carrier & Miller D, 1998; Carrier & West, 2009; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996; Gray, 2003; Haraway, 1997; Knorr-Cetina & Bruegger, 2000 & 2002; Lash, 1994 & 2002; Lury, 1993, 2000 & 2003; Martin E., 2000; Peters, 1999; Rodowick, 2001; Slater, 2002a & 2002b; Thrift, 1998; Wittel, 2001; Wittel, Lury & Lash, 2002). Identity wise, Adkins’ work is concerned with the “epistemological and ontological questions wrought not only by the commodification of social relations, but by the commodification of life itself (for example, in the patenting of cloned transgenic organisms) and by the move from (natural) kind to brand – and indeed from brand to kind. The shifting ground of ‘natureculture’...” (Fraser M., et al., p. 11).

There are certainly new venues for oppression in these new spaces of virtual relationality. Yet, at the same time, innovative emancipatory spaces may also emerge.

Regarding disability, these relational spaces may give new meaning and impetus to the strategic linking of disabled identities as multitude I discussed in Chapter 2 in conjunction with Mitchell and Snyder's (2010) work. As an analogous exercise, could race, especially in its intersectional manifestations of decolonial deconstructions of contractarian ideologies be treated within the mobilizing materiality of multitude? If so, how would those new modes of relationality would look like in their enactment of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning?

Perhaps, the work of Sara Ahmed (2010) can give us some hints. Ahmed's essay is framed around the idea that one's orientations (physical, moral, "spiritual," etc.) shape and are shaped by matter. "If matter is affected by orientations, by the ways in which bodies are directed toward things, it follows that matter is dynamic, unstable, and contingent. What matters is itself an effect of proximities... Orientations are how the world acquires a certain shape through contact between bodies that are not in a relation of exteriority" (Ahmed, 2010, n.p.). In this sense, Ahmed brings back the power of Levinasian trans-ontology in its original phenomenological and existential connotations. However, in her essay, the spectrum of relational orientations is not circumscribed to human contact. At the same time, it highlights in an indirect fashion the unstable way in which sameness and alterity preempt and are disrupted by our bodily orientations and modes of interdependence (e.g., the link between blind individuals and their canes, mobility impaired folks and wheelchair's, the increasing number of people dependent on cell phones and so forth). Racially speaking, there are contexts where these orientations are still governed by segregational patterns. Hence, this approach could help underscore the materiality of segregation itself.

What seems most interesting is how Ahmed complicates (see also her 2006 rendition) pre-assigned ontological and epistemological labels:

“I ... resist calling my own contribution a ‘new’ materialism inasmuch as my own work draws on, and is indebted to, earlier feminist engagements with phenomenology that were undertaken during the period of ‘the cultural turn.’ These phenomenological engagements believe the claim ... that, during this period, matter was the only thing that did not matter” (2010, n.p.)

On the one hand, this gives me the opportunity to clarify some things about the multiplicity of interpretations embedded under philosophical labels such as Spinozism. As Beth Lord (2011) points out, 18th century Spinozism portrayed Spinoza’s ideas as transcendental idealism, dogmatic rationalism or immanent materialism, depending on whose version of Spinozism one would read. Lord is particularly interested in Kant’s reading of and responsive adaptation to Spinozism. Considering the dangerous place given to Kant by decolonial theorists, especially among Latin American philosophers, this Kantian connection for Spinozism is a helpful reminder. Despite Spinozism’s radical and perhaps marginalized status in the framing of European modernity throughout the coloniality of power imposed and still present in multiple versions of imperialism around the world, it is unclear the extent to which the cross-pollination of ideas prevents us from thinking of modernity as purified from such influences, even in Spinoza’s legacy. Therefore, every critical hermeneutic exercise one undertakes must be carefully contextualized and restrained to avoid seeing a given philosophical system as a panacea.

On the other hand, Ahmed’s work serves to explain/understand in materialist terms how certain things that do not attract us or upon which we do not act at all during

certain periods of our lives, end up becoming so crucial in directing our sense of radical agency. Without embracing traditional modes of voluntarism, Ahmed's ideas on orientation show why the non-linear nature of radical agency and even radical solidarity is not merely impulsive or arbitrary. The difference in Asdrubal and Arturo's orientations, for instance, lack hierarchy under Ahmed's framework. Neither of them is a priori better than the other and their moral texture is not preempted in advance. They are materially caused, although not in a fatalistic but rather a highly situated sort of way. Arturo knows that he always cared about disability issues at the activist level. However, somehow, he never saw so much intellectual relevance in them. Unknowingly then, he was cultivating orientations that were splitting his sense of self. He was building silos of exteriority in his own sense of identity. He was precluding modes of radical solidarity that could have been profitable at a given moment for specific projects he was undertaking. Yet, was he ready to orient himself in a given fashion? How would he know? Here is where emancipatory learning becomes paramount. Even if it expresses itself through retrospective reflexivity, it can shed light on some of these orientation dimensions. It can help to start mapping the objects of their turning point contours. Hence, it can give much more than a trajectory, moving towards strategic uses of explanation and understanding in critical hermeneutics where activism and knowledge work mingle and co-create new spaces of agency and movement building for intersectional emancipation.

3.2. Bridging Epistemology, Axiology and Aesthetics

Anarchism, while perhaps not the most attractive political philosophy, is certainly excellent medicine for epistemology, and for the philosophy of science. The reason is not difficult to find... 'the history of revolution in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and subtle than even the best historian and the best methodologist can imagine...' History is full of 'accidents and conjunctures and curious juxtapositions of events' and it demonstrates to us the 'complexity of human change and the unpredictable character of the ultimate consequences of any given act or decision...' (Feyerabend, 2010, p. 2)

This section starts the framing of Latinidad for the sake of examining radical agency/solidarity possibilities. First, it does so by emphasizing the interlocking interactions among epistemology, ontology and axiology. My purpose here is to underscore that what matters is not so much one's multiple knowledges and perspectives about what Latinidad means but the intersectional practices that constitute its continued sense of becoming and performativity in everyday life as well as in literature, the arts, ethics, Latinx modes of spirituality and so on. Although it may seem a truism, the living of Chicanidad is very different to the experiences of Latinx negritude within US contexts and throughout the Americas (Gordon L., 2016; Lao-Montes, 2016). For some, it might seem that categories such as indigenismo transcend the scope of Latinidad as they probably conceive it as a uniquely global identity (Fenelon & Hall T., 2016). Yet, at the same time, it cannot be argued that approaching the study of trans-Latinidades as a relatively unified phenomenon is a futile effort. Exploring its hierarchical contours is extremely fruitful in the examination of radical exteriority's implications for identity and trans-ontological relationality.

Secondly, following Francisco Valdes' (2000) LatCrit conceptualization I use the framing in this section to problematize the relevance of "Hispanismo" in the shaping of Latinidad's decolonial and emancipatory potential. Valdes' core argument is that, in analyzing Latinx, LatCrit and other theorists in a way that considers multiple modalities of internal diversity, e.g., those stemming from nationality, ethnicity, race, immigration background and status, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other categories of identity and identification that "have been rendered relevant to anticolonial analysis" (2000, p. 307, note 1).

Thus, anticolonialism is the crucial dimension (Sandrino-Glasser, 1998). Therefore, the case of Hispanismo must be singled out critically insofar as it links at once with issues of Euro-centric white supremacy and postcolonial/inter-imperial uniqueness of Latinx of all races north and south of the Río Grande. As Valdes (2000, p. 308) puts it:

We have explored the mixture of racism and nativism that afflicts Latinas/os (and other immigrant-identified groups) ... We have found that sometimes Latinas/os have been decried, or have sought to be identified, as white-and that sometimes they have not... among Latinas/os, as among other groups, those of the nonwhites who are more pale are structurally and systematically more likely to receive the social and material benefits associated with whiteness... racial formation among Latinas/os is indeed 'different' than among African Americans, Asian Americans, and other racialized, nonwhite groups in the United States-though in many ways it is similar as well.

Hispanismo epitomizes this mixture of nativism and racism, manifesting itself in slightly different ways throughout the entire Latin American continent. As such, it invites strategic alliance building and broad metatheoretical approaches aimed at decolonial and emancipatory resistance (Chang & Aoki, 1997; López, 1997; Valdes,

1999). Hispanismo or hispanidad is defined as the ideology that builds on exaggerating the grounding of Latinidades on ties to Spain and thus white European ontologies, epistemologies and ways to view the world (Valdes, 2000).

Apart from its geopolitical and socio-historical implications of erasure of other trends, Hispanismo is fundamentally a racial ideology as it embodies white supremacy and appropriates non-white sources of Latinidades. It is set up to perpetuate a colonial and imperialistic heritage that often connects with inter and trans-imperial everyday practices. Arturo, for example remembers having been asked in one of his research experiences in New Mexico why was it that being Hispanic his skin color was so dark. The question came from a Hispanic research participant. This was a person from northern New Mexico who had opted to call himself somebody of Spanish descent. This meant that this individual was proudly linking his lineage to the Spanish conquistadores, which symbolically serves to evoke the power embedded in *ego conquiro* even long after the imperial hegemony of Spain has faded away. Pheno-typically, many of these individuals are not white. However, (perhaps unknowingly) they rely on the enslavement heritage of bearing the last names of conquistadores for having been part of their *encomienda* (i.e., land grant) subjects, mere property, no so different from cattle and other reified items for exchange (Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Roberts D., 2004).

I concur with thinkers who wish to stress the need to avoid looking at Latinx race issues as a black and white binary affair (e.g., Morán, 1997; Perea, 1997). At the same time, I think it is fruitful to inscribe the study of Latinidades within the broad umbrella of decolonial blackness studies (it might seem that the same could also be said of whiteness studies, although, for the sake of my emphasis on radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning I am convinced that a broad application of

decolonial blackness can be much more congruent). As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, I intend to rely very explicitly on the work of George J. Sefa Dei to this effect (see section 4 in this chapter).

There is an important last point I need to address in this sub-section. This point derives from the conflation of race and ethnicity that generally masks the ideological nature of Hispanismo. It is true that Latinidades are made up of racial, ethnic, geopolitical, linguistic and exilic elements (this exilic dimension is relevant even for those Latinx communities which have not experienced physical migration since the times of the conquista, whose identity ethos has nonetheless been forced to adapt to new imperialist contexts in ways that are in practice as diasporic as those experienced by migrating Latinx groups). Despite this complex factual truth, I would like to defend the claim that both analytically and at the level of trans-ontology, this unique intersectionality of Latinidades is governed by race and decolonial resistance dynamics not only in the US but also throughout the Americas, Spain and wherever Latinx enclaves get established. The significance of making this analytical point is well developed by Ian Haney López (1997).

López uses the famous *Hernández V Texas* case as a springboard to his argument, pointing out that while that particular Supreme Court decision granted legal protection to Mexican-Americans and by extension to Latinx in the United States, it did so by avoiding/erasing their racial uniqueness. López further demonstrates that this is done following a social constructivist pattern grounded on legal fictions that nonetheless acquire the force of “reality” (1997, pp. 1152 and following). In *Hernández V Texas* the paradox is that the Supreme Court was following a biological conception of race. This meant that they encountered factual evidence of discrimination typical of

race related cases but were not able to attribute these facts to a biologically recognized racial category within the US legal system. López contends that this paradox dissolves when one treats race as a socially constructed dimension that pertains to Mexican-Americans as much as any other Latinx communities.

... the benefits of employing a racial vocabulary seem to far outweigh the potential costs of reifying notions of innate difference... employing terms like 'race' and 'racial group' to describe contemporary communities lends at least a certain amount of credence to the myth of real biological differences between groups historically considered races. This is so even among scholars. Yet it is exactly such terms, and additional ones like 'racism,' 'racialization,' and 'racialized,' that most fully draw critical attention to the conditions and experiences confronting groups which have been and continue to be subject to the dynamics of race. In contrast, to commit to understanding and discussing racialized communities without using the language of race is to risk losing sight of central facets of the origins, experiences, and on-going construction of such groups. The risk is all the more pronounced when one uses a vocabulary such as that of ethnicity, which purports to explain group origins not in terms of racialization but in terms of cultural affinities. (López, 1997, p. 1154)

Hence, at least at the level of existential materiality, López's discussion brings us back to the relevance of materialist epistemologies. While race is socially constructed, its consequences are ontologically undeniable. They are such that they engender a kind of relational materiality which in many cases is oppressive. However, this relational materiality can also serve to unite subaltern actors who are subject to racialized modes of domination, even though at the level of ethnicity or cultural similarities there may be little to note.

For instance, in many ways, black Latinx and Chicanx differences might make their ethnic links unlikely. Without thinking prematurely of panethnic alliance building

approaches, I would like to suggest that the common racial sources of their material domination make decolonial resistance and radical solidarity worth exploring not only within US legal contexts but across the hemisphere and globally as well. Of course, ethnicity, diasporic/exilic identities and other modes of radical exteriority can and should complement this race-based approach to building decolonial radical agency and solidarity, making sure that internal sources of hierarchization among Latinx communities are also critically exposed and addressed at the level of joined collective action. Only thus will the internal effects of the racial contract be tackled. Like race, there is not a material expression of the racial contract per se. Yet, the material consequences of its ideological fetters are very real. They need to be broken for meaningful cross-racial and panethnic collective action among Latinx communities to start making substantial sense.

A. Notes on the Metatheory of Co-Authoring/Co-Creating: The Paradoxical Potential of Tactility as a Critical Interpretation Tool

Our past is always constructed in our present. The events we have lived many years ago come to our memories with a significance that partly fits our lives today. The madeleine Marcel Proust tasted with his tea in a Parisian café did not simply bring back the bygone world of his holiday at his grandmother's provincial home but also created a new perspective... (Schwarz & Baker, 2017)

Lingering behind all these discussions There is an intuitional kind of relation-ality. I want to try to explicate its interpretative ethos by looking at an essay by Michael Taussig (1991). Taussig's essay is somewhat aligned with the ideas of orientation developed by Ahmed (2006 & 2010). Taussig builds on Walter Benjamin's (1969)

suggestion that one should place the sense of sight under the guidance of tactility for the sake of aesthetic interpretation. From this idea, Taussig implies that this tactility ethos can guide everyday interpretations to an extent non-realized by actors. Taussig (1991, pp. 147-148) states:

Surely this sense includes much that is not sense so much as sensuousness, an embodied and somewhat automatic 'knowledge' that functions like peripheral vision, not studied contemplation, a knowledge that is imageric and sensate rather than ideational and as such not only challenges practically all critical practice across the board of academic disciplines but is a knowledge that lies as much in the objects and spaces of observation as in the body and mind of the observer. What's more, this sense has an activist, constructivist, bent; not so much contemplative as it is caught in media res working on, making anew, amalgamating, acting and reacting. We are thus mindful of Nietzsche's notion of the senses as bound to their object as much as their organs of reception, a fluid bond to be sure in which... 'seeing becomes seeing something' ... this puts the study of ideology, discourse, and popular culture in a somewhat new light. Indeed, the notion of 'studying,' innocent in its unwinking ocularity, may itself be in for some rough handling.

I am attracted by the embodied materiality of intuitional interpretation this approach implies. In my view, the next crucial epistemological step is to link it with relational collective action modes of interpretation such as the one implied by Ricoeur (1971, 1981b, 1986 & 1991) in his conceptualization of social action as text, which I have discussed in several instances throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, I want to link this analysis to LatDisCrit under the implications of the metaphor within and beyond blind people of color as hermeneutic co-authors and radical agents. For instance, as a braille user I wonder how having a tactile reading of social action would look like? How would people be "in the same page" while reading and combating the

ideologies of the racial/ableist contracts? What if they are “sighted” readers/co-authors making sense of a braille text using their eyes but trying to remain at the tactile level of understanding/explanation? Would that reading be sequential or simultaneous? Would either mode of reading make any difference at the level of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning?

As will be seen in Chapter 4, David Bolt (2014) is highly critical of all kinds of haptic constructs. He regards them as part of the essence in the meta-narrative of blindness, a caricature of personhood in the configuration of blind actors. Yet, what if the haptic experiences are embodied by sighted people of color as critical hermeneutic tools in the manner described by Taussig? Would that enhance the potential for radical solidarity and for the joined deconstruction of racial/ableist contracts? What kinds of emerging modes of relationality and interdependent radical agency possibilities would this approach awaken? What would be their drawbacks?

**B. The Problem of Radical Agency within Social Movements:
Alexander’s Civil Society Ideas and Emancipatory Learning**

Si me dijeran, “pide un deseo”
Preferiría un rabo de nubes
Un torbellino en el suelo
Y una gran ira que sube;
Un barredor de tristezas,
Un aguacero en venganza
Que cuando escampe parezca
Nuestra esperanza
(Rodríguez Domínguez, 2018).¹⁸

Beyond a purely catalyzing trigger, I am extremely doubtful that a “great anger” approach can be helpful as a corrective social change mode of collective radical agency

(as implied in the preceding epigraph). Its outcome may seem like the shadow of one's hope, but it is not a hopeful path. Even Fanon (1967, pp. 37 and following) warns about the danger of relying on anger or indifference to guide interpretations of racial/colonial oppression. The populist devastation currently prevailing in Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Nicaragua can testify to the truth of Fanon's recommendation. As the essays in Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) demonstrate, there is often an intimate relationship between the exercise of liberal democracy and the corrective role that populism attempts to play, but whose excesses can derive in terrible spirals of violence and institutional vacuums that harm especially those subaltern groups that allow it to come into existence.

Keeping in mind the ontological and conceptual background discussed so far in the chapter, I aim in the present transitional sub-section to provide some preliminary hints as to the way collective action and social movement building dimensions can be approached in relation to radical agency and emancipatory learning, especially as it pertains to Latinx sociopolitical contexts. To this end, the cultural sociology work of Jeffrey C. Alexander (2003 & 2006; Alexander J., Giesen & Mast, 2006), particularly as it connects with what Jacobsen and Aljovín de Losada (2005) conceptualize as political cultures is extremely valuable. Jeffrey Alexander's cultural sociology paradigm helps us understand the ambiguities inherent to what the Marxian tradition has treated as the sphere of civil society, namely an area for civic action completely separate from the hegemonic purview of the state. For Jeffrey Alexander the picture of this relationship is much more fluid, especially as it is concerned with symbolic dimensions of politics where collective action expresses its meanings through performative approximations (as in the populist cases of Venezuela and Nicaragua mentioned above where a lot of

the agendas set out at the state level are carried out by popular militias apparently grounded in the “civil” sphere and vice-versa; see for example, Roberts K., 2012). What seems odd, especially in terms of the explorations of the current chapter is that, despite having its grounding in cultural sociology, Jeffrey Alexander’s framework avoids paying attention to issues of race and decoloniality.

As far as emancipatory learning is concerned, the essays contained in Hall B. et al. (2012) explores in depth the theory and practice of radical adult learning in conjunction with social movement building and implementation. Budd Hall (2012), for example, examines the collective emancipatory learning experiences that emerged within the “occupy movement.” Occupy movements experiments proliferated throughout major global north cities (impacting simultaneously at their activism pick more than 1500 sites) after the global crisis of 2008. These protest experiments were characterized by spatially situated protests where subaltern grassroots as well as progressive adult segments of multiple political affiliations coexisted to educate citizens about the real origins of the crisis. Budd Hall (2012, pp. 128 and following) demonstrates how the global outreach of the movement was possible due to its sophisticated virtual modalities of innovative emancipatory learning. For 47 days, more than 200 activists worked together to prepare the occupation of Zucotti Park in New York. That is where the bulk of Budd Hall’s analysis concentrates. However, he also recognizes the learning germ for the occupy movement in the Madrid’s Puerta del Sol, a group of “indignados” had already put into effect starting in May 2011 a similar kind of sustained spatial protest site.

Budd Hall’s insights show a multifaceted convergence of elements. First, there was a very clear call and set of diffusion mechanisms.

Galvanised by the clarity of the call for justice in a world where 1 per cent of the world's rich dominate and exploit 99 per cent of world's people, the spark of the Occupy movement caught fire and spread throughout the rich countries of the world. The Occupy Movement was born with a speed and a unity of both purpose and process that have set it apart from most social movements of the 20th Century. It is a quintessentially 21st century movement born in the realisation that global capitalism has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, has robbed the working classes and the middle classes of their dreams, and has made the rhetoric of democracy even in wealthy countries seem empty and powerless. (Hall B., 2012, pp. 128-129)

Already in looking at Budd Hall description one can start interrogating the unique ethos of this strategy. Why circumscribe the movement primarily to rich countries? Although inspired formally in the mechanisms of diffusion of the Arab spring, why not build on the substantive democratizing hunger that fueled that other movement? Why operate in protest waves that appear to have distinctive, separating modes of discursive unity? To what extent should one attribute this wave-like ethos to the social media tools employed as virtual learning contexts or rather, more substantially differentiating elements such as the apparently non-racial, universalizing class-based performativity of a “transversal” consensus that might not possess self-sustaining energy toward long-term engagements?

The second emancipatory learning element for the movement underscored by Budd Hall is tied to the defining concepts used to organize the movement. Notions like “consensus-based, decentralised leadership, collective thinking, direct democracy, non-violence, non-ideological, anarchist, creating replicas of the society we want, creating new knowledge” (Hall B., 2012, p. 130) were consistently invoked (Greaber

2007). The enactment of a unique brand of “collective thinking” was especially important:

Collective thinking is in contrast to a more traditional sense of political discussion where persons with diverse points of view argue their positions until a majority of persons are with them. Consensus is rare in this form of political discourse. Collective thinking calls for persons with diverse perspectives to listen to each other and come up with not a winning or losing idea, but a new idea which represents consensus. People's Assemblies are Participatory decision-making bodies which work towards consensus. They must be pacific, respecting all opinions: prejudice and ideology must be left at home. An assembly should not be centred on an ideological discourse: instead it should deal with practical questions: What do we need? How can we get it?. (Hall B., 2012, p. 130)

Once again, interrogating this line of pragmatic thinking might be of value. Why deny the presence of ideological elements when the protest was fundamentally a political statement inspired by strong ideological concerns? How much depth and lasting unifying force could have achieving pragmatic points of consensus when for some or perhaps many of the participants there was a real thirst for deep dialogue and even debate? Could that dialogue take place without breaking the artificial unity obtained via pragmatic modes of consensus building? Could it be that its anticipated breaking symbolized much more than a mere strategic set of considerations, pointing to deep ideological divides solidly grounded in the incommensurability of radical exteriority, of othering feelings and desires that remained masked under popular assembly techniques?

3.3. Revisiting Social Reproduction/Resistance, Whiteness Studies and Critical Race Theories

In every country of the world there are climbers, 'the ones who forget who they are,' and, in contrast to them, 'the ones who remember where they came from.' The Antilles Negro who goes home from France expresses himself in dialect if he wants to make it plain that nothing has changed. One can feel this at the dock where his family and his friends are waiting for him. Waiting for him not only because he is physically arriving, but in the sense of waiting for the chance to strike back. They need a minute or two in order to make their diagnosis. If the voyager tells his acquaintances, 'I am so happy to be back with you. Good Lord, it is hot in this country, I shall certainly not be able to endure it very long,' they know: A European has got off the ship. (Fanon, 1967, p. 38)

The reader might remember that I indicated in Chapter 1 my preference for privileging emancipatory learning over institutional dimensions of education. Despite this preference, I feel obliged to pay attention to resistance theory in connection to schooling contexts since that is the area where the bulk of the most relevant theoretical work has concentrated. The theoretical examination of resistance in educational studies dates to the 1980s. However, there has not been a concerted effort to link this literature to an explicit examination of the existential phenomenology of radical agency trajectories in alignment with either decolonial theorizing or critical hermeneutics (Dei's blackness studies work might be regarded as a notable exception in this regard).

Giroux (1983a, p. 257) identifies three senses in which the reproductive functions of schooling operate as portrayed by various strands of social reproduction theorists: (1) the reproduction of knowledge and skills that put subordinate classes and groups in their place within the racialized, gendered and class based hierarchical order of capitalism; (2) reproduction in the cultural sense, i.e., in terms of diffusion and

legitimation of knowledge, values language and style tendencies that work in the interest of the dominant culture; and (3) reproduction in conjunction to the state apparatus that legitimates the economic and ideological premises that keep in place the political power of the state. Giroux points out that these theorists fail to provide a comprehensive critical science of schooling. They downplay human agency at the expense of reproduction. Thus, they end up exacerbating hopelessness, missing opportunities to examine the structural complexities and variations of domination modes within concrete school settings (Giroux, 1983a, p. 258).

Giroux's analysis also makes clear that, as detailed in resistance theory studies (e.g., Apple, 1982; Bates, 1980; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982; Giroux, 1983b; Olson, 1983; Whitty, 1981; Willis, 1977), culture as a collective expression of human agency "is constituted as much by the group itself as by the dominant society. Subordinate cultures, whether working-class or otherwise, partake of moments of self-production as well as reproduction" (p. 260). Therefore, the key is to unmask the extent to which their self-production leads to radical agency and under what conditions, without missing emancipatory insights that may underlie within social reproduction formulations.

In this regard, as far as theorist closer to the Marxian tradition is concerned, Giroux favors Althusser's theory of ideology over Bowles and Gintis' "correspondence" theory. Althusser explains better the mechanisms behind hidden curriculum within and beyond school settings (see for example Anyon, 1981; Apple, 1971; Althusser, 1969, 1970, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1977; Carmoy & Levin, 1976; Giroux & Penna, 1979; Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Weaver, 1982) by going beyond the materiality of the

ideological apparatus of schooling capitalist reproduction into its unconscious effects for both students and educators.

This dual treatment of ideology within school settings by Althusser already had the potential in the 1960s and 1970s for facilitating links for the conceptualization of radical agency beyond Marxism, i.e., within the premises of psychoanalysis, existential phenomenology and critical hermeneutics. However, neither social reproduction nor resistance theorists seemed ready to take that epistemological leap.

Still circumscribed within an economic ethos, Baudelot and Establet (1971) enriched the social reproduction discussion by pointing out (1) that there are multiple ideologies at work within schools; (2) that the source of these ideologies is located in arenas of public sphere external to schools; (3) that multiple cultural dimensions of hierarchization impact class consciousness and thus mediate the viability of radical agency manifestations within and outside schools; and (4) that, there is an interpretative role for the consciousness of agents as they make sense of those oppositional ideologies to which they are exposed. To be sure, this interpretative process itself may be ideological in nature (Giroux, 1983a, pp. 264-265; see also, Aronowitz, 1982).

In terms of the cultural reproduction strand, Giroux privileges thinkers such as Bourdieu and his followers as well as Freire's early work, which, because of its characterization of banking education, Giroux invokes as a grounding paradigm for Bourdieu's theory (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977a, 1979, 1988; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Freire, 1999). These thinkers contribute to the exploration of radical agency by highlighting the dialectical interplay between human agency and domination in institutional contexts.

Bourdieu's model focuses on the need to develop an alternative to both those who see educational entities (schools and universities alike) as reproductive mirrors of society's stratification and those who see them as an idealized terrain isolated from external forces. Educational entities are conceived in Bourdieu's model as relatively autonomous but infused with a fundamental role in the exercise of what he calls "symbolic violence," i.e., the symbolic power that the ruling classes perpetuate via cultural capital and cultural artefacts that inculcate and legitimate a world view coherent with their processes of domination under an aura of knowledge-based neutrality and objectivity (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1979, 1988). Curricular bodies of knowledge are presented and organized so that they "not only legitimate the interests and values of the dominant classes, they also have the effect of marginal-izing or disconfirming other kinds of knowledge, particularly knowledge important to feminists, the working class, and minority groups" (Giroux, 1983a, p. 267).

Giroux explains this complex cultural process of legitimation and internalization by oppressed individuals and groups through a very perceptive distinction between *habitat* and *habitus*. These are two of the concepts most often disputed and perhaps misinterpreted among Bourdieu's agency formulations. *Habitat* is objective history in terms of the materiality of time passage through things and how this makes one's position (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). *Habitus* is more concern with one's dispositions which point "to a set of internalized competencies and structured needs, an internalized style of knowing and relating to the world that is grounded in the body itself" (Giroux, 1983a, p. 268).

Let us stop for a moment to consider within this definition of the *habitus* some of its comprehensive emotional, sensory, axiological, political and intellectual conno-

tations. I will continue this discussion in Chapter 4, when I deal with the literature on body centered phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). At this point, it suffices to sketch a picture of the complex interaction of human action and structure that underlies within Bourdieu's theoretical model and how it has the potential of transcending the determinism typically attributed to it. Breaking away from this determinism is certainly not viable without considerable epistemological eclecticism.

For example, Giroux criticizes Bourdieu's unwillingness or inability to give preeminence to reflexivity as the source of resistance when there is a mismatch between habitat and habitus. The only kinds of contradictions Bourdieu considers are structural in nature. They are guided by a pure logic of social control. This entails that they suffer from unidirectional conceptions of dominant culture and ideology as well as the denial of any role for economic or other modes of ontological materiality (Giroux, 1983a, pp. 270-272; see also, Bourdieu, 1977b; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1981; Davies, 1981).

There is an entire section in Giroux (1983a) devoted to analyzing the literature on capitalist state domination mechanisms. Its analysis might have some relevance for understanding/explaining the links between state autonomy, social movement building and collective action dimensions of radical agency. However, I opted to omit it from this project because my research from the past has made me skeptical about the potential for radical agency insights in this state-centered literature due to its reliance on dichotomies of state dimensions versus civil society. As noted above, I see more value in linking Alexander's civil society work within cultural sociology and critical hermeneutics through his treatment of the notion of social performance (Alexander, Giesen and Mast, 2006). This kind of work holds great potential for

understanding/explaining grassroots collective action and the creation of spaces conducive to emancipatory learning through the cultivation and respecting of alternative meaning making knowledges (Readers interested in seminal works on the capitalist state can consult Miliband, 1969; Corrigan, 1980; O'Connor, 1973; Poulantzas, 1973, 1978; Therborn, 1978; there is an interesting body of literature on the mediating role of the state with respect to education and other social institutions, e.g., Adamson, 1980; Dale, Easland & Macdonald, 1980; David, 1980; Sarup, 1982; Wexler & Whitson, 1982).

Finally, as far as more recent renditions of resistance theory literature I would like to allude briefly in this sub-section to Zembylas (2008). Zembylas analyzes collective agents' indirect resistance through curricular efforts. These efforts are aimed at highlighting the shame of oppressors and shameful oppressive techniques in nation building with the vicarious implication of possible complacency by many who have not raised the voice against such oppression.

Contrary to the emphasis on pride, Zembylas argues, this type of resistance exacerbates the ambiguity mediating shame, pride and alterity in the collective imagination of nationhood and identity politics. It deals with polarization in ways that invite critical thinking and reflection. It also has prospects for exploring alliance building through the processes of reflexivity that it might engender at the level of alterity learning in general (although Zembylas is specifically concerned with school intercultural education settings which are more likely to experience control and inspection by state domination and curriculum compliance mechanisms). To some extent, therefore, Zembylas' analysis illustrates the critical hermeneutics metatheoretical work on recognition, meaning making collective action ideology framing and

performativity that I have discussed in previous dissertation chapters. As previously stressed, my eclectic use of this metatheoretical label brands a broad body of literature. In so doing, I follow Roberge (2011).

Roberge (2011) encompasses under critical hermeneutics authors such as Foucault and Habermas, along with structuration theorists such as Giddens, cultural sociology thinkers such as Alexander or philosophers of discourse like Ricoeur and Honneth. I have also discussed in the dissertation the essays contained in Honneth and Rancière (2016), which emphasize the significance of contrasting and complementing the hermeneutic, ethical and political implications of freedom and equality as one applies critical hermeneutics in any terrain. As Roberge points out, every instance where one deals simultaneously with the complexities of ideology, meaning and social action as collective performance, one is in the sphere of critical hermeneutics (2011, pp. 12-15).

But one must not forget that, as Cheryl Matias and Ricky Lee Allen (2013, P. 286) point out, “emotions are as key to political life as ideologies.” Therefore, I also engage contemporary psychoanalytical and other metatheoretical approaches focused on love as a humanizing source for relationality (Boler, 1999; Britzman, 1998; Darder, 2017; Fromm, 1941, 2013; Gonsalves, 2008; Hooks, 2001; Lake & Dagostino, 2013; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Roseboro, 2008) to tame the strongest versions of rule based critical hermeneutics. As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, Such taming has also been approached by Amy Allen (2016). Amy Allen (2016) devotes her entire volume to link the critical hermeneutics of Habermas and Honneth with decolonial theorizing.

In terms of the epistemology of emotions, here resides one of Zembylas’ key hermeneutic lessons. A priori, there is nothing intrinsically positive or negative in shame

as an emotion. Shame is relational in ways that emotions such as pride or guilt are not, because the typical assumption is that guilt belongs exclusively to the micro level realm, while pride's sense of collectivity tends to underscore only what unites a group for purposes of nation building and patriotic modes of monolithic, often acritical solidarity. It is true that shame creates, at least temporarily, a hierarchy of groups: the shamed or the shameless which evoke different reactions.

As far as this project's concern with radical agency, shame also requires a loss of indifference toward others. Actions that shame us or bring shame upon others do so because they involve, perhaps remotely, interest on our part, an unfulfilled expectation with respect to an ideal behavior of relationality. "... shame does more than sensitizing us ... the appropriate reaction to one's own shame is a type of self-transformation" (Zembylas, 2008, p. 268).

Here I would like to contrast Zembylas' work with Fanon's epigraph as quoted at the start of this sub-section. It seems that Fanon insists on highlighting an internal kind of shame that forces people of color (particularly blacks in colonized settings) to reject their original ontology as colonized people who could resist coloniality. This, in turn, leads them to embrace the identity of the colonizer, an existential betrayal not so different to the one I described with respect to Fatima in the reflexive counter-story for Chapter 1.

Hence, one could by way of analogy extend Fanon's mode of interpretation to the world of people with disabilities, especially in intersectional contexts of domination. The decoding of this kind of shaming seems similar to or fully inscribed in psychoanalysis paradigms. It is not clear if Fanon would equate it with guilt. However, it is possible that the betraying individual may need to protect the self from guilt man-

ifestations through processes like the famous mechanisms of defense of the ego in the Freudian tradition (Freud, 1960 & 2002). These processes would probably lead to a deepening spiral of self-alienation from possible modes of resistance that one could engage in alliance with fellow people of color or disabled citizens. Using a Frommian epistemological lens (which has great similarities to Freud's, e.g., Fromm, 1970) would it be possible to identify psychoanalytical tools to break the spiral? How congruent would these tools be with other critical hermeneutics perspectives such as Ricoeur's or Barthes mythology concerns? For example, would they involve the protection from guilt via ideologies of "sublimation" (Sahlins, 2008) or perhaps much more utilitarian mechanisms centered on mundane convenience considerations?

A. Agency, Racial Hierarchy and White Privilege

The fact that skin, or representations of skin, can signify beauty and abjection at once, or evoke attraction and repulsion simultaneously, draws attention to skin's capacity to bear multiple and contradictory meanings... Moreover, belying its status as mere surface matter, skin becomes a site for the projection and exposure of deep-seated cultural, political and psychical investments. Frantz Fanon made tangible these propensities... he describes racism as the 'epidermalization of inferiority' (Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A., 2013a, p. 2)

Since the publication of Peggy McIntosh's (1988 & 1989) seminal work on white privilege, the concept of white privilege has had an immense impact on American race studies. As Robert Amico (2017, p. 3) points out, the concept of white privilege is relational. This means that one cannot merely analyze racism in terms of discrimination and disadvantage based on race without simultaneously understanding those white

folks who benefit as well as the processes by which they remain oblivious to the injustice intrinsic to their privileged positionality.

Looking at this phenomenon purely in terms of radical solidarity I tend to concur since decoding white privilege dynamics has the potential of enhancing antiracist alliance building. Nevertheless, thinking of subaltern radical agency trajectories, I also call attention to the need to realize that it is not uncommon for white privilege facilitation to turn into collective energy spent into “white washing” guilt and shame dynamics similar to the complex psychoanalytical and decolonial issues exposed by Fanon. Hence, I am in favor of a Fanonian trans-ontology approach anchored in blackness studies where white privilege is truly subsidiary to the broad cause of anti-colonial and antiracist collective action (for extensive discussions of the sort of whiteness issues associated with relevant transformational processes at stake here see, Alexander M., 2010; Allen T., 1997; Amico, 2015; Blau, 2003; Brodtkin, 1998; Feagin, 2006 & 2013; Feagin, Vera & Batur, 2001; Guglielmo & Salemo, 2003; Helms, 1990; Howard, 2006; Ignatiev, 2009; Kendall, 2006; Kivel, 1996; Lipsitz, 1998; Massey & Denton, 1993; Oliver M. L. & Shapiro T., 1997; Picca & Feagin, 2007; Smith C., 2007; Takaki, 2008; Weber, 2010; Wise, 2005, 2009a & 2010; Xing, Li, Roper & Shaw, 2007).

As part of Arturo’s current under-employment experiences, he attended a recent school board meeting in a southern town where the material ambiguities of the discourse of white privilege became quite evident. I bring up here some of Arturo’s observations because one of the spokespersons that day was a Latinx individual. The core of the discussion was the re-naming of a school for which Dolores Huerta was suggested. The Latinx individual whose last name was García, along with another white male, spoke against this proposal. What was most interesting is that the grounds

invoked by the Latinx individual were linked to the need to have a “neutral” naming for the school.

Only a few minutes before this incident, there had been a celebratory presentation about a teacher institute. In the institute, the district had been teaching teachers about a black massacre that took place in the same town at a safely distant amount of time from the present. Several school administrators used their white privilege in public. They openly related how, having grown up and having been educated in town, they had never been taught about the massacre until they were elsewhere in the nation and they had been ashamed of their selective ignorance.

There was something rather symbolic that most people probably failed to notice. A sequence of three “H” words were used in the presentation to highlight the dialogical learning purportedly explored during the institute: hostility, humiliation and hope. As soon as the re-naming incident took place, Arturo thought sarcastically to himself that the sequence had so many missing links. Where would the hope come from? What would be its foundational ground? It would have been easy to add many more “H” words. They would make evident that the history kept repeating right in front of everybody right there at the meeting: horror, hysteria, hypocrisy. What about something like a surrealist type of racialized hypnosis?

B. Whiteness as Property? Bringing Emancipation Back in

Quemaron todas las naves
Para iniciar una nueva vida,
Pagaron cara la llave
Falsa de la tierra prometida...
Y si dos vascos atracan

A un farmacéutico en Vigo
Jura el testigo
Que eran sudacas.
(Sabina & Milanés, 2018)¹⁹

Twenty-five years ago, Cheryl Harris (1993) demonstrated very persuasively that the phenomenon of white privilege expresses itself through very tangible structural and material dimensions. These dimensions have progressively been rooted in socio-legal and relational manifestations. The sequence of events indicates that the creation of white privilege is not purely unconscious and accidental. Quite on the contrary. Its contours had been clearly planned and articulated in the early configurations of racialized nationhood. I would even contend that this process is not exclusive to the US socio-legal system of relational hierarchization. It could very well be generalized throughout the Americas with a few local adaptations which by no means infringe in the white supremacy essence of the domination dynamics at stake.

Cheryl Harris (1993, pp. 1724 and following) argues that the defining features of whiteness as property include (1) rights of disposition; (2) right to use and enjoyment; (3) reputation and status property; and (4) the absolute right to exclude others from use and enjoyment. In the US, Cheryl Harris contends that These features had consolidated over time through a merging of racialized and legal status specifically linked with black slavery and Native American land seizures by white settlers, which ties white privilege and domination directly with decolonial theories, although Cheryl Harris does not make this link an explicit part of her analytical paradigm. Likewise, there is no reference in Cheryl Harris' analysis to Latinx dispossessions in the south-western part of the US.

This silence should be interpreted as the exception that confirms and helps to refine the nature of the white supremacy rules that operate behind whiteness as property. As part of the *ego conquisco* approach of US imperialism, there has been a historical ambiguity in the legal status of large portions of Latinx populations (López, 2006). Despite a formal adscription of white status to Mexican-American, for example, this has not been coupled with the kinds of property characteristics analyzed by Cheryl Harris. As a matter of fact, the discriminatory responses have at times been more blatant than those displayed against other racial sub-groups (E.g., López, 2004).

There is a couple of recent applications of the whiteness as property framework worth highlighting in this sub-section. The first one is Buras (2011) which demonstrates how, in the case of New Orleans reconstruction, the structural materiality of whiteness exclusionary property has been used as yet another instance of dispossession of black communities.

Buras' argument stresses the inequitable basis of charter school reforms driven by so-called "conscious capitalism." She points out that this process of reform has served to build the capital of white entrepreneurs and their black allies (Buras, 2011, n.p.). Buras combines David Harvey's (1973 & 2006) theory of urban space capitalism with Cheryl Harris' whiteness as property ideas. In simple terms, Buras (2011) shows that the New Orleans process consists of removing "failing" schools (mostly populated by black children) from the control of the school district, neutralizing union bargaining mechanisms as well as all the accountability checks and balances. The result is a privatized microcosm of charter schools isolated from democratic controls and richly funded through sources that used to be public moneys, subject to much stricter

scrutinizing mechanisms (see also, Buras, 2009; Buras & Apple, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991; Lipsitz, 2007).

Although seemingly more symbolic and discursive than Buras' approach, the second illustration that applies whiteness as property engages areas of intersectional materiality central to my radical agency concerns. Broderick A. A. and Leonardo's (2016) work borrow elements from the whiteness as property model to examine the uneven distribution of behavioral justice and discipline systems in US schooling contexts. Broderick A. A. and Leonardo demonstrate that the embodiment of "goodness" is conflated with white normativity and decreed as equivalent to smartness (2016, pp. 57 and following; for broader discussions of the links between race and disability dynamics see also, Artiles, 2011, 2013 & 2014; Artiles & Bal, 2008; Artiles, Bal & Thorius, 2010; Connor, 2008a, 2008b & 2012; Connor & Ferri, 2007; Erevelles, 2000, 2011 & 2014; Erevelles, Kanga & Middleton, 2006; Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Ferri & Connor, 2014; Leonardo, 2013a & 2013b; Leonardo & Broderick A. A., 2011; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014).

In the United States, education is racialized to reinforce the goodness of Whiteness... Gender, social class, and other domains of identity function in similar (albeit distinct) ways. Race, gender, and social class are part of not only how schools perceive students, but how they actively construct students' identities, self-perceptions, and subjectivities. In short, goodness is a central mechanism for creating normed subjects in schools. Through the powerful constitution of students' identities vis-vis "goodness" (as with "smartness"), material disparities manifest in students' experiences of schooling. Goodness is a central valuation of who deserves or does not deserve certain social and material goods that contribute to differential access to life chances. In other words, goodness is a mode through which dis/abling occurs, including the overvaluation of Whiteness and undervaluation of Blackness within educational practices. (Broderick A. A. & Leonardo, 2016, p. 57)

Broderick A. A. and Leonardo (2016, pp. 57-58) go on to point out that goodness is not merely ideological/discursive. It expresses through a set of material practices that fulfill very dynamic functions at the disciplinary level of interaction. For instance, it is embodied through ritual gestures such as raising your hand before speaking or articulating phrases in a specific way and with a particular accent to show one's smartness and external adherence to protocol. It is not concerned with substantive notions such as nonviolence, genuine kindness, generosity or communal reciprocity. "Like Whiteness, the ideology of goodness recruits all students to abide by its regulations as a justification of its very functioning. We understand goodness, therefore, to be a performative, cultural, and ideological system that operates in the service of constructing the normative center of schools" (Broderick A. A. & Leonardo, 2016, p. 58).

