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**POWER IN PUBLIC ART SPACES. F(R)ICTIONS, PERFORMATIVITY
AND THE GENERATION OF COUNTER-HEGEMONIC NARRATIVES**

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To my grandparents, Pepe and Daphne, who gave me a home that protects me beyond their lives.

INDEX

ABSTRACT/RIASSUNTO/RESUMEN	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
INTRODUCTION: HOW TO READ THIS THESIS	1
1. Structure of this thesis and other choices	8
CHAPTER 1. SETTING OFF FROM THEORIES AND THE STRATIGRAPHY OF POWER. THE DISSECTION OF THIS BODY	11
1. On power. Foucault’s biopolitics in our lives after Zuckerberg. Or “the principle of deformation by faulting”	11
1.1. Power and hegemonies: a genealogical account	12
1.1.1. The loc(k)ations of power and resistance	14
1.1.2. Chronotopes	20
1.1.3. Possibility	23
1.2. Disturbed deposits: the assembled stratum	24
1.3. Gender accumulations	27
1.4. A material awakening of the layers that matter	33
1.4.1. New Materialisms and their ordinariness	33
2. Gramsci and the hegemonies beneath Foucault. Or the law of superposition and disturbed strata	38
2.1. Self-Surveillance and autoregulatory practices. Post practices from a post worlding	40
3. History and its making: The frictions of fictions. Or the preservation potential principle	45
3.1. Capital H for History. Fiction as theory	45
3.2. History and the archaeological record.....	47
4. On colonialism: the importance of space beyond cartography. Or stratigraphic accommodation	49
4.1. Ontology and the problem of the State: colonial conceptual spaces	49
4.2. Beyond cartography: ontological close encounters. The extensive/intensive and the actual/virtual	50
4.3. Beyond the metaphor: decolonisation	52

5. New Materialisms and diastems	53
5.1. Onto-epistemologies and New Materialisms: absent presences	53
6. Beyond time, adagio. Queer temporalities, slow theories, and combined ontologies. Or beyond cyclothemes	58
6.1. Perfect timing and good intentions. Positivism and future	58
6.2. Other embodied timings	64
6.3. Inclusion. What a great word	66
6.4. Beyond nurturing: a non-dichotomous account of tactics	67
7. There is nothing new to matter. Everyday materialism, renewed matters, and queer deaths. Or the principle of cross-cutting relationships	71
 CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGIES IN ACTION: CONCEPTS AS METHODS	 79
1. Introducing the method: A cartography of actions	79
2. Methodology as a happening	84
3. Queering the methods	88
4. Concepts as Methods. Diffractive reading through one another	91
4.1. Diffraction	95
5. Intimacy as praxis. Autoethnography ft. fictions	97
6. Affects and effects	100
7. Situatedness	105
8. History ft. Hollywood and other archaeological artefacts. Fiction as method	108
9. Decoloniality	111
10. Temporal dislocations	115
11. Refusal and anarchism	117
 CHAPTER 3. CASE STUDY 0: A CIRCUMSTANTIAL CHAPTER ON THE VOID AS SATURATION AND NEGATIVE POTENTIALITY	 123
1. Introduction	123
2. Recycling: nothing is really new. Nostalgia, neologism, pastiche and simulacrum ...	128
3. The experience. Or on how chronotopes became in this void	129
4. Voids and negativities towards decolonial potentialities	133
5. Queer deaths	136
6. Waiting for happiness	141
7. Renounce announcements: archives	143

8. Ephemeral times and temporal actions	151
9. Void as presence and fictional ontologies	156

CHAPTER 4. CASE STUDY 1: FRANCES NEGRÓN-MUNTANER AND THE *VALOR Y CAMBIO* PROJECT. *Is the archive always radical?*

158	
1. <i>Valor y Cambio</i> . The experience	159
1.1. Presenting the case study	160
1.2. <i>Valor y Cambio</i> and the radical idea of active concepts. What do you value?.....	161
2. Triggering	170
2.1. The liminal p(l)ace of contradictions: the private and the public	171
2.2. Dislocating temporalities into archives of desire	172
2.3. Beyond aesthetics. Art, material Heritage and linguistic rituals	174
2.4. Introducing the application of New Materialisms	175
2.5. From reflective concepts to diffractive applications. From concepts in interaction to concepts that intra-act	179
2.6. Archaeological records running into the archive of homes and other epistemological encounters	185
2.7. Proper language, property language	194
2.8. Beyond “Anthropobsession”: from anthropy to entropy	196
3. Resolution. The Reina Sofia Museum <i>¿Archivo Queer?</i>	205
3.1. Phenomenal methods, deviant orientations. Remixing concepts. Buzzwords	206

CHAPTER 5. CASE STUDY 2: MORIA AND THERMI AS SITES OF DIALECTICAL DISSONANCES. *Is memory always radical?*

217	
1. A short story: 7.1 kms. 11 minutes by car	219
2. Triggering	223
2.1. Theoretical Fragmentology: dissonance in Histories and their Heritage	223
2.2. Dissonant entanglements: “Race” and Coloniality in Authorised Heritage Discourses	228
2.3. Borders: spatial divisions, motion and mobilities	233
2.4. The temporality of the “unreal”: time as space. Temporal viscosities, waiting	239
2.4.1. Waiting, motion and orientations: de-realising embodiment	240
2.5. Non-places	246
2.6. The agency of memory: haunted Heritage and possession	250
2.7. The senses of <i>beyond</i> in humanism: how a body is translated to be understood	254

3. Resolution. Ryoji Ikeda's <i>Datamatics [ver. 2.0]</i>	257
CHAPTER 6. CASE STUDY 3: BOLOGNA AS A SELF-EXPERIENCED UTOPIC OTHERWISE. <i>Is resistance always radical?</i>	268
1. The experience. An eviction	270
2. Triggering	272
2.1. Assembly/assemblage. Affective kinship within bodily circumstances	273
2.2. Violence/non-violence. Resistance as privilege	282
2.3. Self-panopticum and invisibility	289
2.4. Haunting experience	290
2.5. Emergencies in emergence. Terrifying romance through intimacy	292
2.6. Dissidentifications	295
3. Resolution. <i>Side B: Adrift</i>	298
3.1. A conversational interview with Franck Chartier	301
CHAPTER 7. CASE STUDY 4. TOWARDS CONCLUSIONS. IRELAND AND ANTHONY HAUGHEY'S INTERVENTION AT THE YPA. <i>Is radicality always radical?</i>	309
1. The experience. The Young People's Assembly	311
1.1. Those days	311
2. Triggering	320
2.1. Art and activism: aesthetics and aesthesis	320
2.2. Art otherwise through fictional ontologies	325
2.3. Once more, affecting: on humanism and agency through decoloniality	328
2.4. The decentralisation of the "author": the artist as facilitator	332
2.5. Material culture and the materiality of the table: the limits of translation	334
2.6. The temporality of the intervention. Dislocation and liminality	340
2.7. Art in the temporality of joy	345
3. Resolution. The Void revisited	348
3.1. Diffracting the Void	348
SIDE A CONCLUSIONS	353
SIDE B CONCLUSIONS. <i>Building a house</i>	357

SIDE A BIBLIOGRAPHY	363
SIDE B BIBLIOGRAPHY. <i>Fiction as method</i>	408
ANNEXES	413
Annex 1: <i>Valor y Cambio</i> . A conversation with Frances Negrón-Muntaner and images from the project	413
Annex 2: <i>¿Archivo Queer?</i> Images.	440
Annex 3: Images from the <i>Now You See Me Moria</i> project	443
Annex 4: <i>Datamatics [ver.2.0]</i>	450
Annex 5: <i>Side B: Adrift (Triptych)</i>	451
Annex 6: A conversation with Franck Chartier	454
Annex 7: Images from the YPA project	474

Abstract/Riassunto/Resumen

Abstract

This thesis applies queer theories to the examination of experiences which go beyond queerness. Queer, decolonial, antiracist and feminist new materialist concepts are implemented to the analysis of four case studies dealing with power and art in public spaces. By applying concepts as methodologies, autoethnographic reflections and f(r)ictions as research alternatives, the thesis brings up new diffractive readings from where to perform those scenarios differently. In doing so, the thesis disentangles the historical, material, philosophical, political and disruptive meanings which haunt the four case studies and triggers the *activist* potential of their counter-hegemonic narratives.

Riassunto

Questa tesi applica teorie queer all'esame di esperienze che vanno oltre al queerness. Concetti delle teorie queer, decoloniali, antirazziste, femministe e nuove materialiste sono implementati nell'analisi di quattro casi di studio che si occupano della questione del potere e degli spazi di arte pubblici. Applicando concetti come metodologie, riflessioni autoetnografiche e f(r)ictions come alternative di ricerca, la tesi porta a nuove letture diffrattive da cui eseguire in modo diverso quegli scenari. In tal modo, la tesi districa i significati storici, materiali, filosofici, politici e dirompenti che infestano i quattro casi di studio e innesca il potenziale attivista delle loro narrazioni contro-egemoniche.

Resumen

Esta tesis utiliza teorías queer para examinar de experiencias que van más allá de lo queer. Conceptos queer, nuevo-materialistas, decoloniales, antirracistas y feministas se implementan en el análisis de cuatro casos de estudios el poder y el arte en los espacios públicos. Aplicando los conceptos como metodologías, reflexiones autoetnográficas y f(r)icciones como alternativas de investigación, la tesis plantea nuevas lecturas difractivas que performan esos escenarios de forma diferente. Al hacerlo, la tesis activa los significados históricos, materiales, filosóficos, políticos y disruptivos que enmarañan los cuatro estudios de caso y desencadena el potencial activista de las narraciones contra-hegemónicas que contienen.

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INTRODUCTION. HOW TO READ THIS THESIS

This thesis brings works together, connects them, in a recognition of words I would never be able to articulate. I hear them. And I hear their echoes in other words that I have spoken and heard somewhere, sometime, somehow. I speak and I scream, but the emphasis of my own sentences is upon the reverberation of these works which have guided my body into spaces of epistemological desire to face alternative radical ontologies.

The title of this thesis, “Power in Public Art Spaces. Frictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives” deals with many questions related to the research conducted over the past five years: questions of power and hegemony, fiction and art, their concretising into specific contexts and the performative narratives that can work outside normativity. My interest in art and power comes from my degree in Art History, which I finished back in 2014. After those four years, I found a master which appeared to respond to the critical potentialities I saw in art while maintaining the critique to its commodification to capital. It was a master in Artherapy and Education for Social Inclusion. After two years of professionalisation as an artherapist, I realised a lack of critical thinking that kept me from recognising the oppressions I was reproducing in my own practices. It was then that I decided to enrol in the GEMMA Erasmus Mundus Master, so that under its umbrella I could combine two degrees in Gender Studies, on Comparative Literatures (at the University of Bologna) and Critical Cultural Studies (at Utrecht University).

The title of this thesis then is a condensation of that journey. Even if Artherapy is not a central word for the title, this thesis speaks very much from my recognised errors as a public-art practitioner. Along this path, theories have finally taken the form of methodologies, becoming central while also finding dislocations that connect them differently with each other. To be more concrete about the concepts used in the title, I would like to explain their specific use in this work. *Power*¹ is here used as a broad term, unrooting its meaning from exclusive locations to speak about power as something reproduced in societies. This also entails my own reflections on how I reproduce certain

¹ Since concepts occupy such a central space in this thesis they will be highlighted in italics.

powers myself while, paradoxically, aiming at inhabiting antiauthoritarian and antihegemonic political positions. *Public* does not only refer to a visible location outside private spaces but also to universal accessibility. It also engages in what Jürgen Habermas considers the hegemonic place of the public, since the use of the term is, in many cases, related to a bourgeois hegemony (1962). In fact, its study relates to *art spaces*, where there is always a tension between the potentiality of fiction that art represents and a critical gaze on how these art practices are legitimised by power. On top of this, the critique on privatisation and possession, from anticapitalist positions, also touches upon ideas of identity that work from the singularity of individuals rather than from their communalities and intersections (Cohen, 1997). *Frictions* and *performativity* are here entangled with each other addressing what has just been said: the possibilities and the limitations that coexist in each of the case studies under analysis, the research questions they pose and the extent to which the responses I offer are more performative than total. As a historian I also wanted to give special weight to the archive so that one of those responses is the generation of the counter-narratives, those stories told by, or about, people in the margins of institutions, from liminal positions, which change the recollection of the past and place importance on how the present can also be material for future archaeologies. Thanks to my conversations with my thesis supervisor Margarita Sánchez Romero, who does an amazing job by rescuing silenced voices through different archaeologies, I have gathered the fuel of material cultures to speak about justice in accountable ways.

Writing about and against hegemonic power and power hegemonies inside Academia can be an Oxymoron. The conjunction between Academia and active critical positions seems contradictory. Nevertheless, I have wanted to explore its contradiction under the belief that systems of knowledge, such as universities and research spaces, need to confront the power that is reenacted inside their landscapes of production. And this springs from the recognition that this thesis will also end up being a performative dogma. As Foucault states, it is time to admit that,

power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative

constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, 1995: 27).

Hence, it is important to return to systems of power pertaining epistemological production under the pragmatic “light”² of methodology. At a practical level, this thesis draws from the analysis of four specific case studies in the quest for the reevaluation of the ways in which power articulates the different situations they represent.

The reasons behind the selection of the case studies under analysis in my thesis are linked to my personal experiences throughout my epistemological and activist journey. As a queer transfeminist, there is no other way for me to make theory than being affectively related to it. This is why autoethnography is the main methodological leader in these pages. The first case study, with the *Valor y Cambio* project, was selected after Frances Negrón-Muntaner came to the GEMMA master to present it. I was fascinated by the proposal and, above all, by the public locations it would involve. Given my personal relation to Negrón-Muntaner and the genuine interest I had in the project, I decided to include it as my first case study. I was financed by the UGR “plan propio” research stipend scheme to undertake a research stay at Columbia University in New York, where more experiences shaped my understanding of *Valor y Cambio*. The diffractive reading with the *¿Archivo Queer?* of the Reina Sofía Museum located my critique in more specific ways of understanding the possibilities of the project. The second case study, dedicated to the liminalities between Moria and Thermi on the island of Lesbos was selected after my growing interest in contemporary archaeology. Besides that, the experience of my participation in the “3-minute thesis” competition gave me the tools to put together the ideas for it to become a chapter and finally, through Rosi Braidotti’s theoretical framing and the connection with my also personal experience of attending

² The skeptical use of certain concepts that relate brightness, light and whitened elements is due to their loose connection to positive scientific discoveries and states of knowledge which only perpetuate a particular image of the enlightened. In this sense, and as it is examined through the chapter of the void (chapter 3), some negative, dark, black and misty states can also give us new information on how to stand critically through knowledge.

Datamatics [ver. 2.0.] by Ryoji Ikeda, I found the necessary basis for it to build up and become diffractively significant. The third case study was an encrypted idea at the start, since it was born from an interest of telling an experience in a transfeminist eviction I was involved in the city of Bologna. Because of the limits I find in the translation from activism to academia, in its being translated to words in a thesis such as this one, it was only after relating it to my experience while watching *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*, by Gabriela Carrizo and Franck Chartier, after my later understanding of both experiences by the analysis of some of Judith Butler's oeuvres, and, finally, by sitting on the grass in pleasurable conversation with Franck Chartier, that I found ways of remaining respectful to the anonymity and anti-assimilationist part of the eviction experience while criticizing certain topics which I found fundamental to discuss. This is why, as in the previous cases, the second experience works diffractively upon the first one and viceversa. The final case study, that of the *Young People's Assembly*, organised by social artist Anthony Haughey was decisive to provide circularity to the thesis. I was one of my directors, Pilar Villar Argáiz, who introduced me to Haughey. After speaking to him, I knew that was the artistic proposal that would give final ground to my thesis. This final case intra-acts with the chapter of the void, which was a last-minute improvisation and responds to the many voids and impossibilities in this work, the Covid 19 pandemics but not only. In all these relations, the thesis works as an accumulative artifact and, as such, the chapters do not only relate to the case studies pertaining to them but also enter in a constant restructuring of the previous ones.

With all this in mind, the structure of the chapters follows an initial question which works as a leitmotiv set of demands for each chapter as a whole. These questions are inspired by the initial inquiry “¿Archivar es siempre radical?” (Is archiving always radical?), an article written by Andrea Díaz, Nando Dorrego, Marta Sesé and Gerard Voltà in 2016, which uses the *¿Archivo Queer?* as the material to think about the radicality of historical records. After the introduction of each case study, the narration of the specific experience, the chapter activates through what I have decided to call *triggerings*, which shoot out concepts emerging from the initial experience and transformed into methodologies of analysis. The inspiration for these triggerings came from William Wordsworth's “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” and “emotions

recollected in tranquility” in his “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*” (1802) and I pay tribute to this by quoting “Daffodils/ I wondered Lonely as a Cloud” with the first of such triggerings. Both the initial experience and the triggerings are responded to in the resolution, at the end of the chapter. The division of each chapter into these three sections is more performative than procedural. The specific case studies are analysed in constant awareness of the impossibility of separating the methodology from the theoretical corpus, and of an impossible destination towards concrete results. Departing from genealogical theories of power, such as those written by Michel Foucault or Antonio Gramsci, I arrive to other thinkers who have approached power from the theoretical-methodological orientations³ of a queer utopian understanding of research, such as José Esteban Muñoz (2009). I owe my interest in utopia to my thesis supervisor at Bologna, Rita Monticelli, who sent me on the path to thinking of utopia critically, seeing it from its positionality, since the difference between utopia and dystopia is quite simply the perspective from where these are thought of. And the protagonism that Queer Death approaches acquire here testifies to this.

My thesis does not intend to lead to stable histories and historicities but rather aims at disturbing narratives by diffractively placing them at intra-action with each other (Barad, 2007) and, hence, moving them towards new horizons. In this work, the *locus* of the body is focal, since it is from my body that theories are lived, experienced, analysed and deformed. Corporeality is fundamental since I defend there is an ambivalence in its simultaneous role as discursive and experiential and, thus, it has the potential to both perform and transform. As Thomas J. Csordas examines in his *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self* (1994), “[t]he dominance of semiotics over phenomenology, and hence concern with the problem of representation over the problem of being-in-the-world, is evident in the relation between the parallel distinction between ‘language’ and ‘experience’” (1994: 11). Embodiment has been taken

³ This combination of words is inspired by the way in which Karen Barad puts concepts into conversation, reading them through one another (intra-reading) and highlighting the importance of intersecting cultural and conceptual forms, which rather than exist in themselves, exist in their performative coming in contact (2014).

for granted, as if the way a body materialises were exterior to discursive practices⁴. Still, what I stress here is that this inclusion of the flesh as another site of construction should not equal an impossibility to inhabit configurations of knowledge that acknowledge the necessity of self-situatedness in critical research. To put it very simply, experience is not an excuse for eluding self-revision⁵. This acknowledgement includes revisiting the ways in which colonial epistemologies, gender roles or sovereignty permeate our contexts, experiences and identities and the art experiences are intended to illustrate these tenets. Searching for more situated theory helps us relate to experience rather than to History - capital H intended- in its colonial account, drives towards ephemeral archives as transitional records which work in accumulation throughout the case studies.

The referent “we” in this thesis also responds to a particular location, economic basis and specific time relation. Influenced by critical theories on their insistence of the need to become response-able for one’s place of enunciation, I follow Sylvia Wynter’s insights on how the category of *the human* has been assumed to be holistic and monistic to all kinds of violences towards others (human and otherwise). In this reflection, she challenges how:

The *referent- we* of man and of its ends, he implies, is *not* the *referent- we* of the human species itself [...] [N]atural scientists and also bourgeois subjects, logically assume that the *referent- we-* whose normal behaviors are destroying the habitability of our planet- is that of the human population as a whole (Wynter in McKittrick, 2015: 24).

⁴ Theories relating to the intersection between subjectivity and embodiment, such as Judith Butler’s (1990; 1993) or Elisabeth Grosz’s (1994) try to focus on the many layers which link discursive practices to materialising body experiences. In more recent research, this intersection has been focusing on embodiment beyond representation. This ongoing work has also been developed when speaking about the discursive embodiment of transness (Snorton, 2017; Lehner, 2021), disabilities (Wong, 2020, Shildrick, 2002), racialization (Snorton, 2017; Wong, 2020) or fatness (Pausé et al., 2014), to mention only a few for this matter.

⁵ What I mean by self-revision is the way in which identity should be equality committed with autoexploration and autocriticism in ways in which it can serve not only as a body of resistance but also as a body for accountability.

The thesis revises this awareness of totalising semiotic formulas since many of the critiques and potentialities are extracted from specific contexts operated from what Wynter refers to with her *homo-economicus* concept, i.e., the effects of a globalised economic system which invisibilises many of the ways of inhabiting it. In this thesis materialities are rethought through feminist “new” materialisms, queerness is applied to non-queer experiences and art is used as intra-acted by and intra-acting it all. All these acts are acknowledged to be as situated as my personal appellation to this “we”. This means that I do not believe in the newness of materialism, nor do I dismiss forms of art or queerness that go beyond institutions and identity politics. These unsettling elements may exist outside theorisation, and as such I am not commodifying them in this thesis. Thus, the active elements in here are mainly dealt with by academic theorisation, wanting to maintain the anonymity and anti-institutionalism of many ideas, experiences, movements and cracks. The last thing I would like to do in this work is give radical information for academics (including myself) to reproduce the subject/object binary of study.

In this sense, and as explored in the justification of self-ethnographic research for this work, to be part of the subject I look towards does not only make me an object of research from where to remain critical of its limits (as in the limits of othering/*otherising* the subject of study), but also introduces the people I have encountered throughout these five years of enquiry as co-authors of this thesis. Inspired by the unseen, the confessions, and the hidden elements of *Side B: Adrift* trilogy, these encounters are recognised through an apocryphal bibliography which cites works which were never compiled as publications. The people who are not involved in academic research- or who have no names because they belong to conversations inside a bar’s bathroom-, are cited in this bibliography, which is placed at the end and which I have decided to call “Side B bibliography”.

I work through the notion of activation, which has concrete effects in this thesis such as working through concepts as methodologies or putting together theories which come from very different genealogies. Focusing my energy upon the latter, I see responsibility in activating specific dialogues between theorists and cosmologies

which operate at different locations and temporalities. In this sense, and to name an example, to activate New Materialisms for the analysis of decolonial thinking is a locational decision, since these two theoretical frames work from sometimes oppositional world views. Following the stance of this activation, my closing action is an artistic conclusion, which pictures debates without closed interpretations. The project, which is located at the end of the thesis, has become a Side B conclusions, which dialogues with the Side B bibliography. My use of art, or more importantly, my coming back to its practice, follows this potential: providing specific locations from where to demand reparations without closing-up our “weyond” imaginations. There. There are. There are possibilities. There are possibilities of doing things. There are possibilities of doing things differently. There are possibilities of doing things differently, outside the logics of conquest. As Negrón-Muntaner shouts out, this is *decolonial joy*.

1. Structure of this thesis and other choices

This thesis is divided into this introduction, seven chapters and a conclusion. The first two chapters are the frame to the four case studies. The first chapter is the initial epistemological setting, in which I explore the traditional and historical theoretical genealogies from where I depart, concerning three main issues: power, space and temporalities. Inspired by archeological methodologies of stratigraphic analysis, I have structured its various layers as strata. The second chapter corresponds to the methodology, which is, in itself, another theoretical chapter, since one of the thesis’ explorations is its research praxis, autoethnographic investigation and an approach to theoretical concepts as methodologies. Chapter three is simply a momentum, a triggering, a temporality of failure and an emergence. It is an unexpected chapter that responds to the voids, loses, and changes the thesis has assumed due to the Covid-19 pandemics. This circumstantial inclusion became essential for my positioning to the subsequent research. The following case studies are structured through a presentation of the artistic experience narrated in each case study and its context in relation to my own experience; a “triggering”, where a set of concepts arise for the examination of the case study; and, finally, a resolution, which

diffracts (following Karen Barad feminist New Materialist approaches) with the initial story narrated. Taking the concept of *radicality* as a leading notion to examine the coexistence of potentiality and impossibility, I propose four specific questions which haunt their narratives and are, respectively: *Is the archive always radical?*, *Is memory always radical?*, *Is resistance always radical?* and *Is radicality always radical?* Following this ambivalent scheme, chapter four examines the first case study, the *Valor y Cambio* project by Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and thinks about the limits of the archive, while reflecting through the Reina Sofía Museum *¿Archivo queer?*, in Madrid. Chapter five corresponds to the second case study in which I explore the liminal space of 7.1km of separation between the archaeological site of Thermi and the refugee camp of Moria, both on the Island of Lesbos, which is set in diffractive analysis with the *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* performance by Ryoji Ikeda. Chapter six deals with the Bologna case study, the eviction of a queer liberated space, exploring the contradictions of anti-hegemonic thinking inside activism. It proposes new readings of power which can also make radical thinking accountable. This chapter is diffractively read through *Adrift*, created by Gabriela Carrizo and Franck Chartier. Chapter seven works through the examination of the last case study, the *Young People's Assembly* project, directed by artist Anthony Haughey. It is read diffractively by both the circumstantial voids of the improvised initial case study and, in turn by all the previous case studies, giving specific full-circle structure to the work.

The following conclusions finish with a verbal silence which is continued by the eloquence of the “Side B conclusions”, analogous to the Side B Bibliography, which try to recognise all those lost, silenced, forgotten and excessive conversations which have positioned official theories in the shape used in the chapters. It corresponds to a personal art-project called “Building a house” which is the first part of a series which I use as a bridge from where to think about my future research. These side B conclusions, following the drive of “concepts as methodologies”, work in non-verbal action and in transition to no closures, which is one of my main tenets in this thesis.

In addition, this thesis reads through other Side Bs referring to forms of language and edition which are normally risky and/or forbidden in academic settings. The fact that I use gender-neutral pronouns for most of the authors (those who I have not seen recently

referring to their selves or those who specifically indentify themselves that way) and the cross-out name corresponding to an author whom I use but also expose in the late accusations of harassments, are some examples of these decisions. They respond to a privilege I hold in taking the risk and also in being inside public spaces of knowledge and critical education, in which I cannot imagine a different way of positioning myself than bringing forward discussions that benefit freedom and responsibility. To not-assume someone's gender is something to consider in any research, needless to say in my work which trackless Queer Theory in different histories. It is so beyond a mere question of form in our academic productions, but because of the responsibility we have as educators, teachers and citizens to recognise the students we come in contact with and who are misgendered once and again in our so-called "safe spaces". Furthermore, the concepts which are continuously referenced in quotation marks, such as "woman" or "race" respond to a recognition of these categories are non-ontological but still important to address in their working in sociality. To speak about the distortion of "safe space" takes me to the second question: how do we use theories written by abusers and rapists, for example? My formula is only a starting point of reflection on this needed conversation. A conversation which does not stop in gender but should also diffract through many other questions regarding the generation of this "safer" space, like antiracism, decoloniality, critical disability studies, class or the recognition of different types of work outside statal admission.

CHAPTER 1. SETTING OFF FROM THEORIES AND THE STRATIGRAPHY OF POWER/DISSECTION OF THIS BODY

1. On power. Foucault's biopolitics in our lives after Zuckerberg. Or "the principle of deformation by faulting"⁶

My starting point for this thesis is power. Thinking about how to introduce this part, I have reflected on what all the case studies selected in this research have in common: identity, affect, materiality, resistance and agency. As I started writing, I understood that a discussion of power involves a debate on all these. Above all, power is not only something received, transmitted or enacted from one body to another, but it also contains in itself the forces of self-regulation and self-control. Thus, my mention of Zuckerberg in the title of this section responds to the dominant contemporary frames where Foucault's body control dispositifs are actually ruled by self-surveillance.

The way I envisage the structure of this chapter is through the archaeological method of stratigraphy⁷, i.e., I will use the strata methodology to address the theoretical genealogy I use in my research, a palimpsest which can bring forward the layers of signifiers and theorists which serve as a base from which to build up the subsequent case studies. This palimpsest is constructed in a conscious way, as explained in the methodology, from the awareness of the particular theories, methods and concepts that I put together in my work. In these superpositions, there are assembled strata of situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) performing a continuum between genealogies which are already connected (such as the dialoguing of Michel Foucault and Paul B. Preciado) and my extrinsic combinations which are the result of my own personal choices (as is the case of the dialogue between Jean Baudrillard and Judith Butler).

⁶ Stratigraphy principle by which layers have been deformed over time from their original horizontal position by the process of faulting. By using this layer, I intend to reflect on how Foucauldian theory has been distorted in the last years because of its overuse.

⁷ Edward Cecil Harris's theories of the temporal sequences of archaeological and geological strata (1989) are my inspiration to use further theories relating to stratigraphic research in my analysis of epistemological genealogies.

1.1. Power and hegemonies: a genealogical account

Stratum 0 should start, in my opinion, with Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). *Knowledge* being one of the author's most discussed terms, here I use genealogy to go beyond etymological understandings of changes throughout time, and deep into the social contexts that are embedded in those transformations. Similarly, Archaeology is used, both in Foucault's work and here, as a lens through which the discursive conditions of the past can be observed, rather than as an explanation of such past. I want to start this section, therefore, by conducting an in-depth analysis of Michel Foucault's work on power. This will help me, later, to elicit the particular parts I will use for my analysis of the case studies.

One recurrent idea in Foucault's theories is the treatment of power as neither an agency nor a structure. This offers a much permeable idea of power, at least on power in modernity, which relates to a regime that permeates the social values and subjectivities shaping life. *Contamination*⁸, a main concept in my research, as will be evidenced in the following sections, comes to mind in my interpretation of Foucault, since power flows from one body to another. Hence, I see his power regimes as "regimes of contamination", since the contagion of power among these bodies contaminates, in turn, every aspect of the *times being*⁹. Having set the start of his critique to systems of knowledge and truth in the 60s (with *The Order of Things*, 1966), he develops his ideas in his most influential *History of Sexuality* (1976) to focus on how power functions in networks and not by singular enterprises of control. As he states, power resides in every entity,

not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embes everything, but because it comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1976; 1978: 93).

⁸ As indicated in the introductory part, given the importance of concepts as methodologies in this thesis (see next chapter), I will be highlighting them in italics.

⁹ By this expression I mean the times that are happening now, the perceived temporalities of presentness.

“Power is everywhere” because it is a functioning system generating and shaping the reality we relate to, including our own bodies. Power, as Rosi Braidotti would later express, is affirmative, potential (2013a). It functions immanently, intrinsically and inherently to any type of relationality. Power is, therefore, decentralised. In its omnipresence, power leaves the conceptual narrative of the centre and is expanded to many foci, being at once “intentional and nonsubjective” (Foucault, 1978: 94). This is important to note because this thesis analyses power structures and mechanisms not as attributed to single subjectivities or groups, but as intrinsic to, and imbued in, relationalities. This is also fundamental because of the consequences derived from this proposition. One of the strongest effects of this perspective is the principle of resistance:

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power [...] These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances (Foucault, 1978: 95-96).

In this sense, resistance stands as a dialectical response to power. This is also to say that resistance does not necessarily escape the effects of power but is rather formed depending on the perspectives from which it is conceptualised as such resistance. A shared emergence, power “comes from everywhere” (1978: 93). In this dispersion, power and resistance share the same ontological configuration¹⁰, that of social-relational effects and affects. These perspectives, which will be analysed from queer theory standpoints in the next sections of this thesis, are important to this work because of my intention to question the common assumption that counter-hegemonic discourses are always free from power hegemonies.

¹⁰ Ontology is understood here as the set of practices, studies and ideas engaging in the metaphysics of the nature of being.

I have always felt uncomfortable with the feminist empowerment movement. It made me ponder on whether we could find alternative forms of resistance which do not resort to the reproduction of supremacist and patriarchal logics. We need new political imaginations, rooted outside colonial and capital logics, which can help us inhabit sociality and relationality differently. I also find problematic the ways we, sometimes, from social and activist movements, imagine ourselves outside the power relations that we so eagerly criticise. Maybe it is the enfolded work we put on these actions that makes us so unwilling to accept that we are part of the structures themselves and that, at the end of the day, we reproduce some of their dynamics. Being able to respond to violence, taking responsibility for structures that are embedded in our daily lives, also means taking the space to acknowledge what parts of our identities are sometimes more of a partner in crime for the oppressor than a comrade for the liberation movements.

1.1.1. The loc(k)ations of power and resistance

As I further explore in the methodology section, I do not use Foucault- or any other author- here as an idolised theorist from where to depart. However, I do want to recognise the genealogical aspect of his theories of power and hegemonies which has helped me understand my own positioning inside activism and research, and the connection between both. This is also one of the theoretical reasons why this thesis uses autoethnography as a main methodology of analysis from where to study power, resistance and their *loc(k)ations*¹¹. What I mean by this wordplay is that if we continue examining power only from recognizable locations, some exercises of power and violence existing in non-hegemonic places are locked out of our discussions. This said, the location of power does not reside just in the binary between *in* and *out* but is rather a complex set of contaminated positions. This is the reason why I centre my analysis of power and its oppressions inside and outside institutions and established contexts and I engage with the examination of

¹¹ This wordplay intends to express that the moment the location of power is enunciated it becomes locked-up in that particular place. From other perspectives on power as contamination, these locations are viewed as practices that expose how power travels from one place to another in a constant flux.

powers existing in traditionally non-powerful spaces such as activism or radical theories.

Foucault's *biopolitics* (1978) considers the control over the social body through two main poles: the control of the body as a machine (a direct relation to a westernised capitalised conceptualisation of the body as a space of production and docility inside a system) and the control of the body in its biological extension. The constructions of health systems, nature discourses and the fantasy of the body as organic serve as mechanisms of life regulation. As he states in the last part of *The History of Sexuality*:

The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organisation of power over life was deployed. The setting up, in the course of the classical age, of this great bipolar technology-anatomic and biological, individualising and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life characterised a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through (1978: 139).

Again, power is relational, comes in many shapes and forms, from many locations and identities. In *Technologies of the Self* (1988) Foucault distinguishes between four types of technologies which function as the specific apparatuses through which reality is constructed in a westernised normality and unity¹². During one of his seminars at the University of Vermont in the fall of 1982, he explains them as follows:

[T]here are four major types of these “technologies”, each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which 1 permit

¹² The main purpose here is “to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific ‘truth games’ related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves” (1988: 18).

individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and semis, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (1988: 18).

The technical project of identity, i.e., the way in which technology inside westernised modernity systems is conceived as a manner of control and taming of the *selves*, involves radical ways of conceiving identity beyond traditional essentialist conceptualisations. The individual is, hence, always tied to technologies of control that involve signs, discourses, institutions, material powers, knowledges and other techniques.

As Patrick H. Hutton reviews from the last part of *Technologies of the Self*, “[t]he continuities for Foucault are to be found not in the ideals themselves but in the underlying strategies designed to implement them” (Hutton in Foucault, 1988: 128). This statement is important because it suggests that the ontological understanding of reality is designed, sketched, performed, arranged and mapped. Technologies are defined in Foucault’s texts as a set of practices and actions that enable certain systems of control. As such, they are more than a pre-existent set of structured forms and speak about how we enact and exercise power over ourselves. In this sense, my analysis focuses on both identity and sociality as a conjunction from which we cannot escape.

While shaping the above-mentioned technologies, Foucault’s interest in the self in his last years of research was mostly concerned with the reproduction of power and discipline even in what was understood as freedom. As he states in an interview collected as part of his posthumous works, “[w]hat I am afraid of about humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom” (1988: 15). He deals with this rampant understanding of freedom as essentialised and universalised inside a particular system of values in his last lectures while also introducing a last issue of inquiry: self-surveillance. As Hutton interprets “it is not knowledge of our sexuality that gives us power over ourselves [...] but our will to establish power over our sexuality that incites a search for self-knowledge” (1988: 131). As such, in these works the singularity of identity construction is given a twist so as to focus on its ability to adapt, enact and take many forms, detaching it from this idea of identitarian monism. This last

stage in Foucault's work actually means a subversion of his own previous work because of the combination of fragmentology¹³ and rhizomatic wanderings, two aspects which I find most appealing for my quest. Indeed, Foucault's posthumous philosophy connects with the impossibilities and potentialities of this thesis: the impossibility of closure, of singularity, of reality.

Technologies of the self is also an apex in the theoretical escalation towards a queer and decolonial critique in this thesis¹⁴. Foucault's self-surveillance will be expanded upon in this thesis in tandem with gender and queer theorists, such as Judith Butler or Paul B. Preciado.

At this stage, I want to pay attention to another important aspect in Foucault's thought: the disruption of the idea of origin. In a sort of Derridean haunting (1993), this idea is always present but never evidenced in his work. In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault expresses that in modernity the expectations of finding the origin, that intrinsic and essential matter that gives base to the lived present, has no meaning:

In modern thought, such an origin is no-longer conceivable: we have seen how labor, life and language acquired their own historicity, in which they were embedded; they could never, therefore, truly express their origin [...] It is no longer origin that gives rise to historicity; it is historicity that, in its very fabric, makes possible the necessity of an origin which must be both internal and foreign to it (1966; 1994: 329).

As we can see in this quote, ontology is signified by power: the ontological claim to "what there is" relates to the narrative of reality rather than to reality itself. Ontology is just as mediated by power as are epistemologies. Ontological and epistemological framings

¹³ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) Foucault uses fragmentology to speak about discontinuities in History. Against a traditional understanding of History as a *continuum*, Foucault proposes breaking its narrative into fragments to speak about the multiple stories which are unfinished, unclear and open.

¹⁴ Following my ideas about "concepts and methodologies", the theoretical connections through which theory is analysed and exposed in this work depart from the acknowledgment of these connections as performed, enacted and situated, rather than pre-existing, inherent or historically accumulative. They do not sum up in a palimpsest but are rather performed depending on the way they are put together. I will return to this in the methodological chapter.

reduce the categories of existence, reality and materialities to monistic understandings. From the above quote we can also conclude that History is not necessarily an answer to an event, to the origin of a circumstance, or a complete archive of situations, but rather a medium that reduces to an arranged narrative the event. In this sense, power becomes identitarian. It sticks to subjectivity in its naturalisation and it is integrated through self-surveillance moves. Power, laws and institutions are also helped by this self-control. Identity is not always the result of coercive forces, but it is more commonly a product of how human subjectivity naturalises the actions of the invisible regulation of bodies. This thesis deals with such invisibilisation of powers in connection with the ways in which queer, sexual and gendered embodiments are disciplined.

I have briefly touched above upon the idea of *hauntology*. As Derrida frames it, power is neither dead nor alive (1993: 84). It is not a matter of visualising it, making it public or killing it. We, as mediums, need to haunt it from the spectral order instead. As he puts it:

[T]his element [the medium] itself is neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes. It does not belong to ontology, to the discourse on the Being of beings, or to the essence of life or death. It requires, then, what we call, to save time and space rather than just to make up a word, *hauntology*. We will take this category to be irreducible, and first of all to everything it makes possible: ontology, theology, positive or negative onto-theology (Ibid).

This connects with my tenets in the following sections that the ghosts haunting identity are rarely articulated as historical. They are neither present nor absent. They are spectral. Capitalism, which can also translate as an alias for the western ethos for this thesis' purpose, is the site of creation of spirits, of simulacra, of reality viewed in singular ontological formulations.

Another interesting element in the construction of control and surveillance is the concept of *truth* which Foucault analyses throughout his whole career. In his opinion, knowledge, and the concept of *episteme* itself, are constructions of sites of power that depart from monistic views of what truth means in a particular time-space. The

centralities erected through discourse- which I explore more closely in the sections of History and fiction- allow the systematisation of forms of hegemonies and control that are not individualised in particular bodies or actions but rather follow the above-mentioned omnipresence of power. As Foucault explains:

[Discourse] is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed (1972: 55).

Discourse is a contingent system that produces knowledge and meaning. Discourse, as power, is productive, relational and both intentional and non-subjective. Discourse, in its entanglement with power, is what this thesis shapes and is shaped by. It is the recognition of the locality of my own research and the “always-already” limited epistemologies. Discourse cannot be escaped. There is no objectivity outside the text: everything is discourse, “there is no outside-text” (Derrida, 1967; 1997: 158). However, certain rules, structures and categories precede discourse, and this is the particular way in which discourse camouflages its potentiality and ability as a production of those meanings and knowledges. This is, the invisibility of the norms that are foundational in discourse constructions is the reason for discourses being sometimes hard to disentangle and be recognised as sites of power¹⁵.

This invisible structure of discourse is also related to another factor that I find essential to consider here. Traditionally, disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology, History or Archaeology approach space and time as independent units of analysis, thus ignoring their interdependence. When these disciplines study the presence of power, this delusive autonomy between space and time limits the consideration of how these elements are connected, interact with and relate to each other. It seems as if maps and clocks were enough to determine the conditions under which certain aspects of life and society take

¹⁵ I here use *discourse* as what Michael Herzfeld would call *disemia*, a concept that “expands the narrowly linguistic frame of *diglossia*. It does not ignore language, but contextualises it as part of a semiotic continuum that includes silence, gesture, music, and the built environment, and economic, civic, and social values” (2016: 20).

place in time and space. However, further considerations of relations of closeness, difference, friction, divergence, modification or adjustment in these contextualisations highlight the importance of relationality as an essential feature determining them. The context becomes an encounter activated through the lens of each one of the interactions existing in the conjunction of space and time. The formation of objects depends upon discursive relations which do not stand in exteriority or interiority, but are rather liminal: “These relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice” (Foucault, 1972: 46).

1.1.2. Chronotopes

At this stage, Mikhaíl Bakhtín’s *chronotope* concept serves my purpose of contextualising my case studies along the lines explained above. For Bakhtín, the chronotope represents the impossibility of analysing time without a spatial dimension, and vice versa¹⁶. He explores the idea of *heteroglossia* and its refraction in his *Dialogic Imagination: 4 essays* (1934; 1981), where we read that:

A common unitary language is a system of linguistic norms. But these norms do not constitute an abstract imperative, they are rather the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language, forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia (270-271).

¹⁶ As I will expose in the following chapters, this analysis of chronotopes is developed by Teresa del Valle (2000) from a feminist autoethnographic perspective.

This vision of language as already “ideologically saturated”¹⁷ (271) also gives us a hint of the direction of Bakhtín’s theories. It seems as if Bakhtín’s theories were the jumping off for a consideration of discourse as another *chronotopical* instance of a time-space encounter. This contemplation bridges Bakhtín’s and Foucault’s approaches to discourse, *heteroglossia* connects to a more open account of experience, considering rhizomatic understandings of language generations. Meaning and discourse, in this dialogic trend set by Bakhtín, already speak about a necessary relationality which can expose the capacity of different experiences to being contaminated, becoming polluted, affecting and being affected (Spinoza, 1667; 1993).

In all these respects, I use space as a contingent element that gives shape to my thinking. Space is the circumstantial element of the assemblages of theory that are performed here. In this sense, language, as illustrated by the fragments above, is also space as territorialisation, concreteness of meaning, signification, imagination and connection. It is not that language, and linguistic analysis, become the abstraction of geographical space, but rather that the abstraction of what space means also contains the taken-for-granted linguistic strategies that occur in the social realm. Take, for instance, William Labov’s writings, where we can read that the way in which language is used is as territorialised and space has as much to do with the construction of state policies as our ways of thinking about land property and border separation, at least when referring to our contemporary western contexts (1973).

Homogenisation and centralisation are pivotal terms when referring to linguistic evolutions and settings. It must be noted that a great quantity of the terminology surrounding language theories are paired to spatial concepts and this is far from accidental. Language is contextual. It is inscribed in places. Language, words, ways of saying and expressing different ideas, are located. Language forces are mutable locations. How language is propagated has been well studied, but the most material ways of how it is contaminated by space, time and relationalities has not always been the focus of

¹⁷ Saturation refers to a state of modernity, global capitalism and renovating colonialism in which exception is non-factual. Rather than events, time is saturated by phenomena which, because of their constant presence, are not considered an exception (Jue and Ruiz 2021).

attention. Manuel DeLanda retakes Labov's ideas on the importance that social setting has to language and updates it with a debate on what organisations and institutions mean for the sociality of discourse. In his words:

The Tuscan Academy of Language, founded in 1582, and its French and Spanish counterparts (founded in 1637 and 1713, respectively) were complex organizations staffed with linguists officially dedicated to homogenizing and formalizing the dominant dialect of a particular city (Florence, Paris, Madrid). The authoritative dictionaries, grammars, and rules of correct pronunciation that they published operated as true order-words as they propagated through the rising middle classes, anxious to speak like their aristocratic counterparts. The further spread of standard languages involved, in addition, larger assemblages comprising many organizations: extensive networks of elementary schools and *compulsory* primary education in the standard (2016: 65).

Returning to Foucault's account on discourse and power, the aspect of how objects are materialised is interesting in order to think about the infinite juxtapositions that are related to discourse. Because of our anthropocentric and ontological philosophical and scientific traditions, sometimes these juxtapositions or simultaneities are difficult to understand as the core generator of circumstances. In this sense, the friction between the inside and the outside, as regards discursive positions and generations, confirms this interiority of discourse as a practice which is still pending on exteriority (since it depends on other elements for its operation). Thus, the emergence of objects is the response of relations which, according to Foucault,

are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object; it is not they that are deployed when the object is being analyzed; they do not indicate the web, the immanent rationality, that ideal nervure that reappears totally or in part when one conceives of the object in the truth of its concept. They do not define its internal

constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of exteriority (1972:45).

These sets of relations are, therefore, linked to the emergence of objects in very complex ways. And this is so even if these levels of relations are not always connected or, what is more important here to understand the complex positionality of their generation, not superposed on each other.

1.1.3. Possibility

Possibility is fundamental to understanding how objects emerge. As I will further analyse in the section on History as fiction, one of the strongest consequences of discourse analysis in Foucault's work is captured in my own research in his notion of "Historical a priori". This term makes me reflect on how historical narratives are sustained by chronotopical tendencies, i.e., how the interest is arranged at each time-place, which I use to navigate my case studies, Foucault's *a priori* is fundamental in order to both understand how discourses and epistemes shift and interlock in a time-becoming¹⁸ and also to emphasise that these traces are sometimes difficult to discern.

As problematic as the genesis of the concept may be¹⁹, the *Overton Window* is an interesting theory to understand Foucault's point when speaking about the historical *a priori*. The Overton Window, which was a theoretical explanation on the importance of think tanks and policy makers and industries in the 90s, helped explain how new ideas and topics happen to become important in social systems. The concept has, since its outset, helped to understand how the changes we perceive as societies respond to the

¹⁸ Intending to signify that the idea of ontological existence, which corresponds to "being", is already only sustained by a changing quality which alters this reality in a continuum. Being can only settle by an unsettling becoming.

¹⁹ Created as a political strategy by a conservative think tank in Michigan, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Introduced by Joseph P. Overton in the 90s, the term became popular to think about the possibilities of policies in governmental programmes.

possibilities which exist at the moment without focusing on how politicians or institutions introduce new issues, but rather analysing how these topics are first introduced in the social realm. This relates to the examined theories by Foucault where discursive practices and power analyses focus mostly upon the viability of reproducing them at a specific moment and not so much on singular actions of power. This gets us to the point at which power, violence and the oppressions linked to them have a lot more to do with a set of practices and relations that intertwine and sustain each other, than with exceptional accounts of them. This shift of how power is perceived consequently speaks about the necessity to find new ways of confronting power through strategies which can take into account its intricate many locations. This is not to say that there are no alternatives of “being” in life outside the discourses already existing in the so-called *window*, i.e., beyond the possibility that sociality offers, but that these contentions are fundamental in examining the potential political changes which critical theories research deal with.

1.2. Disturbed deposits: the assembled stratum

In order to analyse the tensions where this thesis stands, in a way that “no longer relate[s] discourse to the primary ground of experience, nor to the a priori authority of knowledge” (Foucault, 1972: 79), the methodological parameters must engage with the theoretical corpus. I engage with a twofold move between non-essentialist epistemologies and self-experiences. Because of the genealogical connections, the historical links and their theoretical relations, I want to turn my attention at this stage to how the notion of *rhizome*, explored by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), is pertinent to an analysis of the multiplicity of power practices and their possible disarticulations. Rhizomatic thinking appears in Deleuze and Guattari’s work as a disruption of monistic, visible and hegemonic ways of facing reality. Reality is, in fact, a messy mix with no beginnings or ends, but multiple middles. Rhizomatic thinking entails a break from monism since it challenges the idea of a unity which is primary and, thus, hegemonic to the successive parts and is also visible and recognisable. As I noted before, relationality- not only between human living forces but also in connections to entities, spaces, ideas, languages and positions- is fundamental in Foucault’s work in order to analyse how

reality is lived and experienced. The work by Guattari and Deleuze also considers connection and relations important to examine how the object, the work or the subject is generated. They call it “[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity” (1980: 7) by which they mean that “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order” (Ibid). Here relationality takes the form of a complex set of assemblages. A rhizomatic analysis of assemblage implies nothing but connects to all. It distances from speaking of a subject in particular and recognises the openness and infinite points of connection surrounding it. As Jamie Heckert reads from the consequences of decentralising the centre itself, as it is displayed in Deleuze and Guattari’s work, there is a rejection of “the notion of the independent subject, but [they] see the ‘individual’ as a multiplicity interconnected with other multiplicities” (Heckert in Nash, 2010: 48). As he continues “a rhizome is also nomadic, and ‘never allows itself to be overcoded’” (Heckert quoting Deleuze and Guattari, Ibid). I read overcoded as normative and nomadic as queer, two main concepts which will fill in the pages that follow.

When thinking about the reification and reproduction of power, rhizomatic analysis is crucial. It exposes how the life of power is a complex set of connections which make it impossible to resolve through isolated changes. This means that there is no hegemonic point that would work as a monistic generation of that power and, thus, its disarticulation should not be based on a battle against a specific target but on a constant rethinking and reworking through the assemblage. In this sense, the moral dichotomy between bad or good becomes a simplification which is incapable of attending to the consequences of reducing ethical values to such binary. This set of contaminations, which speaks of in-between spaces and goes beyond the limits of the signification of power, is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the ambivalence of rhizomes:

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. That is

why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad (1980: 9).

Rhizomes are ambivalent because they both territorialise and deterritorialise. They stratify and dislocate. They signify and suppress. They break the binaries we traditionally resort to when interpreting reality. Reality should not be interpreted from binary stances, but from its performative awareness of the instability of reality. Therefore, any interpretation of reality can only attain a transitional stabilisation, a payout of the multiplicity of readings discharged by it.

From the above we can continue that the interpretation of reality unfolds as performative and mimetic at once. Mimicry is an important aspect for my particular connection to Deleuze and Guattari's work since it links in an organic way to the critique on dichotomies which takes place in their analysis. In their account of mimicry, they decompose the binary position which it entails, being an account of reality and, at the same time, its imitation. Mimicry, as an essential element of performativity, is rooted in my work since my analysis deals with queer and Gender Studies, gender and sex being performative. For the authors, mimicry stands as an impossibility, and is therefore connected to binary logics, since it exposes how a dichotomic distinction between reality and representation is only performed. It is easy to see the connection between Deleuze and Guattari's *mimicry* and Butler's *performativity*, both concepts serving as main figures to the constitution of gender and Queer Studies. Mimicry, understood as the various types of simulacra we come across in the poststructural era, connects with Gender Studies through the notion of *performativity* introduced by Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990), which can serve as an epitome for the case.

Before getting into queer substance, and in order to contextualise the approach of this not-anymore-new field²⁰, I would like to briefly attend to two concepts which deal with reality, its copy and the perceptions about both. Through the work by Jean Baudrillard regarding the concept of *simulacrum*, the difference between simulation and hyperreality can be understood. On the one hand, simulation is centred on the capacity of distinction between the real and the fictional. On the other, hyperreality pleads for an idea

²⁰ Even if nominally appearing during the 90s, many had been writing outside the heteronorm decades before that date.

of fiction as overcoming reality itself. Maybe performativity stands in the space in between, at least in Butler's use of the concept. Performativity, understood as relational, challenges the ontological distinction between fiction and reality. After all, are not maps, rather than land, laws rather than dialogues, what ultimately counts as reality? In terms of gender, performativity exploits the notion that the ontological sign is not lost in reality, as some may think when speaking of gender theories but, rather, that it was never there. In this sense, we shout that gender and sex are not part of the many things that need to be demolished, because they never existed in the first place. Sex and gender, representing ontology and epistemology respectively²¹, are as fictional as each other.

1.3. Gender accumulations

The rhizomatic approach to breaking binaries and touching on imitation and mimicry functions here as springboard to a contemporary analysis of gender and queerness. It also clarifies the way in which certain historical-philosophical concepts are used in this thesis in as much as they are in tension with other concepts. The concept of *becoming* in Deleuze's theories is central to these questions. The analyses done by poststructuralists throughout the 70s and 80s focuses upon concepts and readings which function in transtemporal dialogues with concepts appearing in the 90s. An instance of this is the conversations between Butler's use of poststructuralism and the works by Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault. These readings are only possible through their coming together. The potential aspects of poststructural mimicry, performance and identity are unlocked by their reshaping through Butler's lens. As a sort of *pastiche*, which will enter in conversation with this section in which simulacrum and performativity are introduced, my use of concepts (will be exposed in the methodological chapter) recognises the limits of such concepts in that they are another imitation of reality. I hold on to the Deleuzian move that "it's not a matter of bringing all sorts of things under a single concept, but

²¹ In contrast to ontology, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and how this is generated. It is a philosophy of what it is known.

rather of relating each concept to the variables that explain its mutations” (Deleuze, 1995: 31).

To begin at the beginning of Butler’s performativity, we must depart from John L. Austin’s acts of speech concept (1962). In the preface to *Gender Trouble* Butler states that, “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (1990: xv). Performativity partakes of the idea of simulacrum as an illusion and mimesis of a particular construction of reality. On the one hand, performativity, as discourse, is an act of repetition; on the other, the reality that performativity mimes responds to a set of constructions that are depicted as core to “what there is”. While speaking about the constructed illusion of interiority²² that reality, as performative and discursive, produces, Butler explains that,

reality is fabricated as an interior essence, [and] that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the “integrity” of the subject. In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality (1990: 173).

The regulation of bodies, subjectivities and accounts of relationality towards the world is sustained through an idea of interiority. Butler breaks yet another binary by positioning “nature” as another site of human constructionism. Nature and culture pair with sex and gender by exposing how these four constructions are mediated by systems of anthropocentric relationality. Nature, sex, culture and gender are all part of the same constructive continuum. Hence, Butler recedes from the anthropological opposition between culture and nature, or translocated to gender terms, the binary between gender

²² As intrinsic and essential.

and sex. Sex, as gender, is real “only to the extent that it is performed” (Butler, 1988: 527). The “nature-culture” divide that can often be found as a critique and justification for certain feminisms (such as trans-exclusive, radical, or essentialist feminisms) is unexcused. Butler places *gender* at the core of their research as yet another fragment of how control and power function in our contexts.

The body, and the identities that appear through it, is an act and “an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities” (Butler, 1988: 521). Butler’s *performativity* is also the tool through which gender appears to us as naturalised, as exemplified by drag. Drag related to gender is equivalent to Raymond Williams’s notion of *lived hegemony*. Following Antonio Gramsci’s ideas of hegemony, Williams writes that:

A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure. It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits. In practice, that is, hegemony can never be singular. Its internal structures are highly complex, as can readily be seen in any concrete analysis. Moreover [...], it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own (1977: 112).

The Foucauldian omnipresent power (1978: 93) is here relocated to the examination of identity. A hegemony is more a structuring practice than a set of ideological beliefs. A gendered hegemony, therefore, is beyond ideology, and thus, hard to trace, not only because of its abstraction but, especially, because of its malleability. In Butler’s theories, drag is discussed as an excess from the norms which have been constructed as intrinsic to bodies and bound to ideas of interiority. Thus, drag is a pivotal instance where discourses about gender are exposed. In their words, “drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity” (Butler, 1990: 174). Butler introduces then the “imitation game” that performativity stands for, an alignment to *simulacra* theories in

which the copy and the original are not distinct because of the originality or ontological reality of the latter, but rather entangled. The so called “original” is already a mockery of a certain pre-established model that,

imitate[s] the myth of originality itself [....] The loss of the sense of “the normal,” however, can be its own occasion for laughter, especially when “the normal,” “the original” is revealed to be a copy, and an inevitably failed one, an ideal that no one can embody. In this sense, laughter emerges in the realization that all along the original was derived (Butler, 1990: 176).

Butler’s thinking concurs with the above discussed *simulacra* theories in that they destruct the opposition between the original and the copy- or between reality and illusion- through a reconsideration of the place that binaries take in the representation of what is understood as reality. Following this trend, the mimetic act of being corporeal in the world, i.e., having a body, becomes a strategic point from which truth and the norm are also constructed. The relation between mimicry, masquerade, repetition and pretence results in performativity helping sustain certain gender pretexts, as Butler explains in their writings. Referring to *masquerade*, while re-reading Jacques Lacan, Butler states that:

The term is significant because it suggests contradictory meanings: On the one hand, if the “being,” the ontological specification of the Phallus, is masquerade, then it would appear to reduce all being to a form of appearing, the appearance of being, with the consequence that all gender ontology is reducible to the play of appearances. On the other hand, masquerade suggests that there is a “being” or ontological specification of femininity prior to the masquerade, a feminine desire or demand that is masked and capable of disclosure, that, indeed, might promise an eventual disruption and displacement of the phallogocentric signifying economy (1990: 60).

Masquerade uncovers the dynamics of corporeal regulatory norms. As we can read from other queer theorists, such as Annmarie Jagose, regarding the construction of gender

identities, “queer operates not so much as an alternative nomenclature [...] than as a means of drawing attention to those fictions of identity that stabilise all identificatory categories” (1996: 125). Queerness is connected to masquerade in that it blows off the constrictions of this gender representation. In this sense drag, as used in queer theory and in Butler’s work in particular, is the articulation of this masquerade for the queer specificity.

In the theoretical corpus of *simulacra* Jean Baudrillard references the *Ecclesiastes* in a sort of intertextual mimesis. Simulacrum, he states, is “never what hides the truth” since “it is the truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true” (Baudrillard, 1981: 9. My translation)²³. The activation of Butler’s drag as a strategy to banish certain paradigms of what corporeality ought to be is allied to the distinction that Baudrillard finds in the tension between representation and simulacra. As he illustrates:

Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and the real (even if this equivalence is utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum (1981: 16. My translation)²⁴.

Representation deviates from simulation in that it does not construct an image of the real sustaining itself in the act of mimesis, while simulacrum does. This is translated into drag and a gender language in that through this representation drag denounces the norm inscribed in the primitive gendered reference. Indeed, it exposes the excess that the “original” represents already. At this moment, a nostalgia for the real is activated:

²³ “Le simulacre n’est jamais ce qui cache la vérité- c’est la vérité qui cache qu’il n’y en a pas. Le simulacre est vrai” (*L’Ecclesiaste* in Baudrillard, 1981: 9. Original).

²⁴ “Telle est la simulation, en ce quelle s’oppose à la représentation. Celle-ci part du principe d’équivalence du signe et du réel (même si cette équivalence est utopique, c’est un axiome fondamental). La simulation part à l’inverse de l’utopie du principe d’équivalence, part de la négation radicale du signe comme valeur, part du signe comme réversion et mise à mort de toute référence. Alors que la représentation tente d’absorber la simulation en l’interprétant comme fausse représentation, la simulation enveloppe tout l’édifice de la représentation lui-même comme simulacre” (Baudrillard, 1981: 16).

When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality - a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. Escalation of the true, lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. Panic stricken production of the real and of the referential, parallel to and greater than the panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us - a strategy of the real, of the neo real and the hyperreal whose double everywhere is a strategy of deterrence (Baudrillard, 1981: 17. My translation)²⁵.

Therefore, simulations do not only generate meanings, but they also shape reality. Analogously to Foucault's reconsideration on discourses, simulations are here viewed as positive in that they generate and activate new forms of the "real". The so-called "original" doesn't precede the copy anymore, as "[t]he territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it" (Baudrillard, 1981: 10. My translation)²⁶. Further deepening into this analysis of the copy and the original in oppositional standards, the gaze, the way someone's body is looked at, and the implication of relationality in the formation and reproduction of gender and corporeal adequacies, is also fundamental in Butler's work. We could even say that they, somehow, drag Foucault's opera to insert it in their particular research chronotope:

The unproblematic claim to "be" a woman and "be" heterosexual would be symptomatic of that metaphysics of gender substances [...] Thus, "I feel like a

²⁵ "Lorsque le réel n'est plus ce qu'il était, la nostalgie prend tout son sens. Surenchère des mythes d'origine et des signes de réalité. Surenchère de vérité, d'objectivité et d'authenticité secondes. Escalade du vrai, du vécu, résurrection du figuratif là où l'objet et la substance ont disparu. Production affolée de réel et de référentiel, parallèle et supérieure à l'affolement de la production matérielle: telle apparaît la simulation dans la phase qui nous concerne- une stratégie du réel, de néo-réel et d'hyperréel, que double partout une stratégie de dissuasion" (Baudrillard, 1981: 17).

²⁶ "Le territoire ne précède plus la carte, ni ne lui survit" (1981: 10).

woman” is true to the extent that Aretha Franklin’s invocation of the defining Other is assumed: “You make me feel like a natural woman” (1990: 29-30).

This fragment offers a double claim. On the one hand, gender is formulated as opposite to the other’s gender, and on the other, what Butler states here is that gender is viewed, recognised and mirrored from an external relation that reinforces the idea of relationality as primordial in the formulation of identities. There is a comeback to Foucault’s conception of domain as part of a system of relations rather than a pre-existent state of matterings. Butler’s ideas are granted by their activation through other theories which dialogue with their own, by their rhizomatic contamination with Baudrillard’s *simulacra* in the previous fragments.

1.4. A material awakening of the layers that matter

Another activation of simulacrum theories is their relation to New Materialisms. Deleuze and Baudrillard, among others, have led to an awakening of the concept of intra-actions, central to New Materialisms theories, through their reconsideration of the ontology and metaphysics of difference. From these approaches difference is queered in a way that exorcises the binary positions traditionally adopted by dialectical philosophy. Breaking apart from dialectic constructions of difference is fundamental for reconsiderations of identity, as we can see through Karen Barad’s or Jane Bennet’s new materialist positions. To them, *intra-actions* become a scenario where the self, also including inanimate entities, becomes a specific force from where to consider the differences that occur beyond the idea of pre-established bodily states.

1.4.1. New Materialisms and their ordinariness

Manuel DeLanda maintains that only through the overcoming of the binary between immanence and transcendence, can we put forward the question of identity. As he explains, “[t]he traditional way of accounting for a stable identity is by postulating the existence of essences, transcendent entities that have been part of realism for more than

two thousand years and are therefore not easy to eliminate” (2018: 2). This constraining understanding of identity has been linked to the essence of nature, a discourse which we can well see reflected in conflicts regarding gender policies and narratives nowadays. To engage into identity politics otherwise does not mean to remain in an immanent realm, but rather to work through a metaphysical and ontological thinking that can allow new gender imaginaries. Certainly, *gender* may be a fiction, but at some points it may need a material anchorage. Or let me phrase it otherwise, we might defend the idea that the future will be non-binary and queer, while we simultaneously defend those present subjectivities that are suffering the consequences of anti-identitarian violences right now. As DeLanda clearly explains about the notion of *assemblage*:

The minimal definition of the term *assemblage* is that of a whole with properties that are both irreducible and immanent. An assemblage’s properties are irreducible because while they emerge from the actual interaction between its parts, they cannot be ascribed to any of its parts. And they are immanent because if the components of the assemblage ceased to interact its own properties would cease to exist: emergent properties may not depend on this or that particular interaction, on this or that connection with matter, but they do demand that there should be some connection with matter (2018: 3).

In this sense, the importance of relationality is one of the adhesives in this agglutination. The assemblage of identity counts on these non-materialistic, non-tangible in their autonomy, elements. They are relations and situations which, when activated in this identity assemblage, are the beginning of identity formation. As indicated above, this activation does not mean that identity is lost or only exists and can be accounted for pending on these relational circumstances, but rather this circumstantial component can subsist and coexist with a more rooted understanding of identity. It is a fact that in a social and pseudo democratic way of being in the world, stability, for the sake of representation and political existence, is still needed. As Rita Monticelli engages her students to think about, the problem with identity politics is how they overlook the importance of intersectionality in their formulations. Identities are not lived as formations and fixed

categories, but rather as positions from which different situations can be read from very different perspectives. In her words:

Gender, ethnicity and class, as an extent of differential power relationships, mark identities in different ways and suggest how cultural memory- that is also linked to the distribution and the transmission of power- is to be found in specific contexts rather than be considered as monolithic and essentialist (2011: 1387).

An important aspect of New Materialisms is their approach on realism. Realism has traditionally been depicted from a humanist perspective and has portrayed the relation between perception and the world as ontological when, in fact, this relation is yet another epistemological formulation. In turn, epistemology has a great value for an understanding of empirical facts, but has, nevertheless, failed on accounting for the multiplicity of experiences. Many human and other-than-human experiences of the world have been ignored. Those involved within non-western cosmologies, animal lives or the otherwise forms of life or worlding that are not even subject to (human) perception have been constantly overlooked. The realist ontology proposed by NMs (New Materialisms)²⁷ includes a wholeness that takes into consideration uncontrollable facts, accepting that, as humans, we are as limited to knowledge, perception and experience as any other entity.

Karen Barad²⁸, a fundamental name when speaking about NMs, is one of the main researchers who permeate this thesis. I want to draw attention to their way of framing these ideas under the concept of *onto-epistemologies*. Onto-epistemology is simultaneously a neologism and a conjunction formed by two historical concepts. On the one hand, it stands as neologism because it includes the idea of the impossible separation between what is considered reality -ontology- and what is counted as construction-epistemology. This is also analogous to the rupture of the genealogical distinction between sex and gender, a hiatus that, as discussed earlier on, we see in queer theory, particularly in Butler's work. On the other hand, onto-epistemology also acknowledges

²⁷ From here onwards New Materialisms may also be referred to as NMs.

²⁸ I met Barad during the "Summer School for Sexualities, Cultures and Politics" in Belgrade, in the summer 2019. I joined that summer school so that I could learn with them together with other fundamental thinkers for my epistemological journey who were also present at that seminal event, such as Luce Irigaray, Tiziana Terranova or Svetlana Slapsak.

that this impossibility coexists with the urgency of an accurate look into the histories of both concepts: the construction of reality and the construction of knowledge. Or, to translate this discussion into the queer agitation mentioned above, even if sex has also been dis-essentialised and brought into question as a cultural and historical construction, the way gender and sex are produced follows different dispositifs (Foucault, 1977). And this difference also requires analysis²⁹.

The salient role played by NMs in my investigation lies in the conjunction between a posthumanist mindset -that engages with non-anthropocentric perspectives and antispeciesism- and the remaining importance of relationalities. As Karen Barad explains- an onto-epistemology is a breakthrough to see the gaps that may be full, empty, saturated or remaining in the void (2007). A void can be already signifying and packed, even if not perceivable due to our human limitations (2012)³⁰. This is the point: we are not the limit but rather limited. We are not liminal but truly entangled in constant-vibrating assemblages. Identity and feminist Feminist New Materialisms also share a strong connection in that identity has also the potentiality of discovering its self-organising agency. Let me explain: even if identity is two-folded between something that can be apprehended by politics and something else that changes over time, it has a potential force of becoming, without a specific point where to arrive to. Theodor Adorno also worked from this perspective of identity impossibility. In his reading of how philosophy has shaped identities, identity is already a non-identity since it holds on to negative dialectics. As he states, “[t]he negative motive of identitarian philosophy has remained in force: nothing particular is true; no particular is itself, as its particularity requires” (1966; 2004: 152). The identity of concepts, and, conversely, the concepts involving identity, depend on the mobility and immanence of such concepts in real life. This is, concepts are already copies of the real, and cannot, therefore, be substitutes for it. They are limited by this impossibility which makes them as unstable as the matter they actually represent,

²⁹ I analyse this use of concepts as methods in the methodological section, where I explain the novel openings that this approach can lead to, such as the generation of new temporalities in concepts, which is one of my main propositions.

³⁰ See the specific chapter on the void for my extensive debate on this issue.

the idea of something immutable, something identical with itself, would collapse as well. This idea derives from the rule of the concept, from the concept's tendency to be constant as opposed to its contents, to "matter," and from its resulting blindness to matter (1966; 2004: 137).

On the one hand, identity is to be held from an epistemological perspective since it generates the knowledge which can allow its reclaiming. On the other, identity is to be accounted for by an ontological perspective which can engage into all those moves and changes which take place through embodiment and which go beyond the human capacity of constant recognition and understanding. This links identity to other accounts of existence that go beyond the limitations of epistemic significations. This involves recognition of the limitations of our human capacities to allow a self-organisation of the body as matter that evolves, adapts and folds as time passes and space happens.

The particularity of the media era in which these conceptual orders and turns are imbricated should also be taken into consideration at this stage. Following Franco "Bifo" Berardi's concept of *semiocapitalism*, the debate between the capital media and collective affects is in tandem with the above discussed inseparability of epistemology and ontology. As Berardi states, "a semiotic regime is repressive when one, and only one, signified is ascribed to each signifier" (2009: 111). The Foucauldian understanding of power in knowledge and discourse is tainted here through particular uses of concepts that are capitalised through normative arrangements which mark them as naturalised within a frame of feelings and values. This is, these naturalised arrangements of the use of concepts become repressive since they pigeonhole notions hindering relationalities which could have the potential for the application of the concepts themselves. Notions of gender, "race" and ability are closely tied to these onto-epistemological dispositions and, hence, ascribing new directions from where to use and apply them is a real challenge.

As I am writing this very first part of my thesis, I realise how much the rhizomatic analysis has influenced me. This is simultaneously good and bad. On the one hand, it has allowed me to generate a non-dichotomous-hierarchical way of viewing theories and knowledge. On the other hand, it is very difficult to stick to the categorical classifications required for the presentation and comprehension of my ways of thinking theory.

2. Gramsci and the hegemonies beneath Foucault. Or the law of superposition and disturbed strata³¹

To analyse systems of power, such as knowledge production or identitarian positions is important for the present times. Not more than ever. But neither less. Things are not “better than ever”. Yes, over the years we have trespassed certain paradigms of what has been considered deviant. Yes, there are certain overtures of differences between identitarian positionalities. I will not go right now into how inclusion is not our goal per se (though I will discuss it later on in this chapter), but I will remark that what is meant when saying that things are better than before is that what has shifted is not a particular way of acceptance or tolerance towards the other, but rather time. Only time has changed. Time has gone by and situations that were unthinkable years ago are now set as normal. Hegemonies are still important because they speak about deviance in the face of the historical and current accounts of the norm. The Foucauldian understanding of power means a shift in the “power” paradigm since it transfers its existence from an individual *persona* to a system of “strategic situations”, a power that, as discussed at the beginning “embraces everything” and “comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1978: 93). As I have elsewhere analysed, “This understanding has potential applicability to critical realms of socio-political action in analogy to other approaches to power and hegemonies, such as the work by Antonio Gramsci” (Harris, 2018: 14)³². What matters here is the dialogue between Foucault and Gramsci, as highlighted by scholars such as Joan Cocks. As Cocks suggests:

There are certain striking thematic repetitions [between Gramsci and Foucault], certain similar analytical obsessions – certain ways, too, in which their arguments

³¹ The law of superposition speaks about how the principle of original horizontality allows a clear understanding on how the oldest layers are beneath the most recent ones, following gravity physics. When this stratum is disturbed, we may find younger layers beneath the oldest ones, because of different sediment/rock movements. Applied to my work, I use Gramsci after Foucault following this disturbance movement.

³² Part of this analysis comes from my unpublished GEMMA MA thesis defended at the universities of Bologna and Utrecht. <https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/32553>

and insights are reciprocally illuminating. What is flawed in each argument alone, moreover, is improved by the selective combination of the arguments together (1989: 26).

The state of power that permeates the works by both authors “speaks more about positionalities than of positions and this, at the same time, brings us to consider how power is relational” (Harris, 2018: 16). It also facilitates “fresh considerations of how power works inside places that are constructed as ‘counter-hegemonic’” (Ibid). Foucault’s “regimes of truth” (1977; 1995) which are tangled in systems of knowledge, are paralleled by Gramsci’s consideration about how action has been the disruptive part of History. In this trend, both authors, from very different perspectives, criticise the lack of praxis in alternatives to power. In an article written for the socialist paper *Il Grido Del Popolo* in 1916, Gramsci expresses how,

every revolution has been preceded by a long process of intense critical activity, of new cultural insight and the spread of ideas through groups of men initially resistant to them, wrapped up in the process of solving their own, immediate economic and political problems, and lacking any bonds of solidarity with others in the same position (1916; 1994: 10).

In Gramsci’s analysis, power is also everywhere. And this is so because the constant division between oppression and power does not really apply to sociality, the scheme where these often intertwine. Nevertheless, this is not an ontological account of power since there are cases where certain identities work out of the structures of power here under revision³³. This breaks the essentialism implied in the claiming of identity from monistic and holistic points of view. In my research, the phrase “power is everywhere” also means that power is not only present within hegemonic bodies or groups. In order to escape essentialist considerations of oppressions, “that fail to recognise more ambiguous

³³ Here I am thinking of subjectivities and realities existing in non-capitalised, non-westernised systems, such as indigenous communities, but not only. As will be analysed further on, the structures of power that are under discussion in this thesis respond to my own politics of location, which take me to an awareness not to generalise power.

and hidden relations of power” (Harris, 2018: 16), we need to acknowledge the omnipresence of hegemonies in contemporary capitalist/westernised contexts. As I have explored in my research, through the analysis of Gramsci and Foucault:

This state of power, as both theorists determine, speaks more about positionalities than of positions and this, at the same time, brings us to consider how power is relational, a perspective that can allow fresh considerations of how power works inside places that are constructed as “counter-hegemonic” (2018: 16).

Power does not depend on a particular someone or something in particular. It is rather locked inside a system of production that impregnates sociality. Following this link to power being a productive system, “[p]ower does not equal lack, even if it produces it. Power is not negative, even if it produces negativity. Power produces and is imbricated in every process of life and is informed in and informs every realm of society” (Harris, 2018: 16). As can be read in Bruno Latour’s theories, power, rather than a process of diffusion -as a blurred quality in passing throughout History- follows a process of translation³⁴. As he states:

This model of diffusion may be contrasted with another, that of the model of translation. According to the latter, the spread in time and space of anything claims, orders, artifacts, goods- is in the hands of people [...] there is no inertia to account for the spread of a token (Latour, 1986: 267).

All these considerations take us to a feature of power that I shape in the following section, since it is a leading element in my analysis of the case studies: that of self-regulation, discipline and/or self-surveillance.

2.1. Self-Surveillance and autoregulatory practices. Post practices from a post worlding

³⁴ Translation is here used in a double sense: as a movement of location and as a linguistic adaptation.

As I have written in the upper part of this section, power enacted on oneself is an integral shape of power in the liquid times and contexts we inhabit (Bauman, 2000). It is maybe the uncomfortability of this shape of power that throws it out of many discussions, since it requires a self-critique which is not always possible to face. To put it in Foucault's terms, there is an automatism of discipline and self-regulation in the functioning of a liquid body in postmodern times. Starting from the notion of *biopower*, as we see in Foucault's analysis of bodily control (1978). *Biopower* operates under many shapes: the body is gendered, normalised, assumed, controlled, exercised, sexed, nationalised, assembled. In this sense -and taking a special look into how the body is assembled- the body is simultaneously forced and a force. It is both controlled and controls, not only for/towards others, but also on itself. The way in which a body is controlled, by many different forces -some of them nonhuman ones- will be discussed in the following sections regarding New Materialist Theories. For now, I want to concentrate on the important task of examining self-control, on how biopower is nothing but power being swallowed, drunk, digested and, sometimes, vomited out.

Autoregulation, self-control, and self-surveillance are entangled in every form of power, since power, in the age of *capitalocene* (Moore, 2016), in a globalised tendency, involves much more than a *persona*. Power, as Foucault reminds us, is constantly there even when not visible. It is disindividualised and disidentified, but still effective³⁵. Paul B. Preciado or Byung Chul Han are some of the many theorists that have been dedicating their work to the analysis of contemporary power exercised through identity. I mainly use these two authors in this part because they have also thrown some light on the post-apocalyptic circumstances of this self-regulation in the aftermath of Covid-19. Their work is only a brief sample of the multitude of writing that has been driven from the health crisis triggered by Covid-19. *Self-surveillance* and *self-exploitation* are the two main concepts, respectively, to these authors. They are used to analyse the systems that biologise our own lives somehow. They have become natural. Or at least, in this *post-*

³⁵ It goes without saying that this is boosted if we locate these terms in the current post-pandemics scenario. "Post" does not mean here that the situation has ended, but rather that its effects are already settled in and functioning in a regulated and normalised way, without a state of exception that amplifies its rarity.

ozonic frame of the world, they have become more natural than nature itself, which at this point remains extinct if considering its main characteristic: that of “not being touched by human”.

Preciado coins the concept of *pharmacopornographic industry* in order to refer to the society of control which commodifies bodies and modes of living, production and consumption. The notion is explained as the “‘junkspace[s]’ by means of mechanisms of immediate auto-surveillance and ultra-rapid diffusion of information, a continuous mode of desiring and resisting, of consuming and destroying, of evolution and self-destruction” (2013: 41). This friction breaks the dichotomic appraisal of the processes of commodifying identity and sexuality, among others, through these new technologies of power, which also include the virtual realm. Such approach invites new explorations of the intra-activity between the possibility/limit binary that appears in discourses regarding media-virtual spaces. The ascendant location of these considerations, their background, can be found in the conceptualisation of Foucault’s panopticon. The panoptic machine is not only an architecture of the gaze, but rather stands for a position from where to control. Discipline is tangled in the framing of the panopticon since the control is not exercised exclusively from certain empowered personas but actually involves the voyeuristic compliance of the whole community. Power becomes a secret gazing desire. As Foucault states:

There is no risk, therefore, that the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible “to the great tribunal committee of the world”. This Panopticon, subtly arranged so that an observer may observe, at a glance, so many different individuals, also enables everyone to come and observe any of the observers. The seeing machine was once a sort of dark room into which individuals spied; it has become a transparent building in which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole (1975: 207).

In his study of how the body is commodified inside the systems we populate, Preciado clearly refers to this fundamental way of swallowed control. The body is already delusive since, as in a Truman Syndrome³⁶, it knows it is being observed. Taking into account the historical architecture of the panopticon as a vigilant strategy inside prisons, Foucault determines that,

the major effect of the Panopticon [...] is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action (1975: 201).

Preciado updates these scenarios. In the pharmacopornographic era the voyeuristic aspect of discipline is expanded to the considerations of contemporary times as pornographic expressions of desire consumption, Preciado warns us that necropolitics³⁷ have become central to regulating lives and the biopolitical forces have shifted their strategic locus. Biopolitical apparatuses are swallowed to the extent that subjects become accomplices in power control. As he states in a beautifully and scary fragment:

[T]he differences between the panopticon and the Pill are significant. Within the length of hardly a century, they underline the transition from a disciplinary regime into a pharmacopornographic regime. In the first case, we're faced with an external political architecture that defines the position of the body in a space that is collectively regulated, creating specific positions of power (monitor/monitored, doctor/patient, professor/student...) and allowing the generation of a form of knowing (visual, statistical, demographic) concerning those individuals being controlled. In the second case, we're faced with a mechanism that- without any change in its effectiveness- has reduced its scale to that of a biomolecular technology that may be consumed individually and introduced by bodily orifices.

³⁶ Truman syndrome refers to a psychological disorder linked to a contemporary delusion that one's life is at the centre of a reality show monitored by cameras.

³⁷ A term coined by Achille Mbembe (2003), theoretically and socially used in contrast to biopolitics to insist on the death strategies which are common to contemporary History. It is explored in detail in the following sections of this thesis.

In the pharmacopornographic era, the body swallows power. It is a form of control that is both democratic and private, edible, drinkable, inhalable, and easy to administer, whose spread throughout the social body has never been so rapid or so undetectable. In the pharmacopornographic age, biopower dwells at home, sleeps with us, inhabits within (Preciado, 2016: 207).

Power is edible. Power is the immaterial form of surveillance. Power is sometimes unrecognisable. Paradoxically, power exists in contrast to resistances, in friction with self-determination, and in tandem with other ways of life that decentre anthropocentric understandings. In a sense, self-surveillance is a deviation of self-freedom.

A final argument on self-surveillance should be discussed here before we move on. Let us not look for its causes in a set of circumstances that pre-exist it but in the entanglement of such circumstances. Here I want to introduce Manuel DeLanda's perspective on territorialisation and assemblages, previously introduced through the works by Deleuze and Guattari. DeLanda rereads the latter explaining that "[t]erritorialisation refers [...] to the degree to which an assemblage's component parts are drawn from a homogeneous repertoire, or the degree to which an assemblage homogenises its own components" (2016: 22). Territorialising an assemblage concretises it and allows for its possibility. As DeLanda continues some lines down,

in normal circumstances, this mild degree of territorialisation may be compatible with the acceptance of personal differences. However, when two or more communities engage in ethnic or religious conflict, not only will the geographical boundaries of their neighborhoods or small towns be policed more intensely, so will the behavior of their members. The distinction between "us" and "them" will sharpen and any small deviation from local norms will be noticed and punished (2016: 22).

There is an ambiguity in assembling through territorialisation that resides in the fact that in its concretion it also finds its limitation. The possibilities exposed in this thesis speak from this ambiguity, since the necessity of concretising cohabites with the

acknowledgement of the multiple possibilities which such specification automatically leaves out.

3. History and its making: The frictions of fictions. Or the preservation potential principle³⁸

3.1. Capital H for History. Fiction as theory

Dismantling systems of thought³⁹ does not always mean losing their whole frames of reference. And still, there are moments at which a particular idea must change radically. In this radicality, I align with non-colonial theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) and Naoki Sakai (2006) on their use of provincialism⁴⁰ and translation, respectively. On the one hand, Chakrabarty's deconstruction of power has helped me recognise what particular History I hereby criticise. This said, the authorised ways in which normative and westernised History has constructed past times is not balanced by the alternative ways in which history (intentionally non-capitalised) has been lived through or has helped enact memory and Heritage in other non-centralised communities or areas of epistemological eruption⁴¹. This is not to say that traditional and authorised History should be dodged, but, rather, that the monolithic ways in which History is lived, perceived, used and abused of in "late-capitalist" (Adorno, 1987) first worldings is distant from the otherwise forms of engaging in multiple narratives of the past. In the use of the verb, worlding stresses this idea: the world is lived in many different ways and it is through the enaction and activation of certain elements that different ways of perceiving it come to live. Along these lines, the translation problem exposed in Sakai's work goes beyond languages since it also

³⁸ Principle by which a stratigraphic level has both the potential to accumulate and be saved as part of that record. This principle is used as a layer to highlight the way in which historical narratives and archives are valued in this thesis in their potentiality to maintain accumulative records of the pasts, that is not one but many. This potentiality insists upon the fact that hegemonic History has not accounted for those multiplicities.

³⁹ Assuming knowledge and thought as one of the main elements of power structures.

⁴⁰ Provincialism in this analysis is used as a site of contention for historical and philosophical accounts, insisting on how processes of translation are also involved in a particular location.

⁴¹ Note the distinction between my use of capital H when speaking about an established and official account of History and small h historical grassroots narratives.

focuses on the methodologies, forms and geometries that History- and the disciplines linked to it- takes in order to engage with a community's past for means of the present. Provincialising can be assumed as translating in a way that is understood by a located reader who is potentially attached to or involved in the subject/circumstance under discussion, a *mestiza* strategy of perception which refuses to be adapted and displaced (Anzaldúa, 1987).

In the analysis of systems of power through translation, Sinthujan Varatharajah wonders: "How does a U.S. term live on outside its place of origin?" (Varatharajah, 2022)⁴². They reflect on the possibility of words travelling from dominant scenarios to elsewhere since the capacity of adaptation of certain words comes without an introspective view of their actual *transfusion*, as Varatharajah names it. Thus, how can *transfusion* be enacted in another totally different context? I feel very close to these inquiries since fictional theory has of long been my strategy for locating my own experience in different conceptual contexts. The existence of someone in a dissident identity has always appeared to me as somehow fictional since my own strategies of acknowledging different parts of myself needed figurations and metaphors for their whole accountability. As Rosi Braidotti has notably exposed in her research on feminist figurations, the theories that save us are those searching beyond objective parameters of reality:

I believe in the empowering force of the political fictions that are proposed by feminists as different from each other as Luce Irigaray and Donna Haraway. The former emphasizes images drawn from female morphology and sexuality, such as the two lips that suggest closeness while avoiding closure. The latter proposes instead the figuration of the cyborg (1994: 3).

Braidotti highlights the centrality of political imagination when speaking about subjectivities such as that of the female subject. Her move is double: on the one hand, the

⁴² Sinthujan Varatharajah 13 April 2022 *The funambulist* "The Weight Words Carry: On 'Brown', 'Bipoc' and 'Other Transfused Labels'". <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/decentering-the-us/the-weight-words-carry-on-brown-bipoc-and-other-transfused-labels>.

consideration of the possibilities existing at a particular moment, which I consider primordial in a political activation, and, on the other, the desire for a particular change. As she eloquently puts it “to reconcile historicity, and therefore agency, with the (unconscious) desire for change” is one of the most difficult goals (Braidotti, 1994: 30). Through the contemplation of three levels of sexual difference -differences between men and women, between women and other women, and within each woman-, she proposes a practical alternative for feminist analysis and transformative thinking. Through these three levels of sexual difference Braidotti states that:

If you translate these three levels of sexual difference on a temporal sequence, following Kristeva’s scheme that I have already quoted, you can argue that levels one and two belong to the longer, linear time of history. Level three pertains to the inner, discontinuous time of genealogy. The problem, however, is how to think through the interconnectedness between them, that is to say: how to account for a process of becoming, while empowering women’s historical agency? (1994: 168).

This beautiful way of thinking about how to connect and combine conflicts regarding exteriority and those that are more related to the inner self, is drawn from the recognition of the breaking of the categorical distinction between both spaces, in and out, as argued in previous sections. In this sense, it is essential to investigate what strategies open-up to find the balance between desires and potentialities while accepting the material conditions that are possible in each situation.

3.2. History and the archaeological record

Coming from an archaeological environment, I have realised that often the divisions into historical periods respond to a colonial understanding of experience. Progress, civilisation and production are at the core of narratives concerning eventful value, such as the famous example of the so-called “Neolithic revolution” (Childe, 1936). This positive event, that obviously took place in more than one specific time and place, relates to how ways of life went from nomadic to sedentary, generating a production stability that was also generative of labour specialisation and social organisation which, in turn, gave birth to

stabilised systems of control. The term, coined by Vere Gordon Childe in the mid 30s, was explored from his Marxist point of view which, nonetheless, remained uncritical regarding power formations. Childe's theories attest to how ways of life had been in constant change from developments such as urbanity, technologies, etc. Still, the way in which the modern understanding of social organisation is enabled by power mechanisms, such as the administration of land, labour and institutions, is not in any way answered by Childe. In later critiques, this is one of the most prominent discussions on how History has perpetuated a particular image of what civilisation means, how it was achieved and to what an extent this image has framed our colonial minds in the present.

I would like to push these ideas further on by the analysis that researcher Jen Rose Smith does in her upcoming book project *Icy Matters: Race, Indigeneity, and Coloniality in Ice-Geographies*. While discussing decolonial theories, Smith argues that the settler's view on land always takes the form of earth and that this normative image is broken when we think of otherwise ecologies, such as those regarding ice. Smith discusses the problematics that sedentarism has meant for other ways of living. Through the concept of *Temperate normativity* she analyses "how Western civilization is grounded in this idea of agriculture as a specific kind of cultivation, and this sort of sedentary lifestyle that is meant to emerge from an agricultural way of being in the world, of a kind of stasis in space" (2022)⁴³. Smith's approach is similar to Childe's in her analysis of how the revolutionary forms of sedentarism and agriculture were rather imposed as ways of thinking. This form of environmental determinism is also perpetuated by the still-ongoing understanding on how we divide historical periods. The way in which this determinism relocates or directly expels certain subjectivities has to do with the theories explored further on concerning decoloniality and temporal constructions. As Professor Juliana Hu Pegues observes when analysing Alaskan native experiences, certain bodies are racialised through a "being out of time" (2021: 78), in a similar trend to how Smith discusses the image of Asian migrant people in Alaska constructed through a being out of place. Indeed, temporalities become a fundamental task to analyse in this research.

⁴³ From *The Funambulist*.

4. On colonialism: the importance of space beyond cartography. Or stratigraphic accommodation⁴⁴

4.1. Ontology and the problem of the State: colonial conceptual spaces

The problem with ontology, as introduced above, is that it is always seen as a singular substance. We seem to be incapable of engaging into different ontological considerations to our first ontological thought. Indeed, ontology is constructed from an anthropocentric view in which the human seems to be the builder of reality. Nevertheless, ontology is depicted as independent to the human arrangement. But ontology, as with the notion of sex as a natural element of embodiment, is another site of human construction and is, thus, connected to epistemology.

As Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui explains in her signature work about life otherwise⁴⁵ *Un mundo ch'ixi es posible* (2018), the notion of ch'ixi can serve as “an epistemology that is capable of nourishing through the aporias of History instead of gobbling and denying them, echoing the politics of oblivion” (25. My translation)⁴⁶. In this sense⁴⁷, Rivera Cusicanqui hints at a possibility of ontological enactment, of imagining otherwise, of different lifeways, outside of the “colonial ethos” as she recalls in these pages and working through contradictions. The spatial connection exists in the very way in which Rivera explains and calls out the coloniality of knowledge. She does so through the reconsideration of Franz Tamayo’s work (1903; 2010), a Ch'ixi thinker who has been underestimated because of his lack of “modernity”, where modernity is also understood in connection to space since it responds to the colonial places of epistemological enunciation in opposition to cosmological visions of knowledge, deemed as obsolete from

⁴⁴ This principle of stratigraphy refers to the possible space available for sediment accumulation: it is limited by this accommodation space. This stratigraphic layer highlights the fact that non-colonial histories and experiences have had to the remaining space the hegemonic narratives left them. A decolonial critique from white-western perspectives, which I follow in this thesis, should deal with this and find practical ways of repairing towards a plural account to memory.

⁴⁵ The references in this thesis to *otherwise* mainly follow Macarena Gómez-Barris’s account of this term as *life otherwise*, which refers to ways of living which go beyond the already-known ways of knowing (2017).

⁴⁶ “una epistemología capaz de nutrirse de las aporías de la historia en lugar de fagocitarlas o negarlas, haciendo eco de la política del olvido”. (2018: 25. Original)

⁴⁷ Leaving this notion for further explanation and expansion in these pages.

this frame of mind. That many of these ch'ixi thinkers choose to ignore Cartesian logics demonstrates, again, how the episteme can be a site of resistance from where to exist otherwise. As Rivera acknowledges, the notion of *Bovarism* (from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*) is used to describe how (in this case) indigenous thinking must be legitimised "calling on authors who have made colonialist issues fashionable again", such as in the novel, as beautiful potential sites of domestication (2018: 28. My translation)⁴⁸.

4.2. Beyond cartography: ontological close encounters. The extensive/intensive and the actual/virtual

I want to take account of fundamental differences in which space is perceived, lived and affected. I resort to Gilles Deleuze (1968) once again as a virtual and intensive landscape from where to engage with more contemporary critical thinking. These two properties, the virtual and the intensive, will be explained below. However, before I complicate this theoretical background any further, I would like to briefly explain my enthusiasm with space imaginaries. Because of the dominant colonial ways of involving the issue of space throughout History, we have neglected the possibility of accounting for different parameters of demarcation that go beyond the conceptual mindset of frontiers. I would like to delve into Deleuze's differentiation between the limitation of space through maps. As a rejection of the Hegelian dispersion of reality as totality, the assemblage theory that Deleuze proposes, explained in the previous sections, breaks free from pragmatic understandings of reality and, specifically, walks out of the limitation of reality as phenomenological. As he explains, there is a radical difference, at least from this phenomenological point of view, between extensive and intensive maps (1996). Deleuze's theorisation of space also involves the human body, activating Kant's concept of *noumenon* through which phenomenological understandings of the world, and thus anthropocentric ways of inhabiting knowledge, are called into question. This is interesting since the sense of identity is broadened and sharpened through its own dispersion. The

⁴⁸ "recurriendo a autores que han puesto de moda los asuntos del colonialismo" (2018: 28. Original).

idea of the human body, as already a space of extension affected and cast by intensities throws us in a completely new understanding of identity. As DeLanda explains Deleuze's thinking:

Deleuze's ontology is a realist ontology. But while most realist philosophers espouse one or another form of essentialism, the belief that what gives the contents of this mind-independent world their identity is the possession of an essence, for Deleuze the identity of any being can never be taken for granted and always needs explanation in terms of the historical process which produced it. If we characterize the identity of material beings as defined by extensities (not only by its spatial boundaries but also by the amounts of matter and energy contained within those boundaries) then the process that produces those beings would be defined by intensities. In this sense, human beings not only inhabit extensive spaces, they themselves are extensive spaces (DeLanda in Buchmanan, 2005: 82).

The reworking of concepts such as *essentialism* is fundamental since it is a current conflict activated once and again. Essentialism, as a way to reduce and stagnate conflicts into unmovable single positions, is characteristic of the social experience, in general, and of political life, in particular⁴⁹. As an alternative, DeLanda includes his analysis of assemblages, searching for the multiplicity of realist philosophy and hence abandoning the transcendence of essentialism. As he states, “[t]he most important transcendent entity that we must confront and eliminate is the one postulated to explain the existence and endurance of autonomous entities: *essences*” (2016: 139).

As will be retaken in the analysis of queer temporalities, the multiplicity activated through New Materialistic accounts is fundamental to delve into theories regarding the pivotal role of relations and relationalities in the way in which we construct and give signification to the world. This rejection of anthropocentrism also responds to the

⁴⁹ And with political here I do not mean a mere institutionalised sense of political changes and habilitations, but more corporeally involved politics, where a body, just because of its flesh, can already be passively political.

endorsement of an extended worldview where the actual is not the only reality in an ontological sense:

While extensive quantities (such as volume, area, length, amount of energy or entropy) are additive, intensive quantities are not [...] Deleuze defines intensive quantities as “indivisible”, a definition which is simply another way of expressing the same point: a gallon of water at ninety degrees can be divided in extension, yielding, say, two half gallons, but the two parts will not each have half the temperature (DeLanda in Buchanan, 2005: 81).

As both thinkers explain, changes occur through these intensive quantities, which relate to differences which do not respond to extensive understandings of space, time and properties, since they are indivisible.

4.3. Beyond the metaphor: decolonisation

I refer to whiteness as the main system which regulated cut, and still does, my identity. As I will further explain in the methodology section, my use of self-experience in this thesis tries to remain critical of my complicities in the westernised-white-washed encounters and experiences which have built up my personal history. The references to whiteness and white supremacy, which are constantly addressed as part of my structural embodiment and genealogy, are referenced beyond a racial demarcation. It is in the recognition of the social powers I am intrinsically informed by that I read Sonya Renee Taylor (2018) and Ibram X. Kendi (2019), among many others. In this analysis, I remain accountable and response-able for my own position in the world, acknowledging that my body has many layers of signification which are in need of an intersectional praxis. The oppressions I have lived through my queerness have allowed a disconnection from other privileges which have taken me to reproduce other violences. They are also fragments of my identities which need to become a priority in my analysis. This is, self-surveillance cannot be deconstructed without a continuous self-revision and self-positionality. Decolonisation is not a metaphor (Tuck and Yang, 2012) but a practice, an activation

which brings needed methodologies and epistemologies forward, and set the bases for decisions and material changes to occur.

5. New Materialisms and diastems⁵⁰

5.1. Onto-epistemologies and New Materialisms: absent presences

Maybe Deleuze and Guattari would have not used the aphorism “all roads lead to deconstruction” in their use of the rhizoma (1980; 1999). Even so, it is important to emphasise this aspect of deconstruction applied to research in order to resignify the value of the ways in which theory and concepts are reached out in our studies. In this thesis, these concepts are approached through many paths. As acknowledged in the previous section, fiction, figurations and alternative ways of thinking through the body have been, still are, essential forms of subversive thinking inside feminist and Queer Studies and gender activism. These figurations are fundamental to rethinking materiality and corporeality⁵¹. Figurations and living otherwise open doors that matter, in both senses of the word: they are important and they are of substance.

In her account of materialisms, Jane Bennet deals with vital materialisms and throws out of the box the anthropocentric approaches which, as seen above, have been prevalent until some decades ago inside western philosophy, theory and politics. In this otherwise-materialism we see the potential of the recognition of the agentic contribution of nonhuman forces (Bennet, 2010: xvi). Bennet works through the concept of *affect* but she nuances it to indicate that *affect* as a concept may be human, but what happens through the movements and vitalisms of *affectivity* affects and is affected by other-than-human entities. In her words:

⁵⁰ Diastems are gaps that exist between depositional events that have to do with natural depositions. To explain the layer of New Materialisms, I use this stratum to focus on how the return/orientation towards non-anthropocentric views of matter and phenomena are essential to understand these theories.

⁵¹ See Braidotti 1994 in the Fiction and History section.

For the vital materialist, however, the starting point of ethics is less the acceptance of the impossibility of “reconciliation” and more the recognition of human participation in a shared, vital materiality. We are vital materiality and we are surrounded by it, though we do not always see it that way (2009: 14).

Bennet exerts a very personal critique upon dichotomies, departing from Adorno’s theories of materiality where the life-matter philosophical mantra is rejected in favour of a less defined amalgam of possibilities. As Bennet explains, her materialist vitalism helps “theorize a materiality that is as much force as entity, as much energy as matter, as much intensity as extension” (Ibid: 20). Bennet throws a small reference to the queering of materialistic epistemology and gives a rhizomatic account of what vitalism can be outside the human-centred enclosures we are used to: “A lot happens to the concept of agency once nonhuman things are figured less as social constructions and more as actors, and once humans themselves are assessed not as autonomous but as vital materialities” (Ibid: 21). If there is a particular concept that I highlight from Bennet’s work is that of *agency*. *Agency* is a key notion to take into consideration inside critical studies, involving not only identity and subjectivity making but also new/other materialisms. *Agency* plays a fundamental role in theories regarding subjectivity and politics and is particularly salient from non-human, decolonial and queer-centred perspectives. It deals with the subjective capacity of making decisions, with situating oneself inside worldmaking and with the relationship between non-human forces which escape the exceptional reading of human control (*humans are capable of everything and anything*) while maintaining active human responsibility in the formula. Distributive agency is pinned down as a central idea, where this accountability remains active at the same time as power to affect and be affected (Spinoza, 1993; Clough, 2007) operates. Under the lens of this distributive activity, which travels between different bodies and entities, agency keeps present the understanding of intended motions. Bennet speaks about this idea when commenting that:

In the tradition that defines agency as moral capacity, such new effects are understood as having arisen in the wake of an advance plan or an intention, for agency “involves not mere motion, but willed or intended motion, where motion

can only be willed or intended by a subject”. A theory of distributive agency, in contrast, does not posit a subject as the root cause of an effect (2009: 31).

Distributive agency defeats the ontological privileging of humanity which carries the idea that agency is only present in human living bodies and contemplates other vibrant forces that “live” in different capacities other than human. Distributive matter unroots the human as the “cause of an effect” (Ibid) and extends the concept of agency beyond the human “exceptional” body. Bennet stresses this idea by speaking of the human building of intentionality, which is tied to moralism and limits the notions of agency. As she writes:

This understanding of agency does not deny the existence of that thrust called intentionality, but it does see it as less definitive of outcomes. It loosens the connections between efficacy and the moral subject, bringing efficacy closer to the idea of the power to make a difference that calls for response. And this power, I contend along with Spinoza and others, is a power possessed by nonhuman bodies too (2009: 32).

This account of agency breaks the divide between the human body and everything else and poses the issue beyond anthropocentric ideas of intentionality and ethics. Reading through Derrida, Bennet highlights interesting ties between human perceptions of reality and linear temporalities. In her opinion, things are perceived because of their pending onto an idea of future, a not here or now, that manifests their existence. As she recalls from Derrida,

[it is] an alternative to this consciousness-centred thinking by figuring trajectory as “messianicity.” Messianicity is the open-ended promissory quality of a claim, image, or entity. This unspecified promise is for Derrida the very condition of possibility of phenomenality: things in the world appear to us at all only because they tantalise and hold us in suspense, alluding to a fullness that is elsewhere, to a future that, apparently, is on its way. For Derrida this promissory note is never and can never be redeemed (2009: 32).

This is a fundamental point when speaking about otherwise-materialisms since these alternative ways of viewing the human subject generate other potential temporalities, that

are neither linear nor singular, but rather take the form of an assemblage. Through this presence “in suspense” that Bennet speaks about, what there is and what can be fold into each other. The human mind, our epistemologies, cannot be universalised or taken as fundamentals for the ordering and activation of the world. We are limited. We are fragmented. Each epistemology is true and, simultaneously, holds the impossibility of its general application. Bennet asks herself how to hold in responsibility certain human acts which, even if dependent on a set of other vibrant entities, have an intentionality and reproduce systems of power. Bennet leaves the question open by speaking of the possibility of a strategic material agency linked essentially to humans.

My use of queerness is saturated. The accountability of queerness is applied through the saturation of anthropocentric views. This means that, even if recognising my human animality, which, in turn, works from a very particular notion of knowledge, I maintain my response-ability towards my embodied privilege as a standpoint. Perhaps the notion which best expresses this position is *saturation*⁵². C. Riley Snorton (2017, 2020) who explores racial representation through this notion Melody Jue and Rafico Ruiz approach the concept as follows:

Saturation [...] is adequate to situations where discrete objects/substances/phenomena may be difficult to delineate. It involves an attitude of ontological openness, wherein the researcher does not know all the substances, elements, agencies, or processes in advance, but rather explores what may co-saturate within a given situation (2021: 2).

This saturation of categories forces the search for other directions, for new mechanisms to deal with representational discourses. Applied to my own identity, *saturation* deals with the possibility of exceeding human exceptionalism and the impossibility of dropping its privilege. Thus, New Materialisms are envisioned in these sections of my thesis as informational saturation in their engaging in other types of agencies. Bringing the notion of animacy when working through otherwise agencies deals with this saturation. As Mel Chen explores:

⁵² This concept will be further debated in subsequent chapters.

Animacy is built on the recognition that abstract concepts, inanimate objects, and things in between can be queered and racialized without human bodies present, quite beyond questions of personification. Theorizing this animacy offers an alternative, or a complement, to existing biopolitical and recent queer-theoretical debates about life and death, while the idea of toxicity proposes an extant queer bond, one more prevalent today than is perhaps given credit (2011: 265).

As we read from Chen, these accounts of other-than-human agents and intimacies involving identity formations, affective lives and other critical debates help confront what we understand and construct as reality. Nevertheless, let us not fool ourselves that NMs and other similar theories on matter can be stairways to optimism and universal better futures. They do not invite or refuse negativity or futurity. Instead, they register alternative ways of being in the world and of examining “reality”. We can see that Chen brings forth the toxicity⁵³ in which some practices may become involved as otherwise views of how to face critique beyond human-exceptionalism. Chen’s project is directed to understanding “the potential to resignify toxicity as a theoretical figure, in the interest of inviting contradictory play and crediting queer bonds already here: the living dead, the dead living, antisocial love, and inanimate affection” (Ibid: 266). As such, toxicity is animated through its exceeding a historical materiality associated to toxic critiques which, nevertheless, refuses to abandon its materiality.

Indeed, as many decolonial and indigenous scholars remind westernised visions of New Materialisms, the novelty of materiality is, in fact, very old. If we think about materialities lived through other cosmologies (Bear, 2000), we can assume that the “new” part of materialisms is original only to some contexts. Hence, New Materialisms are used in this thesis as a wide understanding of theories involving a connection to other than human agency. This revisited figuration includes anti-racist and decolonial critiques which can expose what the model embodiment of human representationalism means. As Tina Campt explains, in a conversation with Alexander Weheliye about flesh, refusal and

⁵³ The use of toxicity exceeds its traditional understanding of substances destroying a body and emphatically stresses the recognition of human embodiment as embedded in the world. In this insistence of human relationality with other world entities toxicity is framed as another state of our contemporary identities, exploring our embodiments and subjectivities in a relational continuum which deconstructs the exceptionalist idea of the human.

rhythms, “the ways in which different forms of energy are transferred and affect one another [...] That’s my point of departure that to me is productive and generative as opposed to requiring me to attribute agency somewhere” (2020; min: 39-40)⁵⁴. Certainly, giving centrality to other forms beyond the human can also attend to isolated elements as flesh, embodiment and (lifeless) objects. Both strategies, attributing agency to entities and focusing on the energy transmitted from one body to another, can be points of reference to make room for other forms of experience which are less visible and need a story of their own. This is important for the restructuring of more ethical and inclusive visions of time, History, memory and knowledges, in ways which can open to the multiplicity of experiences while simultaneously remaining accountable for the exercises of violence which are distribute through specific embodiments.

6. Beyond time, adagio. Queer temporalities, slow theories, and combined ontologies. Or beyond cyclothemes⁵⁵

“This is a story of art without markets, drama without a script, narrative
without progress”

Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011: 88)

6.1. Perfect timing and good intentions. Positivism and future

“At the center of *Cruising Utopia* there is the idea of hope, which is both, a
critical affect and a methodology”

Jose Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (2009: 4)

The anti-relational turn that we find in the works by queer theorists, such as Leo Bersani (1996), Lee Edelman (2004) or Laurent Berlant (2011), has been widely discussed inside Queer Studies. In his breaking question for one of his chapters in *Homos* (Ibid), “Should

⁵⁴ <https://vimeo.com/487372030> (Last access 01/03/2023).

⁵⁵ Cyclothemes, also known as sequences, refer to the cyclical collection of stratigraphic successions. In my use of alternative and queer temporalities, I work outside cycles, which approach time and its history as linear, to give space to a broader thinking about time-ordering and rhythms.

a homosexual be a good citizen?” Bersani escapes the trap of becoming a replica of the gender/sexual identity pattern and flies away from a productive ethical model of the imitation game that gay and lesbian’s rights had represented and reinforced throughout the last decades of the 20th century⁵⁶. Not as a celebration of exclusion, but as an affirmation of aberration, Bersani goes on deconstructing what it means for certain bodies to be recognised. Recognition is vision. Inclusion is gaze. Those who look are many. Those who portray are few. This way, his critiques posit a narrative of rejection that has, historically, a great value to different causes engaging deviant gender and sexual ways of living.

The issue of recognition is also rescued by other authors who see this rejection of the concept of *The State* and a reconsideration of outlawing as compatible with more relational ways of sociality. As I will analyse in the last part of this section, through the consideration of Queer Death Studies critiques, the breaking of the binary between reification or death⁵⁷ does not equal a normative positivism where life is the claim coming from politicised resistance.

Lee Edelman’s antisocial project *No Future* (2004) epitomises the queer subject as a site of potential rejection to heteronormative forms of reproduction. Through the figuration of the child, Edelman urges queerness to abandon commodification systems of recognition and inclusion. While the foundations upon which Edelman sustains his argument are interestingly recognised by radical queer movements which reject this “gentle” idea of the future, he fails in acknowledging the privileged embodiment from where he proposes this negativity. A fundamental parallelism to understand the anti-relational queerness and temporality that Edelman proposes is the following: “there are no queers in that future as there can be no future for queers” (2004: 30). This easy and direct formulation of a futurity is what characterises the distinction between relational and anti-relational queer critique. The former addresses a normative future where queers cannot be located, because of this future’s implicit expulsion of aberrant bodies. The

⁵⁶ Here I am referring to the *homobsession* to fit into familiar, social and relational heterosexual categories which have taken LGBTQ+ movements to focus on reproductive and productive standards of life for their political claims, dismissing the radical and non-normative potential some of our identities represent for sociality.

⁵⁷ Following the historical campaign of *Silence = Death*, which deals with reclaims of public demands for the fight against AIDS throughout the 90s.

latter, the anti-relational, does not stop there, but adds the impossibility of any kind of future in queerness. Consequently, the anti-relational responds to a space of normative rejection rather than a lost connection, since it denies the temporality tied to the present which generates strong kinships in many queer experiences. In *No Future* Edelman presents the image of a nostalgic past which functions as a promise of a future and is constructed upon the symbolic figure of the child. Such innocent and hopeful image of a promised future entails re-productivity:

[W]e do not intend a new politics, a better society, a brighter future tomorrow, since all of these fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of the future. We choose, instead, *not* to choose the Child, as disciplinary image of the Imaginary past or as site of a projective identification with an always impossible future (2004: 31).

To critique the figure of the child is to decline a reification of the body in the future through the discipline of the present. To refuse a sense of belonging that includes those bodies which have adapted to standards of present production and reproduction. It is not a question of de-potentialising immature bodies⁵⁸, which are in a place of resistance for theorists such as Jack Halberstam in his reconsidering of *failure* (2011), but rather of escaping the trap of the figuration of a promised future based upon the regulation of the body in the present.

In reading Lee Edelman, José Esteban Muñoz makes a great contribution to rescuing the potentialities of the propositions in *No Future*. Muñoz works together-apart with Edelman's project, framing temporalities within the notion of *hope*. In Edelman's pessimistic view anything referring to *future* as a concept is sterile but this, in Muñoz's language, is not necessarily a negative term:

No Future is a brilliant and nothing short of inspiring polemic. Edelman clearly announces his mode of argumentation as being in the realm of the ethical, and this

⁵⁸ *Immature* is here used in so far as they represent a constant impossibility of the anthropocentric idea of progress and follow the same logic as non-human animal bodies do.

introduction is an anticipation of a reanimated political critique and should be read as an idiosyncratic allegiance to the polemical force of his argument and nothing like an easy dismissal his argument and the seductive sway of the antirelational thesis energizes my argument in key ways (2009: 11).

As Muñoz puts it, the queer anti-relational turns “are romances of the negative, wishful thinking, and investments in deferring various dreams of difference” (Ibid), which, in his opinion are present in Bersani and Edelman among others. Remaining critical to such positions, Muñoz addresses the salient role the construction of time can play in such debates. His “queer hope” goes beyond the idea of a future, or to put it materially, it overcomes the bare promises of a normative optimism. Muñoz goes deeper in his criticism through the normative aspects of time ordering. He does not limit his critique to the future temporality of reproductive visions but also researches into other fundamental aspects of linear temporalities. When looking at the past and historicity, Muñoz draws a parallel with these critiques to reproductive values. He works through Heidegger’s notion of *historicity* (1927) contesting it. To acknowledge Heidegger’s famous contribution in the idea of *Dasein*, through which a subject is already historical (Ibid), only works if we also recognise that this critical perspective was praised by the same thinker who would join the Nazi regime some years after. To rework this temporality is to save concepts from their creators. As Muñoz explains, “Heidegger is then philosophical master and abject political failure [...] [and this is] Thinking beyond the moment and against static historicisms” (2009: 17).

Time is a ghost. Time haunts subjects. Linear time haunts queerness. It imposes an idea of the past, before present, for a mandatory future. Nevertheless, we, queers and not only, lack historicism. We are forced resistance and we are consistently hopeless. Consistently because even if, as queers, we sometimes celebrate our being in the world, our desires, our relationalities and our bodies are marked by a sense of void into the future. Our being *on/in time* is as tautological as our reclusion to reordering our own events. As David L. Eng asserts, modernity is the “persistent denial of such coevalness, its disciplining of time and space into the political logic of liberal humanism and the economic logic of liberal capitalism” (2008: 1487). Taking note of this, it is important to

bring up here the difference between what Muñoz calls “antirelationality” and concrete utopias that is his own reading of radical propositions for queer hopes. The reciprocity between relational refusal and critical alternatives is sustained in his work. Muñoz allows a wide range of critiques on the impossibility of certain typologies of future, in this particular case straight futures, which are reproductive, productive, capital and consequential to a past. At the same time, Muñoz recovers the idea of hope to inscribe it into queer terms: hope is a horizon, hope is not here and will never be in the present, but it will constantly move us forward, a forward which I read as not so much a position in time as a position towards *possibility*, as in “I’m looking forward to seeing you”. I am *looking forward to you*.

Importantly, this also implies a critique on the present, which is often lost in the promises of futurity. As Muñoz reads in the utopic writings by artists such as John Giorno, the concept of *possibility* “lies not merely in the fact that imagining any utopia offers us something that is more than another time but also [...] in that what is made available first is a critique of the present and of its limits, its barriers” (Muñoz, 2009: 37). Thus, queer utopias, in a very broad sense, also need to engage with those limits, those off-trail constructions of “race”, class or ableism which intersect in gender identities. Thus, queer temporalities add another important element: a negation of nostalgia⁵⁹. The concept of *History*, as introduced above, is also part of this debate because it is also inscribed into heteronormativity. History is normalised by gender and, vice-versa, it contains normative ideas about gender. Throughout Muñoz’s whole opera we see an idea of historicity as ephemeral. Queer temporalities deal with ephemeral pasts that materialise in infinite gestures that are the traces of a longing time. Ephemera, gestures, mimics, touches, those are our traces and we are our own ghosts.

POSE

STRIKE A POSE

PAUSE

⁵⁹ Nostalgia is concretely rejected in these paragraphs in its connection to normative understanding of temporalities, where past and present contain positive and negative values, nostalgia being the regressive missing of a better past.

Ephemera, as Karen Barad's void (2012), is not empty at all. It is an entering abjection. It serves to expel stable remains. It signifies the ontology of loss, of invisibility, and as a consequence:

To accept loss is to accept queerness- or more accurately, to accept the loss of heteronormativity, authorization, and entitlement. To be lost is not to hide in a closet or to perform a simple (ontological) disappearing act; it is to veer away from heterosexuality's path (Muñoz, 2009: 73).

Our queer bodies are not only deviant because of our practices, but also because of our rhythms, histories, and our ways of ordering time. Future is not a bright reproductive scenario, and the past is blurry. The present is sometimes sustainable because of "ritualized performances" (2009), as Muñoz writes, which sometimes mask us in the social setting, and others help us imagine different possibilities. This imagination is mediated through moments that are described as past but renew themselves in everyday practices. As Muñoz reads from Douglas Crimp:

Although the moment that Crimp describes is a moment that is behind us, its memory, its ghosts, and the ritualized performances of transmitting its vision of utopia across generational divides still fuels and propels our political and erotic lives: it still nourishes the possibility of our current, actually existing gay lifeworld (Ibid: 34).

In this fragment, Muñoz is clear about queer emotionality informed by specific temporalities: queer affects sometimes stand on top of moments of response, resistance and defiance to existing timings. In reading and attending Crimp's lectures about aids/HIV, dyke and fagot mourning and loss, Muñoz transcribes from the talk:

Freud tells us that mourning is the reaction not only to the death of a loved person, but also "to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as

a fatherland, liberty, and ideal...” Can we be allowed to induce, in this “divinized” list, the ideal of perverse sexual pleasure itself rather than one stemming from its sublimation? Alongside the dismal toll of death, what many of us have lost is a culture of sexual possibility: back rooms, tea rooms, movie houses, and baths; the trucks, the piers, the ramble, the dunes. Sex was everywhere for us, and everything we wanted to venture: Golden showers and water sports, cocksucking and rimming, fucking and fist fucking. Now our untamed impulses are either proscribed once again or shielded from us by latex. Even Qisco, the lube we used because it was edible, is now forbidden because it breaks down rubber. Sex toys are no longer added enhancements; they’re safer substitutes (Crimp in Muñoz, 2009: 33).

Muñoz’s utopia operates through negativity in the sense that he addresses the losses by already embracing a queer imagination. He speaks about queer bodies being demolished but allows another move to this mourning. That move is a queer hope, a motion towards, a horizon. As in Mark Fisher’s thought (2014), this horizon is negative, not pessimistic⁶⁰.

6.2. Other embodied timings

“We need other times”.

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (1984: 22)

I want to move on here to a much more acid use of queerness, that of the breaking of the binary between humanity and anything/everyone else. Indeed, there is a working opposition to the idea that the human, as a full category, exists in an impossible symbolic trade to anything else. Speciesism and human exceptionalism are constructed upon these parameters, that are also an ideology: the human is superior to any other species. As an antispeciesist activist, I have been dealing with all sorts of critical readings regarding where to turn this around. Antispeciesism is not based solely in a slaughter industry that kills more than 153.7 thousand pigs a day (rounding decimals that are actual lives), only

⁶⁰ I will come back to this difference through Fisher’s work in following chapters.

in the Spanish territory, but, as any other ideology, it has less visible and tangible ways of violating and exploiting other bodies. My use of queerness, both intimately and theoretically, also works through these stances which appear, at first sight, to be outside gender discourses. I say at first because the meat industry and the superiority of humanity vs. animality (that infamous Darwinism evolution of species), is tied to gender structures and patriarchal thinking, as Carol J. Adams disseminates (1990)⁶¹. Following from our discussion on queer temporalities, I want to stop at this stage to think on how meat and dairy consumption are also bound to an idea of futurity. The fantasy of survival, of nurturing a body, matters as an idea in linearity towards a future promise. Needless to say that this is only an illusion, since the animal industry and, above all, the human exceptionalist delirium, is leading us to the consumption, and eventual extinction, of the planet as if we were the only piece in the puzzle. Still, it is not so much the material effects that we are now starting to face because of their bursting in our bodily systems, but rather the very ideology of the “some are more equal than others”. The Orwellian fable also serves Jack Halberstam to think about these intricate ways of constructing the world. In his words:

Building new worlds by accessing new forms of sociality through animals turns around the usual equation in literature that makes the animal an allegorical stand-in in a moral fable about human folly (*Animal Farm* by Orwell, for example). Most often we project human worlds onto the supposedly blank slate of animality, and then we create the animals we need in order to locate our own human behaviors in “nature” or “the wild” (2011: 32).

Halberstam sees a huge potential in the way allegories and metaphors drive to new modes of dealing with reality. Still, he also questions what is there to animality in these animated films and historical fables. While speaking about the family ideology, Halberstam,

⁶¹ Without centring my analysis in the antispeciesist frame of reference, I do find crucial the connection that Adams attains through objectification, fragmentation and consumption of the non-human animal to gender and sexuality theories. Obviously, these objectifying mechanisms are not only reduced to gendered and sexualised bodies but also involve other categories such as “race” or ableism.

proposes a very interesting category of “straight time” through the notion of continuity. Writing on the mass media film culture of the 2000s, Halberstam sees potential in the way certain films distort the conceptualisation of the ideal of the family “[a]s a kind of false narrative of continuity, as a construction that makes connection and succession seem organic and natural, [...] [which] also gets in the way of all sorts of other alliances and coalitions” (Ibid: 71). In his own view, kids’ films, those which are not-yet sexualised, have the potentiality to deconstruct the idea of individualism which we do encounter in adult movies. By using examples from films produced by *Pixar*, Halberstam exposes the alternative patterns of cooperation and community building the present in these films, involving us in a reading which serves to demonstrate that sexuality is not only gendered but also capitalised and temporally ordered. And in this, Halberstam’s proposal pairs with Edelman’s thinking that “reproductive futurism” is here produced through the “domestication in the form of romance” (Edelman, 2004: 132). It is not only an idea of the future, that I will come back to when speaking about reproduction in queer cosmologies, but also the connectivity between times through a sense of continuity that normalised structures, such as the family, allow. In doing so, the act of “passing” that queer lives suffer, in order to be good citizens also entails adapting to these values, that Halberstam recalls in the critiques to *homonormativity* in Lisa Duggan’s work (2002)⁶². In my own case studies, I very much engage in these theories because they pinpoint problematics of how self-regulation has been part of my own queer life. Not only the ideological values that these concepts impose in deviant bodies, but rather the way in which a queer structuration of marriage and family sense is also a fundamental gear for private property and capitalism. The biological failure of the continuity in time that we represent -following natural rhythms of reproduction- can be now overcome by a legal system of inclusion.

6.3. Inclusion. What a great word

⁶² I had privilege to learn all this directly from both Halberstam and Duggan during the Granada GEMMA intensive seminar in 2018 and the GEMMA-NOISE Summer School at Utrecht University in 2017, respectively.

Retaking the point which I first touched upon when exploring Lee Edelman's unpopular *No future*, Halberstam places a great deal of potentiality upon the bodies of children and animals. This inclusion of animality as an ideal of non-progress -as I have expressed above- goes hand in hand with the figure of childhood, not because of an intrinsic innocence, but rather as a response to adult centred constructions of humanity and anthropocentrism. In this respect, Halberstam sees a potential in the way children's films work through the, sometimes, non-human bodies, to generate a community based response to the plot. Following the connection to Edelman's book, and departing from his critiques on both the child and the, as he puts it, "dumbest animals" (2004: 137), I want to analyse a particular turn towards Halberstam or Muñoz. In their texts, *The Queer Art of Failure* and *Cruising Utopia*, the authors decentralise the general public in order to centre upon a particular set of non-dominant groups which consume these art productions either through cartoons (in Halberstam) or as queer performances (in Muñoz's case). Here I would like to insist on how Edelman's negativity is contested through the fictional utopias which Muñoz and Halberstam generate in their writings, where only playful children and queers exist. While Edelman's negation of utopia is rooted in a conscious presence of antagonists who consume and eradicate these sites of resistance, Halberstam and Muñoz imagine a world where community based response and relational desires are the cultural forms of existence.

6.4. Beyond nurturing: a non-dichotomous account of tactics

The different construction of the (C)child that the texts have are, in Edelman's text, a problematic in that it focuses on the idea of innocence, and corresponds to the child as an imaginary, an ideology, and in Muñoz's and Halberstam's texts they write about the child as a public and not about the child as an ideology, and this is the potential. The former use is highly risky because innocence is equalled to domesticated or/and compliant figures. Here, the invisible and indivisible bond between the State and a sense of innocence represented through the child also takes us to a new consideration: how non-violence is seen as the only way to resist and engage in a well-mannered citizenship. In this figurative form of resistance, the domestication of the State also naturalises the

emotional shapes of citizenship. Peter Gelderloos explains this point brilliantly when writing *How Non-Violence Protects the State* (2007). As Gelderloos explains, non-violent positions are also dependent on certain privileges, implying that “[n]onviolence refuses to recognize that it can only work for privileged people, who have a status protected by violence, as the perpetrators and beneficiaries of a violent hierarchy” (2007: 24). Gelderloos clarifies that the problem with non-violence is not its strategy as such, but its imposition as the only path to end an already-existing violent system. He adds that, even if many oppressed subjects have chosen non-violence as a tactic of resistance, the problem stands with the normalisation of non-violent standards as the only way to achieve freedom or response of some kind. As he defends as a specific approach:

[A] *diversity of tactics*, meaning effective combinations drawn from a full range of tactics that might lead to liberation from all the components of this oppressive system: white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and the state. We believe that tactics should be chosen to fit the particular situation, not drawn from a preconceived moral code (Ibid: 3).

This approach contends the historical boundaries between violence and pacifism, as there was nothing in-between or outside their limits. Anarchism is pictured here as I sense it in my own practice: a way of recognising the necessary specificity of every situation and the rejection of any standardising way of governing people and their struggles and joys. The advocacies to pacifism often call on actions such as sit-downs, hunger strikes or melodic chants. I, myself, use these tactics. But not only. I use these and many others in the recognition of my own oppression as a dyke womxn but also white abled and remunerated one. As I will explore through the case studies, these non-violent strategies have surrendered to armed forces in most cases. In some others, as I will also analyse, they are not even read as resistance, and as such, they are often ignored, dismissed and blurred in space as if nothing has happened. Gelderloos touches upon structures of sexism which often accompany violence-binary discourses. As it is well known, many of the first (*white bourgeois*) feminists, or at least, those we recognise by name, claimed themselves as pacifists. They did so because they saw a masculinisation of violent actions which,

aftermath, led to an implicit sexism and violence against women. Here, apart from including other identities such as queer and trans people in the consequences of a patriarchal system of values, Gelderloos also disarticulates the myth of violence as only tied to the masculine/male body. As he states:

The entire idea that violence is masculine, or that revolutionary activism necessarily excludes women, queers, and trans people is, like other premises of nonviolence, based on historical whitewashing. Ignored are the Nigerian women occupying and sabotaging petroleum facilities; the women martyrs of the Palestinian intifada; the queer and transgender warriors of the Stonewall Rebellion (Ibid: 69).

As he exposes, many non-violent positions are linked to particularly oppressed feminised bodies in white and westernised readings of the issue. Yes, passive actions work. Sometimes. In some places. Under certain circumstances. But this should not contaminate and, quite literally, colonise resistance⁶³. These critical views of how resistance has been constructed also pose another problem: the identitarian construction of the activist/militant/oppressed as a total subject throughout time and space. Subjects who represent any kind of resistance through passivity, direct action, mourning or peaceful dialectics, are many. This is so because not only are they different from each other, but they also hold in themselves this non-monistic identity. As I analyse in my review of Patrizia Melzer's *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl: Women's political violence in the Red Army Faction* (2015):

In *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl*, Patrizia Melzer problematizes the binary constructions of these discourses in order to analyse the participation of women inside activist and terrorist groups. In doing so, Melzer does not only challenge

⁶³ Here I am thinking of the many examples which work outside capital and colonising systems of social organisation, such as the Zapatistas, with whom I had the opportunity to debate during their "Travesía Por La Vida. Capítulo Europa", in 2021 in Napoli. In these conversations, to think about non-dichotomic violence meant to listen to The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) speaking about demilitarising their territories through their strategic armed system.

the social order, but also any essentialist representation of the feminist subject. Instead, she privileges feminist practice by focusing on acts and behaviours rather than identity construction of feminist subjectivity (2018: 3).