Goodness is not only assumed to be a feature of one's nature. In the US schooling context, it is fundamentally racialized. Ferguson's (2001) study, for example, documents how black male students are disciplined more harshly than their white counterpart and tend to get stigmatized as "bad boys." Yet, looking at their behaviors, no real differences could justify those kinds of harsh long-term reactions. As racialized targets, the predicament of non-white students is extremely hard to manage. Bad labels follow them wherever they go thanks to the bureaucratic records of schooling which for them are no more than a repertoire of reasons to deepen disciplinary retributions in a spiral that often ends with their expulsion or their formal imprisonment.

To me, especially in terms of understanding/explaining radical agency trajectories and early sources of proto-resistance among non-white students (e.g.

those labeled under the umbrella of behavioral disorders in schooling settings and elsewhere), what is most interesting about Broderick A. A. and Leonardo's (2016) approach is that they equate very explicitly these processes with dis/ablement, with the corresponding enablement of white normativity as the ruling modality of domination in schooling environments and beyond. Dis/ability construction, therefore, acquires not only ideological contours but especially racialized ones, with very strong relational overtones. "Just as the process of interpreting a student's interactions through the lens of deficiency is indeed a form of ability profiling... interpreting another student's actions and interactions through the lens of capacity, privilege, pardon, and entitlement is also part and parcel of ability profiling, or ablement" (Broderick A. A. & Leonardo, 2016, p. 60).

The implications of this relational paradigm are crucial for the way I interpret the racial contract in alignment with its ableist ideology counterpart. Both whiteness and blackness studies are necessary to understand/explain white supremacy dynamics. In the same way, dis/ablement and en/ablement must be understood as intersectional components of these same processes.

Global south origin, for example, is yet another ingredient that can exacerbate the pernicious effects of dis/ablement for children and adults of color with and without disabilities. Many of Arturo's experiences can be looked at through this prism. This can serve as a sort of intersectional magnifying glass that enlarges the catalyzing identity issues to which Broderick A. A. and Leonardo (2016) allude to, but not only in terms of their negative connotations.

Hopefully, in terms of resistance spaces of emancipatory learning and radical solidarity, these dis/ablement dynamics can eventually help subaltern people of color

with disabilities realize their common plight. In turn, this means that they will start developing strategic moves that transcend the mere efforts to neutralize concrete modes of micro-aggression. Always in a non-linear pattern, they might evolve toward macro/movement level approaches that will take seriously the trans-ontology of radical exteriority.

C. Whiteness Psychoanalysis and Emancipation

An imitated object shares its properties, except those that make it real, with any completely accurate imitation of itself, the excepted properties being what differentiates the original from the imitation. So we would expect imitations of people we usually avoid looking at to be similarly ignored. Yet imitations of disabled people are prominent in works of visual, literary and dramatic art that command and gratify our attention. What accounts for the eagerness and enjoyment elicited by aesthetic imitations of people whose actual appearance is commonly impugned? Some postmodern artists foreground such figures in their efforts to celebrate difference and exalt deviance. In other words, postmodernists rely on the aesthetic force of representations of disability to undermine precisely those power relationships from which they think the aesthetic draws its force. How can aesthetic imitations of people who are powerless be so powerful? (Silvers, 2002, p. 230)

In important respects, psychoanalysis prefigures the inquisitive transgression ethos present in postmodernism. For the sake of critical inquiry, psychoanalysis offers multiple modalities to penetrate beyond the surface of consciousness formation and unconscious dimensions of ideology. Since Fanon's and Fromm's paradigms are so much grounded in psychoanalysis, particularly in the understanding/explanation of embodied abjection (Kristeva, 1982), it is important to explore briefly its significance in

conjunction with the racial contract and anti-colonial radical agency trajectories. Singling out abjection is helpful because both racism and ableism share its manifestations in some degree against subaltern agents at the margins of normality.

In terms of embodiment, Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A. (2013b) stress the psychoanalytical significance of skin as both a thinking/feeling wall and a bridge (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001) for radical exteriority engagements of the self since “skin is neither simply organic matter nor an effect of cultural-discursive practices alone, but implicated in and mediated by unconscious phantasy” (p. 4). The essays in Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A. (2013a) rely for the exploration of these “fantasy” modes of relationality on eclectic psychoanalytical thinkers such as Didier Anzieu (1989 & 1990), Frans Fanon (1967) and Jacques Lacan (2015). From Anzieu they interrogate critically the notion of “skin ego.” This notion alludes to the way in which the sensory materiality of skin links with psychic configurations of the so-called “bodily ego,” i.e., the dimensions of the self that process and often somatize the material world. Keeping in mind that both racialized and ableist modalities of abjection are connected to relational perceptions of one’s skin (e.g., skin color, external expressions of a rejected sense of the “inferior” other, etc.), this kind of theorizing can be very helpful to understand/explain complex layers of intersectionality where race and disability conflate.

From Fanon, the contributors in Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst’s volume incorporate not only the idea that racism has its cultural and psychic anchors in one’s skin but also that the anchoring processes are reciprocal. They involve (1) the projection of inferiority into the skin of non-whites in colonial contexts by those in power via economic and cultural marginalization and oppression aimed at emptying these subaltern

groups from any sense of interiority, personhood and mindfulness (Oliver K., 2001); and (2) the “introjection or absorption of racist cultural values into the psychic lives and embodied experience of the oppressed, resulting in their so-called inferiority complex” (Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A., 2013b, p. 3; Fanon, 1967, p. 2). The emerging paradigm is one in which skin has profound material, cultural, psychic and sociopolitical meanings that start within race but transcend it, impacting many other spheres such as disability designation, hierarchization and unique modes of post-colonial domination.

As a condition of human subjectivity and a primary site of its negotiation, skin bears multiple, complex pressures from both within and without, and generates a range of expressions particular to persons, cultures and environments. Skin also separates us from and connects us to others and to objects in the world. We feel our skins as intimately our own, and yet they are continually shared by encounter and exchange. In the process, skin is imbued with conscious and unconscious meanings, including those we attach to it through constructions of sex, gender, sexuality, age, race, religion, nationality, class, (dis)ability and so forth. Skin, in short, has a biological life, a social life, a fantasy life, a somatic life, a political life, an esthetic life, a life in the ‘lived body’ and a cultural life—all of which inform one another to shape what it means and how it feels to inhabit skin. Appreciating the richness and multidimensionality of skin is no minor task. At the very least, an interdisciplinary approach is required. (Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A., 2013b, p. 3)

From Lacan, Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A. emphasize the importance of language (Elliot, 2001). They point out that, while Anzieu criticizes Lacan’s over reliance on language due to the complications this tendency engenders for theorizing somatic and sensorial dimensions of skin layers of relationality, they also feel persuaded by Patricia Elliot’s (2001) view of skin and bodily dynamics as spaces that go beyond the merely corporeal (Connor S., 2004). Theorizing embodiment exclusively as a narrow

materiality can be reductionist. Its sexed embodiment manifestations, for instance, are full of psychic processes intimately tied to language and discourse. “Without dismissing the important phenomenological components of the skin and the somatic elements of sexed embodiment, Elliot contends that we need a sophisticated theory of language, such as that offered by Lacan, to understand how the skin ego is animated in culture and psychically invested” (Cavanagh, Failler & Hurst R. A., 2013b, p. 5).

One of the essays in their volume links very explicitly skin psychoanalytical theorizing with whiteness and female embodiment issues. In it, Sheila L. Cavanagh (2013) takes up the analysis of “white trash” (see also, Wray, 2006) as a unique modality of abjection (Kristeva, 1982) in connection to bodily configurations of white females by audience reviews in response to the movie *Monster*. Building on Kaja Silverman’s (1996) bodily ego paradigm, Cavanagh goes beyond the surface of visible dimensions, arguing that white female bodily constructions in the film industry either fetishize white skin or center on abjection mechanisms to conceal troubling knowledge about psychosocial, sociocultural and sociopolitical realities concerning white individual or collective agents. Cavanagh grounds her metatheoretical engagement on the fearful nature of societal confrontations with white trash. Thus, Cavanagh perceptibly points out that white trash “designates a hybrid or in-between state combining what is symbolically coded as ideal (whiteness), and that which is symbolically coded as disgusting and abject (trash). Those designated white trash are often said to be incestuous, sexually promiscuous and licentious” (2013, p. 244).

Like Cavanagh, Leonardo and Porter (2010) also ground their racial analysis on fear (Sedgwick, 2002; Shildrick, 2002). In their case, Fanon’s psychoanalytical decoloniality conceptions drive the way in which racialized dimensions of relationality are

understood/explained. Leonardo and Porter start by questioning the premise that race dialogue requires safety. They argue that this procedural ground rule ineluctably enacts symbolic violence against people of color by privileging the safety of white dialoguing actors and pretending to erase the oppressive violence inherent to white supremacy and racism (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, pp. 140-141). Most importantly, they highlight the paramount significance of Fanon's idea that decolonization by its very transgressional nature is always a violent process (Fanon, 2004, p. 1). One of the implications of this is the recognition that pedagogically and axiologically, antiracist dialogue is to be most uncomfortable and even painful to white oppressors. Softening this axiological pain is tantamount to colorblindness and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977 & 1979) as it represents a mockery of the pain endured for centuries by people of color under systemic relations of abjection within the confines of coloniality arrangements all over the world.

Leonardo and Porter's recommendation is to enact the violence inherent to antiracist processes as an essential part of the transgressional pedagogy of risk that makes decoloniality viable. As transformational/revolutionary violence, it is neither vindictive or oppressive toward whites. It is not a mere expression of vacuous anger. It is a genuine confrontation with the axiology of radical solidarity in ways that truly serve the interests of subaltern racialized subjects (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, pp. 152-153).

Finally, violating the discourse on safety means aiming at rigor. It opens up deeper engagements on race, both in the intellectual and practical sense as a lived reality. In an educational system that prides itself on excellence, pedagogues paradoxically aim low when it comes to race dialogue, settling instead for mediocrity. They fail to take advantage of the deep competencies that students of color have to offer and instead rely on the shallowness of whiteness. It is a pedagogy guided by the least competent

students in the room, a strategy that most educators would not endorse or tolerate in any other condition. It means helping the children most left behind (and who invest in being the last one in) when it comes to race literacy: mainly, white students. They are often racially illiterate and unable to decode the fundamental racial lessons of daily life. Using a Fanonian analytics of the oppressed to drive race dialogue does not mean that the oppressed are correct most of the time even if it means they are correct more of the time. It does not focus on their individual accuracy but on their collective experiences and the perspectives born from a life of risk. For their important decisions rely on race literacy as if their life depended on it. A humanizing violence would restore their education in the proper sense. This means increasing the violence in education, of disrupting its inhumane dimensions toward new standards of humanity that liberate rather than oppress. (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, pp. 153-154)

3.4. Radical Agency Considerations on Blackness Studies/Negritude, Latinidad, Indigenous, Pan-Asian and Other Identities

By 'whither,' my basic question is not what is to be done (with Fanonism), a question that fails to question the distinction between means and ends. I am thinking less of a telos or destination to which one has to hold or train oneself than of a question of incomprehension, deferral, and perpetual challenge... The attempt to subject or limit Fanonism to the horizon of a judgment, to make it make sense, to lead us to a thought, a destiny, to where we want leading, is for me a decision that is always in question... the experience of what it means to read Fanon, or to reduce his rigor to a question of method rather than an experience of contestation and challenge, reveals certain presuppositions that must be opposed, linked as they are to a certain evocation of Fanonism as a kind of knowledge that must be in some way already familiar, already experienced without difficulty. Opposition to this idea of reading... is necessary for me to understand what is most important about this 'whither,' as an evocation whose spirit of decision comes without guarantees or ends. (Marriott, 2018, p. 2)

The previous sub-section provides an excellent segue way into the decolonial blackness studies paradigm developed by George J. Sefa Dei (2017). As I have suggested at several points throughout the chapter, Dei's blackness studies paradigm helps unify Latinx decolonial deconstruction of identity perspectives, addressing even those frameworks not explicitly grounded in negritude or African diaspora, e.g., indigenismo, Hispanismo, hegemonic and non-hegemonic perspectives on mestizaje and so on. What Molefi Kete Asante (2017, n.p.) says in his foreword to Dei's volume feels very validating with respect to my choice in this dissertation to opt for the "decolonial" nomenclature at the expense of terms like postcolonial, which may imply that coloniality is a matter of the past: "Dei knows that the Black scholar or critic or writer will usually find more accommodation in the academy if he or she is a post-colonial scholar rather than an anticolonial scholar. I have always been an anticolonial educator because, while progress is being made, the vestiges of colonialism are still present in the institutions of the West."

Dei's core theoretical principles are as follows (importantly, the reader should consult the expansive discussion in the third chapter of Dei's 2017 volume where he spells out ten principles; my foregoing analysis only touches on a few of these insofar as they have relevance for my broader radical agency possibilities focus in this dissertation project). First, there is a mutual implication between the personal and the political in the intersecting complexities of blackness along with all forms of oppression and subaltern selves in global and locally racialized settlement contexts (see, Dei, 2017, Ch. 1; see also, Abawi, 2017; Ahmed, 2004; Anderson M., 2007 & 2009; Angod, 2006; Bakan & Dua, 2014; Carroll, 2014; Dei, 1996, 2000, 2008 & 2012; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Dei & McDermott, 2014; Dua & Lawrence, 2005; Escobar, 1995 & 2004;

Goldberg, 1993, 2006 & 2009; Lowe, 2015; Mbembe, 2001 & 2003; Quijano, 2000b; Silva, 2007).

It is important to understand the direct implications of these principles for the intersectional analysis of race and disability in the global north as well as in the global south. To this end, it is helpful to contemplate the example Dei brings up with respect to how settler colonialism, indentured labor and transatlantic slavery are closely intertwined in the configuration of Anglo-American identities. Relying on Lowe's (2015) analysis, Dei argues that the genealogical examination of racial and subaltern subject categories within colonial and European settlement arrangements makes evident their specificity and their fluidity, pointing out the sort of mechanisms they enact to conciliate contradictory imperatives such as liberal claims of progress and universality, on the one hand, and the colonial and capitalist need to manage the labor, reproduction and social organization of colonized subjects (Lowe, 2015, p. 9; see also, Dirlik, 1997; Smith A., 2006). "Viewing categories as historically specific social constructions allows a tracing of their transformations and reinscriptions in particular places and times, the fictions they help to create and uphold, and the forms of governance organized around them" (Dei, 2017, n.p.).

Therefore, one can extrapolate this into contemporary societies. By doing so, one understands that the unifying sense of precarity of people of color with disabilities in the global north and in the global south along with the plight of working-class and marginalized segments of global populations is not a coincidence. It is inscribed in their global sense of subjection through abjection and material as well as symbolic deprivation via tragedy myths, mendicity governmentality (Ferrante & Joly, 2017; Kerddaen, 2018; Teklu, 2007) and the like.

Dei's (2017, Ch. 2) second principle asserts that, because blackness must not be seen in terms of a rigid essence, there is no point in searching for its authenticity (Foster, 2007; Johnson E., 2003; Mutua, 2006), at least as tantamount to genuineness/purity. This is a principle equally relevant for broad racialized constructs such as indigeneity, Hispanidad, Xicanidad, Asian-Latinx identity or, as I will discuss in the following section, ontological ideas about mestizaje. "Since White supremacy is a system which shapes other forms of oppression such as patriarchy, transphobia, homophobia, ableism and sexism, racism is also connected to these other systems of domination" (Dei, 2017, n.p.).

Appropriations of blackness for anti-blackness purposes is yet another facet of these complex dynamics. Thus, progressive anti-colonial work demands sharpening one's skills to detect and proactively address their pernicious manifestations, helping others to do the same as a crucial dimension of anti-racist emancipatory learning.

Dei's (2017, Chs. 2-4) third principle stresses that there is an absolute need to speak about and interrogate race. In his view, this need transcends similar needs to speak about gender, class, disability, etc., because unlike any of these categories, there is in the case of race a convenient social desire and operational ethos on the part of dominant racial/colonizing groups to create the false perception that racism is a thing of the past, that race dimensions (especially anti-black race dimensions as organizing frames under which white supremacy rests) have lost their significance. "Unless racism ends, race will always be relevant. Anti-Black racism is one of the many pernicious aspects of racism. Black and African peoples have continually endured this social cancer. If race is to become obsolete then racism must first be obliterated" (Dei, 2017, n.p.).

Of course, this does not involve doing away with race's intersectional character (Hall S., 1997; Saldaña-Portillo, 2016). Quite on the contrary, it entails going back to the political roots of an intersectionally decolonial re-theorizing process for blackness studies (Dei, 1999 & 2014). This radical re-theorizing needs to explicitly depart and end with the certainty that "Black is African and African is Black! ... hegemonic 'systems are put in place to perform anti-Black racism globally ... these systems are used as 'divide and conquer' tactics to diminish any interest of Diasporic Africans and Black people" (Dei, 2017, n.p.). Dei goes on to outline his desiderata and the implications of these principles for blacks and non-blacks as follows:

Diasporic Blackness may center issues of historic specificity to the Black experience. But it does not mean there is no connection between the Black experience in the diaspora and African experiences on the continent and globally... Part of the diasporic experience is still to deal with or to resist the sub-humanity of the African and the Black subject, our social and economic marginalization and the continuing legacies of enslavement and the question of Land displacement. These experiences shape the development of thought and action about what it means to be Black and to affirm our Blackness in particular contexts... Different bodies may come to an understanding of blackness from specific locations and yet with shared concerns and politics. While Blackness is a negative for the dominant/oppressor, reclaiming Blackness may be subversive and liberating for the subordinated/oppressed especially when evoked for political and social transformation. In both conceptualizations, "reinventing Africanness" and "Diasporic Blackness," it is important for us to acknowledge on-going global legacies of colonial genocides with particular impacts on Black, Indigenous and other intersectional communities and the displacement of African peoples and how this has deeply shaped the relations between Black, African and Indigenous peoples in North America, Africa and the global Diaspora. Identities [Black, African and Indigenous identities in particular] have been a site for colonial impositions... There is some significance in asking: how are certain imposed Black identities being normalized within contemporary social formations of anti-

Blackness and anti-Africanness? Also, how can we distinguish between current mobilizations of identity around cultural and ideological constructs of White nationalism and xenophobia (i.e., extreme Right discourses, neo-nazi) and the political and politicized mobilizations of identity for anti-colonial projects? (2017, n.p.)

Hence, how could Dei's radical framework be transposed to the specific materiality of structural and identity issues pertaining to trans-Latinidades in the Latin American and north American continents as well as elsewhere in the globe? What is the added value of this radical decolonial approach for Latinx radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning?

An obvious initial answer is that this framework elevates black Latinidades. This in turn entails addressing issues of anti-blackness intrinsic to many ideological frameworks that contaminate/problematicize Latinx identity formulations (Lao-Montes, 2016). As Agustín Lao-Montes demonstrates, talking about Afro-Latinidades involves dealing with many spheres of contestation. Their analysis requires framing and engaging crucial questions such as the following:

For instance, what are the spatiotemporal parameters and categorical character of Latinidad? Is Latinidad a transhistorical global civilizational attribute that defines a Latin civilization opposed to Anglo-Saxons as in nineteenth-century French imperial ideology? Is it primarily a hemispheric linguistic/cultural postimperial common ground, based on ancestry, which unifies the former subjects of the Spanish empire in the Americas? Or, is it more specifically, a U.S. territorially based, relatively recent panethnic designation for people of Latin American descent who reside in the United States? (Lao-Montes, 2016, n.p.)

By the same token, engaging African-ness in conjunction to Latinidades demands interrogating core notions. Some examples of the questions and problematizing layers suggested by Lao-Montes are as follows:

If Africa as a geohistorical/geocultural entity and category (as an epistemic and ontological reality) is an offspring of transmodernity, how should we conceptualize the relationship between the African continent and people of African descent throughout the world? Should we see Africa as an immutable mother and hence as the ultimate origin and source of unity and identity of all peoples of African descent in the world? Or alternatively, should we develop a more historicized concept of Africanity to account for continuities and discontinuities within continental Africa, as well as between the African continent and among people of African descent in different parts of the world? In the same register arises the question of how to theorize diaspora in the relationship to Africanity. Is the African diaspora composed by Africans outside of the continent, or is diaspora a condition that constitute Africanity itself in the context of violence, uprootedness, destabilization, and dispersal that came along with the institution of chattel slavery, the emergence of Africanist discourses of dark continent and of Negrophobia, but also with the rise of black social movements, publics, and cultural practices as 'countercultures of modernity' (2016, n.p.)

It is in this latter sense of a "counterculture" of trans-modernities that I view blackness issues transgressing and "darkening" all perspectives of Latinidad that might claim some sort of pristine authenticity. On the other hand, I also view the collective action energy of blackness movements around the world as key to providing a special sense of sociopolitical, metatheoretical and axiological vitality to the making and re-making of radical agency possibilities for Latinx. When I say this, I am thinking most particularly of disabled Latinx of color (in case there is such a thing as a white Latinx category beyond the complex, quasi-fictional socio-legal contours exposed by LatCrit thinkers such as López and Valdes and discussed earlier in this chapter essentially as

divide and conquer white supremacy tactics; on this point, see, Trucios-Haynes, 2000–2001; Weber, 2005; Wilson, 2005). They reside in the global north, but they are in a dire need to realize that their emancipatory quest is uniquely aligned with the fate of marginalized subaltern subjects all over the world. They are extreme byproducts of global dynamics of precarity and are united under that common banner with all sort of people at a global scale. At this extreme deprivation level of existential materiality, it does not really matter whether they are socially excluded because they are disabled, perceived/self-defined as racially inferior, or both.

A. Radical Agency and the Problem of Mestizaje

Dei reminds me of the late eminent Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop who was once asked why he used the expression 'Black African' since most people assumed that Africans have always been Black. Diop lifted himself up to his full six feet two frame and said to the questioner, 'To say Black is a political as well as a historical fact.' In a similar vein George Sefa Dei has taken on the idea that Blackness is itself a word that has meaning in the context of our social and cultural contexts as defined by the encounter with Europeans. Of course, what he is contending is that the 'hypervisibility' of Whiteness blurs the social reality of modern Western societies. Indeed we are choked with 'racialized dichotomies' that strangle the normal relations between humans distorting our ability to see clearly that we are truly in this together. (Asante, 2017, n.p.)

Nowhere is the hypervisibility of whiteness more palpable than in the racial ontology of ideologies of mestizaje. I would like to start this sub-section by distinguishing approaches that regard mestizaje as a racialized ontology from those which emphasize epistemological and sociopolitical border-crossing as an imperative of

contemporary collective action and intersectional identities. In terms of Latinx Classical onto-racial examples of theory and political practice, Bolívar's (2004a) Jamaica Letter and Vasconcelos' (1997) philosophical musings on a "cosmic race" are very representative manifestations. I touch on Bolívar's (2004a) Jamaica Letter below while discussing the link between Latin American thought and radical exteriority. Thus, here I deal briefly with José Vasconcelos' argument.

Vasconcelos' idea of a "cosmic race" builds upon the seeming assumption that racial hybridity in and of itself means racial superiority, in a sense not so different from the kind of superiority that proponents of eugenics attributed to whiteness. The problem is that, although indigeneity and blackness are in the mix, it is the "renewed ontology" of the European white male in the American continent which propitiates such racial, cultural and geopolitical miracle. Thus, this kind of ontological conception of mestizaje is nothing but a back-door modality of white supremacy (Miller M., 2004; Saldaña-Portillo, 2016).

Quite apart from Vasconcelos original metatheory, ontological versions of mestizaje have had various explicit and implicit applications throughout Latin America and the US. For instance, Roberto Hernández (2016) points out that, in the 1930s and early 1940s, during the Lázaro Cárdenas administration and those that preceded it in Mexico, there was a deliberate effort to utilize the cultural myth of mestizaje as a cosmic superpower to further the political ethos of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, according to its acronym in Spanish for Partido Revolucionario Institucional). In that campaign, a mystified configuration of indigenismo as embodied by Cuauhtemoc, the last emperor of the Aztecs. During that period, The Mexican state erected many statues in his honor, while it made everything possible to deny the reality of extreme

precarity and marginalization faced by indigenous people throughout the nation. Interestingly, in looking critically at these apparent ambiguities, it should be noted that “while revering this indigenous ‘past’ in the process of modernizing Mexico through the narrative of Mestizaje, Emiliano Zapata, an indigenous hero of the Mexican Revolution, has never been ‘formally’ revered by the state” (Hernández, 2016, n.p.).

Now, in terms of epistemological versions of mestizaje, particularly within the US, the picture of radical agency possibilities is rich and most promising, especially among Chicana feminist scholars and activists. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa (1990) opts to look at *la conciencia de la mestiza* to help us understand mestiza womanhood identity as fluid consciousness formation. Chela Sandoval (1991), frames her U.S. third world feminism paradigm around the fluidity of mestizx identities. Norma Alarcón (1996) talks of “the subject in process” to accentuate this fluidity, emphasizing the significance of border-crossing dynamics in the configuration of identities and modes of alterity in contemporary multi-racial and multicultural contexts.

In line with this kind of epistemological positionality, let us dive for a moment in the analysis of Ruth Trinidad Galván’s (2006) essay, which illustrates the hermeneutic potential of mestizaje as an epistemic ethos and a tool for the enactment of emancipatory learning in intersectional spaces of subaltern marginality. Trinidad Galván centers on portraying alternative knowledge formulation and diffusion by *mujeres campesinas* (peasant women) in a rural setting. The focus on *campesinas* is extremely important. In terms of *Latinidad*’s plurality of fluid identities, *campesinas*, perhaps more than any other group, represent the conflation of multiple layers of subaltern marginality. Therefore, the understanding of their radical agency possibilities under such extreme circumstances is key to transcend hopeless marginality theorizing and

advance a comprehensive sense of emancipatory learning. Campesinas embody womanhood, material deprivation, racialized hybridity and a disdained sense of otherness that takes many forms throughout all corners of the American continent and elsewhere (Moravia, 2016) but which is ineluctably present. One of the curses of Latin American structural contradictions is to be so much founded on the myths of capitalist and urban prosperity. These myths have forced so many peasants to go against the ecological equilibrium of their homeland or to leave them behind to explore new economic and often alien cultural horizons (Chand & Leimgruber, 2016; Chand, Nel & Pelc, 2017; Galeano, 1997; von Braun and Franz W. Gatzweiler, 2014).

Trinidad Galván (2006) presents a picture where campesinas display profound knowledge and a strong sense of practical wisdom. They are collectively grounded in spirituality as a way of life. For Trinidad Galván this way of life represents a powerful pedagogical embodiment of *sobrevivencia*, defined not as mere survival but as a proactive becoming toward “what lies ahead and beneath plain victimry, our ability to *saciar* (sate) our hopes and dreams in creative and joyful ways” (2006, p. 164). I feel a strong alignment to the hopeful ethos of this notion to enact radical agency possibilities in circumstances where powerlessness seems the norm. Emancipatory learning makes much more sense when such a hopeful light shines despite all odds. To accentuate this joyful telos, Trinidad Galván invokes Xicana poet and novelist Ana Castillo (1994, p. 146) who stresses that, instead of survival as a form of surrender, our presence embodies the will to overcome every known repression, always walking our paths with the determination to achieve joy.

Trinidad Galván opens her piece with observational note vignettes at rural church spaces. She shows how her own catholic spirituality provides access and mod-

ulates the sort of epistemologies and pedagogical lessons taught by the campesinas whose portrait she opts to elevate. Trinidad Galván's own involvement with these outstanding mujeres campesinas was permeated by her NGO literacy and community development (through campesina-led small saving groups [SSGs]) work in rural Mexico. Elsewhere (Trinidad Galván, 2001b & 2003) she exposes the collective action contours of this communal work. Her 2006 piece is different. It is fascinating by the way it highlights not only emancipatory learning but also the kinds of alternative knowledges and axiological stance that feed into its collective learning configuration. Furthermore, Trinidad Galván's (2006) piece is unique in its detail portrayal of unknown wisdom heroes (See also, Trinidad Galván 2001a), the ones I am convinced need to be examined and supported much more than old gurus to whom everybody renders cult. This elevation of ordinary wisdom needs to be approached without disturbing or attempting to control their wild flower innate vitality and authenticity of these organic knowledge workers of supervivencia. This institutionalizing control tendency is a problem already observed by some radical adult educators and social movement critics (Choudry, 2012).

Unlike epistemological mestizx stances, racialized ontologies of mestizaje are set up to hide much more than what they appear to reveal. In this regard, it is clear that anti-blackness conceptions of race are at the root of these ontological ideas on mestizaje as a racial category. Even as a child, Arturo had an intuitive sense that this was the case. He liked to engage in playful exchanges with his grandmother (la Nona) to test the limits of racial "truths." La Nona was a very wise and joyful mujer campesina who had never experienced formal schooling. Arturo, whom I have repeatedly described as a blind brown individual in the present chapter, would assert to his

grandmother that he was black. La Nona would immediately respond by rebuking him for saying so. It was as if she felt that reminding this blind child of his brownness, his mestizo being, would exorcize the shadow of blackness to make it flee, leaving the family intact from polluting influences.

Looking back, Arturo now realizes that certain words are euphemistically designed to demarcate racialized categories of hierarchy and elevate the pseudo-mythical ideology of ontological mestizaje. In his native Venezuela, they use the word *trigueño*, which literally translates as wheat-like. Wheat is a scarce cereal in Venezuela. Although it is (or rather used to be since the current circumstances of the nation make it impossible to obtain it even through contraband) eaten by folks of all classes, it is associated with an aura of European (what they used to call in colloquial, old fashion circles “music,” i.e. white and foreign) things. The *trigueño* racialize category is neither brown nor white. It is a golden epitome of ontological mestizaje. In many ways, in its discursive ambiguity, *trigueñidad* represents an allegorically racialized version of the famous myth of “el Dorado,” the mystified territory that conquistadores chased unceasingly anxious as they were to put their blood-filled, imperialist hands on the immensely rich gold mines el Dorado purportedly harbored.

There are other racialized categories typically made invisible through mestizaje ontologies within trans/Latinidades. For instance, watching once again the Argentinian movie titled “Un Cuento Chino” (Borensztein, 2011), I was recently reminded of tropes of racial aversion against Chinese communities across the continent. In general, mestizaje ontology literatures make invisible Asian traces. The same could be said of Crypto and Sephardi Jew, Arab and other racialized communities with relatively large waves of settlement in Mexico and South America.

Finally, the idealized relation between both Chicanidad and Xicanidad in the United States with various versions of indigeneity (e.g., mythical constructs of Aztlán or contemporary engagements with the Zapatista indigenous movement) is worth noting. Roberto Hernández (2016), in his quest to emphasize the heterogeneity of the Chicax and Xicax cultural and political engagements notes for example that the evolution of Chicax movement stances have at various points in time been determined by dynamics which in the strict sense have their origins in intra and inter-organizational struggles. In other words, they are not so much the natural ideological or strategically aligned adjustments of movement building (see also, Anaya & Lomeli, 1989; Chávez, 2002; Gonsales, 2003; Mariscal, 2002; Martínez E., 2002; Muñoz, 1989; Pérez, 1999; Saldaña-Portillo, 2001).

In terms of the critical hermeneutics of racial ideologies such as mestizaje, this points to the need for knowledge workers and grassroots activists alike to ascertain the extent to which major organizations can or should shape collective identities. This is especially true when these identities get to be sold and accepted as a fixation of the most genuine, the purest, the ultimate expression of any given racialized/cultural/ideology-free phenomenon or trend (a tendency that resembles what can be observed among major organizations of the blind in the global north which claim to capture the “essence” of the blind movement in a politically ecliptic manner that becomes at once nationalist and global in scope).

B. From Fanon to Wallerstein: Race Intersectionality, postcolonial thought and the Postmodern Materiality of World System Perspectives

No one can treat a man like a dog without first regarding him as a man. The impossible dehumanization of the oppressed, on the other side of the coin, becomes the alienation of the oppressor. It is the oppressor himself who restores, with his slightest gesture, the humanity he seeks to destroy; and, since he denies humanity in others, he regards it everywhere as his enemy. To handle this, the colonizer must assume the opaque rigidity and imperviousness of stone. In short, he must dehumanize himself, as well. A relentless reciprocity binds the colonizer to the colonized-his product and his fate. (Sartre, 1991, pp. xxvii-xxviii)

One of the ontological paradoxes of black Marxism and dependency theories in Latin America and the global south is that their epistemologies were for the most part oblivious to postcolonial dynamics from the perspectives of racialized and cultural realms of existential materiality as well as symbolic dimensions. For example, as outlined by Cedric J. Robinson (2000), the key connection to understand capitalism in its relation to contemporary modalities of race exploitation entails going back to feudalism's "civilizing" ethos. The problem with this historical locus is that it takes non-European radical forces of trans-modernity out of the picture. Therefore, an explicitly intersectional and racialized approach is needed to tackle the complexities associated with trans-Latinidades in their subaltern and decolonial agency possibilities.

Some of the essays in Bakan and Dua's (2014) edited volume move in this direction. For instance, Enakshi Dua (2014a) argues that there are important points of nexus between Marxian and critical race theories. Dua cites E. San Juan (2002, p. 221) as someone who objects to the oppositional ethos adopted by certain post-colonial theory segments against Marxian principles. E. San Juan's assertion is based on the grounds that the demise of Marxism is not only premature but also prejudicial to postcolonial thought as the latter seems dependent on purifying itself from Marx, on

struggling very hard with its intellectual ethos toward becoming genuinely post-Marxian (see also, Bartolovich 2002; Brennan 2002; Lazarus 2002; Parry 2004).

Dua (2014a, n.p.) further notices that several thinkers at the intersection of cultural studies and postcolonial theorizing (e.g., Paul Gilroy, 1987; Stuart Hall, 1980, 1992, 1996a, 1996b & 1997a; Edward Said, 1978, 1983, 1986 & 1993) have developed sophisticated analyses of Marx in relation to discourse-centered scholars such as Foucault (for a very different theoretical interpretation see, Chibber, 2013). Dua (2014b) insists that these three postcolonial thinkers simultaneously embrace Foucaultian concepts such as power, identity, and discourse in their race and anti-racist theorizing while elevating the paradigmatic role of Marxian notions such as class, ideology, and capitalism (Balibar, 1992; Loomba, 2005; Quayson, 1999; Scott D., 2004 & 2005; Young R., 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2001, 2003 & 2004).

Often overlooked in genealogies of postcolonial theory, beginning with Said's initial turn to Foucault, is that a number of postcolonial theorists have had an ongoing struggle with several aspects of Foucault's epistemology. A close reading of this body of work suggests that a prevalent theme in postcolonial theorizing has been a concern with the limitations in deploying Foucault's method for explaining race and racism... Much of the concern focuses on Foucault's conceptualization of discourse as a phenomenon that 'produces reality,' one that 'produces domains of objects and rituals of truth.' (Dua, 2014a, n.p.)

Another essay worth analyzing out of those collected in Bakan and Dua's (2014) volume is Anthony Bogue's (2014). Bogue's exposition offers an innovative interpretation (and this idea of interpretation acquires great argumentative weight, see also, Balibar, 1994; Bauman, 1987; Lukes, 1996; Walzer, 1993). Bogue's (2014)

examines the writings of Du Bois and C. R. L. James in a comparative light to demonstrate their distinctive blackness-centered intellectual engagement with both Marxian and anti-racist theorizing (Bogues, 2011). Bogues' (2014) argument stresses the significance of slave-centered and black worker social archetypes in the configuration of a radical recasting of Marxian historical narratives concerning revolutionary processes and unique features of the political economy of capitalism in postcolonial contexts (see, Henry, 2000 for a philosophical analysis of this trend, particularly as it pertains to James and other Afro-Caribbean thinkers).

Of special importance for Bogues is Du Bois' and James' views on the Haitian revolution and the reconstruction periods. Both of these black thinkers insisted in showing that the labor exploitation of blacks in the United States was qualitative different to the macro and micro features of capitalist exploitation observable in Europe during the period of the reconstruction. Failing to realize this contributed to an opaque understanding of these dynamics by Marx who was too prone to draw universalist theoretical conclusions from what was indeed a partial picture. Not only that, for Du Bois and James the figure of the black slave was the core driving figure in the entire political economy equation in Europe as in the United States (see Bogues, 2009 for a similar discussion concerning the black Haitian political and revolutionary experience with respect to postcolonial freedom in the west). This is something crucial that the Marxian theoretical formulation essentially missed. In turn, it affected its metatheory for revolutionary agency configurations at the historical level and its explanatory/predictive power (see for example, Du Bois, 1915, 1968, 1969, 1995, 1996a, 1996b & 1999; James, 1970, 1973, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1994 & 2000).

We know that by the end of the nineteenth century, America had begun its external expansion and was now what Du Bois called, in *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*, 'a modern industrial imperialism.' This form of imperialism was different from that described by V. I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and the English political economist John Hobson. For Du Bois, this kind of imperialism could not be called only the economic stage of monopoly finance capitalism, because it created a world of racialized labour and subjects. Modern imperialism, Du Bois argued, depends upon what can be called modern discovery of whiteness. (Bogues, 2014, n.p.)

Since it is even more directly targeted at whiteness studies, it is also worth discussing briefly here the contribution to Bakan and Dua's volume by Sedef Arat-Koç (2014). Sedef Arat-Koç's argument centers on showing how whiteness in the era of global neoliberalism has deliberately transcended the sphere of race to tackle culturalist meanings. Arat-Koç contends that whiteness has become a feature of transnational class configurations after cold war dynamics have transformed the global political economy and sociocultural landscapes as propelled by neoliberal ideologies. Three discursive/material examples epitomize this tendency: (1) the emergence of an underclass in the US; (2) the visibility of the urban poor in third world/global south nation states; and (3) the amalgamation of workers and peasants in post-socialist states (Brown, 2005; Fernandes, 2004; Razack, 2004; Singh, 2004).

I would like to propose that neoliberalism produces subjects, and specifically middle class subjects, who see themselves and their 'other' in increasingly culturalized ways. Culturalism works as a form of 'race-thinking' or 'race-like' thinking, even in contexts when it applies to forms of unequal relationships other than 'race.' Attempts to historicize and contextualize race-thinking in the present would need to take into account its complexities in the post-Cold War era of neoliberal globalism and the new imperialism. Such a project would need to involve an

approach to critical race theory that takes political economy and geopolitics seriously. In a period of neoliberal globalized capitalism, this may necessitate rethinking the concept of 'race' beyond the colour line as technologies of power that involve the 'historic repertoires and cultural, spatial, and signifying systems that stigmatize and depreciate one form of humanity for the purposes of another's health, development, safety, profit and pleasure...' we may be able to identify the ways in which race-thinking and race-like language are used in the exclusion, stigmatization, marginalization, and subordination of people 'beyond' as well as 'along' the colour line. (Arat-Koç, 2014, n.p.)

B.1. The Relevance of Fanon

Notwithstanding the undeniable originality of several of these essays, it is striking their silence with respect to Latin America and Latinidades broadly conceived. The authors recognized limitations in their treatment of indigeneity and postcolonial gender issues (Spivak, 1987). Hence, it seems that they did not even realize that a full continent and a myriad of unique identity/axiological concerns (Fernández-Retamar, 1994; Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2010; Sasso, 1987) had been left aside. This kind of gross obliviousness is yet another synthon of the epistemological and axiological weaknesses of approaches that try to resurrect Marxian macro concerns at the expense of core Fanonian strands of postcoloniality/decolonial theorizing, i.e., existential materialism and psychoanalysis (Gordon L., 2000). The absence of these dimensions weakens significantly one's ability to ascertain the power of radical exteriority in the dynamic unfolding of intersectional decoloniality. This is especially true as radical exteriority ineluctably subsists in the interplay of multiple modes of Latinidad which often compete among themselves in the current global era of fluid identity confluences

and conflicted modes of hybridity (this is a deficiency that, in its own way, will be noted below with respect to Wallerstein's world-system theorizing and his timid approximations to Latin America).

There is only one essay in Bakan and Dua's volume that deals specifically with Fanon's ideas. Audrey Kobayashi and Mark Boyle's (2014) essay compares Fanon's and Sartre's analytical exchanges during the decades after World War II. Kobayashi and Boyle's note that these exchanges focused on ways to refine Marxian, colonial racism and anti-racism theorizing with the aim of examining the potential of ethnic nationalisms in opposition to metropolis-centered paradigms, among which Marx's writings were not an exception. The ensuing dialogue between Fanon and Sartre illumines radical cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and postcolonial/decolonial formulations that even today rest on the foundations laid by Fanon and other early anti-colonial thinkers.

For Vallega (2014), on the contrary, this dialogue between Fanon and Sartre was in several instances much closer to a sour debate than an amicable conversation. In particular, Vallega (2014, pp. 122 and following) notes the philosophical depth and intensity of their debate on issues such as negritude. Sartre (1948, p. 11) attempted to inscribe negritude poetry and literary work as a "dialectical" response to white colonialism. To this, Fanon (Vallega, 2009, pp. 147 and following) responded with a vehement call to avoid such dialectical categorizations under the Hegelian ontology since this would be tantamount to seeing negritude as a mere negation of whiteness and therefore one appendix, one mere moment of European's self-centered sense of progress and historicity (Mariátegui, 1995; Vallega, 2014, pp. 124-125).

Fanon's full critique of Sartre's position... ultimately figures a call for moving beyond the dialectic of the white mastermind and the barbarian, exotic colored other, and beyond the historical element of Hegelian dialectics that sustain such idea... The call for an autonomous way of articulating identity beyond the color line appears as much within negritude movements as within indigenous movements in Latin America. For example, José Carlos Mariátegui... who spoke out of indigenous experiences in the Americas, states in his famous 'The Indian Problem': 'the problem of the Indian is the problem of land ownership and not of ethnicity.' (Vallega, 2014, p. 125)

B.2. What about Wallerstein?