In Melzer's analysis, the violent actions of the women inside the RAF terrorist group were viewed from the outside feminist groups as the consequence of influential violent male activists, thus imposing not only a peaceful essence to female bodies, but also a romantic one, as if these women would have been incapable of enacting violence if it were not for a heterosexual passion that forced them into action. From a different perception, this involvement in terrorist militancy was also viewed as "the result of an 'exceed of women's liberation'" (2015: 2). All in all, Melzer discusses how "[w]omen's participation in militant and political groups in the 1970s and 1980s was not in accord with prevalent perceptions of women as peaceful and nurturing" (Ibid). This time framing can be extended non only temporally, since the restriction to political action and violence is still a component restricted to women's political life, but also to different aspects of analysis. In my case, I do see a strong connection here to one of the case studies, when, in the city of Bologna, we faggots and dykes, were infantilised at a particular protest and dismissed as incapable of non-obedient and non-passive resistance. As I will analyse through the specific case study, the treatment of queerness was constructed from this feminisation of the movement, where state forces as police agents, with whom we wanted nothing to do, were nurturing our passive and fragile sissy bodies. As Melzer continues:

Current scholarship usually posits that women in left-radical groups distanced themselves politically from the autonomous women's movement and thus from the question of feminist politics. To dismiss the connection between left-radical women and feminist activists/politics because their ties were not formally organised means to discount gender as an organising force beyond consciously politicising it. Instead, my analysis [...] that armed women at times engaged intensely with feminist issues and politics (2015: 7).

Here, Melzer is very clear about the essentialism that we sometimes find in gender issues and movements. In this sense, someone's decisions can be gendered even if they are not politicised through gender political views. Or to put it quite simply, Melzer's interest is "in feminist political practices, not [in] defining 'the' feminist political subject" (10). The rejection of certain expectations bound to different bodies does not equal an unwavering defence of terrorism or violence as such, but rather re-orientates the search of the subject of feminism to the object of practices of response. This also means that the search for practices may lead us to an image of women we do not identify with, an image we may even criticise. Gender does not only affect and effect informed bodies, but it also permeates a full range of aspects of one's identity. The singularity of political identity that we see here is memorable. It is as if when you choose feminism, the rest of your militancy is bullshit and if you choose anything else besides recognising our struggle as womxn, you're out of play in feminist issues. In a deviation from the particular issue of women terrorists, Melzer analyses how the use of active violence as a political strategy is viewed by the general public as uncomfortable to the state's promises. Similarly to the debates on the promises of futurity through queer temporalities seen above, Melzer writes: "because terrorists symbolise a violent departure from the social contract and challenge the promise of democratic political measures, they are often demonized in public debates" (232). Again, we see here not a defence of violence as such, but a twist on questions regarding resistance, struggle, activism and identity structurations.

7. There is nothing new to matter. Everyday materialism, renewed matters, and queer deaths. Or the principle of cross-cutting relationships⁶⁴

Following the previous sections, I want to explore the connections existing between different epistemologies which can stand as allies of each other. From decolonialities to New Materialisms, I want to draw a line to see what there is to matter that is sustained in

⁶⁴ This principle refers to a rock body that is cut by another rock body, being older than this body cutting. My reiteration through this layer is to acknowledge how New Materialisms speak as a renewed epistemology but are, in fact, genealogically posterior to "everyday" materialisms, which have been present in many epistemologies, ontologies and existences over the world.

both, not so much as points of connection, but rather as particular responses to the sometimes-shared points of emergence.

As Jerry Lee Rosiek, Jimmy Snyder and Scott L. Pratt write (2020), NMs need to recognise and include indigenous literature on agent ontologies, and deal with their concurrent existence. New materialisms and Everyday Materialisms are both connected and dissociated, since they deal with materiality beyond anthropocentric sets, but also follow a different historicity. Leroy Little Bear (2000), among many other indigenous scholars and thinkers, works through a notion of these everyday materialisms which stand as a factual response to otherwise-considerations of matter which are not new, but stand upon a long set of non-anthropocentric genealogical cosmologies. According to this visibilisation of the everyday practices of material accounts, new materialisms as a recent set of theories is an approach that is located inside a certain geopolitical organisation, that of the global north, where not only the practices of epistemologies take the human body as central, but also other forms of extraction and acceleration have debounced our human lives from dead and inert vibrancies. From these theoretical considerations, the posthuman is also re-envisioned since it is criticised as the limited alternative of the westernised philosophy to think outside the human exceptional box. In the reflections on these critiques, I use Rosi Braidotti's strong contribution of combining "features that are usually perceived as opposing, namely the possession of a sense of identity that rests not on fixity but on contingency" (1994: 31). Fixity and contingency are important to dismantle stagnant identitarian propositions which seek transcendence. Reflecting upon such radical idea, I realise that there is something which has been often overlooked in readings of that fragment: the notion of *possession*. Among other themes, this thesis takes a close look at the meaning of *possession* and the consequences of embodied and material privatisations. In this regard, it is interesting to pay attention to the way in which identities are constructed following the strategies of real estate. What I mean by this is that speaking about fixity in relation to identity, as Braidotti criticises here, there is another way of constructing an oppositional dynamic inside-outside, in which, once more, there are subjectivities that do not fit in. Even if Braidotti focuses here upon the category of *woman* in its broadest sense, I think her thinking is fundamental for the breaking free of political and activist considerations of diversity in identity, as queer or transfeminist movements

are trying to reframe. In Braidotti's work, the used figuration of *the nomad* is not on an exile but a massive force abandonment:

Critical thinking is not a diaspora of the elected few but a massive abandonment of the logocentric polis, the alleged "center" of the empire, on the part of critical and resisting thinking beings. Whereas for Benhabib the normativity of the phallogocentric regime is negotiable and repairable, for me it is beyond repair. Nomadism is therefore also a gesture of nonconfidence in the capacity of the polis to undo the power foundations on which it rests (1994: 32).

I am aware that there is a certain consciousness of privilege in Braidotti's work, and I deem it important that there is a recognition of a necessary stable point of identity from which to operate and which can "allow one to function in a community" (Braidotti, 1994: 33). Still, and focusing not only on her work, this compulsory flexibility and fluidity is sometimes corseted by very tight ropes. As it continues, to state that "the nomad has no passport- or has too many of them" (Ibid) is somehow out of debate as an impossible comparison of different movements of identity. However, keeping in mind that "Nomadic cartographies need to be redrafted constantly" (35), I will use Braidotti as an example on how these cartographies ought to apply this change for them not to become maps. I would like to re-conduct the notion of *nomadism* to incorporate Isabelle Stengers's approach to it (1987). By attaching it to concepts that we use in academic research and critical practices, Stengers speaks of a notion of nomadism that overcomes some of the limitations on the ethical recognition of privilege that Braidotti's nomad metaphor presents. My critique on Braidotti's work is, obviously, more an emphasis than an attack on her thought, since it has been thanks to her that a significant part of my epistemological bases has solidified. As I will analyse later in this thesis, the junction of two of Braidotti's works (*Nomadic Subjects*, 1994 and *The Posthuman*, 2013) give birth to my idea of *subjective nomadities*, which thinks on how space and movement are also subjective to the one who sees, perceives and enacts them. Braidotti retains an interesting point of self-analysis when writing:

Before we let ourselves joyfully celebrate our internationalism, therefore, let us ask ourselves: are we sufficiently present as citizens in our country to start thinking seriously about being citizens of the world? Unless we reflect seriously upon our own belonging to, involvement in, and implication with our culture, we are in danger of postulating internationalization as yet another version of women's exile (1994: 253).

This point is important to ponder on how we generate a sense of allies without falling into a self-determinism politics of generalisation and universalisation of ethical approaches. The critique on these privileged and self-centred practices of the human beyond embodiment is also inhabited by a self-awareness of the ways in which my abled embodied construction has overlooked for many years critical disability studies. In this sense, my critique to the posthuman and other alternatives- which are based on particular embodied experiences while not being completely aware of this specificity-, is also involved in my position on the normativity of abled embodiments. As in the works by theorists Eli Clare (2009), Margrit Shildrick (2002) or Sami Schalk (2022), to name only a few, we cannot speak about gender, sexuality and queerness without situating them in connection to other systems of experience, such as ableism or racialisation.

I would like to close this review of the different strata of the theories illuminating this thesis with considerations of death and otherwise-(non)-living agents. In this regard, another aspect of New Materialisms in their connection to queer temporalities is the theories and works involving Queer Death Studies critiques. QDS⁶⁵ focus on the importance of necropolitical forces ruling contemporary bodies, including non-human ones. It also attends to the many ways in which death and mourning vary from one context to another. It departs from Achille Mbembe's ⁶⁶ (2003) thesis on how, through the idea of sovereignty, the State has the power to work through the logic of annihilation and to involve a citizen imaginary to partake in these actions, maybe not actively, but completely. Death only gains its own property within linear time, the temporality of a body that disappears at the end of a straight line. But the importance of this set of critiques

⁶⁵ Queer death studies may be referred to through this abbreviation from this point on.

⁶⁶ Who I had the chance to meet when attending his classes during the 2019 edition of the Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory Summer School, in Bologna.

goes beyond this linearity, or at least beyond its sense of ordering of time. It rather focuses on the aspects that involve each of the stages of life. It overcomes the limitations of anthropocentric views of memory and living experiences. The human body becomes another expression of material bodies that inhabit the world, and the temporality of memory is distorted into new perspectives of how to remember, how to write History and, most importantly, how to occupy the present moment. The other space of critique in QDS, the one focusing on the many aspects of death and the infinite affectivities which derive from them, tries to recognise the anthropocentric visions of life, in which aspects such as human exceptionalism, white representationalism and active companions⁶⁷ are at the centre of the most part of the western epistemological tradition. Obviously, the resulting anthropocentrism, racism, colonialism and speciesism are the practical outcomes of this set of traditions. It is important to bear in mind these two aspects when using presumed geopolitical concepts concerning the control of bodies by states, institutions, world alliances and other forces of power. In the specific case of biopolitics and necropolitics, QDS involves an awareness of the multiplicity of death, in its forms of enaction and strategic significance in different spaces and at different times. In his analysis of Tasmanian indigenous realities, Gregory Lehman addresses death as relational when speaking about the intimacy of death and the centrality of its thinking for the formulation and formation of cosmological understandings. In Lehman's words, "[t]he world we live in vibrates with the energy of political struggle and revitalisation. The clarity of our vision and the depth of our understanding of the world today is made possible through their intimacy with death" (1997: 54). In this claim of otherness in the conceptual use of death, Lehman also addresses the colonial presence in indigenous experiences and the becoming of death as a "quiet companion", which also tainted the notion of death, the past, ancestors and vibrant entities in a constant resistance to such colonial presence. In this sense, the recognition of the many archives for death is not driven from a desire to

⁶⁷ Here I follow, and also deviate from, Donna Haraway's understanding of transpecies communality (2003) since the only relationality regarded by the human body are those entities which allow a specific activity to fit inside human exceptionalism. Haraway's ambiguous use responds to the exceptionalist selection she does while only engaging in certain "significant others", referring to dogs. It also dives into the problematics of evolution which she analyses in order to explain the bond between humans and dogs.

romanticise its use from abusive, violent, extractive, statal, colonial and official forces, but rather an opening to find alternative ways of living which exceed the cultural forms we sometimes take for granted in the white-western traditions. Important names for me in the study of these otherwise considerations of death, dying and mourning are Marietta Radomska, Tara Mehrabi and Nina Lykke. These scholars situate their QDS critique as a supremacist problem from the perspectives touched upon previously: the human, whiteness, cis-male, heteronormative and abled body. In their move towards queerness, they question these normative understandings of the body which, in turn, translate in specific ways of understanding contemporary discourses surrounding, in this case, death. As they write:

[T]he engagements with death, dying and mourning constitutive of conventional Death Studies' research (e.g. Kearl 1989; Kasher 2007), need to be taken critically further, among others, where they have been constrained by normative notions of the human subject; the human/nonhuman divide; continuing bonds; family relations and communities; rituals; and experiences of mourning and bereavement. Individuals who do not fulfill the conditions of the normative idea of the human (usually imagined to be white, middle-class, heterosexual, cisgendered, and able-bodied) tend to be ignored in dominant stories on death, loss, grief and mourning. Moreover, the current environmental crisis seems to produce new kinds of planetary consciousness about living in ecological and social proximities to extinction, which also gives rise to demands for new kinds of stories of death, dying and mourning (2019: 5).

To open the conceptual uses of death, dying and mourning, to recognise the specific strategies behind their issued necropolitical and biopolitical controls of the social bodies, and to work outside the dichotomous separation between dead and alive are some of the main concerns in this non-binary view of theory, which can easily be applied to parts of the case studies which cannot be understood through these split examinations. Judith Butler has also contributed to the topic while thinking through the question of mourning and grieving. This takes us beyond the individual actions of killing and dying and into the

relational aspects of the consequences involved, such as grief, loss and mourning. Who is allowed to mourn, how and which bodies are grievable, as they ask in their famous *Precarious Life* (2004), becomes fundamental in the disentangling of the normative constructions of embodiment. Queer theory is taken to a new stage: gender and sexuality, albeit their importance in the genealogical path towards a queering of social understanding of oppositional discursive constructions, are not always present nor needed for a queer claiming of alternatives.

In her development of the notion of *necropatriarchy*, which tries to address the specific necropolitics involved in femicides⁶⁸, Sayak Valencia⁶⁹ engages in questions about death, mourning and justice for violences which have become anchored. In such a sedimentation, certain bodies have entered a zone of grievable indistinction where there is a normalisation of the perpetuated structural violences. In Valencia's terms:

I propose necropolitics as the management and capitalization of the death processes that are highly tied to sexism and necropatriarchy in the Mexican state. Necropolitical power expands in a metastable way, among classes, races and generations, regularly leading against those who are nonbinary, queer, racialized, poor, renegade, and/or people living in conditions of precarity. I understand necropatriarchy as the privilege of exercising the techniques of necropolitical violence proffered by the patriarchy to the figure-body of the individual man (2019a: 185).

⁶⁸ The term is defined by Jane Caputi and Diana Russell as "Femicide is the ultimate end of a continuum of terror that includes rape, torture, sexual slavery (particularly in prostitution), incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual abuse, physical and emotional battery, sexual harassment, genital mutilations (clitoridectomies, infibulations); unnecessary gynecological operations (gratuitous hysterectomies), forced heterosexuality, forced sterilisation, forced motherhood (criminalising contraception and abortion), psychosurgery, [...] denial of protein to women in some cultures, cosmetic surgery and other mutilations in the name of beautification. Whenever these forms of terrorism result in death, they become femicides" (1990; 1992: 15). I agree with most of the elements involving femicide/feminicide in this account but particularly stand against any form of colonial, patriarchal, paternalistic way of dominating agency, by which I do recognise sex work beyond the simplification of the limits of human trafficking and forced labour.

⁶⁹ Who I thank in this thesis because of her wonderful short course in the GEMMA programme in Granada, in 2019, and because of her personal kindness in sharing extra time with us during those days and many other times since then.

These postmortem and transmortem *Gore-Capitalist politics*, as Valencia nominates them characterise the *necroadministrative* state of impunity against trans, cis and gender non-conforming women in the Mexican state. They speak to us, as Valencia indicates, about the variable and multiple management and administration of death and mourning whose tactics change rhythmically but surely when it comes to targeting vulnerable embodiments. The way in which these theoretical localities highlight the ambiguity which is sustained by generalised identity exclusions (in this case those towards women) is interesting since it also specifies their location, insisting upon the specificity of each place to target different embodiments (for example with the specific case of racialised women in Spain).

In this theoretical revision of power in its connection to time and space, in their multiple forms, you may have grasped the epistemological genealogy I come from. However, my specific genealogy inside Academia does not fully picture the many covered layers of knowledge that have taken place outside epistemic institutions. In this recollection, I have tried to make clear how the superpositions of theories and my own use of notions is not pure but rather responds to a set of movements, clashes, erasures and losses that I have tried to explain resorting to the archaeological and geological method of stratigraphy as the guiding method for my story telling in this chapter. After accounting for time-orderings, spatial distances and powerful concepts, stratigraphy also serves my further analysis since I will work on the principle of accumulation, i.e., building upon, bringing back and looking beyond in order to wrap the specificity of this thesis⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ The principle of accumulation consists of intra-active elements that activate through their very contact, acknowledging the possibilities on building upon already structured ideas and working through contact between the parts rather than through isolated reflections.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGIES IN ACTION: CONCEPTS AS METHODS

1. Introducing the method. A cartography of actions

“What power epistemologies are confined inside concepts?”. This was the first question that came to mind when wondering on a starting point for this chapter. Although inspired now by the Covid-19 aftermath, the idea has indeed been part of my research since long ago and it is, actually, imbued in the analysis of the limits of theories and genealogies conducted in the preceding chapter. It is my intention in this one to explore how the theoretical strata depicted previously unfolds as a methodological landscape from where to explore the case studies under examination in this thesis.

As I am kin to do, I want to recall a memory. It was during a feminist theory seminar I attended six years ago that I first had the opportunity to problematise the use and abuse of the most influential critical concepts. I insist upon the fact that this moment represented an opportunity, since, after many years of theoretical studies, practical application, and personal experiences, I was able to face academic research from an ethical integrity attitude. The group’s opinion at the time was that these concepts were intrinsically associated with the “big names” who had coined them, and that the resulting conceptual architecture was built upon power and privileged chronotopes. This, together with the immutability of the concepts themselves, generated our suspicion of our mechanical use of such concepts in our own research. In a sort of time trade, the experience also triggered a process of reflection, which has eventually given birth to the present chapter. Two other considerations have been added to this discussion since. One: that when we conduct research we often neglect the colonial epistemologies embedded in our sources of reference; and two: that we assume certain configurations as naturally rooted in the concepts we employ, which, in turn, may have a distorting effect on the transference of research results to the arena of social activity and political motions.

Therefore, this chapter sets out from the conviction that concepts are more than mere passive agents helping us explain the world we are immersed in. The way we put concepts together does not only unpack them as methodologies but also gives them a

space and a place for recognition, a point of departure for a new (con)figuration. It is my opinion that only by choosing to break with monistic/centric (con)figurations of concepts can we progress towards a real decolonisation of epistemologies and, hence, embrace a constellation of methodologies we may refer to as “eccentric”. They are eccentric since they do not occupy the centre by standing there stagnantly. Rather, they function by diffractive patterns that speak more about cartographies of action than about static border maps ⁷¹.

Let me start, hence, by exploring the roles played by *eccentricity* and Karen Barad’s diffractive shift in the re-activation of concepts I propose in this chapter. Barad’s *diffraction* can help problematise the centrality of concepts and the mindset which legitimises them according to the logics of maps, whose borders validate some of them while excluding others. I propose that the logics of cartographies can help replace exclusive borders with inclusive liminality and that a diffractive approach to the use of concepts inside hegemonic spaces, such as Academia, can trigger their radical transformation into actions. Following Trinh T. Minh-ha’s (1990) rejection of the levelling out of differences conveyed by hegemony, I maintain that concepts as actions, and within actions, can unleash translocutions, transfluctuations and translocations of performativity. *Translocution* involves a diffraction of the notion of *space* and a re-configuration of the concepts of maps and borders. It opens understandings of spaces as eccentric cartographies which involve the eliciting of their performance of power. Thus, on the one hand, space takes me to engage with situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988; Csordas, 1994). On the other hand, material locations are reconceptualised here through an approach to physics as hypothetical simultaneous possibilities, or in Barad’s terms, a quantum superposition of potentialities (2014). In this trend, I reject physics as the study of what *there is* and I propose a transgression of the ontology of this concept. In a similar vein, I reject the idea that one should just limit oneself to the act of *speaking* about paths of knowledge rather than *taking action* on them. It is as if the material part of existence would blur into the fluidity of postmodernity, into all its misleading words as momentum

⁷¹ Parts of this chapter were published in Harris Sánchez, Angie. (2021). “Contesting power in public art spaces. Liminal p(1)aces, diverting methodologies and observant participation in *Valor y Cambio*”. *Sociology and Technoscience; Vol 11 No 1 (2021): Seeking Eccentricity*. Pp: 39-55.

reactions with no consequences⁷². In this sense, my formula would be to use an onto-epistemological approach to break free from “geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority [...] remaining resolutely accountable for the role ‘we’ play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming” (Barad, 2003: 802). Besides, the practices of concepts must start articulating the performative part of their “becoming”, a queer becoming, serving as a tribute to José Esteban Muñoz’s queer horizons, words that combine and transition with no need for fixed arrivals. This understanding of “becoming” has the potentiality of performing specific actions that are both evolving and located.

Following the arguments outlined above, another aspect in the dismantling of centrality is the urgent need to pay attention to the multicentricity of meanings in language. Concepts exist because they are articulated through language. Their polysemy gives them a potentiality for manifold uses and relationalities. As language, concepts are both located and can (re)locate and, in this sense, language plays tricks on us. Take for instance the concept of *identity*, which derives from the Latin *identificare*, a combination of two terms: *identicus* + *-ificare* (equal + to fix). The connotations of fixation, stasis and permanence are evident in the original Latin term while they are covert in the English one. Hence, when using the English language, the concept itself functions as a shield to attempts to enliven it, give it fluidity and movement. Language is, therefore, finally responsible for the way policies based on concepts, such as politics of identity, tend to get stuck in space, time and relationality once the initial motion which generates them is over. Breaking with a monistic understanding of concepts and choosing their plurality of meaning entails also resisting their commodification. Just like free radicals, concepts can be used as branches which outreach and escape the control of institutions, academic and others. In other words, I question the rhizomatic meanings we encounter in concepts when we focus on how they interpellate and are interpellated by the material cultures in which they are used.

⁷² Let me illustrate this thought with the following example: We are constantly told by scientists, that the essence of science is impossible for “us” to access. In this sense, this “us” refers to “others”, the uninvited guests to academic research and practices dictated by scientific powers whose hegemony depends on exclusion. This exclusion cannot be attained without the use of a specific type of language, encrypted to everyone other than the scientists who designed it.

Concepts are situated not only in space, as the traditional monism of the concept of space would imply, but also in time and relationality. These new directions are made concrete in this thesis by agential-cuts which are, as Barad explains:

A specific intraaction (involving a specific material configuration of the “apparatus of observation”) enacts an agential cut (in contrast to the Cartesian cut- an inherent distinction- between subject and object) effecting a separation between “subject” and “object”. That is, the agential cut enacts a local resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy (2003: 815).

This is all inside Barad’s purpose of a performative metaphysics, in which performativity is seen outside the constraints of human intelligibility. In this excision from humanist metaphysics, Barad reflects upon the question of meaning itself. Their examination of how non-human entities are invested into performativity grants the later new frontiers from where to be considered. This suggests a new way of looking at the materiality of concepts, since what Barad exposes is not so much their materiality as words but how the meanings and significations associated with the practice of concepts is arranged attending to the human exceptional principle. Following the disarticulation of the concept of *meaning* as a human capacity and property, meaning is not under the unique domain of discursive practices. Here we see an example of the ambivalence of the usage of the concept of *discourse*, already analysed in the previous chapter under the light of poststructuralism. It is potential at the time it limits our views of significant elements in our world making. As Barad notes:

Discursive practices are often confused with linguistic expression, and meaning is often thought to be a property of words [...] Meaning is not a property of individual words or groups of words. Meaning is neither intralinguistically conferred nor extralinguistically referenced. Semantic contentfulness is not achieved through the thoughts or performances of individual agents but rather through particular discursive practices (2003: 818).

As seen in the previous chapter, the anthropocentric placing of significance should be dislocated from its central position. As Barad puts it: “Discursive practices are not anthropomorphic placeholders for the projected agency of individual subjects, culture, or language. Indeed, they are not human-based practices” (Ibid: 821), and it is in this replacement that not only space, but also the temporalities and relationalities involved are also rethought of. Barad writes further on that these perspectives reject “the presupposition that language and measurement perform mediating functions” (Ibid: 813). Barad has the ability here to pinpoint the particular articulation of knowledge as a dispositif of human-exceptionalism. The agential realism that Barad informs in their work activates a new metaphysical understanding, in which phenomena are “ontologically primitive relations- relations without preexisting relata” (Ibid: 815). In this light, my application of *ethico-onto-epistemologies* (Barad, 2007) is here transferred to my own questioning of the use of concepts. Ontologies and epistemologies function in an impossible symbiosis where what “exists” is indivisible from “what we grasp”. By thinking of concepts as methods I recognise the limitations I encounter in the act of conceptualisation, where translation, as has been discussed above, in both a spatial and a linguistic sense, becomes an essential piece of the equation.

Some bodies are held as the actors to translate experience into theory, these becoming concepts. In this exposure of how concepts are domesticated, translation is bound to a certain rhythm, where the acknowledgment of a setting pending on time and space for these concepts to take shape also includes energy as a main element for this frequency. As Henry Lefebvre has proposed through his main theoretical input in *Rythmanalysis* (1992; 2004), “[e]verywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm” (15). In this rhythmic *dressage*⁷³, concepts as methods are directly connected with the critique that Barad posits on *representationalism* as a system of knowledge. Through Lefebvre’s analysis of rhythm, representationalism in Barad is grasped as that human observation revealing and translating pre-existing realities.

Returning to the importance of a view that decentralises not only space but also species, representationalism and the critique to the centrality of words also reframes this

⁷³ Which is used in Lefebvre as a rhythmic training and a training into a rhythm (2004).

understanding of *anthropobsession*. As Barad expresses, “[r]epresentationalism, metaphysical individualism, and humanism work hand in hand, holding the worldview in place” (2007: 134). Even though I will not disseminate here my views towards animal studies and antispeciesist practices, I do want to expose the connection between these fields of study when analysing critique related to knowledge systems, bodies in exceptionalism and ontological pragmatism.

Departing from my exploration of genealogies of theories of power in the preceding chapter (through Foucault, Gramsci or Butler), I retake these ideas now to expose how genealogies are also functional as methodologies. This, in turn, involves the liberation of the main frames of this thesis, such as queer concepts, elements and experiences from their traditional meta-applications within the sphere of Queer Theory. My aim in this chapter is to explore queerness as methodology, overflowing constricted applications which have often excluded non queer examples. The exclusionary application of these concepts dilapidates their potentialities. Besides, we cannot disregard the genealogical ties between the primaeval uses of the concepts when they were created and their current usages, which often deviate from the original coinage. A famous example of this is the very discussed case of *Intersectionality*, which has detoured from its critical genealogy by its overuse and a lack of revision and recognition by white scholars and activists. Landscapes of historical friction, words enacted in impossible connections and the uses of languages are queered going beyond identity ⁷⁴.

2. Methodology as a happening

⁷⁴ As it is traditional in the application of queer and gender theories, these are usually applied to case studies and situations which have a central tie to gender or/and sexual identities. In the case of this thesis, even if gender and sexuality are present in every scenario, they are not the organising element of the experiences which are located in my analysis. In this case, even if gender and sexuality also appear as core elements to some of the situations here exposed, queer theory is applied to give new understandings and throw different questions to encounters which exceed a queer/gender understanding.

This is just a *happening*⁷⁵. Academia, its roles, hierarchies and, above all, the theories “we”⁷⁶ create are just *happenings*. This, as discussed in the theory chapter, is an important issue for me: fiction is already a methodology which draws attention on the way in which the epistemologies we create as humans, that is, as assemblages of time-space-relations, are just *happenings*. Happenings are ephemeral since they only take place once and hence they only respond to the issue for which they have been created. I want to avoid the idea that, when speaking of activism and political actions (as I do further on in the chapters), these are reduced to the idea of happenings. Still, I do want to point out and use the idea of the *immanence* of research (Spinoza, 1677; Braidotti, 2013), because it is the only way to explain my use of some theories, such as the above-mentioned New Materialisms, performance and queerness, three of the theoretical frames that are pivotal to my work and to my living life, immanently related.

This thesis is articulated by seven main concepts which are also its tools: *queerness*, *decoloniality*, *affect*, *autoethnography*, *fiction*, *materiality* and *anarchism*. These tools are actually conceptual frames, notions from where I organise and activate the chapters in it. In the following sections, I will explain each one of these conceptual frames, giving value to their active specificities and not ignoring that each person can perform each one of these categories differently. In doing so, I also wish to escape a generality of meanings, or a given critical way of applying and situating them⁷⁷. Another aspect worth clarifying is the phenomenology⁷⁸ of each case study that takes me to apply different methods in each case. The structure of these chapters follows this schema, by letting them get affected by conceptual triggerings which situate the particular concepts

⁷⁵ Allan Kaprow uses the term in the mid 50s to design those performances of art that are spontaneous and temporally unique because of their immanent quality (Kaprow, 1956).

⁷⁶ As has been exposed before, this thesis insists on a commonality driven from the contexts I have lived in. The locations of Academia, whiteness, legalness, Europe and activism in these places conform the vast “We” which I use to speak about specific relationalities.

⁷⁷ In this sense, I want to engage in decolonial theories, still accepting that my identity is also informed genealogically by white supremacy and colonial thinking. Also, while I identify as an anarchist, currently my income comes from the Spanish State. This is a contradiction and ambivalence I do not want to ignore.

⁷⁸ A philosophical path which insists that reality is how events are perceived, experienced and signified by subjects.

that become activated in each case. Finally, the specific artistic material used in each case is diffracted with the experience to provide a located resolution. This resolution stresses the idea of the immediacy and immanence of the happening: as a response, it is only resolved through that provided time-space-relational diffracted reading.

In the case of my first case study (chapter 4) the circumstantial explosion of the protests after George Floyd's murder by *police activity* (aka. *racism*, white and statal *supremacism*, *brutality* and *abuse*), which took place on 25th May 2020 (just after my research visit to New York and the offset of pandemics), deeply affected my research so that the initial aim of that case study, the use of art as a tool for political activation, radically changed towards the need to re-evaluate concepts. Concepts appeared to me as needing to be built into methodologies, that can relocate them into responses and be nurtured by activism. In the case of Thermi and Moria (chapter 5), because of the strong dichotomy between archaeological History and ephemeral injustice (which is yet another historical event), there is an implicit dialectic modality that works in the analysis of these two spaces, or, rather, on the space that emerges by binding them together. This approach brings back and forth the questions of visibility, History, space and bio-necro-politics (Foucault, 1975; Mbembe, 2003; Valencia, 2010) over which we have already browsed in the preceding chapter. Likewise, in the third case study (chapter 6), that of Bologna, the materiality that is lived through volatile spaces -such as those in *okupied* and liberated social centres and squats- is directly related to the analysis of particular situations where the details of certain material remains become essential to the general picture of complex scenarios. In the case of Dublin (chapter 7), which approaches young people into political debates through an assembly, the ephemeral nature of the intervention draws the political taint of the project, where political responses refuse institutional stagnation and are used as situated answers to specific contextual issues.

In the genesis of feminist "Standpoint Theory" (or theories), Patricia Hill Collins (1991), insisted on the importance of a self-definitory practice, while speaking of the particular situations of black women inside the feminist globalised movement. This meant, quite simply, not only locating oneself in a situation, but, more directly, recognising that a social and political movement does not affect everyone equally, and, thus, fighting it demands the employment of a wide range of strategies. This also meant

a self-revising questioning of feminism as a white articulation that responded to the needs of a very specific profile of women, dismissing the enormous amalgam of identities that are already implied in the “woman” tag. As she recalls through Barbara Smith’s writings (1983), the intersections of categories working within one’s identity should be taken into account when generating specific responses to situations regarding oppression and resistances. In this sense, a standpoint can locate a particular issue and generate a concrete response to it while, at the same time, recognising “that intersecting oppressions of sexuality, race, gender, and class produce neither absolute oppressors nor pure victims” (1991: 126). Standpoint theory, refusing the self-implying objectivity of traditional science, also reworks through epistemologies that have been silenced throughout History. In Sandra Harding’s work (1993) objectivity is given a new significance from a feminist point of view. This is, the way in which traditional science has worked through an oppositional making of the world, stating what was true or false, what needed to be modernised and what was already inside the logics of progress, is challenged through these fresh methodological approaches to science and research.

In my work I apply these situated knowledges and other standpoints to examine how our/my beliefs and values permeate the whole of this work, from the case study selection, to the interpretation, from the choosing of cultural materials to the critiques. As Harding puts it from the “information of hypothesis” to the “interpretation and sorting of data” (1993: 69) we need a regeneration of our ways of inhabiting knowledge. And this is fundamental when introducing the methodology of autoethnography, since its point of departure is the acknowledgment that epistemologies are socially constructed. This is also the first step to a legitimization of knowledge coming from one’s own contexts, which both accepts and engages (in) its limitations, while being directly informed by everyday practices and embodied approximations to knowledge and “reality”. In this thesis, autoethnography is continuously active even if not always applied. As David M. Hayano described in his account of the possibility of other forms of ethnography (1979), autoethnography is not a singular and sharp ended methodology, but an assortment of methods regarding research done in everyday scenarios. In this sense, autoethnography bears similarities with queer methodologies and theories which break free from normative forms of control and codification by opposing the binary frames of mind from where they

emerge. *Decodifying* is here a pertinent verb and concept because it encapsulates the point of convergence between different practices and methodologies which do not only involve other ways of approaching research and reality but often also include subjectivities and identities that are outside the code.

Taking Hortense Spillers as an inspiration for this point, following her advocacy distinction between flesh and body (1987), here the materialistic turn moves towards the flesh. Remembering the way in which the flesh precedes discourses about the body- as many other scholars of colour have been writing about for decades- is a marker in my work. As Spillers suggests, the living ways of the flesh in decodifying experiences can challenge the ideas of family, romantic love, identity and corporeality structured as monistic in social sciences research. She challenges these inferences writing that:

It seems clear, however, that “family”, as we practice and understand it “in the West”- the *vertical* transfer of bloodline, of a patronymic, of title and entitlements, of real estate and the prerogatives of “cold cash”, from *fathers* to *sons* and in the supposedly free exchange of affectional ties between a male and a female of *his* choice- becomes the mythically revered privilege of a free and freed community (1987: 74).

Derived from this, it also seems clear that preconceptions of heterosexuality equalled to heteronormativity are here disentangled to give place to other ways of living inside intimacy and affection, even beyond the idea of romanticism implied in nuclear understandings of bonds. This is what I refer to when I am being critical of the universal application of certain concepts, such as *materialism*, *art* and *identity*. Let me dissect these through the following sections.

3. Queering the methods

As will be noticed throughout this work, *queerness* is the connective element between parts, being central, as it is, to the analysis of many critiques that I formulate in this thesis. This is not only because of the epistemological value of Queer Studies or the queer

ethnographic approach, both driven from theoretical and personal experience, but rather because of the way this *queerness* functions as an “ethico-onto-epistem-ology” (borrowing Karen Barad’s term, 2007: 90) which has several implications as regards my research. To begin with, this idea works upon a rhizomatic understanding of research so that this queering of the method also means the interlockness between the parts of this thesis which are not only in dialogue with each other, but rather haunted by each other, following no linear time but a specific rhythm, no bordering space but a precise contamination. Second, my focus is on how this queering applies to circumstances that are not sketched by gender or sexuality, at least *a priori*, as I explore below. As we have also introduced in the previous chapter this *queerifying* of quotidian and ordinary encounters is in conversation with the meaning and re-evaluation of negativity. Negativity, which will be unfolded in the third chapter about the void, relates in the present chapter to the coeval conjunction between *saturation* and *insignification*. On the one hand, these chapters are saturated by concepts, theories, genealogies, affects and identities while, on the other, all these elements are insignificant until they get activated in each of the subsequent case studies through their performative connections in what I have choose to refer to as “triggerings”. Third, deriving from the above, the meaningless elements are not irrelevant but ephemeral. Following Jose Esteban Muñoz’s idea of ephemeral performance in queer lives, queer evidence is already pictured through the ideas of transitions. Queer is applied outside its limits of identitarian commitment “and makes this space legible outside of its insular sphere” (1996: 5-6), even if this intelligibility, its reading, is also called into discussion and seeks other forms of material existences that go beyond discursive practices of signification and interpretation.

I depart from a very specific text: *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, edited by Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash (2010). It is one of the foundational texts that made me think there was so much to learn from *queerness* as a method. It brings together the voices of queer researchers and puts into dialogue their research practices and their experiences. To *identify with* is to experience in particular ways, and this, whether we like it or not, has a direct effect on how we approach our investigations.

It seems appropriate at this stage to expand on how queerness is used in this thesis in the context of the multiple complexities the term generates. In my work, queer is applied to how I live my queerness as a non-straight person. It does not necessarily equal my not-anymore cis identity, neither does it cancel the way in which my sexuality is changing everyday. Queerness is a non-normative way of engaging in/with my gender and sexuality. I pair with Browne and Nash in this sense, when explaining how, for them, queerness “is and should remain unclear, fluid and multiple” (2010: 7). Departing from a sexual and gender orientation focus, this work is a practice towards *disorientations* (Ahmed, 2006). Though informed by experience, this approach goes beyond the (true) satisfaction of the merging of theory and practice during all these years of research. It has mostly to do with a possibility. As a queer person, I have understood that the resistance I have had to face much of my life has also made me defiant of normative ways of explaining experience. As an example which can illustrate this, the way my queer persona thinks about the future is deviant on what hetero-productive companions see as their time ahead. I do not state this as an accusation, but as a reminder that the way in which we gaze at things is directly informed by our own identities.

On queering the method, Judith Butler is one of the first authors who makes a clear reference to a changing of paradigm. Butler, who already represents such paradigm change through her own persona, engages in this understanding of queerness as a form of practice that exceeds reductive forms of discourse. In their words:

If the term “queer” is to be a site of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings, it will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes (1993: 173).

Here we see that the meaning of *queering* lies on the very uncertainty of its own application. Following this direction, I align with Alison Rook’s view of queerness as a situated method, particularly when she states that embracing queerness under this light also takes research to a new level:

[Q]ueer as a body of theory is not limited to thinking about gendered and sexual subjectivities. Rather it is a philosophical commitment to contesting the logics of normativity. Queering ethnography therefore necessarily involves exploring the normative logics of ethnographic research and writing. This includes interrogating the fictions of ethnographic time and space and the intersubjective nature of the field (Rook in Browne and Nash, 2010: 29).

Queerness is much more than an identity. It is a way of facing experience and, thus, has the potentiality to dismantle normative situations which are not necessarily based on gender and sexual politics. The interesting point I want to highlight here is how Rook recognizes the importance of temporality in the construction of ethnographic time, which also includes methodological research. As a queer concept, *Time* also represents the particular rhythm of queerness as a method. Engaging in temporalities, as already debated in chapter 1, releases queerness from the risk of becoming stagnant in its signification. In her reflection on Jack Halberstam's critique to "straight" time (2005), Rook recognises the "temporal normativities" of research practices (Ibid) and draws attention to the specific potentiality of queerness as a method (rather than queer theory or critique) to challenge these temporal constructions. In liquid times (Bauman, 2000) fluidity is not a choice but rather a strategy. As Jo Grzelinska writes, "Queering methodologies invites the messiness of research – its fluidity, resistance, unspecificity and lack of disclosure" (2012: 113).

4. Concepts as Methods. Diffractive reading through one another

"By what criteria is one to isolate the unities with which one is dealing; what is a science? What is a *œuvre*? What is a theory? What is a concept? What is a text? How is one to diversify the levels at which one may place oneself, each of which possesses its own divisions and form of analysis?".

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972: 5)

As I have already touched upon in the previous sections, in the last years, there has been an internal critique and discussion on the way in which renowned authors, a majority of them white, legal, abled, cis men, are overused in our theoretical approaches to research. The debate is at a dead end since, while, on the one hand, it is true that this overuse reinforces a very particular epistemological body of production, on the other, its mitigation could risk losing fragments of those theories that could be used in contemporary frames. This is the case of the recurrent use of Michel Foucault whose theories and, even more importantly, whose persona, permeate the basis for this excess. In my own excessive analysis of his work, I engage into practices of refusal to bring forward the fragments which can be re-located into contemporary debates. In this thesis my research is connected to various denials and decodifications which are, simultaneously, grounded in material possibilities of situated experiences and runaways from normative expectations. Indeed, each one of the subsections in this chapter on methodology speaks about refusals.

My first refusal practice is my choice to use concepts as methodologies. This stance involves a recognition of concepts as both genealogically situated and potentially neological⁷⁹. As I have mentioned above, the reason for this move is my refusal of the problematic ways in which concepts are often framed from the connections to the authors who formulated them. Sometimes it is hard to distance authors from concepts so that the latter either get lost in time or are merely used on a faithful rapport to their original meaning, depriving them of their potential to become relevant to other situations. What I propose here is a move towards a fragmentology of concepts, where they are used as malleable and adaptable to new critical settings. They become “loyal” to their new situatedness rather than to their historicity and genealogy. It is, quite simply, an application of the contemporary possibilities of “The Death of the Author” (Roland Barthes, 1968). The author loses the position of origin since the cultural contamination of the quotations and references takes the text on a different direction, towards the different readers and agencies encountering the text. Conceptual fragmentology, as clearly evinced in chapter 3, is an essential method of this work, refuting totality and the symbolic consequences driven from it, such as epistemological dominations, knowledge

⁷⁹ Referring to neology as the genesis of a new concept or word.

inheritance and genealogical supremacism. As Zygmunt Bauman also warns the contemporary reader, “[w]hat has been cut apart cannot be glued back together. Abandon all hope of totality, future as well as past, you who enter the world of fluid modernity” (2000: 22).

The entanglement between *time* and *space*, already introduced in the chapter 1, must be revisited here as the first entanglement that takes place in this fragmentation. Thinking these two concepts through one another makes a new category appear: *relationality* which, as also seen before, is to be understood as an experience that incorporates in its own praxis all kinds of entities, including other than human.

This way of interlocking concepts, acknowledging their barren use if taken independently, is also connected to the alternative temporalities we visited in the previous chapter. *Time*, correspondingly, is in conjecture with space and not bound to a linear genealogical rhythm. As also explored before, the past should be revisited but not regressed to. Historicity should not entail regressive nostalgia. To keep an event currently pertinent, this is, active for its possible agitation, the singularity of the applicable concepts, their temporalities (both in their neologic futurity, and in their historical past) should be taken into account, generating what I, borrowing Barad’s terminology (2014), refer to as *onto-epistemologies*. As Barad explains *onto-epistemology* is simultaneously a neologism and a conjunction formed by two historical concepts. On the one hand, it stands as neologism because it includes the idea of the impossible separation between reality -ontology- and construction -epistemology⁸⁰. On the other hand, it demands an accurate look into both histories: that of the construction of reality and the one deepening into the construction of knowledge. Or, to translate it to queer terminology, even if sex has also been de-essentialised and brought into question as a cultural and historical construction, the way gender and sex are produced follow different dispositifs which should be disentangled. This dualism, as Anne Fausto-Sterling examines (2000), connects to other systems of social construction, such as the mentioned critique to racial differentiation, by their commodification (of gender and “race” in this case) through science and their meaning inside biopolitics (8).

⁸⁰ This reconsideration is analogous to the separation from the material distinction between sex and gender that we see in queer theory and, in particular, in Butler’s work.

As many authors have proposed in recent years, people working in knowledge institutions have a responsibility on how to conduct and promote research in our academic settings to produce real impact. This is the case with J.K. Gibson-Graham's⁸¹ critique and use of queerness as a method. In their famous "Queer(y)ing capitalism in and out of the classroom" (1999), they unfold two concepts, *queer* and *query*, in order to generate an understanding of *queerness* as a position from which to challenge reality. It is a way of addressing difference not as a state of separation between elements, but as capacity for constant transformation.

Following my ideas about concepts and methodologies, the theoretical connections through which theory is analysed and exposed departs from the acknowledgment of these connections as performed, enacted and situated, rather than pre-existent, inherent or historically accumulative. They do not sum up in a palimpsest but are rather performed through the way they are put together. In this sense, and as has been introduced before, History would not work without a rapport to fiction. Fiction works for both decolonial and queer theories since it upholds the impossibility of finding a general truth for historicity and gender, respectively. I embrace methodology as a connective point between theory and experience, and this, in turn, implies a change in the use of theoretical concepts. Throughout the case studies some concepts will be deactivated from their hegemonic roots, exploring how the authors who coined them were, sometimes, far from the ethics claimed inside such concepts⁸². In other cases, such as in the analysis that Macarena Gómez-Barris does of the commodification of "el buen vivir"⁸³ (2017), concepts are in need of preserving their genealogical meaning, since they are built as active strategies of resistance to forms of power and oppression. The limits of their

⁸¹ Pseudonym used by economic geographers Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson who share their research and publish as a tandem.

⁸² For some very recent cases, such as ~~Boaventura de Sousa~~, I will symbolically cross out their names when discussing their ideas. In others cases the criticism is not recent, such as with my use of ~~Martin Heidegger~~'s theories, that nevertheless find their use limits in the given the problematics surrounding his persona.

⁸³ That refers to a dignified, satisfying and peaceful life and death. It comes from a Latin American decolonial tradition and has its base in the esteem and consideration of the other(s)' life, including non-anthropocentric worldviews and entities that are thought beyond the human body.

conceptual uses speak about the impossibility of translation, both in linguistics and in geographical terms.

4.1. Diffraction

I speak of myself. I do it trying to maintain the criticism in my own capacity of response. But above all, I always bring theory into my stories to maintain them legit to this work. Maybe it is already so. I mean, it is not so long that our feminist motto was “the personal is political” and yet we feel impostors when making our lives the situated flesh from which to bring theory closer. In this sense, autoethnography here has a particular temporality. It re-turns. I use re-turn following Barad’s use of the hyphen. As they explain, this linguistic formula does not propose to “go back” but rather,

by re-turning – not by returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns [...] [T]he temporality of re-turning is integral to the phenomenon of diffraction (2014: 168).

Diffraction is stated as a counter-piece of this self-impression since it accounts for the *contact with* rather than objectifying the “self” in isolation. Inspired by Barad’s work, I assert that the autoethnography that you can find in this thesis does not speak about identity as pure but as a contamination of circumstantial encounters with other entities beyond the self. These entities, in turn, are inscribed beyond the human. Autoethnography is the way I report on my entanglements with the situations encountered through theory. Following Barad, in this entanglement, there “are not unities. They do not erase differences; on the contrary, entanglings entail differentiatings, differentiatings entail entanglements. One move -cutting together-apart” (2014: 176). This cutting together apart -the elements that are activated here through the four case studies, the chapter related to the void and this methodological ground- is the ontological justification for the chosen topics: there is self-involvement with certain situations that caught my attention, and

where I posit some questions and activate significations. The limits of this thesis present to me at this stage as just as infinite as the possible answers that can arise from the debates in it. I cut from exteriority to engage with *intra-riority* sometimes accessible to my analysis, others left as a consideration that would need further reflection. And still, even if acknowledging these uncontested potentialities, “[t]he existence of indeterminacies does not mean that there are no facts, no histories, no bleeding – on the contrary, indeterminacies are constitutive of the very materiality of being” (Ibid: 177). Or, to change it into a practical example and as I explain in the case studies, the figuration of the mestiza (Anzaldúa, 1987) is not the same as the figuration of the nomad, or even the posthuman (Braidotti, 1994; 2013). There are potentialities in all three of them, but only some are in charge of their own materiality of being, such as the posthuman or certain figurations of the nomad.

Using one of Eva Hayward’s interesting takes on the leakages happening in divergent bodies and how these can radically change the ontology of traditional questions, I want to centre, or divert, on/from *eccentricity*. I feel attached to the trend in which Hayward announces the start of her research in *Spider City Sex* (2010): “I want to ask an eccentric question, an interrogative that borders on incoherence” (225). While addressing embodiment from a trans transitioning experience, Hayward shifts the focus from how space affects the subject to how the subject can weave the environment. This is eccentric not because of the subject in question, as trans embodiment is always thrown into light as already divergent, but rather because of how the analysis is articulated in the first place: how a place affects is fed by how a place is affected. This breaks with the notion of space as a mere geographical and material location and imbues it as organically inert- when focusing upon the traditional materiality involved in spaces-, but still as a vibrant locus where energies are central to the very notions of its location. *Eccentricity* is both urgent and divergent. It is urgent because it derives from non-normative entities and identities, and it is divergent because the analysis does not centre on this non-normativity. It, quite simply, does not centre. In an alternative way, this eccentricity seeks to face how these elements involved in the case studies act and exist in their “materiality, emotionality and performativity” (Calderón-Sandoval and Sánchez Espinosa, 2021: 6), outside their gender paradigm.

Returning to Hayward, I want to rescue an idea from a conversation held with Kathrin Thiele about relation(al) archives, where Hayward insists on the importance of relationality to be added to sociological studies in which Critical Theory participates. In the conversation, Hayward goes on to analyse how her use of *difference* is not within the traditional genealogy of the concept, speaking about ontological difference, but rather difference as in differentiation, that insists on how the materiality of difference comes to be significant in the first place. As she explains “not simply difference as an ontological orientation [...] to some degree I am critical of the ontological project, but that is not a foreclosure of difference and processes of differentiation” (Utrecht University Graduate Gender Programme 2022: min 11:00)⁸⁴. To differentiate can work as a diffraction, bringing together new elements that might be disconnected in the first place.

5. Intimacy as praxis. Autoethnography ft. fictions

In this attempt of a rhizomatic reading of method as theory, and vice-versa, I would like to introduce work by Elizabeth Povinelly related to intimacy since it serves me to enhance the importance of affect and intimacy in the writing of this thesis. Affect and intimacy are the main features of a queere(d) methodology, which in her work is both a strategy (as method) and a concrete depiction of what becomes research (as theory). Povinelly’s understanding of moves towards a queering of relationality between who researches and who is being researched upon, a relation which is often somehow blurred (2006).

A practical way in which intimacy is enacted in the thesis is my personal engagement in the case studies and the entities surrounding them. As in the interviews and visits to certain scenarios, I wanted to distance myself from the traditional interview and position my research inside a conversation method which could deal with oral epistemologies. From a growing decolonial consciousness, it has been in the last five years that I have compromised myself to a critical pace inside research and Academia, without disengaging on the ways in which I also reproduce certain powers in my being part of an institution. The methodologies of autoethnography, affect and intimacy have

⁸⁴https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kgWr1u3L4Q&ab_channel=UtrechtUniversityGraduateGenderProgramme

become radical, as in rooted, but also as in resistant to the specific commodifications which take place inside epistemological spaces. Being aware of my situatedness and privilege, I have tried to work from this perspective, while engaging in what Margaret Kovach nominates “Conversational method” (2010). Remaining compromised with self-revision, I have used these methodologies to claim for a different way of making, dealing, recognising and remembering knowledges. Without wanting to appropriate specific uses of oral History, I do see the connections with the many stories and theories which have become protagonists during these past five years of research from narrators which stand outside Academia because of many reasons: agential refusal, academic ignorance, ageist distance or mere lack of interest. As Kovach writes, “The conversational method aligns with an Indigenous worldview that honours orality as means of transmitting knowledge and upholds the relational which is necessary to maintain a collectivist tradition” (42). Here, orality engages in relationality, in a commonality of knowledge which disarticulates inherited colonial patterns of epistemologies and recognises other memories, wider archives and transtemporal genealogies.

Queerness is also directly related to ethnography and other methodological approaches that look into how people relate in their own settings. Indeed, I use autoethnography in its convergence with queerness. As Stacy Holman Jones and Tony E. Adams explain, “[a]utoethnography and queer theory share conceptual and purposeful affinities: Both refuse received notions of orthodox methodologies and focus instead on fluidity, intersubjectivity and responsiveness to particularities” (Holman and Adams in Nash, 2010: 197). As we can see, queerness and autoethnography are more convergent in *how* they face research than in *what* they actually look at. Furthermore, autoethnography is also in connection to queerness in that as ways of being and of worlding they are closer to intimacy and allyship than other systems of knowledge. Saidiya Hartman does a magnificent act of rebellion from official History in her looking into hidden pasts. In *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (2019), she examines black queer intimacy at the dawn of the twentieth century. As she explains by unblocking the hidden histories of black wayward lives, “[i]mmorality and disorder and promiscuity and inversion and pathology were the terms imposed to target and eradicate these practices of intimacy and affiliation” (Hartman, 2019: 200). There is a distance with the use of queerness here, a

distance driven from the specific black subjectivities Hartman examines in her book. Nevertheless, there is a strong statement in her way of implying that intimacy has been targeted as a marker to unrecognise certain deviant subjects. As such, intimacy and allyship are fundamental echoes for my analysis. Affect and intimacy, or affected methodologies and intimate theories, take me to the very core of a methodological disruption, through the implementation of autoethnography as a key guide to my own way of entering and interacting with research.

Autoethnography is *too sentimental and not scientific enough*⁸⁵. Still, people criticising these personal and situated methods, generally do not enter a self-critique to explore not only in what ways their science is a totalising activity that leads to new and renewed forms of colonial thinking and *epistemic violence* (Spivak, 1988), but also in what ways their claims, from their monistic understandings, are also works of fiction. After all, I ask myself, what is more accurate, a science fiction work that rewrites destroyed stories from the voices of lost ancestors or an encyclopaedia built upon a civilising narrative that erases any way of knowledge other than white and European centred? As Ruth Pinder makes us consider while addressing both the potentialities and limitations of autoethnographic works:

Autoethnography has often been charged with being too close to the seamier side of rhetoric. The criticisms are familiar enough: its advocates are seen as ethically unprincipled, theoretically primitive, emotionally self-indulgent, the authorial voice a biased irrelevance [...] Autoethnography seems to be more about the author's power to hoodwink his/her audience than the disinterested search for objective knowledge. I am interested in how the critique is presented either in terms of excess or insufficiency, "too much" of this element, "not enough" of that, its personal animus often barely concealed. In fact, such terms are infused with moral values, placing the rhetorical conventions of auto-ethnography squarely in the domain of culture (Pinder, 2015: 11).

⁸⁵ As I have experienced in some working contexts where experiences is viewed as not scientific enough.

The limitations of critique to autoethnography fall, once again, in a binary circle where researchers that hold a personal account for their theories, sometimes motivated because of a critical search to knowledge, are seen as *never enough* but *already excessive*. This also stands in connection to queerness because of the way in which deviant subjectivities are constructed simultaneously as a *lack* and as an *excess*. This point is particularly pertinent in the chapter 6 where I explore in more detail how queer genealogies and bodies are marked through specific experiences.

The place of autoethnography is real in its location towards potentiality. It is a grounded fiction of the fact that it is *not yet here*, and still, it is *fully present*. In the ambivalence of autoethnography being both immanent and perpetual, I engage with knowledge that is valuable as a situated enunciation at the same time as it is compostable and lost. I pair with Braidotti's thought in that this thesis uses the four case studies as figurations. As Braidotti states:

My golden rules are: cartography accuracy, with the corollary of ethical accountability; trans-disciplinarity; the importance of combining critique with creative figurations; the principle of non-linearity; the powers of memory and the imagination and the strategy of de-familiarization. These methodological guidelines are valuable not only as building blocks for posthuman critical theory (2013b: 163).

Even if I do see some problematics in this work, as I will explain when I deal with it in the case studies, I highly value critiques that engage in the limitations of anthropocentric paradigms. Following Braidotti's thought on what the posthuman means, these figurations are not materialised in different or alternative *personae*, but rather in locations and cartographies that make such figurations operate in fragmentation. The novelty of research then lives in the way each entity (person but also machine) configures a new way of bonding fragments together, giving birth to figurative relations which are always new.

6. Affects and effects

Returning to Povinelli, I would like to recall a very specific idea of how intimacy may be used as a methodological approach. As she frames it, there is a “space between flesh and environment” (2006: 7) which she calls *carnality*. Flesh is important here not because of its natural characteristics of “being” in the world, but rather because of its hygroscopic capacity. Flesh absorbs the context. Flesh is the result of an experiential pollution. This insistence on autoethnography as a mixture between self and others is fundamental when speaking about the third element inserted in the different experiential locations of this work, that of relationality.

Patricia Clough’s recollection of Baruch Spinoza’s ideas on *affect* (1677; 2007), established in the theoretical chapter, is recalled now in its being part of the methodological affective turn which involves engaging in the states that to “affect and to be affected” sink the body into. To grasp the use of this motto applied to this chapter, I am using Gregg and Seigworth’s understanding of *affect*, when they write that:

At once intimate and impersonal, affect accumulates across both relatedness and interruptions in relatedness, becoming a palimpsest of force-encounters traversing the ebbs and swells of intensities that pass between “bodies” (bodies defined not by an outer skin-envelope or other surface boundary but by their potential to reciprocate or co-participate in the passages of affect). Bindings and unbindings, becomings and un-becomings, jarring disorientations and rhythmic attunements. Affect marks a body's belonging to a world of encounters or; a world's belonging to a body of encounters but also, in non-belonging, through all those far sadder (de)compositions of mutual in-compossibilities. Always there are ambiguous or “mixed” encounters that impinge and extrude for worse and for better, but (most usually) in-between (2010: 2).

Affect is performative in its impossibility of being captured outside its particular chronotope. This connotation of affect as already-mutant will be further realised in the next chapter, a circumstantial creation dedicated to the voids, the impossibilities and the negative parts in this thesis. At this stage, the impossibility already hints at what kind of negativity is activated in these fragments, not as a traditional feeling of exclusion and

inaction, but rather as a disruption of the senses of wholeness and universal values. In this case, affect is fragmented to embrace reciprocity in the entities it affects. An entity is both affected and affects, and in this inseparability also lies an impossibility of grasping affect in traditional terms. Affect is here handled as a method, it is performed as a strategy and informed as an impersonal intimacy. The activation of affect in a candid manner is pertinent in terms of connecting affectivity to other conceptual relations, such as that of perception. Affectivity and affect theories take us to different places, non-domesticated ones, from where to explore outside dominant narratives. This does not mean that affect is exempt from other constructive parts, as if affect were somehow a virgin way of experiencing life. Indeed, as in the deconstruction of the dichotomic essence between sex and gender in Butlerian theory, with affect the cartesian dualism can be challenged through immanent-horizontal Spinozan logics which entails locating it in contamination and permeability. Affect affects and gets affected.

In this sense, *perception* becomes a fundamental concept to hold here. Dylan Robinson speaks about *perception* as part of the colonial project, as evidence of the “‘settlers’ attempts to civilize indigenous perception into a temporality of productivity” (2020: 54). The ways we listen and we perceive are bound to epistemological logics of affective formulation. Affectivity is yet another strategy of surveillance so that its uses, and those of counterpart methodologies such as autoethnography, need to contemplate their own complicities in this control. Robinson’s use of *redressing*⁸⁶ is reminiscent of the concept of *(dis)orientation* as we have seen it used by Ahmed or Gregg and Seigworth. In Robinson’s account ontological *reorientations* can reject hungry ways of consuming experiences such as listening,

resisting forms of hungry listening also entails dislocating the fixity and goal-oriented teleology of listening with more flexible listening practices that [...] situate listening as a relational action that occurs not merely between listener and listened-to, but between the layers of our individual positionalities (2020: 58).

⁸⁶ Remedy, compensation or reparation that is oriented towards the healing of stolen generations survivors.

As the above quote indicates this dislocation of orienting practices of knowing can decentre the human exceptional view of the epistemological tradition by engaging in a need to modify the very ontological paradigm. In this sense, to dislocate teleological meanings is connected to practices that do not surf around human's understanding of the practice but rather in its ontological relation to it. It also gives account of the many fragments and positions an identity can take and the relation towards others more-than-humans. Once again, time and space are accompanied by the third element of relationality for their contextualisation.

Chapter 1 has already analysed the extent to which power is relational and does not exist as a reality in itself but in its being enacted and performed by the relationality of two or more elements which do not necessarily have to be living bodies or material entities. I use *Affect Theory* as a method to delve into more specific tools of power which often get blended inside master theories. *Affect Theory* helps my personal consciousness raising of how power has affected my own life through affects- as I will disseminate in the case study chapters. I have step by step become conscious of how affect is used in contemporary productive locations to collar dispositifs of body control. As Ben Anderson writes in his book dedicated to affect:

it is not enough simply to claim that affects are relational, and/or are emergent from relations and/or take place in relations [...] Whilst I do not disagree with the basic proposition, arguing that entities are “relationally constituted” has become automatic, [...] it tells us nothing specific about different affects and what they do. The initial task for an analysis of affective life is, then, to attend to differentiated “capacities to affect and be affected”; exhaustion, pain, greed, and so on. The second task is to trace how affects emerge from and express specific relational configurations (Anderson, 2014: 10-11).

Affect Theory, as a method, encompasses the relational understanding of power while addressing the stagnated dynamics which are satellite to fleshy experiences. It is used beyond a relational account of coming together. It follows what Muñoz writes when stating that “[t]he ‘we’ speaks to a ‘we’ that is ‘not yet conscious’ [...] [and] is not content to describe who the collective is but more nearly describes what the collective and the

larger social order could be, what it should be” (2009: 20). *Affect Theory* engages in relationality as a possibility, as a new path to follow, without wanting to describe the “we” as an ontological conjunction.

The imperative call to certain affects and emotions, such as those of *happiness* in contexts that are informed by the basis of neo-liberalism and productivity, speak up the normativity of such emotions. These have material consequences, some of which may take the form of oppressions which, when oriented towards dissident bodies, can generate their dominant images as *social killjoys*, as Sara Ahmed disseminates:

These conversion points between good and bad feeling do matter; some bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feeling insofar as they disturb the promise of happiness, which we can re-describe as the social pressure to maintain the signs of “getting along”. This is why I do not describe the sociality of affect in terms of transmission or contagion, where feelings pass between proximate bodies, but in terms of the politics of attribution and conversion. There is a political struggle about how we attribute good and bad feelings (2007: 127).

Affects can play an active role in marking bodies. Finding alternatives to these “duty” demands the questioning of how they make life “bearable”. *Affect aliens*, the concept used by Ahmed to speak about how sociality comes with its own instruction manuals to be *in* life, is a creative reference to allow the excess and stress these tense bonds. As Ahmed points out:

Possibilities have to be recognized as possibilities to become possible [...] This is why affect aliens can be creative: not only do we want the wrong things, not only do we embrace possibilities that we have been asked to give up, but we create life worlds around these wants (2010: 218).

By doing this, Ahmed positions themselves challenging affirmative theories that may lack the tracking of the privilege of their locations when they claim generalised solutions to issues that need to be narrowed down to concrete situations. Ahmed states nevertheless that,

[it is not that] feminist, anti-racist and queer politics do not have anything to say about happiness other than point to its unhappy effects. I think it is the very exposure of these unhappy effects that is affirmative, which gives us an alternative set of imaginings of what might count as a good or at least better life (2007: 135).

As in Muñoz's anti-pessimistic potentiality of the negative horizon, to deal with affects which are generally considered negative and pessimistic can twist them into affects which speak up the potential of voids, mourning, losses or refusals.

7. Situatedness

As Susan Stryker performs for her "Dungeon Intimacies" (2008), the situatedness of this thesis has followed a navigating process of the selected genealogies which have tainted my own way of thinking. Stryker announces at the start of her article that "[t]he physical landscape is made of memories" (36) and continues travelling through images that constitute her own understanding of memory through place. Situatedness is important beyond a politics of location (Haraway, 1988) in order to understand how physicality and the built environment are embedded in our own fleshy identities. Situatedness addresses these locations by insisting on the importance of material encounters such as those sustained through spatial dispositions.