Lastly, let us touch on Wallerstein's theoretical heritage. It is inscribed in this broad dialogue of metatheoretical paradigms with reference to the study of Latinidad identity issues and Trans-Latinidades broadly conceived as a way to bring closure to this section. One can see how Wallerstein's long-term theorizing illustrates similar problems to those already noticed in neo-Marxian frameworks which, as indicated above, are plagued by an over-emphasis on macro dynamics at the expense of micro, sub-conscious and trajectory-based/existential materialist conceptions. Wallerstein's theorizing emerged in the 1970s as a post-Marxian development. Its main contribution consisted of reinterpreting the historical articulation of political economy dynamics that made capitalism not only possible but solidly anchored in increasingly globalized processes (which explained for him why socialism could never be conceived as a phenomenon encompassing a single country or a segment of countries "separate" or in isolation from the sphere of capital; see for example, Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1980; Martin, 1990; Ramirez, 1988; Wallerstein, 1974, 1979, 1984; Wolf, 1982). Despite this

macro emphasis, there is one essay where Wallerstein attempts to engage the uniqueness of Latinidad as a sociopolitical phenomenon infused with multiple identity currents and layers of complexity. In it, Wallerstein (2016) argues that we are witnessing a geopolitical surge for Latin America and consequently for Latinidad at a global scale. This, however, has a great deal of uncertainty in terms of its ultimate telos, especially since Wallerstein centers on strategic considerations at the macro level, which once again betrays the germ of micro-level analysis that one could anticipate in his essay (For a conservative, Eurocentric discussion of the Latinx designation at a global level, see Corsanego, 1999; for political economy and other objections to the emergence of CEPAL [the Latin American Economic Conference based on its acronym in Spanish] from the standpoint of one of Latin America's core dependency theorists and one of the main CEPAL ideologs, see Hurtado, 1985). This is how Wallerstein (2016, n.p.) puts it in his own words:

In this worldwide political struggle, the concept Latin@s can push us all, and particularly those who are encompassed within the concept, in two different, even opposite, directions. On the one hand, it can be a legitimate demand by oppressed groups, using a name that is ultimately founded on concrete local political realities. Latin@s can therefore move forward with others in a family of oppressed groups, and their movements, to find common ground and some kind of unity in objectives and action with other groups founded on other concrete local political realities... But of course it is equally possible--as we know from looking at comparable groups in the historical past and indeed in the historical present--that it can be the base of turning inward, of creating a fortress that protects the group more or less, and puts it in critical conflict with other similar groups. One should not underestimate the pressures that exist and will

come to exist to move in this direction. So, Latin@s as a concept and a discussion about 'Latin@s in the worldsystem' is a double-edged sword that has to be handled carefully, intelligently, and with a sense of how much is at stake.

I have a main problem with a sharply dichotomous approach like the one spelled out here by Wallerstein. This kind of rigid positionality ends up essentializing Latinidad. It does away with the value of examining trans-Latinidades in all their powerful sense of diversity. In other words, this kind of pragmatic portrayal of who is the oppressed in rigid conceptual terms gives the key to a self-righteous lineage of analysts and knowledge workers. In turn, it neglects a priori the ability of activist and existentially minded radical agency trajectories of transformation to explore in an open fashion all possible avenues of emancipatory learning, especially in places and in ways that one would least expect to find it.

Let us end with an example that Wallerstein himself brings up in note 4 of his (2016) essay. There, he cites the work of Martha Jiménez (1988 & 1989). Wallerstein seems to look in a very favorable light Jiménez's questioning of the granting of a fellowship to a multi-lingual, well educated, Argentinian born Latinx high school boy (son of two Argentinian university Professors) by a Bolder newspaper. Wallerstein does not expand on the issues raised by Jiménez, but it seems that the sole objection invoked was that this boy and this family were not "oppressed enough." From something as serendipitous as this an argument is raised to exclude well educated south Americans from the Latinx designation or at least point out the "travesty of the concept" which in Jiménez's case has specific connections to the implementation of Affirmative Action policies but which in Wallerstein's narrative becomes dangerously mingled with the

discussion of trans-Latinidad identity issues as a whole. I cannot avoid dwelling on the realization that under these objections somebody like Arturo would be out of the picture. Arturo, a south America born blind male with “too much education,” as Fatima said in Chapter 2’s reflexive counter-story, would not be “oppressed enough” to deserve Affirmative Action considerations, despite his Latinx “status” (as if there were such a thing as a fix status when it comes to identity matters). Who would have the prerogative of making such decisions? What would be the legitimacy grounds for their determinations? Would it be simply a matter of power abuse without counter-balancing mechanisms as was the case with Fatima and those institutional actors who de facto supported her oppressive exclusionary determination? (see also, Wise, 2005 & 2009b)

3.5. Trans-Modernities and The Political Philosophy of Trans-Latinidad

The point here is not, of course, to suggest that the setbacks and defeats of the postcolonial era ought automatically to be referred beyond the “post-colonies” themselves, to the world system. This would be to exculpate the clearly culpable leaderships of any number of postcolonial states, whose record, in human rights terms as well as in terms of the provision of standards of living, welfare, and social empowerment, has been dismal. It is obvious that we ought not to let the murderousness, brutality, and corruption – not to mention the ineptitude, cowardice, and greed – of so many postcolonial leaders disappear from view in our reckoning of developments in the decades since decolonization. (Lazarus, 2004, p. 21)

The text in this section’s epigraph is very helpful to further underscore the tensions underlying the various attempts for Marxian and global studies/world system thinkers to engage the full depth of decoloniality theorizing. When Lazarus talks of the

“decades since decolonialization” one gets the impression that decolonialization is an event, a historical occurrence formalized at the “granting” of independence by imperial powers. This event-centered understanding differs dramatically from the complex threefold conceptual picture (of power, knowledge and being) analyzed in Chapter 2 as I surveyed the decolonial contributions of Maldonado-Torres as Latin American philosopher of alterity-centered decoloniality. As pointed out above, the Latin American context is especially problematic for authors who attempt to maintain an oversimplified conception of postcoloniality.

Another thinker who has grasped at a philosophical level the macro and micro implication of decoloniality struggles in conjunction with radical exteriority is Enrique Dussel. In particular, his concept of trans-modernity (Dussel, 1996) makes a significant contribution in disentangling and interrogating at the same time the various layers at work. Trans-modernity is defined as the parallel unfolding of multiple civilizations and destructive imperialistic modes of hegemony. For Dussel (2012, p. 269), an intellectual such as Levinas is, if you will, an embodiment of trans-modernity:

Lithuanian Jewish origin, his mother tongues were Russian and Lithuanian, but he was educated in French Strasbourg and German Freiburg. Levinas endured five traumatic years in a Nazi concentration camp, whose imprint was left on his real, vulnerable corporeality. He was a victim of Jewish Holocaust in the very heart of Modernity.

In terms of the multi-layered realities of radical exteriority that make up Latin America and the Caribbean in the diasporic fluidity of their identity configurations, there is another relevant concept which I have called inter-imperialism. Inter-imperialism underscores the fact that imperial heritages do not fade away once a given empire falls down or starts showing signs of sociopolitical and sociocultural decay (as

was plane in the case of the Greco-Roman context). For the study of Latinx radical exteriority and identity confluences and conflicted coexistence this means an eclectic articulation of imperial heritages from the Spanish, French, English, Dutch and Portuguese colonial ethos along with indigenous modes of imperialism such as that of the Incas, the Maya and the Aztec, to name just the most well-known examples.

One aspect greatly under studied with respect to inter-imperialist modes of hegemony is their impact on liberation, resistance and emancipation radical agency trajectories as well as radical solidarity alliance building. How much of Fanon's and James anti-colonial and anti-racist heritage expresses the unique articulation of the empires within which their intellectual trajectories were initially developed?

Answering this question in depth would require a separate dissertation project. In this transitional section of the chapter, it merely serves to highlight the dynamic interaction of critical hermeneutic questions of this sort with respect to the complex articulation of Afro-Caribbean trans-Latinidades, to merely target a single inter-imperialism illustration.

The advent of liberation movements throughout Africa and the Caribbean made the post-1962 period emerge as one of the most promising in the practice of humanism and global emancipation (Lamming and Carter, 1966; Rhodes, 1970; Shepherd, McCarthy-Arnolds, Penna & Cruz Sobrepeña, 1994; Smith R., 2001; Williams & Chrisman, 1994). In fact, it is possible to argue that the reality of empires, race struggles, cultural wars and global capital was no longer the same after this period (Bhabha, 1994; Drimmer, 1968; Stephens, 2005; Wright, 2004). By the late 1970's, virtually all nations in the globe had become postcolonial. By the 1990's the last old

imperial structure of the Soviets also collapsed, bringing down with it the illusion of “proletarian governmentality” (Howe, 1970; Kalpagan, 2000; Stenson and Watt, 1999).

I build on Fanon and James emphasis on the unique language articulation of people of color. This emphasis links to what I would like to call on a preliminary basis “radical intellectual sovereignty,” which in some respects could be interpreted as an organic intellectual variation of radical agency explorations. American Indian thinker Robert Warrior (1995, pp. 87 and following) coined the term intellectual sovereignty. He delineates this notion as an invitation to dialogue or debate. Thus, Warrior does not define it.

Traditionally the concept of sovereignty has been treated as having to do primarily with legal rights and more or less autonomous expressions of nationhood and peoplehood. Warrior stresses that the Enlightenment origin of the idea of sovereignty makes it foreign to 21st century American Indian resistance and emancipation. Furthermore, he contemplates the hegemonic imperialism embedded in its “concession” by the American empire for nation building purposes.

In contrast with Warrior’s critical stance, there are purist in American Indian “authenticity” and so-called traditionalism. Their unpolluted sense of racial/ethnic ontology (not so different from that of ontological mestizaje) can block the potential for broader intellectual and collective action explorations for indigenous thinkers in conjunction with other diasporic people of color. They are not receptive to the unfolding of such an eclectic modality of intellectual sovereignty in its inherent multi-knowledge, resistance-centered heteroglossia.

What Warrior wants to emphasize with the addition of the word “intellectual” as a descriptor of sovereignty is what he calls group sovereignty. By this he means three

interdependent ideas. First, because Native Americans have been researched to death – sometimes literally – Warrior wants to find a counter-voice of research and understanding. This voice is to come from the very subjects that create and recreate alternative knowledge.

Second, in the US context, tribal nationhood reality is by definition group-oriented. Hence, Warrior wants to emphasize a new and revolutionary sense of communality. This communality looks differentially at the uniqueness of tribal manifestations as well as the continuum from reservation to urban peoplehood for American Indians and other neo-colonized people of color. This emphasis on difference aims at building a common quest of liberation based on deep self-understanding – not superimposed by a distorted imaginary coming from the common imperial enemy. Therefore, strategic alliance building is the key component of its unifying quest. It must have explicit and dynamic critical intellectual principles and practices.

Third, Warrior pays special attention to existing barriers to intellectual sovereignty as postcolonial resistance. Barriers operate both at the micro-level -- e.g., individualistic self-destruction or consumption driven strives – or at the macro-level – e.g., corrupt tribal-based governmentality or co-opted servitude. In other words, Warrior calls for searching counter-hegemonic forms of organic intellectual development unique to non-whites. He departs from the extreme reality of American Indians as an overarching seed of hope. If it happens in such meager conditions, why not elsewhere? Furthermore, it has to be everybody's responsibility to explore sovereignty spaces for the subject to bloom, not an elite task deemed to reproduce the iron law of rigid hierarchization and oppression.

For both Fanon and James as emancipation thinkers, People's degree of alienation and enslavement to imperial frames of reference depends on their language acquiescence with the ideological guidelines of domination and hierarchy matrices. These internalized matrices are imposed by the old metropolis of colonial times even long after so-called "independence" has been formalized. Thus, for instance, Fanon warns about the dangers of pseudo-prestige assigned to certain imperial subjects based on their language use and the cultural resemblance to the master imperial agents:

Any Antilles Negro who performed his military service in a Senegalese infantry regiment is familiar with this disturbing climate: On one side he has the Europeans, whether born in his own country or in France, and on the other he has the Senegalese. I remember a day when, in the midst of combat, we had to wipe out a machine-gun nest. The Senegalese were ordered to attack three times, and each time they were forced back. Then one of them wanted to know why the toubabsó did not go into action. At such times, one no longer knows whether one is toubab or "native." And yet many Antilles Negroes see nothing to upset them in such European identification; on the contrary, they find it altogether normal. That would be all we need, to be taken for niggers! The Europeans despise the Senegalese, and the Antilles Negro rules the black roost as its unchallenged master... I was talking recently with someone from Martinique who told me with considerable resentment that some Guadeloupe Negroes were trying to "Pass" as Martinicans. But, he added, the lie was rapidly discovered, because they are more savage than we are; which, again, means they are farther away from the white man. (1967, p. 26)

Therefore, radical intellectual sovereignty (as well as radical agency trajectory possibilities) within the reality of inter-imperialism rests on the idea of contextualizing emancipation. This means placing its praxis within the epistemological and axiological confines of structural and discourse heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1986, 1990). In the

Caribbean, this heteroglossia expresses tangibly in the linguistic configuration of Creole language. With its subversive mingling of old imperial languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, and Dutch) and African vestiges, Creole expresses the freedom of the oppressed to counteract the canons of orthodoxy and aesthetics imposed by empires. Furthermore, it expresses a sense of trans-geographical mobility that transgresses the imposed limits of imperial hegemony (Edwards, 2003).

Of course, it is not simply that speaking Creole provides a magic pathway to emancipation. Rather, in the reality construction afforded by Creole rests the basis for diasporic emancipatory resistance avenues. In Fanon, these avenues start with the psychoanalytical contours of non-compliance; a quasi-therapeutic approach to identity transformation (Fanon, 1965 & 2004; see also, Bulhan, 1985; Caste, 1970; Gendzier, 1973; Wright, 2004). This transformational humanistic approach is based on breaking the chains of acceptance of patronizing: no longer being docile addressees of alienating oppressors.

In James, these emancipation avenues have more to do with the adoption of an eclectically driven kind of Marxian awareness of class and race difference. This awareness allows the oppressed to develop their sense of separate identity from the imperial ideologies of geographical and cultural subjugation. Therefore, this form of identity transformation derives its emancipatory power from the fact that it primarily rests on the experience of Diaspora. The meaning of Diaspora expresses here either geographical trans-location or the constant mutability of ways of being for survival's sake (James, 1953, 1977A, 1977B, 1989, 1996 & 1999).

Postcolonial conditions add complexity to diasporic heteroglossia and inter-imperialism modes of domination and resistance spaces. These postcolonial conditions

often favor hegemony through change and resistance containment, but also play a very meaningful role in catalyzing transnational forms of identity awareness that may result in innovative emancipation routes, especially for the most oppressed. These emancipation mechanisms may include unique gender relations and attitudes, subversive class and race alliances, and so forth.

Another, more symbolic example of these instances of emancipatory transnationality can be extrapolated from James' discussion of the unintended consequences of Cricket matches and their diffusion throughout the British Empire (1993). James demonstrates how this game in its unstructured counter-intuitiveness served to provide a voice to working classes in ways that imperial actors never envisioned. Even in England, the diffusion of the game had a lot to do with this unintended class permeability. In the Antilles, permeability was taken several steps further; fomenting a sort of racial team "mestizaje" nowhere else replicated within everyday race relations. James knew very well what he was talking about. He got to be a very accomplished Cricket player and experienced the interracial "ludic" transgressions this game afforded in Trinidad and abroad within the socio-cultural contexts of British common wealth (1993, Chs. 1 and 7).

Therefore, one of the practical values of inter-imperialism as a concept is its ability to expose the operation and interaction among different modes of imperialisms. Somehow, imperialism thinkers since Lenin have left readers with the impression that imperialism is a monolithic phenomenon due to its structural roots in the linear evolution of capitalism (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1992; Hardt & Negri, 2000). Overstating this feature hides important socio-cultural and socio-historical modes of diverse articulation. Their exploration underlies both a deeper understanding of hegemonic

mechanisms as well as resistance pockets that defy the traditional agency imagination of radical imperialism thinkers and practitioners (Howe, 1970; Stephens, 2005).

3.6. Latinidad as Radical Exteriority

Se estableció en Mendoza, formó allí un ejército, cruzó con sus hombres la Cordillera de los Andes, derrotó a los realistas en Chile, armó una flota, prosiguió por mar a Perú, desembarcó allí con su ejército, entró en Lima y se adueñó del corazón del imperio español en América. Un militar criollo, José Francisco de San Martín, llevó a cabo esa formidable campaña entre 1814 y 1821. Un militar escocés, Thomas Maitland, había concebido el plan en Londres, a principios de 1800. La idea fue recibida y considerada seriamente por el gobierno de William Pitt el Joven. Maitland elevó un texto preliminar al Secretario de Guerra, Henry Dundas... quien lo citó para discutir detalles. De la entrevista Dundas-Maitland surgió el plan definitivo, que fue puesto en posesión del Secretario de Guerra a mediados de 1800. El gobierno de Pitt cayó el 3 de febrero de 1801. El Plan Maitland pareció quedar, entonces, en el olvido. (Terragno, 2012, n.p.)²⁰

Let us now engage the uniqueness of Latinx philosophy and its contribution to the understanding of radical agency. To this end, I center on Vallega (2014) work. His approach is unique. It performs a genealogical more than a merely historical examination of Latinx philosophy of liberation and its connotations for radical epistemology, axiology and aesthetics. I look at Vallega's framework beyond race hierarchy dynamics of domination. I also interrogate its relevance to contexts such as those of intersectional disabilities which expose visible as well as non-visible markers of subaltern status hierarchy dynamics.

Compared to race matrices of hierarchy, in disability contexts, decolonial epistemologies might be less evident in their operational modes of domination. My purpose is not to verify whether radical exteriority has universal validity beyond Latinx identity dimensions. My aim is to look at the scope and limits of this kind of decolonial epistemology. I want to explore how helpful it might be in understanding and enriching contextual emancipation strategies in intersectional Latinx/subaltern agency and domination dynamics beyond the spheres explicitly addressed by the thinkers surveyed by Vallega in his work.

Vallega's epistemology of radical exteriority rests on Enrique Dussel's treatment of Levinas. As I have already demonstrated in Chapter 2, Levinas focuses on otherness as a quest for trans-ontology and an axiology of the human (see for example Levinas, 1969). For Dussel, "to be human is to have a distinct ethical call that results from finding one's subjectivity by being in proximity to others who remain always beyond our decisions, control, and total comprehension ... Thus philosophical thought arises in alterity and

toward the engagement with alterity” (Vallega, 2014, p. 7). It is in this space of absolute alterity that the meaning of radical exteriority resides.

Therefore, radical exteriority is not, in the strict sense, equivalent to or exclusively found in spaces of intersectionality. It is a radical axiology and epistemology of otherness from the experiential vantage point of the excluded (Dussel, 2003, 2012; Vallega, 2009). In the 7th note for his introduction, Vallega puts it this way: radical exteriority alludes to “a thinking and existence beyond Western comprehension, control, and determination; to the living, articulate configurations of lives previously excluded, oppressed, exploited and silenced, from which a sound philosophical thought arises...” (2014, pp. 221-222).

By western in this context, Vallega means Eurocentric universalism. Hence, Vallega suggests that Latin American thought (particularly in its liberation and decolonial manifestations) is uniquely permeated by radical exteriority. That uniqueness stems from Latin America’s ambivalent interdependence and reliance on European epistemology. In this ambivalence, it simultaneously praises what is “civilized” and different about its inherently “mestizx” identity (Miller M., 2004). This is especially so since Latinx identity is reluctantly forced to engage with ideologies of “negritud” (this word *negritud* corresponds to *negritude* in Spanish and it is used throughout the dissertation as interchangeable with blackness) or “indigenismo”/indigeneity (see for example Zea, 1971, 1986, 1991; Vallega, 2014, notes 11 and 14 in Ch. 1, pp. 225-226).

A. Latin America's Simultaneity as anti/Pre/Para-Rationality

Life is tragic simply because the earth turns and the sun inexorably rises and sets, and one day, for each of us, the sun will go down for the last, last time. Perhaps the whole root of our trouble, the human trouble, is that we will sacrifice all the beauty of our lives, will imprison ourselves in totems, taboos, crosses, blood sacrifices, steeples, mosques, races, armies, flags, nations, in order to deny the fact of death, which is the only fact we have. It seems to me that we ought to rejoice in the fact of death--ought to decide, indeed, to earn one's death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life. One is responsible for life: It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return. One must negotiate this passage as nobly as possible, for the sake of those who are coming after us. (Wise, 2009b, pp. 259-260)

Vallega's conceptualization of "simultaneity" in Latin American decoloniality and its aesthetics is also relevant in this regard. Vallega's idea of simultaneity addresses and engages this kind of ambiguity. It does so by looking at thought in its everyday existential materiality as something uniquely Latin American, at once western and non-western. However, Vallega does not imply the overarching sameness that thinkers such as Miller (2004) criticize in the ideology of "mestizaje" as a North American intellectual legacy. Vallega's attitude toward mestizaje is not only ambivalent. It appears to mingle the ontological and the epistemological as a descriptive, philosophical expression of eclectic historicity that gives radical exteriority a sort of dramatic life.

It should not be surprising therefore that the first text Vallega tackles in his analysis is not developed by a philosopher but by Simón Bolívar, a doer, a paradigmatic symbol of Latin American liberation in the 19th century. Vallega starts his analysis by reading in

Bolívar's "Jamaica Letter" written in 1814 a manifesto of what makes up Latinidad as a new mode of identity in the context of early 19th century independence struggles and nation building (Bolívar, 2004a).

Bolívar, despite his preeminent role in these independence struggles was a power icon. Bolívar was a personification of preexisting hierarchy structures in Hispanic American colonial territories. Bolívar was member of a white wealthy family that had close links to the European sources of domination. Those links were being conveniently disdained then under the excuse that Spain's monarchy was being usurped by French invaders. True, it is often said that someone had to lend Bolívar a shirt when he died. That is how depleted his wealth was at the end of his life (see for instance García Márquez's 1990 aesthetic representation of the drama of power under those circumstances). But none of that does away with the practical and symbolic implications of Bolívar's class origins and the underlying race dimensions that defined all the independence struggles throughout what today we call Latin America, especially in the early wave of armed conflicts that the local white elites led against Spain during the first three decades of the 19th century.

Considering the materiality of Vallega's concept of simultaneity that characterizes Latin American history, this contradiction should be read as being at the core of the irony of decolonial liberation in Latin American contexts. For Vallega, these features are today applicable to all nations in the Americas. They shape the many modalities that decolonial thought adopts against hegemonic western modernity. Western thought is fundamentally "instrumental, rationalist, productive, and subjectivist" Vallega (2014, p. 220).

A good example of what is meant by simultaneity in its historic and material manifestations is provided by Bolívar's relation with his subaltern Venezuelan soldiers, the famous "Bravos de Apure" who accompanied him victoriously to the south, as far as the Andean territory of today's Bolivia. Many of these warriors had been fighting for Spain under a fellow named José Tomás Boves (Herrera Luque, 1977). They were subsequently persuaded – we could even say enticed -- to fight under another leader with ties to Bolívar, José Antonio Páez. It was indeed their sense of limited "agency" what turned the fate of independence struggles in a direction towards the tipping point that ended up favoring the anti-monarchic camp. Yet there is further irony in the layers of ambiguity that reflect Latin America's aesthetics and materiality of simultaneity. Páez would later become one of the caudillos that defied Bolívar and led a quasi-dictatorial regime in the territory that currently occupies the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, fragmenting forever Bolívar's broader Gran Colombia nationhood project.

In sum, one cannot preassign a category as belonging to radical agency or liberation just because in its genesis it intends or claims to be emancipatory. This inside not only applies to micro-level radical agency trajectories or radical solidarity alliance building dimensions. This section's epigraph about the heroic military achievements of San Martín is very telling with respect to its macro relevance as well. Like Bolívar, San Martín was a white criollo (direct descendant of Spanish conquistadores and an evolving embodiment of *ego conquiro* in his very role as liberation agent). As a matter of fact, for the bulk of the Latin American continent, the core sense of nationhood is tied to decisions made in one way or another by one of these two white male criollos. Bolívar got to the point of self-

proclaiming his role as dictator. San Martín opted out of politics after independence. Yet, both were entangled in the vestiges of what I have defined above as inter-imperialism. Their legacy, therefore, has not escape this postcolonial entanglement with the identity consequences this engenders for Latinx expressions of citizenship and utopian sense of subjection/liberation even after (perhaps especially after) migration takes place (Forster, 2003).

Contemporary Latin American philosophers such as Castro-Gómez (2002, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2017; see also, Hernández Gonzáles, 2011 for a critical examination of his work) and Quijano (1995, 2000a, 2000b; see also the essays contained in Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui, 2008) stress this point at the epistemological and axiological realms by centering on what they call “the power of coloniality.” Castro-Gómez shows that transcendental thought in its ordering of knowledge throughout the Americas has played a hierarchy setting role of reality while remaining outside of it. The epistemic result of this is a hidden place for transcendental rationality that drives postcolonial realities as illustrated by the historical evolution of Nueva Granada (which roughly occupied what Bolívar later founded as Gran Colombia, encompassing today’s Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador). This mass of land identifies with European principles. This was a territory ruled by Criollos, many of whom were descendants of Spanish male colonial rulers and indigenous, or in rare cases, black slave or mulata women (which by the way is one of the historical legends around Bolívar’s “dark” origins and the subsequent conflicts with his half-brother Manuel Piar who would eventually be executed by anti-Spanish forces, following Bolívar’s direct orders; see for example, Herrera Luque, 2004).

Its adherence to European principles does not operate at the level of empirical rationality. Its identification is expressed through transcendental/invisible rationality (Castro-Gómez, 2005; Schutte, 1993). The transcendental/invisible rationality emphasis is something common to Fanon and decolonial Latinx theory. The latter differs from Fanon's postcolonial analysis in the importance that empirical/observable rationality plays for Fanon. However, in Fanon, the preponderance of empirical rationality works more in terms of what Agamben (1998) calls an "inclusive exclusion" (see also, Dua, 2000 & 2007 for parallel applications of a similar idea with regards to white settler and decolonial theorizing in the Canadian context with respect to Asian females). The implementation of this seemingly paradoxical idea means that it is not a pure either/or dichotomy between transcendental and empirical types of rationality that work for the exclusion of everything antagonistic to the power of coloniality in the coloniality of being and the coloniality of knowledge (Vallega, 2014, pp. 206-208; see also my extensive discussion of Maldonado-Torres decolonial contributions in Chapter 2). In Latinx decolonial theory, Through the power of coloniality, all images, empirically grounded or otherwise, end up being subsumed under transcendental rationality. Therefore, Vallega wonders about "the extent to which philosophers in Westernized or colonized contexts and systems of knowledge are genuinely able to think freely and speak of philosophical knowledge when all images have been placed under the economy of the coloniality of power, knowledge, and thought (P. 209).

B. The Aesthetics of a Latinx Decolonial Rationality?

El niño Andrés Eloy Pérez tiene diez años
Y estudia en la elementaria Simón Bolívar,
Todavía no sabe decir el Credo correctamente,
Le gusta el río, jugar al fútbol y estar ausente.
Le han dado el puesto en la iglesia de monaguillo
A ver si la conexión compone al chiquillo
Su familia está muy orgullosa porque a su vez se cree
Que con Dios conectando a uno conecta a diez...
(Blades, 2018)²¹

This idea of needing to interrogate the myth of “free thinking” in the west from Vallega’s musings provides a good sake way into the aesthetic ramifications of resisting and/or transcending western modes of rationality as a uniquely Latin American phenomenon. Gabriel García Márquez’s (1998) “One Hundred Years of Solitude” has been interpreted by Vallega (2009) as the aesthetic epitome of this kind of decolonial resistance to rationalistic impositions on the basis of radical exteriority. For Vallega, García Márquez’s (1998) work represents a unique modality of ethics that manifests itself as a situated ontology of the Latinx spirit. The importance of such an ethical exercise is that “a fundamentally ethical character of thought leads to the need to think with the other... the other is already here with us, among us, she is an inarrestable element in the very determination of contemporary thought’s many and fluid identities... the other is a figure of our memory... of genocides and the cultural destruction accomplished by colonialism...” (Vallega, 2009, p. 139).

Along with Fanon's, García Márquez's ethical thought involves, according to Vallega (2009, pp. 140 and following), a quest to go beyond both deconstruction of the other (Derrida, 1993, 1998, 2000a, 2000b & 2001) to try to comprehend it or get into perpetual othering processes grounded in Hegelian dialectics with its obsessive negations. It requires a radical listening leap into the incommensurable:

By incommensurable, I indicate experiences that in their specific difference cannot even be juxtaposed as direct or dialectical opposites to rational grasping and ordering... without an opening to the diversity and living specificity of 'our times, philosophy becomes a stone monument to a past that sustains its indifference by claiming its sense in light of an impermeable past that never was, or must follow the dictum and fashions of that normalizing, pseudoemotional, pseudopolitical religious culture that rules today. Finally, without undergoing the direct contact with her living specificity and diversity, not only the South, the other, but also the philosophical tradition in general, slowly, tacitly become victims of a growing deep solitude, as we find ourselves further and further submerged in our tautological and aphasic discourses, undaunted in our solitary solipsism. (Vallega, 2009, p. 140)

José David Saldívar (1991b) objects to this kind of interpretation. His reading of García Márquez's magnum opus underscores the way in which the fictional imaginary of Macondo (the timeless mythical context where García Márquez's novel unfolds) constitutes an ideological trap. For Saldívar, for instance, the preponderant role given in Macondo to the power of the banana company enacts the ideology of macro-level dependency from imperial forces within Latin America to the point of portraying a devastating pan-American sense of hopelessness for subaltern segments of Latin American peoples.

... new perspectives concerning his use of Colombian history might be gained by rereading the novel's famous Banana Company episode where the issues of Macondo's history, dependency, and deconstruction are more clearly dramatized. The Banana Company episode is one of the most self-conscious and significant ideological moments in recent pan-American literary history. In it, he alludes to the controlling principles that regulate not only his sociopoetic novel, but the genre of pan-American, metahistorical narration itself. (Saldívar, 1991b, n.p.)

I would contend that both Vallega's and Saldívar's interpretations are legitimate in the sense that they demonstrate how colonizing and decolonizing dynamics coexist in the constant making and re-making of trans-Latinidades. They both point to fascinating re-reading and co-authoring possibilities on the basis of the incommensurable nature of radical exteriority in Latinx collective and intraconsciousness dimensions of identity formation. At the same time, Saldívar's ideological warnings serve to illustrate how the very philosophical enactment of radical exteriority as a critical hermeneutics tool runs the risk of becoming yet another colorblind, colonizing mode of myth configuration. This is especially true when radical exteriority experiments (aesthetic, axiological, sociopolitical, etc.) attempt to take away the situated-ness of emancipatory learning and radical agency possibilities, transforming them into universalizing modes of a metahistory of all trans-Latinidades conceived as mere gradations within one's self-imposed sameness. How could Macondo encapsulate all Latinx possibilities of oppression and emancipatory struggle? Nevertheless, it is often suggested that therein resides the literary and political philosophy power of Macondo and García Márquez's overall legacy. Perhaps with the exception of *Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera* (García Márquez, 2003), there is not a utopian ethos that can be identified as a unifying thread in his legacy. As has been pointed out in several

junctions of this dissertation project, pessimism by itself is not a very helpful radical agency catalyst, unless it finds core ways to transcend the paralyzing hopelessness of feeling powerless, at the mercy of hegemonic forces. On the other hand, however, the sense of identification of several generations of readers with the aura of Macondo speaks of a sort of co-authoring hunger for emancipation, a unifying force that goes beyond merely rational modes of psychologizing. Here perhaps is where Vallega's critical hermeneutics of radical exteriority would be most helpful as an organizing principle for emancipatory meta-cognition at the intersectional crossroads of trans-Latinidades' multiple border crossings.

3.7. Summary and Concluding Remarks on Race, Latinidad, Decoloniality and Intersectionality

... a soccer or basketball game is brought together by the marvelous, seemingly-inert object of the ball as it joins or separates its players, this is a network of relationships and these networks exist everywhere and everything "sees"; the power lies in how we envisage these networks and systems. The world speaks through different eyes. Eyes, then, encompasses more than the purely visual. (Bennett & Zournazi, 2015, p. 4)

First, the African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a negative interpretation. Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of "human nature." Or, when it is, its things and attributes are generally of lesser value, little importance, and poor quality. It is this elementariness and primitiveness that makes Africa the world par excellence of all that is incomplete, mutilated, and unfinished, its history reduced to a series of setbacks of nature in its quest for humankind. At another level, discourse on Africa is almost always deployed in the framework (or on the fringes) of a meta-text about the animal —to be exact, about the beast: its experience, its world, and its spectacle. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 2)

The two epigraphs I have chosen to open this last section in the current chapter underscore two core themes that have driven several of my reflections on race ideologies and intersectionality as they pertain to radical agency possibilities in trans-Latinidad identities. On the one hand, there is a theme of Afro-centrism. This theme does not operate in the sense of forcing Africanity into all trans-Latinidades. Rather, it fights the forced invisibility of blackness in Latinx which works at once by nullifying negritude or as the verb form in Spanish would say “negreando” everything that does not conforms to the normativity of whiteness within and throughout trans-Latinidades and above its ontological understandings of mestizaje. Marcos Silva (2017) stresses the importance of colors to philosophy. I would add that this extends in a poignant way to the making and re-making of a political philosophy of race in its intersectional dance with issues of disability. There is a saying in Spanish that states: “de noche todos los gatos son pardos” [at night all cats are brown]. I wonder why brown? Why not grey or some other color? Yet, the real power in this allegorical saying is attributed to the night, that is, the world of darkness (which relates directly to the critique expressed in the second epigraph). Throughout the poetic justice driving this chapter’s meta-narratives I have insisted in demonstrating that the real night, the real darkening force against which we need to struggle is constituted by racialized ideologies themselves such as whiteness as property or ontological mestizaje.

The second theme that emerges from these epigraphs concerns radical agency. I am thinking of it in its relational dynamicity with respect to the ontology of existential materiality. It is in this materiality that both the racial contract and the ability contract merge, making it imperative to devise intersectional strategies to combat their devastating

consequences in everyday life. To me, that is the core message in this chapter's reflexive counter story. In other words, Asdrubal and Arturo are very much like the players in the soccer field. But the ball that relates them and keeps them there is the joined intersectional resistance to both contracts in their everyday embodied manifestations.

There is a third theme in the chapter, this time not so directly linked to the epigraphs. It is the theme of situated immanence. What I mean by that is a desire to avoid worshipping sacred cows. The so-called "próceres" (a Spanish word that alludes to much more than mere heroes or fathers of the homeland, but a sort of transcendental/trans-racial, legend-like meta-human mixture of the two) of trans-Latinidades have made immense contributions. It would be self-defeating to deny that. The problem is to dwell on those achievements as stagnating anchors of idolatry. It is as if the Jewish people in the Exodus would remain adoring the bronze serpent long after the biting serpents were dead and gone. This theme shows in the chapter as in a circle. It opens with a critique of Carlos Alberto Torres exaggerated gestures to honor Freire. It ends with a critical look at the racialized/postcolonial heritage implicit in some of Bolívar and San Martín's features.

Theory wise, the chapter mingles Senese's (1991) critique of possibilitarian social justice pedagogies with an extensive exploration of Giroux's resistance theorizing. I honestly and proudly see myself in the possibilitarian camp. However, I also see great value in embracing the daring invitation from Senese to enrich possibilitarian modes of resistance with unusual metatheoretical flavors such as those of Surrealism and Gramscian axiology.

The chapter also dives into whiteness analytical frameworks and contrasts them with Dei's Afro-centric epistemology of anti-racist decolonial intersectionality. The result is an extensive review and a critique of common places. For instance, in terms of white privilege as part of anti-racist curricula, I strongly subscribe the recommendation from Leonardo and Porter (2010) to incorporate a Fanonian approach to violence in the implementation of anti-racist dialogue, making sure that safety concerns for white folks do not drive the process. Allowing that, would mean resurrecting white privilege at the very heart of anti-racist pedagogical interventions.

Similarly, the notion of whiteness as property acquires significance in the chapter as I discuss a couple of metatheoretical illustrations that expand on its applicability to counter-act the racial and ableist contracts. First, in the essay by Buras (2011) the racial contract gets exposed in its spatial and distributive injustices against people of color in the New Orleans 21st century schooling "reconstruction" and reconfiguration context. In Broderick A. A. and Leonardo's (2016) case, intangible things like smartness and goodness are examined at the intersection of race and disability to demonstrate how whiteness as property acquires everyday existential materiality for students of color. For these students in the US, their very construction of dis/ability stems from the racial contract as it conflates with its ableist contract ideology counterpart, joining forces and creating complex layers of exclusionary hierarchies.

A third essay by David Gillborn (2017) which I have not examined so far in the chapter, conceives the notion of whiteness as property as working to construct spaces of advantage for white middle-class children and families through the shaping of dis/ability

as a contested and mutable social category (Allan, 1996 & 2010; Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2013; Araujo, 2007; Crozier, 2001; Gillborn, 2008 & 2015; Gillies & Robinson Y., 2012; Hallam, 2002; Hallam & Toutounji, 1996; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Leonardo & Broderick A. A., 2011; Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent & Ball, 2015; Slee, 2011; Tomlinson, 1981; Wright, Weekes & McGlaughlin, 2000). Gillborn (2017, n.p.) uses a fictionalized counter-story as well as macro-level and qualitative data to argue that middle-class blacks in the UK are forced to opt for one of two alternatives. Either they resist the labeling of their children as “emotionally and behaviorally disturbed,” which brings with it flagrant exclusion from resources and opportunities available to white middle-class children, or they have to mobilize their class capitals “to have schools recognize and act upon what they see as the legitimate additional learning needs of their children” (Gillborn, 2017, n.p.).

Building on the foundational research of CRT legal scholar Cheryl Harris (1993) I argue that dis/ability is a White property right, i.e. dis/ability labels can act to facilitate or hinder educational support and achievement (depending upon the label and the associated institutional reactions). In short, dis/ability labels around emotional disturbance are deployed to put Black children beyond the reach of mainstream schooling (justifying further exclusion from mainstream education) but dis/ability labels that might bring additional resources and support (such as dyslexia and autism) are withheld from Black students who are seen as bogus claimants to these potentially positive resources. (Gillborn, 2017, n.p.)

Nirmala Erevelles (2017) further deepens this crucial conversation on the application of racialized techniques of exclusion to students of color with disabilities. Erevelles shows how anti-blackness and whiteness as property work together via selective exclusionary law enforcement practices whose axiological ethos take us back to slavery-

centered rationales even at the end of the second decade of the 21st century (Powell and Menendian, 2008; Vandervelde, 2015).

Dred Scott was the first time a case reached the Supreme Court where a slave was pitted against his master... Its significance rested on the simple but potent refusal of the Court to recognize free Blacks as ever becoming members of an imagined community of U.S. Citizens by constituting 'whiteness as a salient feature of citizenship...' A similar refusal of recognition justified segregation under Jim Crow laws by drawing on the problematic mantra that 'separate was [indeed] equal', upheld by another notorious court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This occurred despite the existence of the Fourteenth Amendment that guaranteed equal protection under the law to all its citizens including African Americans. Such practices that structure community along racial lines continue today as observed in 'our hyper-segregated and highly impoverished urban areas and coincident White suburban enclaves [where] ... [r]esidential segregation curtails the experience of community for people of different races and is the most important factor contributing to racial inequality today.' (Erevelles, 2017, n.p.)

Erevelles, uses selective anti-black enforcement practices associated with Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act to demonstrate her point (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2013; Artiles, Kozelski, Trent, Osher & Ortiz, 2010; Erevelles, 2014; Ferri & Connor, 2005; Holt, 2003; Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons & Feggins-Aziz, 2006). She stresses that in special education programs throughout the US, "white students dominate gifted programmes and inclusive classrooms while black students are overwhelmingly relegated to segregated classrooms and alternative schools" (Erevelles, 2017, n.p.). Erevelles (2017, n.p.) describes in great detail her observations at a well-reputed magnet school in a small university town in the US deep south:

At a public magnet elementary and middle school that offers an International Baccalaureate (IB) programme in the small college

town located in the southeastern United States, the top 7% of the students identified from each of the public schools in the district are admitted to the school. Admissions to the school are based on the following assessment criteria: Student Performance (report cards) 25%; State Assessments (K–2 DIBELS, 3–7 ARMT +): 25%; Universal Screener: 25%; Learner Profile Screening Device: 25%. Though the philosophy of school chafes at standardization by opting for a curriculum that has an Arts focus and uses Project Based Learning (PBL) as a pedagogical practice, it nevertheless only admits students (as early as the first grade) who score at or above the 40th percentile on standardized tests. These admissions criteria appear contrary to the educational philosophy of the school that celebrates a non-traditional curriculum while at the same time inexplicably excluding non-traditional learners. Once admitted, students who do not make a C average or whose 'behaviour is disruptive to the extent that it interferes with the student's learning and indicates a lack of self-discipline or respect for others' are sent back to their home school according to the 'magnet school procedures' posted on the school's website. Unable to meet these standardized criteria, many disabled students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) are not admitted into the programme. The argument that the admissions committee makes is that such students will not be able to cope with the rigours of an IB programme. However, the school does admit disabled students (most of whom may not identify as such) who have a 504 plan. I was, however, made aware that almost all the students admitted to the magnet school with a 504 plan were mostly white children from upper middle class educated families (it is a university town after all) with labels such as anxiety disorder, unspecified learning disabilities, ADHD, and ED. As per the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students qualified for coverage under this plan cannot be discriminated on account of their disability and the school is mandated to offer them accommodations to support their full inclusion in the regular classroom with their peers. In sharp contrast, I also learned that there were very few if any black students with a 504 plan in the magnet school. And in an interesting twist, the only students who were required to return to their home school on account of low grades and unacceptable behaviours as outlined in the exit policy for the school were black students.

Erevelles' driving theme of a simultaneous interaction of anti-black sentiments and whiteness as property material manifestations at the structural level are at the heart of my treatment of trans-Latinx identity and geo-political configurations. Relying on Dei's (2017) blackness studies framework and on LatCrit scholarship I demonstrate extensively how the simultaneous cultivation of whiteness desirability along with anti-black sentiments organize the ways in which Latinx populations are racialized in the US and throughout the Latin American continent.

As I present it, Dei's framework is organized in three core principles. The first principle stresses the mutuality between the personal and the political in the intersecting complexities of blackness with respect to all forms of oppression and subaltern radical exteriority manifestations of the self in global and locally racialized settlement contexts. The second principle emphasizes the ideological emptiness involved in searching for blackness' authenticity, an aspect that I extended to all dimensions of identity configuration in trans-Latinidades (e.g., the thirst for authentic indigeneity via certain modalities of Xicanismo). The third principle is concerned with an absolute need to speak about and interrogate race, which transcends similar needs to speak about gender, class, disability, etc., because unlike any of these categories, there is in the case of race a convenient hegemonic desire promoted by dominant racial/colonizing groups to create the false perception that racism is a thing of the past, that race dimensions (especially anti-black race dimensions as organizing frames under which white supremacy rests) have lost their significance. Colorblind post-racial ideologies depend on this frame. They are all-encompassing, impacting categories such as disability by portraying them as racially

neutral when so many techniques of the self are deliberately enacted through the hierarchical naturalizing lenses that only racist ideologies afford.

As it turns out, despite (or perhaps precisely because of) their Afro-centric character, Dei's core principles get enacted in various ways within Latinx contexts. This is especially so in relation to ontological conceptions of *mestizaje*, i.e. as if *mestizaje* is a "real" biological phenomenon that results from fusing the "best" from the old (above all European) world and the new world (meaning primarily "indigenous" races where Africanity and other forms of racial alterity are strategically made invisible).

In terms of radical agency, particularly as it pertains to hopeful outlooks for embodying trans-ontological love and action-oriented dialogue, I provide in this chapter a positive critical appraisal of epistemological conceptions of *mestizaje* as joyful, wisdom driven expression of multiple knowledges. Trinidad Galván's portrayal of *supervivencia* via spiritually-infused pedagogical practices by *mujeres campesinas* in rural Mexico is invoked as an outstanding example of these models. Looking at the subaltern layers of marginality and the material conditions of everyday life for these *mujeres campesinas*, deficit-oriented ideologs would proclaim defeat. Instead, Trinidad Galván's careful pedagogical examination shows the powerful dimensions of wisdom and the radical agency trajectories under which *supervivencia* practices thrive. Nowadays when strategic campaigning at the heart of the bureaucracy in the catholic church has finally allowed the appointment of a Latinx Pope, it has become more evident that without the spirituality and border crossing wisdom of subaltern beings like the *mujeres campesinas* in Trinidad Galván's essay gospel's loving values would be dead. Without fanfare, these women make theology and

philosophy of liberation real, renewed and thriving, giving joyful meaning to the martyrdom of so many nameless heroes or living legends like that of Monsignor Romero to whom Ruben Blades paid homage more than three decades ago in a sort of exilic summary of decoloniality's ethical aesthetics:

Father Antonio Tejeira came from Spain
He's looking for new promises in this land
He came to the jungle without hopes to become a Bishop
Amid heat and mosquitoes, he spoke of Christ.
Father didn't work at the Vatican
Immersed in paperwork and air conditioning dreams
He'd go to that little village in the middle of nowhere to give
his homily
Each and every week he's there for those in search of
salvation... (Blades, 2018. The author's translation)

Arturo was in his last teen years when this song came out. It, along with most of the songs in that album were big dancing hits. So many Latinx dived into the rhythm without even thinking of what Blades was saying. For Arturo it was the other way around. At that time, it was already clear to him that something big needed to change, that resistance was paramount.

Bandura (2006) defines agency in terms of individuals and groups perceiving that they can influence their circumstances. So many mainstream definitions of agency move in this direction. The problem is that, under such criteria, many racialized subaltern subjects in intersectional spaces would lack agency (Archer, 2000). My metatheoretical stance in this and previous chapters flips the understanding of agency to encompass precisely its subsistence when it is least expected, namely where powerlessness seems the norm. For incipient radical agents like Arturo in his global south corner, dreaming of change

enacted the material energy propelling this catalyzing possibility in the middle of so much apparent hopelessness. This is also how supervivencia worked for the mujeres campesinas interviewed by Trinidad Galván.

Paradoxically as it might seem, my emphasis throughout the present chapter on materialist ontologies and the power of existential materiality highlights something fundamental when it comes to radical adult education's quest to unearth emancipatory learning dynamics. The very materiality of apparent hopelessness fuels joyful spaces of hope. As most activist would tell you in Latin America, hope is the most important piece of capital a collective body can have. Linking this with radical exteriority and the power of trans-ontological love brings critical hermeneutics depth to the equation.

In Chapter 4, I look at the other side of the intersectional coin of race and disability (and indirectly at other contractualist ideologies whose resistance requires concrete modes of embodiment, e.g., the so-called sexual contract discussed by Pateman, 1988 & 2002). Specifically, I interrogate those aspects that differentiate radical agency possibilities in the realm of disability, and blindness in particular. Moreover, as was done in this chapter with respect to race and decoloniality, I want to explore those instances where the analysis and direct engagement/application of anti-ableist ontologies, epistemologies, axiology and aesthetics frameworks should take precedence. What do those instances tell us about intersectional resistance as a whole? What radical solidarity lessons should we extrapolate from them? How and to what extent do they teach us about both the situatedness and the cross-pollination of decolonial emancipatory learning as well as the conscious enactment

of love's dialogical trans-ontology across various kinds of radical collective action endeavors?

Chapter 4. *The Metatheory of Blindness and Disability Based Domination*

4.1. Introduction and General Considerations

Que difícil se me hace
mantenerme en este viaje
sin saber adónde voy en realidad;
si es de ida o devuelta,
si el furgón es la primera,
si volver es otra forma de llegar.
Que difícil se me hace
cargar todo este equipaje,
se hace dura la subida al caminar;
Esa realidad tirana
que se ríe a carcajadas
porque espera que me canse de buscar...
Que difícil se me hace
mantenerme con coraje
lejos de la tranza y la prostitución,
defender mi ideología
buena o mala, pero mía,
tan humana como la contradicción...
Cada nota, cada idea,
cada paso en mi carrera
y la estrofa de mi última canción;
cada fecha postergada,
la salida y la llegada
y el oxígeno de mi respiración:
y todo a pulmón, todo a pulmón²²
(Lerner, 2018)

The present chapter is both a meta-philosophy of intersectional spaces of blindness and a concrete examination of their organizing challenges as colorblind contexts for interdependent relationality. Hence, here is a concise way to capture the essence of this chapter's argument. The enactment of this chapter's argument entails understanding/explaining the existence of powerful utopian reasons and even parameters for the emergence of LatDisCrit precisely in the organizing deficiencies currently observed in the blind movement in global north settings such as those of the US and in the learned hopelessness adopted by blind Latinx actors who occupy leadership modes of positionality. Thus, the meta-philosophy of embodiment that will be examined via phenomenology and materialist/posthumanist epistemologies acquires concrete expressions. It lives in the situatedness of relational scenarios such as those experienced by Arturo with various kinds of blind Latinx individual "leaders" as recreated critically in this chapter's reflexive counter story as well as in other junctures throughout the chapter. Also, this analytical meta-philosophy demonstrates that, in every instance when a brown blind Latinx actor like Arturo walks the streets of a global north city, with or without cane, with or without spouse, with or without a dog (guiding or otherwise), an embodied metamorphosis of LatDisCrit is taking place. This is true even if no one names it as such and even if blind Latinx leaders are oblivious or prefer to simulate obliviousness to their unique intersectional, existential and relational materialities. As De Freitas and Sinclair (2014) would say, following Deleuze, some rhythmically transformational learning takes place there. It works invisible embodiment wonders by creating new spheres of perception that open the door

for new modes of relational, creative and transitive decolonial solidarity beyond the subjective confines of both blindness and trans-Latinidad.

Looking at the six philosophical questions outlined in Chapter 1 of the dissertation, it is possible to link some of them more directly to specific chapters. The first question, concerned with axiology and epistemology dimensions as they are linked with the enactment of tangible possibilities for situated, collective resistance, pertains more directly to the content of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Questions 2 through 5, especially as they are concerned with the dynamic interplay among notions such as life course trajectories, techniques of domination, techniques of the self, alterity relations and structural dimensions of race, disability intersectionality, postcoloniality, blindness, trans-Latinidades, radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning, are much more intertwined with the content of Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Question 6 is especially addressed in Chapter 5 as the overall results of the critical hermeneutics work on radical agency possibilities are summarized and assessed.

In this fourth chapter, I concentrate on intersectional disability issues of relational agency, radical exteriority and decolonial metatheory relevant to blind Latinx. There is a universalizing consideration that serves as a sake way in the intersectional analysis of trans-Latinidades and disability meta-narratives, bridging the content of the previous chapter and the present one. Especially in the United States, the ethos of trans-Latinidades is often ridiculed or simply encapsulated in the caricature of the fiesta, what I call the “pachanga syndrome,” the perception that Latinx are always in a “rumba” mode, which has certain linkages to cliché tropes such as that of the Latin lover (with all the promiscuity implications

that impact males and females in differential ways). I selected the first epigraph in this chapter thinking of supervivencia as a joyful mode of spirituality for subaltern resistance in exilic spaces of intersectional decoloniality, as a testament to the existential weight that this transformational resistance often entails, contradicting over-simplified or colonially appropriated, commodifying conceptions of rumba-like festivity.

To interrogate this fiesta paradigm, it is helpful to start the chapter looking at Eduardo Mendieta's (2007 & 2015) essays. The essays are unified by the metaphor of the map. In his introduction to Otto Maduro's volume entitled *Maps for a Fiesta*, Maduro (2015, p. 2) stresses the sense of relational spirituality of celebratory spaces when he says:

Nearly everyone, and probably all human communities, has had at least a few beautiful, unforgettable experiences of some form of satisfaction, victory, kindness, affection, happiness, peace, and/or hope. A love returned, a successful strike, the feat of getting a home to call one's own, the end of a period of trials and tribulations, a birth in the family, a long-fought bill raising the minimum wage, the release of a loved one from prison, a reconciliation with someone we had fought with, a relative's successful struggle against alcoholism or a drug addiction. All these are pleasant and valuable experiences that affirm the meaning of human life. Such experiences—and their cyclic remembrance in anniversaries—elicit festive celebrations, bringing together neighbors, relatives, colleagues, and friends in hopeful and enjoyable commemorations. Isn't it true? And, vice versa, parties, dances, religious services, pilgrimages, fairs, and street festivals also frequently inspire and spread joy and hope, leading to new friendships and stimulating the creation of new ties while reinforcing the old ones.

Tellingly, in his introduction to the English version of the volume, Mendieta (2015, p. ix) recalls Jorge Luis Borges' story of a king who had ordered the mapping of his territory, inch by inch, not leaving a single spot without mapping. Cartographers went about carrying out the task throughout the entire kingdom. At the end of their work, the map had covered

the whole territory. As time went on, pieces of the map were all over the territory's ground. It somehow had become a new land. The story contained in Borges (1970) *A Universal History of Infamy* was titled "Of Exactitude in Science."

Mendieta extrapolates from Borges' story an overarching epistemological idea. He points out that the value of maps resides in their role as allegories, or as Mendieta says "twice removed metaphorical representations" (2015, p. x). In this sense, all knowledges, no matter how objective or accurate they pretend to be, are mere ways to represent our relationships in, with and into the world. In other words, they map our web of social relationships, altering the relational territory they map. Knowledges, therefore, in their mapping dynamicity are interpellation devices. "They ... look at the world through a certain perspective, often excluding or denigrating other ways of viewing the world, even excluding other perspectives. Maps therefore also conceal and distort. They invite epistemic insouciance and epistemic hubris" (Mendieta, 2015, p. x).

Have you noticed how commercials in Spanish speaking television channels (or culturally charged/racialized representations of festive occasions like the Mexican commemoration of cinco de mayo) profit from the external portrayal and/or the internalization of the pachanga syndrome by Latinx populations in the United States? Colonizing hegemonic actors are prompt to appropriating and/or manufacturing distorting caricatures of the Latinx family (almost always recreating some figure that resembles the abuelito [grandpa] or the abuelita [gramma] to carry out their alienating/commodifying work).

Now think back to the myth of disability, or rather blindness, as I discussed it in previous chapters. For blind Latinx, how do the pachanga syndrome and the ethos of tragedy mythology can be conciliated? If both ideologies coexist in the configuration of blind Latinx subaltern identities, are they enacted as confrontational manifestations of radical exteriority with which blind Latinx have to cope in global north contexts? To what extent are there variations of their enactment in contexts such as those of Canada, western Europe, UK, Japan or Australia? If so, how should those variations be interpreted from the standpoint of radical agency possibilities, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning trajectories or typological opportunity mixtures of conformity and resistance?

The latter of these questions is clearly beyond the scope of this dissertation project. Still, through the present chapter's reflexive counter story I aim to tackle the intersectional decoloniality implications of this process of identity formation from the standpoint of leadership development. The reflexive counter story will present three interactional snapshots from Arturo's life which cover a span of almost forty years from 1981 to the middle of the current decade. As yet another interpellation device for the purposes of developing a critical hermeneutics of decolonial intersectionality in conjunction with radical agency possibilities for blind Latinx individuals and organized collectivities, the snapshots will be ineluctably selective, emphasizing how the phoenix bird of hope stubbornly emerges in scenes of apparent powerlessness and isolation, opening avenues for the interrogation of old ways and dreaming of new ones, full of the imperfection inherent to those things that are not yet and which therefore linger to be awakened among layers of doubt and fluctuating waves of expectancy.

I am especially interested in maintaining an ambiguous engagement with both individual level and movement building dimensions of identity formation as informed and constantly transformed by radical exteriority. This is the reason for touching on leadership development in this chapter's reflexive counter story. From the standpoint of emancipatory learning, radical agency and radical solidarity, leadership development has the potential to be a relational expression of decolonial interdependence between leaders and followers insofar as the collective synergy of following can be critically grounded on situated emancipation considerations.

A. The Need for a Preliminary Theorizing of Decolonial Solidarity

Despite the fact that disability is a ubiquitous, even mundane, human experience, people with visible impairments almost always seem to 'cause a commotion' in public spaces. An encounter with disability elicits surprise, attracting the attention of curious passersby... The curious fight the urge to stare, to gather visual information that will help make sense of such startling physical difference... Disability is considered out of the ordinary, separate from the everyday, a cause for pause and consideration... in Western literary, rhetorical, and visual traditions disability 'inaugurates the act of interpretation' by functioning as a signifying difference—something out of place, in need of correction... As in traditional representation, disability inaugurates the act of interpretation in representation in daily life. In daily life, disabled people can be considered performers, and passersby, the audience. Without the distancing effects of a proscenium frame and the actor's distinctness from his or her character, disability becomes one of the most radical forms of performance art, 'invisible theater' at its extremes. The notion that disability is a kind of performance is to people with disabilities not a theoretical abstraction, but lived experience... but the notion that disability, too, is

performed (like gender, sex, sexuality, race, and ethnicity) and not a static "fact" of the body is not widely acknowledged or theorized... While scholars such as Butler argue that identity is performed unconsciously, disabled people talk about performing their identities in explicitly self-conscious and theatrical terms, as does playwright and wheelchair user John Belluso: Any time I get on a public bus, I feel like it's a moment of theater. I'm lifted, the stage is moving up and I enter, and people are along the lines, and they're turning and looking, and I make my entrance. It's theater, and I have to perform. And I feel like we as disabled people are constantly onstage, and we're constantly performing. We have to make the choice either to perform or not to perform.... There are times when it's fantastic to perform your disability, it's joyful, and it's powerful. (Sandahl & Auslander, 2005, p. 3)

In line with this existential idea of solidarity as an emerging expression of decolonial interdependence, I devote this sub-section to a detailed consideration of Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández's (2012) critical treatment of the notion of solidarity from a decolonial theory standpoint. Its importance resides in revealing at the metatheoretical level that, as we shall see in this chapter's reflexive counter story and in other sections of the chapter, there is an inherently mutating character in the enactment of radical solidarity, especially for subaltern collectivities such as those of blind Latinx folks whose relational and material livelihood is so often threatened and undefined.

Gaztambide-Fernández's argument involves a critical appraisal of the idea of solidarity. He points out that it has been misused countless times for hegemonic purposes, especially in postcolonial contexts (Smith A., 2006; Stjerno, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Ultimately, Gaztambide-Fernández framework aims at exploring the possibilities for enacting three distinctive modes of decolonial solidarity in inter-sectional spaces, which he names relational, transitive and creative.

Before delineating the unique characteristics of each of these three modalities of solidarity, Gaztambide-Fernández (2012, p.42) discards apparently progressive approaches such as multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, urging educators to play an active role in the re-imagining of current human conditions at a global scale:

Critical educators committed to decolonization and anti-racist critique must endeavour to imagine what human relations might emerge from current conditions, conditions marked primarily by increased migration and economic, ecological, and political instability. We are called upon to imagine and pursue modes of human relationality that might constitute forms of resistance to, as well as healing from, the coloniality of present conditions. This requires a recasting of our day-to-day relations and encounters with difference. ‘What is at stake,’ to quote Judith Butler, ‘is really rethinking the human as a site of interdependency...’

For Gaztambide-Fernández, the problem with multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism is that in both of these frameworks’ solidarity is seldom considered in terms of its genealogy tied to European nation building (Calhoun, 2006), which contradicts the spirit of contemporary decolonizing projects. For critics of the concept of multiculturalism, it’s very etymology implies aged conceptions of culture that re-inscribe colonializing essentialisms (Goldberg, 1994; Hall, 1981 & 1992; Walcott, 2003). As Gaztambide-Fernández (2012, p. 43) says, the “very prefix ‘multi’ implies discreet but clear and lasting boundaries between ‘this’ culture and ‘that’ culture or the other that are both conceptually and empirically untenable and that fail to describe the complex lived dynamics of cultural change.” At the historical level, in US educational contexts, for instance, multiculturalism emerged as a neutralizing response to the demands of civil

rights movements and to the paradoxical conditions created by the persistence of racism in the post-Brown era (Banks, 2009; Bell D. A., 1980). In Canada, multiculturalism constituted in great part a smart way to frame the struggles between colonial powers as a “bicultural” issue around the so-called “Quebec question,” which in turn allowed for the cultivation of an attitude of oblivion toward the continued colonization of indigenous peoples (Day, 2000).

Gaztambide-Fernández acknowledges the emergence of progressive alternatives, i.e., critical multiculturalism (Ladson-Billings & Brown K., 2008) and cosmopolitanism. Grounded in critical race theory, critical multiculturalism “locates processes of identification and identity construction within a social/legal framework that addresses the role that power dynamics play in what comes to be seen as culturally specific or relevant” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 44). It defines culture in terms of an elastic collection of dynamic characteristics and tries to embrace the changing nature of contexts for communities and educational ways of unfolding realities (McCarthy, Rezai-Rashti & Teasley, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Nieto, Bode, Kang & Raible, 2008).

The turn toward cosmopolitanism derives from the very critiques of multiculturalism. For example, McCarthy, Rezai-Rashti and Teasley (2009) infer in their critical argumentation that to do away with the enactment of diversity as a proxy is only possible by abandoning the “auratic status” of notions such as culture, race/ ethnicity, identity and the like, recognizing their porosity in human interactions at all levels. In other words, the very nature of postmodernity calls for a cosmopolitan stance (Hansen, 2008 & 2010; Pinar, 2009; Popkewitz, 2007; Todd, 2009). The problem, as Mignolo (2000b) makes clear, is that

cosmopolitanism is closely tied to the colonial project of modernity by establishing white European, upper-class male figures as the epitome of cosmopolitan outlooks. In the early phase of modernity this cosmopolitanism expressed through religious modalities. Later on, it became secularized. Hence, there is nothing postmodern or anti-modern in the enactment of cosmopolitan attitudes as the norm for humanizing interdependence while cultivating radical solidarity.

Still, for Gaztambide-Fernández, progressive thinkers like Mignolo do not go far or deep enough either. Gaztambide-Fernández criticizes Mignolo's enactment of critical cosmopolitanism through the concept of "diversality," intended to substitute universality and expose the violent production of coloniality at a global scale. According to Gaztambide-Fernández (2012, p. 45; see also, Bhimani & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Harvey, 2009; Todd, 2009) Mignolo's critical cosmopolitanism preserves the ghosts of the Kantian version of Enlightenment that informs the roots of its ideas through a stubborn insistence in adhering to rationalist conceptions of what counts as human.

For Thomas Popkewitz, 'if cosmopolitanism provides a way to think about the hope of the future, its cultural thesis generates principles that order the qualities and characteristics of people who threaten that future...' specifically, the irrational, parochial, emotive 'other.' This is part of what Sharon Todd calls the 'fault lines of cosmopolitanism, upon which rest a series of paradoxes, ambivalences, and tensions' about the possibility of a new cosmopolitan project... By retaining the individual as the unit of action, a rationalist conception of the human—albeit in a subjectivist fashion, and an avoidance of the question of 'the other,' cosmopolitanism both reinstates the Enlightenment subject and, along the way, the very coloniality that yielded present conditions. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 45)

Back to the three decolonial solidarity categories (relational, transitive and creative), Gaztambide-Fernández notices the remarkable lack of attention given to solidarity as a whole in educational theory, despite being a concept often invoked as the backbone of several paradigms. For example, solidarity has a preponderant place in Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a key component that explains how oppressors come into experiencing relational liberation along with the oppressed.

For Freire, solidarity entails the recognition that liberation is a collective project that requires dialogic participation and a critical consciousness of how both oppressor and oppressed are bound together through power relations. Yet Freire, like most other authors within the critical tradition, leave solidarity largely under. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, pp. 45-46)

Likewise, thinkers such as Barry Kanpol (1995), despite their attempts to conceptualize solidarity, fall into the temptation of conflating it with mere empathy. Kanpol's (1995) essay lacks theorizing on what solidarity really entails, where it comes from, how it has evolved and why it is important for liberation projects and trajectories of resistance.

What is clear is that solidarity is overused and misused (Bayertz, 1999; Scholz, 2008). In part, this stems from the concept's idealized nature which allows it to be invoked for purely appealing purposes in too many contexts that tend to contradict themselves without careful attention to the scope and parameters of its usage and possible enactment dimensions. "Most relevant to projects of decolonization, yet more rare and complicated to theorize, is a conception of solidarity that hinges on radical differences and that insists

on relationships of incommensurable interdependency...” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 46). Given my strong reliance on radical exteriority and interdependence as core conceptual units in the metatheoretical configuration of the present dissertation, this is the sort of conceptualization of solidarity that I prefer.

There is an underlying tension. Does solidarity involve a factual predicate that describes specific aspects of human interaction at the social and/or purely political level? Is it instead more a matter of following a metaphysical/axiological determination of interactions in a prescriptive manner? “Whether descriptively or prescriptively, solidarity can refer to social relations at different levels of abstraction, from the universalist to the interpersonal, including social, civic, and political types of solidarity” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 47).

Bayertz’s (1999) solidarity typology includes four categories: (1) human solidarity, grounded in morality considerations; (2) social solidarity, concerned with social relations within and across multiple modalities of stratification and differentiation; (3) political solidarity, which pertains to issues of liberation; and (4) civic solidarity, with relevance to issues linked to the welfare state and distributive justice. “What Bayertz’s analysis reveals are the ways in which notions of solidarity are caught within conceptions of humanity, citizenship, social belonging, and moral obligation. These are the same concepts around which colonization and other dynamics of oppression also operate, pointing to how solidarity always operates in tension with logics of domination” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 47).

In contrast to Bayertz's (1999) solidarity categories and in light of what some social philosophers perceive as an increasing fracturing of social relationality which undermines the authentic enactment of solidarity relations (Bauman, 2008; Beck, 1997; Calhoun, 2006; Sennett, 1998), Gaztambide-Fernández's conceptualization of relational, transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity emphasize the need to bring into action the kind of trans-ontological love of giving and receiving which I discussed in conjunction to Levinas and Maldonado-Torres in Chapter 2. Gaztambide-Fernández (2012, p. 49) stresses that despite solidarity's genealogy strongly grounded on colonizing dynamics, in its decolonial reconfiguration it is imperative to transcend considerations of whether and how social groups organize to protect the interest of their members. This logic ineluctably takes us back to colonizing modes of rationality. It perpetuates the divide and conquer ethos.

A decolonizing pedagogy of solidarity must shift the focus away from either explaining or enhancing existing social arrangements, seeking instead to challenge such arrangements and their implied colonial logic. In particular, solidarity in relationship to decolonization is about challenging the very idea of what it means to be human, and by extension, the logics of inclusion and exclusion that enforce social boundaries, including notions of social, political, and civic solidarity. It is about imagining human relations that are premised on the relationship between difference and interdependency, rather than similarity and a rational calculation of self-interests... Does solidarity require, while also challenging, inherited political and social categories? Does solidarity require similarity, shared interests, or a common destiny, or can it work in a context committed to an incommensurable interdependency? Does solidarity imply a hierarchical relationship between those in solidarity or against those that are the target of the solidary activity? Does solidarity depend on a particular morality, or can solidarity exist in the context to differing, perhaps even opposing, moral claims? (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, pp. 49-50)

There are three things that Gaztambide-Fernández regards as crucial in addressing these questions, providing a common template for distinguishing the core characteristics in the making of solidarity dynamics across multiple contexts. First, solidarity always involves relations among individuals or groups, whether aimed at understanding what binds people together or what mobilizes them for civic or political purposes. Secondly, solidarity always implies a strong sense of equity or justice driven duty, whether it is grounded on some notion of human rights or contractarian logics or on commitments to fight concrete modes of oppression or exploitation. Third, solidarity always entails reciprocal action expectations such as the proverbial disposition to treat others as one would like to be treated or radical manifestations of asymmetrical relationality of the sort theorized by Hoelzl (2005) as life sacrifice in ways that resemble Levinasian ethics of trans-ontological love.

Drawing on feminist scholars such as Jodi Dean (1996), Iris Marion Young (2002), Chela Sandoval (2000), Sara Ahmed (2000), and Chandra Mohanty (2003), Gaztambide-Fernández's three modes of decolonial solidarity center on enacting pedagogy as a form of politics. His focus is pedagogical (Macedo, 2005), not curricular, since Gaztambide-Fernández's conceptualization "highlights both the relational and the goal-directed character of all educational projects; pedagogy 'is inherently directive and must always be transformative'" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 50). In other words, it is always about learning to become, not leaving anything untouched in the relevant contexts.

The coercion in the process of "learning to become" is made all the more violent when the task is to challenge—to transform—the subjectivities inherited from, and continually produced by, ongoing processes of colonization. The kind of 'difficult

inheritance' that a pedagogy committed to decolonization and anti-racism must surface 'is bound up with the ethical problem of learning how to imaginatively account for the forms of life it leaves in ruins.' (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 51)

Hence, in the relational mode of decolonial solidarity the assumption is that reciprocity must be achieved, not taken for granted (Tarc, 2011). In this sense, Dean (1996) talks of "reflective solidarity" to underscore the need to make and constantly re-make a commitment to cultivate reciprocity beyond the purely familiar and communal patterns of relationality (Nancy, 1991 & 2000).

The apparent separation or distance from another is where Jean-Luc Nancy has located the illusion of individuality that pervades the modern subject. We are not who or what we think we are outside of relationships, and it is in these relationships that we are made as subjects; there is no 'I' outside of 'we' and there is no 'we' without a 'they...' being is always a 'being-with' and that there is no existence outside of a co-existence. But what is most compelling about Nancy's argument... is that the collective implied in 'being' is never an already defined entity with stable markers of any sort. Rather, our collective being is also a being in relationship to another, with boundaries that are themselves part and parcel of being and that are constantly negotiated, redefined, extended, and encroached. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 52)

Some of the questions associated with one's interrogation of plural subjectivities, especially political subjectivities in terms of the relational mode of decolonial solidarity include dimensions such as the following: How am I being made and transformed by way of radical exteriority interactions with others and with my own sense of otherness? how is the mythology of my being as I perceive myself and as others perceive it and transform it the result of unequal circumstances of existential materiality and injustice as well as

possible spheres of privilege? In other words, what “kinds of sacrifices are implied in the mythology of myself as being and my insistence in my individual freedom? This is ultimately about examining the particular arrangements that enable subjectivities to emerge and be” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 52). Therefore, one also needs to interrogate whether these sacrificial levels of relationality make sense as anchors for transformational modes of radical solidarity or if they are mere excuses to give the appearance of one’s activism, relational leadership, caring attitudes or the like. Apart from the purely relational and discursive, this interrogation elevates the significance of materialist epistemologies such as the ones I discussed in Chapter 3. “This way of questioning ‘being’ brings to the center material conditions and highlights inequality as the basis of present being, rather than as an accident of present conditions. It also highlights the ‘double-bind’ of both acknowledging while at the same time undermining the very constructions of difference that make relationships, and thus the subject, intelligible” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 53).

One helpful way to illustrate the concrete power and applicability of these questions which might in principle seem too abstract is represented by the contrasting positions of two well-known feminist authors: Iris Marion Young (2002) and Linda Alcoff (2000). In her *Inclusion and Democracy* book, Young (2002) argues most compellingly that there is a differentiated ecosystem of solidarity movements, groups and organizations mapped out in accord with their perceived cultural and local situatedness. In terms of the concrete manifestations of their differential resource dependence and relational positionality, it is unavoidable that their “action and interaction often have distributive

consequences that tend to benefit some over others... the task of politics is to address structural inequality in order to ensure full participation by those who are differently positioned in society” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 53). Young is in favor of a politics of difference, arguing that it by no means weakens deliberative democracy and a genuine commitment to the common good. However, she also points out that the only kinds of differences that matter for the politics of distributive justice are those originated in structural inequalities and forms of injustice. Her firm conviction is that a careful process of rational deliberation should distinguish between "parochial interests" and “politically significant social differences.”

The problem with Young’s basis for conceptualizing "parochial interests" is that it responds to the messy entanglements of what Alcoff (2000, p. 336) calls these group’s “public identities,” which in turn grounds their political subjectivities. “Young commits the error... of thinking ‘that we have more individual control over our subjectivity than we have over our public identity...’ the outcome of Young's implicit idealized subject, for whom public identity and subjectivity are not at significant odds, and who can presumably enter the deliberative space freed from parochial interest and ready to engage in reasoned argument” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 53).

Think for example of the nature of rehabilitation regimes such as the Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (BEP). BEP essentially grants since 1936 in US jurisdictions a monopoly for qualifying blind individuals (in terms of their agreed upon rehabilitation plans) to trade with vending machines in Federal and State facilities. There are not specific education requirements and it is not clear how this monopoly should be justified over the

financial or entrepreneurial needs of other categories of persons with disabilities who are not blind. Now that the program seems to be endangered by neoliberal privatizing politics, it is not surprising that other disability groups have not backed blind organizations in the putative defense or realignment of BEP. How would a case like this relate to Young's idea of parochial interest? It is probably fair to assume that the needs of these blind individuals who have so far benefited or could benefit in the future from BEP are the outcome of structural inequalities and severe forms of injustice. Would this suffice to maintain the monopoly intact? On the other hand, assuming that the creation of this monopoly is linked to special interest lobbying (probably associated with the plight and political weight of blind war veterans), would this suffice to condemn BEP as the expression of parochial interest and thus treat it as an unfair distributive justice practice?

In terms of transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity, Gaztambide-Fernández stresses several distinctively dynamic elements (2012, p. 54). First, the fact that in languages like Spanish and Portuguese, the transitive verb "solidarizarse" (something like enter into relational living dynamics of solidarity) is much more common than the noun form used in English. Thus, Gaztambide-Fernández quotes Paulo Freire's definition of solidarity to emphasize the non-static nature of its relationality:

Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture... true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these "beings for another." (1970, p. 49)

This is what differentiates solidarity from static feelings or unidirectional emotions such as empathy. "The pedagogy of solidarity is not simply about entering into a state of

solidarity—to be in solidarity—which might suggest feelings towards, but about actions taken in relationship to someone... the pedagogy of solidarity is about an action that also affects or modifies the one who acts—to solidarize oneself with (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 54).

Secondly, in their constant search for transformation, transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity are by definition contingent and transient. Under their paradigm, all assumptions about a core human essence (and by extension, in line with the themes relevant to this dissertation project, core/rigid race and disability assumptions) are rejected as failures insofar as they (1) exclude by default; (2) operate on a nullifying attitude toward difference; and (3) are premised on fixed conceptions of normality, fairness, etc. a priori of interactional encounters (Rorty, 1989; see also, Razack, 1998 & 2007). At the same time, the transitivity of decolonial modes of solidarity challenges “the kind of ‘ironic solidarity’ based on Rorty’s (1989) conception of contingency, in which solidarity becomes ‘a matter of self-empowerment’ through which the idealized Western subject improves his humanity at the expense of the suffering of others” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 55). The power of open questions that transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity engenders is at once ground-breaking in its trans-utopian ethos yet also frightening in its daring horizons of uncertainty:

What unimagined and unimaginable outcomes might become available if we were willing to risk the possibility that we simply do not know where we are going? Or even worse, that this mythology of me, on which my sense of self relies, is exposed for what it is—a mythology—and replaced by some other necessary and contingent mythology? We invest so much in the outcomes we imagine from our actions, that this seems to place us in a precarious position as presumed agents. The realization

that all being is contingent brings about a certain anxiety that has become paralyzing, particularly for those of us in the academy who have so much vested on the various mythologies of who we are and what we claim to do. I am so afraid to acknowledge the privileges presumed in my particular mythology that I often fool myself into thinking that my work makes a difference, even when it is utterly clear that it does not. Or I seek to counter balance those privileges with a parallel mythology of innocence that makes me feel better about myself, even as my ability to mobilize that narrative presumes a particular kind of (unequally distributed and sometimes precarious) academic privilege. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 55)

B. Radical Agency, Blindness and Leadership Trajectories:
A Fourth Reflexive Counter Story

Corre – dijo la tortuga,
Atrévete – dijo el cobarde,
Estoy de vuelta – dijo un tipo
que nunca fue a ninguna parte.
Sálvame – dijo el verdugo,
Se que has sido tú – dijo el culpable...²³
(Sabina, 2018)

The morning was already hot. A vigorous sun kept everything in a sort of expectant sense of alertness. Although it was late in May, the rains had gotten delayed that year. It was 1981.

The two brothers kept on riding the bike as it was usual for them on week days at that time. Arturo was sitting in the bar frame that links the front part with the rest. Melanio was busy with the forward rhythm of the pedals. There was a strange silence in the air. There were only a couple blocks left to get to the high school, but everything was so quiet.

At last, the ride was over. They had arrived at their destination. Yet, there was not a chance for them to park the bike. They were forced to remain standing with the bike's frame in their hands. The gates of the high school were secured with thick chains and a stubborn lock presided the scene. After waiting for a while, a couple of Arturo's friends came to the gate to chat with him. "What's going on?" Arturo's inquiry was met with a reverberation and a brief silence.

Alfonso and Silvia, from the inner side of the gate, gazed at the two brothers with an air of self-sufficiency. "We took over the high school," one of them responded, probably Alfonso who was an out spoken brown guy affiliated to the "Liga Socialista," a leftist party which had opted to separate from the Communist Party a few years earlier for not being radical enough and which had been tied to short-term guerrilla activities in the 1960s. Silvia was a member of "Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo" (MEP) or "Movimiento Institucional Revolucionario" (MIR), Arturo no longer remembers, since he found both names contradictory and tended to mix them in his thoughts. Both parties had split from Acción Democrática (AD). AD was a social democratic ideological formation that was by then one of the parties that had become part of the corrupt power machinery in Venezuela. It alternated every five years clientelist administrations with COPEI, whose ideological branding was in theory Christian Socialist, but which shared with AD a pragmatic, anti-popular kind of conservatism that favored oligarchic interests. Both party administrations operated under a perpetual parade of never-ending political scandals which corroborated the climate of impunity that characterized indistinctively both of their regimes. A lot of the current disgraceful plight for Venezuela as a nation can be traced back to the

disappointment people cumulated during those years. It is not uncommon to find among leading figures of today's "opposition forces" protagonists from those scandals who, gambling on people's forgetfulness, want to erect themselves into pseudo-resistance heroes. This, among many other factors, have eroded the credibility of Venezuelan democratic opposition, leaving the nation in a state of political vacuum that often leads to levels of desperation and hopelessness that are very much understandable.

Back to our 1981 snapshot, at that point, Alfonso went on to say: "you know what happened with Alfredo; we couldn't let that go by without doing nothing." Arturo was appalled. As a member of "Jóvenes Progresistas," an autonomous, grassroots youth-driven group he had formed a few months earlier with the youth inside the gate who were leading, he could not understand how this act could be compatible with the ideals they purportedly espoused as a grassroots resistance group. "I's never consulted," Arturo exclaimed, although he knew there's no point in trying to argue with Alfonso. Everything seemed pre-cooked, too advanced, so much in motion and it did not seem that these youth were truly in control of the situation any more. Alfredo was an AD representative who had been expelled from the high school for good reasons the previous week. Alfredo was a heavy-drinking guy with terrible reputation. Everybody knew that AD and COPEI paid these kinds of unscrupulous fellows as infiltrated agents. These was done both in high schools and universities all over the country and, most unfortunately, the practice was also extended to minor leftist parties as well and transferred into the opportunistic ethos of what later became the so-called "5th Republic," Bolivarian Movement, or Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV) that still today sustains Chavismo as a dictatorial force that

oppresses the same people who brought them to power out of desperation in 1998 and who have been unable to get rid of their dictatorial rule ever since, no matter how hard they try, even at the expense of so many young lives.

Arturo's position was unique. He was the only member of Jóvenes Progresistas who was not affiliated to any political party. He was skeptical of party politics and believed that autonomous grassroots alternatives were a much better (less corrupt) option for resistance than party affiliation, regardless of the ideological branding of parties in question. The closest Arturo got to become a party member was when in 1980 one of the members of Jóvenes Progresistas told him about a scholarship to conduct undergraduate studies at Patricio Lumumba's University in Moscow. The scholarship required membership in the Communist Party. He now realizes that this was yet another example of the same clientelist strategy for recruitment they had in place and wonders how much his radical agency trajectory would have changed under the constraints that this option would have created for him.

The high school take over ended up lasting several months. All of those who, like Arturo, were seniors that year (including several of the members of Jóvenes Progresistas inside the gates) were negatively affected. Many of them had to delay their college entry for a year or more. Several of them, especially girls, never entered and saw their educational aspirations altered in significant ways. Arturo had special respect for Silvia's intellect. Hence, he came several times to the high school to converse with her about the futility and the mercenary character of their efforts. She told him that he was too much of

an idealist and disdained his perspective. Years later, she confessed to Arturo how ideologically trapped she had been during that period. She was probably 17 or 18 at the time and was already married. Her husband was a university professor deeply engrained in the leftist party politics of the time. Her perspectives were very much preempted by that kind of influenced. Eventually she got divorced and, as a writer and engaged scholar, her intellectual life became less tied to collectivist ideologies.

One of the emancipatory learning lessons that Arturo extrapolates from this first snapshot in his leadership development trajectory is that, as Gaztambide-Fernández points out, decolonial radical solidarity must not be circumscribed to one's closed identity circle. Notice that none of the members of Jóvenes Progresistas was blind. Arturo's blindness was never an issue. At the same time, Arturo's grassroots idealism made him a political outsider in the group, making evident the limitations of models of radical solidarity grounded on the old processes and structures of party politics and class-based organizations (as Robert Michels stresses in his classical 1915 "Iron Law of Oligarchy" thesis and analysis). The second snapshot looks at this issue of oligarchic leadership rigidity from the vantage point of two blind Latinx individuals.

Fast-forward to 1991. Arturo is conversing with Cirilo, another blind Latinx. Cirilo is telling Arturo how his blind friend, a prominent white blind leader in the state's blind bureaucracy and the national organized movement of the blind in the US is helping him to secure a scholarship and a position in the agency that he directs. Cirilo has just come back from the national convention and is impressed with the rhetoric and persuasive power of the leader. A couple years earlier Arturo had attended the Convention and had been part

of the membership of their state's chapter for a year or two. However, the main take away he had gotten from that experience was how Latinx individuals were invisible in major leadership positions at the national level and, despite their numerical significance in the state, held positions that were subsidiary to those of white blind leaders. Arturo could not understand that a single person could hold the leading role in an organization for decades. Hence, he asks Cirilo his feelings about that: "well, I don't see anything wrong with it," Cirilo says with a smile. "If a leader is good, why should he be removed?" Most likely, the prospect of even talking about female leadership roles in the blind movement was something never present in Cirilo's thoughts up to that point. Thus, the conversation which was held in Spanish, alluded exclusively to male leadership figures (a fact reinforced by the conspicuous absence of present-day female leadership figures in the organization they were talking about).

Cirilo had arrived from Latin America about a year after Arturo and was an undergraduate. Decades later he would declare to media in his country that he had never received any help when he arrived. Arturo's recollection is quite the contrary. As a matter of fact, Cirilo made a long-standing and successful career in blind related bureaucracies thanks to his direct ties with key white leadership actors. Arturo remembers that the core message from Cirilo that day had been to remind him that there was no point in making waves; that riding the plight of the leaders was a much more desirable approach for them as foreigners. Arturo's heart was filled with sadness. Somehow, he felt he should be a sort of de facto mentor for this undergraduate blind friend. However, it was clear that Cirilo's

fate was already inalterable at that point. His course was set. Success (measured in terms of material stability) was his arbor; and nothing would deter him from such a fixed journey.

The emancipatory learning questions that arise from this second snapshot are fundamentally concerned with radical solidarity possibilities. What kind of radical solidarity should be built among blind Latinx like Arturo and Cirilo? In terms of relational leadership and in terms of the relational modes of decolonial solidarity concerns discussed by Gaztambide-Fernández, how do Arturo and Cirilo's selves act as a mirror to one another? How does their reciprocal sense of alterity feeds into their own sense of identity? How can these distinctive identities collaborate in a common solidarity quest that gets anchored in a profound sense of transitivity and creative co-transformation?

The last snapshot shows Arturo in the back seat of a van. It is 2015. Van riders are going to a one-day workshop hosted by a public university on blindness issues. Arturo is going to present on braille literacy initiatives. With the exception of the driver, all of the persons inside the van are blind. Three of them are male and Latinx, counting Arturo; one is a white female (the driver is also white). The round trip that day involves more than six hours. Since, with the exception of Arturo, all of the persons in the van can be said to constitute established leaders of the blind movement, this snapshot is a showcase of collective concerns.

Blind Latinx are a minority among minorities in the state where the workshop takes place. Hence, it is somewhat understandable that nothing in the conversational back-and-forth set of dynamics profiles the fate of blind Latinx within the state agency whose leadership was most represented in this trip (although, it should be clarified that one of

the issues originating the underrepresentation of blind Latinx as service seekers is associated with specific policies set up to exclude unauthorized migrant Latinx from services; including in a proactive way those marginalized populations would certainly change the demographic representation of blind Latinx in this and other states, not to mention the collateral effects of these policies on prospective blind Latinx who would qualify under existing policies but who are led to believe that they are not welcome or worthy of such “privileges” and human capital investments). However, blind Latinx are a majority among blind populations in the state where two of the blind leaders come from and the policy in that state is theoretically more inclusive of unauthorized blind immigrants. On the other hand, these two blind Latinx leaders are long-time friends who attended the same blind school in the 1960s. Not surprisingly, many of their anecdotes surround matters related to the high school. But one of the things that strikes Arturo the most is to realize that nothing in their conversation reflects a vision or a desire to consolidate a specific change making agenda which targets blind Latinx in that state or nationwide. How could such obliviousness be justified? Would it be possible that in this case positional and relational leadership do not go hand-in-hand? Could it be that the “iron law of oligarchy” thesis has permeated the lives of these blind Latinx leaders to the point of desensitizing them with respect to the urgency of a solid blind Latinx agenda? As far as the blind Latinx rank and file is concerned, what would be necessary for them to become bottom-up radical agents that shape the content of such an agenda, despite the apathy and obliviousness of their leaders? What kinds of relational, transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity would be necessary to propel such bottom-up movement?