Following Stryker's account of the kink communities in San Francisco (2008) and scholar Michelle Liang's methodological identity accountability (2020), I use situatedness to address the intimacies which permeate my own visions on words, theories and political readings. I follow what Liang accurately explains as "the interest of acknowledging my own positionality in this research, I identify with the words queer, kink and BDSM" (2020: 4) adding asexual, white, abled, middle class and neurotypical. The only stable category of these body inscriptions is white, which is a huge part of who I am and has constructed and informed the amalgam of privileges impregnated in my experience. The rest are mobile. Some are not even specific since, for example, it has been 5 years now that I have been thinking about my gender and sexual identities.

As Susan Stryker reflects upon her own idea of autoethnography in "Dungeon Intimacies", the place of the deviant body is never where it is expected to be. Stryker

writes “I was not where others looked for me, and I was where they saw me not” (42). Stryker inspires Hayward’s for her account of *transpositions* in “Spider City” (2010) a concept employed “to name the spatial-sensual-temporal processes that mark such transsex transitions” (2010: 237). Stryker and Hayward can be diffracted through one another, breaking a sense of linear time. This break continues till now when, years ahead, I read them both in an attempt to speak about the coexistence of unseen visible bodies affecting affection. Stryker closes her piece with this reflection: “[o]ur bodies are spaces set in motion, motions set in space: what trace of their generative locations do these mobile architectures make as they extend into the world?” (2008: 45). Through this question, she posits the problem on how spaces of resistance, including human embodiments, can be captured into normative commodities of sociality. After all, the official space is still imbricated within other disordering locations. This specular frame, the body as motion and motion as embodiment, is the move I take when twisting Braidotti’s figuration of the nomad in what I term as *subjective nomadities*. Nomadism is an embodiment and embodiment is in motion and in subjection. The body exceeds human exceptionalism and the ability of response to human particularities when it comes to terms of injustice while aggregating other-than-human entities in these strategies and motives of response.

Following this formula of self-awareness, I am very interested in how some contemporary scholars who I use here have coupled the situatedness that Haraway grounded with practical ways to acknowledge a position in time, space and relationality to the world. Following Kirthana Selvaraj’s account of their own imbrication in the system, to remain critical is also to remain “not complicit, interrogating the ways in which we non–First Nations people continue to benefit from the subjugation of these ancient peoples” (2021: 66). At this point, I want to recall a text written by Aisha M. Beliso-De Jesús and Jemima Pierre, “Anthropology of White Supremacy” (2019), a fundamental base to call into question disciplines of whiteness as a system of self-centralisation. By this I mean that often as white people, as leftists, feminists, ecologists, anti-racists, queers and other politicised conditions, we adjust to our characters and exclude ourselves from critiques and callouts, thinking that positioning ourselves in discursive counter-ideologies exempts us from perpetuating and permeating systems of power. As they remind readers:

[W]e encourage this research alongside analyses of global structures of power. But, rather than regarding white supremacy as representative of extremist racist groups (as exist throughout Europe and the Americas), we understand white supremacy to be infused in all structures of global power, including liberal notions of international law and sovereignty (2019: 3).

The two authors reflect on how white supremacy is strategically misused as exceptional. In this sense, the construction of whiteness as a supremacist category is linked to otherness and exception: “other whites, not us, radical thinkers” and “other times, not in our everyday practices”. There is an implied privilege that comes with whiteness and which is only addressable when we acknowledge it, since “white supremacy as a long-standing global system of power that benefits all white people, certainly did not satisfy this view” (Ibid: 5). One of the strategies of this implied reproduction of white supremacy happens in the perception of certain epistemological facts. In their words, “Normative considerations of ‘empirical’, ‘ethnographic’, and presumed ‘real’ research thus lends to the invisible workings of white supremacy” (7), where knowledge is framed as an ontological capability drawn by racial identity rather than by the distanced research from where white academics work and produce epistemological material. As they note, one does not have to be explicitly racist to reproduce white supremacy or its discursive formations.

Whiteness and the colonial and racist mindset have, thus, produced and reproduced a very particular idea of what reality is. Reality, often taken as the aim of research, linking once more ontology to epistemology, is mediated by a very particular cosmovision. Deviations in these ways of engaging with *realness* by approximations rather than straight directions are often taken within traditional mono-disciplinary fields of knowledge as too subjective, unscientific and not objective enough, as commented above.

I use autoethnography as a constant reminder of the situatedness of my research and the works I produce. In too many situations I have noticed how white researchers have, *we have*, denounced that when our studies deal with experiential facts, they are not given the empirical importance they deserve by patriarchal scholarship while,

simultaneously, reproducing the same strategies, languages and nostalgic writing rhetoric employed by such dominant scholarship. And this is particularly upsetting in the case of white feminist researchers. These reproductive ways discard the potentiality of breaking the *realness* that hegemonic academic consumerism requires. Maybe the problem is not the need to reclaim certain experiences or subjectivities to be considered empirical inside *our* academic territories, but rather to deterritorialise knowledge. This way, we may acknowledge that, while research is real only in the context of a given time-space-relationality, we also need to engage in practices that dismantle the whiteness that exists in looking the other way when realising who is included in our syllabi, classrooms, conferences, and so on (Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre, 2019). Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre propose an Anthropology of white supremacy to unravel the strategies and normalisations that white superiority uses in order to maintain its dominance, that are not only sustained by “identity (i.e., the ‘white supremacist’) [but also] [...] the structural embeddedness of white supremacy in the world” (Ibid: 8). This note on identitarian considerations is very interesting for my point here because it disturbs the homogenising ways in which we are in the world, and in this case in particular, in academic research. As I have observed some lines above, the lamentations by white critical researchers about being taken for granted because of their personal experiences being at the centre of their research coexists with the fact that we are already inside the parameters of white supremacist research because of our nevertheless inclusion in certain publishing/teaching/research dynamics. To sum my argument up: autoethnographic research can expose the ways in which situatedness is often used as a metaphor preventing full engagement into decolonial practices that would recognise empirical research that stands beyond epistemological logics. No, decolonisation is not just a metaphor (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

8. History ft. Hollywood and other archaeological artefacts. Fiction as method

“Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledge”.

Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1988: 581)

A claim to other ways of engaging in the formulation of knowledge⁸⁷ also partakes in doing research *otherwise* bringing up a rhizomatic praxis which decentres the linearity of time in Historical narratives of power, as I have discussed in Chapter 1. The decomposition of History⁸⁸ as a unit of knowledge to address the past is one of my aims in this work. Having worked in the Archaeology Department now for over four years has made me quite conscious of the double bind that can be found in disciplines concerning narratives of the past. Archaeology, and, specifically, studies concerning material culture, break the idea of History as an eventful condensation of time and space. Artefacts receive a singular treatment and can take us to a better understanding of the conjunctions between humankind and objects, or to put it otherwise, it can ultimately be related to renewed materialistic perspectives. There is a specific potentiality in Archaeology in its possibility to frame artefacts as performative: their steadiness is valuable inside the historical narrative build around them and their interpretation is valid at a certain time and space. As Mark Graham explains about recent studies concerning matter:

What these studies all point to is the queerness of matter and things. By this I mean that matter and things are performative, provisional, indeterminate (despite their apparent material obduracy), and, in the case of artifacts, continually gesturing beyond themselves to their, often disavowed, constitutive outsides (Graham in Nash, 2010: 184).

The queering of the method here refers to the reading of unstableness of the interpretation of these objects. On the disentangling of historical narratives, I want to bring back the above analysed *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (2019) by Saidiya Hartman. As she exposes at the beginning of her book, memory, as an archaeological product, is already a fiction created from the side of power:

⁸⁷ I use this expression (*formulation of knowledge* instead of *formation of knowledge*) to highlight the range of ways of constructing knowledge that happen outside academic settings.

⁸⁸ Just a reminder: note my distinction between capital H when speaking about an established and official account of History and historical grassroots narratives.

[T]he dispossessed, the subaltern, and the enslaved is forced to grapple with the power and authority of the archive and the limits it sets on what can be known, whose perspective matters, and who is endowed with the gravity and authority of historical actor (7).

I use fiction in connection to autoethnography because of the possibility it brings in the distinction between identity as a site of resistance and identity as a site of enunciation. Identity, as the connection between one's body and the world, becomes complex in the recognition that while identitarian politics are still fundamental their *leitmotiv* is the acknowledgment of identity as another fiction. Fiction here is not charged with a negative meaning but rather with ongoing possibilities that embrace mobility and malleability as a way of being in the world. It exceeds the paradigms of reality, science and objectivity, to welcome new forms of worlding, new limits and ongoing diversities to imagine. Edgar Chías translates this fictional dialectical conversation into a tension between “domination and subordination” (2013: 9). He dives into an amalgam of possibilities when twisting the characters enacting violent roles in his play⁸⁹. What I find particularly remarkable in this constant change of the interlocutor's position is how the exposes and destabilises fixed categories.

Fiction, as introduced in Chapter 1, has also been a pivotal element to destroy and negotiate colonial understandings of the past. We can read this from Toni Morrison's afro-futuristic landscapes (2007) to the poetics of Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga (2015), through metaphors in Frantz Fanon's work (1968) or the critiques on colonial identitarian constructs in María Lugones (2008), while hearing bell hooks speak about the anticapitalisation of the author's name (2000). As will be specified further on, and following my intended rhizomatic and cumulative accounting in my thesis, fiction is in tandem with temporalities. Both elements are enmeshed in coloniality and must be understood as constitutive parts of Historical narratives. This is central to the argument since when I criticise History as a fictional dispositif, what I am implying is that History does not actually exist. As the WAI architecture Think Tank group has analysed for an issue on time, “HISTORY DOESN'T EXIST. Historical narratives do really exist, like

⁸⁹ The work is a theatre play.

propaganda: though rendered with ideology, they are real productions that satisfy the positions of settler-colonisation, ruling classes, capitalism, white-supremacy, and heteropatriarchy” (2021)⁹⁰. Narratives, that are remixed by time and fiction, are materially accountable. History has been locked into an ontological trap and, as introduced in Chapter 1, there is a *dispositif* that challenges this idea of Historical narratives and their fictions: the *archive*. Archives can flourish as counter-narratives of other documented absences. Archives are not without problematics and are still sites for revision, as I analyse through the first case study, since they can involve commodifying practices that still and quill the potentiality of transient, passing, ephemeral actions. As we can see through the recovery of all those narratives in Ferrán Burguillos Martínez and Jose Antonio Frias’s excellent records (2006), the usual paradigms of recollection may not be enough when there are other intersections in need of being questioned. We exceed the space of the word in oral traditions to engage into more controversial documents, as occurs in the recalling of memories during the Franco dictatorship where the specific law against homosexuality⁹¹ took many dissident bodies into court and jail. In my own research inside the *¿Archivo Queer?* of the Reina Sofía Museum, launched in 2012, I could see the many ambiguities in following the traces of a radical archive. The many questions arising can be summarised the very specific interrogation, raised by Andrea Díaz, Nando Dorrego, Marta Sesé and Gerard Voltà regarding this specific archive: “Is archiving always radical?”⁹². This question has inspired the research enquiries I tackle in my case studies.

9. Decoloniality

Decoloniality comes into discussion in relation to the archive and how to track memory in alternative ways. Fiction, as a form of resistance to the systematisation of rationality

⁹⁰ In *The Funambulist* <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/they-have-clocks-we-have-time/history-doesnt-exist> (Last access 10/5/2023).

⁹¹ *Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* was a law passed under the republican state, in August 1933, which was used by Franco as his instrument for specific criminalisation of homosexuality.

⁹² “¿Es Archivar siempre radical? A propósito del *¿Archivo queer?* del Museo Reina Sofía” (2016. Original).

towards the notion of “truth”, is an interesting methodology to write and think about *otherness* and *otherwise*. Otherness as a social construct but also as not-real-enough to become History. In this section, I want to speak about the importance of a decolonial methodological approach in my research studies. The conjunction between decoloniality as *theory*, as *method* and as *approach* is based on the recognition of an implicit colonial imprint in Archaeology, Anthropology and Ethnography -naming just a few of those in which my research focuses- and research studies in general. Knowledge fields that are capital patterns of power, need to acknowledge the colonial understanding of conquest and modernisation that they implicitly handle. These narratives, following the idea of knowledge for the present and the future, are held stratigraphically in the same palimpsest as colonial historical discourses. This implies that, resorting once again to my use of stratigraphy as a metaphor, even if we try to distance ourselves from dominant discourses of cultural, epistemological and material subjugations, our position is already tainted with narratives of the past that have been erased by superseded layers, rather than uprooted. The unravelling of colonial thinking and positionality implies a recognition of an impossibility. Let me insist: working through decolonisation should not disregard that colonial thinking is at the base of our knowledges and that we still reproduce coloniality within our western/ised epistemological settings. As decolonial authors remind us, decoloniality is not the opposite to coloniality but, nevertheless, it can recast cultural variations in ways which recognise rather than ostracise them. As Ojeya Cruz Banks explains when analysing popular forms of culture, such as dance, in the diaspora “while this approach is not in complete opposition with colonial knowledge, it does strive to recuperate the importance of cultural difference and an explicit acknowledgment of hybridity” (2012:161). Indeed, popular ways of generating and reproducing one’s own cultural experiences can attain a recognition missing when using high theory practices. As an alternative, low theory can help concreteness inside situated research. Stuart Hall’s defends this use of concrete theory in Gramsci’s work:

Some critics have assumed that Gramsci’s concepts operate at this level of concreteness only because he did not have the time or inclination to raise them to a higher level of conceptual generality-the exalted level at which ‘theoretical

ideas' are supposed to function. Thus both Althusser and Poulantzas have proposed at different times "theorizing" Gramsci's insufficiently theorized texts. This view seems to me mistaken. Here, it is essential to understand, from the epistemological viewpoint, that concepts can operate at very different levels of abstraction and are often consciously intended to do so. The important point is not to "misread" one level of abstraction for another. We expose ourselves to serious error when we attempt to "read off" concepts which were designed to operate at a high level of abstraction as if they automatically produced the same theoretical effects when translated to another, more concrete, "lower" level of operation (Hall, 1990: 413).

In Gramsci's case this concreteness springs from a Marxist orientation. In further uses the defence of lower forms of theory around situatedness responds to an amalgam of perspectives, in Hall's case being oriented to his antiracist and decolonial examination of cultural articulations. Low theory, sometimes depicted as not true enough, speaks to fiction and autoethnography as ways of standing and identifying inside research. For my research, low theory brings to the surface particular expressions to help uncover subtle constructions and perceptions of reality. Furthermore, low theory has a radical importance in Archaeology and material culture research since it acknowledges that paying attention to disempowered and low forms of material culture, such as maintenance activities, may have radical consequences upon the community, even if their expressions do not always happen in the "public" realms and, thus, have been neglected by historical accounting. Here I turn to a specific text by archaeologist Whitney Battle Baptiste, *Black Feminist Archaeology* (2011), going into those concrete material remains that, even if insignificant *a priori*, can refurbish normative identity constructions, in this case reshaping African American History in the United States. As she discusses while engaging in her own critical praxis for her interpretation of excavation of *The Hermitage* plantation, in a return to the understanding of captive life, she states a necessity to include "socialization process in the private spaces that were often characterized as meaningless exchanges to outsiders, but were essential to Black cultural production" (2011: 87).

Decolonisation and antiracist methods mean moving from a theoretical approach of discourse to an actual application of decolonisation movements. The limits of research, of entry into certain spaces, both physical and of thought, has taught me that remaining critical about my own identity construction, as a genealogically settler, means accepting the boundaries of certain experiences. As Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang write as an interruption from political correctness, decolonisation has sometimes been an emblem more than a practice. In their famous text “Decolonization is not a Metaphor” (2012), Tuck and Yang denounce the paradoxes of inclusion, as it simultaneously normalises and invisibilises the radicality of resistance:

[T]his kind of inclusion is a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonization [...] When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks (3).

Methodology may be the most important task inside a research activity. It is not the *what* but rather the *how* which shapes everything else. In their reading of Patrick Wolfe, Tuck and Yang see the importance of this cognitive shifting of what settler thinking actually means and entails. This idea is explored and exposed in Wolfe’s thought when he writes that “settler colonisers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (2006: 388). In this analysis of what settler colonialism is, Wolfe exploits the way in which History has been written as an event founded discipline, based on particular temporalities marking succession, rather than on a continuum structure. Wolfe goes on to explain that when speaking about the structure of colonisation “we are not talking about an isolated event here. Thus, we can shift from settler colonialism’s structural complexity to its positivity as a structuring principle of settler-colonial society across time” (Ibid: 399). I use Wolfe to give structure to the unsettling of linear time as a way of ordering hegemonic History through the rhythm of events. Wolfe’s account on time outside the paradigm of historical

events opens a space of recognition for all those processes, structures, projects and experiences which are held in a continuum exceeding the linear chronology. In this sense, linear temporalities pair with historical narratives as they focus on the presentness of the event. When examining other historical presences and existences, we can see that this ordering of time through individual milestones is yet another colonial vision of human rhythm and memory. When the event chosen for historical narration is isolated, slow processes of settlement and needed reparations are held unexamined.

10. Temporal dislocations

As we have seen in the former sections, the way in which knowledge fields, such as Ethnography, Archaeology and Anthropology, are constructed also speaks about different temporal positionalities dividing the practice between the object of study and the subject of research. As anthropologist Johannes Fabian writes “anthropology has been constructing its object -the Other- by employing various devices of temporal distancing, negating the coeval existence of the object and subject of its discourse” (1983: 50). The idea of *coevalness* should be highlighted here since the application and reading of historical time belongs to presentness. I.e., subjects constructed within the contemporary rhythm are activated through time, while people who are distanced from this present time, are framed as History.

As Karen Barad includes in their research on the openness made possible when working through non-linear time, these imaginaries understand materiality differently since they are,

not imaginaries of some future or elsewhere to arrive at or be achieved as a political goal but, rather, imaginaries with material existences in the thick now of the present - imaginaries that are attuned to the condensations of past and future condensed into each moment; imaginaries that entail superpositions of many beings and times, multiple im/possibilities that coexist and are iteratively intra-actively reconfigured; imaginaries that are material explorations of the mutual indeterminacies of being and time (2015: 388).

The material is re-taken as a site of connectivity between subjectivities and identities and entities, times, spaces and other encounters. The situatedness discussed here is fundamental to positionality inside decolonial critique as a method. Beyond theoretical landmarks, situatedness implies the conscious exercise of acknowledgment of our positions in research, regarding not only spatiality and geographical terms, but also our symbolical locus of enunciation, which, according to Ramón Grosfoguel, refers to the “geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks” (2011: 6). In consonance with other ways of facing ontology and epistemology or, as I have framed it ahead, with how we use fiction, queerness and autoethnography as new engagements in how we see and live the world, there is an ambivalence in working with decolonial methodologies in our research. A sense of unity is driven from these new epistemologies which are already recognised as partly fictional since, as discussed before, they are constructed from the narrative of lack: a lack of objectivity or of maturity in the thinking process. As Donna Haraway explains in her famous *Situated Knowledges* (1988),

“our” problem, is how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own “semiotic technologies” for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a “real” world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness (1988: 579).

Through her proposition of a necessary dialogic understanding of the world, Haraway binds science, science fiction and fantasy as features of “feminist objectivity”, adding an indivisible bond between fiction and “science” that has been fundamental to gender and critical studies ever since. In her criticism to this totalising technological vision, which she conceptualises as the *God Trick*, seeing everything from nowhere, Haraway states a very particular idea of *truth* from a feminist perspective: “[w]e unmaske[d] the doctrines

of objectivity because they threatened our budding sense of collective historical subjectivity and agency and our ‘embodied’ accounts of the truth” (1988: 578).

In her article “Writing the ‘Self’: Writing Autoethnography” (2015) Queenbala Marak maintains that the critiques to autoethnography stand because of their being considered too sentimental. The potentiality of this sentimentality, as Marak understands, is earmarked in the recognition of new epistemologies that have been denied over time. As a feminist issue, autoethnography engages into new ways of understanding the world and knowledge while embracing narratives that have been objected to from historical genealogies. Autoethnography and the writings from the self, from these recognised positionalities, are a feminist and decolonial issue, since, as has been examined throughout the past decades, emotions and feelings have been linked to an infantilisation and feminisation of the subject, derived from colonial and sexist thinking. It is interesting to remark that this defense of fictional ways of understanding the past is also linked to the following question: Why are affects tangled to emotionality while colonial and patriarchal thinking is not? In my opinion, understanding epistemic thinking as a fiction in itself does not only incorporate and recognise other forms of being in life, but destroys the dichotomy between objectivity and emotions, proposing that being socially official and settled is not tantamount to being unemotional. The question above exposes how delusional it is to disconnect social organisations of the world from these affective movements. Even the most rooted thinking in research is, at the end of the day, intrinsically imbued in affect and emotions. The ways we live subjectivity is directly linked to the ways in which reality is experienced, understood and, ultimately, transformed.

11. Refusal and Anarchism

My intention in this last section is to bridge decolonial thinking and my own experiential contexts. My way of handling this is via the anarchist political thinking that I follow in my daily political life. For this purpose, I use the concept of *refusal* as a direct connection between decoloniality and western anarchist experiences. In my personal understating of anarchism to my own deconstruction as a white body, I use particular anti-statal critiques to remain critical about the ways in which certain bodies are targeted at the same time

they are invisibilised. As introduced before, Tuck and Yang explore refusal as decolonisation of data and they explain the importance of “a recognition that some communities- particularly Indigenous, ghettoized, and Orientalized communities- are over-coded, that is, simultaneously hyper-surveilled and invisibilised/made invisible by the state, by police, and by social science research” (2014: 811). This ambivalence is a particular rhythm that officiality and whiteness as systems of representation follow in order to maintain their status and maintain invisibilised rhetorics of those controlled. They continue stating the particular use of refusal as a practice of unbecoming saying that:

Analytic practices of refusal involve an active resistance to trading in pain and humiliation, and supply a rationale for blocking the settler colonial gaze that wants those stories. Refusal can comprise a resistance to making someone or something the subject of research; it is a form of objectless analysis, an analytic practice with nothing and no one to code (Ibid: 812).

Refusal stands as a situated alternative to commodification and assimilationist practices, engaging in identity politics and practices from a different gaze towards their claim. It also helps “researchers and the people who prepare researchers to avoid building our/their careers upon the pain of others” (Ibid). In their 2015 founded “Practising Refusal Collective” Saidiya Hartman and Tina Campt provide radical modalities of refusing visual and representative systems of control which are given and taken for granted and narrow down our political imaginations. As Campt explains, to move towards refusal is to explore it “as a generative and capacious rubric for theorizing everyday practices of struggle often obscured by an emphasis on collective acts of resistance” (2019)⁹³. *Refusal*, introduced in Chapter 1 as theory and now revisited as a method of research, implies many questions on selection, reading, translation and positioning. In this sense, my selection of case studies follows this tension between officiality and radicality, they break free from oppositional readings of reality, negate a possible translation in its linguistic and spatial ways and position in the friction between reality and fiction, using art as the

⁹³ Online <https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt> (Last access 20/02/2023).

medium to apply theories as methodologies. This is also the reason why my worded Side A conclusions need to be continued by the silenced Side B conclusive images.

Paul B. Preciado comes again to mind when thinking about these refusal practices, directing this negation towards binarism. I had the privilege to meet him back in November 2017 when attending his special lecture held at the Het Nieuwe Instituut. He evinced how hard it is to sum up the problematics of every single fixed material that “we” encounter and the enclosures “we” must confront. There are two aspects of the talk that I want to relate to some issues concerning translation and binarism. The first one is the fragility of consciousness and of the material scenario of “real” life. The second is the important role that art plays in order to denaturalise the power strategies in it. For the former, Preciado uses a specific example: Leoni Rogozov’s self-operation. Considering Rogozov’s half anaesthetised body, Preciado speaks about the simultaneous form in which the body is conscious and unconscious. This resetting of the understanding of bodies is essential to rethinking them as spaces of possibilities outside the norm. The political fictions of the body and the human are also burst in the *Side B: Adrift*, performance used to analyse the case study in Chapter 6. This brings me to the second point, the power of art in creating new possibilities of opening the “black boxes” Preciado inspires to explore in this lecture. Art, and more specifically dance and theatre, can help us confront the posthuman era we are part of in an affirmative and explorative form, breaking boundaries between different possibilities and bodies and helping us yearn for new ways of relations with others and with ourselves. It can help us recognise “the modern fantasy of the body as a stable, unified, bounded entity, and gives a language to the multitude of connections that bodies form with other bodies (human and otherwise)” (Malins, 2004: 85).

Strangely enough, my use of anarchism does not respond to my anarchist ideology but to a sincere belief that anarchism as a method is the only political match -in terms of ideology referring to the status quo- this work can have. I use anarchism as a method in relation to the traces above: queerness, decoloniality, autoethnography and fiction. In these relationships, anarchism also functions by breaking the isolation of positions and treating “individuality and community as mutually constitutive, rather than as in

opposition to one another [...]and] freedom as a social product, rather than as a value/goal that is necessarily in tension with community” (Daring, 2012: 2).

Anarchism has been a leading point in my research for years now and has led me to uncontrollable thinking. By uncontrollable I mean that it has never settled down and keeps changing in the constant cumulative addition of new situated perspectives. As I wrote some years ago, for my master’s dissertation thesis:

Against any kind of social contract, relational anarchism draws from the conception of queer from where I position myself, one that is anti-assimilationist, celebrates failure, works through vulnerability and acknowledges precarity (Harris, 2018: 40).

I was here concerned by the ways in which relations were experienced in my own contexts. Here, against more allosexual forms of relations, like polyamory or open relationships, relational anarchy also engaged in a deeper sense of the other, prioritising the people who populate our lives without necessarily being intimate partners. Even if this seems a bit out of track in the present thesis, my way of understanding relations gave me the tools to address overwhelming presence of the binary constructions that normative culture has imposed upon sociality, the romantic sense of *pairing* being an example of this. Furthermore, this analysis added a new component to my own research. In the pairing of time and space to study particular contexts after my first dissertation, relationality was a basic item that changed completely my view of different situations: not only was contextualising a particular epoch or location important but the encounters and codes towards others -including non-human-others- were also primordial. As anarchist authors remind us in these solutions and dissolution politics, the strategies that are found in anarchist methodologies are “coalitions that can negotiate a temporary common ground, and moving beyond divisive identity politics” (Daring, 2012: 79).

Anarchism as a method is also a partner to my use of queer temporalities in the following chapters. As I have already introduced in Chapter 1, when dealing with the works by Halberstam or Muñoz, and as I have reflected upon in my previous research, a promise of future in normative politics can also be reworked through anarchism:

The disruptive vision of the promise of ideological agreement inside political movements involves a transgression of straight temporalities. These normative temporalities maintain us attached to ideas of futurity which interrupt the dynamism of our movements (Harris, 2018: 48).

This apprehension to promises for the future is something that, I am sure, many of us recognise as those easy optimistic ways of working through politics and resistance. The way linear temporality has been productive in our political imaginations is here reworked through many aspects. As seen above, the ideological aspect of futuristic views of politics is disrupted when taking into account other aspects of communality and radicality which go beyond this promise in the future. The way affect and kinship are used in this thesis function outside the temporality of expectation, which, as we know, takes us to the waiting rhythm of a future which may never become present. As Caitlin Berrigan addresses through the disruption of care as a main expectation in the construction of relationality:

Kinship is anarchy. Enigmatic and unruly, the social formations that go by this name evade the specifics of structure and definition. In its ideal form, kinship refracts into aspirational horizons: chosen families, loyalties, loves, queer futurities, ancestral conjurings, intuitive magnetisms [...] Toxic kinships haunt us through inheritances both material and immaterial (2022)⁹⁴.

The subversive ways in which kinship and intimacy deal with authoritarian patterns, also puts forward an anarchist understanding of time in its re-dealing with the concept of *inheritance*. *Heritage* is decentralised from the normative conception of the nuclear family and from the linear temporality of production and reproduction. As Berrigan explains, these inheritances haunt us and modify our experiences, sensing and imagining otherwise. As Heather Davis also deals with while engaging in new forms of genealogies

⁹⁴ Online <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/130/491388/kinship-is-anarchy/> (Last access 20/03/2023).

which can decentralise normative understanding of inheritance, the idea of kinship is rooted into this colonial, capital and patriarchal view of genealogical property:

Inheritance as right, possession, and property indicates how Western modernity conceives of intergenerational time. Here, we become with the world through our objects. Inheritance as property, rather than as skills or ways of being, assumes a naturalized relation to capital and to colonial extraction and is about the ways in which filial relations, patriarchy, and race unfold across generations, consolidating, rather than redistributing, privilege (2022: 15).

In Davis's words, there is a commitment to *refusal*. A refusal to given privileges. A refusal to normalising genealogies of colonial reproduction. A refusal to becoming a commodity to the system. As in the potentiality of refusal, anarchism also stands as a resistance to any form of commodifying our work and of being swallowed up by the inorganic forms of production which dominate. As in Campt and Hartman's use of *refusal*, anarchism can be a disordering of power, thus going beyond its political strategic positioning.

Following Sara Ahmed's ideas, *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) should be abandoned here yielding, instead, for the defence of a sense of being in the world that, even if uncomfortable, engages in the circumstances of sociality. Also, in the path followed by Ahmed's refusal to Academia⁹⁵, other forms of theory as praxis open-up, which disentangle thought from the spatial and contextual landscape of institutions. Low theory, as Jack Halberstam suggests, can be thought as "a kind of theoretical model that flies below the radar, that is assembled from eccentric texts and examples and that refuses to confirm the hierarchies of knowing that maintain the *high* in high theory" (2011: 16).

⁹⁵ Resigning from Goldsmith in 2016 after the institution failed to respond to reported sexual abuse. The resignation letter can be read here: <https://feministkilljoys.com/2016/05/30/resignation/>

CHAPTER 3. CASE STUDY 0: A CIRCUMSTANTIAL CHAPTER ON THE VOID AS SATURATION AND NEGATIVE POTENTIALITY

“People say that my work is pessimistic,
but it’s not - it’s negative”

Mark Fisher, *Crack Magazine* (2014. Online)⁹⁶

1. Introduction

Circumstances are political, and this is what I intend to reflect upon in this chapter. The Covid-19 pandemics and their several lockdowns paralysed my work, my life and my healing but, above all, they also exposed me to a series of questions which gave complexity to my research, and which I address in what follows. The concept of *contagion* took me to those of *toxicity* and *contamination* and to what an extent they imposed themselves upon my research at that moment, penetrating my writing. Hence, in the circumstantial particularity of this chapter, I analyse contagions as uncontrolled intoxications. Here, *toxicity* and *contamination* are used in the abstract sense discussed in the theoretical and methodological chapters, which helps me employ these two concepts to refer to the philosophical turns my work has suffered given the circumstances that have taken place in the past five years. I am not only referring to Covid-19 pandemics, but to every turn and experience in my life during this time. Nonetheless, to speak about toxicity in philosophical terms becomes a muddy issue if we engage in the concrete social and natural moments we are living through right now, amid the Anthropocene (Cruzen, 2000)⁹⁷. It is disturbing that humans, in general, are still being made responsible for this era of intoxication, rather than placing the blame on the actual human structures which are, ultimately, leading towards the planet destruction. As Kathryn Yusoff warns their readers in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018), nothing is neutral about this era. They write:

⁹⁶ <https://crackmagazine.net/article/long-reads/mark-fisher-interview/> (Last access 01/05/2023).

⁹⁷ Current geological era when human actions are altering the Earth.

Origins draw borders that define inclusion and exclusion, and their focus is narrow, narrating a line of purpose (read Progress) and purposefulness (read Civilization), while overlooking accident, misdirection, or the shadow geology of disposable lives, waste, toxicity, contamination, extinction, and exhaustion. There is not geology on one hand and stories about geology on the other; rather, there is an axis of power and performance that meets within these geologic objects and the narratives they tell about the human story. Traveling back and forth through materiality and narrative, the origins of the Anthropocene are intensely political in how they draw the world of the present into being and give shape and race to its world-making subjects (34).

The axis Yusoff mentions activates uncomfortable connections between questions such as whiteness, property or progress and destruction, contamination, violence, extraction or extinction. Only a few lines after this quote we read that “nothing that can be found in the end is not already prefigured in the origin. Origins configure and prefigure the possibility of narratives of the present” (Ibid).

As previously discussed, in my reading of Foucault’s research on the omnipresence of power (1978) the concept of *contamination* stands out as important to bring into conversation. *Contamination* tells us that intimacies, affects and power are transmitted from one body to another. Yet, there is also a positive potential contained in these intoxications, as sustained by Mel Y. Chen when they address toxicity “as an animated, active, and peculiarly queer agent” (2012: 10). Besides, transmissions are also held to various subjective exposures since the way a body gets contaminated, biologically or experientially, is associated with how a body is presented in sociality. In my case, the way my body is exposed has allowed me to transform the pandemic circumstances into a healing set of theories and concepts which have helped develop my own research frames.

This chapter is born of a necessity rather than out of a planned schedule. When Covid-19 exploded, in March 2020, the penny finally dropped. Everyone started writing about pandemics, about the ecosystems we were inhabiting and the post-apocalyptic era we had become then, “and only then”, aware of. At the time, I was fully immersed in my

own research, which was a privilege, since it kept me isolated to a certain extent, inside a sort of bubble. However, I soon understood to what an extent the pandemics had affected, modified and mortified my own case studies, though, perhaps, I could not see at that stage how much they were going to affect my remaining research over the following years. I have realised that speaking about the historical context of the pandemics is something personal and different for each one of us. It all depends on our material and emotional situations inside a health crisis as such. Back then I decided I would let myself be affected by these modifications and then, after everything had calmed down, I would choose what was central to my study out of the lived circumstances. After many reflections, the concept that can be seen as companion to this thesis, the element that has *contaminated* this work because of the pandemics, is the *Void*.

Concepts such as the *void* itself, *negativity*, *passivity*, *ephemera* or *untranslatability*, are drawn not only from an impossibility but also from my New Materialist agential-cuts. In this sense, as seen in the methodological part, I posit interrogations such as “Is archiving always radical?” (Díaz et al., 2016) and I do so in order to engage in the voids not as emptiness but as saturation since to be absent does not mean an ontological emptiness. Indeed, as discussed during a seminar with Macarena Gómez-Barris in May 2019⁹⁸, absences can be shaped very differently, sometimes being positional voids, which are filled up as presences somewhere else (such as the known looting cases in modern museums⁹⁹). The regulating figure of who archives is sometimes unavoidable, even more so when the process does not involve self-exploration. In my exploration of narratives, archives always contain a void, since they represent the impossibility of conclusion. Some stories simply do not want to be told, at least following academic standards. Hence, my agential-cuts of some parts of the experiences narrated in this thesis respond to the question in a very pragmatic way: archiving otherwise is not always radical, since when we are trying to archive something in, we obviously archive something out. Using Barad’s transitional moments of stabilising phenomena through

⁹⁸ “Beyond the Pink Tide” Gemma seminar held at Granada University in 2019.

⁹⁹ Snorton (2017, 2020).

agential-cuts, I have decided to move away from totalising theoretical answers and resort to voids on some questions, problematics and interpretations.

It seems pertinent at this point to speak on how the measurement of any value is based upon human exceptionalism. In the critique of human exceptionalism that I enact in my research, the angles that the void takes are mediated by this human-perception. Thus, the voids examined through this chapter refer to these humanly constructed absences, negativities, lacks or avoidances. The void uses anthropocentric methodologies that guess and decide upon the ways references and data are interpreted. It constrains the way in which we are asked to produce. A way such as in rhythm but also as in morphology. In this sense, the vacuum is not only already saturated, following a physics turn towards what the void means, but in essence what is said is that “The nature of nature depends on how you measure it” (Barad, 2016: min. 20:29). The binding I use in this thesis between methodologies and theories is materialised through the invisible inevitables which come to surface. Whether extracted, avoided, muted, evicted or mistranslated, the elements come to life through the vibrancy of the chapters. I have chosen to see and, conversely, I have chosen not to see. To see is to neglect other sites of seeing. That is why this thesis calls on art, following Macarena Gómez-Barris’ use of submerged epistemologies in *The Extractive Zone* (2017), being fully aware that my approach to the chosen case studies cut the eternal possibilities of infinite readings. The case studies illustrate my ideas on research as bridging art, reality and theory and hence follow Gómez-Barris’ inspiring words when she states her intention to work “across spaces that might not otherwise be organised together in one study, delinking from the naturalisation of national histories and from the heteronormativity of the nation-state” (Ibid: 2). Denaturalising the blank space, testing its saturation and, above all, leaving it empty in some cases, is what this chapter’s attempt, in order to acknowledge the politics of location I depart from and which are limited and, thus, incomplete. I have decided to see and such intention forces me to recognise that there are parts I cannot reach to see. To acknowledge the impossibilities in a narrative and to respect the desire of oblivion is an important task for us in research. In this sense, the recognition of research limits, of anti-institutionalisation demands, of the variety of epistemological existences, of desires to be

forgotten and of futile encounters determines some of the positionings of my analytical gaze.

As Mark Fisher recalls when discussing hauntology, “Derrida’s neologism uncovers the space between Being and Nothingness” (2014: 112). This hauntological space is also where the *void* stands as it pushes itself into this thesis. The theoretical traditions which reach these pages are haunted. Hauntology is haunting. As Fisher writes:

Hauntology was the successor to previous concepts of Derrida’s such as the trace and *différance*; like those earlier terms, it referred to the way in which nothing enjoys a purely positive existence. Everything that exists is possible only on the basis of a whole series of absences, which precede and surround it, allowing it to possess such consistency and intelligibility that it does. In the famous example, any particular linguistic term gains its meaning not from its own positive qualities but from its difference from other terms (2014: 26).

I am calling on Mark Fisher, AKA K-punk, because the voids in my work are as present as his K-Punk spectre is a saturated void. His suicide in 2017 was only the start of the present recognition of his devices to analyse popular culture. I am calling on him as the ghost who has haunted my work in so many different forms. First in Art History as a disruptor of 4 years of aesthetic classical study, then now, 12 years later, as a plethora of signification in the many absences of this thesis work.

The void also imbues my approach to interviewing in some of the case studies. These interviews are turned into conversations which instead of closing up on the dichotomy between interviewed and interviewer or insisting on the usual sequence of questions followed by answers, unfold other rhythms which can encompass the voids of absent responses to some of the raised issues. Indeed, the conversationalist mode intends to erase the traditional form of the interview and facilitate a deeper connection with the other. It is not, therefore, an interview as the site for the exchange of knowledge but a conversation as a space of shared prosaic philosophic intimacy. *Las conversadoras* (2006) reached my hands in November 2022, when, after a breakup with one of my best friends, another good one gave it to me. It became an intimate substitution to converse with in the

last months of writing. The book tells the story of a whole summer shared between Marguerite Duras and Xaviere Gauthier. In the heat of the summer their intimacy makes them pose questions that become long reflections in some of the pages. They turn to one another unfolding a number of topics which they recognise as impossible to respond to, as simply a liberating pouring out of words. The rhythm is interrupted to give space to suspended responses submerged in contemplation. This absence of immediate response is what connected with my personal conflict to how my thesis kept changing. The impossibilities were not agential. They were not empty either. They were saturated in suspension.

2. Recycling: nothing is really new. Nostalgia, neologism, pastiche, and simulacrum

As has been announced previously, through the critique of human-exceptional perception and production, what is socially perceived as a void is not actually an absence of a state of forms or matter as such, but a lack of concrete materialisation. The value on a temporality towards the future forces a constant production of novel matterings. In a famous conversation with Andrew Brooks about *modernity* and *pastiche* in 2014, K-Punk, AKA Mark Fisher, states that:

[I]t's the formal nostalgia of the current moment rather than the psychological nostalgia per se. Well, it's both in some sense, but I think more problematic is the nostalgia of form, you know, where things are repeated but in an unacknowledged way, and the increasing naturalisation of pastiche. It's prescient that in his '80s texts Fredric Jameson talked about the increasing prevalence of pastiche, but in those early days of what we then called postmodernism pastiche was still noticeable as a style, the quotation marks were still around things. Whereas now, the quotation marks have disappeared. Appropriation is no longer signalled, it's just assumed I think (2014).

This interview starts with an impossible title: the paradoxical question "Do you miss the future?" and goes on to explain the incoherencies wrapped up in the emotional tools that

human exceptionalism has employed in order to resist and insist upon its particularity. One of these is nostalgia which touches at once the past, the present and the future. These three-time locations are here merged through Fisher's critique on how the expectations of a capital system are in need of raw cultural pieces, neological perspectives and shocking futurities as immersed in production as a whole. This also applies to the fundamentals of knowledge production. We are made to miss a future not only as a horizon to expect better ways of inhabiting experience, but, more importantly, as a landscape of original consumption: we miss the future because we are required constant reinvention. We miss the future because we are too imbued in a present of constant production. We are in *dressage*, as Henri Lefebvre coined in reference to this disciplining of the modern subject (2004). *Pastiche* or *Simulacrum*, it is not a question about how close we are from the real but rather that the real, as it finally bursts in our faces, was never there. The ontological difference between respectively Jameson's (1992) and Baudrillard's (1981) independent readings of postmodernity in Fisher's analysis gets to a dead end because the ontological as a counter-part of constructionism is finally dislodged from it, working outside human exceptionalism.

3. The experience. Or on how chronotopes became in this void

These are the parts that were not meant to be written, the accessible formulae that were kept out because of a process of selection. They are the feelings and affectivities which did not quite fit in the whole. But the whole has holes through which some shadows are allowed in.

Some years ago, long before my professionalisation as a lecturer in History, I attended one of the seminars that would change my whole academic career. I will be honest here- since I think there is also a self-critique to the way in which academic aesthetics are consumed in "our" gender circles- I was not eager about this course because the researcher in question, someone called Teresa del Valle, was not young enough to, in my opinion, pour in "fresh" feminist ideas. I had not slept much because M., my partner back then, had been texting me all night because of problems in our relationship which had been going on for several months. My belly was inflated in gas because of my lack

of rest, my neck was twisted to the left, the direction I had kept responding to her messages. When I got to the classroom, Teresa was standing in front of us, in a way that now appears to me as very appropriate to anthropologists: silent, smiley, beholding, cold but intimate. Two minutes were enough for her to capture my attention. It was not how she talked- I would leave that to other artsy experiences- but the simple way she would put things together or ask her questions to the group. Yes, she was speaking about things I had already read elsewhere, but the questions she posed were located in that specific chronotope (del Valle, 1999). At some point, del Valle spoke about History and milestones. Against the idea of big scenarios, del Valle chose to focus on everyday practices as a way of being in History. This idea, which is now valued from feminist and critical views of disciplines such as Archaeology, something that I explore in other parts of the thesis, works against landmarks as historical events. From a feminist perspective del Valle spoke about disempowered ways of being (in) History. She went on to explore the importance of auto-ethnographic research from this perspective, since the particular ways in which we live and the specific things that happen in our lives determine our research and vice versa. The quotidian parts of our experiences are already, already historical facts. Writing in my notebook I realised my belly was still inflated with nerves, and afterwards I felt the need to cry out of self-compassion. My archives had not recorded these insignificant messages, but my body traced them with every step I took that day. I was able to take responsibility for myself and, when night fell, I wrote my last message to M.

In my entanglement between the parts of this thesis, I want to reactivate certain sections of the methodological chapter here, such as those relating to counter-narratives and autoethnography. However empty, void or insignificant the archive, as del Valle explains, is already there, saturated with information. The small stories that are imprinted on our bodies are the motions that move us through time. As I have discussed previously, del Valle's gendered chronotopes add a relational account to Bakhtin's neologism and serve as alternative narratives of historical accounts, as counter-narratives, in which social memory has been modified by specific encounters inside those quotidian practices which are usually the voids of official historical accounting. To deepen into the absences in the narration of the past or into identities refuted throughout time is central to the critique

intended in this chapter. Del Valle's specific chronotopes can take us to *non-discursive memory* (1999: 38), a concept which I find extremely interesting since it collects the need for looking into disempowered accounts of sociality and cultural and experiential formations. As she writes:

By generic chronotopes I understand, on the one hand, all those points where time and space imbued with gender appear in dynamic convergence. Like powerful links full of reflexivity and emotions, they can be recognised because of the following features: they act as a synthesis for wider meanings; they are cathartic, catalytic; they condensate creativity and are subject to modifications and continuous reinterpretations. They are temporal spots with complex activities and meanings where identities are negotiated, where new interpretations of actions, symbols generating inequality, can be in conflict [...] Chronotopes are, thus, a methodological strategy (1999: 12. My translation)¹⁰⁰.

My work extends this relationality that is added into del Valle's thought so as to find connection to beyond-human encounters. This approach is central to my own goals since it attributes importance to the compression of time and space only when activated through specific encounters. The encounter with non-living agents reshapes the archive in its content and signification and holds it in its dynamism. It finds a special place for those everyday practices as significant elements for historical sequences and this brings a wider reading of the notion of identity. What I love about del Valle's work is how, in my opinion, it breaks with the human delirium of individualism and the uniqueness of human-exceptionalism. This exceptional independence of the human body is what Almudena Hernando names the "Fantasy of individuality" (2012), a fantasy which has served

¹⁰⁰ "Por cronotopos genéricos entiendo en primer lugar los puntos donde el tiempo y el espacio imbuidos de género aparecen en una convergencia dinámica. Como nexos poderosos cargados de reflexividad y emociones, pueden reconocerse con base en las características siguientes: actúan de síntesis de significados más amplios; son catárticos, catalizadores; condensan creatividad y están sujetos a modificaciones y reinterpretaciones continuas. Son enclaves temporales con actividades y significados complejos en los que se negocian identidades, donde pueden estar en conflicto nuevas interpretaciones de acciones, símbolos creadores de desigualdad [...] Los cronotopos son, por lo tanto, una estrategia metodológica" (1999: 12. Original).

History to reach “milestones” such as wars, treaties or doctrines while relinquishing what she calls “maintenance activities”. She writes:

[B]esides their participation in productive tasks, complementing masculine tasks, women have fulfilled a role which men haven't, and that has been fundamental for the group: they have sustained the bonds of the group, making it possible for men, despite the growing individuality they were developing, not to lose their sense of belonging to a unity stronger and bigger than themselves. This also prevented the distress which their consciousness of smallness would have caused them (2005: 127. My translation)¹⁰¹.

As she explains, this fantasy of individuality has served the big names in History, specifically (but not only) those white masculine identities, to accomplish the historical deeds that are evidenced in historical records. At the same time, it has erased the role of feminised and otherwise bodies when serving for the cohesion of the group. This should not be taken as an essentialist view in Archaeology or make us ontologise the understanding of femininity as one and only, adapting it to values of caring, affect and emotionality. The claim here is that we need to look at disempowered identities, not only those feminised understandings from the present, but also disabled bodies in the past and their multiple meanings exceeding reductionist views (Shildrick, 2002, 2012). These simplistic views breathe through our present, in time and space.

What is chased in my thesis is a recovery of those identities that have been located in chronotopes of disempowerment or non-visibility (not invisibility), giving them other values beyond the individuality impressed in the archives of official historicities. Not only is the idea of femininity narrow from our presentism- a fact that takes to a sort of *allochronism*¹⁰², following Johannes Fabian concept [1983], of the ancient subject into a

¹⁰¹ “[A]l margen de su participación en las tareas productivas, complementando las tareas masculinas, las mujeres han cumplido una función que los hombres no han ejercido, y que ha sido fundamental para el grupo: han sostenido los vínculos del grupo, posibilitando que, a pesar de la individualidad que los hombres iban construyendo, éstos no perdieran la sensación de pertenecer a una unidad más fuerte y más grande que ellos mismos, evitando así la angustia que la conciencia de su pequeñez les habría generado” (2005: 127. Original).

¹⁰² Neologism used by Fabian to refer how the “other” in research practices, such as Anthropology, is created through their construction as never coeval to the researcher.

prestructure of subjectivity in itself-, but it is also limited. It is so since it is disposed as a set of spatial arrangements whose purpose is to organise genders and sexualities in ways which can be controlled and arranged.

4. Voids and negativities towards decolonial potentialities

Allochronism means a time differentiation where the subject is otherised, held into a fictional past and an imposed absence. These impositions take us to ideas about gender and sexuality that follow schemes dominated from specific time-locations in ways which can serve to control identities while, at the same time, giving an idea of freedom and justice. The absences and voids here respond very simply to imposed categories which may be not active or active in different frames, and thus imperceptible for the recognised subject. As an example of this, the idea of femininity is conceived according to modern values and desires of gender organisation which, reading Oyèrónké Oyèwùmi or Maria Lugones, can be found as the basis of the colonising set of mind (1997 and 2008 respectively). Oyèwùmi's thesis is that these fantasies give a sense of unity when speaking about subjectivities not only from the present, but also when seeking for them in the past. While speaking about the colonisation of the Oyo empire, Oyèwùmi writes that:

[The] impulse to apply this assumption transculturally is rooted in the simplistic notion that gender is a natural and universal way of organizing society and that male privilege is its ultimate manifestation. But gender is socially constructed: it is historical and culture-bound. Consequently, the assumption that a gender system existed in Oyo society prior to Western colonization is yet another case of Western dominance in the documentation and interpretation of the world, one that is facilitated by the West's global material dominance (1997: 32).

The exceptionalism of the West, as a social strategy for white supremacism, and the strategies of colonial thinking and identity values are exposed in this thesis in ways that checkmate reductionist visions of universal criticism, as is often the case with feminist

theory and Gender Studies. Oyèwùmi warns readers that “researchers always find gender when they look for it” (1997: 31), a critique that takes us to Joan Scott (1986) in her analysis of gender as an important category only if contextualised. Indeed, critique should not be taken as universally and transnationally critical, but it should be applied when the context, taking into consideration the temporal-spatial-relational trinity, demands it. In this sense, when driven from universal values rather than situated responses, westernised critiques of the category of gender are essentialist in their denial of experiences which may not be active or performed in the same ways as the contexts from where these analyses are produced. As Oyèwùmi exposes, the white categorical assumptions in research and epistemologies can deprive us from the enriching experience of gender as plural, unsettled and unpredictable.

Eva Hayward proposes a trans negativity in this turn towards dislocations of human exceptionalism. As she writes, this negativity “turns against liberal (white) transgender projects about visibility, accessibility, and progressivism, to expose how these political logics are predicated on racialized humanism” (2017: 193). Indeed, in this new stream of attention to other non-illuminated points, queer politics have, in many cases followed racist ways of engaging in political claims, including the reknown examples of authors writing and defending a queer negativity. In Ahmed’s analysis further on, from an antiracist positioning, these opacities are brought back keeping them dark and sometimes untranslatable. As it follows, darkness and other negative points are in saturation of absences, being filled up but still disregarded. Taking Barad’s diffractive method in connection to this break from oppositional rigidities:

The two-slit diffraction experiment queers the binary light/darkness story. What the pattern reveals is that darkness is not a lack. Darkness can be produced by “adding new light” to existing light - “to that which it has already received”. Darkness is not mere absence, but rather an abundance (Barad, 2014: 171).

Abundance, a saturation of the space of absence, provides new meaning to the notions that exist inside the idea of void, such as darkness. These darkneses, lights and other bright ideas give the sense of a dislocated epistemology, an “eccentric” one. Eccentricity

is here taken as a divergence from the centre, as insistence upon the particular urgency of removing critiques and epistemologies from centrality. This is activated from contemporary decolonial resistance movements and many are the critiques articulated around such dislocations from Arjun Appadurai's analysis of identitarian imagination (1996), Anibal Quijano's undoing on progress, knowledge and modernity (2000) to María Lugones's dismantling of gender universalism (2008). All of them expel ontological understandings of identities, those understandings which still permeate our cultural interpretations and political imaginaries. As Lugones expresses in her famous chapter concerning the coloniality of gender:

[T]he modern, colonial, gender system cannot exist without the coloniality of power since the classification of the population in terms of race is a necessary condition for its possibility [...] Problematizing biological dimorphism and considering the relationship between biological dimorphism and the dichotomous construction of gender is central to understanding the scope, depth, and characteristics of the colonial/modern gender system. The reduction of gender to the private, to the control over sex and its resources and products is an ideological issue which is ideologically presented as biological. This is part of the cognitive production of modernity that has conceptualised race as “gendered” and gender as racialised in ways particularly differentiated between Europeans-as/whites-as and colonized/non-whites. Race is neither more mythical nor more fictional than gender – both are powerful fictions (2008: 93-94. My translation)¹⁰³.

¹⁰³ “[E]l sistema de género moderno, colonial, no puede existir sin la colonialidad del poder, ya que la clasificación de la población en términos de raza es una condición necesaria para su posibilidad [...] Problematizar el dimorfismo biológico y considerar la relación entre el dimorfismo biológico y la construcción dicotómica de género es central para entender el alcance, la profundidad, y las características del sistema de género colonial/moderno. La reducción del género a lo privado, al control sobre el sexo y sus recursos y productos es una cuestión ideológica presentada ideológicamente como biológica, parte de la producción cognitiva de la modernidad que ha conceptualizado la raza como «engenerizada» y al género como racializado de maneras particularmente diferenciadas entre los europeos-as/blancos-as y las gentes colonizadas/no-blancas. La raza no es ni más mítica ni más ficticia que el género –ambos son ficciones poderosas” (2008: 93-94. Original).

The reductive forms in which difference and inequality are envisioned, those affecting sexual practices and rights, property or private spatialities, are, as Lugones warns us, ideologically contained.

Oyèwùmi and Lugones serve as bridge towards intersectional analyses of coloniality because of their focus upon the double subordination of colonised women both from racial and gendered categorisations (1997: 123). Critical voices, often coming from Feminist and Gender Studies, claim for a counter-archive which could contain different accounts of histories and favour more inclusive narratives. Even if this alternative is fundamental for a different use of historical epistemologies and disciplines, which can be sustained from more critical positionalities, the idea of a counter-archive can also reproduce essentialist ideas of History. The fact that everything is material for memory and archives, the obsession from humanist exceptionalist thinking about the future in terms of Heritage, also silences the many experiences which, from agential positions, reclaim the void of oblivion and ephemeral existence. Yes, the way of collecting through a certain discipline also follows colonial standards and from these anticolonial, transgender and refusal claims, the counter-archive is only another possibility, not the only alternative for these traditional ways of sketching the past. The case studies which follow this one will take this reflection further. They will also deal with the ways that untranslatability and opacity can be radical ways of engaging in these counter-archives.

This positive connection to negativity, this calling attention towards voids and blank spaces is what I want to activate in the following section. Departing from the theories cited above, I engage with queerness as positive negativity, queerness as dislocation, queerness as disinformation and queerness as death.

5. Queer deaths

On speaking about absences and negativities, we must also approach the coevality between voids and saturation, between truth and art, between reality and imagination or, ultimately, between life and death. This is the context from where I apply Queer Death Studies to this chapter. As we have seen before, Queer Death Studies is a relatively new

field of research, formerly unknown in many of the theoretical and academic environments where I normally operate. It is, nevertheless, well inscribed in activist and politicised spaces, where death and mourning have been, since many years ago, central to disruptive scenarios. Queer, racialised and non-human bodies implied inside these activisms have centralised the importance of deviant affects involving death, mourning and, of recently, mental health. After the experiences of the pandemics, these alternative and non-optimistic emotions have permeated even more inside activisms and daily experiences. Systems of domination have engaged sociality into very particular ways of conceptualising death and its affects by generating necropolitical, war-based, extractivist and control arrangements. My application to this chapter is not so much about the negative feelings and pessimistic effects of the binary between death and life, but rather a claim for otherness through conceptual ecologies. What is there to *death*, to *mourning* and to surrendering when welcoming the many connotations of these notions into critical studies? And also: isn't remaining in negativity and choosing to give up a privilege, after all? I do look critically into queer negativities, which I bring up again here for the particular purposes of this chapter. I pair with Angela Jones's concern the privilege of queer negativity positions (2013. Jones puts it very clearly when writing that in the case of Leo Bersani,

while he astutely critiques the teleological forces at work within redemptive theoretical projects, his focus on negativity ignores at worst and neglects at best the necessity of emancipatory politics for many queers whose material conditions make embracing the negative a political privilege or luxury (4).

New materialisms are also agential in this section beyond the figure of Karen Barad and their analysis of saturation and void breaks the normative understanding of what emptiness actually entails. I recall Claire Colebrook's work here in the connection between QDS and NMs through the concept of passive vitalism which she reads from Deleuze and Guattari's writing. Also analysed by QDS researchers such as above-mentioned Marietta Radomska (2020), Colebrook's work is an inspiration for embracing the tension between materiality and vitality, and also between life and art. The pieces selected for the case studies are works for a diffractive reading of the specific situations

sketched in these cases. Under the application of Barad's use of *Contingent Ontology* (2007: 73), I understand the coeval existence here between life and art, vitality and materiality and void and saturation.

In her structuration of passive vitalism, Colebrook has an interesting take to bridge the gap between NMs and QDS. Her approach on vitalism brings forward a critique on posthuman exceptionalism which engages in the problems around the solidity of identity politics. In this ideal, the end of human exceptionality becomes a potential loss. As she notes:

What I want to suggest in this chapter is that the contemporary valorization of becoming over being repeats rather than destabilizes a highly traditional and humanist sentiment of privileging act over inertia, life and creativity over death and stasis, and pure existence or coming-into-being over determination (2014: 75).

Becoming over being, even if disturbing stability, is still fixed within humanist privileging. Passivity and negativity are here detached from the human particularity that reduces their time to hope and futurity. This perspective gives centrality to passive vitalism which "is one in which 'life' is not some force that actualizes itself in single bodies, but a 'field of survey' that places any body's becoming in relation to the forces of its milieu, and never as active self-creation" (2014: 79). The phenomenology to which Colebrook gives space to- and this different direction of time that abandons futurity and becoming-, is related to the conceptual (dis)orientation that Sara Ahmed uses for her *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), which I engage further in later on. In Colebrook's approach orientation applies also to the dislocation of the notion of becoming: "[t]here would no longer be man as subject, the being who is nothing more than his own self-becoming, for becoming-woman suggests that becoming is oriented, or tends toward, a term beyond the process of becoming" (2014: 80). In the case of art, this has an ontological restructuring (noting ontology from Barad's contingency), since the separation between the real and the aesthetic is no longer necessary. The distance from ontological reality, from everything else outside the human exceptional ethos, loses force from this perspective. The diffractive reading of art practices, which is applied to the case

studies' experiences, follows this ontological turn: the activation of fiction through art arranges reality outside the logic of certainty. As Colebrook writes:

[A]ny becoming is always localized; it is a force of a particular quantity, in relation to another quantity, producing a point of relative stability, or a field. In terms of "the aesthetic," it is not a question, then, of art practice returning the subject or creative potentiality to the sense of its own forming power. Rather, the art object would be the result of a collision not intended or reducible to any single life (83).

The dislocation of the place that art holds in these analyses deconstructs how it is also disposed in relation to the case studies used in my research. It is a matrix of uses, meanings, becomings, generations and impossibilities. Art is used as an unfolding of relative stabilisers, applied in order to give a localised reading of particular experiences, but maintaining its potential to engage into the impossibilities that already exist in these interpretations as contingent:

The universe is not some single object that is then perceived or synthesized; there are events of perception, each of which is an unfolding of an infinite series. There is no conflict in these series precisely because there is no outside as such, or life as such, beyond all the points of view that compose the harmonious whole. This doesn't mean that truth is relativized, that we don't get to the truth because of perspectives; rather, truth is composed of relative series, not located in "a" point, but effected from an open whole of converging and diverging points. Life just is this quantity of divergent worlds (Ibid).

These new perspectives cannot fall into relativisms of any kind or into human exceptionalism but rather help us remain aware of the fact that we should not de-responsibilise acts and mindsets. In this thesis, the posthuman is returned to and reshaped

as an infinite figuration. The nomad, in its impossible interpretation ¹⁰⁴, is rethought in terms of movement and action, in space and time, from non-human new-material possibilities while mainly addressing its particularity in our ontological contingency. In this contingency, the nomad becomes situated. Its interpretation is enabled through its concreteness. In the potential movement of the nomad, life, as in the exceptional difference between human vitalism and anything else, draws attention to the connections between New Materialism and Queer Death Studies and the voids these frames engage in.

From this critical situatedness, and remaining open to the many possibilities which the motion of the nomad brings, what life means, what death entails and the territory of mourning are reviewed stating new hopes that exceed pure possibilities. Hope, action, vitalism and meaning are in “[s]pectral presences and present absences” (Radomska et al., 2020: 92). Other ways of thinking about life as also encompassing death and mourning in its logic, are part of a look into negativity as affirmative. Affirmative politics, which depart from these negative feelings, and which think about embodiment and human experience, lead towards new forms of hope. This positive approach helps escape the singular negations that we can find in traditionally negative Queer Studies such as the above cited works by Bersani or Edelman. We can find these new approaches to otherwise-temporalities in critiques such as “Cruel Optimism” (Berlant, 2011) in favour of the sort of hope which does not conceive the future uniquely as a human becoming.

Reviewing Franco “Bifo” Berardi’s *Semiocapitalism* (2009), death, mourning and negativity are detached from compulsory ways of inhabiting affective sociality and public feelings. Obviously, as I have indicated above, this is also in need of a continuous recognition of the locations and situations where these disruptions take place and reclaiming “negative” feelings also needs a critique which can pay attention to the multiple reasons, locations and consequences of such feelings. Depending on the context, death, dying and mourning can have the potentiality of affirmative “negative” feelings,

¹⁰⁴ Following the critiques to reduce nomadism to a mobility of subjectivity, displacing identitarian fluidity to other circumstances of movement which do not always attain agential desires, such as those of forced migrations, refugee and asylum seeking and escaping violence movements. See case study 2 for further discussion.

or they can be symptoms of violences which must be criticised and exposed as absolutely non-affirmative feelings. Acknowledging these positionalities from where to reject public feelings might also entail the impossibility of disruption, where normative affects can be ways of resistance for some subjectivities.

6. Waiting for happiness

As Ahmed's affective dislocation, when exposing what *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) really entails¹⁰⁵, QDS decodifies new forms of facing what is particularly exceptional about humans and other living entities: death. With necropolitics in mind, QDS remains critical of the abuses of deciding on behalf of someone else's body whether or not such a body should stay alive and engages in affirmative critiques and otherwise utopic enactments¹⁰⁶. As Angela Jones explains, these arrangements create,

spaces in the present that do not necessarily allow for complete emancipation or even happiness, but are suggestive of the potentiality for the future; they give hope. Given that happiness is a normative and regulatory construct, it seems fitting here that the construction of queer utopian spaces does not hinge upon happiness, but rather are simply autonomous spaces in which to breathe (2019: 3).

This is what radical hopes look like: potentially spilled and spatio-temporally affected. In this sense, the promising compulsion towards a better future takes us to the notion of *waiting* as intrinsic to human rhythm and temporal expectation. *Waiting* is related to an impossibility, to negativity and to passivity. I take Ghassan Hage's conceptualisation of the term in his homonymous book (*Waiting*, 2009) because I find it particularly interesting for application to my specific critique on the notion of *motion*, when theorised as nomadic, capable or total, in subsequent chapters. At this stage, I want to linger a bit

¹⁰⁵ Ahmed's dislocation exposes how positive public feelings, such as happiness, are really commodified to control subjectivities and relationalities and, as such, other feelings signified as negative can also have potentialities to reclaim owned feelings.