C. Naming as Co-Authoring/Co-Creating: The Power of Naming in the “Making” of Blindness

In the opening of the Proteus chapter of *Ulysses* Stephen Dedalus wanders on Sandymount Strand, questioning the ‘ineluctable modality of the visible’ by asking if the world disappears when he cannot see it. He tests his ruminations by closing his eyes. What he discovers is not the absence of space but an acute awareness of time, registered through the sound of his own footsteps clattering over the cobbles. What he loses of space he regains as duration. Then he opens his eyes: ‘See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end...’ Stephen repudiates idealism by knocking his scone against the rock of reality. He does so by trying on blindness to discover being in time—Aristotle's *nacheinander*—a reconciliation he desperately needs if he is to move beyond his own solipsism and the narrow sensationalist categories he has inherited from eighteenth-century aesthetics. For the increasingly blind James Joyce, Stephen's experiment in not-seeing was a marker of his tenuous relationship to that ‘ineluctable modality of the visible’ upon which so much modernist art is based. If we forget Joyce's blindness in reading *Ulysses*, it is due in part to his success in creating the aesthetic terms by which modernist works—including his novel—sought to transcend the conditions of their imagining. If we remember Joyce's blindness, we reenter modernism through a glass darkly. Stephen Dedalus's experiment could be seen as a model for more recent attempts to rethink the museum—and by extension, the aesthetic—as a critical vehicle for exploring the visual as a cultural product. Much postwar art has utilized the installation space to challenge modernist ocularity by breaking down the gallery walls, digging up the floor,

introducing performance and dance, creating new acoustic spaces out of sound and text, and perhaps most significantly by moving outside the museum walls to sites and spaces in the larger public arena. A good deal of this effort has been inspired by Marcel Duchamp, who in late works like *Etant Données* brings the viewer (figuratively and literally) to the keyhole to peer at a naked figure on the other side and thus experience aesthetic viewing as a kind of prurience. His attack on the retinal in art raises the question of the work's institutional status, its participation in scopic regimes reinforced by museums, galleries, architecture, patronage, and art historical discourse. From *Nude Descending the Staircase* through the 'Large Glass' to the readymades and chess games, Duchamp's example as an artist was to rethink the retinal basis of art through the very art historical means that foregrounds the eye as self-evident arbiter of value. (Davidson, 2008, pp. 143-144)

In this sub-section, I would like to revisit briefly in conjunction to blind Latinx leadership development and agenda setting strategies two ideas from Ricoeur that I discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2: (1) the procedural and substantive implications of the idea that authors have a role as first interpreters of their own work; and (2) the complex epistemological and sociopolitical idea that collective action constitutes a text whose explanation/understanding is made and re-made by co-authoring partners in the configuration of their multifaceted layers of meaning as they enact that collective action in its dynamic unfolding. The example of the work of blind fiction and non-fiction authors (Borges, Joyce, Kuusisto, Michalko, etc.) is only a first layer of inquiry that exposes the aesthetic and axiological processes behind these ideas from Ricoeur. Yet, because their work is often construed as a single-handed effort (although often as the sophisticated

percolation or expression of an epoch, a meta-consciousness), I would like to venture into the discourses of organized blind leaders in global north (mostly US and Canada) contexts. Unfortunately, I am only left with white blind examples to choose from, and my critical hermeneutics exercise will be permeated in this case by the analysis of a black blind communications scholar, John S. Smith, to whom I referred in previous chapters. In this instance, I am going to rely on his (2016) rhetorical examination of speeches by two National Federation of the blind Presidents whose leadership expands for a period of more than four decades.

Importantly, the reader should note that the two largest organizations of the blind in the US the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and the American Council of the Blind (ACB) share the adjective/noun “blind” as the word that designates their membership. Their ties to Canadian blind circles are very close, hence, it would be safe to say that this nomenclature is also popular in Canadian contexts. However, in their everyday work, many of the leaders of these organizations work as leaders and often in dual advocacy roles alongside agencies whose preferred nomenclature is that of persons with vision or visual impairments (at times also expressed as visually impaired individuals or the like) which indirectly gives legitimacy to ambiguous naming categories that their rhetoric condemns as euphemistic or counter-productive (Omvig, 2014).

What I am trying to underscore here is that the power of naming by leaders in an organized movement is also a matter of power that transcends the merely rhetorical. It often creates spheres of materiality and/or structural exclusion that determine who is who in the politics of setting the practical boundaries that limit the scope and the borders of

ontologies for policy sake, i.e., granting or denying benefits to potential categories of individuals and groups with disabilities. In turn, this takes place in a complex bi-directional dance of advocacy and something similar to what law enforcement thinkers have called “capture theory” (Laffont and Tirole, 1991; Levine and Forrence, 1990; Stigler, 1971) to highlight the duality of roles often played by some of the relevant actors.

John S. Smith was an NFB member at the moment of writing (and he probably remains active as a member). His analysis centers on demonstrating how, for instance, in the 1990 banquet address (which commemorated fifty years of the NFB), Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, at the time the NFB President used the rhetorical configuration of his speech to achieve three aims: (1) delineate the historic trajectory of the blind movement; (2) persuade attendees of the indisputable veracity of his historical account of NFB as the expression of that movement; and (3) motivate the membership to secure their rights under that collective action model. This is how J. S. Smith (2016, n.p.) puts it: “In reality no other member of the NFB had the knowledge and respect comparable to that of Kenneth Jernigan. Jernigan’s address serves as a defining event for the NFB...” But why is it that after fifty years no other blind NFB member among the thousands of individuals was able to hold similar knowledge and respect to that of Jernigan? Was this unique positionality a matter of organizational design or was it a terrible deficiency in need of drastic and overarching correction? Why is it that not even J. S. Smith in an analysis published a quarter of a century later shows signs of criticizing the grave sociopolitical implications of this kind of implicit form of messianic one-man leadership or collectively consented personality cult?

Arturo had attended one of these banquets a year earlier in 1989. He took away a serious concern with the longevity of Jernigan's presidency and the fact that the organization did not provide real spaces for leadership alternation. Arturo thus felt that this could engender a proclivity to populist or personality cult distortions. This is what Arturo was trying to convey to Cirilo in the conversational vignette reproduced in this chapter's reflexive counter story. Coming from Latin America, Arturo was aware that lack of alternation was always an exacerbating factor in the consolidation of oligarchic practices for all sorts of democratizing efforts (not to mention that through his graduate level political sociology courses, Arturo's exposure to Michels' Iron Law thesis was being digested around that same time). Notice the underlying dynamics of paradoxical autocratic practices unintendedly highlighted by J. S. Smith in the following extended quote:

Jernigan reflects on a passage from another of tenBroek's letters in which he admonishes Professor Price for declining the invitation to deliver the banquet address. 'We are desperately in need of new voices and a new brain to do this job, and a man from New York has geographical advantages as well.' This strategic use of direct quotations and "report speech" by Kenneth Jernigan accomplished the task of calling the membership to action. Although Jernigan provides his own set of guidelines for a successful banquet address earlier in the speech, it is his reflection on the words of his mentor that allows him to call others to action, while admonishing those who fail to step forward when called. As the longest serving leader of the NFB and one responsible for much of its organizing, Jernigan argues that it is fundamentally important to become familiar with their history. As he writes, 'In considering our past I am mindful of the fact that except for inspiration, perspective, and prediction, there is no purpose to the study of history.' Jernigan's ironic phrase draws humorous attention to the importance of history and the instruction such information provides. (2016, n.p.)

Using Ricoeur's ideas, as I enumerated them at the start of this sub-section, my critical hermeneutics reading of this extended quotation from J. S. Smith points to an autocratic style of co-authoring. History seems to get appropriated by Jernigan as both he and his audience agree on regarding him as the one-man embodiment of the blind movement. His calls are also to be regarded as a sort of messianic anointment. Dissent from his intrinsic aura of authority is not promoted. It is not necessarily Jernigan's fault. It is as if the very organization has gotten used to expect this as the way business are to be conducted in and beyond its most paradigmatic activities, i.e., the national convention banquets (and based on Arturo's firsthand experience, state conventions as well). One should also keep in mind that despite (or as another radical agency paradox, precisely because of) these characteristics, NFB is by far the largest membership organization of the blind worldwide.

For years, Arturo was a regular reader of the Braille Forum (this is ACB's braille periodical counterpart to the NFB's Braille Monitor). From those pages, he has developed the perception that the organizational culture at ACB is less autocratic. However, not having experienced a single ACB national convention (although he had the opportunity to present at one of their state conventions, despite the fact that those who invited him were well aware that he was not an ACB member and did not intend to become one for the sake of a sincere bridging aspiration between NFB and ACB under parameters of formal membership neutrality), I have opted to avoid a direct ACB/NFB comparison in this regard as part of the present chapter, as any conclusion I could achieve would be too preliminary at best. I prefer to think of this as a pending line of empirical research. This line is very

much necessary to unearth, in a comparative light the political philosophy/movement building differences and similarities of the organizational cultures and the strategic approaches adopted by these and other blind membership organizations in global north contexts (see for example, Garvía, 1997, 2007 & 2017 for sociological analyses of the Organization Nacional de Ciegos Españoles [ONCE] whose legacy has had symbolic and material impact on blind organizations throughout Latin America; to my knowledge there is not a comprehensive comparative study of these organizations which would constitute a crucial step in understanding the collective configuration of a good portion of blind Latinx, not knowing the proportion of those who opt out of these organizations, often for very justified reasons, as I pointed out in Chapter 2).

D. Organizational Culture, Identity and Intersectional Agency

I felt a little panicked and wondered whatever possessed me to voluntarily plunge myself into total darkness. People around me laughed nervously or murmured similar sentiments. 'I don't want to do this.' 'Can we turn around now?' 'I'm not so sure about this.' 'Where are we?' We stopped. Apparently, there was a 'logjam' at the front of our line. This gave me a chance to get a more solid footing and take a couple of deep breaths. Finally, blind wait staff guided us to our tables in the main dining area. At the same moment my hand traced the corner of my table, I heard my friend Emily's voice disappearing away into the darkness. Alarmed, I felt like we were falling off opposite sides of a raft. I called out, 'Emily! We're getting separated,' and to the waiter, 'She's my friend. You're separating us. Don't do that!' The waiter responded with great calm, and somehow managed to arrange us next to each other. Now we knew the shape of our table but we still didn't know anything about the larger space. Big auditorium? Small room? How many tables? Where were we in relation to everything else? We awkwardly

located utensils, paper plates, and covered glasses of water with straws. We passed around the family-style bowls of chilled quinoa with broccoli and chopped ginger, and bite-size fresh melon chunks with red onions. We were hesitant at first, but it didn't take long for us to adopt verbal strategies and physical cues with our new tablemates. The person across from Emily said, 'Here is a bowl of... maybe couscous? Not sure.' Emily spooned some on her plate, then leaned in toward me, saying, 'Here's the bowl,' I scooped a portion onto my plate, not knowing if I had too little or too much because I didn't know the size of the spoon head. I gently elbowed the woman to my left and held the bowl until I could feel she had a good grasp on it. A tablemate announced she found a sticky vegetable roll already resting on her plate, so I ran my left hand across my plate to find mine, and tentatively picked it up with my right. The roll started to unravel but I managed to secure it with my fingers, albeit a bit sloppily. More to myself than to anyone else, I said, 'I found mine! But it's falling apart. Oops...' The mutual discovery of the sticky rolls bonded us somehow, and we introduced ourselves all around. I relaxed; I could handle the pure blackness for the next two and a half hours. 'Are you guys doing all right? Need anything?' The waiters moved noiselessly and flawlessly through the dark space, their disembodied voices surprising us with each kind query. There is no way I could have moved around that room without bumping into tables, chairs, people, or knocking things over. I couldn't tell if the wait staff carried trays or brought items one or two at a time. However they did it, I was impressed by their ability to navigate in the total dark. Our new custom of passing bowls, describing their contents, and elbowing neighbors to pass again continued easily until, as often happens at family-style meals, all the bowls inadvertently ended up resting in front of one person. We were full. A woman seated across from me remarked, 'I'm getting comfortable not seeing. I notice I keep closing my eyes. I don't know why since it doesn't matter.' Others agreed. Someone else said, 'I'm doing okay without my eyesight right now, but then again, I haven't tried moving around.' Another voice from somewhere else in the room began speaking. He said his name was Gerry, and that he came from Boulder, Colorado, just for this event. He said he has plastic eyes and has never had sight. Gerry told us how he became a coffee roaster and café owner. Two more blind people shared their stories, another recited poetry, and an acoustic string group performed music that perfectly fit the ambience--dark, moody, and nurturing all at

once. When they were done, and the wait staff had served us individual bowls of dark chocolate mousse with plump, fresh blueberries folded throughout, I seized the opportunity to ask my tablemates the question that had been gnawing at me all evening. 'Is anyone at the table blind?' 'No,' they each responded. 'I am,' I said. I had dropped the blindness bomb. 'Can you see anything?' 'Yes. I am legally blind.' Everyone fell silent. That I was legally blind yet retained some vision--unlike the 'blind' experience of total darkness that we were sharing--took a moment to process. Then, the questions spilled out. 'What does that mean?' (Omansky, 2011, pp. 2-4)

Beth Omansky develops her work to underscore the intersectional positional-ity of sighted blind individuals, who enter the identity of blindness through the back door of quantitatively standardized legal recognition rules. I already said in Chapter 1 that in my first doctoral dissertation I centered on the examination of those kinds of rules for purposes of enforcement and so-called law-in-action negotiation mechanisms. The phenomenological ethos of the worlds created by such quantitative threshold-making and re-making fascinates me, although at the time I wrote that dissertation, I did not have in mind disability studies, race or intersectional dimensions (all of which were and had been so much part of my life and that of my family). In ending this section, I bring up Omansky's intersectional approach to explore the link between the organizational culture of specific blind membership entities and their openness/flexibility to instances of intersectionality that break the mold of what is considered as "business as usual" for them. To be sure, blindness is not darkness, and I am convinced that Beth Omansky never intended to convey this sense of ocularcentric ontology. However, I make this clarification for the sake of my sighted readers. It is an issue that reminds me of the debate on "negritud" between Fanon and Sartre I mentioned in previous chapters. Admitting that blindness is dialectically

dependent from non-blind ableist conceptions of light and darkness is as much as denying blindness any kind of ontological reality, succumbing to a supremacist idea of able-bodied ocularcentrism.

This is in line with an idea I have tried to convey in several of the previous chapters: the principle that organizational stuff should not be confused with movement building or collective action as a whole. Hence, in talking about organizational culture, I am using a restrictive lens that aims at separating movement dimensions, in this case blind movement building and organizational features or foundational imprints. For example, it is common for ACB to organize the sort of “dining in the dark” events that Omansky describes in so much detail in the opening epigraph for this sub-section. What does really underly beneath these sorts of events? Regardless of their manifest function, to use Robert K. Merton’s (1949) famous concept, they have latent or unintended consequences.

One of these consequences, and this is one which worries Arturo a great deal is the perception that blindness identity can be trivialized through acts of mere empathy, without getting to the sort of relational modes of decolonial solidarity alluded to and explained in detail by Gaztambide-Fernández. How much could one’s attitudinal outlook toward blindness change by getting exposed to one of these events? Would experiencing many of them engender a genuine firsthand knowledge of blindness beyond the sort of empathy level I just mentioned? Most importantly, to what extent could it be detrimental for non-blind folks to assume that merely by closing their eyes or attending events like these they can embody blindness and be subsumed in blind identities when so many blind individuals invest years of their lives without getting to embrace the radical exteriority gap that

inhabits inside their own sense of self? How much gets disclosed about a blind membership organizational culture when these outreach/fund raising tactics are employed?

Arturo is aware of agency contexts controlled by NFB members where similar, yet more extended immersion tactics are utilized as a condition of employment for sighted individuals to “become part of the team.” Also, NFB training centers for the blind employ a method called “structured discovery” by which blind trainees with residual sight are required to remain under conditions of total blindness for extended periods to develop neurological and skill-building capacities in the event they become totally blind (Ryles, 2008). For non-NFB critics of this method, this is yet another expression of NFB’s rigid and autocratic ethos.

Here is a final organizational culture example which underscores serious radical solidarity issues at the level of intersectional decoloniality and broader emancipation agendas within the everyday unfolding of the US blind movement. Back in 2012, there was a famous case that involved Chen Guangcheng, a Chinese blind human rights activist and autodidactic lawyer who was granted asylum in the US. Kane Brolyn, a white blind protestant male, currently acting as the President of the Michiana chapter of the NFB in northern Indiana wrote an article in the Braille Monitor (Brolyn, 2012). In it, Brolyn argued that blind organizing as a dynamic process of relationality must not be parochial. As Brolyn puts it:

I’ve always believed that many of the most important lessons learned through a college or university experience happen outside the classroom. At least this has been true for me. Raised in a mid-sized Midwestern city with well-educated, positive-minded parents and lots of access to Braille and recorded materials, I never thought myself sheltered, even though I had been totally blind all my life due to retinopathy of prematurity. But after entering Iowa State University, I gradually stretched

my wings, broadened my horizons, and came to the realization that I had still seen almost nothing of the real world. Maybe it is this realization that led me to live in an international dorm in 1987, the last year of my undergraduate career, so I could meet and interact with men and women from far-away places who could tell and show me things I'd not yet experienced. What I didn't realize is that, in choosing to move to those surroundings, I was also opening new vistas for the foreign students who lived around me. The more I talked with my Chinese roommate Ming and his friends, the more I realized they were as curious about me as I was about them. I soon learned this was because, even though they were from free areas of Greater China such as Hong Kong and Singapore, they had never seen a blind person doing anything out in the larger world: walking with a cane, reading independently using Braille, taking classes and tests, working a part-time job, trying to get a full-time job, and presuming I would land one. Sometimes I asked these folks, 'What do blind people do in your country? How do they live? How can they learn to read in a totally different linguistic system?' (2012, n.p.)

Incidentally, Arturo recalls how when he first came to the US as a graduate student, he had requested to do the same as Brolyn, to live in the dorm where graduate students resided. He was denied this request because as a "handicap," as was customary to say in those days, he was mandated to reside in the only "handicap" dorm available on campus. Tellingly, this building was the oldest and less attractive of all the dorm buildings. Apart from these infrastructural limitations, its only unique feature was that it was set up for access to wheelchairs. Arturo argued to no avail that not being a wheelchair user, this mandate did not apply to him. The bureaucrats making the determination only saw in Arturo a "handicap" embodiment; But wait a second! To what extent did it matter that it was a brown "handicap" embodiment instead of a white one? How much meaning did it have in the determination Arturo's status as non-citizen, as alien, instead of being a full embodiment of "American" representational attributes, which as anybody with a critical

sense who has lived in the outskirts of the US empire (that is, Latin America, the so-called backyard) means a special kind of ability, even for “Americans with disabilities?” Those were the days prior to the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the US. Can you as a critical interpreter notice the patriotic reverberation of the title of this piece of legislation? How much do you think it would matter for Arturo’s fate as an alien graduate student with disabilities to face this relatively minor situation of micro-aggression before or after ADA’s enactment? Guess what, Arturo got assigned a room with a broken window. I guess the assumption was that as a blind guy he would not notice. Arturo did notice when the cold wind of the fall came to greet him. He complained, again to no avail. All the rooms (in the first floor because the same bureaucrats assumed he could not live in the upper floors, although he could survive the winter without an appropriate level of heat in his room) were taken. In sum, the fact is that Brolyn’s choices were by no means a matter of exploratory entitlement for an alien Latinx blind like Arturo. The most pitiful thing is that, as was discussed in detail in the first reflexive counter story, the extent of material and symbolic exclusions did not end there. It was a mere precarity prelude. The most horrific parts of the plot were yet to be written.

Back to Brolyn’s article; he goes on to emphasize that given the high profile of this blind refugee case in the US press, he had been expecting extensive commentary from official blind circles but had found none. Brolyn unearthed firsthand information about a previous visit to US in 2005 or 2006 where Chen Guangcheng had visited Maria Bradford, a blind NFB leader in the eastern part of Washington state, expressing interest in learning about the US blind movement. Brolyn’s ultimate goal through this article was to awaken

NFB's membership interest for global matters related to the blind movement. To his surprise, however, upon the publication of the Braille Monitor article, his in-box became filled with e-mail messages from blind NFB folks who wanted him to devote his intellectual and organizing energy to matters exclusively relevant to the plight of US blind citizens in their domestic policy dimensions (Private Communication to the author, 2017). How could relational modes of decolonial solidarity be cultivated under such organizational culture? Are the issues at stake in this kind of apparent desire for isolation merely an expression of parochialism or are they a byproduct of white supremacy? To what extent is it likely that the individual and organizational responses would have been different if the refugee in question were a white blind coming from a global north context?

4.2. Disability, Impairment and Blind Metanarratives

Things seen
Through the eyes of girls—
Morning walks
Past intricate, modernist shopping,
A touch of Milan in the old city—
Glass flutes, gold medallions,
Baskets filled with carved birds.
Borges tell them what *you* see:
Wingless angels, brows unselfish,
Books blown open
From which numbers rise and walk
Like circus cats.
Today's girl describes carpets and last year's wine,
You clutch her arm, afraid to walk.
Such stark houses, iron grilles,
Perforated clocks—
All things
Confessing station

To the blind.
Is this why you stayed home,
Behind a window, water in a glass,
Leaves and shutters 'imperative,' 'irrevocable'?
(Kuusisto, 2013, p. 11)

The reader is probably familiar with the fact that Kuusisto and Borges are two famous blind writers. Is there any reason for their communication as blind interlocutors not to be visual? Can anyone attempt to deprive their outstanding blind writer imagination from the ability to visualize? Could they explain this putative deprivation as some kind of vicarious carry over of their visual "impairments"?

Switching gears a bit, here is my purpose in this section. I want to interrogate the ontological, epistemological and axiological dimensions of believing in a dichotomy of impairment and disability. What happens when one uses this dichotomy as the driving collective action paradigm for movement building in the case of blindness? Having said this, I am immediately reminded of something rather striking. Arturo has heard in numerous NFB banquets and other blind gatherings the claim that blindness is not a disability. It has always sounded like a mantra or a slogan. Its meaning is never interrogated. Arturo's inquisitive nature has moved him for years to wonder about the axiological contradiction of expressing this stance and at the same time having a strong organizational lobbying (and even capture theory tactics) aimed at keeping virtually intact the rehabilitation policies that have governed benefits for blind youth and adults for the past five decades without altering in substantial ways the unemployment realities faced by blind segments of the population, especially blind of color with roots in the global south.

In terms of the contemporary political philosophy of disability, the British social disability movement is the equivalent of what critical pedagogy, resistance and social justice theories of schooling have done for educational studies. The social disability movement was fundamentally an activist driven constructivist manifesto against the domination imposed by medical models until the 1970s (Abberley, 1987, 1993, 1996 & 1998; Barnes, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1996 & 1997; Barnes and Mercer, 2003, 2006 & 2010; Barnes & Sheldon, 2010; Charlton, 1998; Davis K., 1993; Hughes, Russell & Paterson, 2005; Hurst R., 1998 & 2000; Imrie, 2004; Oliver M., 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996 & 2004; Shakespeare, 1993 & 2004; Shakespeare & Watson, 1997 & 2001).

Today, it is fair to say that no theoretical approach in critical disability studies exists without reacting, in one way or another, to the postulates, ethics or practical strategies emerging from the social model of disability. Social disability theory argues that social processes cause “disablement,” which consists of the exclusion of people of disability from crucial arenas, most preeminently meaningful employment. This in turn impacts personhood. Thus, disablement is a socially sanctioned process that places physical and mental impairments in the driver’s seat, perpetuating an ethos of dependence that goes from micro aggressions to macro level oppression and marginalization. This demands radical responses from disabled people and their allies in tangible social policy dimensions.

The social model of disability is confrontational epistemology. It is aimed at changing a material ontology of disability, impairment and disablement which, being socially constructed, can be subject to radical undoing. This trilogy of concepts has generated a great deal of controversy in disability studies over the past three decades. The

controversy is relevant to this dissertation project. It illumines the critical examination of agency for people with disabilities in their varying experiences of the phenomena inherent to this trilogy as well as their collective action responses.

A first position is illustrated by Shakespeare (2006, Chs. 2-4). Shakespeare draws on critical realism. Thus, Shakespeare emphasizes the damaging strategic consequences of relying on a model outdated both from the political and the ontological/epistemological standpoints. For Shakespeare, this is a model that divides sharply impairment as purely medical and disability as purely social, thinking of disablement as unidirectional and always outside of the disabled.

Secondly, without alluding directly to the social model of disability, Tanya Titchkosky (2011), opts instead to interrogate the situated agency of people with disability in Canadian higher education circles through the question of access viewed from a phenomenological prism. Finally, authors interested in the so-called “posthuman condition” or posthumanist hermeneutics/epistemologies (e.g., Adams & Thompson T., 2016; Clarke & Rossini, 2017; Goertzel, 2010; Hauskeller, 2014; Jeffery, 2016; Morgenstern, 2018) see the ontological issues underlying the trilogy as a matter of the past. They point out that current technological and bio-ethical micropolitics are making people with disabilities more and more “dependent” on devices and relational conceptualizations of the self which transcend their bodies. Yet, these devices and concept maps are an integral part of the corporality of disability’s interdependence with impairment and enablement as well as people’s own identity. Hence, the blurring of limits demands new discursive and material paradigms.

Therefore, part of the problem with the implementation of the social model of disability in diverse contexts of relationality where radical exteriority becomes highly palpable concerns also its tendency to perceive responses to its premises in binary ways. You are either with or against their premises. So, paradoxically, their very emphasis on the materiality of change has made the model omnipresent in disability policy measures that claim to embody its spirit (for detailed examples of the strategic and epistemological implications of this binary omnipresence in connection to specific experiences of various types of disability and practices/dimensions such as caring for persons with disabilities or coping with so-called impairments see Davis I., 1995, 2002; Goodley, 2003; Hughes, McKie, Hopkins & Watson, 2005; Humphrey, 1999 & 2000; Titchkosky, 2002; Tremain, 2002).

A. Why Fight? Interrogating Meaning in the Conceptual Scope of Disability, Impairment, Access and Alterity-Based Intersectional Identities

September 11 did not create anti-Muslim suspicion. The post-9/11 period, however, amplified previous prejudice and initiated a climate of harassment... Then a series of events on both sides of the Atlantic reflected the so-called 'terrorist next door' phenomenon. In the United States, it started as soon as 2002, with the 'Lackawanna Six' and the 'Portland Seven.' In these two cases, the majority of the terrorists were U.S. citizens (both first and second generation). Mohammed Reza Taheri-azar, who tried to kill people with his SUV on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2006, was an Iranian-born U.S. citizen. Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, who attacked a Little Rock, Arkansas, military recruiting office in 2009, was an American citizen (previously

known as Carlos Bledsoe) who converted to Islam. Three of the suspects arrested in May 2009 on charges of plotting to bomb two synagogues in the Bronx and to shoot down planes at a military base in New Jersey were African American U.S. citizens. Of the 175 post-9/11 cases of Americans or U.S. residents convicted or charged of some form of Islamist terrorist activity directed against the United States, half involved U.S.-born citizens, and another third were naturalized citizens (D'Appollonia, 2012, pp. 165-166).

'La Migra never comes at harvest time.' Central American migrant workers taught me this expression in the early 1990s. The phrase reveals a profound truth: raids by immigration agencies, popularly called la migra, rarely occur at harvest. So what happens after the work is finished? Farm owners and government agencies must return foreign workers to their nations of origin or integrate them into local socioeconomic structures. The use of foreign nationals for agricultural and industrial labor in the United States has created the need to incorporate African, Asian, European, and Indigenous peoples, their languages, and their cultural practices. In comparison to the months'-long steamship travel late-nineteenth-century immigrants faced, contemporary immigrants, particularly those of Hispanic descent, can migrate between the United States and their homelands in a few days or weeks. (Irizarry, 1995, p. 2)

Fighting for one's sense of justice can get messy when the complexity of intersectional identities blocks one's radical solidarity relational vision for transformation. Here is what I mean. Looking back at this chapter's reflexive counter story and contemplating the Latinx leaders in the van with Arturo, one gets the impression that they are and have been fighting long-term for blindness issues broadly conceived, sacrificing their inner radical exteriority sense of Latinidad. Their conceptualization of justice concerning blindness issues is color blind. Indeed, their conversation in the van turns at times to Spanish, as a whale gets oxygen while going through the ocean. Their crucial

leadership activities are carried out in English. The color of their skin, their distinctive accent is nothing but a feature, a salient component of their diversity as underrepresented minority bureaucrats for (not with) the blind, not necessarily the Latinx blind as a specific concern of their leadership legacy.

In 2015, Arturo was confronted with this dilemma while trying to design a Latinx blind organizing strategy in a conversational context that involved a female Latinx blind emerging leader who had recently arrived from Central America. Unlike Arturo, this woman (let us call her Sonia) possessed the logistical advantage of the geopolitical birth rights of US citizenship. So far, this was the first time Arturo had the opportunity of mentoring informally a female blind Latinx emerging leader. Sonia was not perceived as an emerging leader in her immediate circle at the NFB, where she had opted to become a member (in a state under dispute for blind organizing purposes, due to the historical control of ACB leadership and agenda setting privileges). Her arrival was too fresh, and she had limited community links, primarily within non-blind Latinx circles made up of immigrants from Central America. Both Arturo and Sonia agreed that the blind Latinx population of the state and the region was too small to try to consolidate a new organization, opting instead to work within NFB (which would be Sonia's responsibility) and ACB (which would be the sphere of influence targeted by Arturo, keeping this parallel development process for one year or two as a tentative incubation strategy).

Looking back, Arturo has started to question the assumptions that grounded this determination. Given the unknown proportion of unauthorized blind Latinx populations in the state and region, it could very well be that indeed the opposite is true. Perhaps the

underlying issue has more to do with the shame/guilt/ignorance of Latinx immigrant families who perceive the presence of blindness in their home as a sort of a curse, something to hide. This, in turn, would impact the visibility and the relational and existential materiality possibilities for these blind Latinx individuals who would lack access to education, employment opportunities, etc., in ways much more dramatic than those faced by the general population of blind folks in the US (which, despite the money spent for decades in rehabilitation initiatives, as I have indicated in previous chapters, is already unbearable; not so distant from the precarity conditions observed in global south contexts).

Pandisability organizing strategies grounded in trans-Latinidad were never examined by Arturo and Sonia. They wrongly assumed that, with the resources afforded by the organizational infrastructures of NFB and ACB and given these organizations' need to compete for blind Latinx membership, it made sense to operate within their shadows. The problem is that outreach and the kind of relational, transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity I have discussed in this chapter are very different things. None of the two organizations were willing to go beyond an outreach mode of relationality, and even there, their attitude was neither proactive nor welcoming for blind Latinx. Eventually, Arturo sourly confirmed that Sonia's sense of relational allegiance favored Fatima (who holds significant power within NFB, instead of gambling for Arturo's precarious positionality, although, in theory, as a blind Latinx, Arturo's plight could eventually become hers in a not so distant future). Under these circumstances, Arturo saw no point in continuing with the organizing path he had outlined along with Sonia).

Hence, at the level of radical solidarity metatheorizing and in terms of practical dimensions of movement building and political philosophy in action, the question of why fight enclose numerous and interesting emancipatory learning lessons for blind Latinx. How could a field like LatDisCrit emerge and have tangible organizing existence when it has never been named as such or envisioned by blind Latinx leaders? Apart from the discursive and material enactment of LatDisCrit, how can blind Latinx sense of radical solidarity engage meaningfully with other groups of persons of color with and without disabilities? How can they interact with white allies without missing their core perspective as agents in the driving sit of their movement's destiny? Should one also keep in mind that driving may be too much of an ocularcentric metaphor for the purpose of this movement? What metaphors should be considered as appropriate alternatives?

B. Collateral Damage: The Expansive Impact of Domination for Family, Friends and Supporters of Persons with Disability

The notion that someone with a very visible physical disability might "come out" perhaps seems oxymoronic to those for whom the cultural assumptions that structure the normal remain unquestioned. Indeed, pressures to deny, ignore, normalize, and remain silent about one's own disability are both compelling and seductive in a social order intolerant of deviations from the bodily standards enforced by a quotidian matrix of economic, social, and political forces... Nevertheless, what enabled my own coming out, as well as the more important accompanying scholarly work, was discovering that disability studies is an emergent academic discourse in the social sciences that can be interrogated and infused into recent trends taken in the humanities by cultural studies and literary criticism (Garland-Thomson, 1996, pp. xviii-xix).

There is a body of literature that condemns the vicarious consequences experienced by “innocent children” (my quotation marks in this case do not object to this axiological sense of innocence but rather to the strategic overuse of its nonsensical connotations, to the point of getting to risk desensitizing the very audiences they may try to target) due to the corporal punishment exercised against women, especially women of color (Meiners, 2007 & 2016). Much less attention has been placed on examining the plight of families, friends and especially spouses and partners of persons with disabilities. They often experience vicarious rejection, something that becomes exacerbated in intersectional spaces of decoloniality such as those where race and disability meet instances of precarity and marginalization.

Kathleen A. King Thorius and Paulo Tan (2016) offer an interesting exception to the trend of scholarly silence on this subject. Thorius and Tan build on Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (2006) analysis of educational debt, a complex construct which encompasses the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral dimensions of debt that have cumulated at the intersection of race and disability, whose multifaceted implications are at the root of many of the modalities of gap typically invoked to justify the exclusion and the continuous educational as well as socioeconomic marginalization to which these intersectional categories of individuals and groups are subject in institutionalized settings. In other words, educational debt has reciprocal causality implications in the perpetuation of these gaps and on the tangible expressions of existential materiality they engender in people’s lives. And this is not only true with respect to people with disability as direct holders of entitlements for the repayment of such historical debt. They also impact in significant ways

their families, spouses/partners and close friends who are often caught up in the spiral of senseless victimization this unpaid debt precipitates. For instance, when adults with disabilities are unjustly condemned to an endless cycle of under and unemployment that lasts for all the decades of their productive life, the income reduction and the resulting blocked/missed opportunities impact their families and life partners as much as they do for persons with disabilities themselves (Artiles, 2013; Brantlinger, 2006; Reid & Knight, 2006; Reid & Valle, 2004; Yell, Rogers & Lodge-Rodgers, 1998). For persons of color with disabilities, intersectionality compounds the situation with multiple layers of discrimination and micro-aggressions that eventually acquire epigenetic proportions (Squier, 2017; Wallace, 2017). Thorius and Tan (2016) show very persuasively that the same dimensions of educational debt spelled out by Ladson-Billings in conjunction to race and class inequities, apply to students with disabilities, particularly students of color in the context of “disproportionality” debates about their overrepresentation among those diagnosed with disabilities that question their learning and intellectual aptitudes.

Historically, constructions of disability as deviance... have contributed to exclusion of disabled individuals from public education and from robust opportunities to learn. Although compulsory public education laws were in place for all states by the early 1900s, many states cited students with disabilities as ‘feeble-minded,’ ‘mentally deficient,’ and ‘nauseating to’ teachers and other students as a rationale for enacting statutes specifically excluding children with disabilities... The Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA), may be understood as an attempt to repay historic debt, yet concerns about access, participation, and outcomes for students with disabilities remain. Disability studies scholars critique deficit framings of disability as justifications for excluding students from general education... and special education practices (for example, segregated placement) as hegemonic... when they are

emphasized over the goals of students and families (Thorius & Tan, 2016, p. 89)

Yet, it is also important to underscore that in many instances, both in global north and global south contexts, the origin of the discrimination and multiple micro-aggressions experienced by family members, spouses/partners and friends of persons with disabilities is much more mundane. For example, it is not uncommon for relational maps and attitudes toward these non-disabled individuals to switch, as soon as their link to a person with disability is uncovered. Old friends and even family members of non-disabled persons who marry or get engaged with persons with disabilities often show signs of abandonment or flagrant rejection to the prospect of having to relate on a regular basis with a disabled individual.

Under these conditions, it becomes clear that some of the metatheoretical ideas offered by critical disability thinkers are not mere speculations or scholarly amusements. Margrit Shildrick (2002), for instance, talks of the intimate relationship that exists between “monster” perceptions of disability as bodily difference and issues of vulnerability. In other words, it is not uncommon for disabilities to engender unconscious modalities of fear that stem for able-bodied individuals’ sense of irrational vulnerability which leads to rejection of disabled bodies as a whole as a sort of self-defense mechanism of the inner self.

My project here is the limited one of reconfiguring two... devalued domains that are interwoven one with the other in both predictable and surprising ways. On the one hand, I turn to the monster in order to uncover and rethink a relation with the standards of normality that proves to be uncontainable and ultimately unknowable. Although the image of the monster is long familiar in popular culture, from the earliest recorded narrative and plastic representations through to the cyborg

figures of the present day and future anticipation, it is in its operation as a concept – the monstrous – that it shows itself to be a deeply disruptive force. My second concept, by contrast, is that of vulnerability, an existential state that may belong to any one of us, but which is characterized nonetheless as a negative attribute, a failure of self-protection, that opens the self to the potential of harm. As such it is, like the notion of the monstrous, largely projected on to the other and held at bay lest it undermine the security of closure and self-sufficiency. The link that I want to make is that we are always and everywhere vulnerable precisely because the monstrous is not only an exteriority. In both cases what is at issue is the permeability of the boundaries that guarantee the normatively embodied self... neither vulnerability nor the monstrous is fully containable within the binary structure of the western logos but signal a transformation of the relation between self and other such that the encounter with the strange is not a discrete event but the constant condition of becoming. (Shildrick, 2002, p. 2)

C. Expansive Emancipation? Radical Agency and the Problem of Fear of Freedom as Internalized Powerlessness

Visually illuminate. Aesthetically dissonant. Satirically implicate. Theatrically expropriate. Creatively resonate. Imaginatively educate... My passion for the arts began with my tenure with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), a Toronto-based non-governmental 'place of encounter' for adult educators worldwide who shared a commitment to the critical and social purposes of adult education. Within the ICAE the arts—photography, popular theatre, music, poetry, dance and the like—were used as enablers of new understandings, containers for dialogue, and mediums to generate new knowledge. By extension visual artists, poets, photographers, musicians, and theatre performers were mediators and agents of critical social learning and change. I also saw the potential of the arts in social movements when I took part in a women's march in Ottawa in 1995. (Clover, 2012, p. 87)

The aesthetic realm is a wonderful microcosm of freedom because it expresses through creative spatiality and allows for the momentary realization of utopian realities. However, for many, the ludic qualities of art make it incompatible with the harsh realities of, say, bureaucratic disability policy implementation as a front line, street level agent of order. In truth, this conservative stance merely showcases a broader problem: the fear of freedom as the enactment of life-changing possibilities.

In the case of blind Latinx organizing, as has been demonstrated throughout the present chapter, this fear stems from a profound sense of powerlessness. This is a fear that traps blind Latinx leaders more than anybody else, due to their entanglement with the existing status quo. For them, change would entail giving up a lot of their positional material and symbolic privileges. They know that these are very tenuous privileges that often come with strings attached, above all, the adoption of a public agenda that tries to make less visible their Latinx identities beyond purely cosmetic expressions of diversity. In sum, blind Latinx leaders epitomize the sense of powerlessness that defines the inaction on the part of the bulk of blind Latinx populations in global north contexts, a sense of powerlessness that gets enacted as learned hopelessness and passive acquiescence.

Under these conditions, resistance and change by and for blind Latinx will have to come from below. However, for this to be possible, radical solidarity networks will need to stretch out both toward pandisability and trans-Latinidad alliances. Furthermore, the role of Latinx knowledge workers, at least at an initial stage, will need to mark the political philosophy horizons of what is possible, desirable and necessary to shape blind Latinx

unique freedom utopia, starting by transcending the fear to freedom itself and to the messy contours of collective action trial and error.

Back when he was studying law in Venezuela, Arturo had an active part of a small, rather tiny organization (by US standards) of the blind in the Andean region during the 1980s. Despite having attended many leadership meetings over a period of five years or so, he does not remember having real blind from the streets in those meetings. Arturo was told that they were members of the organization. As a matter of fact, some of these blind individuals working in very precarious conditions in street contexts of informal economy and subject to heavy drinking were the relatives of prominent blind leaders of the organization. All meetings took place in office spaces. No efforts were made to get close to those environments where the blind who were really struggling (and perhaps having the most to teach) concerning material and symbolic modes of precarity. Arturo looks back and feels the shame of not having dared to cross those imaginary (yet terribly real) lines of hierarchization. Was he fearful of threatening his own status within and outside blind circles? Was this a matter of radical exteriority, of placing the non-blind ahead for purposes of quasi-fictional solidarity ties that Arturo himself knew could be broken as soon as he defied in excess the limits of normality and “monstrous allowances” within the vulnerability of able-bodied bystanders? For me, the intersectional space of this reciprocal fragility enacted as radical solidarity is what should constitute DisCrit’s core area of inquiry, especially in a life trajectory approach that accounts for radical adult learning as well as intergenerational social movement identity/alterity configuration dimensions. The

following sub-section takes a brief look at the relevant literature as it is currently emerging in US educational settings.

D. DisCrit and Other Intersectionality Paradigms

Guillermo Tell no comprendió a su hijo
Que un día se aburrió de la manzana en la cabeza
Y echó a correr y el padre lo maldijo
¿Pues cómo entonces iba a probar su destreza?
Guillermo Tell, tu hijo creció,
Quiere tirar la flecha,
Le toca a él probar su valor,
¡Préstale tu valleta!²⁴
(Varela, 2018)

The allegoric legend of William Tell (Wodehouse & Houghton, 2015) represents in its manifest function a Swiss nationalist praise for the triumph of freedom's thirst over fear, a focal nationalist pride myth. Another way of reading it could also emphasize that this allegory has an interesting air of resemblance with Abraham's disposition to sacrifice his "legitimate" son, the one where the promise rested. Hence, it probably has a parallel universalizing ethos that defies the narrow limits of sectarian nationalism.

To me, in this broader/deeper signification, the legendary allegoric force of William Tell resides in the fact that it speaks of intergenerational interdependence as a prerequisite for lasting emancipatory learning to be possible. It makes the father's valor and love of freedom interdependent with the sentiments and dispositions of his son (certainly without regard for feminisms of any sort, as the son's mother is erased from the picture). Only through this kind of radical interdependence can the sacrificial aura of the myth transcend

the momentary remembrance, facing history face-to-face. But in Varela's version, as spelled out in the epigraph that opens this sub-section, the myth is taken a step further. In Varela's version it touches the subversive in new emancipatory learning possibilities. In Varela's William Tell's Saga, the son becomes the teacher. The son is the radical agent who invites the father to help him undo patriarchy and authoritarian unidirectionality. It is an allegoric version that embodies radical democracy in a sort of horizontal psychoanalytical rehearsal of revolutionary processes of "shared succession."

In this regard, the allegory of William Tell revisits a theme that I mentioned in passing in Chapter 1. At that point, I indicated that it is indispensable to look at radical agency in terms of life trajectories. I stressed that this should be taken to its ultimate epistemological consequences. One must not think of radical agency in light of the fragmentary approaches to education favored today in line with pseudo-scientific positivism's obsession for specialized knowledges: early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, special education, post-secondary education, adult education, popular education and so on.

Can one create a segmented ontology of the world to accommodate this kind of epistemological fragmentation obsession? Does it make sense to look at intergenerational interdependence in their role for radical solidarity and emancipatory learning to be lasting and more meaningful through a fragmentary lens?

I am convinced that the answer to these questions is a categoric no. This is especially so when it comes to transformational processes of learning, which, in light of positivistic epistemologies are denied to early childhood learners, people with disabilities

of all ages. I am thinking particularly of those individuals with so-called “feeble-minded dispositions, what in present-day language is designated as intellectual disabilities or as what other authors prefer to approach as mere instances of neurodiversity (for discussions of this latter terminology see for example, Armstrong, 2010; Babineau, 2018).

In my discussion of DisCrit I strongly defend the necessary link among this profound sense of revolutionary interdependence, radical solidarity and intersectional spaces for radical agency possibilities to be enacted not only in terms of intergenerational connections but also in terms of radical modes of horizontal interdisciplinary cooperation among categories typically separated for purposes of emancipatory collective action: students versus teachers, children versus parents, adults versus youth, leaders versus followers, special versus general educators, higher versus “lower” learning institutions, etc. Remember that LatDisCrit is a new naming category. As such, it holds the power of radical creation, of expanding new frontiers, of unlearning, with all the joy and suffering that it entails.