¹⁰⁶ *Enaction* is here used in the sense of *enactivism*, which refers to the position through which cognition is understood as the dynamic interaction between an acting organism and its environment.

on the saturation that *waiting* holds within. The notion of *waiting* becomes central because it calls into question the different forms of envisioning and looking forward to “futures”. Hage formulates the question “what kind of waiting is exhibited in the phenomenon that one is examining?” (2009: 1). Surely, the waiting after entering a refugee camp cannot be equal to the experience of travelling nomads when waiting to move in a flight delay. Nor do agency, passivity or emotionality seem to be the same in these two cases. The analogy may, indeed, be problematic since it ignores such obvious distinctions between experiences and conditions, appropriating this figuration to refer to people in capitalised contexts. As Eliana de Souza Ávila explains, the commodification of the figure of nomadism invisibilises the particularities of movement, including its absence. The nomad, as the queer, become tokenised figurations of identities which serve to justify the “modern state”:

[The] queer and the migrant, despite - or because of- their power as emblems of bodily mobility and fluidity across borders of gender and nation, have increasingly become tokenized as figures of transcendence, mobility, and freedom, while reinstalling material and symbolic stagnation on the racialized sites of immobility (2017: 41).

Departing from this notion of *waiting* as a new form of engaging in differences between experiences, I want to draw a line of connection between new ways of engaging in materiality and normative senses of experience. How we wait, what we wait for and the agency involved in these different modes of waiting involve already an activity that disentangles passivity from its reduction to enaction. Hence, the different types of waiting also imply suspended rhythms, a notion of temporality acquired through cultural and lived experience. This is interesting because rhythm is normally thought of as the pace of a particular moment which generates an action. It is harder to think about the rhythm of enaction, or about the action involved in temporalities with a suspended rhythm, two situations which can relate to Hage’s notion of waiting. The presence of this perceived absence is essential to the void claims of this chapter. The temporalities of suspensions such as waiting, queuing, expecting, or imagining are full of action, the sort of action that exceeds the temporality of presentness. Let us take utopic or dystopic imaginations, for

example. Waiting for a better future or for the worst scenario, respectively, share the same sense of rhythm and temporal knowledges surrounding their conceptions. They follow a linearity moving towards a sense of progress. For better or for worse, they are oriented towards a future and they are bound to time as reproductive of singular scenarios. Historical narratives follow this rhythmic sense. New ways of materialising time can mean engaging into excessive temporalities, as a counterpart to singular temporal outcomes, while they also address their dressage. New archives conformed by different temporalities can also involve a radical form of generation of experiential alternatives.

7. Renounce announcements: archives

What is the connection between the void of the lost archive and the question “Where are you from?”? Martin F. Manalansan indirectly poses this question when speaking about the potentiality of queerness as a mess. Departing from an ethnographic approach of the observation of a group of six queer undocumented migrants in NY, Manalansan writes about the disentanglement of certain stereotypes often attached to queer racialised experiences. In his analysis of these housemate bondings, Manalansan uncovers the ways in which fixed ideas of categorical subjective moves, such as those linked to migration or queerness, are also present in the reproduction of the official way of archiving. Returning to the question at the start of this section, Manalansan writes that “‘Where are you from?’ is the question posed to the foreigner, the noncitizen, and the queer. It comes from a power-laden state-centred vantage that demands a fixed reference, origin, or provenance from anyone seeking recognition” (2014: 103). Giving a fresh vision of the *documented* lives in archives, he states that archives deal with institutional aspects of the subject, either in their officiality or their divergence. As Manalansan explains, the question “where are you from?” does not seek an answer but a commitment without a necessary consensus of fitting the interlocutor into one’s discourse. Manalansan returns to authors such as Derrida to speak about the sense of order established through the archive and the historicity processes for collective memory:

Archives are vested with authority, as Jacques Derrida has astutely pointed out in *Archive Fever*, in terms of ordering time and space and storing. Robert Vosloo, in a critical reading of Derrida's work, reemphasizes the need to recognize the archive not only as a site of power but also as a vantage for promoting social justice and ethical responsibility. Such responsibility involves an "openness to the future" and a recognition of the limitations and exclusionary impulses of state and other institutional archives that seek to "officialize" and tether historical knowledge or understandings of the past in terms that do not engage with views from below. Following Vosloo, this essay is a way to center the lives and spaces of the Queer Six to promote a more sensitive and nuanced understanding of queerness and migration by upholding a particular notion of an archive enmeshed in clutter and disarray (Ibid).

The mess, the queer, the messy queerness and the queering entanglement get recognition via Manalansan's analysis of the queer six (the group of subjects of Manalansan's research). I intentionally use *recognition* apart from its usual connotations of *visibility* and *signification*. Following identity politics as a close example, some readings of *recognition* are directed to making visible, being significant/signified and/or being understood for interpretation. Along these lines, even if these concepts are taken as a gradation in critical studies (recognised-visible-significant-understood), the acknowledgment of someone's experience here deviates from their entering a specific set of significations. To avoid this adjustment, the archive may become a place of refusal from where to reject such commodification. It can actually be a chosen absence. Manalansan breaks with the officiality of the archive, recognising wayward cohabitations without making these lives fall into the evidence of the archive. Or to put it very simply, the messy archive cannot be commodified under regulating records. This impossibility is not related to futile devices, but rather to its going beyond the opposition between "refusal" or "engagement" and standing in their excess, their messiness. As he writes, the look is posed "to gesture to the workings of chaos, mess, and morass in ways that deflect simplistic questions of origins, functions, and value as part of a queering of the archive" (2014: 104). As in the case of the *¿Archivo queer?* of Reina sofía museum, that I analyse

in the next chapter, it exceeds the questions that track down one's life, documenting it while being undocumented. It does not engage in binary understandings of being visible or invisible. The impossibility of messiness has its own movement. It moves *weyond*, terming the beyond in a plural pronoun. It unfolds "new ways of understanding History from below [fostering] more expansive notions of queerness and migration [...] unfolding new vistas for what is significant and (im)possible for building new coalitions around immigration and queer issues" (2014: 105). In addition, this impossibility exposes the multiple and multilayered experiences which should be taken into account in the archive. This impossibility, which is not one, connects with other moves involved in this critique, such as practices of translation. As Jacques Lezra explores this through the concept of *untranslatability which-is-not-one*, which claims for untranslatability as a way of resistance:

The notion is paradoxical in some of the ways in which Luce Irigaray's famous title is - *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*, translated into English as *This Sex Which Is Not One*: not a sex; not a single sex; not a phallically single sexual organ but lipped, more-than-one-thing ones (2017: 2).

Untranslatability is in a tandem with impossibility because of their untraceability. Impossibility is not one and only, even if reframing the sense of ontologic terms used in our studies, theories and approaches. It speaks of fragments that are kept from dislodging, of units of entities working at once, of mess and chaos.

As explored in *The Practicing Refusal Collective* by Saidiya Hartman and Tina Campt, negation through disorder can be, in fact, a potential force of finding alternatives to one's own experience. As Campt explains "the decision to reject the terms of diminished subjecthood with which one is presented, using negation as a generative and creative source of disorderly power to embrace the possibility of living otherwise" (2019). It is interesting to observe that the focus in these propositions stands in connection to manifold experiences rather than upon the stability of identity. Identity is held in its radical importance as a centrality to one's embodiment which changes and shapes differently in time, space and relationality.

Returning to Manalansan and the “queer six” case, his anti-officialising move is an attempt “to avoid normalizing notions about the relationship between persons and things” (2014: 104). Besides, by dialoguing with Sara Ahmed’s *phenomenology* (2006) and José Esteban Muñoz’s *ephemera* (1996), Manalansan speaks about queer negativity and messiness and reclaims a new way of envisioning queerness even inside academic studies, breaking with the official and normative understanding of the good queer. The analysis of the experiences of the undocumented queer six helps him engage in communalities without kin, bonds that go beyond desire. These new images collect edging experiences and manage to break with the stereotype of queers as caring, queer-kin, affective, desirable and desiring subjects. The way six people engage in life having to remain in cohesion is not only about resistance. It is a question of the relation to matter, as in an archive. *Where are you from?* is rejected in this proposal not only because it entails a most controversial exposure of undocumentable experiences, but rather because it loses its meaning when understanding extra-official ways of being in life and the impossibility of grasping singularity in experiential answers. Quoting Esteban Muñoz (1996), Manalansan writes,

ephemera go against pre-established disciplinary formations of evidence since it speaks to illegibility and lack of clarity. Ephemera are to some extent about mess and clutter - of seemingly disposable and trivial stuff. Finally, ephemera, he elegantly offers, are about “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things (2014: 105).

In my opinion, Manalansan exposes quotidian practices of signification in which material cultures and non-living agents are agential to the construction of the archive. Alterations in the archive represent new temporalities that go beyond the “no future” of privileged understandings of queer divergences (Edelman, 2004). The futurity of messiness is not tied to fixed categories that are instrumental to productive archives and fulfil them. An archive should serve not only as a cultural memory, as in *past*, but also as construction of our ideas of temporality, as in *progress*, as in *rhythm*, as in *disjunction*, as in *significance*. Chronotropic archives of everyday practices are situated and performative of a recollected

experience. They are only stable from their time-place-relational location. They are significant when we claim their performative activation. They fold and unfold continuously. They are both embodied and ephemeral. These archives are insignificant because they refuse to be fixed into established positionings. In this sense, they are insignificant but not irrelevant. Muñoz analyses the queer('s) archive in disruption, writing that:

While seriously engaged in establishing an archive of queerness, it simultaneously disrupts the very notion of officially subsidized and substantiated institutions [...] It is not an image that is epistemologically framed and grounded, but, instead, is performatively polyvalent. The fundamental indeterminacy of the image made me feel that its ephemerality and its sense of possibility were profoundly queer. Central to performance scholarship is a queer impulse that intends to discuss an object whose ontology, in its inability to “count” as a proper “proof”, is profoundly queer (1996: 6).

The impossibility is framed into inability, a loss of control from discursive infrastructures. Halberstam's *failure* connects with this idea, since the inability to fulfil a proper proof for the queer archive, is a possibility of escaping its reproduction of the stability and normativity it criticises. Hence, the impossibility becomes a possibility. Escaping from commodifying visibilities and intelligibilities, Muñoz uses ephemeral acts as transitional testimonies of queer existence and as defeating institutional “rigour-mortis”. Muñoz defines his use of ephemera as “linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself” (1996: 10). I.e., what matters is not the solidity of the “thing itself”, but the materiality of the performativity involved. As Muñoz recalls from Raymond Williams, the object in our analyses is mediated by “tropes of emotion and lived experience that are indeed material without necessarily being ‘solid’” (Williams in Muñoz, 1996:10).

When looking at the untraceability and the impossibility of a reunited archive, time also becomes relevant and comes into question as another one of the elements which

fix historical narratives under very particular patterns. In a divergent account of physics, time represents an impossibility regarding its constitution as an organising element even if consumed as an ontological material. Thus, time is naturalised. An interesting approach in this sense is Mark Rifker's temporal sovereignty which he explains as:

[T]he effort to track the force exerted through processes of temporal recognition (including the insertion into dominant periodization schemes, treatment of Native opposition as an eruptive aberration, reorganization and privatization of personal development, reorientation toward the market economy, and subjection to anachronizing models of Indian realness) while envisioning Native being and becoming as nonidentical to these imposed frames of reference, even as Indigenous temporalities are affected and shifted by such colonial imperatives (2017:179).

Rifker calls on Ahmed's *Orientalisms* to offer a glance of what this sovereignty might look like. His thought takes us to a reconsideration of ways of being and ways of being seen, embracing opacity and invisibility as strategies of resistance in their deviation from common representationalism. What cannot be consumed by the white experiences is already targeted as useless. In Rifker's words, this impossibility is connected to untranslatability, and that is primordial to this particular application of decolonial framings of temporalities. At this point, untraceability and untranslatability speak about that stereotyped "epistemological opacity [...] rather than [viewing these alternative temporalities as] material expressions of another mode of reality with its own dynamics and temporality/ies, including that of prophecy" (2017: 144).

On addressing negative dialectics in Franz Fanon's work, Ahmed attains a critique which acknowledges communality without falling into the trap of docile subjectivities. With this I mean that even if common arenas of actions are desired or needed in many experiences, mainly those traversing racial, gender, abled and class orderings, Ahmed remains critical about assuming these bodies as already docile, disempowered or kin to kinship. As we see in Manalansan's analysis, this is already a fantasy driven by

exclusionary practices, where *the other* is either isolated and fishy or communal and complacent, caring, efficient. As Ahmed reads from Fanon:

[T]he experience of negation, of being stopped or feeling out of place, of feeling uncomfortable at home, does not “stop” there. It is around such experiences that bodies gather, getting together, acting, refusing this inheritance of whiteness, refusing even the desire to follow that line. We learn this from Fanon’s phenomenology of being black. By accounting for the “I cannot,” for the body that is stopped or held up, we also attend to the condition of possibility for the emergence of a collective form of activism. We act by collecting together such moments of being held up and being held back (2006: 155).

The junction through disjunctivities that the otherised subject resists through is a potentiality and a possibility for those standing outside the archive or, at least, its making. In Ahmed, Manalansan and Fanon, this practice of refusal translates as a sustained difference from these officialised landscapes. In this direction, Trinh T. Minh-ha’s “Not You/Like You: Post-Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference” (1988)¹⁰⁷ comes to mind. In her critique to essentialist values that westernised analyses have imprinted in feminist issues, Minh-Ha rescues difference from simplistic views equating it to exclusion. In this respect, she states that:

To work against this leveling of differences is also to resist the very notion of difference, which defined in the Master’s terms, always resorts to the simplicity of essences. Divide and conquer has for centuries been his creed, his formula of success [...] Conflicts in Western contexts often serve to define identities. My suggestion to this so-called lack is: let difference replace conflict. Difference as understood in many feminist and non-Western contexts, difference as foregrounded in my film work, is not opposed to sameness, nor synonymous with separateness. Difference, in other words, does not necessarily give rise to

¹⁰⁷ The text was first lectured and delivered at *Viewpoints: A Conference on Women, Culture & Public Media* at Hunter College, New York, in 1986. Later it was published in *The Independent (Film & Video Monthly)*, May 1987.

separatism. There are differences as well as similarities within the concept of difference. One can further say that difference is not what makes conflicts. It is beyond and alongside conflict. This is where confusion often arises and where the challenge can be issued (Minh, 1990: 172).

Minh-ha criticises assimilationist values of difference which, following the anthropophagic¹⁰⁸ values of colonialism and domination, try to digest otherness into mainstream culture. The other, the exclusion part, is generated through similarities on the other side of the equation. As Barad reflects on Minh-Ha, “What is needed, Trinh emphasises, is a disruption of the binary, a way to figure difference differently” (2014: 170). New materialisms, and in particular Barad’s approach to diffractive analysis, cut free from these oppositional understandings, using quantum accounts of what we perceive as “real” or “scientific” to modify the very sense of ontological framing. As seen in the previous chapter, Barad abandons the binary based on fragments -following the logic of the alternative theory to wholeness and continuity in this critique to traditional physics and ontology- to speak about phenomenology of the intra-action. In this alternative, they avoid speaking of the entity in itself in favour of the entities already in intra-active forces. Barad explains how:

Difference is understood as differencing: differences-in-the-(re)making. Differences are within; differences are formed through intra-activity, in the making of “this” and “that” within the phenomenon that is constituted in their inseparability (entanglement) (2014: 175).

In this challenging new form of anti-assimilation praxis, there is also an unsettling of the identity categories which are sometimes fixed in studies concerning relationality, such as Gender Studies, NMs or QDS, to name some of the frames used in this chapter. Many scholars have, indeed, engaged in this return to identitarian deconstruction and the use of diffraction as a way of refusing this forced assimilation. Kathrin Thiele, for instance, deals

¹⁰⁸ Andrade, Oswald de (1928). “Manifiesto Antropofágico”. *Antropofagia* 1, maio.

with diffraction to face differences while writing “[h]ow *to live* a world of difference(s), a world in/as ongoing differentiation [...] so that new senses of commonality are envisioned?” (2014: 202). It is under this consideration that Donna Haraway also pairs in the use of diffraction or reflection when speaking about the subjectivity of otherness and difference. As she writes:

[T]o be an “inappropriate/d other” means to be in critical, deconstructive relationality, in a diffracting rather than reflecting (ratio)nality as the means of making potent connection that exceeds domination. To be inappropriate/d is not to fit in the taxon, to be dislocated from the available maps specifying kinds of actors and kinds of narratives, not to be originally fixed by difference (1992: 299).

Haraway overcomes the binary opposition to difference in her situated perspective (1988) while *staying with the trouble* (2016). She engages in difference without seeking closure and speaks up for other forms of identity politics and practices which fiercely stand against assimilationist conquests.

8. Ephemeral times and temporal actions

Negativity can also take the form of a distance from normative productions of time(s) and a distortion of the linearity of past present and future. Still, memory and the archive, and potentiality and horizons, are possible and this possibility is made available through new considerations of the connection between these temporal lines, involving past and future not as cause-effect but rather as intra-dependence. After all, the sense of time is also constructed from an anthropocentric dimension within an ideology of human exceptionalism. Ahmed reorients temporalities by dislocating them. Returning to a future can mean, quite simply, going back to new pasts. In her words:

[O]nce unsettled it might be impossible to return, which of course means that we turn somewhere else, as a turning that might open up different horizons. Oddly

enough, it is the backward glance that confirms the impossibility of this return, as we face what is behind us. You go back, to move on (2006: 155).

This dizzying of time that Ahmed articulates also serves as a way of unravelling certain affects from the illusion of ontologic and intrinsic ways of a body's action and reaction. In Ahmed's proposals negativity is not linked to a melancholic position but rather insists on the normative and compulsory ways we are taught to feel (Ahmed, 2010). This is particularly interesting because, although from sociological and anthropological perspectives ontology and epistemology are often separated, the affective dimension of lives breaks such separation. Ahmed's position takes my argument to Ruha Benjamin (2022) who has explored the effects of the coexisting of two pandemics: that of anti-black police violence and Covid-19. In her initial analysis, still during the lockdown period, Benjamin insisted on the approach towards affective theories, acknowledging affects and emotions not as intrinsic values of the human body, but rather as actions that have very much to do with someone's agency. Benjamin's reading is essential for me since it breaks human exceptionalism and speaks about our affective constructions. Thus, in an imaginary conversation between Ahmed and Benjamin, I read affectivity disruptively, granting affects a life of their own and a cultural structure that locates them. I read Benjamin's work as negative optimism since, in her practice of disruption from the racist status quo, she works through "hope, joy, love" which, in her opinion, "aren't simply things to feel. They are things to do" (2020)¹⁰⁹.

Indeed, how we feel and the emotions which emerge in our personal experiences are political. Thus, they can also become actions of resistance and as such become a subject of time. Such is the case with *hope* when used by Jonathan Lear in a move beyond optimism or pessimism. Lear speaks about a beyond positioning, related to precarious and violated experiences such as those of first nation communities. Such experiences can overcome the simplifications of negativity or positivity, adapting to new realities while remaining critical of the violences suffered in these forced changes. As Lear writes:

¹⁰⁹ <https://aas.princeton.edu/news/black-skin-white-masks-racism-vulnerability-refuting-black-pathology> (Last access 14/03/2023).

What makes this hope *radical* is that it is directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is. Radical hope anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it (Lear, 2008:103).

The illegibility, the lack of significance, the negativity of discourse, are in this thesis performed by disrupting affectivities. They are disrupting because they lead to different timings, rhythms and temporal ellipses, without an enclosed signifier or signification. Affects are *in* negative because their side B speaks about their activation and not their nature. They are in connection to different time locations without a discourse that complies with their understanding. Muñoz's horizon is, indeed, a happening, a performance of ephemeral enaction that unfolds a transitional sense of the notions used in my work. The radicality of *radical hope*, as I have explored in one of my previous research dissertations, "is related to a situated understanding of hope which, rather than disrupt the material conditions of its contexts, exceeds them, maintaining the consciousness of its own location" (2018b).

In the resistance from tracking down what a body feels- including a range of corporeal experiences, disabled, racialised and queered inhabitations of the flesh (Wong, 2020), is reframed. Along similar lines, hope is also used to break free from heteronormed futures, as Jack Halberstam theorises. As introduced above, Halberstam uses *queer failure* as a radical concept to criticise the "Heteronormative common sense [that] leads to the equation of success with advancement, capital accumulation, family, ethical conduct, and hope" (2011: 89).

Queer negativity is connected to the refusal to fit inside any kind of mould. The normalcy which haunts the queer experience watches over the subject of its interest as its possible ingestion. In Halberstam's view the act of failure is a choice, a refusal, a manifestation of queer existence (Halberstam in IPAK Centar, 2014). Hence, the refusal of normalcy is much deeper than a simple rejection of the norm, of the assimilationist project of normalising queerness. It is a rejection of power, an embrace on failure as a way of success through non (re) productive forms of being in life. Michael Warner accurately explains that the concept of normality is already an identity deviation since no one can completely fit its ideal standards and that the specific connection between

normality/normativity and power is clear: “[t]he history of the movement should have taught us to ask: whose norm?”, he writes (1999: 59).

Queer as a range of realities links to the ambiguity not only of its form but from an ontological view, where identity is both a recognition of the body as well as the norm that we should fly off from. Thus, queer theory, in all its possibilities, needs constant revision of critical theories so as to situate it in a context that frames a time, a location and the relations that occur in it. Queer theory poses similar questions to identity politics but the answers to these questions are radically different. Because of the openness of its responses, queer theory positions in a more frictional understanding of identities. Identities are seen as free bodies capable of escaping the demonised norm. Also, they are envisioned as marked bodies, that can be the same ones that in the former contexts are capable of refusal and in others have a need to respond to the materiality of their situation.

This is the position I want to stand with, a frictional response “beyond the ‘binary stalemate’ of having to choose between resisting the hegemonic fantasy of the homosexual or acceding to it” (Nyong’o, 2008:107). As Nyong’o does while relating to the multiple critiques of the sometimes-normative application and approaches that queer theory establishes, I have a special interest in these counter theories that stand next to/against/behind/before the beloved Queer. Following this assimilation of negativity and failure in our own forms of life as queers, my interest this application is also on examining how forms of power, hierarchies, violence, normativity and oppression can also be found in critically constructed places. As the critiques to white queerness have brought to the surface, the singularity from which identity is consumed is problematic since it evicts certain subjectivities from a continual revision of their own positioning in the world. In Cathy Cohen’s words, the “concern, instead, is with any political analysis or theory which collapses our understanding of power into a single continuum of evaluation” (1997: 452).

When thinking about the (re)production of bodies in societies to attend to national forces and power structuring, negativity is easier to understand in connection to the queer radical project. Insisting on the critical element in this queerness, negativity is directed towards many stances where productivity is framed, like natalism, patriotism, work, colonialism and rhythm, to name but a few. From an anarchist view of queerness as negativity, Nova Ishtar Daggers-Drawn writes:

Queerness is not a contribution to this society but the negation of one of its colonial dimensions- the cisheteronorm. This dimension is the capture and capitalization of human bodies to create pairs that will reliably generate individuals who can be subsumed to the needs of productive forces. These ideal bodies are binarized, heterosexual, white, able, and educated– that is, they are domesticated (2019: 5).

The liberation of temporal accomplishments, such as the idea of future that entangles many other subjectified notions, is taken as a central pillar to work through these otherwise refusal perspectives. In connection to antiracist and decolonial directions to these negative hopes, impossible futures and detained realities, to refuse is attached to disjoined temporalities. They are disjoined from official moves towards the future in obvious accounts and uses of the past. To refuse these localised rhythms is to acknowledge that archives, in their preservationist form, can dispossess many other pasts. To archive is not only to select and, hence, also to leave out, as seen at the beginning of this chapter. Archiving means the validation of certain moves towards how to preserve something or someone somehow. These disjoined temporalities are activated but not completely understood, translatable or graspable and they work in what Vine Deloria articulates as “time of its own” (1997) when referring to sacred indigenous spaces, that are normally commodified inside temporal notions of futurity preservationist approaches to memory. Indeed, the future is not a container of every potential force, but rather, as ~~Boaventura de Sousa Santos~~ puts it, it is contracted while the present is expanded. In ~~de~~ ~~Sousa~~’s overture we read:

In order to combat metonymic reason, I propose a Sociology of Absences. What does this mean? That a lot of what exists in our society is actively produced as non-existent, and, therefore, the biggest trap we can fall into is reducing reality to

what exists. That way, we immediately share this lazy rationality which produces as absent much of the reality that could be present (2006: 23. My translation).¹¹⁰

New forms of temporal accounts of experience and experimental rhythms that work through reason and memory in other ways, taking into account the voids that appear in those processes and engaging in them in a saturated present rather than obsessing with their filling up with futurity. This is what ephemera looks like: it is about allowing it in the present in ungraspable forms of commodifying it, an enactment of *chrono-illogical* approaches which stand in the liminality between the need for material presences while re-turning and twisting other tempos.

9. Void as presence and fictional ontologies

In these multiplications of absences and their multi-layered meanings, the void can also be saturated by a presence thought through a temporal futurity. I would like to briefly introduce what I refer to as *fictional ontologies* since this concept is central to my understanding of art and performance as will be applied to the subsequent case studies in this thesis. To claim an absence from the present of utopic other timing saturations is hard to grasp. However, if we think about fiction applied to reality, we can start engaging with what potentialities exist through the juxtaposition between these two realms- reality and fiction.

Fictional realities engage the fact that art can be used to understand experiences in different tones. Fiction is sometimes as real as reality. It is well known by many engaging in Critical Race Studies and antiracist theories that the use of fiction in black literature can help look for lost genealogies. Such is the case with, for instance, afrodescendent authors seeking for the dreamt “feminist genealogies” and finding it impossible to locate the archives of their ancestors since they were lost because of their

¹¹⁰ “Propongo, para combatir a la razón metonímica, utilizar una Sociología de las Ausencias. ¿Qué quiere decir esto? Que mucho de lo que no existe en nuestra sociedad es producido activamente como no existente, y por eso la trampa mayor para nosotros es reducir la realidad a lo que existe. Así, de inmediato compartimos esta racionalidad perezosa, que realmente produce como ausente mucha realidad que podría estar presente” (2006: 23. Original).

enslavement. These circumstances have led many of these authors to use fiction as a site of past exploration. To name only a few, Whitney Battle-Baptiste from an archaeological perspective (2011), or Octavia Butler (*Kindred*, 1979) from a literature background, have shown the many ways in which oral histories, distorted memories, imagined futures and impossible desires constitute much more accurate narratives than historical records in the recovering of the lost archives of people who were enslaved. This is testimony of the importance of claiming History as multivocal and it also demonstrates that the way someone narrates, navigates and imagines can sometimes provide more information of that person's experience than the fitting boxes of identity, particularly in the above cases which reduce the sought for subjects to mere "enslaved identities". In this sense, "fictional ontologies" are meant to use fiction as a site of ontological construction so that ontology is both deconstructed (as yet another site of anthropocentric and white construction of the world) and reshaped (focusing on its potential as alternative narration of the world).

In the wake of these contributions of negativities, impossibilities, voids and avoidances, the transition between the case studies that are constituent of the following chapters has emerged.

CHAPTER 4. CASE STUDY 1: FRANCES NEGRÓN-MUNTANER AND THE *VALOR Y CAMBIO* PROJECT. *Is the archive always radical?*



CHAPTER 4. CASE STUDY 1: FRANCES NEGRÓN–MUNTANER AND THE *VALOR Y CAMBIO* PROJECT. *Is the archive always radical?*¹¹¹

“What matters is not to know the world but to change it”.

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin. White Masks* (1952: 17)

This chapter tackles a diffractive reading of the *¿Archivo Queer?*, a Reina Sofía Museum initiative, built by authors and activists Sejo Carrascosa, Lucas Platero, Andrés Senra and Fefa Vila Núñez, through the concepts triggered by the *Valor y Cambio* experience, at Columbia University, N.Y. *Valor y Cambio*, directed by Frances Negrón-Muntaner, is a project held in Puerto Rico after Huracan María provoked a burst not only of material lacks and loses but also of the colonial domination that the USA has over the country. The main concept which activates this chapter is *value* and its main material is the archive. The archive, decolonial thinking and the importance of connecting the material and the symbolic, are salient aspects in understanding the impact of the *Valor y Cambio* project. Among other aims, in this case study I intend to explore new gender approaches to material culture¹¹² and to the decolonisation of cultural epistemologies and spaces¹¹³ so as to deconstruct art spaces as containers of cultural concepts.

1. *Valor y Cambio*. The experience

Frances Negrón-Muntaner’s *Valor y Cambio* installation/experience is my first case study on counter-hegemonic narratives for social and academic change. This chapter starts by

¹¹¹ Parts of this case study were published as an article: “Contesting power in public art spaces. Liminal p(l)aces, diverting methodologies and observant participation in *Valor y Cambio*.” (2021). *Sociología y Tecnociencia*.1.1: 39-55.

The research question in the title is inspired by the article “¿Archivar es siempre radical? A propósito del *¿Archivo queer?* del Museo Reina Sofía” (2016) by Andrea Díaz, Nando Dorrego, Marta Sesé, Marta and Gerard Voltà. <https://www.museoreinasofia.es/exposiciones/archivo-queer>

¹¹² Following González Marcén et al., 2012; Alarcón García y Sánchez Romero 2015, among others.

¹¹³ Following Lugones, 2008; Mezzadra, 2012; Rizvi, 2018.

presenting my response-able three-month long observant participation of *Valor y Cambio* as a public space transnational installation. Attending to the significance of spacing and taking the cue from the queering of temporalities (Esteban Muñoz, 2009; Berlant, 2011), it is my intention to re-conceptualise these spaces as what I would term *liminal p(l)aces*.

1.1. Presenting the case study

Created by Frances Negrón-Muntaner, writer, film-maker, professor of cultural studies and coordinator of both the project and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (CSER) and with the collaboration of artist Sarabel Santos Negrón, *Valor y Cambio* was conceived in 2019 as “a story-telling, community-building, and solidarity economy project [which] is out to spark a broad conversation about what is a just economy and how to foster collective empowerment in the face of austerity and neoliberal policies locally and nationally”¹¹⁴.

The project, which started in Puerto Rico, was launched with the circulation of its own currency, conceived as a tool for exchange and transformation within the community at all levels. These “pesos of Puerto Rico” were dispensed from an ATM-style machine and different Puerto Rican personalities, such as activists, educators, athletes or communities, feature on them. In order to access the pesos, people had to answer questions about what they valued. They could then choose to extend their participation in the project by continuing the circulation of the currency by exchanging the pesos for products or services, or they could just keep the pesos as a cultural memento of the figures they featured.

After the initial Puerto Rican phase, the project was intended to come to Harlem in the Spring of 2020 as a collaboration between Columbia University and the New York and Harlem City Councils and I had planned my visit to Columbia so as to conduct my observant participation in this phase. However, Covid-19 made its unexpected appearance instead and with it many things changed. The structure of my research had to be adapted as a consequence of the new circumstances. The result was in itself queerly eccentric, since it got me into peripheral practices. My initial goal was the examination of how *Valor*

¹¹⁴ <https://www.valorycambio.org/abouttheproject> (Last access 20/04/2023).

y *Cambio* could have a transformative impact/affect upon: 1. the academic unit participating in it, the Media and Idea Lab (MIL) within the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (CSER) at Columbia University; and 2. the city of New York and the Harlem neighbourhood in particular. However, with Covid research became an action that had to depart, now more than ever, from my own position. Faithful to my main goals of unpacking my practices and remaining self-critical, I became involved in two singular projects. The first one was my contribution to a series of films and videos, “Days With(in)”, a joint project developed by Columbia University students attending Prof. Frances Negrón-Muntaner’s “Video as Inquiry” course at CSER in the Spring 2020. In it we reflected upon quarantine, self-isolation and an inquiry into new futures¹¹⁵. The second one was the interview/conversation with Negrón-Muntaner on *Valor y Cambio* which inspires this chapter and how the project tackles the concepts I am researching into (2020b).

Plans and intentions had to give way under the pressure of the sudden transformation of our lives with Covid. I, like anyone in a housing situation, had to take shelter within the limits of the domestic space. I realised that the new situation was disturbing the basic premises of the social divisions of space and of cultural public representations which had originally inspired me to undertake a research experience on public art spaces at Columbia University and the City of New York. What came next was the unexpected generation of public conversations and joint creation during the times within and under the constraints of the private.

1.2. *Valor y Cambio* and the radical idea of active concepts. What do you value?

In the context of this visit- and of the enormous inspiration that Frances Negrón-Muntaner’s work has meant to my own research- the following section analyses some fragments of the interview/conversation I had the opportunity to engage in with her on 29 June 2020 and which you can find transcribed here as annex 1¹¹⁶. The fragments I close-read and discuss touch upon social problematics and their possible solutions through

¹¹⁵ <https://vimeo.com/channels/dayswithinseries> (Last access 03/04/2022)

*artivism*¹¹⁷. They engage in the contradictions researchers involved in critical theories have to deal with when confronting the tensions between academic production demands and our desires to deconstruct the foundations of these ways of knowing. The fragments selected tackle this conflict and discuss possible transformations in a search for new horizons to move towards. They help us question, for instance, whether we can work through the concept of “anticapitalism” in cases where the concept of economy is itself rooted in logics other than those of accumulation. *Valor y Cambio* is an example of how to decolonise the concept of economy and its imbrication within the state and the system.

Valor y Cambio started in February 2019 in Puerto Rico and then was taken to New York, in 2020, partly because of the large Puerto Rican community who have been living in the city for over a century now. It contains more action than many other academic projects. It is a solidarity collaboration between different communities which destabilises what we understand as living in a society. It reappropriates and gives new force to diverse concepts, such as *value* and *exchange*, that give the project its title. Negrón-Muntaner started by posing the following question to the people participating in the Puerto Rican experience at the first stage of the project: “What groups or persons do you know about that do what you value?” on which she comments:

This seemed to be the most difficult question to answer. People participating in the experience responded they did not know anyone that did what they valued, or their answer was *Valor y Cambio*, the experience that they were living through at the moment (2020b; 5:11-5:23. My translation)¹¹⁸.

The difficulty to respond to the question is not due, in her opinion, to their not really knowing what matters, since, as she explains:

¹¹⁷ *Artivism* refers to the joining of art and activism, dealing with practices of political and social change and agitation which are held through art practices.

¹¹⁸ Subsequent references to the interview are indicated as Negrón-Muntaner (2020b), followed by the minutes in the recording. For the Spanish original, see Annex 1.

Most people know what they want but they do not know how they want it. It is amazing that the largest amount [90%], regard education, after family, as the most valuable asset. And they don't mean education as a means for social mobility, they mean education in the sense of their own relation to the world, with themselves and with others (2020b; 12:50-13:26).

This was an interesting point in the project, because it suggested many aspects from which to depart. As Negrón-Muntaner states, people knew what they valued. It was the how, the means, the method, that they had not thought about. This is exactly what my research was looking for: eccentric thinking, a radical break from hegemonic mindsets for which the end, usually, justifies the means. I wondered about the commitment of the participants, particularly those involved in public education. As she explains:

I realised that the teachers and students from schools in Puerto Rico had come in an autonomous way [...] What we did was two workshops of forty educators each and it was amazing because they rapidly saw the possibilities of using the exchange notes as a way of involving the whole school in the education process. Some of these teachers have other ecological projects or other types of projects that integrate different subjects (2020b; 7:07- 9:15).

Teachers perceived *Valor y Cambio* as an educational methodology in itself, or as I read it, a making of connections, not only between people and their experiences, but also between different realms of knowledge.

The fact that Puerto Rico has been, and still is, “a Caribbean Archipelago that has been subject to US colonial-capitalist rule for more than a century” (Negrón-Muntaner, 2020a: 171), has political specificities that also impact the project. Negrón-Muntaner comments on the way politics are differently lived and experienced in Puerto Rico as compared to the USA. In Puerto Rico, she notes, the period of elections is felt many months before they take place, in contrast with the USA, where the tension is concentrated in the last period, only weeks before the event. Hence, her intention was to return to

Puerto Rico in 2020 to investigate the changes in the people's consciousness one year after. As she explains:

After the protests [of summer 2019], in one of which one million people participated, new names and groups of people appeared in the scene. Then, I wanted to test whether the new protests scenario had generated changes in the people with respect to those groups who were acting on what they valued (2020b; 5:25- 5: 46).

With all this in mind, I thought of the connection with the ongoing protests taking place in the USA that erupted after George Floyd's murder at the hands of the police a few weeks before our interview. I wanted to speak about the link between the resistance I perceived in Negrón-Muntaner's project and those protests, both touching, in my opinion, on the concepts that constitute socio-political ways of living, both aiming to transcend official responses and to have an effect on everyday action. Commenting on this, Negrón-Muntaner remarks that the atmosphere of resistance has been growing for a long time, and, more specifically, during the past two years¹¹⁹. She recalls some of the factors that have generated the specific climate and reflects on the importance of language and terminology:

The move to rethink justice also includes rethinking the levels of incarceration, police brutality and further rethinking. Another factor is the increase in the understanding of racism as a systemic problem, which is interesting since media has recently been discussing what terminology to use when talking about anti-racist movements. If the catchword 10 years ago was *African-American*, the claim now is *Black*. This change is strongly influenced by the BLM movement, a radicalization of perspectives which responds to systemic racism and white supremacy. Regardless of its different shapes, both of these are just as present as they've always been and keep the same roots as before. All of this, added to a situation of economic polarisation, of less options for the youth to access the job

¹¹⁹Two years before the date of the interview the 8th of April 2020.

market [...], and Covid, makes people more conscious of the neoliberal impact on them. And then, George Floyd's murder triggers and explodes it all. There is an interesting thing about Bernie Sanders's campaign concerning terminology and concepts. He offered a vocabulary to speak about what was really happening in the USA which was not accepted by most African-American electors. This means that the category of race and racism is not so much terminology which emanates from class but the way inequality is thought. Sanders spoke about a revolution, an insurrection, but he did so using a vocabulary which could not generate it (2020b; 17:50- 20:48).

Here Negrón-Muntaner touches upon one of the main concerns of this research: the importance of language and its capability to materialise itself into living concepts. In order to work through these resistances, an important step, as seen before, is the analysis of the way concepts structure our lives and are maintained and sustained through space and time. As she continues, in relation to *Valor y Cambio*:

The project and other projects of the kind [...] respond to a need to transition from an economy based on exploitation, accumulation and extraction to one that puts the welfare of the community at its centre [...] The crisis has generated a number of new mutual-help projects which are not always about creating a social currency, but there are notions that coexist and insist on the need for a transformation. If you speak about capitalism from a colony, your perception and experience of capitalism won't be privileged. You see things that a person in NY wouldn't, because even if you are poor in NY you are in a place of abundance (2020b; 20:50-22:24).

The concept of economy as used by Negrón-Muntaner, transitioning towards communal welfare exemplifies well what I mean when I reclaim concepts as cartographies of action. In her use some of its aspects, such as circular economy or solidarity economy, are activated while others, such as economy as exploitation, accumulation and extraction are discarded. And in this Macarena Gómez-Barris's *life otherwise* (2017) theories come to

mind since, as we have already seen, she proposes an ecological praxis of memories and new understandings of experiencing and materialising pleasurable lives.

Valor y Cambio is a breath of fresh air because it brings about a multiplicity of records, perspectives and experiences. The way concept of *economy* is perceived from colonies, from neoliberal spaces and from other locations where it does not even exist queers the very definition of economy. I see this as a project that also works through imagination, and, in this respect, I wanted to bring the project's relation to art into the conversation. I suggested to Negrón-Muntaner that Walter D. Mignolo's division of *Aesthetics* and *Aesthesis* (2010) could be a pertinent parallel to *Valor y Cambio*, since they both go beyond the idea of progress and its connection to futurity maintained by hegemonic aesthetics. Mignolo's division, as I see it, speaks about a type of political imagination that can reconceptualise concepts that are basic to many social structures, such as those of economy or art. In this sense, *Valor y Cambio* had an artistic base from the start, following this idea of political imagination. After researching and asking herself about the best way to introduce the project to the public she realised most people, and in particular activists, were tired of speaking about conflicts:

They denied any form of conventional thinking: they didn't want assemblies or meetings. They didn't want to talk to other people doing what they were doing. They said they felt exhausted, they had no energy left and all they wanted to do was continue their work in their communities. I then started thinking of other ways of having these conversations which would not feel like work, which would not drain their energy. The question then was "how to circulate a new currency and with it a new set of ideas and narratives?" [...] There are lots of people who think art can't have that impact, and that's not always so, since in our case art has been an essential component [...] The best thing that can be done is generate an experience which is not felt as an imposition (2020b; 24:23-28:46).

The attention to agency, an essential point in the interview when rethinking academic practices and hegemonies, took me back to the times when I was being trained as an art therapist. My work as an art therapist made me see the potentialities of other forms of

communication which centrifugate languages towards borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). Alternative forms of communication, such as art, allow for diverse forms of accessibility into the experience conveyed by those languages. Therefore, new artistic figurations provoke new agencies and epistemologies. Along these lines, Negrón-Muntaner suggests that:

[*Valor y Cambio*] demystifies and challenges the idea that art is an elitist experience. It can be, and indeed it is so if we speak about art hierarchies, museums and traditional institutions with all their conflicts. However, people also give value to artistic experiences as precious knowledge. In the Puerto Rican context, many people prefer artistic interventions because they value artists more than they do other representatives, such as politicians [...] I have been thinking about that lately. James Baldwin came to mind because he has been forgotten for decades, partly because of his homosexuality, partly because he did not respond to the same hero paradigm as Martin Luther King or Malcom X did. Still, recent transformations in social demands make him an important voice now. Thus, we must preserve these materials, circulate them and make them accessible for future use. We know that the tree may take its time to grow but this doesn't matter since the process is an ongoing one (2020b; 32:30-36:20).

The archive is here revalued and re-written from new temporalities. It lets us speak about its value using it as a powerful methodology. The eternity of the process of creation, a queer horizon to which the genealogy of knowledge aspires, makes archives eccentric methodologies because of their disobedience of the idea of progress and futurity contained in the traditional understanding of genealogies. This, in turn, leads to a decodification of traditional ways of creating and learning about life and forms of living, and opens up the experience of what Negrón-Muntaner calls *Decolonial Joy*. She narrates that when she started the project her idea was to bring “out” what she had learned from debt,

[and] take it to the streets. But, what happened was that the streets provided me and others with a space to reconsider other things, for example the concept itself [decolonial joy], which I think would not have emerged from my academic work. It emerged from the space we created and shared (2020b; 38:23-38:58).

Decolonial joy is collective and is a response to a colonial past and present. It enables very diverse forms of thought:

[In the designing of the currency], colour [was] also very important. Every colour communicates something different. Colour is also loaded with knowledge. It connotes stories, archives, perspectives, theorizations, actions, emotions, etc. [...] How people speak and express themselves, not only what they say, is fundamental for the complexity of thought and action (2020b; 59:10- 1:02:03).

Inspired by this, I spoke to Frances about my own conflict with the archive since my own research was not only a result of academic knowledge, but also the outcome of my relationships. The people I have encountered in my life have embodied and generated my ideas. Speaking of the way non-academic influences should also be cited in my work, Negrón-Muntaner reminded me that theories depart from practice. In the case of gender, for instance, she remarks that “movements and the way people theorise about their bodies is where these theories emanate from, not the other way round. Academia organises and links these thoughts” (2020b; 41:42-42:03).

This was a salient issue to me. I mentioned the concept of genealogy and the meaning of Heritage, particularly inside the discipline of Archaeology. Responding to this, Negrón-Muntaner explains that one of the principal aims of her project was to generate a new genealogy from the currency notes by displaying historical figures that had been dismissed in the historical narratives coming from Puerto Rico. One of the main groups of figures was the Corderos, a group of siblings who dedicated their lives to education. These sisters were unspecific figures, unknown by the vast majority of their country and this was so because of the way genealogies and historical canons are constructed: while Rafael Cordero’s students were boys who then grew up to become

literate men and could leave precise records of his life, the 12 sisters' students were girls who, as Negrón explains, "grew up being women and, later on, wives who did not write about their teachers" (2020b; 52:15-52:23), hence the absence of historical records which also extends to the image realm:

There are no images of these women [...] while Rafael Cordero was captured in different paintings [...] The dilemma here was, "what can we do?". We looked for photos and paintings at the time, we did research on Rafael's face and we invented them. It is complicated and generates questions. It doesn't resolve, but at least it opens up questions (Negrón-Muntaner, 2020b; 53:43-54:48)¹²⁰.

It is a question of imagination, of political imagination. The situational aporia also unlocks paradoxical forms of knowledge. In this regard, Negrón-Muntaner remembers how emotion and affect was another way to access these new epistemologies. Thinking of other forms of archive, I wondered what potentialities exist inside spaces of recognition, or to translate this thought into Spinozan terms, what *potentia* can be found in *potestas*. In a way, this multiplicity of positions has been pivotal to Negrón-Muntaner, recognising divergent genealogies inside academic frameworks. As she recalls:

Coming from a black genealogy, the archive has been of great importance. Counter-archives have meant a source and basis for the construction of discourses against white supremacy, for example. This is not to say that it is free of contradictions, but it is a strategy for subaltern power [...] How you look at it, how you use it, how you relate it, is key to working through these materials. You see a link in things you hadn't considered previously (2020b; 1:05:23- 1:06:01).

¹²⁰ You can see these images in Annex 1.

A response-able¹²¹ attitude to genealogy also implies that, as Negrón-Muntaner highlights, the archives must subserve a strategy against hegemony.

As illustrated by this case study, and as seen above, we need renewed images, concepts as cartographies of action, which can bring political imaginations to disrupt our hegemonic methodologies. What follows is a summary of the new concepts which emerged from the *Valor y Cambio* experience. In the reading and experiential narrative of the case study here explored, there is a triggering of concepts which help me dialogue diffractively with the public-cultural space of the *¿Queer Archive?* of the Reina Sofía museum.

2. Triggering

“For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils”.

William Wordsworth, “I Wandered
Lonely as a Cloud” (1802)

As I have announced previously, because of the circumstances of Covid-19, my subjugated experience in the project, which was initially planned for my on-site participation, finally took the form of an interview/conversation with Frances Negrón-Muntaner. This final form of connection to the *Valor y Cambio* project made me get involved and evolved in unexpected ways. I aimed towards a generation of tools of action which could conceptually help me disentangle certain ideas from the archive, rather than an experiential resolution, as was planned initially. As I see it now, the conceptual

¹²¹ Response-ability is a fragmented term to insist upon the more relational ethics, politics and practices to live in a world which counts with more than humans. The conceptual feminist tradition of the term is sustained by many scholars, such as Donna Haraway (2008, 2016), Natasha Myers (2012) or Hayward (2010) and stresses the fact that feminist praxis is related more to learning how to respond than to an essentialist idea of being (responsible). The touching upon practices rather than stagnated identities regarding ethics is what Haraway refers to as “Staying with the trouble” (2016).

triggering taking place through this situation is in correlation with the Derridean understanding of Hauntology, re-read here as a defence of negative notions. This is, I embrace “being haunted” by certain concepts as a *potentia* to reacting and facing the archive in fresh manners. This movement conveys an impressionist account of experience, acknowledging the affective value of art.

Concepts emerge from the *Valor y Cambio* case study as the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” which inspired William Wordsworth’s after his encounter with daffodils in the “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” poem which opens this section. The notions that rise from these flashings work as relational frames from where to analyse experience in new ways. The triggering concept in this experience is the notion of value, which is considered outside the signifiers of capital production and worth, and is, by contrast, in connection to the claim of joy. It works as a critical, decolonial, queered and non-normative joy.

2.1. The liminal p(l)ace of contradictions: the private and the public

To rethink through counter-archives, as Negrón-Muntaner proposes, is a necessary eccentric move in our decolonial practices. Taking response-ability for the genealogy we each depart from is an ongoing process which brings forward continuous contradictions: our different identities, the diverse spaces we inhabit and perform, even the conflicts that can be found in being a member of Academia, as Negrón-Muntaner recognises from her own experience. Still, though conflicts are present, contradictions can become joyful if we manage to provide space for them. Hence, although archives may be generated from inside institutions, they can still provoke motions of resistance. The contradictions and frictions of their being outside-within allow for a diffractive space of relations that can enact a “cutting together apart” (Barad, 2014: 176).

As I have introduced in the previous chapters, *space* has attracted my attention since I started doing feminist work. Since *space* can be a physical, astrological, social, relational, fictional and figurative scenario, I would like to put it into action by interrupting the rhythm of the binary conceptions from where *space* is often assumed. Indeed, one of the earliest demands of feminism has been the reclaiming of public space

in contrast to the private, read as domestic, sphere. Years have passed since then and a number of situations have taught me that the spaces of militant resistance cannot be limited to this binary division between the private and the public. I now maintain, after militant years of cruising through multifarious feminisms, that identity is manifold and that, therefore, spatial dynamism should not be assumed as limited but as liminal. This is perfectly exemplified in the case of *Valor y Cambio*, which confirms my belief that this binary does not make sense anymore. The material and relational intimacies generated by the *Valor y Cambio* experience make the private spaces blend with the public ones. Hence, the former stop responding to the logics of capital, ownership and accumulation, while the latter stop signifying the power of institutions. I propose to call these new liminal blended spaces, *anticapital private-spaces of desire*, inspired by Horacio N. Roque Ramírez (2005). A perfect illustration of this concept can be found in the antiracist protests taking place in the USA while I was writing this chapter. I expand on this in the next section.

The new reading I propose of these spaces as liminal and blended, takes us to epistemological edges, transversed maps and failure methods of imagining, as Jack Halberstam would put it (2011: 89). It is an alliance for a flux of openings, an ejaculation of possibilities, a “potentia gaudendi [...] *that as an orgasmic force does not seek any immediate resolution*” (Preciado, 2008: 38. My translation)¹²². Liminality leads to eccentricity, dislocating centres and activating cartographies without N-S referential points, transitioning towards the acknowledgment of asphyxia, of *Combat breathing* (Fanon, 1959).

2.2. Dislocating temporalities into archives of desire

Combat breathing, or to hashtag it through the actions taking place in the USA #ICan'tBreathe, is the urge to identify non-linear temporalities, non-passing reparations, and to accept that violence towards certain bodies keeps going. The current transition from *Black Lives Matter* to *Black Livings Matter* is a move towards accountability in everyday actions and experiences that become response-able. It is also a queering of the

¹²² “La fuerza orgásmica no busca su resolución inmediata” (2008: 38. Original).

temporalities of production since bodies are given meaning outside the production-consumption logics and are valued for every inch of their flesh (lives) and experience (livings). Following Fanon's account of a body in resistance under occupation/domination:

There is not occupation of territory on the one hand and independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction. Under these conditions, the individual's breathing is an observed, an occupied breathing. It is a combat breathing (1959: 65).

The focus of these protests and critiques turns towards the importance of living and not only lives, insisting upon these taken-for-granted ways of being in the world which disregard the importance of other claims maintaining a state of domination and violence towards *otherised*¹²³ embodiments. In this sense, queering temporalities enables the establishment of new archives, new genealogies, new histories, and thus, new identifications. This is not about a particular destination, but about a horizon of desires, an incessant process. *Potentia* and *potestas* come into conversation, examining what possibilities open up when reconceptualising the notion of power itself in these new archives.

As an Art historian and Art therapist, one of the most important connections I have made in my research and practice has been the constant friction between fiction and reality. History is both the most fascinating imaginative tale and the best way to approach not only present materialities but also past periods, times and rhythms. In the defence of an eccentric approach to the archives which give form to what we interpret as our *reality* at present, one of the most engaging methodologies used in *Valor y Cambio* is the new currency with the images of Puerto Rican figures overlooked in History, such as Rafael Cordero's twelve sisters, previously known by most people as unspecified figures associated with their well-known brother. The exposure of the re-imagined figures of those forgotten sisters is certainly a decisive dissident move for decolonising the

¹²³ *Otherised* since the term insists on how certain bodies marked through constructions of ableness, "race", gender, etc, are constructed from the social rather than reproduce essentialist values of these embodiments.

collective imaginary. The deserved recognition of neglected local agents of change, revolution and organisation, attained by their spotlighting, is essential for Negrón-Muntaner's *decolonial joy* and what Horacio N. Roque Ramírez refers to as *A Living Archive of Desire* (2005). Taking his association of the concepts of desire and archives, I would like to bring up counter-hegemonic narratives to allude to the messiness and embodiment which I read as main ingredients of counter-hegemonic archives. I read Ramírez's association of archive and desire as an example of affects in action: transformative affects which could engage communities in more radical ways, as Negrón-Muntaner's experience demonstrates.

2.3. Beyond aesthetics. Art, material Heritage and linguistic rituals

Transforming the concept of archive also implies a conversion of material culture. Heritage comes into question, and with it the remains of matter which in *Valor y Cambio* shape into a communitarian currency. I have brought about the need to decolonise material Heritage by calling on Mignolo's division between *aesthesis* and *aesthetics*. What is recognised as preservable, as artistic, is an assumption of a legitimate and official way of representation, a system that sorts out what is valuable from what is disposable.

Imagination and art concoct differently from the way aesthetics and art do. When art becomes a language, concepts enact affect, and consequently art evolves as a decolonial practice, a constellation of epistemologies with infinite connections among themselves. As in Gloria Anzaldúa's *La Frontera*, eccentric forms of knowledge are not always made accessible, but remain in-between experiential codes which do not want transliteration.

This opens the path to a cartography of action which resorts to language as ritual, as repetitive procedures, and, ultimately, in Byung-Chul Han's words "a home in space" (2020. My translation) ¹²⁴. Concepts as linguistic rituals can facilitate fluidity of communication and exchange between bodies, including other than human. They become tokens of recognition, as liminal identities from where to explore life.

¹²⁴ Los rituales "[s]on en el tiempo lo que una vivienda es en el espacio" (2020. Original).

2. 4. Introducing the application of New Materialisms

As explored in the previous chapters, New Materialisms challenge the notion of reality, questioning the extent to which ontologies follow the same logics as epistemologies, and are bounded to human logics of representation. In this critique to representationalism, the use of queerness fits well since it also trespasses the simplification of the binary between the real and the constructed by exposing how sex, as a biological category, is as constructed as gender. In this junction, I also find the potential to throw light on the issue of the archive. The archive, which is traditionally linked to these logics of epistemological exception and value, can also become invigorated when such conceptions are challenged by engaging in its mutability instead of dealing with it as stagnantly connected to questions of inheritance and duration through time.

The poststructuralist shift that Karen Barad takes in their work (2007, 2014, 2016) also reconceptualises the human, matter, agency and identity. All these new considerations of different world entities become imbricated within the ontological turn in their work. In their phenomenological conception of matter as entangled in discursive expressions, Barad allows me to see research beyond human exceptionalism and challenging representationalism.

Through the application of agential realism, onto-epistemologies represent the individualistic sense of the implosion of metaphysics. The combination of these four concepts -ontology and epistemology; and agency and realism- into two groups helps understand the limits of representationalism. Barad and NMs explain how objects and subjects do not precede their interaction *per se* but are the result of their combination and *intra-action*, Barad's main neologism (2007). In this application, a series of "taken-for-granted", i.e., ontologised notions, are confronted. Such are the concepts dealing with aspects of space, time and energy:

I aim to dislocate the container model of space, the spatialization of time, and the reification of matter by reconceptualizing the notions of space, time, and matter using an alternative framework that shakes loose the foundational character of

notions such as location and opens up a space of agency in which the dynamic intra-play of indeterminacy and determinacy reconfigures the possibilities and impossibilities of the world's becoming such that indeterminacies, contingencies, and ambiguities coexist with causality (2007: 225).

The deviation that Barad encourages through their writings reshapes the analysis of social inequalities and violences, grasping them not as pivotal and essentialised, as preconceived to any relation, but as entangled in their inter-play to phenomenological accounts and circumstances, or as they put it, “without the need for the usual anchor to some conception of fixity” (Ibid). This is key in their keeping politics of locations at the centre of the critique since this walking away from notions as essentially existing and constituted can be used to deviate human responsibility and accountability from issues that are located precisely in this exceptionalism and representationalism. Coming back to the question of the archive, and to the alternatives to the traditional way of doing memory, the situational aspect becomes key to liberate these recollections and their knowledges, rhythms and affects, from stagnation.

In this re-questioning of the human as the centre of action Barad also works from that posthumanist tendency that NMs engages with. In their analysis of the aftermath of anthropocentric research and standards, Barad announces other ways of delving into ontology and epistemology, building into the use of agential realism to “take into account the fact that the forces at work in the materialisation of bodies are not only social and the bodies produced are not all human” (Ibid). As a recognised example through this thesis, Foucault’s extensive account of *power* does not address certain concepts such as *dynamism* and *difference* which are, nevertheless, central pieces of feminist critiques. As Barad maintains “the notion of dynamics is [not] a settled and unproblematic concept. Agential realism entails a rethinking of both notions: power and dynamics” (233). The way in which NMs regards movement and agency restructures the implications that discursive practices have in feminist theory analysis since materiality here means more than “an effect or consequence of discursive practices” (Ibid).

It is through the research for this case study that I started thinking about the potentiality of reworking language and concepts to challenge traditional notions of

knowledge and enact alternative “realities”¹²⁵. The rethinking of the genealogy of concepts away from the authors who coined them, as discussed in previous chapters, is central to attain such aim. Such is the case of the explicit critique of the pre-fixed formulas that certain conceptual turns have used to deconstruct specific epistemologies in need of new rhythms. What I mean by this is that the ways in which post/anti/neo/new are cited here also respond to specific understandings of History and sometimes go beyond the time of historical narrative (as in the *post* in colonial critiques or the *new* in materialisms). Even if Barad and other related theorists are essential for my work -also given the materialist genealogy I come from- there is also a move missing New Materialisms to encompass the genealogies of otherwise materialism which have existed outside capitalised cultures. Among many other decolonial scholars who question westernised and whitewashed systems of knowledge, Kim Tallbear states that:

[I]ndigenous peoples have never forgotten that nonhumans are agential beings engaged in social relations that profoundly shape human lives. In addition, for many indigenous peoples, their nonhuman others may not be understood in even critical Western frameworks as living. “Objects” and “forces” such as stones, thunder, or stars are known within our ontologies to be sentient and knowing persons (this is where new materialisms intersects with animal studies) (Tallbear in Muñoz, 2015: 234).

As Tallbear unapologetically warns readers, even from critical positions white systems and western thinking must acknowledge the impossibility of experiencing and understanding entities in indigenous cosmovisions. To grasp is to misunderstand. By settling down records, the archive inevitably closes down many possible alternative readings to the reality it tries to fix. Here, a step into this critique is to recognise how certain translations involve a fantasy of recognition fulfilment that, nevertheless reifies

¹²⁵ A pertinent term here could be *puncept*, a concept which is born by the pun, the blending, of two other existing terms. In the works by theorists Jacques Derrida (1967) or Karen Barad (2014), puncepts represent a main methodological use of concepts as transformative. Concepts as methodologies and puncepts are simultaneously rooted and fugitive.

other world arrangements. To move beyond a system of epistemic and value control is also to disregard many other systems or ways of being that have followed other paces. Without romanticising the many ways and different forms of social and communitarian organisation, these are not collected inside the dominant and normative institutional forms that “we” criticise and take for granted as universal forms of life and relationality. Thus, NMs is here used inside this politics of location recognition, where the insights towards matter, animals, environmental justice and other non-human forces come from very specific formulations and spaces which I have encountered within my human experience.

This activation of otherwise research is connected to the notion of *performativity* since it touches upon multiple methods rather than singular solutions. It is more *a doing* than a set of prearranged tools. *Performativity*, in Butler’s sense, is generated in my thesis through the recognition of its contextual limitations: since concepts are held as methods they, therefore, only permeate the time/space/mattering of this thesis. In Barad’s words, “[g]endering, Butler argues, is a temporal process that operates through the reiteration of norms. In other words, Butler is saying that gender is [...] an iterated doing through which subjects come into being” (2007: 57). Barad engages directly into Butler while reshaping the Butlerian tradition and genealogy. They take performativity into New Materialist terms through its link to representationalism and the human exception critique that can be developed in reading between Butler’s lines. Barad addresses the issue exposing how:

It is possible to develop coherent philosophical positions that deny the basic premises of representationalism. A performative understanding of natural cultural practices is one alternative. Performative approaches call into question representationalism’s claim that there are representations, on the one hand, and ontologically separate entities awaiting representation, on the other, and focus inquiry on the practices or performances of representing, as well as the productive effects of those practices and the conditions for their efficacy (2007: 49).

Performativity, in this New Materialist sense, means quite simply a situated knowledge. Let me explain: performativity becomes the counterpart for other practices of representationalism, which, as Barad writes, are immersed in an outsider’s position.

Representationalism does not recognise how, we are already part of that reality we, as researchers, deepen into. As Barad explains further on:

A performative understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things. Unlike representationalism, which positions us above or outside the world we allegedly merely reflect on, a performative account insists on the understanding thinking, observing, and theorizing as practices of engagement with and as part of, the world in which we have our being (2007: 133).

Outside this anthropocentric representationalism in which the human is seen as the full entity consuming an external world, performers of thought, such as Barad, make us face that we are already part of the grammar and semiotics of the world. Concepts are not full but rather re-emptied and refilled. Words stand in performative positions which, at once, can change the panoramic view of the whole. But they are mere fragments of such whole. The hole, the whole. What is the difference?

2.5. From reflective concepts to diffractive applications. From concepts in interaction to concepts that intra-act

In my proposal of concepts as methods and alternative archives Esteban Muñoz's *Ephemera* (1996) plays an important part. As stated in the preceding chapter about the Void, the question of the archive also touches on a temporal-space-relationality that cannot be held as a sequence. Archives should exceed the present since they also work inside, within and towards other temporal signifiers *Ephemera* stains, or perhaps rather illuminates, this whole thesis since each one of the case studies can only be drawn from this alternative paradigm. *Ephemera* works from the terminology of negativity, but as with the appropriation of our own recognition as fagots and dykes, negativity here is not held as barren but as accountable.

I now want to focus upon the shift that I intend with introducing the performativity of concepts. Again, my main literature is NMs theories and, in particular, Karen Barad's

queer implementations of quantum physics from which I use the distinction between reflection and diffraction. As they write in their acclaimed article “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart” (2014):

While returning might have the association of reflection (how light returns from where it came once it hits the mirror), re-turning, as I hope to develop this notion, is about diffracting. The play here between reflection/returning and diffraction/re-turning, separated only by the mere mark of a hyphen, is an important reminder that reflection and diffraction are not opposites, not mutually exclusive, but rather different optical intra-actions highlighting different patterns, optics, geometries that often overlap in practice (184-185).

Extending it from these lines, I would like to give a thought to the multiple effects that diffractive readings can have (2007: 135) because of the conceptual shift represented by what Barad calls agential *intra-actions*, in opposition to *interactions*:

The notion of intra-action (in contrast to the usual “interaction,” which presumes the prior existence of independent entities or relata) represents a profound conceptual shift. It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful (2007: 139).