Back in Chapter 2, I had discussed critically schooling dynamics by analyzing social reproduction and resistance theories. Also grounded primarily in K-12 schooling settings, there is an emerging body of literature that looks at race and disability through the lens of what they call “DisCrit” (Connor, Ferri and Annamma, 2016). Building on the critical transdisciplinary work of Chris Bell (2006) who has started a preliminary denunciation/mapping of the field of “white disability studies,” Annamma, Connor and Ferri (2016a) argue that DisCrit consists of a deconstructive inquiry and transgressive work of recovery and detection. DisCrit searches for the intersectional spaces of learning and

transformation opened by the presence of bodies of students of color with disabilities in school settings and other institutions (2016a, P. 4).

Annamma, Connor and Ferri imply that this epistemic and ethical search is transgressive because there are tangible interests and systemic arrangements that profit from keeping the interactional dimensions of race and disability separate (2016a, p. 3). Systemic and disciplinary arrangements build walls that fragment the student identity and their very corporality. These arrangements express fearful sentiments against the transformational power of difference and dynamic boundary breaking processes that can be unleashed within these otherwise monochromatic and recalcitrant institutions as race and disability constituencies talk to each other and learn to fight their concomitant matrices of oppression.

The bulk of DisCrit studies focus up to this point on learning disabilities and other special education spheres characterized by a significant quantitative impact on many school districts throughout the nation (see for example, Annamma, Connor and Ferri, 2016b; Broderick & Leonardo, 2016; Gillborn, Rollock, Vincent & Ball, 2016; Thorius & Tan, 2016; Mendoza, Paguyo & Gutiérrez, 2016). Blind, deaf and other sensory disability populations do not have significant representation in DisCrit yet. The exclusion of these populations from regular schooling settings is substantial, often beyond the limits of so-called “least restrictive environments. Their numerical differences isolate them as minuscule minorities outside the reach of typical special education and legally prescribed “inclusive” classroom mechanisms in the United States and other OECD member nations. Most educators will never have to deal with them.

Both educators and segments of sensory disability students remain unconnected. Epistemologically and ethically speaking, this systemic differentiation and the concomitant invisibility of people of color with disabilities point out the need to (1) expand the scope of DisCrit spheres of inquiry to start understanding how the spaces of intersectionality differ among various categories of DisCrit actors; (2) find ways to engender dialogue among radically different categories of educators and emancipatory learning contexts; and (3) pursue an explicit examination of radical agency in comparative schooling and non-institutionalized learning environments as a way to develop a political philosophy, critical axiology and liberation aesthetics within DisCrit. My purpose in outlining these characteristics is to point towards the formulation of preliminary basis for exploring LatDisCrit as a sub-component of DisCrit in its situated emancipation and radical agency/political subjectivity possibilities. Yet, since as I have indicated earlier in the chapter, LatDisCrit is currently an unmapped territory, its ontological limits, its metatheory, its axiological and aesthetic connotations are still under development. For example, has anybody wondered about the radical agency and radical solidarity plight of educators with disabilities both in formal and informal educational contexts? Their empirical examination in relation to concepts such as disability disclosure and emancipatory learning are within the confines of DisCrit. Linking this sphere of inquiry with the specific development of a critical hermeneutics of trans-Latinidad identities in their multifaceted modes of decolonial intersectionality, one would be in the presence of a specific sphere of LatDisCrit.

What about the importance of life trajectories? In terms of an expansive consideration of DisCrit beyond the confines of K-12 schooling and college-centered

institutionalized environments as well as in terms of LatDisCrit in its connection with radical adult as well as intergenerational modes of emancipatory learning, breaking away from siloed ways to understand and enact education becomes paramount. How else could one bridge the explanation/understanding of, say, cross-cutting issues such as material and symbolic precarity which impact all categories of persons with disabilities in ways that are both unique and generalizable under intersectional premises of decoloniality and trans-ontological ethics? How else could one undo the walls that separate multiple fields of collective action currently undertaken by engaged knowledge workers, teacher educators, parent and disability organizations, youth activists, equity-oriented education reformers and so forth? Often, the effectiveness of their efforts and the depth of relevant analyses can be attributed to segmented considerations of the constructs at stake which lead to partial relationality/concept maps and consequently to limited utopian horizons of change, alliance building prospects, strategic alternatives, political subjectivity incentives, etc.

4.3. Ideology Frameworks: 'Dis'ableism and the Metanarrative of Blindness

En verdad que eso que llamáis libertad es la más fuerte de vuestras cadenas, aunque sus eslabones relumbren al sol y deslumbren vuestros ojos. Y, ¿qué si no fragmentos de vuestro propio yo es lo que queréis desechar para poder ser libres? Si lo que queréis abolir es una ley injusta, debéis saber que esa ley fue escrita por vuestra propia mano sobre vuestra propia frente²⁵ (Gibran, 1996, p. 50)

Decolonial theory as illustrated by thinkers such as Castro-Gómez, Vallega and those enumerated in Chapter 3 can also help articulate LatDisCrit's need to expose the

kind of “inclusive exclusions” constitutive of the ideological frames that govern ‘dis’ableism. In the case of ‘dis’ableism, the role occupied by the body and its interdependent dimensions of dignity and “mutual recognition” are at the core of epistemology and axiology. Therefore, there is a strong reliance on critical hermeneutics, contemporary psychoanalysis and existential phenomenology theories within and beyond the sub-discipline of critical disability studies. As brief illustrations that showcase the tip of the iceberg, in this section, I only address in somewhat superficial ways two of these ideological frames: (1) ableism as ‘dis’ableism in the making of minoritizing identities toward pandisability as a unique postmodern utopia of the 21st century and (2) what David Bold (2014) calls “the metanarrative of blindness.” This latter frame links to my examination of radical agency in the unique intersection of blind Latinx identities as discussed in the last two chapters.

Discussing Siebers’ (2008) ideology of ability makes a lot of sense here. Its ideological frame illustrates quite well the interplay between utopia and performativity in the making and unmaking of blind Latinx and other minoritizing identities. I have opted to adjust the notion slightly to talk of an ideology of ‘dis’ableism. My aim is to emphasize that, even emancipatory radical agency efforts are ideological and need to be subject to critical hermeneutics and decolonial scrutiny in terms of their epistemology, axiology and aesthetics.

At the metatheoretical and political philosophy levels, Tom Shakespeare (1993, 2004, 2006; Shakespeare & Watson, 1997, 2001), an initial supporter of the social model as a movement, developed one of its most comprehensive and devastating critiques.

Several of Shakespeare's claims are much more fully developed by Siebers (2008). Siebers grounds his metatheory of disability in the phenomenology of the body and a critical disability positionality aimed at branding minority identity politics for people who experience disabilities (which might also encompass family members who "lack" physical or mental impairments that make them "legally" classifiable as people with disabilities). In other words, Siebers metatheory combines discursive as well as material dimensions, in an open transgression of the radical epistemological prescriptions of social disability orthodox thinkers and activists. Some of the points listed by Siebers under the frame of the ideology of ability are:

1. Ability is the ideological baseline by which one's level of humanness is determined. The lesser the ability (or so-called severity of impairments), the lesser one's entitlement to be seen and treated as a human being; something that gets exacerbated by intersectional dimensions such as Latinx identitarian allegiance or global south immigrant origins.
2. The ideology of ability simultaneously banishes disability and turns it into a principle of exclusion. This means that so-called inclusivity is nothing but an excuse to formalize and legitimize this exclusion as part of the status quo and as a naturalizing sense of "law and order" that takes control of what deviates from the "norm," preserving its inalterability.
3. Ability is the supreme indicator of value when judging human actions, conditions, thoughts, goals, intentions, and desires. In this regard, it operates similarly to white supremacy. However, in the case of 'dis'ablism, the

ideological power stems from values that are thought as having meta-historical origins as they embody an ideal that does not depend on geopolitical and other types of relational domination. In other words, it is no longer necessary to invoke the ego conquiro rationale as a justification for 'dis'ablism. It is an axiomatic given, a truth that transcends argumentation and has an intrinsic kind of ontological immutability from which epistemological, transcendental ethics and aesthetical consequences are automatically derived.

4. If one is able-bodied, one is not aware of the body. One feels the body only when something goes wrong with it. Therefore, the radical sense of embodiment is tied to subversive conceptions of trans-ontology typically cultivated by people with disabilities or folks who care of and about them in horizontal modes of interdependence.
5. The able body has a great capacity for self-transformation. It can be trained to do almost anything... The disabled body is limited in what it can do and what it can be trained to do. This, in turn, presumes unproductivity and lack of creativity on the part of people with disabilities and those who opt to relate with them under conditions of horizontal interdependence.
6. Disability is always individual, a property of one body, not a feature common to all human beings, while ability defines a feature essential to the human species. Therefore, disability is not only taken as intrinsically abnormal but also as non-human and even threatening to the stability of the human condition of the able-bodied collectivity.

7. Disability can be overcome through will power or acts of the imagination. It is not real but imaginary. Moreover, given its sub-human character, it is paramount to overcome its pernicious imaginary ethos.
8. It is better to be dead than disabled. Death expresses a stable ontological category, while disability is always conceived as instable and contingent. Therefore, it requires an inner rejection that should lead continuously toward the abandonment of its sub-human features.
9. Nondisabled people have the right to choose when to be able-bodied. Disabled people must try to be as able-bodied as possible all the time. In other words, the mistakes of the able-bodied are natural occurrences intrinsic to human freedom and creativity. Imperfection, being intrinsic to disability is always in need of fixing, cure and so forth. This is especially true within educational contexts, as educators are under the obligation of avoiding the propagation of “disabled” ideas, sympathies and practices.
10. In sum, overcoming a disability and tendencies to empathize with the disabled are events to be celebrated. It is a special super-human ability in itself to be able to overcome disability (Siebers, 2008, p. 11).

As I have already implied, what emerges at a first glance is a sense that Siebers’ presentation of the ideological frame of ability shares some common features with racialized ideological frames (Gordon B. O. and Rosenblum, 2001). This, in turn, calls for a closer examination of intersectional spaces where disability matrices of hierarchy operate

in tandem with class, gender and race. How should the ideological features be treated for purposes of heuristics in the critical understanding of reality? Politically speaking, what are the consequences of analyzing critically these various ideological frames? Ultimately, in terms of the making of radical agency, what ethical, emancipatory learning and strategic lessons can be extrapolated in general and in terms of the unique Latinx blind space of intersectionality?

In connection to these questions, let me introduce briefly the way in which Bolt (2014) presents his metanarrative of blindness. Immersed in cultural studies and discourse-based epistemologies, being a blind individual, Bolt brings home his metanarrative to the materiality of everyday life for blind people through an autobiographical introduction. Many of Bolt's claims are linked to what he calls "ocularcentrism," i.e., a reality construction frame that privileges what one sees and one's ability to see as the ontological driver of what is true or worthy of being trusted. It is an image frame that gets to the point of equating seeing with knowing, and by default, blindness with complete ignorance through metaphors of darkness (Vidali, 2010).

There are two complementary imagery devices in Bolt's metanarrative depiction through his literary examination of a selection of 20th century text written in English (1) the prevalence of haptics and (2) the reliance on what Bolt calls "symbolic castration" (2014, Chs. 3-4). Despite being taken from literary depictions, Bolt stresses that the imagery devices that make up this metanarrative are fundamental reflections of real-life stereotypical constructs with serious material implications for people with visual impairments.

In harmony with Goffman's (1963) interactionist insights about stigma, Bolt argues that, being in the immediate presence of each other, stigmatizers and stigmatized are forced to confront the causes and effects of stigma as an everyday occurrence. Fictional accounts reproduce these encounters, but they do so full of filtering mechanisms brought in by the author, often exacerbating the underlying master tropes of these stigmatizing processes. To some extent, these literary representations of the self in interactional situations operate as cultural magnifying glasses of stigmatizing dynamics.

Invoking Gordon Allport's (1954) study on prejudice in Nazi contexts,²⁶ Bolt underscores the incremental nature of prejudicial processes so that, each stage surpassed makes possible the deepening of stigmatizing entrenchment that may lead to the last two stages, i.e., physical attack and extermination. I would add that, although physical extermination of people with disabilities may be rare, some of the sterilization tactics of eugenics of the not so distant past and the discretionary immigration policy currently applied in countries such as Canada and Australia toward immigrant persons with disabilities display close resemblance. On the other hand, making invisible stigmatized individuals and groups by ignoring their presence in interactions with other "normal" individuals and groups is a symbolic mode of interactional extermination that leads to long term patterns of prejudice in workplace, school and other contexts through so-called token inclusion. This brings back Agamben's idea of "inclusive exclusion" which I mentioned when discussing Vallega, Castro-Gomez and other Latinx philosophers grounded in radical exteriority and the colonality of power. How far could the parallelism of inclusive inclusion be drawn between Latinx and blind identities? To what extent is this parallelism merely a

heuristic accident? What radical agency and political philosophy consequences derive from interrogating the relative truth or mythology of intersectional spaces of parallelism between blindness and Latinidades?

4.4. Intersectional Notes on the Political Philosophy of the Body

La posición de un agente en el espacio social y, específicamente, en el propio de las sociedades capitalistas, está determinada por su trayectoria social, ascendente o descendente, y por sus propiedades corporales, sean estas socialmente elogiadas o estigmatizadas... En este sentido, comprobábamos que la posesión de una discapacidad o, más precisamente, de un cuerpo discapacitado, implica para su portador una desposesión en términos generales de capital simbólico, la cual se traduce y expresa de manera práctica en limitaciones en su capacidad de manipulación tanto del cuerpo propio como del espacio físico. Así, señalábamos que las personas con discapacidad, al poseer unas condiciones de existencia similares derivadas de la imputación de la "medicamento denominada deficiencia", podían ser considerados como miembros de una clase oprimida. A partir del etiquetamiento del agente como poseedor de una deficiencia se naturaliza, bajo la forma de enfermedad, una relación de dominación que, muy lejos de ser natural, es un producto histórico de carácter arbitrario. De esta forma, llegábamos a la conclusión que el Estado, a través de su distribución de las nominaciones sociales legítimas, inculcaba el habitus de la discapacidad, que lleva asociado, por imputación, un cuerpo enfermo/feo/inútil como oposición al cuerpo sano/bello/Útil. Dicha conclusión, a su vez, expresa que una de las características principales del capitalismo es el secuestro corporal de la experiencia personal.²⁷ (Ferrante & Ferreira M. A., 2008, p. 404)

Let us switch gears once again to focus in this section on the metatheory of the body and its significance for understanding/explaining the possibilities of radical agency in

decolonial intersectional spaces associated with disabilities and trans-Latinidades. In disability studies, thinkers such as Kevin Paterson and Bill Hughes (1999) emphasized the preeminence of the body by theorizing the phenomenology of corporality and everyday forms of embodiment. Earlier (Hughes & Paterson, 1997), these authors used these same ideas to attack British social model of disability ideologists for splitting the notions of disability and impairment, over-emphasizing the former at the expense of the latter, to the point of making the body ontologically disappear from the theoretical picture. Hughes and Paterson (1997) acknowledge that the disability movement “has successfully politicised social and physical space by drawing attention to the ways in which dominant, non-disabled values and practices constitute vast tracts of space as no-go-areas. On the other hand, the same social values and practices constitute 'special' venues as spaces of exclusion or dumping grounds for disabled people.” (p.325)

The problem that Hughes and Paterson (1997, pp. 326-327) see in adopting this sociopolitical approach is that it artificially separates culture and the body (Shilling, 2005). This means that, at least till the end of the 1990s, there was really not a solid sense of the sociology of impairment, especially in ways that would not be regarded as a regression to the stage when medical models were the sole expression of scholarly analyses on disability. In other words, in sustaining this sharp separation between the social and the cultural on the one hand, and the bodily realm, on the other, the social model is de facto giving away the corporeal sphere as an area exclusively colonized by medical model theoreticians and researchers. The irony is that this happens precisely at the time when sociology was rediscovering the body/meaning link in ways that resemble or complement some of the

new materialist epistemologies I discussed in Chapter 3 (see for example, Falk, 1994; Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991; Scott S. & Morgan D., 1993; Shilling, 1993; Synnott, 1993; Turner, 1984, 1992 & 1994).

A. Phenomenology, Embodiment and the Political Philosophy of Impairment

I showed up, which is really the only thing you can do when someone is suffering. There is nothing to say or do that matters more than just showing up. Every week I stopped by with coffee and muffins from the Starbucks down the street. We talked as they held their son who we knew would die within the next few months. We talked about how death might affect their older son, who was three at the time. I told them he would have an old soul for the rest of his life. And that has turned out to be true. I once heard a lecture in Jerusalem by a rabbi who was the youngest child to survive Auschwitz. The most chilling thing he said was that there were no children in Auschwitz. No matter what your age (he was six), you became an adult as soon as you walked through the electrified barbed-wire fence. There were no children in Auschwitz. You don't really become a grown-up until you suffer some sort of real and deep pain. This means that some children can become adults at six and some adults can remain children well into their sixties, until their parents die, or their own body fails in some critical way, or their child, the light of their eyes, succumbs to disease or death, or their life crumbles during a divorce or a business or moral failure (Leder S., 2017, pp. 4-5).

Hughes and Patterson (1997) situate their metatheoretical analysis of impairment and the body between phenomenology and post-structuralism (particularly Foucaultian versions of post-structuralist metatheorizing), taking sides for the former, although they applaud the anti-dualistic ethos of both of these frameworks. Hughes and Paterson's argumentation highlights the tendency for contemporary metatheorizing to move away

from rationalism and foundational claims which, with respect to the body, underscore its mortality, “the dust it would become—an image of its own relativism and tendency towards the nihilistic... post-modernity has celebrated the body as otherness, as that which cannot be wholly regulated and that which ultimately protests against the subordination of desire by reason” (Hughes & Paterson, 1997, p. 327).

From this relativist aura, Hughes and Paterson (1997) go on to stress the pernicious epistemological consequences for social model segments within disability studies to persist in clinging to a Cartesian dualism. Doing so precisely at the point when new material epistemologies and postmodern metatheories were opening the door for the abandonment of its nullifying heritage was not only inaccurate. It served the politically nullifying and positivistic interests of disabling and colonizing forces grounded in biological essentialism:

In the social model, the body is rendered synonymous with its impairment or physical dysfunction. That is to say, it is defined—at least implicitly—in purely biological terms. It has no history. It is an essence, a timeless, ontological foundation. Impairment is therefore opposite in character to disability: it is not socially produced. With respect to the body and impairment, the social model makes no concession to constructionism or epistemological relativism: it posits a body devoid of history. It also posits a body devoid of meaning, a dysfunctional, anatomical, corporeal mass obdurate in its resistance to signification and phenomenologically dead, without intentionality or agency. This implicit notion of the body which is produced by the emphatic distinction between impairment and disability is 'the kind of body to which we have been accustomed in scholarly and popular thought alike...' typically assumed to be a fixed, material entity subject to the empirical rules of biological science, existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change and diversity and characterised by unchangeable inner necessities. (Hughes & Paterson, 1997, pp. 328-329)

In their 1999 essay, Paterson and Hughes' line of argumentation aims at developing in detail the basis for their strong reliance on phenomenological approaches as the core engine of their sociology of impairment and embodiment. They start by warning that, despite phenomenology's ontological anti-dualism, up to the late 1990s, typical phenomenological approximations to disability were imbued with medicalized and individualistic conceptions of the self. Therefore, it was necessary to come up with a radical phenomenology of embodiment charged with the necessary sociopolitical force for a sociology of impairment to make sense in 21st century postmodern contexts of fluid identitarian positionalities. In somewhat simple and concise terms, "a realignment of the impairment/disability distinction would enable the development of a sociology of impairment... This may be achieved by adopting the perspective that impairment is social and disability is embodied" (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 598). There is a question that stems from this realigning assertion. It could probably be articulated as follows: in what ways, then, is the phenomenological conception of embodiment unique (Csordas, 1994), especially in comparison to competing metatheoretical alternatives (such as post-structuralism) when it comes to formulating a new politics and radical agency of the body, impairment and disabling dynamics?

For poststructuralism, the body is 'the body', an abstract, singular, intrinsically self-existing and socially unconnected, individual; the social behaviour, personal identity and cultural meaning of this entity are passively determined by (disembodied) authoritative discourses of power. For the new political movements of personal-social, cultural-environmental resistance, by contrast, 'the body' consists essentially in processes of self-productive activity, at once subjective and

objective, meaningful and material, personal and social, an agent that produces discourses as well as receiving them. The value of phenomenology to the development of a sociology of impairment is that it can be used to graft on qualities of sentience and sensibility to notions of oppression and exclusion and therefore overcomes some of the deficits of poststructuralism. (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 598)

It seems, therefore, that in their 1999 essay, Patterson and Hughes opt to move away from abstract/external notions like power to concentrate on agency producing qualities of the body, among which impairment and disability features, behaviors, sub-cultures, etc. could perfectly have a constitutive role. To say that phenomenologists theorize the body as subject/object means that they recognize a potentially sociopolitical tension between being and having a body, between creating and experiencing bodily matters such as impairment and disability (Bendelow & Williams, 1995; Lyon & Barbelet, 1994). For example, Merleau-Ponty (1962) had already theorized the phenomenology of human embodiment in ways that emphasized “the experienced and experiencing body. The world as perceived through the body was, for Merleau-Ponty, the ground level of all knowledge, for it is through the body that people gain access to the world... Our perception of everyday reality depends upon a 'lived body...' which simultaneously experiences and creates the world” (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 601). Paterson and Hughes (1999) discuss the phenomenological theorizing of pain as a way to set the basis for a metatheory of impairment in its sociological embodiment:

One can argue that all pain is subjectively and, therefore, culturally meaningful. There is no pain that is exclusively biological. Pain always has meaning, is always ‘socially informed...’ and it informs the social. Thus, pain should not be regarded as physical sensation with additions of meaning, but

as permeated with meaning—permeated with culture... and as a state of embodiment which 'produces culture'. A far more sophisticated alternative to the biomedical model of pain is needed; one which locates it within its social and cultural contexts, which allows for the inclusion of feelings and emotions... and which captures the complex ways in which pain, as a carnal property, is culturally produced and productive. (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 602)

Once again to look at blindness as a social expression of an embodied impairment might provide a helpful illustration of the implications of the radical phenomenological theorizing proposed by Paterson and Hughes. The first thing that one notices is that, unlike other modalities of physical and mental disabilities, blind-ness does not necessarily entail the endurance of chronic pain. A lot of what gets identified as implicit between the lines in the very idea of independence as expressed by blind organizational voices and outreach documents is precisely this painless “proximity” to able-bodied “normality.” Hence, Arturo reflects upon the hermeneutic paradox that when NFB actors claim in their banquets that blindness is not a “disability” but rather a mere feature of one’s unique sense of difference, they are also distancing the experience of blindness from so-called “true” disability, that is, painful, limiting, dependent forms of embodiment. Arturo has never heard this implicit comparison been verbalized with specific cases of true disabilities. However, he has never heard anybody claim in these meetings that disability as a whole is a myth. It is a territory of conjecture, a sort of analogical exercise of meta-reading, meta-perception or meta-interpretation.

Arturo recalls a comment made by Kane Brolyn (private communication with the author, 2018) to the effect that NFB does not favor the frequent profiling of Helen Keller

as a role model while ACB does. Assuming that this could be subject to empirical contrastation via systematic comparison and/or content analysis of relevant policies and online documents, what sort of phenomenologically relevant organizational implications could this differentiation have? What is it about Keller's deaf/blind embodiment that reciprocally causes and gets impacted by such profiling? In terms of outreach and conceptual messaging, e.g., with respect to values/belief systems such as those aligned with interdependence versus independence, what are the consequences of the resulting role modeling differences between these two blind membership organizations? ACB's membership is indeed, older and perhaps discursively friendlier to aging issues. However, could this be attributed to this kind of selective messaging as an imprint of ACB's organizational culture or is it possible that the opposite sequence is at work, namely, that the messaging has resulted from the kind of blind membership that has been recruited over the years? It was recently brought to my attention by one of the members of this dissertation committee that Helen Keller's story is part of a hybrid list selected in a preliminary vote by the Texas Education Board to be excluded from the curriculum set for the learning adventures of Texan children in years to come (Honolulu Star, 2018). This makes me wonder how is it possible that that Keller's radical affiliation with emancipatory movements has been noted and selected for attack by conservative forces but not by important segments of the organized blind movement in the US? To what extent can Keller's sense of interdependence or perceived "dependency" from others as a deaf/blind radical agent and leader justify not looking at her as a desirable role model? Could it be possible that her embodiment of "severe" disabilities and the relational ethos of a woman

of her time threaten certain kinds of patriarchal blind leadership and organizational culture styles not so prone to promoting mechanisms for power alternation within the blind movement to adapt it to the identitarian vicissitudes of 21st century global realities?

As can be seen, the range of metatheoretical and research questions opened up by Paterson and Hughes' radical phenomenology is rich and fascinating in its sociopolitical spectrum. What if one adds to the mix the layers of pain and race-based micro-aggression experienced by Latinx embodiment inside these global north membership organizations of the blind? What if one mudds the theoretical waters a bit further by bringing to mind Levinas' ethical ideas on trans-ontology as a way to link this phenomenological issue with matters of decoloniality? I am certain that the spectrum of thick signification would be even richer.

Another core concept in Paterson and Hughes (1999) line of argumentation is that of dys-appearance (borrowed from Leder D., 1990, p. 53). Dys-appearance entails the realization that "in everyday life our experience is characterised by the disappearance of our body from awareness... the 'body not only projects outward in experience but falls back into unexperienceable depths...' However... this customary mode tends to be profoundly disrupted in the context of factors such as pain and disease" (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 602).

Leder uses a phenomenological approach to explain the process by which this pendular alternation of body experience takes place. First, one needs to recognize that pain exacerbates our perceptual consciousness of our body. Secondly, and most importantly, one needs to also understand that this perceptual realm of pain or

impairment is by no means circumscribed to the physical domain. It encompasses relational dimensions that can lead to the configuration of political subjectivities around the existential materiality of impairment's specific links with oppression, precarity, etc. Therefore, it is incorrect that, as traditional social model proponents claim, there is nothing that one can do about the pain of impairment (Crow, 1996) which means that disablement's social oppression dimensions should be the sole target of disabled movements' collective action. Adopting this position entails ignoring the intrinsic social nature of pain and impairment, missing a crucial opportunity for interventions centered on the dimensions of embodiment that make disability as interdependence a unique emancipatory learning and radical agency space.

One can argue—applying Leder—that the disablist and disabling sociospatial environment produces a vivid, but unwanted consciousness of one's impaired body. Here, the body undergoes a mode of 'dys-appearance' which is not biological, but social. For example, in the context of the ubiquitous disabling barriers of the spatial environment, one's impaired body 'dys-appears'—is made present as a thematic focus of attention. When one is confronted by social and physical inaccessibility one is simultaneously confronted by oneself; the external and the internal collide in a moment of simultaneous recognition. When one encounters prejudice in behaviour or attitude, one's impaired body 'dys-appears'. The body of a person with speech impairment 'dys-appears'. when faced with (socially produced) embodied norms of communication. Since these norms largely reflect the carnal information of nondisabled people, the relationship of disabled people to them is one of significant disadvantage. The 'dys-appearance' of the impaired body is structured by this disadvantage. Exclusion from and disruption to communication is not therefore a matter of the ability of an impaired person to communicate, but about conventions and norms of communication, which are (a priori) hostile to non-conforming forms of physicality. (Paterson & Hughes, 1999, p. 603)

The proto-feminist intersectionality and radical solidarity attempts of an interdependent role model like Helen Keller can offer an excellent learning incubation mirror. Her fragility as a deaf/blind leader, her attempts at transcending disability to tap into the workers' movements of his time, all of it should suffice. But Arturo has experienced firsthand how deaf/blind folks are treated as a lower cast among the organized blind movement and rehabilitation processes currently in existence in the US. The excuse of severe intersectional layers of disability is often invoked. Education and other services for deaf/blind are extremely secluded. They are seen as not belonging to the realms reserved to either schools for the blind or schools for the deaf. If they qualify, deaf/blind children can be placed in the highly selective Helen Keller Center located in New York or one of its satellite regional coordination teams.

In one instance, a Latinx rehabilitation counselor told Arturo the story of one of her transition-age cases. This was a Latinx deaf/blind female who, despite many challenges, had achieved excellent academic results up to middle school (the logistics of this exceptional success were not revealed). The Latinx rehabilitation counselor tried to place this student in the Texas regional center but "socio-emotional" complications were used to justify the rejection of this student. As usual, I have to wonder if the Latinx identitarian profile of this female deaf/blind student played a role in the journey that ultimately resulted in such a negative determination.

While working with the state's rehabilitation agency in his jurisdiction, Arturo also had the opportunity to design and pilot a leadership development curriculum specifically targeted at deaf/blind adults. Despite the withdrawal of American sign language (ASL)

supports and the eventual elimination of funds for the pilot, Arturo continued working with a cohort of about five deaf/blind individuals for an intermittent period that lasted about two years. This afforded Arturo firsthand knowledge of the outstanding leadership skills present among segments of this population. This is a feature especially salient given the complete isolation of their work from so-called “hearing blinds” (the name with which many AS proficient deaf/blind designate the bulk of persons with visual impairments such as Arturo in an aura of relational distance that could very well bring to mind the structural rigidity of cast systems even for certain deaf/blind individuals who become proficient in the use of braille, white cane and so forth).

One of these individuals in the leadership development cohort, let us call her Brenda, was a white, college educated deaf/blind female in her fifties who had created her own non-profit and had a system in place for the training of certified social support persons (SSPs). SSPs epitomize the notion of interdependence. They help with tactile ASL interpreting and other supports specific to deaf/blind individuals’ needs. For some, however, who look at these issues from the distance of their narrow conceptions of dependency in the blind movement, SSPs would simply be an example of how much these deaf/blind people need “proper training,” the kind of training that insures independence for all blind categories (and whose infrastructure is suspiciously under the organizational control of the same advocates who lobby for state sponsoring funds for most blind consumers to be sent there, an option which, de facto is typically not available for “severely impaired” categories of deaf/blind individuals any-way).

Arturo's critical look at the radical solidarity potential of SSPs is different. The SSP model, especially in the versions that emphasize critical disability approaches, such as the ones used in Canada, illustrate quite well the application of radical transformation ideas around disability as multitude. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Mitchell and Snyder's (2010) idea of disability as multitude was borrowed from Hardt and Negri (2000, 2005 & 2009). The transposition of this idea was conceived as a way to criticize traditional Marxist conceptualizations of people with disabilities as "surplus labor," that is, masses of non-productive labor power, "unemployable" segments of active population whose "parasite" economic ethos is evident in the extremely high percentage of unemployed and under-employed persons in the ranks of disability categories across the board. Mitchell and Snyder's alternative is to rely on Hardt and Negri's multifaceted definition of multitude which involves a duality of factors: (1) "affective labor" networks that play into late capitalism's transformational sense of productive becoming through eclectic, cross-movement identities and (2) social and community sites for resistance incubation and political subjectivity.

Brenda's dream, and that of many deaf/blind activists and self-advocates, is to access tax-paying resources for the funding of standard services for deaf/blind populations such as those afforded with the help of SSPs throughout the nation. A similar model is already in use throughout several states for children and some adults with socio-emotional, developmental and intellectual disabilities. An apparent weakness of deaf/blind segments is their relative low number, compared to the categories currently funded through tax-paying resources. However, in terms of relational, transitive and creative

modes of solidarity, this low number could be used as an opportunity to experiment with various forms of cross-movement network building that could target multiple layers of interlocking issues. As a matter of fact, if this experimentation proves successful, it could provide emancipatory learning grounds for replicating some of its features in the organizing of blind Latinx cross-movement types of identitarian and existential materiality pursuits. Although grounded in race-based and intersectional modes of coloniality, some of the cast-like, structural rigidity features of hierarchization and isolation observed for deaf/blind populations are also present in the plight of blind Latinx. Cross-pollinating relevant organizing experiences might prove reciprocally edifying. At a minimum, this cross-pollination will have to virtue of bringing together conglomerate of oppressed agents typically isolated from one another. On the other hand, in the case of Latinx deaf/blind segments, the experimental nature of these efforts should become the core strategy for an intersectional approximation to identitarian modes of decolonial solidarity. With the changing demographics of trans-Latinidades in US contexts, the configuration of Latinx deaf/blind ranks is likely to expand significantly in upcoming decades. Getting ready for the necessary paradigm shift in movement building approaches must start now.

B. The Body, New Materialist Epistemologies and Pedagogical Applications from Critical Disability Studies

Matter and meaning are inseparable and do not stand in a relation of exteriority to each other. One might imagine that this kind of ontology is non-operational in terms of analyzing classroom discourse, in that it seems to leave us in the lurch, without a leg on which to stand. But one of the important

consequences of this relational ontology is the way it supports new research methods and new ways of studying language use... The challenges of breaking with such an all-pervasive binary distinction are huge, in part because language is often treated as that which definitively determines meaning, centring analyses of interaction on verbal activity. Of course, language use is powerfully implicated in meaning-making, but researchers are sometimes blinded by its apparent efficacy, unable to see how other forces modulate this power. Much is at stake in breaking with this binary, including our tendency to imagine the speaking subject as the emblem of political action. One means of pursuing a micropolitics of discourse is to study language use in ways that resist the affirmation of a human subject as a self-governing legislator or self-authoring subject, affirming instead the 'positivity of an opaquely becoming subject...' learning can and often does entail a creative encountering (with norms, bodies, concepts), and because such encountering entails cutting and reassembling relations in new ways, we are keen to study language as in(ter)vention rather than communication. According to Colebrook, this need to rethink the nature of **becoming** is why Deleuze and Guattari suggest that affect be studied as the genetic engine of **new** systems rather than only studying **power** as the controlling engine of **current** systems. (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, pp. 116-117)

In this second to the last sub-section I continue to focus on body metatheorizing (Barad, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2010 & 2011; Colebrook, 2008). This time, I do so by revisiting some of the ideas I discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to so-called new materialist ontologies and epistemologies. However, in this context I aim to under-score some of their pedagogical implications, especially in the transformational sense of pedagogies and decolonial modes of relational, transitive and creative solidarity invoked by Gaztambide-Fernández, as they may hold special pertinence to blind Latinx and other people of color with disabilities in global north institutional and popular adult education settings. Unlike

DisCrit, whose K-12 circumscribed focus has for the most part engendered a somewhat reductionist epistemological and even ontological spectrum of radical agency possibilities, pedagogies inspired in new materialist framework have the potential to be applied across the entire span of life trajectories and in intergenerational modes of transformational relationality. Thus, I am eager to acquaint and be able to co-learn with the reader about the true limits and potential of its emancipatory learning applicability.

The opening epigraph for this sub-section comes from Elizabeth de Freitas and Nathalie Sinclair's (2014) outstanding mathematics education treatise devoted to a thorough theorizing of issues of embodiment for students with disabilities in terms of mathematical learning and enactment. De Freitas and Sinclair (2014) center on the material entanglements of embodied disability differences in the classroom (any classroom, both in formal and informal learning contexts). In terms of substantive metatheorizing, the content of the epigraph has its origins in Colebrook's attempt to link affect, language-based and materialist epistemologies in a powerful reinterpretation of the Micropolitics connotations of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) seminal critical theory/political philosophy work on the schizoid tendencies intrinsic to advanced capitalism (Delanda, 2008; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 77).

Yet, de Freitas and Sinclair's metatheoretical aims go even further, as the following passage indicates:

In order to rethink language and matter together, and to pursue a posthumanist account of their entanglement, it can be helpful to consider a vast, geologic perspective where language and matter evolve as one entanglement... Language, according to this grand narrative, emerges biologically as a mode of expressivity, unfolding (and extending) in both temporal and

spatial relations. Thus, language is merely another kind of 'expression' – a particular arrangement of material relations – like 'colour, sound, texture, movement, geometrical form and other qualities that can make geological or meteorological entities so dramatically expressive' (p. 163). We find this geologic perspective provocative in that it demands that we study language use outside of a theory of communication and representation. Instead of seeing language as the transcendental coding of all meaning, we suggest studying it as a material expression so that we might begin to grasp the material work that it does. By inserting the parentheses in the word in(ter)vention, the term takes on a dual meaning, highlighting the way that language operates on at least two planes, intervening in and reconfiguring current learning assemblages, and simultaneously bringing forth or inventing new materialities through discursive 'cuts' and diagram-gestures. The term in(ter)vention captures the sculpting and ontogenetic nature of language. Thus we hope to study language as part of the material assemblage, rather than as representing or coding it. The challenge is to examine the material coupling of speech and meaning, in order that one can study how language effectuates and is itself effectuated: To 'order, question, promise, or affirm is not to inform someone about a command, doubt, engagement, or assertion but to effectuate these specific, immanent, and necessarily implicit acts' ... In other words, speech and other language acts have to be studied for how they couple with other materialities and operate outside of a communication model. (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 117)

Approaching the examination of language's transformational acts and processes in terms of this ontology of radical materiality has very serious implications for critical disability studies in general and the deliberate link of LatDisCrit with posthumanist epistemologies and radical agency possibilities in particular. These implications make the approach extremely relevant in conjunction with the analytical, axiological and political philosophy aims of the present dissertation project. For example, if language is not seen in

purely cultural and discursive terms, but as biological expressions of corporeal performativity that create reality as it gets named, the competing ethos of independence versus interdependence for blind subjects (and especially blind Latinx and other subjects of color with disabilities), acquires vivid material significance. Could it be that somebody like Edwina from the second reflexive counter story, in trying to cling to the sense of “independence” of herself as an able-bodied black woman while simultaneously opting not to disclose her emerging blindness as impairment is really struggling to materialize the articulation of a new sense of interdependence? What if the duality of discourse and materiality is eliminated and one starts to view this simultaneous set of processes as the expression of a single material phenomenon yet to be namable in the emerging contours of its relational, transitive and creative modes of decolonial solidarity? What if a new material culture is in the process of being created among blind people of color like Edwina in their identitarian proto-ableist, yet emancipation-seeking hybridity?

While living in Maracaibo, Venezuela’s second largest city back in the early 1980s, Arturo had a blind female piano professor; let us call her Guillermina. Her musical and didactic skills were extraordinary. To Arturo’s knowledge, there was no other blind person in that country with as much conservatory advanced level training (which included several years of conservatory training in London). There was another blind piano performer that everybody kept bringing to Arturo’s attention as the ideal role model; let us call her Gabriela. Gabriela was charismatic and was perceived by sighted folks as very independent. Guillermina was secluded by choice, rather shy, soft tempered and truly humble in her demeanor. Guillermina never used a white cane, did not like to go outdoors

unaccompanied and thus was perceived as dependent and frightened. But how could Guillermina's case be read as an interdependence failure? How could her outstanding talent, long-term discipline, determination and hard work be ignored in the name of blind independence? Guillermina is no longer alive. Apparently, her family's greed had a lot to do with her ultimate fate (the unfolding of this story is so obscure that Arturo prefers to keep it tied to question marks). Arturo does not know what happened with Gabriela; yet, he is almost certain that if he asks, several people would remember her and her aura of apparent success. Very few people knew about Guillermina, even when she was still active. To Arturo, this kind of material enactments underscore how discursive constructs engender deceitful shadows of reality unfolding and modes of becoming. To what extent could it be possible for the blind Latinx Guillerminas out there to earn respect and validation for their leadership style and their heterodox role modeling approaches? To what extent will blind movements in the global north and in the global south be able to embrace multiple forms of intersectional decoloniality and cultural materiality, transcending traditionalist conceptions that unknowingly tend to align with ableist ideological frames under the material performativity associated with the discursive umbrella of independence?

In their book, de Freitas and Sinclair (2014, Ch. 6, especially pp. 141 and following) take up the relational analysis of bodily senses and learning. They pursue this examination from the point of view of a radical ontology, aesthetics and politics of inclusive materiality, opening new horizons to understanding the monist enactment of language and material meaning/cultural embodiment of disability and difference.

By 'senses', we refer to the sensory organs (eyes, ears, skin, nose and tongue) that we normally associate with our sensing of the external world (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting). There is quite a long tradition of associating success in mathematics with various senses or with particular sensory organs. By examining this tradition, we can learn more about how conceptions of mathematical (dis)ability are tightly bound to particular images of mathematics and about the relationship between thinking, the body and learning. To this discussion of how various senses have been tied up with mathematics, we bring inclusive materialism to bear in order to rethink the nature of sense altogether. Our goal is to think the body free from the confines of current regimes of perception, and to recognize the human body in all its potentiality, even in our current classrooms, where bodies can be seen as differently abled and differently (organ)ised rather than disabled or distracted. In keeping with our post-humanist approach, we do this by decentring the human organs and abilities – with their fixed forms of sensation, prescribed patterns and implied (dis)abilities – so as to understand perception as distributed across the learning assemblage – occurring in temporary, contingent encounters. (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 141)

I definitely want to go beyond the political philosophy of mathematics concerns that drive de Freitas and Sinclair's engaged scholarship project. I am especially attracted to their treatment of blindness as dissensus through the hybrid/rhythmic embodiment of perceptual dimensions of thinking, knowing and sensing.

Blindness played an important role in debates about the sensory origins of ideas. 'Molyneux's problem', posed in 1688, asked whether a man blind from birth would be able to recognize objects visually were he suddenly to acquire sight. The question fuelled a great debate about the role of the senses and became a centrepiece in developing and promulgating Locke's empiricist epistemology. Some scholars answered the question negatively, others positively, but a central point of concern was the extent to which knowing with one sense was related to knowing with another. If the blind man had known a cube by touch, would he recognize it by sight? ... Sight and touch were incommensurable

for Berkeley, and thus the absence of one sense could not entirely be accommodated by or corrected through another... The debate also featured discussion about the unreliability of the visible world and the relative importance of each of the senses. (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 143)

In the mid 18th century, with the emergence of cataracts surgery, the speculative debate which had involved thinkers such as Locke, Berkeley, Newton and others could at last be transposed into experimentation. “For the most part, those who had answered Molyneux’s problem negatively were right, because patients who were suddenly able to see were bewildered by the visual world, not knowing where to look, not knowing what they were seeing. Furthermore, they... could not immediately correlate objects with tactile images... (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 143).

These findings engendered further layers of scientific inquiry: “Could patients pass from sight to touch by means of reasoning? Could they ‘see’ the external world by means of sensation alone? Thus, ensued more thought experiments, like those of Condillac, who imagined adding senses to a statue and trying to find out at what point the statue might be said to have sensibility” (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 143). Condillac’s answer was that the statue would develop “sensation without touch.” However, “it would not be able to discover its own boundaries and the existence of the world beyond; without a sense of tactile encounter, there was no determination of a subject” (de Freitas & Sinclair, p. 144).

From this historical examination of the mutable understanding of the interplay between senses and ideas, de Freitas and Sinclair (relying on the work of Smith, 2003) move into a conceptual contrast of the way in which sensation and perception are viewed

by two very influential philosophers writing in very different time periods and socio-material contexts: Kant and Deleuze.

Kant's theory of perception involves a synthesis of dispersed sensation. This cognitive synthesis entails first apprehending and then contracting the sensations into a unified perception of some particular thing... In other words, an object is perceived when it has been assigned to the synthesized parts of a spatio-temporally apprehended multiplicity. This begs the question as to what actually constitutes this original multiplicity. What is this 'sensation' at the outset of the process? How is a sensation recognized to begin with, before being synthesized as a whole? These are the unstated questions of the *Critique of Reason* that get taken up in the later *Critique of Judgement*. Kant explains how pre-perception 'parts' are identified as parts by the imagination – not the understanding – through the use of a sensible or qualitative unit of measure. According to Smith's reading, Kant proposes that our bodies know intuitively how to select the unit of measure. (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 157)

In contrast with Kant's metatheory of perception, Deleuze (1984) opts to deemphasize the rationalistic ethos of the pre-perceptual synthesis:

Kant's pre-synthesis act of evaluation, whereby a sensation is identified, seems to be operating even at the very minute level of apparently immediate sensory encounters. Deleuze suggests that such an evaluative act at the micro-level is relational and highly responsive, and thus the unit of measure is itself in constant variation and infinitely divisible... This variation and recalibration is, in Deleuze's terms, a grasping of a rhythm that operates beneath the concepts entailed in judgement. The constant recalibration is less a human synthesis of discrete sensations and more the synchronizing of rhythmic intensities across a system. But synchronizing is radically different from synthesizing. We propose that perception is not the synthesis of sensation – where synthesis is taken to be a rational judgement – but rather a polyphonic process of modulation, a process by which new folds and inflections emerge in unstable material configurations. The continuous variability of the unit of measure indicates how sensations are more like folds than

individuations. For Deleuze, sensation is vibration, and thus rhythm is the foundation of perception. In what is a far more Leibnizian than Kantian approach to perception, Deleuze suggests that perception is not individualized, but rather comprises the rising amplitude of a wave or rhythm, with frequencies momentarily in phase and resonant (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, pp. 157-158).

Reading this passage, I cannot help but thinking of the rhythmic unfolding of a cane walk through uncharted territories. This kind of rhythmic performativity is not unlike the mapping of a fiesta set of ideas explored at the start of this chapter. However, unlike Borges' story of the imperially ordered map that takes over everything, the synchronization of this rhythm is always a moving target. One gets a sense of the spatial and sonic, even the smelling contours of the new territory, perceives it and massages it, so-to-speak. One does not conquer it, in the sense of transforming everything in the newly known territory into a fixed document for cartography.

Think of it as a collective wave of walking folks with canes. All of them are contributing rhythmic layers of synchrony. None of them constitutes the ultimate individuation of its perceptual status. None of them is the ordering king, the tribunal of last resort. To me, this must become the metaphor for blind movements yet to come, particularly those uniquely relevant to and constructed by people of color and Latinx folks with disabilities in the global north and the global south. LatDisCrit is a utopian, multi-knowledge border-crossing expression of their emerging tip. It embodies their polyphonic arrangement and rearrangement. It is called to incubate new and constantly renewing blind cultural materialities and identitarian exaltations of the reign of radical exteriority,

loving trans-ontologies, radical ethics and aesthetic performativities.

4.5. Summary and Concluding Remarks on Intersectional Blindness, Relational Phenomenology, Decoloniality and Critical Hermeneutics

We all know what it means to have a ‘distressed body.’ Or to be a distressed body. The former phrase—to have —posits the body as something separate from the essential self. This is how it can feel, for example, when in pain. The body seems other, alien —like a possession now uncomfortably possessing us. Yet the depths of this mutual possession also suggest that who I am is inescapably embodied. I wouldn’t quite know how to live a bodiless life, nor would I usually choose to. It is with, and through, and as a body that I play, desire, love, travel, enjoy delicious food, listen to thrilling music—even read and ponder, as you are doing now. For our bodies are naturally ecstatic, from the Greek roots ek and stasis, meaning to “stand outside.” As a Greek term, ekstasis also can refer to “astonishment” or “amazement.” The body does have an astonishing capacity to stand outside itself, to fling itself across the universe through the projective powers of desire, perception, movement, contemplation—whether we gaze at stars billions of light-years away or stroke the cheek of a lover. The body is not just a piece of meat, but the way we rush out to meet the world. We ever leap beyond our fleshly limits through the agency of the flesh. (Leder D., 2016, n.p.)

Papá cuéntame otra vez
esa historia tan bonita
De aquel guerrillero loco
que mataron en Bolivia.
y cuyo fusil ya nadie
se atrevió a tomar de nuevo
Y como desde aquel día
Todo parece mas feo...²⁸
(Serrano, 2018)

I have reiterated that Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 in this dissertation project are especially linked. They are two sides of the same intersectional coin. Hence, it is understandable that some of the themes, although developed with unique profiles and accented tones in each of the two chapters, are interwoven throughout. One such theme reverberates in the second of the epigraphs opening up this last section. I am alluding to the theme of iconic personality cults, which in Chapter 3 was invoked as a symbol of trans-Latinidad's exilic nostalgia. Its effects run the risk of edging into organic paralysis, typically not a good feature for movement building's sense of dynamic synergy.

Che Guevara's iconic stature is one of those foundational cases. Yet, the very slogan of a "socialism for the 21st century" employed with great fanfare in places like Venezuela by official propaganda channels, implicitly corroborates their recognition of the need to transcend old methods, old ways, old myths and old iconic idols. Of course, worshiping empty slogans, regardless of funfair, will not change anything. Mercenaries will always be there to keep appearances. Yet, the rank and file suffer and know. Precisely because they suffer, and they sincerely care about the outcome of lack of change, they search and observe, they await expectantly, they keep on learning. It is the same within blind movements, the organic as much as the organized (should I say ossified?). Yet, how long-lasting or transformational is the emancipatory learning thirst pseudo-satiated under those circumstances of latent energy, of movement stagnation? Could it be that, like in stagnated, non-living water, rotting bio-degradation dynamics could be at work? Could it be that this rotting transitivity (which still holds potential for decolonial solidarity in the intersectional spaces of hope that remain to be harvested against all odds) expresses both

metaphorically and in terms of the naturally wearing effects of the existential materiality and symbolic performativity of multiple modes of precarity or “ugliness” as Serrano says in his song?

In the first section of the chapter, I contrasted the master myths that get mingled in the identitarian intersectionality of blind Latinx aesthetics, ethics and everyday performativity. On the one hand, there is a “pachanga” syndrome attributed to trans-Latinidad, a festive obsession, a hyperbole of joyous irrationality. On the other hand, there is a “tragedy” myth, to which I had alluded, especially in Chapter 2, when Edwina’s plight was analyzed in detail as part of the second reflexive counter story.

Intersectionally, this dual mythology calls for a trans-ontological solution that can provide understanding/proto-explanations on the grounds of radical exteriority. Both myths would seem not to be able to coexist in the same identitarian profile. However, there is perhaps in this illogical paradox a kind of “third space,” as Soja (1989, 1996 & 2010; see also, Allen R., 1999) would say. This is a hopeful radical agency space of creative potentiality pregnant with the promise/viability of enacting pre-rational or para-rational approaches in the emergence of LatDisCrit. Both myths, rooted as they are in stereotypical disdain simultaneously coming from white supremacy and ableist absolutism, deny the rationality of both joy and sadness. What if the opposite is also true? I say “also” here because I am convinced that LatDisCrit inhabits the uncharted postmodern/posthumanist territory of pre/proto/para-rationality while embodying new modes of phenomenological and posthumanist modes of rationality. This is a renewed sense of rationality/reasonableness free from the dualist burdens of Cartesian ontologies

and epistemologies. What if, in terms of collective action performativity, axiology and ways of knowing LatDisCrit builds on the affective materiality of both hopeful joy and sad indignation, the kind of justice-seeking indignation that makes one's intrinsic dignity appear as if rocks were being transformed into bread (see the gospel according to John, 13:18; Luke, 11:8, 19:40; Matthew, 4:3; 6:11; 7:9; 16:11) or the living water at the wedding feast (John, 1-10) into sublime, outstanding quality wine?

Next, I explored in detail the metatheory of decolonial modes of relational, transitive and creative solidarity as critically formulated by Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2012). Ultimately, my aim in going over extensively over Gaztambide-Fernández's critical re-conceptualization of solidarity in conjunction to critical pedagogies is to engage issues of political subjectivity in cross-movement building dynamics of transformational collective action, radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning as self-transformation, unlearning and undoing of old habits and change-seeking structures. Why would one embark in a social justice trip grounded in radical exteriority if it is not for the sake of sacrificing one's own multidimensional sense of self? Why cling to static/contemplative adoration of old movement building gods and idols, regardless of how heroic and extraordinary their deeds may have been, which is a recurrent theme that proves to be as true for trans-Latinidades as it is for pandisability and blindness movements? With a critical eye into (1) history's teaching role, (2) the material and symbolic value of not giving up what has been earned through collective identitarian struggles under premises of intra-solidarity modes of organizing and (3) the need to co-author one's collective action and utopian performativity plot under the new parameters of decolonial intersectionality in a

relational, transitive and creative ethos, what is the point of being mere propaganda channels of the greatness of heroes from the past?

In this chapter's reflexive counter story, I opted to deal with relational leadership issues in Arturo's life trajectory as a blind Latinx who has aspired to become a possibilitarian radical agent and whose radical exteriority experiences open the door for strategic, axiological, performative and metatheoretical considerations. This, to me, is one of the best ways to tackle the practical dimensions of the apparently abstract modes of decolonial solidarity explored in the preceding portion of the chapter.

Here are some emancipatory learning lessons afforded by this chapter's reflexive counter story exercise, which was enacted in three snapshots corresponding to a variety of chronological periods and contexts from the 1970s during Arturo's youth years in Venezuela and his mature adulthood experiences in the US during the 1990s and the present decade of the 21st century. First, the organized blind membership observations compiled by Arturo at the existential/experiential level as well as the meta-analytical interpretation work developed elsewhere in the chapter reveal the material and symbolic power of naming in terms of agenda setting and transformational learning possibilities for relational solidarity in the global north and in the global south. Incidentally, there is one word, the term "invidente" used quite frequently in Spanish as a euphemistic way to name the blind outside organized blind circles. Over the years, Arturo has noticed that almost ineluctably it always carries with it strings attached full of materiality and embodied symbolism. These strings are often associated with the mercenary betrayal of blind identities under pseudo-diplomatic disguise which end up playing the divide-and-conquer

game of zero-sum arrangements where, what mercenary intermediary agents get a hold of as payment for their infiltration and clientelist “services” becomes inaccessible to those who challenge the status quo via dignifying demands with and for fellow blind comrades.

Secondly, all of these analytical and experiential layers of observation have very tangible metatheoretical value. They serve to corroborate two ideas from Ricoeur which I had discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2: (1) the procedural and substantive implications of the idea that authors have a role as first interpreters of their own work; and (2) the complex epistemological and sociopolitical idea that collective action constitutes a text whose explanation/understanding is made and re-made by co-authoring partners in the configuration of their multifaceted layers of meaning as they enact that collective action in its dynamic unfolding.

I wanted to use a practical springboard. Hence, I recalled the strategic slogan invoked in certain blind membership organizations throughout the US (often echoed uncritically elsewhere in the global north and in the global south) to the effect that blindness is not a disability but a feature of difference, just as one’s height, political affiliation or unique matters of taste would.

Based on the need to interrogate the practical implications of the notions embedded in this ideological slogan tool, in what remained of the chapter, I engaged with theories of disability, starting by looking critically at the British model of disability. From it, I moved into the existential questioning of why fight, which I approached by revisiting recent experiential organizing dilemmas faced by Arturo in connection to Latinx blind movement building alternatives essentially couched between either going for a trans-

Latinidad-centered pandisability approach or relying on existing blind membership organizations.

Arturo chose the latter and got very disappointed with the results. Above all, his auto-critical sense of the situation was that blind Latinx leaders are fearful of freedom via an internalized sense of powerlessness that keeps them dependent on existing colorblind mobilizing infrastructures where their identitarian politics does not make any difference yet serves to simulate “multicultural/cosmopolitan” diversity toward external audiences.

This realization engendered two core questions. How could a field like LatDisCrit emerge and have tangible organizing existence when it has never been named as such or envisioned by blind Latinx leaders? Apart from the discursive and material enactment of LatDisCrit, how can blind Latinx sense of radical solidarity engage meaningfully with other groups of persons of color with and without disabilities?

Departing from critical questions like these, I then dived into the ideological analysis of ‘dis’ableism, looked critically at DisCrit frameworks and examined so-called blind metanarratives. Lastly, I focused on two core metatheories of embodiment, which have shown to impact most definitely and directly the understanding/ explanation of impairment and disability not only at the levels of ontological, epistemological and axiological analysis, but also in terms of the practical materiality of border-crossing and cross-movement building dimensions of strategy and collective performativity of decolonial modes of solidarity. These metatheories are (1) the phenomenology of embodiment; and (2) the metatheory of language as materiality under the premises of new

materialist ontologies and epistemologies as well as posthumanist and affect-centered radical micropolitics of relational interdependence.

In Chapter 5, I will wrap up the present dissertation project. Looking back at the six driving questions developed in Chapter 1, I will bring together the various layers of thematic and metatheoretical explorations tackled throughout the first four chapters, looking at general critical hermeneutic and decoloniality implications in the enactment of radical agency, radical solidarity and emancipatory learning. Likewise, using the reflexive layers afforded by all the counter stories, I will map out a metatheoretical and axiological summary of critical observations. I will use decoloniality lenses to read critically into the contributions and implications of two concluding frame-works that I think will help give pedagogical and metatheoretical congruency to the project: (1) Paris and Alim's culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) and (2) Santos' epistemologies of the south. Finally, I will survey pending metatheory and research items, as well as practical organizing and policy dimensions that LatDisCrit activists and knowledge workers should consider as they embark into emancipatory learning projects of their own.

Chapter 5 *An Interrogating/Integrating Conclusion? Critical Hermeneutics, Decoloniality and Intersectionality Musings in the Sinuous Path Toward LatDisCrit's Radical Agency Possibilities*

5.1. Introduction: Revisiting Ideology, Utopia and Performativity as Radical Agency

In Mexico there are unions but there is no unionism... And there is no workerism although there are workers... Fifty years of white unionism, white with the pallid look of cowardice and

betrayal, have exhausted our workers of their class-consciousness... Each trembles with fear just at the thought of dismissal or the exclusionary clause... On the first of May the day of labor is celebrated... But when is the day of the laborer? . . . All of this derives, mainly, from the capitulation of their leaders... If they had an Olympiad of vanity, corruption, and uselessness, the labor leaders would take all the gold medals... There is a mystery that puzzles me: they say that the Revolution has gotten down from its horse... Why, then, are there still so many many charro leaders? (Editorial, El Heraldo [Saltillo, Coahuila], October 7, 1970, quoted in Lenti, 2017, n.p.)

Cada uno es todos somos ninguno. El hombre/los hombres: perpetua oscilación. La diversidad de caracteres, temperamentos, historias, civilizaciones, hace del hombre: los hombres; y el plural se resuelve, se disuelve, en un singular: yo, tú, él, desvanecidos apenas pronunciados. Como los nombres, los pronombres son máscaras y detrás de ellos no hay nadie — salvo, quizá, un nosotros instantáneo que es el parpadeo de un ello igualmente fugaz—. Pero mientras vivimos no podemos escapar ni de las máscaras ni de los nombres y pronombres: somos inseparables de nuestras ficciones —nuestras facciones—. Estamos condenados a inventarnos una máscara y, después, a descubrir que esa máscara es nuestro verdadero rostro... la máscara convertida en rostro/el rostro petrificado en máscara... La crítica despliega una posibilidad de libertad y así es una invitación a la acción.²⁹ (Paz, 1994, p. 237)

As I write this last chapter, Mexico (perhaps fewer people inside and outside Mexico than it would be desirable) prepares to interrogate its 50-year commemoration of the Tlatelalco massacre of 1968, where a still unknown number of students got killed by about one thousand army troops (for recent book-length discussions as well as Octavio Paz's famous reflections on Tlatelalco's events and their Mexicanidad and trans-Latinidad macro and micropolitics, see, Lenti, 2017; Paz, 1994; Velasco Piña, 2018). So many ironic

things can be brought to mind about this commemoration process. For instance, Foro TV is airing a week-long set of sophisticated documentaries about Tlatelolco. Foro TV is a news channel owned by one of the capitalist groups that has benefited the most from the political aftermath of this terrible event, and which, like most mass media of the time, contributed to keep all references to the massacre under strict silence. Could it be that this kind of news analysis is now economically and even politically profitable? If so, what factors determine this unusual salience? In a clear gesture so indicative of the Eurocentric trends that affect intellectual as much as public opinion circles throughout Latin America and beyond, when one talks of 1968's student and parallel cross-cutting movements, most people would associate the topic of conversation with France's May 1968 events or the resistance movement in Prague against the Soviet invasion. That is just one of many ways in which trans-Latinidades tend to hide their multi-layered identitarian and political philosophy faces (should I say masks, paraphrasing Fanon?) behind white skinned ideological simulacra of modernity.

Just this month, in France, Macron has opened to public scrutiny the archives of the Algeria war and all documents about folks who got missing there, both French and non-French alike. As he orders this, he says that we now must strive to look at the truth of history face-to-face. In the same month, Spain's government has at last ordered Franco's bones to be removed from the so-called Valle de los Caídos, where they had remained, offending the memory of his own dictatorship's victims. Even for the blind and friends of braille literacy there is a fresh stream of good news this month. The long-awaited Marrakesh Treaty implementation Act has at last been approved by the House of

Representatives and is awaiting Presidential action. This legislation could open the door for braille availability of resources from all over the world, creating an open literacy system of unprecedented proportions.

But how much hope should one harvest out of these apparently isolated events of historical magnitude? How could similar change be accomplished in the plight of Latinx blind when their self-erected leaders dressed on colorblindness and servile passivity prefer not to mourn the memory of their Caídos? What will be their collective fate if Latinx blind Caídos and marginalized victims remain as unacknowledged pieces of a resounding historical vacuum? If not mourned and their unique sense of inequality is not denounced as inequity in the global north, how could they be remembered by anyone who is neither blind nor a trans-Latinx expression of the complex identitarian makeup of their radical exteriority sense of existence and material precarity? If not remembered/acknowledged, who will fight with/for them and their significant others?

My aims in this concluding chapter are as follows. First, I will summarize the main thematic and metatheoretical threads of the dissertation project. For instance, the thematic focus of this last chapter's reflexive counter story captures the dialectical tension and material meaning modes of interdependence between disability identities as radical exteriority and the ontology of rehabilitation or the legal fiction of formalized, ceremonial "habilitación," prescribed within the Napoleonic Civil Code tradition which, in turn, takes us back to the Roman jurisprudence on specific kinds of disabilities. Secondly, I will address the significance of themes and meta-theories in exploring the implications of the six driving questions at the core of the dissertation's decolonial critical hermeneutics approach

toward intersectionality which I spelled out in Chapter 1. Third, I will outline the preliminary presentation of key considerations on LatDisCrit's emergence as a field of study and critical activism as well as its nexus with radical agency possibilities, radical solidarity and modes of interdependent emancipatory learning that highlight deep life trajectory/radical exteriority-infused relationality among spheres such as radical adult education, civic engagement/youth studies, intergenerational/relational leadership, transformational community/organizational learning, social movement building, critical disability and trans-Latinx studies, political philosophy, economy, sociology and anthropology, etc. Fourth, I will identify potentially fruitful areas for research, metatheorizing, movement building and critical dialogical engagement among activists, performativity co-authoring partners (e.g., non-disabled family members, life partners, friends, educators and teacher educators who have direct performative bearing on the interdependence experiences of persons with disabilities of all ages, often without noticing or knowing exactly the relational relevance, both positive or negative, of their engagement/indifference stance) and emerging LatDisCrit and other decolonial solidarity knowledge workers toward tangible collaborative transformations that might result from some of the analytical dimensions dealt with or implied in the present project.

Before tackling these aims, I want to cover in this introductory section two practical metatheorizing models: (1) Paris and Alim's culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP); and (2) Boaventura de Sousa Santos' epistemologies of the south, especially in his engagement with relevant Foucaultian constructs on knowing and power. These two practical metatheories are important at this juncture because they have the potential to capture in

compatible ways, the transformative integration of several of the frameworks I invoked in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

A. CSP as Intersectional Decoloniality of Race and Disability in Global North Institutional and Movement Building Contexts

It's tempting to begin... like a fairy tale. Once upon a time a poor, blind, and orphaned child named Annie magically grew into a happy, sighted, and successful adult woman. She became a miracle worker, lighting the intellectual fire and imagination of the deaf-blind girl Helen Keller at a water pump in the wilds of Alabama. We know this kind of story. Many of our books and movies, the morality tales and parables we tell, even the heroes we've created, are versions of the same inspirational tale. The cheerful and uplifting message is that yes, you too can conquer anything in order to do the impossible. But I won't. 'Any book about me,' Anne Sullivan Macy reflected near the end of her life, 'must be full of contradictions...' the contradictions of a delightful, gloomy, charismatically fascinating, and annoying woman who was neither blind nor sighted. Though she was born in 1866, her life is a surprisingly contemporary tale. It is the story of a caring, fiercely proud, and intelligent woman trying to forge meaningful human relationships despite her own ingrained flaws and wounds. It is the story of a woman deeply frightened of depending upon anyone else for emotional, economic, or social sustenance. And yet—in one of those contradictions that Macy warned us about—she made one notable exception: she did not hesitate to lean on her famous student, and later friend, Helen Keller. While the whole world assumed that Keller's deaf-blindness forced her to depend on her teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy, my research suggests that the reverse more accurately characterizes their relationship of nearly fifty years. (Nielsen, 2009, n.p.)

The idea of interdependence has been a recurrent theme throughout my dissertation. Typically, this idea evokes one-on-one instances of relational reciprocity like

the one recreated in the opening epigraph I just quoted. Yet, dwelling still on interdependence, let us depart at the start of this sub-section from the idea of disability as culture in action and in reciprocal interaction with institutionalized settings in general and special education as well as everyday spheres of life such as employment, professional sports integration, technological and built environment access, friendship circles, etc. (Blanton, Pugach & Boveda, 2018; Koppers, 2011). Using this culture-centered ethos (especially in terms of the posthumanist materiality of culture, meaning and language discussed in Chapter 4), it is also possible to infer that each disability category constitutes a sub-cultural sphere. Disability's unique difference-based sense of richness can enhance collective contexts for learning in special ways. Take for example the meaning of musical silences as a unit susceptible to rhythmic and trans-melodic embodiments. How would deaf learners and their interdependence partners contribute to enriching our understanding of the mathematical depth of musical silences? The answer is only viable by unleashing the power of true belonging in co-learning spaces for sharing. Those knowledges are already brewing within the vitality of deaf learner experiences and those of their interdependent partners. Excluding them, we are also depriving the contextual whole from one of its core learning parts, especially if one thinks of this process of exclusion in terms of emancipatory learning epiphanies triggered by unique dimensions of absence, invisibility and phenomenological dys-appearance of corporeal categories of individuals not allowed to remain (Gerner de García & Becker Karnopp, 2016; Mathews, 2017).

Now, let us get closer to this dissertation's concern for blind Latinx sense of radical agency as expressed through cultural materiality and radical exteriority. Consider visual math dimensions as they get experienced by blind and/or visually impaired individuals and their interdependent partners, particularly as trans-Latinx folks unconsciously in search of their identity-based political subjectivities in global north and global south contexts. To what extent do stereotypical conceptions of visuality prevent us from dialoguing with these kinds of learners? Perhaps an example outside math may be in order here to appreciate the power of non-visual knowledges and ways of knowing in terms of their intuitional relationality.

I invite the reader to remember briefly here the essay by critical anthropologist Michael Taussig (1991), discussed back in Chapter 3. The reader will recall that Taussig builds on Walter Benjamin's (1969) suggestion that one should place the sense of sight under the guidance of tactility for the sake of aesthetic interpretation. Taussig implies that tactility should guide everyday interpretations to an extent unimagined by sighted actors unaccustomed as they are to the inner power of sensorial posthumanist materiality. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that Taussig is talking in his essay about the interpretative processes and intuitional knowledges experienced and created by sighted individuals. Paradoxically, if he had developed statements like these in relation to experiences of blind students or scholars, the depth of what he was saying would immediately vanish. This vanishing is the byproduct of ableist readings of blindness as mere impairment or as an incapacitating/paralyzing state.

What if pedagogically one takes Taussig's idea of tactility and asks blind students to become teachers of sighted students and perhaps prospective teachers on how they enact and embody tactility as students of disciplines like mathematics and the arts? In doing so, one should be prepared for all kinds of outcomes. For instance, the reader will also remember that in Chapter 4 we found out that cultural studies thinkers with visual impairments such as David Bolt (2014) criticize the over-representation of haptic constructions in relation to the blind. In Bolt's view, this haptic over-emphasis is an expression of ocularcentrism, that is, the belief that knowledge is only possible under sighted guidance, under the "light" of wisdom and proper directionality, which contrasts with the frightening darkness and vacillation inherently associated with tactility. What if there is a culture of resistance toward tactility among these teaching blind students? What if there is more cultural plurality among them than initially anticipated by non-blind audiences? Ultimately, only these teaching individuals (who could also encompass their interdependent partners, e.g., close friends, parents, etc.) could show us the lights and shadows of tactility as a dynamic knowledge creating tool and as a multifaceted expression of sub-cultures of blindness.

Another switching of gears allows us to get into understanding the relevance of CSP as a transformational emancipatory learning tool. CSP is a pedagogical tool that has the potential to build upon the sub-cultural richness of disability-specific knowledges as well as pandisability transversal experiences of marginalization, symbolic and material precarity, residual pockets of power and relational, radical agency. Intersectionally, these specific disability sub-cultures and pandisability manifestations have elements in common

with people of color's counter-hegemonic spaces of resistance through unique language tools and creative embodiments of cultural materialities.

Paris (2012) defends the use of CSP terminology because he sees it as a much more accurate conceptualization of the dynamics pursued as one engages with cultural contexts of diversity that are threatened by their systematic marginalization within learning spaces. Paris (2012, pp. 95-96) points out that it does not suffice to keep talking of culturally relevant or culturally responsive pedagogies. This term has been used in US educational contexts of critical multiculturalism for at least three decades. The usage of the term has spread especially since the publication of Ladon-Billings (1995). Along with this terminology there are other less diffused similar terms that have been used in the literature such as culturally congruent pedagogy (Au & Kawakami, 1994), culturally compatible pedagogy (Jacob & Jordan, 1987), engaged pedagogy (Hooks, 1994), everyday pedagogies (Nasir, 2008), and critical care praxis, (Rolón-Dow, 2005). See also, Alim, 2007; Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009; Alim & Reyes, 2011; Cammarota, 2007; Chang & Lee, 2012; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Hill, 2009; Irizarry, 2007 & 2011; Kinloch, 2010; Kirkland, 2011; McCarty, 2002; McCarty, Romero, & Zepeda, 2006; Morrell, 2004; Paris, 2009 & 2011; Souto-Manning, 2010; Winn, 2011 for expansive, border-crossing examples of cultural research in the context of dynamic multi-lingual and multi-layered identity spaces of learning).

The next logical step is to grapple with another core question: what are the concrete areas of cultural practice one is trying to sustain and why? Paris and Alim (2014) interrogate this dimension. They argue that, important as it is to employ asset-based pedagogies, it is paramount to dynamize their applicability to keep up with the evolving transformations of

youth cultural processes at the local level and throughout the globe, as well as counteract the myriad of institutionalizing practices (Du Bois, 1965) that aim at stifling this relational learning dynamicity (the latter being of crucial significance for youth and adults with disabilities in their math of all experiences inside and outside schooling contexts). Paris and Alim (2014, p. 86) point out their own sense of responsibility in the areas of practice they criticize:

First, we recognize that we are implicated in... our loving critiques, as some of our own research and teaching has uncritically taken up and built on previous notions of asset pedagogies, has at times reified traditional relationships between race/ethnicity and cultural practice, and has not directly and generatively enough taken up problematic elements of youth culture. Indeed, our own experiences as researchers and teachers who need to push further are foundational to our coming to these critiques. Second, as scholars committed to educational justice, we live, research, and write with the understanding that our languages, literacies, histories, and cultural ways of being as people of color are not pathological. Beginning with this understanding—an understanding fought for across the centuries—allows us to see the fallacy of measuring ourselves and the young people in our communities solely against the White middle-class norms' of knowing and being that continue to dominate notions of educational achievement. Du Bois... of course, theorized this over a century ago with his conceptualization of double consciousness.

Transposing this to the enactment of LatDisCrit, how would double consciousness would look like in the enactment of teaching and research practices? The plight of students with intellectual disabilities illustrates quite well the dualism intrinsic to double consciousness in classrooms and beyond. On the one hand, there is a manifest goal of wanting to transform deficit-centered scenarios but, it is not uncommon for researchers,

educators and even advocates to keep falling into rather ritualistic attempts. These attempts are existential traps. They almost never involve youth or adults with intellectual disabilities themselves as drivers of their own transformational learning as well as that of the institutional environments where their education takes place.

Paulo Tan, Rachel Lambert and I (in press) recently conducted meta-analysis that targets this population in terms of disability studies in math education (DSME) principles and practices. Our review centers on the specialized math education literature published during the past decade. It makes evident a minoritarian status for those instances of research where DSME principles are explored. The saddest thing is that this rare DSME exploration is often timid. In none of the studies we found are students with disabilities involved as co-designers of their learning or the math research that pertains to them.

Of course, we know that this very prospect would alarm the majority of math education researchers. For them, the configuration of research studies is a continuous exercise that corroborates their self-fulfilling prophecy that these students are not capable of complex operations. Thus, it would be temerity to leave their learning destiny in their disabled hands or pretend that one can have a meaningful collaboration toward pedagogical ends and processes with them as responsive agents. In turn, double consciousness will acquire an internalized status in the lives of these students with disabilities. Learned helplessness, learned hopelessness are not an unlikely outcome for them. After all, the symbolic exposure to exclusion messages in classroom settings for years at times is taken to heart; fortunately, less often than certain specialist would prefer (Ayres, Lowrey, Douglas & Sievers, 2011; Baglieri, 2017; Connor, 2008a & 2008b; Connor

& Ferri, 2007; Connor, Ferri & Annamma, 2016; Duckworth, 1995; Erevelles, 2000 & 2005; Gallagher, 2004; Graham & Slee, 2008; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Pending empirical examination, I would hypothesize that the situation of DSME for blind Latinx is not substantially better. However, empirical research in this area would require further refinement of existing metatheoretical tools such as CSP. The intersectional application of CSP is still embryonic.

McCarty and Lee (2014) extend CSP's scope of theory and action to center specifically on indigenous education's enactment and revitalizing sense of sovereignty. Importantly for the purposes of LatDisCrit's potential establishment within and beyond schooling contexts, Federico R. Waitoller and Kathleen A. King Thorius (2016) demonstrate that CSP can and should also be proactively cross-pollinated with universal design for learning (UDL, see, e.g., CAST, 2012; Chita-Tegmark, et al., 2011) in an effort to enhance its specific relevance and applicability to cultural spheres and barriers faced by students with disabilities. Waitoller and Thorius (2016) define this practice of cross-pollination in terms of (1) a continuous and fruitful interchange of ideas; and (2) a deliberate effort to identify and build upon the strengths of both CSP and UDL, particularly as both of these frameworks can enrich each other's pedagogical, that is, transformational capacities. Their cross-pollination is congruent with emerging pockets of intersectional interrogation of educational inequities that involve disability issues in alignment with race, language diversity dimensions, gender and class throughout various sub-fields such as inclusive education (Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011), disability studies in education (DSE, e.g., Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Connor & Gable, 2013; Ferri & Connor, 2010) and even

transformational actors within special education (García & Ortíz, 2013). Waitoller and Thorius express some optimism as “dis/ability now sits at the ‘table(s) of social justice and multicultural education...’ and manifests in some emerging alliances among disability studies and other critical fields (2016, p. 367).

The truth is that collective action and institutional responses aimed at addressing disability inequities in global north contexts both within and beyond educational spheres has a long way to go (for somewhat optimistic examples, see, Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Connor, 2012). As things stand, disability as the product of cultural, political, and economic practices often brings about extremely negative consequences such as segregation. Their deep existential materiality is undeniable for those who suffer these consequences as well as those who become targets because they accompany them and are vivid expressions of support in caring relationships of interdependence (Davis L., 2013; Rector-Aranda, 2018). Furthermore, disability is a unique relational “identity marker that includes ways notions of ability are relied on and constructed in tandem with other identity markers (e.g., gender, race, language)” (Waitoller & Thorius, 2016, p. 367; see also Gillborn, 2015). This means that, in terms of radical exteriority, its intersectional enactment for radical agency trajectories and radical modes of decolonial solidarity often faces multiple spheres of resistance and requires very creative pedagogical mechanisms for those resistance pockets to be genuinely sustainable, adaptive and multifaceted in their performative, axiological and knowledge-based manifestations.

For the purposes of consolidating the basis for LatDisCrit, CSP can help integrate metatheoretical frameworks such as Dei’s unique brand of decolonial black studies or the

formulations of border-crossing and epistemological mestizaje I analyzed in Chapter 3 into a practical paradigm. Through posthumanist and new materialist epistemologies, one could accentuate the materiality of many of the cultural and creative language dimensions CSP has explored in conjunction to Latinx urban youth, inner city blacks, Asian, Pacific islander and urban Indians, among other categories of intersectional hybridity that defy existing siloed identity constructs. Above all, CSP knowledge workers and activists can pursue new approaches toward intergenerational organizing, eclectic and unexpected modes of decolonial solidarity and community building, using the critical warnings that Paris and Alim (2014, p. 86) explicitly outline in the passage I quoted above: (1) avoidance of uncritical embracing of asset pedagogies, merely because they claim to be asset-based; (2) take good care not to reify linkages between race/ethnicity and cultural practices; (3) keep on always interrogating youth and adult cultures, especially in terms of ossifying tendencies within otherwise dynamic social movements; (4) watch for supremacist yielding to white, middle-class and ableist ways of knowing and being, monitoring the latent implications of double consciousness in our own reflexive as well as metatheoretical enactments and axiological/performative stance.

B. Foucault, de Sousa Santos and Decolonial Intersectionality:
The Need to Bridge North and South Decolonial Modes of Solidarity

La primera dificultad de la imaginación política puede formularse así: es tan difícil imaginar el fin del capitalismo como es difícil imaginar que el capitalismo no tenga fin. Esta dificultad ha fracturado el pensamiento crítico en dos vertientes que sostienen dos opciones políticas de izquierda distintas. La primera vertiente se ha dejado bloquear por la primera

dificultad (la de imaginar el fin del capitalismo). En consecuencia, dejó de preocuparse por el fin del capitalismo y, por el contrario, centra su actividad en desarrollar un modus vivendi con el capitalismo que permita minimizar los costos sociales de la acumulación capitalista dominada por los principios del individualismo (versus comunidad), la competencia (versus reciprocidad) y la tasa de ganancia (versus complementariedad y solidaridad). La socialdemocracia, el keynesianismo, el Estado de bienestar y el Estado desarrollista... son las principales formas políticas de este modus vivendi. En el continente, el Brasil del Presidente Lula es... el ejemplo más elocuente de esta vertiente de la tradición crítica y de la política que sostiene. Es una socialdemocracia de nuevo tipo, no asentada en derechos universales sino en significativas transferencias condicionadas de dinero a los grupos sociales considerados vulnerables. Es también un Estado neodesarrollista que articula el nacionalismo económico mitigado con la 'obediencia resignada a la ortodoxia del comercio internacional y de las instituciones del capitalismo global.' La otra vertiente de la tradición crítica... vive intensamente la segunda dificultad... de imaginar cómo será el fin del capitalismo. La dificultad es doble... imaginar alternativas poscapitalistas, después del colapso del socialismo real y ... alternativas precapitalistas anteriores a la conquista y la colonia. Aún cuando usa la noción de socialismo, busca calificarla de varias maneras; la más conocida es 'socialismo del siglo 21' para mostrar la distancia que imagina existir entre lo que propone y lo que en el siglo pasado se presentó como socialismo. Los procesos políticos en curso, hoy en día en Venezuela y Ecuador representan bien esta vertiente³⁰ (Santos, 2010, pp. 11-12).

Like CSP, Boaventura de Sousa Santos' ideas on epistemologies unique to global south contexts have evolved apart from considerations of disability dynamics. Santos' original configuration of these ideas come from the field of socio-legal studies where my intellectual trajectory had started decades ago. Hence, I feel special empathy for them and have a strong alignment with some of their conceptual grounding.

The empirical impetus of Santos' exploration was the realization that the favelas of Rio de Janeiro where Santos conducted his dissertation work decades ago, revealed a parallel socio-legal world that could not be explained in terms of traditional socio-legal models designed for global north institutionalization theorizing (Santos, 1974 & 2002). In the absence of the institutional dynamics that ground such traditional theorizing, it was imperative to develop an alternative framework for understanding/explaining what was happening and had been happening all along without getting to the scholarly radars of attention.

Over the years, grounded on emancipation, Santos has extrapolated these original ideas into a very sophisticated epistemological paradigm. Rather than a thorough examination of all its multifaceted components, I aim at identifying key elements relevant to LatDisCrit and to the exploration of radical agency possibilities via a targeted epistemological/axiological comparison between Foucault and Boaventura de Sousa Santos. To that end, I rely on Santos' own critical comparison, as he develops it in Santos (2014, Chs. 4 and 5) and in Santos (2002, Chs. 1 and 7).

In a somewhat counter-intuitive move, Santos' look at emancipation starts with Weber's modes of rationality. For Santos, the "pillar of emancipation is constituted by three logics of rationality... the aesthetic-expressive rationality of the arts and literature, the cognitive instrumental rationality of science and technology, and the moral-practical rationality of ethics and the rule of law. These three logics — each in its own way — destabilize the horizon of possible expectations by expanding the possibilities of social transformation beyond a given regulatory boundary (2002, p. 3). Santos goes on to assert

that these spheres of rationality “create possible futures that do not fit the political relationship in force between experiences and expectations. They have therefore a Utopian dimension... and contest the necessity of what-ever exists — just because it exists (2002, p. 3).

I find this latter implication somewhat disturbing. The contesting of everything merely because it exists is not necessarily emancipatory. It brings to mind the vacuous modes of resistance that I discussed in Chapter 3 while analyzing Giroux’s 1983 critical denunciations of falsely freeing resistance as well as the contributions of thinkers such as Willis (1977) who have tackled these issues of counter-productive struggle through extensive qualitative research among working-class actors.

Santos contrasts the “pillar of emancipation” with the “pillar of regulation.” The latter expresses through three principles: (1) the principle of the state, primarily as developed by Hobbes; (2) the principle of the market, theorized by Locke and political economists such as Adam Smith; and (3) the principle of the community, which guides Rousseau's social contract and political philosophy theorizing.

The principle of the state embodies the vertical political obligation between citizens and the state, an obligation that is variously insured, according to time and space, by coercion and legitimacy. The principle of the state stabilizes expectations by establishing the horizon of possible (and hence the only legitimate) expectations. The principle of the market consists of the horizontal, mutually self-interested obligation among the agents of the market. It stabilizes expectations by guaranteeing that, within the politically established horizon of expectations, the fulfillment of expectations is obtained with a minimum of imposition, through universal promotion of self-interest in the market place. Finally, the principle of community entails the horizontal obligation that connects individuals according to criteria of non-state and non-market belongingness. It stabilizes

expectations by defining what a particular group collectively may expect or attain... This tradition goes back to Aristotle who e political boundaries set by the state and outside or beyond any market obligation. (Santos, 2002, p. 3)

Santos sees this dialectical interplay between the pillar of emancipation and the pillar of regulation as being at the heart of social change and he uses it to build his ideas on the epistemologies of the south by showing how emancipatory forces can be embedded in existing regulatory efforts through infinite performative possibilities for political imagination to be enacted even within the most coercive contexts.

The paradigm of modernity is an ambitious and revolutionary project, but it is also internally contradictory. On the one hand, the breadth of its claims opens up a wide horizon for social and cultural innovation; on the other, the complexity of its constituent elements make the overfulfillment of some promises and the underfulfillment of some others hardly avoidable. Such excesses and deficits are both at the heart of the paradigm. The paradigm of modernity aims at a reciprocal development of both the pillar of regulation and the pillar of emancipation, as well as at the undistorted translation of such development into the full rationalization of collective and personal life. This double binding — of one pillar to the other and of both to social practice — is supposed to ensure the harmonization of potentially incompatible social values, such as justice and autonomy, solidarity and identity, equality and freedom. It is easy to predict that the hubris of such an overreaching aim carries in itself the seeds of frustration: unfulfilled promises and irredeemable deficits. Each pillar, based as it is on abstract principles, tends to maximize its potential —be it the maximization of regulation or the maximization of emancipation

— thereby blocking the potentially infinite unfolding of the tension between them. Similarly, each pillar consists of independent and functionally differentiated principles, each of which tends to develop a maximalist vocation (Santos, 2002, p. 4).

It is precisely in disentangling this complex picture of modernity's change paradigm that Santos engages Foucault's metatheorizing, especially as it pertains to issues of power and knowledge. Santos views science, and to a lesser extent modern law, as core agents of the pillar of regulation in the paradigm of modernity. Hence, Santos shows how, by the start of the nineteenth century, "modern science had already been converted into a supreme moral instance, itself beyond good and evil... politics was... a provisional social field of less-than-optimal solutions for problems that could only be adequately solved once transformed into scientific, technical problems: the well-known Saint-Simonian transformation of the administration of people into an administration of things" (2002, p. 4). In law, institutional developments such as the German pandect and the codification processes epitomized by the Napoleonic code of 1804 as well as positivist legal theory developments such as Kelsen's (1967) pure theory of law are expressions of this movement toward a scientific management of society. For Santos (2002, p. 5), even aesthetic paradigms such as Futurism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Russian constructivism, etc. at the turn of the 20th century are part of the same scientific hegemonic trend of rationalistic formalism.

Here resides Santos' main critique against Foucault. Santos perceives in Foucault an inability to understand the intimate interpenetration between juridical and disciplinary

modalities of power in action within this broader transformational trend as a manifestation of modernity's dialectical inner tensions.

Foucault overstates the mutual incompatibility of juridical power and disciplinary power and overlooks the deep interpenetrations between them. Foucault's major thesis is that since the eighteenth century the power of the state — what he calls the juridical or legal power - has been confronted with and gradually displaced by another form of power — what he calls disciplinary power. The latter is the dominant form of power in our time and is generated by the scientific knowledge produced in the human sciences as it is applied by professions in institutions such as schools, hospitals, barracks, prisons, families and factories. (Santos, 2002, pp. 5-6)

Foucault's error stems from adhering to a long tradition in western legal and political philosophy. This tradition goes back to Aristotle who developed a distinction between law as a normative set of commands and law as a systematic description of regularities of phenomena and taxonomic categories.

... this distinction undergoes qualitative changes within the paradigm of modernity, and the changes occur in an opposite direction to the one indicated by Foucault. Foucault is right in stressing the predominance of disciplinary power, which... corresponds to the centrality of science in the reconstructive management of the excesses and deficits of modernity. But he is wrong in assuming that disciplinary power and juridical power are incompatible. On the contrary, the autonomy of law and science vis-à-vis each other has been achieved through the transformation of the former into an alter ego of the latter. This explains why it becomes so easy to move from science to law and vice versa within the same institutions. The defendant, depending on the 'legalscientific' verdict on his or her mental health, can be referred by the very same institution (the court) either to the medical field or to the penitentiary-juridical field. Actually, women have often been 'located' in either or both fields at once — as mad women in the attic or as prostitutes — under the same sexist and classist presuppositions of both science and law. Such affinity between science and law and the circulation of meaning it allows give rise to social processes that

function as symbolic melting pots, configurations of meaning in which elements of both science and law are present in complex combinations. (Santos, 2002, p. 6)

A similar argument could be made with respect to disability. However, it is striking the extent to which Santos remains silent about disability dynamics, to the extent that some of his constructs could be considered ableist (see for example, Santos, 2014, Ch. 5) in their discursive and metatheoretical implications. Since Foucault's analytical framework is often explicitly aimed at tackling issues of the power of embodiment as a technique of the self, its impact on the field of disability studies has been much more pronounced.