Phenomena are an impossible ontology because they are also imperceptible, a priori, by the human mindset since they happen “without a preexistent relation”. Defined as “dynamic topological reconfigurings I entanglements I relationalities I (re)articulations of the world” (2007: 141) they are related to a performativity of things in the world. As has been illustrated before in this thesis, relationality is a key element when speaking about the analytical frames of time and space. Sara Ahmed contributes to this argument when reading intra-dependency through her above-mentioned queer phenomenology. Ahmed seeks to engage into a specific queer experience, writing that:

Neither the object nor the body have integrity in the sense of being “the same thing” with and without others. Bodies as well as objects take shape through being orientated toward each other, as an orientation that may be experienced as the co-habitation or sharing of space. Bodies are hence shaped by contact with objects and with others, with “what” is near enough to be reached. Bodies may even take shape through such contact, or take the shape of that contact. What gets near is both shaped by what bodies do, which in turn affects what bodies can do (2006: 54).

In this analysis of *orientations*, Ahmed looks for a redirection of queerness and conversely, queers the directions towards the project. The matter of History, of knowledge and of experience remain entangled, unfolding signifiatory excess, marking orientations and intra-dependencies as ways of unblocking otherwise happenings. This is, through these entanglements, another kind of knowledge about “what there is” and “what there was” can be enacted beyond the limits of discursive practices and intellectual significations. As she reflects, inscribing phenomenology as a new site for queer realities, “Orientations are about the direction we take that puts some things and not others in our reach” (2006: 56). In my fictionalised connection between Ahmed and Richard Fung’s *Orientations* (1984)¹²⁶, Ahmed opens-up towards a phenomenological account of intimacy and ground-breaks globalised schemes for the application of certain notions¹²⁷, contesting the ways of looking into the archive and making room in it for intimate stories lived by non-hegemonic embodiments. In their sense of space and direction, and following the importance of *orientation* that queer geographies highlight (Bell and Valentine, 1995), Ahmed’s use of the concept of *orientation* becomes a site to reinscribe phenomenology inside feminist and queer critiques and revisions. Ahmed talks the reader into a commitment to this “oriented” method of location when explaining that:

¹²⁶ Meaning that the connection exists in my own practice rather than in an actual conversation or conscious connection between the two authors.

¹²⁷ Fung’s research speaks up about the specificity of the Asian sexual consumption, not as mere pornographic material but as the idea that leaks through the notion that “gay people are white people”.

Phenomenology can offer a resource for queer studies insofar as it emphasises the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds (2006: 2).

Situated knowledge becomes situated again, *intersectionality* is re-oriented towards an antiracist critique and the diversity of concepts engages into the impossibility of expansion, recognising the limits of distance and the potential for certain notions to being activated through proximity and, thus, having a specific temporality. In this sense, the temporal rhythm of queerness is recentred again as a site of resistance and Muñoz's *ephemera* is kept active through new orientations.

When thinking of concepts as intra-active another pertinent angle is the deciphering turn in Sylvia Wynter's work. As Wynter writes:

[A] deciphering turn seeks to decipher what the process of rhetorical mystification *does*. It seeks to identify not *what* texts and their signifying practices can be interpreted to *mean* but what they can be deciphered to *do*, and it also seeks to evaluate the "illocutionary force" and procedures with which they do what they *do* (1992: 265-266).

The meaning is substituted, not in its totality, but in its quality and value, by action. What is generated is placed above discursive intelligibility. Indeed, these other forms of materialisms, such as NMs theories, give new shape to time-space understandings. As Barad formulates it, these "dynamics" account not so much for the movement present in non-deterministic understandings of time and space, but they acknowledge, instead, the importance of certain activations that involve the exclusion of other possible movements, not "once and for all" but rather from an agential-cut. To put it more simply: that an exclusion could be seen as not determinant, but rather as a site of dynamics and agency, also reworks the sense of time and space as intra-active. Coming back to the question of the archive, its potential resides in its material becoming a non-determinant cut which

works in giving a time-space location to the past. In the usual location of the archive, inside institutional places such as universities or museums, and bounded to official discourses, the archive is already de-limited by its representationalist contexts. As Barad explains:

Intra-actions are temporal not in the sense that the values of particular properties change in time; rather, which property comes to matter is re(con)figured in the very making/marking of time. Similarly, space is not a collection of preexisting points set out in a fixed geometry, a container, as it were, for matter to inhabit [...] What matters is marked off from that which is excluded from mattering but not once and for all. Intra-actions enact specific boundaries, marking the domains of interiority and exteriority, differentiating the intelligible from the unintelligible, the determinate from the indeterminate. Constitutive exclusions open a space for the agential reconfiguring of boundaries. As boundaries are reconfigured, “interior” and “exterior” are reworked. That is, through the enfolding of phenomena, as part of the dynamics of iterative intra-activity, the domains of “interior” and “exterior” lose their previous designations (2007: 180-181).

As we can see in the fragment above, the meanings of *inside* and *outside* are blurred in favour of a more performative understanding of matter. As in the conversation with Negrón-Muntaner, the ways in which the protests surrounding BLM took place in public scenarios, also shaped new understating of these binaries. These civil mobilisations in the public also open up fresh notions about what a home may look like, since the *private* applied to intimacy can also refer to places which work outside the logics of privatisation, such as the street.

Returning to Barad’s analysis, there is a certain activation that engages in the “left-out” parts, giving them a central importance as *already constitutive* for the mattering of what is materialised. In the case of concepts and the words we use, spread and domesticate in Academia, activism, and other multiple locations, they respond to an activation of those concepts as central tools of enactions. This reinscribes language as a *dispositif* used and essentially changed pending on certain time-space-relations. Hence, concepts are

momentum activations that have matterly effects. Time and space are as dependent on relationality as this sense of interaction implicit in relational views of knowledge is reliant on time and space. Interaction is, thus, reframed as intra-action.

This activation involves a consciousness of the limits of the epistemologies we regenerate through our specific scientific representationalism. Representationalism, in turn, works through a constant representation of the significance of the object of study (rather than of the object itself as raw material). The way of relating concepts in my work- the formula of concepts as methods-, aims at acknowledging that already their bonding is a human fantasy. As Barad makes us reconsider, through the notion of *thingification*:

[That is] the turning of relations into “things,” “entities,” “relata”- infects much of the way we understand the world and our relationship to it. Why do we think that the existence of relations requires relata? [...] On an agential realist account, it is once again possible to acknowledge nature, the body, and materiality in the fullness of their becoming without resorting to the optics of transparency or opacity, the geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theoretization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect while at the same time remaining resolutely accountable for the role “we” play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming (Barad, 2003: 812).

The reactive entanglement performed in the bonding of the concepts in my work responds to a breaking of dualities between these elements (interiority-exteriority; transparency-opacity; cause-effect; human-other; Human-human) while remaining accountable for the limits of the knowledge I present. In the motion of accumulation proposed in this thesis, this chapter contributes the New Materialist approach on how matter comes to matter in relation to the archive. In the *thingification* that Barad refers to, I find the material of the archive which breaks with the oppositions between inside and outside and focuses on the importance of the archive as a relational material. This does not enact a new metaphysics. It rethinks it, asks for it, questions it, and leaves it unanswered.

2.6. Archaeological records running into the archive of homes and other epistemological encounters

Departing from the questioning of archives in Frances Negrón-Muntaner's project, I look into the issues presented previously when addressing the breaking free from the dichotomy between the public and the private- when thinking about the protests of BLM- and the insistence on homes that exceed space- which can be read from Byung-Chul Han's work. In my exploration of the uses of spaces outside this dichotomy I want to approach household theories from an archaeological perspective. Taking Han's cartographic image of the use of language as a home in space (Han, 2020), as a point of departure, I want to analyse the importance of household archives to speak about these architectures of responses and about how the intimate space, usually associated with the realm of the "private", can be found in public and communal landscapes. Through archaeological theoretical texts dealing with the space of homes and households, we can reflect upon the importance of these intimate spaces of signification and on how they are containers of specific conceptual uses. Through these readings, we can grant a critique to language at the same time as acknowledging material needs. This is, to identify, to name, to remember are, in many cases, experiential needs of embodiment even if their stagnation is, somehow, a question we need to embrace from critical positions. In this sense, the conceptual twist between border and cartography is an imaginary I follow for this revision, where location is somehow a bodily condition as it is also a situational state. Pragmatic visions of how a body is/experiences (in)space are problematic as they disregard so many experiences and conditions which do not fit in their theoretical approximations. As will be explored later in this thesis, to ontologise what motion and movement mean, and the agencies involved in such actions is too reductive and represents a very specific world-viewing.

Continuing with the approach to concepts as methods, and in the wake of the specificity of its application to the archive in connection to identity, the following paragraphs deal with the issue of historical recognition. As already introduced, to History, Archaeology, Anthropology and other disciplines based on narratives about past events, identity has served as a monolith from which to depict and reproduce certain ideas about

human groups. Archaeology has proven to be another spectre of white, often male, normative supremacism, and has helped re-produce stereotypical views of bodies throughout History. In the case of histories of resistance, the historical narratives aligned in these disciplines have failed to recognise the multiple layers of existence that the different human experiences have created. This is easily recognisable to anyone who has become engaged in History somehow: the past is told and archived through specific identity categories which provide a quick image of the time-space they represent. In the construction of European identity we only have to think about how Philosophy, and, later in time, Politics have been handled in naturalising ways from Greek and Roman Histories, respectively. They are naturalising since they work as identitarian markers that connect to certain names, features of personality and concepts. These logics of recognition help some of these Histories remain uncontested, since they are constructed as *the* European genealogy. The Roman Empire is consumed in vast forms throughout our heritages- mostly in their capital value of consumption-, but the theoretical critique to it is becoming more and more present. Nevertheless, such critique falls into confusion and is abandoned when the temporalities and spatialities are dislocated. More contemporary time framings and locations which are simultaneously present and invisible seem too uncomfortable for some narratives to hold in critique and most of the time they are abandoned or dismissed as unimportant. This is the case, for instance, of captive life in the USA. The motivation behind the use of this particular example is drawn from a specific text I will analyse hereunder that was a turning point in my understanding of how Histo-fantastical narratives construct us and *where to find them*. As Alexander G. Weheliye reflects upon, the narrative of captive life and its consequential identitarian generations has been reduced to a simplistic view of victimisation and infantilisation of the racialised captive body (2014). As will be analysed next, both to reclaim a home and to rework through the archive are landscapes of resistance. This takes us back to the view of the archive as a home and a home as a space of everyday archives.

The responsibility of historical disciplines towards the present has been long discussed, as already mentioned earlier in this thesis. As also seen before, their response-ability, their capability to impact and offer responses to the present, is a main concern in this research. Even if Heritage practices- such as museums, exhibitions, patrimonial

popular knowledge, to cite some of the most generalised ways of historical disciplines entering societies- are being rethought for a more active inclusion of the non-specialised public (Smith, 2006; Moshenska, 2017; Almansa, 2021) it is still common to find these disciplines tied to remote pasts which have little to do with contemporary issues. As in the previous example, it is easy to connect with Greek iconography, but this gets tangled when it comes to closer periods. In the wake of woke perspectives inside Academia (Stottman, 2011; Flewelling, 2019), there are many committed scholars who are reworking through the idea of what we could call archaeological activism.

I want to vindicate here the importance of domestic and intimate locations in archaeological terms. That affectivity and autoethnographies are necessary inside academic landscapes is particularly pertinent when it comes to Archaeology. It means that small histories, the untold, the ephemeral spaces and the sites of social conjunction should be looked for and also that the positionings and locations from where we enter these intimate spaces should also be examined. To work through the notion of *home*, as critical archaeology brings forward (Alarcón García et al.), also restructures the materially essentialised ways of reading household archaeology through a gender theory lens. Reconsidering how the notion of home works and is active in many different forms depending on the context of time-space-relationality can also generate fresh readings on how the historical opposition between public and private is fuzzy. Again, to deontologise here means awakening other kinds of artefacts that may come through as insignificant. As Jamie M. Arjona notes, following James Baldwin's tradition, the ambivalence of *home*, "teeters between claustrophobia and homesick longing." (2017: 44). This ambivalence is a disposition to engage in and the vindication of public spaces against the private-domestic invisibility is taken as only one of the oppositions that may be active in an archaeology of household and space, opening the path to research into the many other experiential circumstances that can be lived through this "home" Archaeology.

To reclaim space is also to reclaim a post anthropocentric viewing. This is, to engage into the ways in which spaces, such as homes, take a particular significance because their affectivity (their capacity to affect and be affected) disrupts the anthropocentric worldmaking, in which the monistic derivation is the human body. The ways in which households, homeplaces and other intimate locations are affected by and,

in turn, affect their inhabitants leads to reconsiderations of matter as agential to the archaeological process. In an intra-active attachment (Barad, 2007), the artefact is significant beyond its material property, but rather as interlocked with the environment, where the human body is agential only as a part of this conjuncture. Object and subject are part of a total, of an *affective arrangement* (Slaby et al., 2019)¹²⁸.

Space is never only a physical place. It also involves other temporal habitations. That is the deviant connotation between *house* and *home*. A home is always haunted. A home is never present but rather subsists in different temporalities and is, simultaneously, hidden and visible. In a mixed style between stream of consciousness and its solvent in documented references Carmen María Machado's *In the Dream House* (2019) breaks down the space of *home* as the signifier of their experience of intra-gender violence. The space of physical intimacy is addressed from many angles and metaphors. This compilation re-enacts the ways in which space is normally thought about. It is the locus which gives birth to the topics of specific scenarios of violence and not the other way around. In one of these twists, Machado speaks about *being haunted*, a notion that, in turn, haunts also this thesis. In reflecting upon being haunted in its metaphysical meanings, they write:

What does it mean for something to be haunted, exactly? [...] It means that metaphors abound; that space exists in four dimensions; that if you return somewhere often enough it becomes infused with your energy; that the past never leaves us; that there's always atmosphere to consider, that you can wound the air as cleanly as you can wound flesh (2019: 146).

The sense of atmosphere which they refer to in this fragment is directly inspired by the work by Bennett Sims, in which the *being haunted* surpasses superstition and releases the undisciplined atmosphere which exceeds human authority.

¹²⁸ For the authors an *affective arrangement* is mediated and has affect as its central core. This means that affect is not added to pre-existing arrangements, but rather these arrangements exist because of their affective state in itself.

Machado's writing opposes some canonical literary devices, such as Chéjov's gun principle, by which an element which is not extraordinary and fundamental to the plot should be cut off. Instead, the ordinary, the elements that have been haunting, become visible. We can read from Machado's dealing with intra-gender violence how this structure, a dynamic that continually moves towards many places, is made contingent on unimportant elements. These elements, which work as atmosphere, are simultaneously a void in the plot and a saturation of its meaning. Again, connecting this to the ideas in the previous chapter, a void is not a lack, but rather an impossibility to face, to look directly at. Histories of violence, static notions of "race", gender, ability, and structural forms of engaging in temporal meaning such as past or potential futures are conditional to these elemental leaks that seem unimportant. In this wake, material cultures of experiences which may be read as unimportant are fundamental pieces to reclaim in order to modify our rhizomatic pasts and concretise precise histories for reparation.

Following alternative narratives of these histories, Whitney Battle-Baptiste's analysis of the archaeological record from "The Hermitage"¹²⁹ in *Black Feminist Archaeology* (2011), represents a strong foundation in ethical and politicised Archaeology. Battle-Baptiste has deconstructed these reductive identifications and has provided new methodologies and records from the slavery landscapes in the USA. Helped by not always written archives and traditions, Battle-Baptiste started reflecting upon what agency and resistance meant for people under the subjugation and property of white bodies. Speaking about the *homespace*, she explains how:

It was a place to regroup, to learn strategies of survival, find strength, and create thoughts of resistance [...] I began to think about my homespace as my environment, the spaces that shaped my experiences and memories. I did not grow up in an individualized place; in many ways there was a collective nature where I grew up (2011: 95).

¹²⁹ Home of President Andrew Jackson and thus a historical place that, nevertheless, has overseen the president's active involvement in slavery. The many excavations that have taken place in the site give this untraced and unrecognised information, that only some have highlighted as the main aspect of this space, beyond the romanticisation and whitewashing of Jackson's life.

Battle Baptiste “inhumates” formalism in normative accounts to History when imbricating her own world view and the way the material record in the archaeological site of The Hermitage is reinterpreted. The intimacy of her own experience is brushed towards the understanding of a genealogical past which, nevertheless, has been interpreted through white visions of History.

This also throws new considerations of what *counteraction* might mean when disentangled from preconceived notions of identitarian communities. Counteraction is normally conceived of as taking place within universal viewings of oppression which are historically left outside archives. This also engages with what *resistance* might look like if new parameters such as *silence* and *hidden archives* are thrown into critical discourses (Satlhgren in Stottman, 2011: 96). Battle-Baptiste starts de-ontologising the captive-life narrative, while addressing material culture and maintenance activities that disentangle experience from archetypes of popular living. When speaking about artefacts that dislocated this idea of essentialised identities, Battle-Baptiste refers to:

[F]ood preparation, cooking activities, and leisure related items such as clay and ceramic marbles, a harmonica part, several straight pins and buttons, three mouth harps, and fish hooks. This meant that at this location all genders and ages came together to make music, play games, and do other activities like prepare food, make soap, and sew worn clothing. Most important of all was the in-ground cooking that was done at this site. These were all activities that left some archaeological trace, and which not only distinguished this area from any other place excavated on the plantation, but opened up the dialogue about daily life in a central gathering place (2011: 104).

Concepts associated to family roles, masculinity, patriarchy and, again, agency, are here retwisted and highlighted from new positions, giving them new meanings and values:

I needed to understand how captive African families maintained an existence within a normalized, but impossible to emulate, Western patriarchal family structural system. By this I mean that in a social atmosphere where women and

children were protected by men as property and dependents, the captive African family operated at a great disadvantage. There was a social expectation of man as head of household; yet realistically, captive African men were usually restricted in their ability to protect, provide and “rule” over their household on any plantation. They were captives, property of another man. Therefore, from the beginning, their role as patriarch was virtually impossible to exercise (2011: 94).

The abstraction of how certain concepts introduce and induce our experiences is challenged through the ruptures Battle-Baptiste finds using the archaeological records and its artefacts. Following what has been framed as epistemological coloniality, from the theories by Anibal Quijano or María Lugones among others, gender binarism and patriarchal values are seen as an effect of colonial expansion and infestation. Battle-Baptiste attains a strong decolonial and antiracist critique when addressing the impossibility of emulation, drawing from Fanonian tradition (Fanon, 1952) and, thus, exposing the futility and incoherence in using heteronormativity and heterosexuality reciprocally.

Battle-Baptiste’s analysis of how certain heteronormative values are settled in very specific heterosexual contexts, in this case those related to freedom, whiteness and monogamy, among others, takes me back to Cathy Cohen’s critique on privileged understandings of resistance from gender and sexuality perspectives. In Cohen’s case, sexuality and gender are always already imbricated with other identitarian schemes such as racialisation. Cohen writes that:

[M]y concern is centered on those individuals who consistently activate only one characteristic of their identity, or a single perspective of consciousness, to organize their politics, rejecting any recognition of the multiple and intersecting systems of power that largely dictate our life chances (1997: 440).

Maybe this is the fragment where we can really understand the specific monistic understandings of critique that have been reviewed over the years, such as the application of negativity by white homosexual scholars Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman, analysed in

the previous chapter. Within matters of saturation against the narrative of *nothingness* that these two scholars engage in their theoretical framework, negativity was restructured to attend to the principles of privilege involved in its claim. The sole view of a gendered and sexualised body was problematic since it did not take responsibility for their already saturated whiteness in their corporeal experiences. This idea returns in this chapter opening space to an approach to intersections beyond the traditional understanding of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Lorde, 1984) which has become appropriated of by white scholars hence often invisibilising the genealogy of intersectionality in itself. As noted by Nash (2008) and Cho and Crenshaw (2013), intersectionality should escape its appropriation by identities embedded in its theoretical frame as generators of the inequalities it denominates. As Nash reminds feminist scholars engaging in intersectional discourses, intersectionality is a doing, a methodology that needs to be reframed within its political action without taking identity for granted or tokenising people's experiences. To remain critical of how we appropriate concepts, to disappropriate them, does not mean to abandon them. It is rather a revision of how in our research practices we inhabit those which are cut by our corporeal experiences (Ibid).

Returning to Cohen's analysis, she reminds her readers that the activation of identity as a singular form is problematic not because of a strategic choice of action, which could be understandable, but because it escapes any kind of reflection on how identity is never about particular traces but rather an imbrication of different elements that may or may not be simultaneously active. This also unfolds other issues that have been analysed in the previous chapters: translation and otherwise materialisms. How translation and translatability can be dangerous for the totalising of how certain concepts, movements and positions are viewed will be further analysed at the end of this chapter.

When rethinking singularity, exceptionalism, supremacism and a universal idea of the *self*, other kinds of entities are also activated. As has been introduced and analysed before this chapter, NMs may not have been always new, but they have been radical in their engagement with experiences and epistemologies that exceed anthropocentric singularity. In the critique to the colonial and white supremacist mindset, as well as other gendered critiques, there is a particular take inside this scheme since on the one hand there is a human-exceptionalism that is working and shaping these categorical settings, but on

the other, the same human exceptionalism is problematised and cannot be disentangled from specific human doings. This means that even if NMs are a fresh understanding of the whole idea of humanism, they cannot disengage from specific human systems, traditions and generations, such as those engaging in violence, oppression and supremacism. Karen Barad also enters this space when writing that:

The idea that beings exist as individuals with inherent attributes, anterior to their representation, is a metaphysical presupposition that underlies the belief in political, linguistic, and epistemological forms of representationalism. Or to put the point the other way around, representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they support to represent (2007: 46).

In their critique to representationalism, Barad explodes the binary understanding between the ontological entity to be represented and its representation, where the human exceptionalism holds itself to, engaging in this delusional distinction between object and subject that impregnates other relationalities that exceed a direct representational system, such as non-human animality, plants and inert bodies. Following the phenomenological tradition of perception and consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Dreyfus, 1992), Barad engages in the fundamentals of the human body as already knotted inside this material entanglements. That representationalism is a perception fantasy of exceptionalism is dealt with in Barad's work by exposing its own impossibility and reshaping notions of universality, comprehension and apprehension.

Battle Baptiste also follows this divergent take on the past when dealing with the notion of *absence*. In this connection to NMs, and beyond-anthropocentric perspectives, Black Archaeology finds a particular way of entering research spaces at the same time as it also unfolds the impossibilities of translation and translocation. The oral histories Battle-Baptiste uses are present in intimate ways in their text and do not necessarily function from visibility standards. Furthermore, certain conceptions of intimacy are left expanded only in material terms while maintaining their untranslatability to the general public. The whole of the book looks at the past in its ambiguity between possibility and

visibility. As she writes, “[i]n looking further, I decided to also think about the impact of material on places they were found and places where no artefacts were discovered. The absence of material being as important as their presence” (2011: 86). The voids in this epistemological reconstruction are decentralising since they are not material for their representationalist consumption from academic landscapes. The impossibility here is related to the chosen limitation that Battle-Baptiste works through: redoing a specific stagnated narrative while allowing its intimate existence outside white-supremacist logics of knowledge consumption. This limitation will be explored further on under the conceptual tools of translatability and translation at the end of this chapter.

2.7. Proper language, property language

Returning to the notion of *emulation* which Battle-Baptiste takes from Fanon (1952, 1968) to apply it to their own academic renaissance, the way words are used is a consequence of how concepts are held and possessed. In this regard, while speaking about the cultural and symbolic uses of concepts in certain discourses, their materiality is often ignored. Yet, decolonial and antiracist theoretical practices, economics and their critiques, are rooted in a colonial and racial system where property and accumulation are at the core of the violent and oppressive practices taking place throughout history. As Cedric Robinson has plainly exposed (1983), the extraction of social, economic and labour forces is the root of our economic systems and their critiques. In this light, concepts need to be studied as property, where language becomes a landholder’s scenario. As Negrón-Muntaner reflects upon the use of antiracist language in the USA during the last elections,

[some years ago] people preferred to be referred to as *African American*, but the pendulum has gone back to *Black* and that is partly directed by *Black Lives Matter* [...] because there is a radicalization of the perspective [...] the revolution is to think how white supremacy, the hierarchical racist organisation of society, has changed its form but not its root (2020: min: 18:50- 19:10).

Words matter and are a matter of property. What words are used for, how we identify through words and what concepts are locked inside archives which are created to recognise a common past is also part of the critique to discourses. Since the activation performed in this research is the material production which certain conceptual uses and understanding of knowledge impress in our contexts, we must also reflect on certain uses of language that go beyond discourse. Words are already entangled in worlding activity, not needing their link to big discourses to be taken into account. Words in themselves are never insular, even if held in singular uses. Rather, words have a history, an epistemological ontology. They are contaminated and, while they can be reviewed in isolation, words are never alone.

Language as property is a performed effect I activate in this section. To animate this perspective, I want to introduce the work by Chery I. Harris “Whiteness as Property” (1993), a crucial text on Critical Race Studies and theories. In her text, Harris addresses the wide, and sometimes blind, effects of whiteness as a system. In this analysis, the perpetuation of some of the effects of this system contaminate reality and, as Harris specifies, the particularity of property. Who owns is not only rooted on who is authorised to a certain *worlding*- intended as world making, which is a central issue when thinking about representation- but it is also a material account of a direct connection between the economic system we are immersed in and the racial and colonial implications that merge from it. To address whiteness as a system that also operates in an economic ideology of privatisation and property, can help us rethink about the property of language and concepts. Who owns concepts also includes who is legitimised to unfold them inside a cultural/experiential context. Or we can put it more directly: how and which words circulate is directly informed by privilege.

Let us come back to Battle-Baptiste’s concept of *emulation*, when addressing the issue of the impossibility of the non-white subject to be inserted into a white system, in order to focus upon how the way in which concepts spread unfolds the identities compiled into their uses. Following the importance of recognising these uses inside the pragmatic existence of property, who owns masculinity is pivotal to grounding how the concepts determining the configuration of the notion of *masculinity* are required under a certain activation of the concept itself. Masculinity, built from a white supremacist paradigm, is

impossible to emulate by the subjects outside its identitarian label, making other notions surrounding masculinity, such as patriarchy or heteronormativity only performative aspects of this impossible emulation. All in all, the way in which the property of certain cultural notions is compiled inside limited subjectivities (those of white people) can also expose how the critiques driven from these colonising concepts are imbricated in this logic. As Battle-Baptiste or Cohen remind us, there is an imperative requirement to situate concepts, even if these are born within critical spaces. To use heteronormativity as a universal disruption takes for granted that the imitation game of masculinity is accessible, possible and desired by everybody.

2.8. Beyond “Anthropobsession”: from anthropology to entropy

As explained hitherto, performativity can be used as an alternative to normative considerations not only of gender- as would be proposed by a Butlerian reading- but of how epistemology and ontology are socially perceived. The distinction between both has its base in the centrality that language and semiotics have been granted for the last centuries. The cartesian distinction between mind and body is performed through traditional epistemologies by assuming a constant distinction between the ontological object which is, nonetheless, perceived as already represented. The anthropocentrism implicit in the representationalism involved in our research and knowledge practices is questioned in these “turns”¹³⁰. As Barad explains in another one of their articles when addressing *performativity*:

[I]t is possible to develop coherent philosophical positions that deny that there are representations on the one hand and ontologically separate entities awaiting representation on the other. A performative understanding, which shifts the focus from linguistic representations to discursive practices, is one such alternative (2003: 807).

¹³⁰ I remain skeptical of the many “turns” that have taken place in the past decades since, in my opinion, they ratify the anthropocentrism involved in the discursive centrality of our critical analyses, leaving matter behind.

Human exceptionalism is here questioned through the connection to feminist discourses on how the body is a social construction, a historical formula that has been, nevertheless, important to some political disruptions. In the account of this cumulative formula, it is through this triggering of conceptual matterings that I want to deepen into the link between anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism and the question of the archive and other historical practices. Other accounts of the human are, in this light, a necessary step to address human exceptionalism as a mindset. I am not keen on certain aspects of posthuman thought since it has often been used as a state to be achieved, as if the universality of “being human” could escape the material distances within humans themselves. I adhere to Barad’s take on posthumanism when they state that:

No uncritical embrace of the cyborg as the ironic liberatory savior is at issue here. Posthumanism, as I intend it here, is not calibrated to the human; on the contrary, it is about taking issue with human exceptionalism while being accountable for the role we play in the differential constitution and differential positioning of the human among other creatures (both living and nonliving). Posthumanism does not attribute the source of all change to culture, denying nature any sense of agency or historicity. In fact, it refuses the idea of a natural (or, for that matter, a purely cultural) division between nature and culture, calling for an accounting of how this boundary is actively configured and reconfigured. Posthumanism does not presume that man is the measure of all things. It is not held captive to the distance scale of the human but rather is attentive to the practices by which scale is produced (2007: 136).

The difference Barad refers to is committed to a dismantling of particular arrangements that divide the notion of the human. The *dividuum* fragmentation works upon the base of similarity, while individuality is reinforced by exceptionality and integrity (Deleuze, 1992; Raunig, 2016; Desiriis, 2018). In their critical application of posthumanism, Barad redirects the analysis to a diffractive reading of experience in which non-totalising manners of researching different situations achieve a more-than-human approach that still remains accountable for the differences among those referenced humans. When searching

for other forms of archiving and giving value to new materials, this decentralisation of the human as already this modulated figuration of humanism.

In fact, the importance of destroying monism throughout conceptual history is also linked to these other ways of engaging in the human body beyond humanism. When reading indigenous authors and a straight critique on our white systems of body control and human epistemes, there are encounters with other ways of being, of being in the world. These may regard, as is the case with indigenous ontologies and cosmologies in North America, other non-human and non-living entities that are beyond the cisnormative divide nature-culture. I call it cisnormative because, as I have defended earlier on, the binary cosmology of human exceptionalism and supremacism makes these divisions (sex-gender, nature-culture) part of the same formula of bodily control. As Kim Tallbear addresses in her work, “[n]ature and sex have both been defined according to a nature-culture divide” (Tallbear in Muñoz et al., 2015: 234). Expanding on this idea, we can also see the bond in western and white genealogies between the meaning of humanity and sex-gendered values. From a new materialist approach, we could say that the notion of humanity, as lived from white contexts, is already polluted by its intra-action with concepts regarding sex and gender, which seem to be intrinsic and ontologically ascribed to the human body. Doing away with the framework of human exceptionalism helps disentangle the pre-established ideas of humanity, of the body experience and of the notions bound to these. Intra-action, as a tool to otherwise materialisms, decentres human agency and helps disorganise the monistic bases of our use of concepts.

As regards the way in which History is used in these alterations of concepts, the anthropocentric interpretation of the past is simultaneously potential and problematic, as seen in the example used previously of archaeological artefacts and their interpretation. Archaeology seems to be an epistemological scenario where we can find some particular potentialities. Artefacts resist in a liminal place between the impossibility of bringing steady solutions while they activate otherwise narratives. Take for instance how the human genitals have been the specific excuse for historians and archaeologists to speak about forgotten identities in the past. However, as proven by feminist archaeology, to find bodies with certain genitals in different spaces has been read as potentially destructuring of certain stereotypes linked to identity issues, some of which have been silenced

throughout traditional Histories. This, being in some cases a potential tool to address these invisibilisations, where the category of gender is crucial (Scott, 1986), becomes a shortcut in other contexts where it is activated as intrinsic to the human body. This leaves other categories unattended even though they may be functioning in those contexts. One such category may be colonialism. As I have previously announced, gender is not only constructed, but it has a very specific genealogy: colonialism. María Lugones in her radical input of the coloniality of gender (2008), makes visible how the gendered body is a colonial invention. This forces a rethinking of the categories that may be active in otherwise contexts, distant in time, space or discursivity, and which may be linked to difference but not necessarily to oppression. Examples of this can be the archaeological revisions of our material cultures which have emerged in the last decades, coming from decolonial (Rizvi, 2006; Voss, 2012), feminist (Conkey, 1991; González Marcén and Sánchez Romero, 2018), post-processual (Hodder, 1982), anticapitalist (Hamilakis, 2017) and public archaeologies (Moshenska, 2017)- to name only a few-. These have allowed new interpretations of the past, in which difference is not necessarily linked to oppression and violence, gender is not taken for granted as an ontological category and the conceptual present is engaged as a factor of impossibility of escaping from our cultural bias.

As Enrique Moral de Eusebio has unapologetically defended in their research, gender as a category of analysis should be distanced from gender as culturally active. In other words, the way in which gender and Queer Studies can be helpful to face certain inquiries and otherwise readings does not mean the contexts studied function always from gender and queer activations. As Moral de Eusebio illustrates through the deconstruction of the interpretation of the archaeological record:

As regards age, we must clarify that gender does not remain fixed in someone's body in an homogeneous and immutable way but it rather varies throughout different situations and social contexts [...] partly because of the performative character of gender, which demands its continuous practice [...] Thus, the archaeological record must take into account that death, and with it the burial

goods, only show the last stage of someone's life, not the whole vital trajectory of the buried person (2014: 260. My translation) ¹³¹.

The intra-action existing in concepts takes place also through their fragmentation. It is not only that concepts are already activated through one another, but that these intra-actions keep modifying, as we can see in the interesting dichotomy between the identitarian moment of life and death. As I have already analysed in the chapter on the void, QDS offer a critical formula to attend to other forms of life and experience that exceed biological and animating understandings of both states, while addressing the particularity of each vibrant entity. In their destruction of simplified and, in many cases, privileged notions of ontology, Marietta Radomska, Tara Mehrabi and Nina Lykke (2000) speak through the westernised conceptions of life and death, assembling new categories, forms and uses of these concepts. In their analyses, they write how their field of studies, QDS,

does not discuss ontologies of death as a fixed moment that marks the end of life, bounded to a human subject (a white, able-bodied, heterosexual man) whose life is imagined within a linear temporality marked and defined by birth, reproduction and death. Rather, death becomes meaningful in terms of assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari 2004) and intra-actions (Barad 2007). Death is materialised and becomes meaningful at a particular time, in a particular place and in relation to other processes. Thinking about death in terms of relations then leads to questions not only about the ontology of death and the binary of life and death, but also about human exceptionalism, in which human death is approached as unique. It questions Western linear temporality, in which birth and death are defined as the two opposites marking the beginning and end of the subject (89-90).

¹³¹ “En cuanto a la edad, es necesario aclarar que el género no permanece fijo de por vida de manera homogénea e inmutable en el cuerpo en el que se inscribe, sino que varía a lo largo de diferentes situaciones y contextos sociales [...] en parte porque el carácter performativo del género exige una práctica continua [...] En el registro arqueológico, por tanto, es imprescindible tener en cuenta que la muerte, y con ella el ajuar, muestra sólo la última etapa de vida de los sujetos, no la trayectoria vital completa de la persona inhumada” (2014: 260. Original).

QDS takes us to a discussion of the concept of *animacy*. Mel Y. Chen's work unfolds the importance of language as a constituent of animacies which, as explored in the previous chapters, refers to an activation rather than a certainty. As Chen describes it "Animacy is a craft of the senses; it endows our surroundings with life, death, and things in between" (2012: 55). Animacy is the endowment that initiates our surroundings. It speaks about ontologies while walking away from ontologisation. On this basis, iterative power and its languages are made central. Thus, conceptualising and naming is a way of animating. As Chen explains this "conceptual 'mattering' is ontologizing in the sense that it has a relation (which is however sometimes nonidentical) to the considered 'reality' and is hence eminently consequential" (2012: 37). The insistence upon ontologising, rather than ontology, which is already reified, builds the category of realness. Yes, this sounds controversial on many levels, but it is so because language dynamics and hierarchies have, as Chen proposes, material effects and thus their ontologisation is reinforced as their natural movement in invisible ways. This is the case of the association of certain concepts such as *objectification* and *dehumanisation*, which I have already recalled in the previous chapters. These terms are often mixed in current discussions about racialisation, corporeality and animal studies as fresh forms of engaging into matter (such as NMs) and this is problematic because of obvious reasons: racism, colonialism, white supremacy and human exceptionalism have used ontologised and naturalised forms of concepts as notions imbricated in social understandings. This is, the way in which languages about animality, humanity, embodiment and objectification have been naturalised, have made these acts invisible in themselves. In this panorama, to exist in a white system seems a paradigm rather than a constitutive constant enaction. To be racist is depicted as an oddity, hence misreading racist social consistencies as isolated actions which seem to be enacted by insular identities detached from the mainland of correct society.

The problem with parallel uses and synonym concepts is that we are unable, or perhaps too dull, to unpack the animacies behind these conceptual bonds. Again, concepts do not exist by themselves but rather they are fixed to an intra-activity that gives them meaning in their matching with other notions and divorcing from others. This praxis constitutes a binary move towards a metonymic recognition or a disidentification. Hence,

bringing new connections to these notions can invigorate them. Indeed, as seen in previous chapters, notions are both bound to their genealogies and also potentially disentangled from them.

Returning to the specific example of animalisation, dehumanisation and objectification, Chen explains what dehumanisation may entail, where,

[o]ne form of what is understood as dehumanization involves the removal of qualities especially cherished as human; at other times, dehumanization involves the more active making of an object. Indeed, perhaps the most unsparing dehumanization is an approximation toward death (43).

In this case, Chen is referring to critiques of Disability Studies, where the body is narrated as a corpse and dehumanised through an objectification of “it” becoming property. The body is dependent on other humanised and inert ones. An example of this is the State, an inert entity which is also animated since it panoptically controls embodiments from invisible positions. Nevertheless, and as has been thought through by the reconsideration of both bio and necropolitics, the direction of a body towards death and destruction is not only a matter of organic forces in hold, but also the organising contingency surrounding bodies’ meanings. As explored through Ruha Benjamin’s thought further on, the asset in this part is the importance of life outside biological means, of what she calls “Afterlife” (2018).

As in the case of sexual abuse, rape culture, women’s objectification, pornography, sex work and prostitution, that seem to fall into the metonymic trap referred to before, the problem is not located in the source of objectification, which happens at so many levels beyond the sexualisation of the feminised body. Against monolithically condemned considerations, animacy here works to consider the ways in which exteriority and interiority, or agency and inaction, are elements we depend on when speaking about these constructions around the notions of *the human*, *the animal* and *the subject*. It is then disentangled from parallelisms and uncritical analogies dressed up as intersectionality, that bind radically different corporeal experiences to the same social choreographies. As I have decided throughout this work, the situations which are paired and put into

conversation here step out these violent analogies and are referred to as communalities. In this way, the situations can be addressed from points of connection without matching them as similar, equal, or analogous. To deontologise objectification from its monolithic negative categorisation does not mean to abandon the critique of how certain bodies are constrained to it as an inherent category. Here *inherent* is not used in the anthropocentric sense of being tied to organic notions of life and death, but rather to the materiality of the concept, that gives us an idea of the body which, even if organically functioning, is agentially expelled.

At this stage, following from the discussion of activation and animacies, I would like to introduce animal studies and antiracist researchers and activists, Aph and Syl Ko, because of their brilliant bridging of the tensions existing between these two areas of research. Their critique of how intersectionality has been abused by white traditions, has taken them to engage in antispeciesist views, i.e., beyond humanist and anthropocentric theoretical perspectives which do not fall into analogies. Even if human exceptionalism and racist and colonial practices and mindsets are connected in fundamental because of their “common source of oppression, which is systemic white human violence” (2017: 11), it is fundamental to deal with the specificities of how they are produced. As Syl Ko writes:

There’s a troubling aspect present in [...] the interpretation of blackness or brownness as essentially *bodied*. In other words, the mainstream (read: white) tendency to find us visible insofar as we are regarded merely as bodies is a tendency that we have internalized and on that we now perpetuate [...] Understanding beings as “bodied” becomes a problem when beings are viewed *primarily* in terms of their bodies. That is, reducing conscious, active beings with viewpoints, interests, and/or projects-*subjects*-into merely the biological frame that houses the source of this activity-*objects*-is destructive to those beings (2017: 1).

Certainly, as indicated before, critical theory must face how the ideas of the human bodies are standardised by references to normative ways of inhabiting flesh. As Zakiyyah Iman

Jackson asks, “[w]hat and crucially whose conception of humanity are we moving beyond? Moreover, what is entailed in the very notion of a beyond?” (2015: 215). The “beyond” takes us again to the posthuman turn and its uncritical positions on these universal human takes. As I have said before, the climate crisis has tube-tested these ideas in its refocusing on theories of the anthropocene, veganism, posthumanism or futurity, in which the sense of moving beyond a problematic scenario is caught inside the white parameters of official subjects. This is important to bring into question here because resistances concerning posthumanisms (such as antispeciesism, veganism, climate justice, etc.) are sometimes taken for granted as positions against discriminatory and violent practices. The special issue with these resistances is that normally the subject involved in resistance is different from the one that needs liberation, i.e., animal. Resistance is often viewed and consumed as out of the discriminatory logic, i.e., constructed in a binary scheme from which the person resisting is regarded as having managed to escape from the oppression of power or abuse. This is problematic because of the two poles it essentialises: being part of an unjust system and radically changing one's position. At the same time, other issues regarding corporealities, such as white people against racism, are also depicted as if these activists were power and violence free, making them exempt from racism just by identifying with antiracist practices. To be an antiracist white person can also coexist with being inherently racist, even if checking on oneself constantly. In the reading of Gloria Wekker's *White Innocence* (2016b)¹³² and in the listening of her lectures (2016a) during my GEMMA second year at Utrecht, I understood the many covered ways in which racism subsists inside spaces which are constructed against racism, such as the Netherlands in itself. In her references to Fanon, Wekker finds the options on how to expose the performativities which are required of the non-white subject to fit in these “liberal” spaces. I am writing this as a white antispeciesist vegan and an antiracist person, defending that I do acknowledge human exceptionalism as an identitarian part of our species, but so are the political actions which can dismantle white supremacy. Also, I do not extract myself from the racist systems that I am part of.

¹³² Which I had the chance to learn about during a lecture with Gloria Wekker in Utrecht University, during a lecture called “Decolonizing the University: Gender and Race in Academic Space” In 2018.

3. Resolution. The Reina Sofía Museum *¿Archivo Queer?*¹³³

After the large conceptual considerations and debates in the previous parts around new ways of engaging into matter, other forms of knowledge beyond human exceptionalism and archives seen beyond their discursive material, I want to work through a situated resolution. These possible ways of re-reading the archives and proposing new forms of recollecting experience address the ambivalences involved in any account of the past involves. As I have written at the beginning of the previous section, the frames which haunt me in this chapter, triggering from the analysis of the *Valor y Cambio* experience, unpack different readings of the particular public art space of the *¿Archivo Queer?* in the Reina Sofía Museum, which I visited in 2019 and 2021, i.e., before and after the *Valor y Cambio* experience.

The genesis of this archive was the Research Residences organised by the Museum in the years 2013 and 2014. Resident to the “Biblioteca y Centro de Documentación” of the Museum, the project highlights the importance of counter-archiving and remembering differently, recovering those activist voices which have been neglected until recently. The insistence upon the impact these groups had in the public space was the reason why I chose this case study: art and activism. In conversation with the last case study in which this conjunction between art and activism is performed decisively, we can say that there is certainly activism in the *¿Archivo Queer?* which reflects upon the space of art as a space of potentiality for subversive experiential accounting.

The locational resolution of the reading of the archive, as a historical material which has the possibility of transforming experience, happens through the reconsideration of these spaces/artefacts as concrete pieces of a non-common past. This is, the practices of locations applied to these archival genealogical encounters are considered through the notion of activation, in which the value of the archive consists upon its instability and irreducible quality, acknowledging that the archive is only one of the many possible traces/histories/narratives that are part of the past they intend to preserve.

¹³³ See annex 2 for images of *¿Archivo Queer?*.

3. 1. Phenomenal methods, deviant orientations. Remixing concepts. Buzzwords

“The possible is obvious, what is desired is the impossible.
What is not is what drives what is,
and transforms it into itself.
What is becomes what is not and
what is not becomes what is and what is not.
The future is always here, in the past”.

Amiri Baraka, “Jazzmen: Diz & Sun Ra” (1995: 255)

In a return *loop* to Frances Negrón Muntaner, I want to consider some of the concepts which arose from my conversation with her, such as *decolonial joy*, *resistance*, *time ordering*, *archives* and *value*. In my understanding of her work live my own considerations about the *¿Archivo Queer?*, which have only become visible and intelligible to my ephemeral understanding after working through the notions that were born through out of this conversation and which have triggered the reflections preceding this part. In my analysis of the *¿Archivo Queer?* in the Reina Sofía Museum, the concept of *translation* becomes essential to understand under what critique I highlight the limits of this specific archive. Even if it is true that this particular archive is radical in comparison to others¹³⁴, it also falls into the limitations of institutional representationalism.

My interest in the *¿Archivo Queer?* project started in 2019. After some months researching and teaching at the University of Granada Archaeology department my interest in how History is recollected started growing again. I say “again” because I had abandoned my specific research in History after finishing my Art History degree in 2014 and going through academic disappointment several times. One of my main inspirations before that desertion was Giuseppe Campuzano, who died a year before I finished my Art History studies. After creating the Museo Travesti de Perú, Campuzano had done many

¹³⁴ Traditional archives that follow mainstream methods for collecting memory and doing History, such as archives of colonies, and are not critical of the institutional colonial background or the languages used in many of these. These alternative archives do not totally discard the materials that conform traditional archives, but rather look at them from new gazes and assemble them together in ways that can activate them as contestation.

other interventions that served me to find inspiration inside my dominant boredom at that stage. When “Queer Futures. Salón de Belleza”¹³⁵ was put up at the entrance of Reina Sofía, I decided I wanted to visit the museum’s memory initiative to queer history. The project tries to recollect all those resistance histories that hide behind the museum and have been silenced because of identity reasons. As the project has been planned, the archive presents itself as multiple and in conscious constant motion and modification and has as its main focus the interrogation of mainstream understandings of what an archive is. With Campuzano’s piece at the entrance, it is easy to connect this changing archive to a decolonial historical praxis, a reflection that has been central to my work all these years. My first visit takes place some months before covid, so when I am reading about the HIV pandemic activism, my reactions are historically dislocated in a health situation of stability at the time. For my second visit, after the pandemics and my involvement in *Valor y Cambio*, my perception of the world and health control systems have changed. Even if both situations live through very different roots, my sense of biocontrol has shifted lately. The largest amount of research behind *¿Archivo Queer?* took place during the research residencies 2013 and 2014, in which queer researchers and activists such as Lucas Platero, Fefa Vila, Andrés Senra, André Mesquita, Sejo Carrascosa and Adriá Rodríguez de Alós-Moner digged into their own memories together with external archives to ask themselves about notions such as the public secret that queer activism during the 90’s meant in the city of Madrid.

The main political groups featured in the *¿Archivo Queer?*, LSD, Radical Gai and RQTR (only a few of the many groups included in this collection) are included in this archive and we learn about the activities, actions and activisms enacted by these movements in the 1990s through a vast amount of material such as fanzines, manifestos, pamphlets, photographs, posters, stickers and several audiovisuals (see Annex 2). The queer archive has attained these results by taking into account several ideas, researched into by queer actors (teachers, activists from the 90’s and artists), which I find very much interlocked with the theories and frames about archiving otherwise/counter-archives exposed in the previous sections.

¹³⁵ <https://twitter.com/museoreinasofia/status/1144563618916315136> (Last access 14/02/2023).

The first idea connected with the success of a counter-archive is the disclaimer that the meaning driven from the prefix (*counter*) does not actually exempt the archive from the limitations, commodifications and control subjecting any other type of archive. It is so because of the recognition of the space it occupies in one of the most important museums in the Spanish State, and also, more importantly, because any kind of material stabilisation involves a potential cut. As was explored in the previous sections, I consider this archive to be an agential-cut (Barad, 2014), recognising the ambiguity of this material as simultaneously potential and confined. Maybe it is this ambiguity that is emphasised through the interrogative form the title takes, which also bounces on other questions such as “Is Archiving Always Radical?” (Díaz, Dorrego, Sesé and Voltà, 2016), by which the authors reflect on the limits of the act of archiving. This also relates to the idea of impossibility which I have analysed in the previous chapter and which corresponds to an alternative way of constructing knowledge from the past, in the present for the future. In this sense, as a distortion of the historical value of colonial archives, the future is inhabited to imagine a present which can also have an impact upon the past. These archives become eccentric beyond the limits of time and space since the counter-archives presented are not located at a margin-centre binary or a future utopian reading, but rather they are eccentric in the dislocation they represent and their ephemeral space-time valuing. And all this is locational to the *¿Archivo Queer?*

Indeed, one of the first concepts which come to mind when reflecting on the actions involved in this archive, in diffraction with Negrón-Muntaner’s *Valor y Cambio*, is *value*. In the ambiguity of the counter prefix exposed above, the criticism of what is valued allows in new desires, meanings and significance while simultaneously becoming another stabilising movement. As Sejo Carrascosa and Javier Saez write at the start of *Por el culo* (2011):

When we speak of a power regime or a cultural regime, hetero-centred for example, or sexist, it is not about a vertical and hierarchical power that plans hatred towards women, or towards gays or towards being penetrated. It is a regime of discourses and practices that simply function, is exercised and repeats itself continuously in daily expressions, from multifarious places and moments, and it

generates reality [...] through that repetition. You learn the value before you encounter the object or the act itself. Furthermore, it is the negative value that creates the object and not the other way around (2011: 8. My translation)¹³⁶.

Indeed, what we value is controlled by a representationalist system which, as Carrascosa and Saez expose, disciplines the relation with the object prior to the contact itself. As an alternative, what becomes valued and desired from the notion of *difference*, also enters a politics of translation which adapts the object of desire to facilitate comprehension. It gives it significance by limiting its atemporal potential. In both senses, from a disciplined or as released from this control, meaning and intelligibility are central. The meaning is substituted, not in its totality, but in its quality and value, by action. What is generated is placed above its discursive intelligibility and the archive becomes a product of intelligible consumption, created by people situated inside its own genesis narrative. In many cases, and following a colonial orientation of epistemologies and histories, the stories collected from other times and other spaces are disconnected from the subject curating the archive. And this applies not only to historical records referring to subjectivities which have gained more visibility over the centuries but are still outside those archives, but also to the many examples where queerness is registered by non-queered identities, antiracist projects designed by white people or class discussed by bourgeois subjects who are, quite simply, *other* to the material in the archive. The need to find space for the active location and identification of the specific subjectivities collecting these narratives makes the “counter” prefix alive.

When speaking about the limits and problematics of translation, I refer to various motions, since the concept and its practices comprise different spaces both linguistically or geographically. Translation helps go deeper into rethinking the concepts, ideas, and experiences that are put into motion in the first place. To make it clearer, the problem

¹³⁶ Cuando hablamos de un régimen de poder o un régimen cultural, heterocentrado por ejemplo, o machista, no se trata de un poder vertical y jerárquico que planifica el odio a las mujeres, o el odio a los gays o el odio al hecho de ser penetrado. Es un régimen de discursos y prácticas que, simplemente, funciona, se ejerce, se repite continuamente en expresiones cotidianas, desde múltiples lugares y momentos, y que crea realidad (y que hiera) a partir de esa mera repetición. Se aprende el valor antes que el objeto o el acto en sí. Es más, es ese valor negativo el que crea el objeto, y no al revés (2011: 8. Original).

with translation in its various forms is not so much the politics of the movement that happens when it is performed, but rather the bias about which elements are selected to enter this dynamic. In the use of Anzaldúa's engagement in the impossibility of transliteration as proposed through *la Frontera* (1987), the radicality of the proposal does not consist only of this warning but is built upon the intrinsic refusal to enter certain language paradigms, rejecting specific notions and their uses, and engaging into experiential discourses which simply *happen to be* (rather than *are*). In this constant revision of how my work commodifies certain theoretical backgrounds, I want to engage in prosaic concepts of everyday practices that have made me grasp certain critiques in horizontal and confronting ways. I claim these raw (as in unrefined) ways of communication since the radicality of the *¿Archivo Queer?* is also located in these alternative forms of narration. Focusing on the text by Petra R. Rivera-Rideau, *Remixing Reggaeton* (2015), I here want to embrace "obscene" and "unrefined" forms of words (4). The author does a revision of how reggaeton has been a medium to challenge and transform the notions of blackness in Puerto Rico. As Rivera-Rideau does in her brilliant beat, my use of concepts as methods stand in favour of a constant mashup, different *featurings* and, above all, an ensemble of "unpurified" understandings of these. In the *¿Archivo Queer?* the unrefined forms are structural to the archive, taking shapes which for many people may be uncomfortable to think through in a museum's archive¹³⁷.

Let me linger a minute longer upon the significance of *the obscene* and *the unrefined* in the context of this diffractive reading. With the reinscribing of "obscene" genres and significances, highly recognisable in the case of her Rivera-Rideau's study through reggaeton, scholars such as Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Raquel Z. Rivera or Rivera-Rideau- among others-, have recovered the political life of these "unruly" and "deficient" paradigms of existence (Negrón-Muntaner and Rivera, 2007: 36). From a Puerto Rican perspective, these authors have polished an anti-classist and anti-racist critique to the way in which culture is not only produced but also consumed. Without an oversimplification of thinking of reggaeton as a "unitary expression of Puerto Rican identity" (Rivera- Rideau, 2015: 20), the way in which popular explicit forms of words

¹³⁷ Not only people outside queer discourses but also some who are familiar with them but are used to their taking place outside official locations.

have polluted the genre from the start has served as an excuse to gate-keep its popularity. As Negrón-Muntaner and Rivera highlight, the boundaries imposed upon some cultural expressions have drawn them as apolitical and criminal (2007: 36-37). Still, as the authors decipher, the saturation of themes that reggaeton mobilises to impress its listeners, dancers and producers is nothing but political. Such is the case of the *¿Archivo Queer?*, where unruly stories are told, “obscene” identities are the main characters, and the historical “criminal” imagination saturates the archive¹³⁸. As Negrón-Muntaner and Rivera claim:

Reggaeton’s story, then, holds the hope that even under dire conditions, the people of Puerto Rico can find creative ways to make a mark in the global economy. In capturing the imagination, it also tells us much about what kind of nation Puerto Ricans are imagining and inhabiting in the global era. For starters, reggaeton calls attention to the centrality of black culture and the migration of peoples and ideas in (and out of) Puerto Rico, not as exotic additions but as constitutive elements. If Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans have celebrated Spain as the “motherland,” reggaeton redirects the gaze toward Africa’s diasporas (2007: 39).

Reggaeton, a secular language of resistance and joy, is here politicised though it still does not fall into the romanticisation that recognition sometimes involves. To cross-reference with Negrón-Muntaner’s thought, this is what *decolonial joy* looks like: it celebrates while resisting. The fact that reggaeton is in these analyses allowed its fair position as a genre of social contestation does not mean it is proclaimed as an unproblematic scenario. But then, no genre can be recognised as totally aseptic. Rivera-Rideau explains that:

While reggaetón may challenge the racist underpinnings of hegemonic discourses of racial democracy, it also reinforces some problematic hierarchies, particularly

¹³⁸ This refers to the “Ley de Vagos y Maleantes” law (lazy and criminal people law), passed on the 4th of August 1933 during the II Republic and later on modified by Franco to include homosexuals inside these repressive actions in the law. In this sense, in the Spanish State, the words “criminality” and “laziness” have historically been associated with the queer body.

regarding gender and sexuality [...] At the same time, it is important to remember that reggaetón is not the first popular music in Puerto Rico (or elsewhere) to have a vexed relationship with questions of gender and sexuality (2015: 17).

The linguistic turn in this reworking of genres is more focused upon its use than upon its form, hence activating, once again, its methodological potential. Rescuing what was said at the start of this section, their use and practice also includes consideration on what concepts are selected in these shifting methodologies, such as the case of choosing reggaeton as the epicentre of social and decolonial questioning of the uses of languages, their forms and their consequences. As Rivera-Rideau historicises, reggaeton is already remixed in its ways of bridging together very different existences compelled in the experience of colonisation and diasporic motion. Taking Juan Flores's concept of "cultural remittances" (in Rivera-Rideau, 2008), Rivera-Rideau alludes to the importance of the singularity and situation of certain cultural expressions, that can be erected from the quotidian but are charged with political significance. In this account of situated expressions, she addresses how:

Reggaeton thus developed in Puerto Rico as a cultural practice of diaspora. Here, the term diaspora addresses both the histories of migration that are crucial to reggaetón, and reggaetón's articulation of diasporic links across different sites, particularly between Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the African diaspora. As a cultural practice of diaspora, reggaetón must be understood in relation to both global and local factors- a music "routed" through various geographic sites that has become "rooted" in local communities as an expression of particular understandings of race, class, gender, and national identities (2015: 16).

The global and local references here mentioned are entangled within specific social paradigms and bound to different pre-conceptual understandings, but nevertheless remain in constant motion. In the long-distance motto "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978: 95–96), in this prosaic way of engaging into theories that can disentangle

certain conceptual and discursive states, the theories, authors and ideas mentioned throughout this chapter commit to everyday practices of questioning language.

Unnaturalising, unrulying or *unrealising* stand for the acknowledgment of a distance from certain materialisations. As in the counter-archive or the archive of otherness, such as the *¿Archivo Queer?*, we see that questions about the durability of the archive also helps in this denaturalisation of power positions. This is not tantamount to abandoning matter as a site of resistance to over-productive human locations, since it is one of the main tenets of this work, but rather a rejection of ways of performing our being(s) in the world. I refer to otherwise views of nature that, at once, accept our limited human locations and interact from here changing certain aspects of sociality, as we can sense from the questioning marks of the project under analysis. In the connection of these unruly materialisations to gender and trans matters, I activate the work by Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix” (1994), one of the fulcrum texts to trans studies. As she places trans existence and resistance through her own words:

Hearken unto me, fellow creatures. I who have dwelt in a form unmatched with my desire, I whose flesh has become an assemblage of incongruous anatomical parts, I who achieve the similitude of a natural body only through an unnatural process, I offer you this warning: the Nature you bedevil me with is a lie. Do not trust it to protect you from what I represent, for it is a fabrication that cloaks the groundlessness of the privilege you seek to maintain for yourself at my expense. You are as constructed as me; the same anarchic womb has birthed us both. I call upon you to investigate your nature as I have been compelled to confront mine. I challenge you to risk abjection and flourish as well as have I. Heed my words, and you may well discover the seams and sutures in yourself (1994: 240-241).

The monstrosity of trans, that relates to this activation of unruly and unrefined formulas, is both a limited and potential exclusion, where certain bodies, unnaturalised ones, are also a call into imagination, making basal questions about what stands for “natural” in society that is, quite simply, already a place of construction.

The anti-normative, monstrous and unpurified movements included in the *¿Archivo Queer?* deal with the negativity involved in queer history, which includes discussions of HIV, stigma and violence. As in the previous chapter, where from queerness there is a new value added to negative notions, these topics in the archive are interpellated by other forces, also allied to queer history, such as resistance, joy and communality. Joy and desire, as has been recalled from works by Frances Negrón Muntaner (2020b) and Horacio N. Roque Ramírez (2005) respectively, are key notes to regain every queer *potentia* which has been lost throughout the normative narratives involved in our experiences. In this sense, it deconstructs the *dressage* of History, and recovers those eccentricities which are capable of twisting dynamics concerning representation, justice and relationalities. It is important to mention this particular focus on time since, as Henri Lefebvre argues “[w]herever time, space and an expenditure of energy coincide, there is rhythm” (2004: 15). Concentrating upon the concept of *Dressage* creates an incision in the concept of *diffusion* and disentangles power from its understanding as an act performed by singularised bodies. Lefebvre relates the concept to a process of repetition that is linked to a training process (*le dressage*) where the subjects commodify themselves from an action of agency rather than a reaction to a particular force. As he explains:

One can and one must distinguish between education, learning and dressage or training [le dressage]. Knowing how to live, knowing how to do something and just plain knowing do not coincide. Not that one can separate them. Not to forget that they go together (2004 :39).

The innovation in Lefebvre’s work is the importance that he gives to rhythm as a new way of analysing bodies in society and how these are marked by constructed timing, in particular the rhythm of repetition, when speaking about dressage. “It is through rhythms that this model establishes itself” (Lefebvre, 1992: 41) and the way we adapt and learn how to live suitable to particular norms is marked by a rhythm and, hence, by an active movement. It is not only the palpable rhythms involved in the generation of any kind of record, but the effects that these have in the subject(s) relating to them that I find interesting in the use of *dressage* applied to the *¿Archivo Queer?*. In Lefebvre’s analysis

the importance given to disruptions is held under specific rhythms that already inhabit in the cultural time (44). This should be highlighted since, as we can see from the ambivalence of the counter-archive, its potentiality is mediated by a *potestas* limited from a specific context, which is to say that rhythm has more to do with the social unconscious than with recognised power entities, something which is central to the *¿Archivo Queer?* and its location. This connects to the self-criticism the *¿Archivo Queer?* does of itself, maintaining it as a living archive, one that recognises its limits while keeping its own motion. It is important to bring up the notion of *impasse* in relation to the *¿Archivo Queer?* since it is relevant to the juxtaposition between what is silenced and what has not yet entered discourse. The queer reading of Ahmed's phenomenology (2006) is here reinforced. Reality, or what is consumed as such, is also erected upon a structural sense of time. This takes us, once again, to the revision of queer temporalities and temporal dissonances as a site of resistance to this rhythm. What I mean by this -and as has been introduced in the theoretical chapter through José Esteban Muñoz-, is that unnaturalising identities, narratives and conceptual uses also needs of *otherwise* temporalities. (Re)productive performativity is adhered to new ways of engaging in linear senses of chronological experiences, that break with normative understandings of how the past is consumed to address a particular sense of future. In the case of the *¿Archivo Queer?* through narratives of death, through the claims of HVI affected experiences, resistance in demonstrations, anti-reproduction practices of lascivious contacts, lust and, upon all, a continuous sense of movement, the normative sense of rhythm is distorted. Bodies are accelerated in normative affects of care (sex, marriage, monogamy) while they slowdown on their own (non-reproduction, the approaches to death, failure and resistance). As Elizabeth Freeman writes in *Time Binds* (2010), this sense of chrono-normativity shifts to "alternative temporalities, and sexual dissidence in terms of temporal dissonance" (142). This dissonance, a term which becomes central to chapter 5 as we will see next, touches upon the importance of maintaining the archive alive. As reflected in the initial question: "¿Archivar es siempre radical?" (Díaz et al., 2016) there is a deconstruction of the normative sense of archiving that has "tried to open up a spectre of what is archivable

beyond the document, integrating what is known as ‘living materials’” (7. My translation)¹³⁹.

These living archives cohabit with the art piece in the shared space of the museum which hence becomes a space of liminality. This junction dialogues and disentangles the stagnant aesthetics traditionally involved in the space of the museum. The interesting part of this archive is the continuous motion and multiple transitions which take it to new standpoints in a frequent tense, stressing the idea that an archive is something alive. In this aspect, the *¿Archivo Queer?* also invokes Jose Esteban Muñoz’s notion of ephemera (2008), breaking free from the “rigor-mortis” (7)¹⁴⁰ expected from the traditional ways of historical evidence. Building up Muñoz’s epistemological world, this ephemeral awakening does not only keep the archive alive, but it also *disidentifies* it from traditional uses. The archive, with all its contradictions, becomes a necessary artefact to keep histories and experiences alive as exemplified by the *Valor y Cambio* and the *¿Archivo Queer?* initiatives. In the vindication of *otherwise* epistemological thought, as Macarena Gómez-Barris explores (2017), other readings and possibilities emerge to materialise these alternative archives. Without a linear temporality of futurability, there is a horizon to move towards. Dislocated and ephemeral counter-archives. In new directions. Not forward, but towards (Muñoz, 1996; 2009).

¹³⁹ “Se ha tratado de abrir un espectro de lo archivable más allá del documento, integrando lo que se ha venido a llamar ‘materiales vivos’” (Díaz et al., 2016: 7. Original).

¹⁴⁰ Used in Muñoz’s work as a criticism to the notion of rigour demanded in academic research.

CHAPTER 5. CASE STUDY 2: MORIA AND THERMI AS SITES OF DIALECTICAL DISSONANCES. *Is memory always radical?*

“The flesh is nothing less than the ethereal social (after) life of bare existence”.

Alexander Weheliye, *HABEAS VISCUS: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (2014: 53)

This case study is probably the one which I am most attached to. It is so because, even if the pandemics blocked my visit to the contexts here discussed, it was through the spatial binary between Moria and Thermi that I started imagining how queer theory could be applied beyond queerness. Even though Butler will play a more central role in the triggering of the following chapter, their conceptions of grieving and mourning (2004) have been primordial for me to take positions in this case study. Mourning channels me towards Achille Mbembe’s work in *necropolitics* (2003), and from there my investigation evolves to affectivity. What matters about necropolitics is not only the concept of death but the acts of grieving and mourning and the public feelings generated by them.

The triggerings that follow the case study take me to a momentary resolution of the examination of this case study. Together with these frames, I centralise this chapter upon Rosi Braidotti’s work. I see a great deal of potential on the discussion of space as a division between inside and outside in her use of nomadism. The ensuing consequences range from the inclusion-exclusion to citizen-refugee paradigms and get more complicated when analysed as relational rather than as a dichotomic. My proposal is to entangle two of Rosi Braidotti’s works, *Nomadic Subjects* (1994) and *The Posthuman* (2013). The diffraction of these two works, allows the cracks I have seen in their application to be momentarily resolved for my own use. I entangle these works through a diffractive reading with *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* (2006-2008) by Ryoji Ikeda. In turn, this diffractivity rearranges the dissonance between Moria and Thermi. The main concept that activates this chapter is *dissonance*, which is read through material cultures, present, but also absent ones.

1. A short story: 7.1 kms. 11 minutes by car ¹⁴¹

Since this chapter deals with Heritage, I would like to begin with a memory. In no particular order: I remember waking up to the burning down of Moria, the largest refugee camp in Europe. Furthermore, I remember writing about space in ancient Greek *polis* and surfing through Google Maps to check the exact distance between Moria, which had that morning caught my attention, and Thermi, an archaeological site, both located on the Greek island of Lesbos. The 7.1 km distance from one to another did not come as a surprise. However, their proximity made me feel very uncomfortable. I realised a dissonance resided in the contradiction between their cohabitation of the same space and their diametrically opposed significations as “historical” locations.

History, and its consequent cultural and Heritage manifestations, are framed by time and constructed within a chronological narrative. It is particularly important to take this point into consideration in relation to the case study examined in this chapter, the distances existing between Moria and Thermi, because of the discursive impossibility which binds these two places to each other. For this case study the impossibility is already assumed by the specific location from where this chapter departs – the space of research. The concept of discourse is pivotal for the theoretical framework of my analysis. I further give weight to the use of concepts as methodologies, as stated in the methodological chapter and case study 1, as a medium to be used as,

more than mere passive agents helping us explain the world we are immersed in. The way we put concepts together does not only unpack them as methodologies but also gives them a space and a place for recognition, a point of departure for a new (con)figuration (Harris, 2021: 41).

To contextualise historically this case study, I would like to begin providing the readers the necessary background information on the sites analysed in this chapter. Thermi is today famous because it is one of the most prominent and best-conserved prehistoric

¹⁴¹ This was the title of my participation in the *My thesis in Three Minutes* (3M thesis) contest (2021 edition). <https://canal.ugr.es/noticia/veinte-doctorandos-de-la-ugr-se-enfrentan-al-reto-de-contar-su-tesis-en-menos-de-3-minutos/>

settlements not only on the island but in Greece. It was founded c. 3000 BC and is one of the first examples of urbanisation in the whole Mediterranean (Lamb, 1936). With the plain of Thermi being one of the most fertile territories on the island, it is not unanticipated that a large community flourished here throughout the early and middle-late Bronze Age (3200– 2350 BC; c. 1900–1200 BC). It is also relevant to mention the strategic position of Thermi in relation to the flux of cultural influence articulated by the Balkans and Troy to the North, and Cyprus and its connection to the Egyptian world to the South; and a strong connection with the Cyclades and continental Greece surrounding its seas.

The other space touched upon in this chapter is the refugee camp of Moria, founded in 2013. As a bureaucratic and symbolic entrance to the European *ethos*, in 2015 Moria became a refugee and migrant hotspot, as well as a registration and control centre. While far from concepts such as “cultural palimpsest” or “urbanisation” which are essential to the site of Thermi, Moria has gained a central position with respect to other life situations, accommodating a particularly large population. According to media reports, at the time of the tragic events of September 2020, when fire destroyed the site, twenty thousand people were dwelling in a camp that had initially been planned to host a maximum of 2800. Most of its inhabitants were relocated after the fire, some to the camp of Kara Tepe, most to other fragments of camps around the territory. Moria was a geopolitical explosion of contemporary conflict. It was the space which concealed European shame in the name of justice and reparation for the effects of wars which were created, as in dystopias, years before.

In the approximation towards these two liminal spaces, I started to read a large number of texts concerning Archaeology and contemporary conflicts, coming to works by Senake Bandaranayake (1974) Uzma Rizvi (2006) or Yannis Hamilakis (2007; 2017). My navigations in the field were also increased by some of the teaching I had been doing in the Archaeology Department, at my home University, which became an incentive to delve into a field of research I had not expected to include in my thesis as much as I have finally done. My first idea was to find a connection with the island, from a historic-archaeological perspective, which could allow me to do fieldwork to study these spaces and their materiality on site. In this first motion, I came into contact with Hamilakis, with

whom I exchanged some messages where the possibility of an observant participation in the Lesbos projects he is involved in was spoken about. Since Moria was burned down, and the Covid-19 outbreak took place, I reflected on how to speak about this circumstance while also accepting that I was not prepared for the experience and felt unable to escape the sensationalist position of my European privileged body visiting the camp, even more under the circumstances. I decided to reflect upon these dichotomies and contradictions from my own location in Granada.

It was many months after starting to write about the friction between these two intra-acted spaces that I came upon a specific article by Hamilakis speaking about Moria: “Archaeologies of Forced and Undocumented Migration” (2017). Even though I knew his work in anticapitalist and critical Archaeology, I had not read his analysis and application of archaeological methodologies to contemporary refugee and migrant camps. Reading his work, I verified my long appreciation for Hamilakis’ analysis, again testing how some archaeologies can remain critical. In the reading of *Archaeologists as Activists: Can Archaeologists Change the World?* (2011), a compilation edited by M. Jay Stottman, I came back to these rooted intuitions. To maintain a critical positioning towards historical disciplines which engage into material cultures as potential remains to activate certain memories and knowledges for the past is also to engage in an idea of these artefacts as permeable and in constant flux rather than static, as they are many times studied and taught in our academic contexts. As I read from Hamilakis’s analysis of the refugee camp, these archaeological records work as locations of cultural significance inside the European identity construction. As we can see from the non-extensive bibliography dealing with the topic, most scholars and authors deepening into these critiques are documented white citizens. This is important not only at a symbolic level of representation of what is reproduced when these contexts are analysed from privileged positions, but also because of its direct consequences, such as the interpretation given through these perspectives. As Hamilakis writes while using Agamben’s conceptual tools:

[W]hile Agamben (1998) and others, especially through the concept of migrants as “bare lives”, seem to emphasize citizen rights [...] that category may not be

relevant for many migrants today, as some invent their own versions of being as they go along (2017: 126).

This is relevant for political and activist discourses which go into the analysis of aftermath wars and extraction since the language which used in these contexts is highly influenced by the control of a state which has universalised the idea of the refugee and the migrant as in their desires of inclusion and their ideas of futurability.

On these active movements on the involvement of Archaeology in contemporary debates, I soon came into contact with a group of activists from all over Europe who were challenging, through *artivism*, the invisibility and silence around the Moria refugee camp. After some conversations with one of the groups based in Berlin, I unofficially came into the activist project of *Now You See Me Moria*, artistic interventions which are partially framed through Annex 3. The project, which started as an Instagram collaboration, was born in August 2020 with the intention of making public to the European citizenship what was happening on the island of Lesbos and was never covered by media. With the contributions of many artists, the project got a great number of posters which highlighted the devastation and failure of the European narrative of freedom and “civilisation” by exposing the actual dramatic situation of millions of lives ¹⁴².

Some months after these urban interventions, the Head of my Department suggested that I participate in the *My thesis in Three Minutes* (3M thesis) contest (2021 edition), which challenged 20 doctoral candidates to explain their theses to the general public in an accessible way in only three minutes. Even if my first reaction was a great fear of not knowing how I would be able to face the challenge of constructing such a monologue, it was this activity that gave me the opportunity to locate the concepts I would use in this chapter and bring them down to earth. In this conjunction between the activism I did related to the situation in Moria and, later, Kara Tepe, and the structural theories I applied for the preparation of the monologue, I found a way of discussing the contradictions I perceived between these two spaces. In this sense, the point of connection and departure for my analysis was the shared space of a map and the title of the

¹⁴² <https://nowyouseememoria.eu/> (Last access 30/03/2023).

monologue, “7.1 KM (11 MIN by car)”, intended to represent that a shared geographical context is also a space of differences and disruptions.

The triggering to this chapter is, therefore, to be found in the material consequences which maps inside border logics have in the constitution of space as identity. I will first analyse the bases of fragmentology and coloniality to then engage in the analysis of spatial ordering and geographic apparatuses fully, using as my methods the concepts from the pertinent theories: from Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Queer Studies, Decoloniality and New Materialisms. These reflections throw us back to the question rooted in the previous chapter concerning the materiality of memory: archives. The question here travels from the materialistic account of documents “Is Archiving Always Radical?” (Díaz et al., 2016), which articulated case study 1, to a materialising aspect of subjectivity: “Is remembering always radical?”

2. Triggering

2.1. Theoretical Fragmentology: dissonance in Histories and their Heritage

Since a comprehensive theoretical genealogy of epistemological power would exceed the length limits of this chapter, I have decided for this part to work through a particular leading text, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) by Michel Foucault. In this book, Foucault deals with a great number of notions that are all part of a collective critique and theoretical frame that focus upon the process and generation of discourse, knowledge, and power. Following the trend of cumulative theory and stratigraphic thought in the thesis, after addressing Foucauldian power in the previous chapters, my main point in the present one is to examine the ways in which *dissonance* resides in contemporary conflicts and their material cultures. Furthermore, I explore how an analysis of these aspects can explode and expose the dissonance hidden in seemingly harmonious historic Heritage. This dissonance may be unveiled through juxtaposing this Heritage with the ways in which current discourses are active and generative of subjectivities and specific ideologies. Foucault’s *oeuvre* is used out of a need to situate and locate the limits of the epistemological constructions of my own research. Using in this section *The Archaeology*

of Knowledge as the main reference for my mapping of concepts, I, once again, understand discourse as a set of relations that exceeds the historical record it contains and has more to do with the analysis of how this content shapes meaning, produces knowledge and accumulates power. In this sense,

discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed (Foucault, 1972: 55).

Discursive knowledges then, as we can see in Foucault's work, are related to certain bodies and subjectivities, not only as elements bound to these particular identities but, more importantly, as elements that produce the circumstances of these identities. In other words, when something is stated it amplifies and evinces a set of structures existing a priori, that are interdependent in an invisible web, a connection which does not depend upon continuity. Accordingly, when a historical object is created, it happens/occurs through a set of practices and repetitions which are not just a question of describing an ontological fact, but the impossibility of escaping the epistemological construction to which they are attached. In the following sections I revisit this by searching for its connections with the concept of *performativity* through a queer lens. The concept of *fragmentology*, being the first triggering of this case study, works as the theoretical accountability for the use of certain fragments that escape the notion of theory as a whole, as a unity. I work with those pieces from Foucault's text which can be used to study the case of Moria as an object of Heritage Studies and its relation to the embodied case of Thermi. In terms of discourse and signification, this relation works through tension and friction.

The limitations of these assumptions of theory as a unified whole are evident when we recognise how spaces and material experiences that are bound to a contemporary temporality are not classified as historical remains and Heritage. There are situations that entangle in ways that make their particularities and independent aspects dissolve in a general sense of their existence. In other words, the way we narrate, connect and juxtapose

situations, ignores sometimes the individual pieces that conform those experiences and which exist outside the need of becoming history.

Following the essential role played by temporalities and chronology in the construction of the epistemologies we work with in this thesis, I would like to refer to Foucault's clear-cut division between *presentness* and *actuality*. This dichotomy may be construed as representing the signs performed in the discourses about Thermi and Moria. On the one hand, even if Thermi is inscribed in a past distant from the present, it is also inscribed in the actuality of its cultural significance, and thus, constitutes an epistemological fact. On the other, Moria, even if placed in the presentness of current contemporary conflicts, is not a decisive factor for contemporary History. Placing Karen Barad's work on *diffraction* (2007), which I have deepened into in the preceding chapters, in conversation with Foucault's above-mentioned concept of *continuity* I find interesting connections since the fragmented narratives we are referring to are tied to this sense of diffracted temporalities. The notion of *continuity*,

is a paradoxical one: because it is both an instrument and an object of research; because it divides up the field of which it is the effect; because it enables the historian to individualize different domains but can be established only by comparing those domains (Foucault, 1972: 9).

(Dis)continuity is construed here not only as an object of study, but, more importantly, as a tool, a lens, through which to dig into the past in relation to the present(ness). In this chapter, *(dis)continuity* works as a methodology of approximation to the analysed case study. *(Dis)continuity* is what resides between the present and History in the case of Moria and Thermi. It also represents the consciousness of an impossibility, because of the very presentness, for Moria, of both being and, imminently, becoming History.

It needs to be emphasised that this impossibility is not an inherent status of the situations that I examine in this chapter. Rather, the specific circumstances determining the construction of knowledge within fields such as History, Archaeology, or Heritage Studies, evict the possibility of facing certain realities that exist but are difficult to deal with through traditional research methodologies, which, ultimately, function as

genealogies of thought. Therefore, the impossibility also encloses and contains the potentiality of a critical opening-up of these fields towards these contemporary sites of conflict and *dissonance* in order to prevent them from disappearing from any historical account. My call for such fissure is not a claim for the aesthetics of ruins and conflict (a topic which should also be discussed in depth), but a demand for justice in the face of indifference and an act of response-ability from our/my own privileged locations. It is a form of side-taking before injustices which should not be silenced by the historical distractions that we perpetuate through constructing exclusive/exclusionary research.

Discourse, therefore, is a genealogical practice, a machine of material generation. Thus, when speaking about these two locations as pseudo-shares (in terms of their participation of the same geographical space of Lesbos), we observe that the discursive narrative about prehistoric Greece generates a reality that is tangible in contrast to the impossible narration that throws Moria into a non-place. Non-place is understood here in the sense of Marc Augé's theories about spaces (2008) which, because of their lack of signification, preclude an anthropological vision. The theoretical impossibility here is important because the constructed subject it produces also responds to that lack of location and is thrown into anonymity. Following the above-mentioned potentiality, the void that certain *topoi* represent, their discursive absence, already manifests a rule in order:

The discursive formation is not therefore a developing totality, with its own dynamism or inertia, carrying with it, in an unformulated discourse, what it does not say, what it has not yet said, or what contradicts it at that moment; it is not a rich, difficult germination, it is a distribution of gaps, voids, absences, limits, divisions (Foucault, 1972: 119).

This way, absences, just as accumulative presences, are constructed and produced. The amplification of these absences connects to another of Foucault's concepts, the *principle of rarification* - a rarity which has more to do with the criteria that allow atypical statements to enter the conversation than with what these statements enunciate.

As Heritage is the field which is most directly affected by the arguments of this chapter, I will approach it as the dispositive that allows the formation of certain identities within chronotopes. Heritage helps reify those identities through the claims of culture and History, maintaining the epistemological order of things and the authority of certain constructions of knowledge over others. I would like to use Laurajane Smith's idea of "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (2006) to speak about the assumptions and assimilations that the hegemonic understanding of Heritage reproduces on a daily basis. The discourses in which authorised Heritages are embedded assume that cultural remains are entangled in a time-framing of the past as the pivotal element to render it meaningful to a community or group of people assembled and connected through this past. Thus, the identification between the past and Heritage is an assumption implied in historical discourses ¹⁴³.

Theories on power, hegemonies, and on how they are implemented through discourses in different study fields are many and diverse, as seen in chapter one. I will not, therefore, stop at those parts of Smith's argumentation regarding who has the power of enunciation. Instead, I would like to highlight a specific aspect of this text which so far has been overlooked: the construction of temporality that Heritage has absorbed from its constitution.

As Smith re-evaluates through an analysis of John Urry's "How Societies Remember the Past" (1996), out of the many boundaries that mark official discourse making, "[o]ne boundary disconnects the idea of heritage from the present and present-day values and aspirations so that it becomes something confined to 'the past'" (Smith 2006, 12). We need to rethink Heritage along these lines as a continuum that reaches to the present.

¹⁴³ This construction of the past and History is another example of how knowledge, meaning, significance and epistemologies merely constitute the perceived reality.

2.2. Dissonant Entanglements: “Race” and Coloniality in Authorised Heritage Discourses

I want to move on to consider the particularities of certain categories in the construction of the two analysed spaces, Moria and Thermi. I suggest that their relationality resides in the way they can be put together, bound to each other, as this chapter proposes. The ontological reasonings that we sometimes find intrinsic to certain experiences, situations or examinations would not respond to the logic of a comparison between these two different spaces. What links them in entanglements is rather the performative action of looking at them as *chronotopically* similar locations, following Nigel Thrift’s stance on how performativity unsettles our normative visions of materiality:

Spaces can be stabilised in such a way that they act like political utterances, guiding subjects to particular conclusions. But, as a counterpoint, the fabric of space is so multifarious that there are always holes and tears in which new forms of expression can come into being. Space is therefore constitutive in the strongest possible sense and it is not a misuse of the term to call it performative, as its many components continually act back, drawing on a range of different aesthetics as they do so (2003: 2022–2023).

According to this view of space as performative, we can distance ourselves more easily from the rigidity of the historical construction of places of significance. A detailed examination of the categories at work in each of these two spaces demonstrates that History is not an active element in Moria, nor does racialisation play a role in the case of Thermi. The non-substantial significance of these categories in the analysed cases does not mean, however, that they do not have impact on, or are non-existent, in each of these places. In other words, the fact that “race” and History are not made visible in the narratives about Thermi and Moria should not lead to conclusion that there is no racialised construction of the justified body for Archaeology, or that the void that Moria represents for contemporary historical records right now will not have historical consequences in the

future¹⁴⁴. Even if at present these consequences appear as absences and are not marked as historical landmarks, they are there in the making.

The construction of “race” and otherness in the case of Moria and Thermi responds to a reflection on the existing discursive dynamics of exclusion-inclusion. Indeed, the element of “race” in the case of Thermi is active in invisible ways. This is so both because of the construction of inclusiveness which is taken for granted in the identity that Thermi represents, and because of the temporality it informs, a past that is consumed in the present. I am particularly intrigued by the way in which the construction of time, in general, and of the past, in particular, functions as a dispositive that allows certain subjects to escape the visibility of their very representations. What seems to happen in Thermi, in opposition to Moria, is that the condition of the past constructed through the present allows the subjectivities related to it to neglect the necessary revision of their own construction. Instead, these subjectivities are already shaped beforehand, not through a material analysis of remains, but rather through the discarding of critical issues of our present such as the construction of “race”. This is not to say that there is no translocation of present identities to the past, but rather that the construction and ways by which those identities are constituted are elements that exceed the temporality of the past. Thus, the ways in which prehistoric times are equalised through historical discourses to an idea of European ancestors – that of White, male, abled subjects – overlooks the way in which “race” is still active and helps the construction of an authorised past in our presentness. What I mean to emphasise here is, once again, the dichotomy between the activation of certain categories in the present and the form in which they are transformed and mitigated through their introduction as History, thus past. In the account of these civilising discursive practices, which are read through the eyes of performativity, I want to cite Barad to add the positionality I take. This location is a privileged distance from the actual spaces I am examining, and through this positioning I intend to get closer to the materiality of Moria and Thermi. As Barad writes about this understanding of performative discursivity:

¹⁴⁴ Beyond the invisibilised consequences that are already taking place, and which are materially determinant for many subjectivities banned from biased historicities.

A performative understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things. Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real [...] [P]erformativity is actually a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve (2003: 802).

Performative discursivities work as entanglements. The entanglements that exist between situations which, a priori, do not seem to have connections with other constructions and intersections of social categories have an immediate effect upon the way a body, and its identity construction, is at the same time perceived and ignored. It is perceived in that it is recognisable even if viewed as external to normative patterns of identity. It is ignored since the different assembled elements that conform that particular identity are not recognised, and this provokes the distancing between that body and its identity. Having used the term of *assemblage* in relation to its development by New Materialist thinkers (DeLanda, 2016), here I use the concept as formulated by Jasbir Puar (2005):

The Deleuzian assemblage, as a series of dispersed but mutually implicated networks, draws together enunciation and dissolution, causality and effect. As opposed to an intersectional model of identity, which presumes components—race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, religion—are separable analytics and can be thus disassembled, an assemblage is more attuned to interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency (127-128).

Puar makes a straightforward move in using *assemblage* to give difference a multiplicity by “intensities, emotions, energies, affectivities, textures” (Ibid: 128). In this motion, she focuses on how biopolitics enacts the differentiation between the historical corpse and the bare-life bodies. Borrowing Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *bare life*, I place emphasis on

the way in which bodies in Moria stand in opposition to the subjectivities related to Thermi through their meaning. What matters in Moria is the biological dimension of the bodies while Thermi is based upon acts of signification attached to discursive practices. As conceptualised by Puar, “an assemblage is more attuned to interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency and permanency” (2007: 212).

In her critique of the conception of identities as stable and named, Puar proposes to work with an idea of identities as affected, enacted, and performed by/through circumstances that go beyond the monism of the body. An identity is hardly ever a fixed category that works outside of the world conditions in which it is inscribed. Instead, identities are in/a continuous contamination in which the body functions as subject and object of that permeation, exceeding the human exceptionalism which anthropocentrism has inscribed in identity studies. Puar reworks the theories related to *intersectionality*, popularised through the work by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), and proposes an intersection between assemblage and intersectionality. In her view, though intersectionality has been important as a site of resistance to dismissed identities, a strategic focal point from where to fight back their oppressive representation, it has also reinforced the idea of identities as fixed categories through time-space. In Puar’s own words,

to dismiss assemblage in favor of retaining intersectional identitarian frameworks is to miss the ways in which societies of control apprehend and produce bodies as information, as matter that functions not or predominantly through signification, as modulation of capacities, as individuals in populations with any array of diverse switch points [...] and surveilles bodies not on identity positions alone but through affective tendencies and statistical probabilities (2013: 387).

Puar stresses the idea of affective identities and this proposal checkmates the image of identities linked to bodies as islands, perceived as isolated non-places. Examining the two places central to this chapter through the lens of assemblage, we can see, then, that the historical accounts and discursive elaborations of these two spaces are determined by

affective circumstances that entangle and intertwine with the bodies connected to each of these locations. As I have stated at the beginning of this section, the ways in which these two spaces are assembled in one case study is a circumstantial decision that goes beyond their intrinsic relationality. Following the idea of the instability of connections between the elements that conform with both the interiority and exteriority of these spaces, the assemblage also works as a cartographic methodology according to which categories, such as “race” and Heritage, which are symbolically external to these two places, become attached to them through a specifically generated chronotope common to both. The racial architecture of the dominant identitarian genealogies in Thermi is revealed in this performed cartography. At the same time, the lack of genealogy in the dominant historical discourse in Moria is also evinced. “Race” and *Heritage* become inseparable concepts to confront and challenge.

These assemblages also highlight the dissonant temporalities of these two locations. Memory and genealogy work in different directions here, since the fact that Moria is not allowed a future does not mean it is erased from memory. Specifically in this case, the construction of Moria as a place outside temporality coexists with its potentiality as a space of memory. But not yet, not now. This potentiality is established in its accountability as a historical event, as a necropolis, as an archaeological site, once it becomes past.

As experienced throughout various current examples of dissonant Heritage in post-conflicts, there is an urgent need to activate and vindicate realities that have been silenced or erased from memory. This is recurrent in many of these examples. With this goal in mind, I examine the ways in which Heritage, memory, and identity are constructed through a fixed idea of what the past means. These constructions and fixations are embedded within knowledge formation and, therefore, they are linked to research practices and places of epistemological generation. We, as academics, researchers, and political subjects have a responsibility to act as the advocates for situations of contemporary conflicts, dissonant histories and heritages.

Through connecting two very different realities coexisting in a liminal place, the archaeological site of Thermi and the refugee camp of Moria, I have engaged into questions of how the binding of these two places together works in a performative

manner, allowing categories that have not yet been activated to enact and become significant to Historical genealogies and Heritage Studies. The vindication of present dissonant spaces of conflict, such as Moria, opens-up approaches to History that exceed the linear temporality in which it has traditionally been inscribed and disrupts the power structures to which History responds. This claim, ultimately, interpellates new considerations of memories and identities, and provokes response-able reactions to unjust situations which we often tend to ignore when looking at them from our privileged positions.

With the deconstruction of a normative understanding of time and temporality inside disciplines dealing with History and memory, this chapter tries to dislocate the present in order to anticipate significant silences. These currently created voids encapsulate potential dissonances in a (not so) distant future. In this sense, the way in which *dissonance* is used is (pun intended) inherently dissonant: it speaks about a heritage and a memory of the future. Or, in other words, it faces material injustice in the present to foresee cultural dissonance yet to come.

2.3. Borders: spatial divisions, motion and mobilities

After examining the fragments which conform History and the colonial tricks which are to be found in between these fragments, I would like to engage in the specific materiality which triggered this case study: maps inside border logics. The many paradoxes that are locked inside border theories include a specific one which calls my attention: contemporary borders are not reduced to geographic divisions, as Anzaldúa wrote long ago (1987). Departing from the text by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson¹⁴⁵ “Between Inclusion and Exclusion: on the Topology of Global Space and Borders” (2012), this case study analyses in which ways the oppositional binaries between inclusion/exclusion and identity/counter-identity depict a critique inside identity politics. These theories, that have already been problematised and diffracted (following Karen Barad’s *theories of diffraction*, 2007) via Jose Esteban Muñoz’s *disidentification theory* (1999), are reshaped

¹⁴⁵ Who I had the privilege of meeting at the 2017 Summer School of the Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory, in Bologna. I also attended his lectures in the 2019 edition of this same Summer School.

to give a new ordering of space which can respond to new significances of spatial limits and also of their connections. The theorisation of the border as a rediscovered *topos* in the middle-space, a nomadic setting (following Rosi Braidotti's Nomadic Theory, 1994), trapped me inside a dilemma that I am still dealing with when addressing politics of identity. The depiction of the border as a site of possibilities is based upon its *potentia* - as a station for becoming-, where identities, subjectivities, resistance, power hegemonies and intersections are stressed and intensified in a way that reveals, drags and performs all these processes. As I have analysed in the previous chapters, my understanding of a method -as the border method here applied from the studies by Mezzadra and Neilson (2012, 2013)- is one that does not refer to it as the ultimate solution. There is more to be gained of a method when using it as a critical point from where to analyse and locate these assemblages, diffractions and nepantilism¹⁴⁶.

As I have examined in the previous chapters, my dissidence regarding the “nomadic” border is not related to the understanding of a necessary breaking of the “wall” metaphor (even if its dystopian image-metaphor is being materialised) and a questioning of the processes that are performed in that motion. Instead, I am concerned with the responsibility that is placed upon these “nomadic” subjects. I want to problematise this depiction of the border as a place of resistance, which projects two ideas open to big misunderstanding: one comes from the fact that it seems as if this “nomadism” came from one's own agency of being in an “in-between” space. The other follows some of Marxist György Lukács's theories, as Peter Drucker¹⁴⁷ reflects in his “The Politics of Some Bodies” (2017), where the responsibility is placed upon the person under oppression reproducing the idea that a struggle “guarantees revolutionary consciousness” (Drucker, 2017: 3). These two ideas, which have been exposed in the previous chapters, are here embedded in a new location, that of a friction of two spaces of liminality: Moria and Thermi.

I have found the exploration of these two limits- and the possibility of a critical assemblage view of them- in the horizon that Jose Esteban Muñoz proposes in

¹⁴⁶ *Nepantla* refers to a space in the middle in the indigenous language of Mesoamerica, Nahuatl, and is used in Anzaldúa's work to refer to that state of being in the borderland (1987).

¹⁴⁷ Who I had the privilege to meet during the NOISE Summer School at Utrecht University in 2017.

Disidentifications (1999). While reading the text from a diffractive methodology of examination (Barad, 2007), the dissing, *dizzing* and dissident aspects of Muñoz's motive have their means in the negotiation of the contradictions and paradoxes that appear when talking about disruptive identities, such as that of the *border-crosser* (to some, the *nomad*). Muñoz brings new light to the world making of (*some*) queer identities through disidentifications, examined by queer performances as case studies.

The counter-identity approaches proposed by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson through the "border method", and by Rosi Braidotti in her "nomadic theory", are important sites of reflection on in-between chronotopes. They need a conversation that can remain critical of the dregs that become sediment through theory and discourse. In the nomadic space of the border "there is a certain intensification of political and even existential stakes that crystallise relations of domination and exploitation, subjection and subjectivation, power and resistance" (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012: 60). From a queer analysis of identity formation, it is interesting to see how the border can be read as a place of concentration of power hegemonies over the subjects who occupy it. Still, the border can be many other things when disentangling it from identity. Even if it is true that the border is drawn as a locus of possibilities, it is still at the service of a particular identitarian apparatus which generates an oppositional understanding of space through its liminality. The potentiality of the border stands "as parameters that enable the channeling of flows and provide coordinates within which flows can be joined or segmented, connected or disconnected" (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012: 59). Still, this possibility, this *potentia* for new becomings, is framed in an uncritical way that establishes the border as a place where agency and consciousness are the elements of the formula sustaining the actions which occur in it. The subject at the border is here understood as a subject in struggle, as a hybridity that "def (ies) notions of uniform identity or origins [...] [and] catches the fragmentary subject formation of people whose identities traverse different race, sexuality, and gender identifications" (Muñoz, 1999: 31-32). A critical disruption of this idea is found in *disidentifications*, as it recognises the struggle and sometimes inertia that the nomadic position implies. As Muñoz examines:

Disidentifications is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that

continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship (1999: 4).

Muñoz depicts the disidentification system of identities as a strategic negotiation which minority subjects must perform in order to survive breaks with the uncritical style that nomadic theories have to speak about this oppressed position as a site of possibilities. The disidentifying project can be connected, instead, to this other aspect of borders, which is not centred upon identity. In this alternative, and following the lines of critical border studies, I apply Paulina Ochoa Espejo's bold project *On Borders: Territories, Legitimacy, and the Rights of Place* (2020). Ochoa Espejo challenges the universalising idea of "No borders" reflecting on the deeper layers which are locked inside the motto. Her approach decentres identity and works through the possibilities of borders as tools for situated politics, which also restructure the problematic of neoliberal practices of governability and the abstract understanding of justice. Ochoa Espejo asks what solidarity might mean in every specific place and why inclusion, as a concept of political activation, is not always the synonym for solidarity. If we think about indigenous communities in first nations, or current occupied spaces, such being the case in Canada and the USA or Palestine, respectively, we understand that exclusion sometimes means, quite simply, the preservation of living otherwise. As she reminds, "[i]f the theories of self-determination wish to remain consistent, then they (explicitly or implicitly) must rely on the natural borders of polities." (2020: 101). It is interesting how Ochoa's perspective, by focusing on place similarities rather than subjective identifications of space, questions the universalisation of identitarian pre-conceptions of different worldings. She also criticises the alternatives of statal-border geopolitics, based on identitarian rhythms of land, which conceive certain populations as naturalised and conditioned by the good-subject idea, which also reproduce certain patronising misconceptions. This is also in connection to the human exceptionalism so deeply criticised in this work, since it also works from the delusional idea that people born in a place, such as indigenous subjects, operate on the opposite side of culture, as if they were ahistorical and timeless. Ochoa also formulates a deep critique on the prejudices of identitarian categories which build up the migrant and refugee model subject according to this inclusion by exclusion, i.e., understood only from such rejection. As others have analysed, the reduction of some subjects to their condition

of being outside nation-state active locations, such as the case of people inhabiting a refugee camp, reproduces ableism and cis-heteronormativity (Loyd et al., 2023).

Having revisited the assumptions of spatial division and fragmentation, I would like to return to the question of motion and mobility. When critically examining these topics, the acknowledgement that the agency in this motion identity comes from a struggle does not only revisit the normative spaces from where these subjects are diasporically thrown out, but also where they are sometimes thrown in. This recognition of situational motion opens a variety of possible strategies of resistance. Hence, within these, when speaking about forced mobility, such as asylum or migration, there is also space to talk about normativisation as one possible strategic need of survival or resistance.

As I have announced previously, in the last few years I have grown very interested in critiques and counter-critiques on politics of identity. Concepts such as *homonormativity* (Lisa Duggan, 2002) or *Homonationalism* (Jasbir Puar, 2007) have become very popular in queer theory. The obvious conjunction between state and identity is primordial to these studies since they work from both non-straight and non-static perspectives. Criticism of the privileges that stand behind identitarian discourses is necessary and it should be directly connected to the privilege that also stands behind the depiction of the border and the nomad as the radical possibility of breaking apart from the system(s) of power. As Peter Drucker elaborates, “many queer critics of homonormativity are middle-class, and many working-class lesbians [*or other queer identities*] are attached to gender roles and family” (Drucker, 2017: 3). Disidentification stands in the diffractive positionality from where to encounter these terms in a rhizome of possibilities, calling into recognition the complexity of anti-capitalist struggles which the dissident identity might encounter (Drucker, 2017: 3). Moreover, di(zz)ssing these theories calls attention to a revision of how these possibilities are also connected to a sense of responsibility imposed over the subject under oppression and surveillance, hence reinforcing the power structures that stand behind the struggle. In a crisscrossing mode, the oppositional binary is broken by these alternatives in their problematising and recognising of the subjects inside a system of control. From these new locations, identity is more connected to an intersecting fiction than to a generative epicentre.

Muñoz goes along with Michel Pêcheux's work in breaking this oppositional understanding of inside-outside the system while talking about the political determination of the subject inside the ideological system of representation. Pêcheux builds over three ways in which the subject is constructed: The "Good Subject", the "Bad Subject" and the "Disidentifying Subject". The danger that the "Bad Subject" presents is determined by the "counter determination" that,

validates the dominant ideology by reinforcing its dominance through the controlled symmetry of "counterdetermination". Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology (Muñoz, 1999: 11).

Identity is a complex assemblage of tensions between the subject and its relation to what it comes in contact with. As such, identity cannot be framed as a monistic cause from where the subject enacts. Following Michel Foucault's theorising of power in *The History of Sexuality* (1976), these frictions also speak about how hegemonies appear in a multiplicity of chronotopes. The dislocation of power which appears in disidentifications through the tension between cut-stick in respect to the system of representation, is a claim to the recognition of the privilege that stands behind theorising. It also reclaims the necessity of remaining critical about how to imagine utopian futures outside normative systems of identity, while, at the same time, responding to the material conditions of the location from where these possible becomings are imagined. Using some queer performance examples (in this case, Marga Gómez's *Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty and Gay*, 1992, 1994), Muñoz speaks about how the constructed "minoritarian" subjects come into the fiction of representation, stating that "Spectacles such as those that Gómez presents offer the minoritarian subject a space to situate itself in history and thus seize social agency" (Muñoz, 1999: 1). The danger of the fiction of representation is then getting trapped into the system, as expressed by Jack Smith's sentence at the start of the book: "Normalcy is the evil of homosexuality" (Muñoz, 1999: ix). Disidentifications confront this trap as they propose, from a privileged state of consciousness and agency, a fiction in drag that brings together (for those who find it possible) survival and resistance. Activism must be informed by these diffractive theorisations and disidentificatory optics

that turn “to shadows and fissures within the text, where racialized presences can be liberated from the protective custody of the white literary imagination” (Muñoz, 1999: 29). Disidentifications, thus, are methodological strategies that I find primordial in order to bring together theory and activism in a way that keeps the border as a critical place from where to act in friction, talking of how not only does light have to be brought into shadows, but also of how, sometimes, shadows need to permeate lights.

2.4. The temporality of the “unreal”: time as space. Temporal viscosities, waiting

In the continuation from the previous section, my particular interest in *disidentifications* is the connection to subjectivities which become unreal through specific movements and significations. The putting together of Muñoz’s ideas and Fanon’s theories regarding the “violence of derealisation” (1968) can be productive for the comprehension of this case study.

The dislocation mentioned above speaks distinctively of the temporality shift this chapter deals with. Speaking about Heritage and identity, the sense of chronology appears as more viscous. The dislocations of the meaning of the present, which eventually becomes significant pasts, are also tied to the temporalities of the subjects involved in this coevalness. This is important to deal with because of the futuristic alternatives which are constantly shaped in research and Academia in their attempts to find solutions to contemporary problems but lacking an attention to identities which are bound to a temporality of present, to the human flesh and to the material possibilities of representation. In the claim of affect over discourse, there is a potentiality of understanding , engaging and dealing with the multiple ways of embodiment responses. Affectivity becomes crucial in these new temporal considerations, where immediacy and restriction are also fundamental markers for new embodied rhythms. As Laurent Berlant reflects through their¹⁴⁸ theorisation of *Cruel Optimism* (2011), the project tries:

¹⁴⁸ Who is nominated through both they/she since they used neutral pronouns in their professional environment and she pronouns in her personal life. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/03/books/lauren-berlant-dead.html?smid=url-share>

[To look] at the complexity of being bound to life. Even when it turns out to involve a cruel relation, it would be wrong to see optimism's negativity as a symptom of an error, a perversion, damage, or a dark truth: optimism is, instead, a scene of negotiated sustenance that makes life bearable as it presents itself ambivalently, unevenly, incoherently (14).

In Berlant's analysis there is a strong commitment to remaining critical of the circumstances involving optimism, which can also derive in other optimistic structures such as normative understandings of identity, temporality or affects. *The Promise of Happiness* in Ahmed's critique (2010) is shaped in Berlant's work through the notion of *attachment*. As they write, "attachments are optimistic. That does not mean that they all feel optimistic" (Berlant, 2006: 1). This use of attachments helps me focus upon temporalities again: in Berlant's scheme optimism is not associated to the promise of a future, but rather to a "waiting" in the present. Ghassan Hage's development of the notion of *Waiting* (2009), reviewed in the previous chapters, relates to this other temporality or temporal others. Hage's use of waiting speaks of a state of stuckedness. It deals with the temporality of maps. In this identitarian way of shaping bodies through different temporal rhythms, Hage's ideas connect to Alexander Weheliye's development of *viscosity*: the bare life recovered from Agamben's theorising of the *Homo Sacer* (1998) is directed towards the ways in which racialised assemblages nurture from accumulative processes which give shape to certain embodied experiences. As the accumulative process of this thesis, these accumulations involve temporalities, affectivities, relationalities and visual racialisation/genderisation/commodification, which become sticky and stuck in bodies.

2.4.1. Waiting, motion and orientations: de-realising embodiment

As I have analysed previously, throughout the chapter on the Void, the notion of *waiting* can help direct the critique towards motion in different orientations. Nomadism is criticised through Braidotti's formulation and figuration because of its impossibility to attend the ambivalence of the movement it holds within. Taking Ghassan Hage's use of *stuckedness*, the twist of the established "critique of crisis" formula to the "crisis of critique" one helps explain the way in which being stuck does not intrinsically entail a

lack of mobility. Hage makes a distinction between existential stuckedness and social stuckedness: “just as there is an imaginary existential mobility, there is an imagined existential stuckedness. This form of stuckedness is existential in that it does not necessarily coincide with lack of social mobility” (2015: 5). Hage’s fresh approach to motion is very applicable to our argumentation here. To be stuck, to lack mobility, has different connotations from a social point of view (as can be exemplified by people migrating and settling in new landscapes) and from an existential perspective. One could say “I feel trapped” because they are stuck in an established form of life, production, love and so on. With the space of Moria in mind, even if such statements can be read as a lack of agency, to equal the locations from where these lacks happen can be very dangerous.

Returning to Berlant’s approach to temporalities from queer motions I want to pay attention to their analysis of the normativity inscribed in time and the materials derived from it. Time becomes a phenomenon, seen through the many examples of the stagnant materials that generate from its ordering, such as Heritage, space or the displaying of concepts. Space exists in time. Geography exists inside chronological apparatuses. As I stated above: there is a temporality to maps. In their queer temporalities, Berlant understands that the breaking of the time continuum is attained by *waiting*, which has its own temporality. The question arises: what does waiting mean and how do we speak about the temporalities of time *on hold*?

Time unfolds identity. “Waiting to identify” and “waiting to belong”, respond to radically different schemes. The former responds to an active waiting, while the latter implies passivity, a distinction often overseen without recognising that, as Derrida predicted through his *spectres* (1993, 2012), time is a changing agent. How one waits for History or for historicity is different. The former scheme waits for a recognition of existence. The latter is already included in an epistemological truth.

Hage’s *Waiting* makes us engage in unassumed perspectives of agency through rhythm. He formulates the question “Is waiting an exercise of agency or a lack of it?” (2015: 2). Something as daily as *waiting* can come from very different positions and has radically diverse effects. We do not all wait for the same things, at the same time or in similar tempos. As regards this human temporality of *waiting*, the question for this case study stands in this direction: what is the vibrancy of an active waiting? How does a

passive temporality give new meanings to death even through living bodies? These questions extend also to the following case study in which the notion of *waiting* becomes salient to the analysis of those of *non-violence* and *passive resistance*.

As has already been reviewed, hegemonic narratives and “Authorised Heritage Discourses” (Smith, 2006; Rizvi, 2006, Hamilakis, 2007) touch closely on the temporality issue since they can lock out certain historical events from their records. Disruptive temporalities apply here also because of the breakdown of the dead-alive dichotomy. A linear temporality of production and reproduction, of hope and imagination, is held in suspense in the space of the refugee camp. The space of the camp is always signified through a temporality of exception, a rhythm of urgency and a further objective on moving elsewhere. Still, as has been proved in each space, this is not the case. The camp and its inhabitants are holders of yet another layer of indistinction (Bülent, 2004: 93), scheduling the temporality of the “unreal”, which comes back to Fanon’s “violence of derealization” (1968).

These temporal inquiries should also be paid attention to when applying basic concepts such as *biopolitics* or *necropolitics*. In the use of renewed ideas about humanism, there is a crack in the assumed exceptionality of the human, a disruption that comes both from a possibility, a critical perspective, and from an impossibility, since some bodies are limited because of their being only accountable through their flesh, in their total *bareness*. Other-than-human ways of living, of being affected and materialising, are needed for these potentialities but also to remain accountable for what bodies are meaningful of. The biopolitical twist which Achille Mbembe applies in his formulation of *Necropolitics* (2011) to his understanding of the contemporary state control on bodies highlights the ambivalences and contradictions of such bodies in modern societies. This is the case with the embodiments of both Moria and Thermi for which the very notion of life has mutated. Giorgio Agamben’s considerations of *bare life* and the exploration of the figuration of the *homo sacer*, enter a zone of “irreducible indistinction” (1998: 9) between elements which seemed concrete in other philosophical traditions, such as the generalisation of life in Foucault’s work, when applying *biopolitics*. Agamben’s work challenges such notion by speaking about the lack of distinction between naturalised oppositions such as *bio* and *zoe*, included and excluded, or ultimately life and death. As he writes:

What defines the status of *homo sacer* is therefore not the originary ambivalence of the sacredness that is assumed to belong to him, but rather both the particular character of the double exclusion into which he is taken and the violence to which he finds himself exposed. This violence—the unsanctionable killing that, in this case, anyone may commit— is classifiable neither as sacrifice nor as homicide, neither as the execution of a condemnation to death nor as sacrilege. Subtracting itself from the sanctioned forms of both humans and divine law, this violence opens a sphere of human action that is neither the sphere of *sacrum facere* nor that of profane action (1998: 82-83).

Agamben's project goes a step further from the generalised bio-value in Foucault's understanding of life. Nevertheless, it still fails to recognise other assemblage layers. The omnipresence of power and its theorisation is limited in the way in which sovereignty and modern state control are somehow pictured as impossible to contest. In this sense, Agamben does pair with Foucault's understanding of institutional power in which there is nothing specifically to blame. The problem with Agamben's analysis in the dominant narrative of the European holocaust is that, in the case of the Shoah as pivotal milestone for western political construction, the sovereign power did not come from the possibility of violence or domination but rather from a racialisation and stereotyping of Jewish subjectivities. This is essentially important in this case because the way in which the self-panopticum works in contemporary societies makes everyone entangled in a system of values responsible for a reproductive idea and the resulting violences and invisibilisations. As is the case here, where the refugee subjectivity is reduced to flesh, it is not simply about the bad practices of a war and the power institutions and states reacting to it, but about a set of layers assembling, normalising and legitimising such violent practices.

Taking into consideration the ambivalences of the spaces of Thermi and Moria, their own temporal viscosities come into play when considering the realisation of embodiment in each of the cases. The un-real becomes sticky to the waiting body in Moria, rather than to the cultural figuration in Thermi which, on the contrary, is

ontologically read through the cultural significations of European Heritage. Racialising assemblages encounter other forms of consideration which go deep into their generational roots. Through the readings of Jasbir Puar, Hortense Spillers and Alexander Weheliye, we can dis-assume the ways in which bare life is a universal value that divides the state and its citizens. This erasure of the importance of contemporary categories involving ability, racialisation, gender or property is contested by these authors by maintaining an active critique on how some bare lives are barer than others. In Spillers' antiracist reading of the distinction between *zoe* and *bio*, she proposes the opposition between flesh and body. Through her analysis of these categories in her groundbreaking text "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" (1987), we understand how both terms work in opposition through a chronological matter and not a discursive one. This is, *flesh* is not oppositional to *body*, but rather prior to it. As she maintains:

I would make a distinction in this case between "body" and "flesh" and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. Before the "body" there is "flesh," that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography [...] We regard this human and social irreparability as high crimes against the flesh, as the person of African females and males registered the wounding (Ibid: 67).

The flesh, which is a located ambivalence for non-white embodiments, is both saturated through visibility and ignored. As Alexander Weheliye examines through their proposal of racialising assemblages, the non-white flesh, which is already categorised prior to the "body", following Spillers' theories, is sticky in its own signification. It is saturated by meaning but meaningless. Racialising assemblages is Weheliye's proposal to speak about "race" "not as a biological or cultural classification but as a set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans" (2014:12). In this antiracist critique to humanism, the intersection between body and flesh can be found in their application to the two locations of Moria and Thermi. Who holds a body and who counts as flesh is significant through these two spaces since they show that the

idea of the human goes beyond the biological scheme: the bodies of human significance in Thermi are those of non-living ones. In a mix with Puar's analysis of assemblage, Weheliye insists in the flux that marks racialising assemblages, which are, simultaneously tied to territorialisation and deterritorialisation (2014, notes: 104). Puar's take on assemblage is unprecedented because of the historical momentum it ties to, a post 9/11 war of terror and how homonational practices benefited from this generational alterity to gain privileges from state systems. It is also radical because it speaks outside the box of representation, giving space to a double move where, retaking Butler's theoretical break, what matters also matters (1993, 2010). In their reading of Arun Saldanha on the viscosity of the body, Puar attempts a broadening of the representational status, in which social schemes of power, sexuality and "race" are saturated by much more than a mere code or sign of pre-signification. This means that while representation happens to matter, attending to how that matter is actually productive without a need of a prefiguration, can disentangle these assemblages in more effective ways. As they write:

Signification, narrative, and epistemological coherence- known or unknown- is what subtends and mediates the stickiness, or slipperiness, of objects [...] Must bodies already be signified as something sticky in order to become even stickier? Is stickiness only a product of signification, of epistemic formation rather than ontological properties? (2017: 188).

Stickiness, which Puar addresses from the affective reading of Ahmed's use of the term (2005, 2014), is here relocated into viscosity, used as a property which opens much more to the circumstantial (de)activation and to that ambiguity which works in certain bodies which do not always need of historical signifiers to hold on to. There is a particular non-place which exceeds the human understanding of *place* itself. This non-place is beyond a cartography and resides in the practice of embodiment. Weheliye takes viscosity as a guiding concept from Sylvia Wynter and Hortense Spillers' reading on the flesh. Weheliye writes:

[T]he flesh epitomizes a central modern assemblage of racialization that highlights how bare life is not only a product of previously established distinctions but also, and more significantly, aids in the perpetuation of hierarchical categorizations along the lines of nationality, gender, religion, race, culture, sexuality, and so on (2014: 33).

In this statement, Weheliye pairs with Puar in their deepening into the ontological activity of social schemes, such as “race”, and how these fleshing experiences do not only respond to pre-established settlements but rather get enacted and reinvented in a vibrant connection to other schemes.

2.5. Non-places

As was reviewed before when speaking about continuity and fragmentology, the two places here analysed can be examined through concept of *non-places* from Augé’s use when speaking of supermodernity (2008). Moria and Thermi can be defined as non-places because of the subjectivities inhabiting those locations, the dawdling rhythm and the space of saturated voids. These voids could be considered as saturated following the ideas explored through the chapter of the Void as not tantamount to nothingness but rather to indeterminacy (Barad, 2012).

Non-places are defined in many ways and respond to different factors involving the acceleration of supermodern times applied to space. One of these elements is the anonymous signification of the people inhabiting the space, which is active in both Moria and Thermi in very different ways. Continuing with Fanon’s analysis on subjective unrealisation, anonymity is different in these two spaces. It works ambiguously in the case of Thermi, since, as has been established before, the site operates as a cultural place of encounter, as a museum, a domestication space where to consume the “European roots of civilisation”. Nevertheless, it remains a concrete space which informs other spaces, i.e., it gives significance to the rest of the places which saturate through the idea of a civilised territorialised Europe. The idea of non-place seems much clearer when referring to Moria. The refugee camp lacked agency in its formulation since its saturation of

signification came from discursive others outside the camp. In the case of Moria, thus, anonymity entails many other factors which are far more dangerous to speak about. As Fanon writes about these fake dialectics:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town (1968: 37-38).

Exclusion is what marks the opposition between the two places of signification, one being filled by its recognised meaning, the other hiding its saturation through an impossibility of being perceived as significant. Using Fanon's passage, Nolan Oswald Davis's "No Conciliation is Possible" project (2018-ongoing) reflects on the possibility of reparation which is frequently envisioned from the Norths, from whiteness and from privilege, a dialectics which wrongly takes the two sides of the binary to be equally meaningful and lacks consideration on the many present-absences and silences located on the unprivileged side.

The place of indistinction where Moria fuses the identitarian notions of living-dead contrasts between bodies. Indeed, the inert bodies haunting Thermi are active in ways the living ones in Moria are not. The spectrum of the ghost is more vibrant than the organic embodiment of an actual living body. This instance gives new information about this specific dichotomy: alive and dead as consequential categories that correspond to action and inaction respectively.

The non-place active in Moria worked from an outside consumption of the place and from a reproductive formulation of application of the *homo sacer* identity to the people residing in this place. Obviously, here anonymity and impersonal signifiers do not refer to the inhabitants of this refugee camp, which certainly held strong relations among their families, their neighbours and the workers of the place. Instead, anonymity is applied to the way in which the "refugee" identity, reduced to this monistic category, is consumed

as anonymous, as an embodiment of un-intimacy. It is then clear I am not trying to pin down the experience of the people having inhabited this place, since I do not think it is my task in this thesis, but rather I aim to approach the cultural formulations, maturations and many layers of signification which ultimately generate a particular reading. At this point, I want to address Augé's idea of "totality temptation" (1995: 48) as a reduction to a coherent image which is drawn from a cultural place of signification. The anthropological, ethnographic and archaeological traditions have resorted to this practice in their way of signifying through archetypical subjects, artefacts, practices and places. This totalisation is illustrated by,

societies identified with cultures conceived as complete wholes: universes of meaning, of which the individuals and groups inside them are just an expression, defining themselves in terms of the same criteria, the same values and the same interpretation procedures (1995: 33).

Thus, identity reifies into a consumption based on recognition, similarity and inclusion through exclusion. The identities constructed inside these liminal spaces are devoured as outside within: outside the space of identification-with but within the system of control. These identity thresholds follow the position of onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2014). In this topography, identities are not spoken about as totalised understandings of a subject but rather as understandings from figurations which are active from the specificity of particular locations. Again, the person in the refugee or asylum situation is not described here but rather the configuration of these experiences inside the white exceptional European subjectivation. Following Johannes Fabian's analysis of the constructed *Other*, the analysis responds to "a temporal concept [...] a category, not an object, of Western thought" (1983, 2014: 18). These ideas, as Augé reminds us, follow the coherence of wholeness to allow a straight idea and signification of their value inside those specific worldviews. Along this line of thought I would like to approach the concept of *alochronism* defined by Fabian (1983, 2014) as the epistemic terrain of knowledge where the contemporary *Other*, understood from a white anthropological tradition, is displaced to a different temporal location. This temporal dislocation activates a distinction between

subject and object in the traditional division of research knowledge. As Maxwell Owusu also points out in his exceptional article “Ethnography of Africa: The Usefulness of the Useless” (1978), the distancing of the other in time is sustained and emerges from other generative practices of otherness, such as language detachment, which is not simply a generalised critique to communicative gaps, but rather the culturally separation which is usually informed by the oppositional construction of the viewer and the viewed.

This insistence on time dislocations from normative and powerful epistemological positionings takes us in very different directions. Here, through this connection of the generative other through the negation of coevalness, I want to switch to a consequence that can appear contradictory at first sight. Through the case study here presented I want to focus on how some others, those ontologically prehistoric, i.e., Iron Age citizens, are granted a historicity of the past that locates them in a present, while in the case of Moria, their presentness saturation makes them un-discursively expelled from time habitation. My main interest in archeological studies is this, since the discourses of the past which taint traditional and mainstream archaeology do not assume the generative exclusionary practices for the present. This is, while Archeology is a potential discipline to transform injustice into situations of civil and state responsibility, its bond to the past and the discourses surrounding this narrative has prevented this potential from becoming actual action. In the past years, thanks to antiracist, decolonial, and feminist and queer archaeologies, the discipline has been exposed to a more committed way of working through knowledges. Authors such as Jaime Almansa (2011), Gabriel Moshenska (2017) or Ana Pastor Pérez and Margarita Díaz Muñoz (2022) have, for many years, insisted upon the importance of making Archaeology accessible to the general public, for purposes of critical Heritage generations and conservation but also to insist upon the particular strength the discipline has to relate the present to the past in ways which can inform contemporary debates, conversations or conflicts in more resolving ways. Authors such as Margarita Sánchez Romero or Paloma González Marcén (2018) or Margaret Conkey (1991) have taken this narrative to the ground of feminist and Gender Studies, insisting upon the need of a deconstruction of the past which can locate and imagine women and other identities in the past besides the masculine cis-heterosexual body which informs our public imagination. Other significant voices in this transformation of the discipline are

Enrique Moral de Eusebio (2012) or Barbara Voss (2000; 2012) with queer archaeology: the highly referenced Whitney Battle-Baptiste (2011), Marisol de la Cadena (2009), Yannis Hamilakis (2007), Uzma Rizvi (2006), Timothy Pauketat (2007), Vine Deloria (1997) or Zoe Todd (2016) who have also had a high influence in my understanding of other approximations to material culture that break free at the same time as remain conscious of contemporary colonial configurations of their materiality.

2.6. The agency of memory: haunted Heritage and possession

My understanding of memory and its temporality has been modified in the last years after my encounter with New Materialisms. Memory here appears as trauma, as fiction, as agential, and as a consequence and is used from a historical sensibility which draws attention to both the social and the personal angles of how the past is recalled. My use of New Materialisms is connected to other issues that are linked to the human but exist in not-always-human expressions. Hence, I ask myself what parts of memory are not-human, or not only human so that even with historical memory, reparative justice and other historical accountabilities of the violent praxis of some human communities, the way we approach the past is difficult because it takes us to spaces and places which are not present, and which are involved and evolve with/from other non-human actors. As in the case study here analysed, the spectral presence of the long-lost prehistoric figurations and the inert objects surrounding the tents are, for Thermi and Moria respectively, vibrant in ways human bodies cannot be. These vibrant spectres can be read through the notion of agency used in NMs, connecting the broad theoretical corpus of memory to these “new” accounts to matter. As Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische discuss in their article *What is Agency?* (1998) the discussion on materiality has worked through the division between structure and agency, forgetting the many ways in which both sides shape social realities (963). Carm Knappet and Lambros Malafouris also retake this question of agency and apply it to archaeological records so as to disentangle the discipline from the basis of anthropocentric interpretations (2008). Records of the past are vibrant through the present because of the flowing energy between structure and agency, which is not to be thought

about only through human embodiments. Memory studies are linked to these ways of engaging in vibrancies. And as Maria Zirra notices:

[D]espite the profusion of objects and other non-human actors in memory studies, the non-human still presents a significant gap in critical discussions of how societies remember. Be they archaeological, archival, museal, or architectural, objects have been explicitly presented as the matter and media of memory (Zirra, 2017: 458).

Archaeology and disciplines regarding the material past have placed value on artefacts, which again illustrates to what an extent space is part of this memory that materialises. As critical geographies and, in particular, queer geographies, have for years highlighted, and as we are seeing throughout this thesis, space is not neutral. Starting from the already discussed premise of the intertwining of identity and space so that identity shapes space and, conversely, space generates identities, this part focuses on how an application of queerness to the study of a certain location is important even if the site is, a priori, not gendered. By this I mean that we often think that spaces and experiences that are lived from a cisheteronormative standpoint have nothing to do with gender, which is an error since, as the claims of queer theory applied to geography demonstrate, a taken for granted and legitimate identity is, already, a gender act of construction. Still, I do think that gender is not a centre of conflict in all cases. Even if I do recognise that gender is one of the components of lively constructions, I do also see that it is not the main scheme of conflict. Hence, as seen before in this thesis, just as I use Queer Studies applied to space (Bell and Valentine, 1995) I also engage with other theories regarding, for example, how normative temporalities can be a main factor of conflict in some of the situations I encounter here.

There is an interesting intersection between identity and material Heritage in this case study which can be best approached by the terminologies of possession. When we speak of different types of historical and archaeological sites of memory and cultural Heritages, we happen to be inside a frame of identitarian discourse. Hence, we need to reflect on how identity, in singular, can be the ultimate site of Heritage, privatisation and possession.

In Macarena Gómez-Barris's analysis of indigenous phenomenology, Andean phenomenology in particular, we read that the subject building in these realities "places less emphasis on the making of individual subjectivity, since embodiment is defined as thoroughly sensitive, and as being in haptic touch with the surround" (2017: 49). As has been discussed in the previous section, the centrality which some non-human agents have in the construction of someone's experience has to do with unrecognised (from our globalised white epistemologies) forms of identity.

Connected with the "ulterior" projects of the posthuman the dynamics of possession and privatisation are to be found in these alternatives to make clear the ambiguities and risks that any project is to have. This idea deepens into the notion of possession applied to identity and derives from the combination of "features that are usually perceived as opposing, namely the possession of a sense of identity that rests not on fixity but on contingency" (Braidotti, 1994: 31). In this regard, although attention to the role of privatisation on the construction of identity is not often part of identity politics' agendas, the activation of this perspective is essential to throw new considerations regarding the commodification of identities and bodies which serve for state, capital and dominant projects of social control. Disciplining happens through a normalisation which is made possible through the essentialist idea that subjectivity is private and, thus, external to ultimate systems of control. As María Lugones exposes through the "coloniality of gender" (2008), identity is yet another site for colonial domination.

As has been discussed previously, this re-vision also speaks to the posthuman and other traditions that challenge human exceptionalism, which, nevertheless fall into anthropocentric considerations of the world. It challenges them by decentralising human agency as a coherent, central and unlimited entity of experience. In its questioning of the exceptionality of the human body it also challenges the notion of exceptional identity by which subjectivity is sometimes forced to find coherence in its own identifying process. This stagnated idea is check mated through the present case study which, while engaging in a multiplying and multilayering notion of identity, also aims to remain accountable for those fragmentations in which specific practices of oppression are practised. As Ta-Nehisi Coates voices while speaking about historical narratives driven from power, "[i]n America it is traditional to destroy the black body. *It is heritage*" (2015: 103). The

fragmentation of the non-white body happens prior to a disengagement, as proposed in alternatives to singular and monistic views of identity. The black body lacks integrity inside dominant narratives. To speak about fragmentation in this case becomes precarious. The risk of totalising experience is at stake. The alternatives to identity, particularly when written from white embodiments- such as the ones proposed by Butler or Braidotti, among many others, including myself-, must urgently recognise its limitations: that even research, academic spaces and knowledge which follow the guidelines of diversity and utopic alternatives to reality are thought through white supremacist imaginations.

As has been exposed above in this chapter, the way History, Heritage, Anthropology or Archaeology (to name only a few) have marked certain violences and oppressions against non-power bodies is part of their gained value (value here is as in power). Following Laurajane Smith (2006), Senake Bandaranayake (1974) or Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), I think of Heritage as another fictional practice of History. It is not that History or Heritage studies lack importance, since they are structural paradigms from which to think about our pasts and contexts and work in identifying ways. It is rather that we cannot disregard the fact that these disciplines have, been at the service of colonial and national identitarian projects of cohesion, which had the excluded counterpart of non-identified subjects lacking a cultural memory framework. As Coates highlights, the way certain bodies are excluded and violated is Heritage. Violence towards the black body is rooted in the American dream.

In their arguments about the flesh and viscosity of the social body, Alexander Weheliye delves into the meanings and spatial possibilities of mourning and reparations. In their magnificent attempt to write about the particular experiences of the racialised subjecting terms of their sociality, Weheliye also calls into question the particular ideas surrounding violence, mourning and loss, stating that:

While thinking through the political and institutional dimensions of how certain forms of violence and suffering are monumentalized and others are relegated to the margins of history remains significant, their direct comparison tends to lead to hierarchization and foreclose further discussion (2011: 17).

As introduced previously, Weheliye's main argument focuses on how the non-white embodiment suffers from a viscosity that renders the flesh outside any category of the human from where recent considerations depart. In this sense, posthumanism, animal studies and the Anthropocene, just to name the frames operating in this thesis, have their genesis in a consideration of the human archetype lying on white supremacy and exceptionalism.