How could one look at this epistemological exchange between Santos and Foucault in light of intersectional decoloniality? I am convinced that the exchange illustrates the practical dimensions of working from an epistemology gap that captures qualitatively different phenomena. The differential knowing and even the ontological enactment of these phenomena is preempted by the geopolitical premises of the north and the south (in some cases complicated by east and west senses of cosmogony). Santos' (2002, Chs. 7 & 9) core point is that law can be emancipatory insofar as it embodies innovative principles of cosmopolitanism (something to which I do not think that Foucault would be opposed as a matter of principle). Yet, as was made evident during the discussion of Gaztambide-Fernández's critical stance toward cosmopolitanism from the vantage point of decolonial global north considerations, Santos also qualifies his embracing of the concept from a skeptical attitude born from emancipatory learning experiences grounded on the subaltern marginality of the peripheral south:

In a sense cosmopolitanism has been a privilege of those that can afford it! There are two ways of revisiting this concept, one by asking who can afford it, the other by asking who needs it. The first question is about social practice. It entails the singling out of those social groups who have managed to reproduce their hegemony by using to their benefit concepts like cosmopolitanism that would seem to run against the very idea of group benefits. This question has thus a critical, deconstructive stance, the second question is about social expectations. It entails the identification of groups whose aspirations are denied or made invisible by the hegemonic use of the concept and may be served by an alternative use of it. This question has a post-critical reconstructive stance. This is the question I ask here. Paraphrasing Stuart Hall... who needs cosmopolitanism? The answer is simple: whoever is a victim of intolerance and discrimination needs tolerance; whoever is denied basic human dignity needs a community of human beings; whoever is a non-citizen needs world citizenship in any given community or nation... In sum, those socially excluded... Subaltern cosmopolitanism is therefore an oppositional variety. Just as neo-liberal globalization does not recognize any alternative form of globalization, so also cosmopolitanism without adjectives denies its own particularity. subaltern oppositional cosmopolitanism is the cultural and political form of counter-hegemonic globalization. It is the name of the emancipatory projects whose claims and criteria of social inclusion reach beyond the horizons of global capitalism. (2002, p. 460)

5.2. The Legal Myth of “Habilitación” and the Ontological Problem of the Ethics of Rehabilitation: A Fifth Reflexive Counter Story on Blindness and Latinidad from the Global South to the Global North

El lagrimear de Las Cumaraguas
Está cubriendo toda mi tierra,
Piden la vida y les dan un siglo,
Pero con tal que no pase nada
En mi tierra mansa, mi mansa tierra.
A veces pienso que todo el pueblo
Es un muchacho que va corriendo

tras la esperanza que se le va,
La sangre joven y el sueño viejo,
Pero dejando de ser pendejo,
Esa esperanza será de edad.
Huellas cansadas tienden tus pasos,
Pero, aunque el río sea muy manso,
Poquito a poco
se enfrenta al mar...³¹
(Primera, 2018)

The afternoon is cold and rainy, as Mérida's late afternoons tend to get by this time of the year. Arturo is sitting at Juan Luis' law office, a small room located in the front portion of an old house. The open window overlooks the narrow street and lets the noise of cars and people's voices come through, as indifferent witnesses to the landmark occasion.

A few months ago, Arturo celebrated his graduation as attorney of law. However, unlike those hundreds of able-bodied folks who graduated the same day with him, Arturo has not been able to practice. He had to wait for Juan Luis to finish up processing in Civil District Court his "Habilitación," a crucial ceremonial prerequisite prescribed in the Venezuelan (as well as other European and Latin American) Civil Code since the 19th century for blind individuals and other categories of persons with disabilities. These individuals with disabilities are presumed by the legislator since the times of the Napoleonic Code to be incapable and thus forbidden from exercising full ownership rights of their patrimony without the formal tutelage of an able-bodied individual or (and this is ontologically paramount for our radical agency possibilities discussions) a person with disabilities who has successfully undergone the process of "Habilitación."

Like Arturo, Juan Luis is blind since birth. Both graduated from the same law school. Juan Luis has been in practice about a decade or so by the time this meeting takes place. Could it be that, like in the gospel phrasing attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, “the blind was guiding the blind” through the intricacies of mythical legal fictions?

Nothing substantial or even peripheral has been altered about Juan Luis’ or Arturo’s visual impairment because of “Habilitación.” Hence, it is worth asking: which one, the pre or post states of affairs should be considered fictional? Despite its direct meaning in Spanish, “Habilitación” has nothing to do with enabling. It is a mere rite, a kind of “first communion” into the technicality vacuum of a defaced myth worshipping lawyerly religion. In a purely ontological sense, nothing has happened.

However, as Arturo would find out years later the hard way, this ritual held the magical power to safeguard his professional lawyerly status. When the law school tried to attack his legitimate status as university professor in Venezuela during the late 1990s, the “Habilitación” prerequisite was invoked, under the assumption that Arturo would have overlooked such a crucial step. New legislation was in place. Yet, unfamiliar with it (shame on these ableist lawyers) they preferred to stick to the old stuff. Why so? Could it be because these Roman time fictions were more attuned with their embodiment of “normal” supremacy?

At a deeper level, a level much more linked to issues of radical exteriority, Arturo had had his own encounter with the “self of blindness” in his own multilayered constellation of evolving selves. Yes, Arturo had been born with a visual impairment in the 1960s at a city not so far from Las Cumaraguas in Paraguaná Peninsula, at the extreme

northern part of Venezuela. Despite this (or perhaps precisely because of the social weight attached to this impairment and the relational submission to ableist supremacy), he grew up believing/dreaming/wishing that a miracle operation would cure him and return him to a “normal” status. It almost sounds laughable, but it is as real as it is cruel. This is the sad power of alienation. Thus, existentially, the myth of blindness as tragedy is not a radical exteriority event exclusive to “newly blind” individuals like Edwina (see, Chapter 2’s reflexive counter story). Juan Luis, Asdrubal, Emeterio, Guillermina, so many blind folks in the global south and the global north could corroborate this existential pattern with their own stories, their own joys and tragedies, their own radical exteriority confrontations.

What about rehabilitation processes in the global north? What about their aura of scientificity and legal formalism that mirrors so much the modernity trends underscored by Boaventura de Sousa Santos? To what extent can they be deemed as ontologically real? To what extent are they about independence or “normalizing” myths? What sort of phenomenological embodiment do they represent? In terms of posthumanist and materialist epistemologies in the micropolitics of disablement, what sort of materiality do they create and maintain beyond the institutional infrastructures that feed from the perpetuation of precarity conditions of under and unemployment and subaltern marginalization of so many millions of blind individuals for generations to come?

A. Beyond Determinism: A New Look at Resistance Epistemology and Axiology

From this point onward in the chapter, I highlight thematic elements that give congruency to the metatheoretical project that has occupied me throughout the present Dissertation. The first of these themes pertains to emancipatory resistance. Beyond the obvious need to abandon deterministic ideas of reproduction, culture as mere symbolic capital and the vulnerability as mythologies as discursive/material structures susceptible to be unlearned and deconstructed, there are complex layers that radical exteriority and radical agency in terms of life trajectory can add to the existing literature. They allow for dormancy and alienation to be reconfigured as possible stages of a sinuous career. They allow for multiple selves to interact with some degree of autonomy in an open sense of freedom as love and vice-versa. Some aspects of this complex enactment could be non-resisting. Conversely, radical periods of resistance would not preclude alienation or betrayal in future instances of relational exchange. On the other hand, so much of the existing resistance literature seems oblivious to intersectionality dimensions. In this regard, many of the insights presented throughout this project acquire significance toward the exploration of new territories and interrogating domains. What about the spectrum of individual level, relational and macro-level modes of resistance in settings of intersectional decoloniality? Here is another sphere of an intrinsic demand for interdisciplinarity which gets opened for further examination and metatheorizing.

B. Radical Agency, Emancipation and the Problem of Betrayal

Throughout the Dissertation, I have focused on contextual, situated, multi-layered modalities of emancipation, linking them to intersectional decoloniality dimensions relevant to global north and global south settings. Thus, it is possible to conceptualize betrayal in contingent epistemological and axiological terms as well.

For instance, looking at the reflexive counter stories in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 in a comparative light, it would be possible to think of micro as well as macro-collective modalities of betrayal. Even somebody like Asdrubal in the reflexive counter story from Chapter 3 could be read as an embodiment of macro dimensions of betrayal as one projects the fate of so many people with disabilities and aging folks in the inept/chaotic environment created by the pseudo-revolutionary processes prevailing in Venezuela. This is especially so since, for most of them, the option of exile and the heroic dream of the border-crossing “caminantes” (walking sojourners) is by no means a viable choice.

At yet another level, it is possible to perceive procedural as well as substantive dimensions that should be brought to bear when examining instances of betrayal. In other words, the how things are done matters as much (and at times more) as what is done to betray a given emancipatory cause or a relational solidarity principle of performativity. Also, since radical exteriority allows for intra-level dimensions of transontology (in terms of multiple selves), both emancipatory learning and betrayal could be examined as dialectical components that might show unique performativity trajectories throughout a radical agent’s life.

C. Intersectional Agency as Identity Conflation and Contradiction

The two previous metatheoretical themes make evident the non-linear nature of identity formation in radical agency trajectories. Conflating Latinx and blind identities might mean the conflation of contradictory modes of positionality with respect to trans-Latinidad as well as multiple enactments of blindness both philosophically and in terms of practical embodiment issues.

For Arturo, for example, this complex sense of intersectional conflation means asking which one comes first blindness or different manifestations of trans-Latinidad? In terms of situatedness, emancipatory learning and radical agency/solidarity possibilities, what kind of factors would make him tip in one intersectional identity direction or another? How does the radical exteriority whole come together, if it ever does? In terms of mythology deconstruction, as was discussed in Chapter 2 with respect to the contributions of Barthes and Sandoval, how could one play into the emotional spectrum afforded by the concurrently contradictory myths of pachanga and tragedy in trajectories experienced by somebody like Arturo?

Let us add characters such as Helen Keller, Guillermina, Edwina or perhaps some of the unnamed female students in Arturo's blind school. Just by doing this, the complexity of interrogating variables gets multiplied. What could explain the virtual absence of blind leadership and interdependence role models, apart from an obvious sense of patriarchal "good old boy" syndrome in blind movements both in the global north as in the global

south? In what unique ways do gender and multiple impairments complicate the enactment of radical agency possibilities?

D. Competing Utopias? An Exploration Through the Lens of Critical Hermeneutics

What about the prospect of having to deal with competing utopias? In terms of collective action as On the other hand, some of the issues explored in the present dissertation will require empirical analysis as well as multi-textual hermeneutic reality co-authored by various radical agents, how should each of these co-authors deal with issues of conflicting loyalties?

Imagine for a moment a blind Latinx whose priorities lean toward global south precarity concerns but who also enacts relational leadership roles in global north blind membership organizations. What if there are dualities difficult to reconcile? Could a concept like Santos' subaltern oppositional cosmopolitanism help? What about the practical role of notions such as CSP?

What if one comes up with collective mirrors of similar questions? For instance, how do collective loyalties align and realign in terms of transformative pedagogies? What factors determine shifting loyalties and how could these factors be approached for purposes of LatDisCrit's metatheorizing and practical organizing?

5.3. Decoloniality Disruptions and Contributions to Critical Hermeneutics

The following sub-sections are primarily concerned with cross-pollinating/interrogating integrative prospects for critical hermeneutics and decolonial theories. As discussed in Chapter 2, the most fruitful enactment of dialogue as a performative epistemology for the practical embodiment of love as giving oneself for the wellbeing of the other is expressed in Levinas's sense of trans-ontology, masterfully brought into a decolonial perspective by Maldonado-Torres. Yet, when trying to link dialogue and power in Kögler's work, there were several dimensions that I found wanting. This was especially true in terms of the emancipatory force of the analysis, which seemed to be stronger in the ideological examination undertaken while looking at Geuss and Ricoeur in Chapter 1.

A. From Fanon to Foucault and Deleuze

Foucault has occupied a very important place throughout the dissertation. His metatheory is among the few ones specifically invoked in conjunction to several of the dissertation's driving questions. Thus, I also tried to close the circle by linking him to my analysis of Boaventura de Sousa Santos in the present chapter, particularly since, at least geopolitically, Foucault still represents the ethos of a white organic intellectual and is thus vulnerable to Eurocentric and settler ideological pollution.

With respect to Fanon and Deleuze, the Foucaultian contribution allows for a power tri-partite metatheoretical model infused with decolonial, posthumanist/ materialist and

discursive dimensions. Applying this tri-partite model to the intersection of race and disability, I see a great deal of potential, particularly as it pertains to the consolidation of LatDisCrit as a sub-discipline and a sphere for targeted intersectional activism. For example, in theorizing and implementing new modalities of relational leadership, one can bring in difference-centered conceptions of interdependence that simultaneously build upon decolonial modes of solidarity, vitalist/posthumanist/neo-materialist views of situated embodiment and an ethical aesthetic approach toward the fluid consolidation and distribution of power and multiple knowledges.

B. Amy Allen's Critique of Habermas and Honneth

A crucial contribution to integrating decoloniality and critical hermeneutics was provided by Amy Allen. Amy Allen's critique of Habermas and Honneth as proponents of a normative conception of evolutionist progress was strongly grounded in a rejection of their Eurocentric principles and practical stance.

This emancipatory learning critique can be transposed to the practical lessons on movement stagnation I discussed in the reflexive counter stories for Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. For example, one can extend core questions beyond what was directly discussed in the chapters. Is it possible that, just as blind membership organizations have preferred to dwell on a context more attuned with the second half of the 20th century than the fluid globalized predicaments of the 21st century, something similar is affecting specific pockets

of trans-Latinidad in the US and beyond? if so, what sorts of innovative/creative decolonial solidarity could rescue them from this dormant stagnation?

5.4. Bringing Together Radical Exteriority and Mutual Recognition: Is a Pre/Para-Rational Critical Hermeneutics Possible?

In this section, I center on Latin American philosophy contributions. Based on Vallega's analytical exploration from Chapter 3, my answer to the question that makes up the title for the section is cautiously yes. In terms of LatDisCrit, this allows for more flexible manifestations of performativity than those observed within the organized blind movement up to this point. At the same time, I interrogate the residual value of emancipatory modes of rationality such as those proposed by Santos, Paris and Alim in the present chapter as well as Geuss and, to some extent Dei in his approach to blackness studies.

One interesting area for further exploration under the expansive metatheoretical, axiological and aesthetics performativities explored in the present dissertation is the realm of spirituality as a relational mode of leadership and transformative pedagogy beyond traditional canons of rationality. My discussion of Trinidad Galván's (2003) unique mode of epistemological mestizaje touches on this. However, its political philosophy, utopian and performative contours within decolonial intersectionality are such that it should be elevated as an autonomous line of theorizing and empirical research.

A. Beyond Multitude and Empire: Radical Agency Implications of Castro-Gómez's Critique

In Chapter 2, I discussed how Hardt and Negri's concept of multitude had been used by Mitchell and Snyder in conjunction to disability activism in global north contexts. Santiago Castro-Gómez (2007) takes up the optimistic reading of empire presented by Hardt and Negri. For Castro- Gómez this conceptualization of capitalist empire and multitude is naive because it does not take seriously issues such as the coloniality of power, knowledge and being (as I discussed them in Chapter 2 while presenting the decolonial contributions of Maldonado-Torres).

Castro- Gómez's interrogation of multitude and empire should also be extended to disability applications such as LatDisCrit. In its enactment of decolonial and posthumanist principles, LatDisCrit needs to become sensitive to sophisticated critiques of multitude and empire on the basis of decoloniality. It also needs to consolidate a metatheory of precarity in the global north and in the global south able to explain, understand and evaluate critically the material and symbolic impact of the power of coloniality as well as myth-making dynamics, even those that come unintendedly from leftist segments of the intellectual spectrum.

5.5. Summing up the Corporeal Dialectics of Domination and Resistance

Relying on phenomenology and posthumanist/materialist epistemologies, I

developed an extensive metatheorizing of embodiment. A key lesson from this consists of understanding the language of meaning and materiality as one thing, not as a duality.

An important corollary of this is the need to develop a solid sociopolitical conception of impairment as part of the embodiment of disability and as part of the radical exteriority dimensions that make up disability cultures and disability identities. For example, looking at the reflexive counter story in the present chapter, one can elucidate how mere ritualistic formalities have a tangible material bearing in the relational manifestations of embodied impairments. Arturo learned this the hard way. Could it be possible to develop a repository of emancipatory learning lessons that might guide others (both knowledge workers and activists) in the proper anticipation of these kinds of dynamics under the constraints of their own situated emancipation parameters? At a minimum, could new questioning spheres be mapped as people of color with disabilities grapple with these layers of existential materiality?

A. Revisiting Driving Questions

As articulated in Chapter 1, my driving questions in this dissertation project are presented next. In doing so, each of them will be briefly addressed in terms of the broad strokes of metatheory and thematic layers of learning cumulated by the decolonial critical hermeneutics examination employed through this dissertation project.

A.1. What dimensions of axiology and epistemology make situated, collective resistance possible?

Here is one aspect that seems to emerge from the metatheoretical and thematic discussions. The comparative and dialogical modes of epistemology and axiology are likely to engender core enacting triggers that can potentially enhance these modes of emancipatory learning, unlearning and resistance beyond isolated, individualist dimensions. Another somewhat counter-intuitive answer to this question is associated with the role that ideology and multiple utopian currents play. Ideology is treated throughout the dissertation beyond its purely pejorative sense, which allows for a more flexible link between its programmatic manifestations and utopian projects.

A.2. In terms of a life course trajectory at the individual level as well as meso and macro level collective action, how are oppressive techniques of domination unlearned and strategically deflected?

Primarily, this seems to be associated with decolonial modes of solidarity. Unlike antiquity, feudal and precapitalist societies, in our postcolonial, globalized world, oppressive techniques of the self operate both internally via acquired habits of multilayered self-examination and also externally via monitoring mechanisms of social control, many of which come always attached to us through technological devices that we refuse to let go. Therefore, unlearning can only take place through parallel expressions of relational, transitive and creative forms of pedagogy. Their main transformational effect impacts the self. Thus, this transformation triggers radical agency trajectory realignments.

These realignments often lead to unlearning and self-determination in ways that defy one's imagination.

A.3. What links micro level techniques of the self with radical solidarity as a long-term existential mode of becoming?

From elements common to Arturo's adjustment to impending situations described in the five reflexive counter stories, one could extrapolate a sense of validation in the establishment of identity anchors. Even if these anchors are transitory, they help with the performative dimensions of aspects such as self-disclosure, relational leadership development, interdependence and so on. Especially as emerging from posthumanist/materialist onto-epistemologies one can be rather optimistic. As Arturo's interactions with Emeterio reveal, many of the relational barriers that get erected among humans and non-humans are mere fabrications or byproducts of the biased strings that tie our imagination's capacity to transcend solidarity impediments.

A.4. What dimensions of axiology and epistemology make situated, collective resistance possible?

How do alterity/radical exteriority relations and structural dimensions of race, disability intersectionality and postcoloniality interact in the making of radical agency? Some of the core metatheoretical elements in answering this question can be taken from Ricoeur's collective action as text and co-authoring ideas (such as the epiphany that the author operates as first interpreter), Dei's central emphasis on blackness studies as the

anchor for other racialized modes of resistance against white supremacy and the settler power of coloniality, epistemological modes of mestizaje, phenomenology, posthumanist/materialist epistemologies and blind meta-narratives with an emphasis on ocularcentrism as a master ideology. In this latter regard, the materialist implications of de Freitas and Sinclair's (2014) rhythmic conceptualization of perception, beyond rationalistic dualisms, seem very promising for the theorizing and relational leadership development work within blind Latinx and pandisability approaches toward radical agency and radical solidarity.

A.5. What is the intrinsic value of intersecting metanarratives of blindness with Latinidad for the enhancement or stifling of radical agency and emancipatory learning?

Here is a fundamental component to ponder on this. It has to do with the need to struggle against lovelessness and ossified modes of movement organizing. Trans-Latinidades often have difficulties conciliating their master ideologies and competing utopias. This leaves LatDisCrit hanging as a proto-utopia, one that remains within the power of the unnamed. Yet, it will only have corporeal meaning if it gets traction as a mutually edifying sphere between knowledge workers and activists in the trenches. To me, one of the main metatheoretical and practical lessons on the enactment of this comes from Gaztambide-Fernández's emphasis on avoiding the framing of decolonial solidarity as a process circumscribed to communities of sameness. For LatDisCrit this recommendation should translate into as many modes of trans-Latinx and pandisability relational links as possible, especially among those collectivities that can generate more tension for the

comfort zones of blind Latinx. Of course, that CSP strategies of language preservation should be attended. Yet, above all, LatDisCrit must avoid solipsistic intra-communitarian conceptions of blind trans-Latinidad. Doing so would lead to similar patterns to those currently observed in major blind membership organizations throughout the US.

A.6. What are the limits of social justice education and emancipatory learning in relation to radical agency and radical solidarity?

The moral force of social justice education is one of its greatest assets. However, in terms of the ambiguities engendered by radical exteriority, some dimensions of emancipatory learning may not be as clear cut. Especially in terms of non-linear life trajectories, social justice education may need to open up its utopian modes of transformational pedagogies to the complex contradictions of human and material expressions of radical agency which, in some instances, deviate from the ethical aesthetics and the relative truths of its utopian spirit.

5.6. Pending Philosophical Questions and Interdisciplinary Lines of Research.

For the most part, the field of political philosophy has marginalized disability issues, treating them as an appendix of political philosophy's existing metatheorizing. Therefore, what has been accomplished in the present Dissertations pushes the limits. However, it must be admitted that I have not been able to address systematically gender and class

issues as they pertain to the configuration of decolonial intersectionality. A lot of work is needed there.

On the other hand, some of the issues explored in the present dissertation will require empirical analysis. For instance, a line of research should tackle comparative dimensions of organizational cultures within the blind and Latinx movements. This, in turn, engenders interesting design issues. How can one capture the intersectional spheres of difference that such a research would require? To what extent would it be possible to capture empirical dimensions of radical exteriority? If radical exteriority can indeed be assessed empirically, what kind of methodologies and subjectivity assessments would be most appropriate?

At the political philosophy and ontological levels, it would be paramount to deepen the linkages among decolonial, posthumanist/materialist and critical hermeneutics modes of theorizing as applied to both racialized and disability-based types of resistance against white and ableist supremacy modes of domination. To what extent is it possible that some of these metatheories are more apt to deal with race-based versus disability-based issues? How does intersectionality impact the way these differential aptitudes get resolved?

What about emancipatory learning? How many of its dimensions should or could be tackled empirically, especially in terms of transformational pedagogies that could be combined with radical adult education and relational leadership development applications?

Finally, it is great to think of radical agency and radical solidarity possibilities as concepts that are able to transcend siloed disciplinary boundaries. Building on this

accomplishment, what theoretical and methodological mechanisms should enhance the potential of the emerging transdisciplinary findings this exploration affords? How could this transdisciplinarity best translate back to emancipatory learning and radical exteriority dimensions? Above all, how could one insure that the kind of interdisciplinarity practiced serves to model non-hierarchical relationships between knowledge work and activism? How could material and symbolic walls against this possibility be permanently demolished, guarding against their disguised re-erection in subtle modes of servile or mercenary relationality?

Notes

¹ Throughout this project, the use of Latinx as a qualifier emphasizes gender neutral and ambiguous identities as being intrinsic to Latinidad. It also highlights the multi-vocal and conflicted manifestations of Latin American philosophy, especially in its post-philosophy of liberation and decolonial formulations.

² DisCrit is a specific theoretical development that seeks to explore the unique intersection of disability and race in educational contexts. I adopt a critical stance toward its current evolution as an emerging sub-field of analysis. However, in using this term in the title of my proposed Dissertation, I am expressing symbolically my hope for DisCrit to become a powerful space for the exploration of radical agency in the intersection of Latinidad and critical disability studies. This sub-discipline could become LatDisCrit, in the same way that LatCrit has been building upon and engaging dialectically the heritage of critical legal studies and critical race theory. (www.latcrit.org; see also Trinidad Galván 2014 for an illustration of the expansive postcolonial epistemology centered on trans-Latinx identity experiences of intersectional subaltern axiology and existential alterity which grounds the conception of LatDisCrit I have in mind).

³ “A voice cannot take with it the tongue and the lips that gave their wings on loan to it. A voice must look for ether. Alone, without nest, shall the eagle defy the sun” (Gibran, 1996, p. 5). (Translated by the author).

⁴ Following Habermas (1971), Foucault (2016a) distinguishes three types of techniques: techniques of reproduction, signification and domination. To these Foucault adds a fourth sub-category called techniques of the self, which he uses to criticize his own early work as being too centered exclusively on overt techniques of domination, i.e., *Discipline and punish* (Foucault, 1977). Foucault defines techniques generically as “regulated procedures, thought-out ways of doing things that are intended to carry out a certain number of transformations on a determinate object. These transformations are organized by reference to certain ends to be attained through these transformations” (quoted in Cremonesi et al., 2016, note 6). On the other hand, compare for example what Sandoval (2000, p. 17) says about the “technology of love” which turns out to have analogous echoes to Foucault’s conceptualization of techniques, this time embedded in global, twenty-first century and decolonizing contexts: “... a methodology of emancipation comprised of five skills: semiotics,

deconstruction, meta-ideologizing, democratics, and differential consciousness... these different methods, when utilized together, constitute a singular apparatus that is necessary for forging twenty-first-century modes of decolonizing globalization. That apparatus is "love," understood as a technology for social transformation."

⁵ These are "techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, or to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on." On note 17, the editors of the lecture also reproduce the following definition for techniques of the self: "... procedures that are 'suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of self-mastery or self-knowledge.'" Please note that in the latter of these definitions, Foucault seems to give preeminence to the prescribing/suggestive process and thus the relational power that gives birth to these techniques at a given point in time. This, of course, is a great way to remind the reader about the theme of problematizing agency which I am framing in this sub-heading.

⁶ I aim at evaluating race and disability matrices separately and in their emancipatory intersections in the borderlines of blindness and Latinidad. Epistemologically, some frameworks, e.g., relational phenomenology, have been more effectively employed in disability studies regarding dimensions such as the body (Hughes, 2007; Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Shildrick and Price, 1996), access (Titchkosky, 2006, 2008, 2011), voice (Michalko, 1998, 1999, 2001) and relational vulnerability (Gibson, 2006; Mitchell and Snyder, 2000; Sontag, 2001; Titchkosky, 2002; Tremain, 2002). However, relational phenomenology might have emancipatory potential in conjunction to white supremacy, for example. Hence, it is helpful to keep this as an open question to facilitate a better engagement with the specific issues of unlearning, knowledge production, meaning making and mobilization relevant to that mode of hierarchization.

⁷ The literatures on social justice and popular education as well as critical pedagogy contain magnificent descriptions and curricular formulations on how to infuse humanizing empathy among learners (e.g., Zembylas, 2012). At times, they have tackled resistance and certain modes of emancipation (e.g., Echa, 2013; Quayle and Sonn, 2013), getting even to the point of missing the "forest" of the collective for the sake of highlighting the "tree" of individual leadership style. They have certainly set an excellent foundation. For me, what is still underdeveloped is a clear sense of how one would link those humanizing predispositions with concrete radical agency projects. There is a need to understand longitudinally the steps and detours that characterize emancipatory learning in specific situated manifestations of resistance. My proposed Dissertation project does not include an empirical component. Therefore, it does not address this deficiency. However, it analytically confronts intersectional domination and compares explicitly various approaches to the epistemology, axiology and aesthetics of decolonial resistance with a conceptual focus on contextual practices of radical agency and emancipatory learning. Hopefully, this moves the literature closer toward the trenches. There, both radical agency and emancipatory learning are taking place, regardless of how under-theorized relevant issues might be at the current juncture. On the other hand, social justice is much broader than the processes encompassed under radical agency and emancipatory learning. Some popular education and certain modes of facilitated dialogue claiming to represent critical pedagogy, for example, defend that they do not have to be emancipatory. Their argument is that educating the poor and underprivileged is revolutionary in and of itself. Branding this radical agency focused sub-segment of social justice education to illuminate its epistemological, axiological and aesthetic politics and counter hegemonic practices is a valuable endeavor because it will eventually link the theoretician and the researcher with the intersectional activist in designing and documenting concrete radical projects. Multifaceted actors will thus reflect together on what could be done better or differently when transferred to other spaces of emancipatory resistance. No doubt, this approximation process will have to face its own hierarchization and unlearning caveats (see for example the work on shaming by Zembylas I analyze in this project, pp. 28-29).

⁸ Amy Allen (2016, p. 6 and following) indicates that, in terms of their approach to the teleology of historical transformations and their idea of progress, Habermas and Honneth represent a step back with respect to prior critical theory approaches such as that of Adorno and Benjamin. This weakens Habermas and Honneth ability to incorporate ideas from and have a compatible/constructive epistemological dialogue with postcolonial/decolonial theories.

⁹ Utopia left in flight
Chased away by hunting dogs
That were raised
In her lap
Not being able to catch up with her, they betrayed her;
Today, functionaries
of treading dreams within a rigid order...
(Translated by the author).

It is important to note that the word utopia is a female noun in Spanish. There are metanarrative emphases that this treatment can have in conjunction with feminist paradigms, but I would like to keep this as an open question for exploration as the exploration of utopia in its intrinsic unity to ideology and performativity gets further elaborated.

¹⁰ I use the term dialogical here in a dual way. The term means on the one hand the “I and thou” relationality that Buber (1970) uses to underscore complex links of trust at the micro level despite otherness barriers. It simultaneously carries with it the multi-vocal meaning that Bakhtin (1981, 1986, 1990, 1993) attributes to dialogue which, paradoxically, might encompass certain modes of “ventriloquism” in the configuration of political acts (see for example Anderson R., Baxter and Cissna, 2004; Baxter and Montgomery, 1996; Berlin and Fetzer, 2012; Cooren and Sandler, 2014).

¹¹ Moon of the poor always open
I came to surrender my heart
As an immutable document
I came to surrender my heart.
And I will tie the extremes of a single cord
And I will go away tranquil, I will go away slowly...
(Páez, 2017 [2013]). (Translated by the author).

¹² “Love and fear must be united: fear without love becomes cowardice; love without fear becomes presumptuousness. At that point, one has no longer any sense of direction” (Pío de Pietrelcina, 2017). (Translated by the author).

¹³ No one saw the beauty of the streets
until dreadful in its clamor
the greenish sky did indeed fall
in dejection of water and shadows.
Unanimous was the downpour
and abhorring to look was the world,
but when a rainbow blessed
with forgiveness’ colors that afternoon
and the smell of moistened earth
made gardens cheerful,
we got out to walk through the streets
as if going through a recuperated inheritance...
(Borges, 1995, p.29). (Translated by the author).

¹⁴ Loving, in any event, means being vulnerable. It suffices for us to love something for our heart, with all certainty, to twist and possibly get broken. If one wants to be sure of keeping it intact, one must not give one's heart to anybody... avoiding every commitment; keeping it locked and well protected in the safe box or the coffin of our selfishness. But in that safe box — safe, dark, immutable, without oxygen — it will change, it will not break, it will turn unbreakable, impenetrable, unredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least the risk of tragedy, is condemnation. The only place, apart from heaven, where one can be perfectly safe from all dangers and disturbances of love is hell (Lewis, 2017, p. 100).

¹⁵ With you went away the voice of the poor, the dispossessed, the oppressed and those without voice.
With you went away Latin America's consciousness as well as a good portion of our dignity.
With you passed away the living myth, the one who struggled against contradictions, the one who educated through parables, the one whose smile was so seductive...
With you we were born to the vigor of a utopian education...
With you we enjoyed the denouncing and announcing prophet.
With you we found out that this world's pilgrimage only makes sense in struggle...
With you remains your invitation not to repeat you or celebrate you but rather strive to reinvent your legacy...
(Torres C., 2018, n.p.). (Translated by the author).

¹⁶ Whenever cold weather comes back, that is, in the middle of fall, I get into the crazy habit of thinking of ideas of the eccentric and exotic kind. I think for instance that I'd like to turn into a swallow to be able to fly into countries with warmer weather. Or perhaps I'd be an ant to get deep into a cave, eating the products stored there from the summer. Or perhaps I'd be a viper like those at the zoo which are well kept in a glass cage with a heating system so that they don't get stiff due to the cold. That's what happens to poor human beings who cannot purchase clothing, expensive as it is, and who cannot get warm for lack of kerosene, lack of coal, lack of wood, lack of fuel, as well as lack of money. Because when one has cash in the pocket one can enter any bar and get a good swallow of grapa. You have to see how it warms you up, although it's convenient not to abuse. From abuse comes vice and from vice comes degeneracy from the body as much as from moral deviations that each one has. And when you come down the fatal slope of lack of good behavior in every sense, no one will save you from ending up doomed in the most dreadful trash can of human disrepute. No one will ever give you a hand... (Cortázar, 2018 [2004], n.p.). The author's translation. Importantly, English readers should know that the original in Spanish has extreme colloquial and localist overtones. The author has opted not to render this ethos into English to avoid localist distortions, making sure that the theme of marginality and disrepute gets clearly conveyed, which serves the purposes of the analytical contours of the present chapter.

¹⁷ Where are you from? The question, repeated in every situation and at every hour, can be disquieting. It would not be so if you come from Europe, western Europe should be understood in this case. But if you come to the United States from a third world country, this question becomes rhetorical. For it, there is only one possible reaction. It was 1988. I had just arrived at the United States to study comparative literature with a Fulbright scholarship and it did not seem that there was another way out. Whenever they asked me "where are you from?" and I answered, my response triggered in the other a full gamut of prejudices about what it means to be a Mexican which was followed, on my part, by an unending defense. Immediately, my interlocutor frowned, disappointed because I contradicted their idea of Mexicanity which defaced my image. To their eyes, I was transformed into a mutating virus, something dangerous from which one needs to flee. One of the biggest surprises upon arriving to the United States was listening to what I was or what I was supposed to be as a Mexican, as a woman, as whatever one becomes upon crossing a border and being seen by others. And, above all, it was surprising to find out that I was not myself, but rather that I was, and would always be the 'other.' The second thing was coming into a bookstore and find out that authors like Gabriel García Márquez and Jorge Luis Borges, who, to my mind, had each of them written their own 'book,' were displayed in the section designated as ethnic literature. Perhaps these two matters were part of the same thing. Where are you from? That question encapsulates the origin of the crime (Beltrán, 2018 [2015], n.p.). (Translated by the author).

¹⁸ If they would say to me, “make a wish”
I would prefer the tail of a cloud
A swirling wind on the ground
And a great anger coming up;
A sweeping of sadness,
A great downpour as a vengeance
That when it stops our hope may shine forth
(Rodríguez Domínguez, 2018). (Translated by the author).

¹⁹ They burned all their ships
In search for a new life,
They paid an expensive price for the false key
To the promised land...
And if two Basque guys robe
A pharmacy owner in Vigo
The witness will surely swear
That they were Sudacas
(Sabina & Milanés, 2018). (Translated by the author).

Importantly, the word “Sudaca” conveys a strong demeaning character in Spain, very much like the “N” word in the US. It at once encompasses non-whiteness and southern origin, targeting primarily Latinx and Sub-Saharan nationals. Also, with all the reservations toward biological conceptions of race, it should be noted that in Spain and in Latin America there is a generalized perception that Basque folks are “phenotypically” white (whatever this means for the hierarchical alignment of white supremacy mythologies).

²⁰ He got established in Mendoza, there he formed an army, crossed with his men the Andes mountain range, defeated the Spanish royal forces in Chile, developed a maritime war fleet, moved by sea into Peru, disembarked there with his army, came into Lima and got a hold of the heart of Spanish empire in the Americas. He was a criollo warrior. José Francisco de San Martín brought about this formidable campaign between 1814 and 1821. A high-ranking Scottish officer, Thomas Maitland, had conceived a plan like this in London at the start of 1800. The idea was received and considered seriously by the government of William Pitt the young. Maitland raised a preliminary text to the War Secretary, Henry Dundas... who cited him to discuss details. From the Dundas-Maitland interview emerged the final plan which was placed in the hands of the War Secretary by the middle of 1800. William Pitt’s government fell on February 3, 1801. Maitland’s plan seemed to have been forgotten since then (Terragno, 2012, n.p.). (Translated by the author).

²¹ The boy Andrés Eloy Pérez is now ten
He studies at Simón Bolívar elementary,
He still doesn’t know how to pray the Credo the right way,
He likes going to the river, playing soccer and being absentminded.
They’ve given him the altar boy’s role at the church
To see if the connection fixes this little guy
His family is very proud because they somehow believe
That if God is connecting one He’ll connect with ten... (Blades, 2018). (Translated by the author).

²² How hard it gets to me
Keeping on moving through this long trip
Not knowing where I’m really going;
If I’m going forth or coming back,
If the funeral car is the first stop,
If coming back is a mere way to pretend that you’ve arrived.

How hard it gets to me
Keeping on carrying all this luggage,
It gets tough for me to go up the slope;
That damn tyrant reality
Keeps on laughing at me
Because it expects that I'll get tired of my soul search...
How hard it gets to me
To remain with enough courage
Far from corruption and prostitution,
Defending my ideology,
Good or bad, but always mine,
Just as human as contradiction...
Each brief note, each idea,
Each step in my career
And the verse from my latest song,
Each postponed appointment,
Each act of leaving and coming back
And the oxygen of my regular breathing:
Pushing along! Pushing along!
(Learner, 2018). (Translated by the author).

²³ Run – Said the turtle,
Dare – Said the coward one,
I'm back – Said a guy
that never went anywhere.
Spare me – Said the executioner,
I know it's you – Said the guilty one...
(Sabina, 2018). (Translated by the author).

²⁴ William Tell didn't understand his son
Who one day got board of holding the apple on his head
And started running, so the father cursed him
How would he be able now to demonstrate his skills?
William Tell, your son grew up,
He wants to throw the arrow,
Now it's his turn to prove his valor,
Lend him your bow!
(Varela, 2018). (Translated by the author).

²⁵ "Truly, what you call freedom is the strongest of your chains, although its links shine intensely with the sun and blind your eyes. What but fragments of your own self are what you want to dispose of to be free? If what you want to abolish is an unjust law, you must know that such a law was written by your own hand upon your own forehead" (Gibran, 1996, p. 50). (Translated by the author).

²⁶ This study describes 5 incremental stages: antilocution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack and extermination.

²⁷ ... an agent's positioning in the social space and, specifically, the space pertaining to capitalist societies, is determined by the agent's social mobility trajectory, be it upwards or downwards, as well as by the agent's bodily properties, whether they are praised or stigmatized... In this sense, we showed that possessing a disability, or more precisely a disabled body, entails for the person in question a dispossession in general

terms of symbolic capital, which translates into and expresses through practical limitations in the person's ability to handle her/his own body as well as the physical space. Hence, we indicated that persons with disabilities, insofar as they share similar conditions of existence derived from an imputation of "medically named deficiency," could be seen as members of an oppressed class. Departing from the agent's labeling as possessing a deficiency, under the disguise of illness, a relationship of domination gets naturalized. This, far from being natural, is a historical product of arbitrary characteristics. Thus, we arrived at the conclusion that the state, through its distributing role of legitimate social labels, inculcated disability's habitus which carries with it, via imputation, an ill, ugly and worthless body in opposition to healthy, beautiful and able embodiment. This conclusion, in turn, implies that one of the main features of capitalism is corporal sequestering of personal experience (Ferrante & Ferreira M. A., 2008, p. 404). (Translated by the author).

²⁸ Daddy tell me once again
That most beautiful story
Of the crazy guerrilla guy
That was killed in Bolivia.
And how was it that his gun nobody else
Ever dared to hold or carry?
And how is it that from that day onward
Everything seems uglier and uglier? ...
(Serrano, 2018). (Translated by the author).

²⁹ ... each one is everybody, all of us are no one; the human/all humans: perpetual oscillation. Diversity of characters, temperaments, histories, civilizations, makes of the human: all humans; and the plural gets resolved, gets dissolved in a singular: I, you, she/he, fading away as soon as they are pronounced. Like nouns, pronouns are masks and behind them there is nobody — except, perhaps an instantaneous us that is the blinking of an it equally ephemeral. But while we live, we cannot escape neither from masks nor from nouns and pronouns: we are inseparable from our fictions, our actions. We are condemned to invent a mask for us and, afterwards, find out that this mask is our true face... the mask transformed into face/the face petrified into mask... Critique displays a possibility of freedom, and so it becomes an invitation to action (Paz, 1994, p. 237). (Translated by the author).

³⁰ The first difficulty for political imagination can be framed like this: it is as hard to imagine the end of capitalism as it is to imagine that capitalism has no end. This difficulty has fractured critical thought into two tendencies that support two leftist political options quite distinct from one another. The first perspective has allowed itself to get blocked by the first difficulty (the one centered on imagining the end of capitalism). As a consequence, it stopped worrying about the end of capitalism and, on the contrary, it now centers its activity on developing a *modus vivendi* within capitalism that might allow it to minimize the social cost of capitalist accumulation, dominated by principles of individualism (versus community), competition (versus reciprocity) and the rate of profit (versus complementarity and solidarity). Social democracy, Keynesianism, the welfare state and the developmentalist state... are the main political expressions of this *modus vivendi*. In the continent, President Lula's Brazil is... the most eloquent example of this critical tradition perspective and the kind of politics it supports. It is a social democracy of a new sort, not grounded on universal rights but on significant conditional transfers of money to those groups considered most vulnerable. It is also a neo-developmental state that articulates an economic nationalism mitigated with a 'designated obedience to the orthodoxy of international trade and global capitalism institutions.' The other critical tradition perspective... lives most intensely the second difficulty... of imagining how will be the end of capitalism. The difficulty is twofold... imagining postcapitalist alternatives, beyond the collapse of real socialism and ... precapitalist alternatives prior to conquest and colonial times. Even when it uses the notion of socialism, it tries to qualify it in different ways; the best known is that of socialism of the 21st century which aims to show the distance it imagines there is between what it proposes and what last century was presented as socialism. Today's political processes in Venezuela and Ecuador are representative of this tendency (Santos, 2010, pp. 11-12). (Translated by the author).

³¹ The running tears of Las Cumaraguas
Are covering up my entire land,
They ask for life and are given a century,
But just as long as nothing happens
In my meek land, my meek land.
At times I think that the whole people
Is like a boy that keeps racing
after the traces of banishing hope,
The blood is young, the dream is old,
But stopping to be an idiot,
That hope one day will come of age.
Tired footsteps are left by your feet,
Yet, although the river might be quite meek,
Little by little
it faces the sea...
(Primera, 2018). (Translated by the author).

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