2.7. The senses of *beyond* in humanism: how a body is translated to be understood

To think outside a human-exceptional paradigm does not always entail an engaging into animal and NMs theories. As discussed previously, it can also involve a reconsideration of human experiences, affects, practices, cosmologies and realities which exceed the normative category of the human. As Jose Esteban Muñoz writes in his contribution to *Theorizing Queer Inhumanities* (2015), while explaining his *The Sense of Brown* project¹⁴⁹, we need to think as a latinx¹⁵⁰ body outside the human paradigm. In this sense, the humanity category is the problem in itself, since it is limited to bodies being fitted in it rather than flourishing in different directions. When describing "queer inhumanity" he states that:

To think the inhuman is the necessary queer labor of the incommensurate. The fact that this thing we call the inhuman is never fully knowable, because of our own stuckness within humanity, makes it a kind of knowing that is incommensurable with the protocols of human knowledge production. Despite the incommensurability, this seeming impossibility, one must persist in thinking in these inhuman directions. Once one stops doing the incommensurate work of attempting to touch inhumanity, one loses traction and falls back onto the predictable coordinates of a relationality that announces itself as universal but is,

¹⁴⁹ A theory which was recollected by Joshua Chambers-Letson and Tavia Nyong'o posthumously in 2020.

¹⁵⁰ A term that is used to describe those Latin identities which exist outside the normativity of straight cis binarism.

in fact, only a substrata of the various potential interlays of life within which one is always inculcated (in Muñoz et al., 2015: 209).

This reconsideration of human exceptionalism takes into account many different realms, throwing fundamental light on the abandonment of the colonial and racial critique of many environmental paradigms which have been thrown into the Anthropocene catchall category. As we read from Jinthana Haritawor's reflections on queer non-humanity:

It once again seems important to consider the uneven terms on which bodies interpellated as "queer" or as "racialized" are sorted into various biopolitical and necropolitical molds [...] There is a certain temptation to scapegoat critical race theorists as anthropocentric, correlationist dupes of the species binary with an irrational investment in humanity and a lack of acknowledgment that objectification and animalization remain necessary objects of investigation (in Muñoz et al., 2015: 212).

This is the point: the binary of inclusion and exclusion also affects scholarship dealing with the problematics of the objectification and animalisation of certain bodies, falling into the oppositional trap of construction that this logic conveys. This inclusion/exclusion simplification makes it impossible to work in the friction between decolonial and antiracist reparations and the reconsiderations of otherwise forms of being in the world. A shift is needed towards "the potential to tackle anthropocentrism and dehumanisation simultaneously, as relational rather than competing or analogous paradigms" (Haritaworn in Muñoz et al., 2015: 213), outside the oppositional inclusion/exclusion gauge. Here anthropocentrism re-engages with its centre, confronting its whiteness and ableness (Puar in Muñoz et al., 2015). The human, as has been alluded to, is a fractal paradox, contained under certain biopolitical parameters but still formed by infinite components which produce the impossible illusion of what the body is. In this attention to both factors, the limited and the infinite, is where the potentiality of thinking outside the human category is to be found. To think outside anthropocentrism does not imply ignoring the urgent need of reparations to specific human experiences. To have a body should be prioritised over the attribution of significations to the body through different actions. The viscosity of certain aspects of embodiment gets stuck between the hegemonic concept of humanism

and the escaping of such categories to other *beyond* and *post* formulas. As Alexander Weheliye has recognised while attaining the centrality of the body as the material aspect of identity, there is a shift of the institutional *habeas corpus* to a disentanglement of the potential in turning towards *habeas viscus*, the neologism Weheliye introduces in their work (2014).

To expose power as a direct generator of violence is not new to academic critiques and we have seen plenty of this already in the thesis. Nevertheless, to name particular forms of power that come through this recognition of *habeas corpus* and which are determinant to how knowledge functions is less common and more uncomfortable. To position epistemology (de Sousa Santos, 2006) and translation as elements that have enabled modernity (Vázquez, 2011) is to open a space for rethinking that the way knowledge is approached can enact violence.

Long ago, Spivak spoke about the colonised embodied minds fruit of epistemic violence (1988). To situate the notion of translation that is active here, I use Vázquez's account of it. He writes:

Translation designates the permeability, the movement at the borders of a given language, a given system of meaning and more generally, of a given epistemic territory [...] translation performs a border-keeping role and expands the epistemic territory of modernity (2011: 27).

Modernity's sidekick, hidden coloniality, is challenged. Since language, its given use, forms, practices and actions, lies in the taken-for-granted forms of modernity, these more subtle forms of arranging language for others and adapting certain experiences for a dominant whole are typical of a colonial mechanism:

[T]he epistemic territory of modernity determines the parameters of legibility, of recognition in accordance with modernity's metaphysical principles such as the notion of time and its rule of presence [...] The epistemic territory of modernity establishes its field of certainty, its reality, by a movement of incorporation that

subdues the multiple, the discontinuous, difference into the realm of presence (Ibid, 2011: 28).

Somehow, to name is to present, not only in a scenographic sense, but, more accurately, by displaying the temporality of bringing language to the current moment. To name is to force a notion to interpellate the present and this brings us, once again, to the impossibility of translation. While untranslatability (Lezra, 2017) is equated here with the impossibility of transplanting certain notions from Thermi to Moria, it also has to do with the untraceability we visited in the previous chapter. The untraceable consequence of this activation must be acknowledged. This is, while reclaiming the activation of certain notions in particular languages, such as historical-archaeological-archivistic languages in the case of Moria, their untranslatability forces them into untraceability, making practices situated beyond discourse and language necessarily tactical for the reconsideration of these experiences. They become sticky, viscous.

Since translation can be a technology for cultural control, as explored in the theoretical chapter, untraceability could also represent a disruption of systems of representation. I acknowledge the trouble with the constant suppression of certain experiences, insisting on the disruptive elements as only one among many other readings that untranslatability can mean. The archive is saturated and empty at once, as has been previously explained. The detectable parts may exceed language. The traceable elements may work in saturation. The leaking parts, outside the archive as containment, could be new centres from where to restructure their memory.

3. Resolution. Ryoji Ikeda's *Datamatics* [ver. 2.0]

Taking Ryoji Ikeda's *Datamatics* [ver. 2.0] (see annex 4) performance (2006-2008)¹⁵¹, in this part I would like to explore the potentialities that this production offers to the reconsideration of subjectivity and embodiment in the present era. In the intra-action with other readings, I wish to explore a situated resolution to the concepts triggered by the circumstances explored through this case study. Furthermore, I explore how the

¹⁵¹ <https://www.ryojiikeda.com/project/datamatics/> (Last access 23/02/2023).

dialoguing of two critical theory works written at different periods allow these theories to maintain their critical character. Therefore, following a non-straight (re)productive temporality (Muñoz, 2009), I am assembling two works by Rosi Braidotti: *Nomadic Subjects* (1994) and *The Posthuman* (2013). Following Manuel DeLanda's use of *assemblage* and Barad's ideation of *intra-action*, I am working diffractively through the ideas of *immanence* and *irreducibility* in both texts. This action brings me to the new material of *Subjective Nomadities*, born out of this diffraction.

DeLanda's use of *assemblage*, as seen in the first chapter and in the re-examination of the junction between Moria and Thermi, emphasises that its properties are both irreducible (since they exist in the actual interaction between the parts and cannot be ascribed to any of them) and immanent (since if the components of the assemblage ceased to interact they would cease to exist) (DeLanda, 2018: 3). This *existence* through *persistence* in assemblages is at the core of Barad's work, where such connections are concretised in the *intra-actions* between two or more forces. Thus, this assembling is here used to see how categories such as *the human*, *mobility*, *subjectivity* or *identity* are also intertwined in the Anthropocene era, which taints the present normative understanding of the human, as was explored in the previous section. I continue the triggered ideas using concepts from NMs, decoloniality and queerness. My aim is to work in the frictions between the importance of recognising the agency of matter and the reconsiderations of subjectivity itself. The force of Ikeda's work can diffractively bring these thoughts into action in times where self-organisation and activism are necessary to enact *life otherwise*, following Gómez-Barris' previously mentioned formula (2017).

I have been trying to figure out what it was that I conceptualised as a shift in the blast of *Nomadic Subjects* and, later on, of *The Posthuman*. Both works had been entangling in me for over seven years and I kept wondering how I had matched them together in a way that could sustain their own potentiality while addressing the problematics and avoidances of some issues that existed in them. At an anxious moment of trying to understand what I wanted to do, I resorted to a revision- one of many that have happened throughout my academic years- of Karen Barad's work (2007; 2014; 2015; 2016). I then grasped the way in which Braidotti's two texts would fully materialise only by their own meeting, breaking their temporal distance, and arriving at a new

scenario where motion was beyond subjectivity and subjectivity, in turn, was beyond the understanding of the human, squirting in the patient way which characterises water and other fluids, moulding to different objects with no resentment at all. The diffractive reading of these two texts works in temporality, since they were written within a lapse of 20 years, and space and since they are relocated now to my approach to movement and the human in the liminality between Thermi and Moria¹⁵². The temporal shift has taken me to new considerations of the texts while using the theories and notions which derived from them. Their dialogue also engages now with non-human and beyond human theories included in NMs, making them nomadic in time and exceeding a symbolic human rhythm. From this reading my take is that the divergent correlation between text and theory in both cases is what causes the lack of a critical positioning in Braidotti's words towards categories and realities concerning "race"/*racialisation*, *class*, *ableness* or *nationality*. The understanding of these seems to be radical in Braidotti's creation of new epistemologies, still without addressing the materiality and ontologisation which perpetuates new epistemic generations. This is, in the use of a Deleuzean-Spinozan division between *potentia* and *potestas* (1968, 1677), the epistemologies driven from these two texts are at once potential in their own existence but respond to specific reproduction of powers which are necessary to bring into discussion so this potentiality can become situated. It is in this tension that I look for the constitutive parts of each of the theories used with my *punctum* of *subjective nomadities* implying the juggling with each other of the nomadic subject and the posthuman and aiming at creating a new scenario from which to demystify both figurations in Braidotti's work. The motion involved in the nomadic subject is exposed as another site of human exceptionalism and idealism while the flexibility of the posthuman becomes nomadic in its own promise. This way, a new sense of politics of location is born as more situated and remaining critical of the fixed figurations already existing in the exploration of the proposed ones (nomad and posthuman).

I am aware that there is a consciousness of privilege in Braidotti's work, and a recognition of a necessary stable point of identity from which to operate, that can "allow

¹⁵² I say activated because there would be many more elements that could become active, and that would change the interpretation/analysis that occurs here. It is from the activation that I make that this located interpretation is derived.

one to function in a community” (Braidotti, 1994: 33). Still -and not only focusing on her work- this compulsory flexibility and fluidity is sometimes corseted in very tight ropes. And, as it continues -and although being aware of the political context in which this text was written- to state that “the nomad has no passport- or has too many of them” (1994: 33) is somehow out of debate as the impossible comparison of situations which I have discussed earlier in this chapter. However, keeping in mind that “[n]omadic cartographies need to be redrafted constantly” (1994: 35), I use Braidotti as an example on how these cartographies ought to apply shifts for them not to become maps. Through the consideration of three levels of sexual difference, that of difference between men and women, that between women, and the differences within each woman, Braidotti proposes a practical alternative for feminist analysis and transformative thinking. In her account for the nomad subject, she states that:

If you translate these three levels of sexual difference on a temporal sequence, following Kristeva’s scheme that I have already quoted, you can argue that levels one and two belong to the longer, linear time of history. Level three pertains to the inner, discontinuous time of genealogy. The problem, however, is how to think through the interconnectedness between them, that is to say: how to account for a process of becoming, while empowering women's historical agency? (Braidotti, 1994: 168).

The diffractive intra-action of the two texts, of the ideas breathing out from them and the genealogies and identities/figurations performed in each, helps them become agentially response-able specific questions in their entanglement.

I use the text of *Nomadic Subjects* since, although the text was written nearly three decades ago, the *nomad*, as a feminist figuration, still plays a most salient role in studies and politics regarding its feminist agenda. As she writes, a figuration “is a politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity” (1994: 1) and, as such, figurations constitute essential scenarios where the fiction of utopian politics clashes into material actions. That is why I deem it essential to reconfigure these personae. And within this frame of mind, the *posthuman*, also a figuration which questions more than what it claims, deserves even further critique. Braidotti writes that “cartographies [are] a sort of

intellectual landscape gardening that gives [us] a horizon, a frame of reference within which [we] can take [our] bearing, move about, and set up [our] own theoretical tent” (1994:16) and only a bit further “[i]t is crowded at the margins” (Ibid: 20). The immanence featuring in Braidotti’s work, that insistence upon the politics of location for different conceptions of many subjectivities, can also lock notions of the human in those edges that rather than create cartographies keep reproducing more and more maps. What matters to me is how these locations happen through certain assemblages. The human exceptionalist conception needs motion in order to contemplate other subjectivities and entities existing in many corporealities other than human ones. This is, the posthumanist approach read from Braidotti’s proposition would grow from an application of a nomadic insertion in its formula.

Some questions arise such as: What kind of agency would be activated if the nomad, its material move, was read in the posthuman figuration? What if the *post* locks up much more than new agency towards fresh epistemologies? What nomadisms and motions are linked to extractions, dispossessions and evictions? What if performativity included ontology in its own understandings, its foundation of a new scenario of reality? What dissonances take place through the reconsideration of Moria’s material cultures?

These questions set a particular need to relate rhythm and time, as performed here when dissolving 20 years in the mixture. Zygmunt Bauman’s *liquidity* (2000) allows us to place emphasis on how fragile theories are at the mercy of normative temporalities, and on how it is only by the blending of periods, locations and relationalities that these can become a located instrument of activism, enaction and critical thinking. The friction between the materiality of the present and the potentiality of nonlinear-productive temporalities appears in the deliquesce between the motion of the nomad and the fiction of the posthuman corporeality. Along the lines of the enacted assemblage, I perform through Braidotti’s texts, my reading of Ryoji Ikeda’s *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* unchains disparate happenings giving space to this *otherwise* timing.

I saw *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* in the Eye Museum in Amsterdam, in 2018. From the critiques I had read of the performance, I was curious to know more about it while experiencing the show. I found interesting how many critiques focused on the incomprehension of the performance, through which I read an uncomfortability of art-

critics to face the unknown which art sometimes involves. As I went in, I could sense around me the artsy vibe that made me walk away from the art-world some years before, those forced conversations focusing on high discourse and contrived concepts which maintained their tension by the nervous interaction of participants who did not want to feel excluded. Nevertheless, the light goes off and Ikeda walks out, to the mixing table. The screens start shooting out instant images whose pace becomes more and more agitated. *Datamatics*, I immediately think, is showing that we, humans, become data for systems, in an accelerated rhythm that throws us out of paused identities. Ikeda criticises how we become numbers, sounds, erased information and get entangled in an *everything* that blurs our subjectivities. *Datamatics*, in this sense, mixes Braidotti's two figurations by making what our real posthuman identities are into a nomadism that is too fast for us to tackle. Ikeda's world is built upon "pure data as a source for sound and visuals, datamatics combines abstract and mimetic presentations of matter, time and space"¹⁵³ and *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* "explores the potential to perceive the invisible multi-substance of data that permeates our world" (Ibid). There are some of the comments from the people seating behind me, something unthinkable for the other art-scenarios I had anticipated. Some are asking what is going on. The images are flashing lights that cannot settle as images. I am myself feeling quite dizzy and I start wondering whether this is because of the blinks or because my brain is trying to think as fast as those images. There are some people walking out of the room. It may not be because they are physically disturbed by the constant flashing but probably from their frustration at not knowing how to read the performance. They comment from their annoyance as they come out and also from their discursive disorientation. The borders of subjectivity become nomadic in time, in a posthuman mode of understanding the framing of reality, while contesting to nomadic and material happenings. This way, the performance works against straight temporalities, exceeding the normative notion of identity time. The reproduction inherent within the temporality of identity is reshaped, offering different rhythms which, again, deconstruct human exceptionalist subjectivities while situating their epistemological existences. As I read from Ikeda's proposal, the temporal encounters achieve an identity earthquake that forces the spectators to face alternative ideas of their selves and challenges the normative

¹⁵³ (<https://www.ryojiiked.com/project/datamatics/>) (Last access 23/02/2023).

conception of how meaning is consumed from this humanist supremacy, again making the post-human critique become nomadic in its own formulation. As Jose Esteban Muñoz asserts in their wonderful writings, linear and swallowed tempos move against non-(re)productive encounters. The counter space where the nomad stands, in that horizon that Braidotti stares at, becomes in Muñoz's reading a drift, a topos in flux that moves simultaneously through the potentiality of utopic horizons at the same time it adopts current rhythms. As Muñoz magnificently casts up through performative art in *Cruising Utopia* (2009), the force generated through these temporal motions is "a modality of knowing and recognition among audiences and groups that facilitates modes of belonging, especially minoritarian belonging" (99).

Following the triggering on how identity is linked to property, in Ikeda's piece a queer horizon is generated through the dizzying and disidentifications through data information that escapes the memory of subjectivity and holds interpretations, expelling meaning from the piece as a whole experience. The temporality of the actual performance finds situation in further times, places and relationalities, "never [being] just the duration of the event. Reading for potentiality is scouting for a 'not here' or 'not now' in the performance that suggests a futurity" (Muñoz, 2009: 99). The stage where the performance is activated becomes a specific chronotope without boundaries involved, and this very undistinction between the matterings, data and subjects also allows new temporalities of potential happenings. In the reading of the liminality between Moria and Thermi, this means quite simply disentangling identitarian politics from property, Heritage and dominant discourses. The contact with matter, with data, with electronic vibrations connects with a memory that is inspired from horizons more from with twilights, with the notion of futurity without delimiting its imaginaries.

In these rhythms there is nothing to grasp, or at least no language to hold on to. There is the whole human and at the same time no human involved. In this sense, it is data that shapes the terraces of the theatre. After some minutes of performance, the stage, shifts to our side, leaving us impotent while translating us into pure action, moving inside languages that we would never understand, being only a part of that genealogy that created data working in rhizomatic vibrations. *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* works at the intersection of both of Braidotti's texts, bringing us an uncomfortable reality: the potential

identities reclaimed through the space of Moria become data in their entering liminality. The European *ethos*, which works through a border, through a distance of 7.1 kms, throws these identities into a posthuman nomadism impossible to grasp. Ikeda's late motive resists uncritical materialism through images that are music and music that we are quite unable to listen to. Following this idea, as Jussi Parikka writes, there is a binding of "media and nature [together] as co-constituting spheres, where the ties are intensively connected in material nonhuman realities as much as in relations of power, economy, and work" (2015: 14). In the loss of meaning in favour of an open way of connecting to the piece, that makes the location of the nomad posthuman concrete, there is a potential to address knowledge and systems of comprehension in a radical sense. My critique to knowledge and translations is built in parallel to specific critiques which have deepened into these questions. Such is the work by Quentin Meillassoux who applied the term *correlationism* to the critique of a philosophy of knowledge and, I would add, anthropocentrism. As he defines it,

[it is] the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other. We will henceforth call *correlationism* any current of thought which maintains the unsurpassable character of the correlation so defined. Consequently, it becomes possible to say that every philosophy which disavows naïve realism has become a variant of correlationism (2008: 5).

In the performance the discursivity of agency distracts this "correlationism", dialoguing with the ideas brought by theories of NMs and involving the untranslatable materialities present in the space of Moria. The anthropocentric obsession is situated from the vector of knowledge, bringing into question what opens and closes when a human-centred understanding of the world is abandoned. Dealing with the Anthropocene- or as Parikka twists it, the *anthrobscene* (2014) on speaking about the effects of media geology and digital garbage, NMs are essential to a reconsideration of the constitutive parts involved in the binary between human activity and natural agency. In *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* performance- and in intra-reading to the next case study through *Adrift-*, the binarisms between human and non-human, inert and alive or vibrant and inactive are deactivated by

new considerations existing inside all these categories. To exist in opposition to humanity does not necessarily entail a non-human body. Similarly, being dead is sometimes more productive than a living body, as we can see from the late embodiments, referred to as the “cradle of western civilisation”, through the space of Thermi, while inactivity might entail vibrances which are imperceptible to the “human” eye, such as the agencies surrounding the materials in the late refugee camp of Moria.

In the re-reading of posthumanism, a new understanding of Anthropocenes as multiple geological scenarios from which to criticise human activity will facilitate a recognition not only of the earth but also towards other bodies living otherwise. As Macarena Gómez-Barris exposes the term Anthropocene has been used monistically “too generally, addressing ‘humanity’ as a whole without understanding histories of racial thought and settler colonialism that are imposed upon categorizations of biodiversity, spaces where the biotechnologies of capitalism accelerate” (2017: 4). In a decolonising push towards the application of a rhizomatic reading, this understanding of multiplicity when talking about the Anthropocenes also relates to the intra-actions that Karen Barad drives forward in the radical considerations of new relationalities that come to matter. The relation between the human public, on the one side, and the datamatic schizophrenia, on the other, generates new agencies in fleshed that become enacted in that particular chronotope, becoming “less an intrinsic property than a situated capacity”, as Chad Shomura notices (2017b: 1). This performance is yet another example on how to bring action not only into theories but also for new considerations of the human which can have material impact. This is the extraction of nomadism which applies to the posthuman and gives a new sense of its importance for a critique to privileged humanity by still keeping the focus in its situation. In this manner, the Anthropocene formulations would find critical ways of considering not only the violences that the earth has suffered because of human profit, but also further violences involved in this extractive logic towards bodies and entities which do not always get included in the standardised idea of humanity. I am speaking not only about animated bodies but further matter that relates to them and has a life of its own.

In *The Extractive Zone* (2017), Macarena Gómez-Barris presents this “global North psyche” as an “artificial separation of life into organic, inorganic, mobile.

Immobile, animated and inanimate matter” (41). Ikeda relates to this division by exposing westernized and white systems of humanism, making the audience enter an uncomfortability that they are, in many cases, incapable of sustaining from their supremacist self-image. In this line, and by applying this idea beyond the simplified separation of life between organic-inorganic, mobile-immobile and animate-and inanimate, that Gómez Barris presents, another sense of human rights claim can be implemented in the critique for this case study, between the places of Moria and Thermi. The cultural appeal of the archaeological site of Thermi does not only speak about the European ethos but also on how *habeas viscus*, viscosity, death and mourning shape in specific corporealities. The necessity of resorting to traditional works, such as those presented by Braidotti, and meshed together through an art-performance, works from both a potential theory that finds a location from where to dialogue with the specificity of these liminalities. In the case study, who is mourned is here reshaped, also through the question of violence. Maybe archiving is not always radical, but an affective phenomenology, as QDS propose (Lykke, 2022), or an intensified assemblage, as Puar suggests (2005, 2007), can lead to a wider sense of reality shaping and help reclaim a humanity which can be more response-able towards identities in places of subjective liminality.

Heritage, memory and identity are constructed through a fixed idea of what the past is and means. These constructions and fixations are embedded with knowledge formation and are, thus, linked to research practices and places of epistemological generation. In this sense, the responsibility we have as academics, researchers and political subjects to be loudspeakers for situations of contemporary conflicts, dissonant histories and Heritages, is an important act of accountability. Through the connection of two very different realities coexisting in a liminal place, the archaeological site of Thermi and the refugee camp of Moria, both on the island of Lesbos, I have engaged into questions of how the binding of these two places together works in a performative manner, allowing categories that have not yet been activated in each case, to enact and become significant to Historical genealogies and Heritage Studies. The vindication of present dissonant spaces of conflict, such as the Moria, opens up approaches to History that exceed the linear temporality in which it has traditionally been inscribed and disrupts the power structures History responds to. This, ultimately, can allow new considerations

of memories and identities and provoke response-able reactions to unjust situations which we often tend to ignore when looking at them from the vantage privileged positions.

Bouncing forward to the conversation I held with Franck Chartier, as one of the directors of the artistic piece which will be analysed in the following chapter, I remember speaking about undesired memory. As he explained through the particular case of going back to a bitter memory, a trauma, a loss, we sometimes take for granted that people want to remember, that they want to travel to the past. We assume that our present temporality is so strong that they won't get affected in uncontrolled ways. As Franck described how fear of loss was sometimes "super confronting", I reflected on how narratives from the past, in History, in Memory Studies, universalise the desire to remember. As I read from Hamilakis, "while archaeology valorizes such material traces, out of which it produces an 'archaeological record' and an archive, such valorization is not necessarily shared by the migrants themselves" (2017: 133). There are risks in memory and archives. Remembering, as archiving, is not always radical. Still, we need counter-narratives to bring forward disruptive alternatives.

CHAPTER 6. CASE STUDY 3: BOLOGNA AS A SELF-EXPERIENCED UTOPIC OTHERWISE. *Is resistance always radical?*



CASE STUDY 3: BOLOGNA AS A SELF-EXPERIENCED UTOPIC

OTHERWISE. *Is resistance always radical?*

“We know by experience that human rights are a political instrument for oppression and the retaining wall for much more radical vindications. We have learned that when we are doing well it is because someone else can profit politically from keeping us more or less happy”.

Paco Vidarte, *Ética Marica. Proclamas libertarias para una militancia LGTBQ* (2007: 16)¹⁵⁴

The present case is the most personal one in this thesis, since the activist experience that I narrate is a queer squat eviction that I was part of. It is also dear to me because it is chronologically that first to take place in my life and also because the idea of this Ph D thesis probably springs from this experience. It follows the dealing with affect as theory and methodology, as methodological concept, which I have undertaken in the previous case studies. The circumstantial emptiness because of the pandemics or the vulnerated communion of bodies in the dialectics between Moria and Thermi are strongly infected by affectivity, as illustrated by the previous case studies, but it is in this case study that affect touches me the closest affect, since I was not only observant in the events but also full participant. Indeed, in all these case studies both the experiences narrated and the way of archiving are imbued in visceral ways of facing those encounters. But it is in this chapter that the relation between the collected experiences and my narration blur, since it is my personal experiences that are depicted here.

The perspective that I follow, much of it driven from the research on affect theory I conducted for my Art Therapy Master's dissertation, is negativity as an extension of disruption. Disruption can be approached as an antinormative exercise of

¹⁵⁴ “Conocemos por propia experiencia que los derechos humanos son un instrumento político de opresión y un muro de contención frente a reivindicaciones de base mucho más radicales. Hemos aprendido que cuando nos va bien es porque le conviene a alguien que no somos nosotras y saca un rédito político del tenernos más o menos contentas” (Original).

defamiliarisation from compulsory ways of feeling (Ahmed, 2010). Shared feelings of hope, fear and vulnerability are rooted in systemic practices. This means that when speaking about negativity, as I have explored in chapter three on the void, we are not necessarily referring to despair, but it can also be linked to active feelings. Indeed, as seen above, the affectivity lived through these cases has already been affected by the personal facts that infect this work and, also, the momentum lived in the aftermath of Covid-19. This is important here because, as memory studies have taught us, the way we remember things is not only factual. Remembrances are “real” in a present which is already more material than the past. Besides, collective livings also infect our looking back.

Building on the reconsiderations of Braidotti’s work in the previous chapter, this case study brings Judith Butler’s work on materiality and non-violence to discussion. I will tackle a diffractive reading of *Bodies that Matter* (1993), on the one hand, and *Precarious life* (2004) and *The Force of Non-violence* (2020) on the other. This will allow me to intra-act the experience, an eviction, and the subsequent triggering of concepts outside binary understandings of *resistance*. I will finally diffract this threefold assemblage of the works, the experience and the triggerings, with the analysis of the *Side B: Adrift* performance by the Peeping Tom dance company and with the conversation with one of its directors, Franck Chartier. The main concept activated in this chapter is *resistance*.

1. The experience. An eviction

As was already a tradition within my group of friends during my first GEMMA MA year in Bologna, we had arranged to go to Cassero¹⁵⁵ that night. It was after the demonstration for the 8th of March 2017. It being the 8th of March, we were all too excited to handle a conversation. We were throwing words and moving nervously without knowing how to cool nerves down. When we got to the piazza, we got confirmation of our excitement, looking at each other amazed, looking in every possible angle. During the demonstration

¹⁵⁵ Cassero is the provincial committee of Bologna’s Arcigay NGO, a political circle which has been active for more than 40 years. This place has become an official location for LGBTQA+ activities, parties and events of all kinds. The space was controversial inside the political dissidence in the city as explained in the narrative.

there were too many emotions involved and asking each other how we felt was only ceremonial since no one was fully capable of knowing what to respond. Halfway along the route, some friends started talking about this transfeminist squat that had been occupied earlier on that day and needed support to resist for their first hours after the space liberation. Many hours later, someone proposed we went to join them and so, without any awareness of the place we were about to enter, we had our first contact with the space.

That academic year, 2016-2017, was our first official contact with Gender Studies in a specific curriculum, that of the GEMMA master at Bologna University. We were constantly brought into different discussions about queerness, visibility, sexuality and pink washing, the latter being our main critique of Cassero. Midway between feeling disappointed and turned on, we left the club in the middle of the night. Saying goodbye is always a sort of liturgy among queer friends. It is a ritual of checking in, offering a half-walk together, but also a farewell, a quick recollection of your friend's gestures, just in case.

While squeezing in a shared hug, some voices filled the air in lethargy. It may have been less, and my night vision is not the best, but I remember seven of them, filling a couch, in the middle of the street. We come by, moving slowly towards them, deciding whether to embrace their tough expression or their tired positions. They have been there for two and a half days, resisting alone after an explosive first moment of success, the geyser effect which taints social movements at their outset, unable to last over time. They are fighting against an eviction signed not only by the government but also by the rest of the city, by those who were their companions in the olden times but who, today, have surreptitiously rejected their queer reality.

In a polyvalent voice, I say *hello*, trying to mix with each one of the faces and humours that are resisting at 4 a.m. waiting for the blue lights that will finally put an end to this no longer abandoned garage. To be fair, it is quite big. There is at least space for twenty-five cars and three hundred unruly bodies. The next two hours go by quite fast and without thinking that the moment would actually arrive, the cars park next to the poster, where you can read the transfeminist queer name which to their occupants is only a meaningless code. We have decided we will stand for a passive eviction, trying to avoid

the active resistance that other (non-queer) squats have had lately. We receive them sitting down, watching how the blue lights are off and the helmets are still sleepy in their hands. We are ready- or I am trying to convince myself we are-. We are ready to respond to their aggressiveness, to their mean faces forcing us to immediately leave this place. We are ready because we have been in some other hostile evictions before.

I am scared, but I am still able to put on my best face. With a defiant expression I follow the songs we are singing as a strategy to reject their movements. Some are laughing, and there is one yawning. It is still very early in the morning and he hasn't probably had time to get his espresso. When his mouth closes again, there are 9 more people out of the place. I have also been moved by two gentle uniforms. They put me down, slowly, on the other side of the street. All those years of self-defence, of fiction and theory reading, of imagining how we would face our own rights to resist, are put down together with my body. We have been thrown into passivity. Our body weights are not as important for them as the light amount of resistance they have found in the street where we are. Our anal pleasure, and its applied passivity, have again made them silence us. *Them*, not (only) cops, not (only) lawmakers, but, painfully, our (non-queer) radical comrades.

2. Triggering

The experience of the eviction I narrate here took me to realise that my attempts to dismantle power till that moment were only oriented towards hegemonic figures and spaces. During those days of March 2017 and the following months of activism with this group, I started reflecting on how power and violence surpasses the place of officiality and is present in places which, before this experience, I would never have imagined. I also started understanding power in a relational way, rather than a monistic critique, where its dynamics were more important than the theories regarding notions of hegemony. The violence we suffered that day did not come only from violence but also from non-violence: it was not only activated by the presence of the cops and State mediators but also by the significant absences of our comrades in other activisms who were not present that day because although it may appear as if all resistances are equal,

some, unfortunately, are more equal than others. And ours, as queer, was simply kid's stuff. As Lauren Berlant observes, it is something "made of and for children" (Berlant in Nyong'o, 2008: 104).

2.1. Assembly/assemblage. Affective kinship within bodily circumstances

Because of our symbolic eviction from activist resistance, the first concept that haunts my memory and triggers reflection from this experience is *assembly* and why certain bodies, marked ones, need to resist together, in kinship. Political feelings have never grown up from this infantilised vision over which they have been constructed. Developing from the normative constructions of kinship, in this respect, politics have been thrown out the backstreet. The front door, in the meantime, remains restful in a straight temporality which determines both which relationships should enter kinship alliances and for how long these alternative associations should exist. The straightness of the temporalities that sustain these alliances entail both a sense of inheritance and of reproduction which translate in the cultural notion of *the family*. This notion, particularly, during adulthood converts all the relational possibilities to normally singular and permanent alliances with those few who become the ones to care for. Jack Halberstam points out how normative temporalities prefer longevity to temporariness so that longevity becomes the authenticating notion which "renders all other relations meaningless and superficial, and family ties, by virtue of being early bonds, seem more important than friendships" (Halberstam, 2007: 317). The effects of a productive surrounding is felt in the notion of *futurity* that is implicit in our political temporalities. In this futurity, besides reproduction, stands the hope for replicas of the ideas that conform our understanding of our own identities. They are identities marked by locations, desires, demands, and other circumstances.

Revisiting Lee Edelman's analysis of straight temporalities, some of the most juicy parts deal with the notion of *futurity*: "we are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the child" (Edelman, 1998: 21). Forcing myself away from the inimical feeling towards these analyses, I read the way in which political bodies are infantilised, dramatised and

patronised following the fantasy of the child. This concentration of the child imaginary and its family signifier becomes “misleading and mistaken, and, ultimately, it blots out a far more compelling story about cooperation, collectivity and non- heterosexual, non-reproductive behaviors” (Halberstam, 2007: 315). The triviality applied to these political bodies depends on how these bodies are marked, not only singularly but also as they participate in collective imaginaries. As Butler wonders in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015):

[W]hen bodies gather as they do to express their indignation and to enact their plural existence in public space, they are also making broader demands: they are demanding to be recognized, to be valued, they are exercising a right to appear, to exercise freedom, and they are demanding a liveable life [...] How do we understand the form of signification that such protests seek to convey in relation to how they are named by those they oppose? Is this a political form of enacted and plural performativity, the workings of which requires its own consideration? (2015: 26).

Certainly, during the eviction we were performing a form of resistance that had nothing to do with the long debates within our circles or the shared beers after hours of consciousness raising. “We” as a marked sexually identified group; as a feminised¹⁵⁶ and, consequently, disempowered group; as unequal to the “real” squatting scene. Still, to be accountable in a state of violence is to be exposed to its threats when, as Butler also remarks, at this moment “the body risks appearance not only in order to speak and act, but to suffer and move” (Butler, 2015: 87). Our bodies were eroticised and monistically read as sexualities, as if there were nothing more to them than the ways we fuck, as if fucking was the only mark of our gendering.

Our openings to the world also imply anal coalitions that are not only sex-driven, but also, as Paco Vidarte coined, *anaethics* (2007), converting our asses into,

¹⁵⁶ Note that the participle is intentionally used to emphasise the fact that these feminisations and sexualisations were coming from an outsider vision, since our group worked from non-binary transfeminist values of desire outside allosexual logics.

our political instrument, the fundamental slogan of another LGBTQ militancy, to design a very basic anal politics: all for the inside, to receive everything, to let everything penetrate and only throw shit and farts to the outside, this is our eschatological contribution to the system (Ibid: 20. My translation)¹⁵⁷.

Raised fists and ass openings work as a resignification as they are “not marked by gender or sex” (Carrascosa and Saez, 2011: 111)¹⁵⁸. They are not only understood as sex markers but as black holes capable of absorbing great amounts of matter(ings). We were read as passive, we were constructed as passive, and we actually were passive. Nevertheless, our agential passivity rejected systemic participations. It was the kind of passivity that seeks an ongoing penetration of intersecting existences, the type which refuses to be kind any longer. Bouncing back to the previous chapter, the connection between passive resistance and waiting finds its link through the question of agency (Hage, 2009; 2015): we were thrown into a non-agential rhythm of waiting, we were stuck in expectation of a non-violent response. We were wanted and expected as isolated in our own gathering, as docile in our transfeminine manner. We were denied violence. To such a degree, more than a claim to violence, I call for a further and wider opening of the understanding of its agency.

Affective life and other emotional bonds to relationalities are important for this analysis since they have been part of the rubric in decentralising particular normative kinships and relational impositions. As we could read from Cohen and Johnson, white abled systems of power have legitimated their existence through the idea of restricted kinshping, controlling our affective and emotional lives. Theories and practices on other forms of affectivity also entail new relationalities. As Antonio Negri unfolds:

Affect can be considered, as a first hypothesis, a power to act that is singular and at the same time universal. It is singular because it poses action beyond every

¹⁵⁷ “Hacer del culo nuestro instrumento político, la consigna fundamental de otra militancia LGBTQ, diseñar una política anal muy básica: todo para dentro, recibir todo, dejar que todo penetre y hacia afuera sólo soltar mierda y pedos, ésta es nuestra contribución escatológica al sistema” (Vidarte, 2007: 20. Original).

¹⁵⁸ “no están marcadas por el género o el sexo” (Carrascosa and Saez, 2011: 111. Original).

measure that power does not contain in itself, in its own structure, and in the continuous restructurings that it constructs. It is universal because the affects construct a commonality among subjects. In this commonality is posed the non-place of affect, because this commonality is not a name but a power; it is not the commonality of a constriction or a coercion but of a desire. Here, therefore, affect has nothing to do with use-value, because it is not a measure but a power, and it does not run into limits but only obstacles to its expansion (1999: 85).

Affective labour modifies general feelings and, as a surplus of social experiences, it influences specific zeitgeists. As Negri follows through, since postmodernity's *value* is outside any kind of measure (86), its reification is to be found in other places for its control, such as the place of affect. In his commitment to renovate Marxist theory, Negri uses the economies of affective labour as a pretext to deepen into affective states of affairs that are conformed inside capital systems of production. This alternative analysis does not only focus on how the system depends on its invisible actors (the affective labour in house scenarios by women, for instance). It also insists on the non-material affairs which play a decisive role in this system, holding itself together through economics but also outside. A system based upon feedback: To affect and to be affected.

The affective turn, which calls attention to the urgency of returning to affects proposes both a theoretically and a praxis approach to the matters. Affect matters in a Butlerian double bind: it is significant in its material sense. As power, affect is productive, extensive, and multifocal. This is its potentiality but also its urgency. Affect affects and is, at the same time, affected. Following Deleuze and Guattari's take on Spinozan potentiality, Patricia Clough explains affectivity as "a substrate of potential bodily responses, often autonomic responses, in excess of consciousness" (2007: 2). Potential, sometimes drawn as intensity, such as in the case of Brian Massumi's work (1995), is the drive to the protagonism of affectivity in our lives. As Anne Cvetkovik (2012) has enlightened affective and critical scholars for many years now, the affective turn is an amalgam of inquiries which have been claimed both inside and outside the institution of Academia, engaging in,

cultural memory and public cultures that emerge in response to histories of trauma; the role of emotions such as fear and sentimentality in American political life and nationalist politics; the production of compassion and sympathy in human rights discourses and other forms of liberal representation of social issues and problems; discussions of the politics of negative affects, such as melancholy and shame, inspired in particular by queer theory's critique of the normal; new forms of historical inquiry, such as queer temporalities, that emphasize the affective relations between past and present; the turn to memoir and the personal in criticism as a sign of either the exhaustion of theory or its renewed life; the ongoing legacy of identity politics as another inspiration for the turn to the personal; continuing efforts to rethink psychoanalytic paradigms and the relation between the psychic and the social; the persistent influence of Foucauldian notions of biopower to explain the politics of subject formation and new forms of governmentality; histories of intimacy, domesticity, and private life; the cultural politics of everyday life; histories and theories of sensation and touch informed by phenomenology and cultural geography (2012: 3).

Trauma, fear, melancholy, shame, queer temporalities, intimacy, all touching upon the phenomenology of affects, are at the core of the narrated experience. As we have seen before in this thesis, following the standards of new materialistic theories, affect does not pre-exist the relation, but rather gets activated through the intra-action with it (Barad, 2007: 141). This relation, which exceeds the human parameters, insists upon phenomena, which appear in their coming into contact, rather than their pre-existence, moving beyond the notion of *interaction*, which assumes agency as an inert characteristic of humanism. The importance of affect theory here goes beyond its emotional agenda and connects with trauma and memory studies. As Clough reminds readers (2007), memory is at the base of affective life and vice-versa. María Torok and Nicolas Abraham (1994; 1979) talk about "transgenerational trauma" haunting bodies in imperceptible ways. How these affective experiences are acted through renewed forms in unconscious ways is a radical link between affect and memory. Such is the case with the affectivity involving the memory of stolen and occupied land, or the image of an impossible body outside cisnormative

corporations. Memory, trauma or hope are bound to multifarious circumstances which must be taken into account as a reminder that affectivity does not pre-exist relationality, but rather gets enacted through it.

Affect theory has relocated these social feelings and reactions at other levels of *responsibility*, understood as response-ability. In this sense, Sara Ahmed has taught us that “ugly feelings” such as rage and uncomfotability can be rescued as powerful political activators after an experience such as her resignation from Goldsmiths in 2016¹⁵⁹. Sadness, rage, depression, anxiety, awkwardness, are some of the feelings that affect theory has brought to the fore. As Anne Cvetkovich writes, they then become “public feelings” (2012). In Cvetkovich’s analysis of this new affect sociality, negativity is presented as potentiality by queer theory, analysed formerly, and gives a new sense to the breaking of the binary, fundamental in queer thought. As they put it:

Binary divisions between positive and negative affects don’t do justice to the qualitative nuances of feeling that are only crudely captured by such designations. Queer theory’s focus on negative affect has created some of the same kind of sparring generated by the antisocial thesis, although such criticism sometimes seems to miss the persistently reparative and dialectical dimensions of much of this work (2012: 6).

In the defence of affective experience as already entangled in identity politics and social structures, Cvetkovich addresses the need of these potentials that go beyond the critique of co-optation of radical movements, inhabiting the spaces where “it feels like there is something else happening” (6) while remaining aware of the framework(s) of action one occupies. Following the lead of these about public feelings, Caleb Luna’s article starts with a radical statement: “I am a depressed person, but depressed is a verb. I consider my depression to be the result of social positions and the inevitable history of colonization, of racism, of fat stigma, discrimination and antagonism” (2018). Feelings are public, which means they exist in their operative movement and get activated through social intra-actions. The radical embrace of frustration as the impossibility of responding to

¹⁵⁹ After the institution was incapable of responding to a sexual harassment claim.

normative demands regarding able production, gender performances or racial apparatuses, means that we can find a concrete potentiality in *failure* which does not necessarily reside in the future or in a specific space (Halberstam, 2011). This way of affecting our politics and research invites us to remain with the conflict, to work through contradictions. It is simply a question of “staying with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016).

In this affected analysis, it is important to speak about relationalities occurring inside political spaces of imagination, as the one presented through the experience. Who we fight is, sometimes, a matter of temporality. This is relevant when it comes to the analysis of this case study because of the many significations a body can have. The person fighting in a particular eviction together with you can be the person making you uncomfortable and asking catchy questions to you and your NB¹⁶⁰ friends the following Friday night. Haraway’s proposal to “stay with the trouble” is one of the solutions. As Cohen reminds us, other less-visible parts of our identities might also invisibilise the ways in which our corporeal racialisation and ableness constructions are in no need of alliance. Following Cohen’s kinshipings, I want to quote Patrick E. Johnson when speaking about kinship:

For example, my grandmother, who is homophobic, nonetheless must be included in the struggle against oppression in spite of her bigotry. While her homophobia must be critiqued, her feminist and race struggles over the course of her life have enabled me and others in my family to enact strategies of resistance against a number of oppressions, including homophobia (2001: 6).

Johnson’s de-romantisation is an interesting take on kinship since it stays within the contradiction while working through it. Indeed, relationalities are saturated with signifiers that activate and deactivate depending on specific chronotopes. Ahmed also enters the critique involved in the construction of the family as the site of white exceptional and supremacist construction while addressing the sexual and gendered politics entangled in it:

¹⁶⁰ NB is an abbreviation for non-binary.

What needs closer examination is how heterosexuality becomes a script that binds the familial with the global: the coupling of man and woman becomes a kind of “birthing”, a giving birth not only to new life, but to ways of living that are already recognisable as forms of civilisation. To make a simple but important point: orientations affect what it is that bodies can do. Hence, the failure to orient oneself ‘towards’ the ideal sexual object affects how we live in the world, an affect that is readable as the failure to reproduce, and as a threat to the social ordering of life itself (2014: 144-145).

Ahmed proposes the deconstruction of productive and reproductive experiences which turns the question back to what kind of affectivities are involved in kinship. Halberstam’s failure is one such affective strategy to decompose the elements entangled in normative structures of relationality. As he writes, “while failure certainly comes accompanied by a host of negative affects, such as disappointment, disillusionment, and despair, it also provides the opportunity to use these negative affects to poke holes in the toxic positivity of contemporary life” (2011: 3). All this said, there is something that seems to be overlooked by these approaches: the economic aspect to affects. Economy is bound to affective effectivities from where things get arranged and reproduced.

This idea explodes in Ahmed’s *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) where she explores emotions of expectation and their economy. Happiness is one of this kind, being explosive in the way it organises affective life at the same time as it responds to other motions and notions that are associated with it. As Ahmed writes:

The history of happiness can be thought of as a history of associations. In wishing for happiness we wish to be associated with happiness, which means to be associated with its associations. The very promise that happiness is what you get for having the right associations might be how we are directed toward certain things (2010: 2).

The promises of happiness, the expectations and the ideas of hope that draw from them are in association with other forms of sociality that intra-act. In following this idea of

socially desired feelings, Ahmed also points out the displacements of certain affects, such as hope, which are sometimes lived through the expectations on another person's experience. In the case of happiness, or success, as we see inside the traditional ideas of kinship and family, "the parents defer their hope for happiness to the next generation in order to avoid giving up on the idea of happiness as a response to disappointment" (59). The promise of the success of the next generation represents the pending hope in a reproductive temporality and, as a result, the intensification of the orientation towards legacy.

The persistence through future imaginations works on different levels in the case of communities, populations and relationalities that exist already in resistance as Jonathan Lear explores through his concept of *radical hope* which serves him to analyse indigenous worldings. This new notion of *hope* is radical as in both rooted in a specific context and different from other dominant ideas about it. Lear addresses a new sense of temporality based on the "hope of a future in which things [...] might start to happen again" (2008: 52). In this rearrangement, the diffractive reading of these concepts involves a failure in the re-appropriation of some "unwanted" affects that are reoriented towards a potent horizon. To round it up, just for now, just here, Lear's approach leads me to imagine a fictional entanglement between Barad (2007), Halberstam (2011), Ahmed (2014), Preciado (2008) and Muñoz (2009). All five thinkers, all departing from Gender Studies, orient their application to forms of sociality and experience exceeding gender, such as the production of economy, the economy of time, the time of reproduction, the reproduction of reality and the reality of production.

Reconsidering the otherness of affective life needs also a breaking from the binary opposition between possibility and potentiality. This means that not acknowledging the material conditions in which someone lives and the affects involved in their experiences is another extension of privilege. Imagining these new possibilities is only an option to those who are not immediately involved in a struggle to simply stay alive. Following Perera and Pugliese's text:

[T]he target subject's energies are fully committed merely to survive; as such, the logic of state violence is predicated on ensuring that the subject cannot begin to

expend their energies in resisting, contesting or subverting the power of the state (2011: 2).

Future possibilities can only exist when there is something beyond the mobilisation of what could be considered combat breathing (Fanon, 1959).

2.2. Violence/non-violence. Resistance as privilege

Although violence is not ontologically opposite to pacifism it has been created as its opposite through singular epistemological readings which have become hegemonic. As Peter Gelderloos states:

[I]t can be noticed how pacifism [is] an ideology [that] comes from a privileged context. It ignores that violence is already here; that violence is an unavoidable, structurally integral part of the current social hierarchy [...] Nonviolence refuses to recognize that it can only work for privileged people, who have a status protected by violence, as the perpetrators and beneficiaries of a violent hierarchy (2007: 24).

As passive, as unproductive, we, the participants in the anti-eviction action, were equated to futile devices, to sterile movements of no signification to the city. We were not seen as political threat by the authorities but, surprisingly, neither were we regarded as radical allies when it came to comrades. Working through queer failure means facing the dissidences within our movements and the fact that, as queers, we are denied political responsibility because of the passivity they attribute to our identities. Wildness is a choice and so is the guerrilla organised back action that responds to their violence, their way of imposing their futurities on us, their destructive way of reading our fiascos. There is a choice in our BDSM exchanges, in our submissive relations, based upon ongoing conversations, in spans that find strength in shared words and spaces. There is a choice when we reinvent places once and again to speak up the violence that we continue to suspend in our comrade. There is a choice in our renouncing to cops and their patronising

smiles, and there is also a choice to look for these smiles in the middle of our occupied utopic locations. But, again, who is “us”?

That the notion of violence, like that of power, is not one but many is explored by Butler in *The Force of Nonviolence: the Ethical in the Political*¹⁶¹ where they express that “we cannot race to the phenomenon itself without passing through the conceptual schemes that dispose the use of the term in various directions, and without an analysis of how those dispositions work” (2020: 14). What is considered a violent act, as well as what is considered resistance, depend on the specific discourses at work in the contexts in question. In this sense, and as Jennifer Mills recovers from Hannah Arendt’s analysis of violence while reading Butler’s proposal, “violence is not a tool but a practice” (2021)¹⁶². This is important to remind in order to find room for critique on the critiques of violence which approach violence as a moral category and if it were only an apparatus and not also an exercise. To name an example for this insistence in praxis within structure, gender performativity and repetition does not exempt drag of misogyny and sexism, but it is held in its potential to expose gender as a social training. As Ta-Nehisi Coates writes in *Between the World and Me* (2015), the representation of violence is violent in itself. In his analysis on how structural ideas of the practices of violence are imposed upon some already violated bodies, Coates rethinks the possibilities existing regardless of the structural and statal traditions of violence against black bodies. As he reminds us “‘Good intention’ is a hall pass through history, a sleeping pill that ensures the Dream” (33), getting stuck in discourse and walking off from enacted responsibility. The taken-for-granted dichotomic notions of violence, resistance and justice can get trapped into these “good intentions” which, nevertheless, fail to enable responses.

Butler tries hard to input a twist in the considerations of bodily response to violence, which can also entail aggressive responses to it. In their proposal, aggression is considered as a response but is conceptualised outside the conceptual uses of violence. As they write, “[a]lthough some people confuse aggression with violence, it is central to

¹⁶¹ I had the chance to learn about the reflections on this topic at Judith Butler’s opening keynote lecture during the Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory Bologna Summer School in 2019. At the time the book had not been launched yet.

¹⁶² <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/review/malm-pipeline-butler-nonviolence/> (Last access 12/04/2023).

the argument of this book to foreground the fact that nonviolent forms of resistance can and must be aggressively pursued” (2020: 23). Being already a significant shift from traditional understandings of bodies reacting to violence, it nevertheless lacks a commitment to those resistances which can happen outside discourse. Only some pages after, they go on writing about nonviolence saying that:

[I]t can be understood as a practice that not only stops a violent act, or a violent process, but requires a form of sustained action, sometimes aggressively pursued. So, one suggestion I will make is that we can think of nonviolence not simply as the absence of violence, or as the act of refraining from committing violence, but as a sustained commitment, even a way of rerouting aggression for the purposes of affirming ideals of equality and freedom (Ibid:27).

Butler centres their analysis on discursive practices: in the reconsideration of other responses which entail aggressiveness, as ontologically distinct from violence, they give centrality to structures which can be significantly different to traditional ways of acting on violence. Nonviolence can also be held through action, through active participation. As Butler explained through a lecture held in the Summer School of the Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory, in Bologna, 2017 ¹⁶³, conflict, in substitution to violence, can allow us to think outside the circumstances of crisis: “[p]erhaps there is no life without conflict, agonism, and the question is whether the technique can work with conflict in an ongoing way, not to eliminate it but to stop forms of violence both legal and extra-legal” (min. 47:30-47:49). The potential in Butler’s ideation is that violence abandons the temporality of exceptionalism and enters a common-place rhythm. As I read it, this temporal shift can also examine formulas of violence that function outside “official” positions. Still, the questions go back to what is left out of these considerations: where are all those responses which happen outside these discursive formulas?

Butler makes an accurate distinction between aggression and violence and delves into a “normativity of violence”, which opens up the violent spectrum to multiplicity, though still not encompassing the actions which come from non-normative contexts.

¹⁶³ <https://aghct.org/judith-butlers-opening-lecture> (Last access 26/06/2017).

Butler works through a political temporality of futurability in which their own identity remains expectant of a future without a specific violence (seen both as structural and as circumstantial violence). Butler does not take into account those many precarious subjectivities whose bodies only matter in the tension of their actual presence. This is, some bodies, their material surroundings, cannot be held in this non-violence response. Again, this seems to allocate the task of social change to the precarity of certain subjectivities. It is specifically those activated parts of their identities which become the locations from where to shift certain structures. Butler writes:

[H]ow aggression is crafted makes the difference for a practice that resists violence and that imagines a new future of social equality. The imagination- and what is imaginable- will turn out to be crucial for thinking through this argument because we are at this moment ethically obliged and incited to think beyond what are treated as the realistic limits of the possible (2020: 29).

This statement works through an idea of reality which Butler sustains in the framing of imaginations. As they explain, the possible, what is actually materialised and becomes “real” is directly related to imagination. Nevertheless, Butler’s understanding of action and reaction disregards those experiences without a given temporality for a future or an imagination for hope. In this sense, this critique and other theoretical approaches to matter, such as the propositions of NMs, lack specific attention on subjective agency. The nomad’s motion, the understanding of unfixity, the mobility of a critical mind, are here turned into a more subtle sense of how bodies react to different circumstances. Bodies that matter are here turned into bodies that materialise, that enact different senses of reality by agentially cutting together-apart: they separate from violence while they remain entangled and responsive to the conflict. But again, there is already an abstraction of agency which lacks a wide consideration of possible bodily responses.

I am not defending a queer negativity of no-future in Edelman’s direction, but rather paring with a sense of direction that cruises, that moves without a specific path or rhythm, in which the future becomes unimportant because of its adequation to the norm of desire, expectation and possibility. Such is the case in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) in

which Butler reflects on the impossibility of addressing all gendered identities from a theory of performativity, as explored in *Gender Trouble* (1990), and engages in more material aspects of the body and how gender also modifies and mortifies the body. With this, Butler also goes on to reflect upon the essentialist part of performativity and discourse and their role inside social and critical studies. This chain of thought which Butler enacts in the jump from performativity to materiality (1990 and 1993) can also be applied to *Precarious Life* (2004) where the focus becomes precarious experiences rather than gendered identities. As happens in the abstraction of the notion of the human in Braidotti's introduction of posthumanity, in comparison with her nomadic figuration, the precarity which Butler speaks about in their more recent analysis also loses the precision of their 90s research through the specificity of gender. We read:

If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were" and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. The derealization of the "Other" means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral (2004: 33-34).

In this manifestation of other sedimented social norms, Butler opens a possibility to explore the ways in which violence can also be sustained, understood and implemented. Precarious and non-visible lives become the direction that violence takes. Nonetheless, other sedimented social forms of bodily materialisations through violence are left unattended. Such is the case in forms of violence in which more materialistic aspects that exceed agential redirections to bodily responses are taken into consideration. This was explored in *Bodies that Matter*, in which Butler writes that "theory would restore a figure of a choosing subject- humanist- at the centre of a project whose emphasis on construction seems to be quite opposed to such a notion" (1993: x). Interpellation becomes the invisible side of discursivity. This is, the direct effects on subjectivity which happen in an interpellative action can fail to comprehend bodily responses where the agency may be

driven from a personal experience detached from the actual circumstance. To put it very simply, the alternatives to violence are, in most cases, based on a temporal, spatial or identitarian disengagement from the circumstance they respond to, and thus, are at best unrealistic, at worst unconscious of this detachment privilege. The application of the notion of interpellation tangled in violence makes it more complex than a mere question of decision. Politics of location, of mobility, of nomadism, exceed the self-centred paradigm, while responding to apparatuses in which these are already constrained by multiple intra-active layers which become, as Foucauldian institutional powers, difficult to pin-down.

Indeed, as indicated above, the act of conscious resistance- this is, how every person chooses how to resist- is a privilege. As in Franz Fanon's analysis while explaining the naturalised notion of *combat breathing* (1959), it has become a priority for critical movements to think through the differences involving the organisation of subjects in public while being assumed as an organic action of any living body. In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder by not only the police structure, but also by the white supremacist state of mind surrounding the events, the effects and affects on breathing, *combat breathing* (Fanon, *ibid*), become a political terrain from where to fight against white supremacism and brutality, a system of which I feel I am a constituent part.

As seen earlier on in the chapter, forms of association tend to reproduce normative essentialisms on kinship as biological configurations. The family, understood in a traditional way as a (re)productive association is a structural paradigm of certain positions on how to inhabit the world¹⁶⁴. As analysed through the works by Battle-Baptiste or Cathy Cohen, critiques against heteronormativity must focus on normative understandings of the family which are, in turn, imbricated in other assumptions on sexuality and gender, such as the idea of monogamy, sexual orientations, or reproduction.

Lauren Berlant's work is primordial in the challenge to normative and hegemonic ways of living affects since her concept of *cruel optimism*, as discussed earlier on, engages with renewed organisation formulas for the present: "multiple modes of attachment, endurance, and attunement to the world and to the contemporary world of

¹⁶⁴ And the recent changes of equality local and regional councils "family councils" is an example of this.

spreading precarity and normative dissolution” (Berlant, 2011: 13). Escaping from an essentialist consideration of attachments, Berlant proposes a relational approach to these *dressaged* bonds, arguing that the cruelty of these approximations resides in the fact that “the very pleasures of being inside a relation have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation” (Ibid: 2). Berlant's considerations of affects such as “cruel optimism”, is cutting-edge in the turn towards relationality that she introduces in her thought and that endows the endless discussion about affects a certain extra power: that of excess.

As previously indicated, the power in affect is in its reciprocal movement as in affecting and getting affected. The “capacities to affect and be affected” which Anderson (2014) uses as an initial definition of affect already gives us a formula of how affective life, and the apparatuses sustaining it, are bidirectional and, somehow, relational. Taking Deleuze's notion that the body can be anything, Anderson researches affect by this principle which he uses as a basis to speak about how power operates through affects in certain bodies, marking them. I would suggest to call these operations “hegemonies of affects”. The dynamism of the theories that Anderson revisits in his work can also be best expressed by resorting to the concept of “free radicals” that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has used to speak about the radicality of affectivity in as much as affects are continuously moving throughout bodies and, at the same time, they “become attached to... almost anything” (Anderson, 2014: 6). The defence of an affective turn comes, then, after this type of considerations on affect as a *potentia* for social action but in need of deep analysis and reflection in order to escape the parts where it establishes itself as *potestas*.

Following Anderson's line of thought regarding the importance of finding the friction between relational considerations of affects and attachment theories, I side with Claire Hemmings's critique on the generalised application of affect as the “only path” to liberate bodies living under oppression. As she remarks, “[w]e are effectively caught in culture. Critics viewing poststructuralism in this way advocate not a material return but an ontological one, a revaluing of individual difference and capacity for change over time” (2005: 554).

Last but not least, affects, in Judith Butler's terms, can take the shape of performative drag happenings as a mode of “queer performance that [could] subversively

‘allegorize’ [...] heterosexual melancholy, thereby revealing the allegorical nature” (Salih, 2002: 96) of, in this case, affect hegemonies. Aware of the many needed critiques on the construction of performativity from privileged locations, I do find a potential refusal of normativity in performative acts, such as my writing of this thesis, not as a resolute action to escape dispositifs of power, but rather as a strategically located fictional tool which can help unveil such dispositifs.

As a closing to this section, I would like to return to the concept of *happiness* as an affect clashing with *failure*, which I have followed to pollute the application of queer as dissident in this work. As we have seen before, along the lines of Sara Ahmed’s theories regarding cultural affects and happiness in particular, affects are directly linked to the fantasies of living a “good life”. As Ahmed (2010: 1) questions, “Do we consent to happiness? And what are we consenting to, if or when we consent to happiness?”. The imperative call to be happy in contexts informed by neo-liberalism and productivity has material consequences on the oppression of dissident bodies.

2.3. Self-panopticum and invisibility

It is relevant at this point to remind ourselves that our activisms do not make us not safe from reproducing structures of violence. As has been explored before, to read critical race and decolonial theories and work side by side with other non-white antiracist activists does not exempt white people from being simultaneously racist. Likewise, the assumptions that because queer subjects are already an oppressed group and therefore impervious to racism is something to be revisited.

Returning to Johnson’s reading of kinshiping through the example of his homophobic grandmother, we appreciate that queerness intra-acts with many other markers of identity which, in this case, allowed him to extract resistances from what his homophobic grandmother taught him. The grandmother’s homophobia helped him open his eyes and see *otherwise* (Gómez-Barris, 2017). Cohen and Johnson remind us that heterosexuality is different from heteronormativity and that to suffer from homophobia is, in many cases, not the only violent tangent working within a body. Intersectionality also applies to the ways in which a body can be both oppressed and oppressive.

As I have examined in the chapter of the void, choosing invisibility can be an agential-cut which is also relevant to this case study. Visibility and human exceptionalism are connected in Eva Hayward's encouraging "Don't exist" (2017). In her words, the imperative "Don't exist" breaks the ontology of nothingness, in that there is a movement, an agency put into practice, a decision to not become, a taking away of someone else's power of deciding your own ontology for you. Don't exist "articulates an attack on ontology, on beingness, because beingness cannot be secured" (2017: 191). But only a few lines below, Hayward speaks of this "conundrum: [which is] terrible violence directed at the non-existing, the never having existed" (Ibid). The traditional reading of the associations between existence and visibility as positive, is renegotiated by Hayward, opening room for the contradictions existing in the tensions between concepts. As Castro Samayoa points out, the question may reside in a *willfull opacity* (2017), from where to resist in a saturated queer negativity which is the choice of the resisting community or group.

In this regard, while speaking about black existence in America, Coates comments that "it is traditional to destroy the Black body – it is heritage" (2015: 103). Violence, anger and conflict can also be taken possession of. Anoosh Jorjorian writes "Our anger isn't yours. It doesn't belong to you" (2020)¹⁶⁵. The appropriation of anger and other affective responses to being in the world, is a commonplace in allyship that we need to re-ponder on. As they continue explaining, "By being angry and berating other white people for being asleep all this time, you are actually centering yourself and your feelings" (Ibid), bringing us to a discussion on how these responses and resistances are not only possessed of through actions but also through theoretical and philosophical generalisations of what "good" resistance should be like.

2.4. Haunting experience

"Sadly, the Future is no longer what it was"

Leyland Kirby (Online)¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ <https://jorjorian.medium.com/dear-white-allies-our-anger-isnt-yours-ea482e702569> (Last Access 09/06/2023).

¹⁶⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjH7NzFpKCo&ab_channel=You%27veprobablyneverheardofit (Last access 08/01/2023).

Another triggered concept from the queer okupation experience is *haunting*. The lost space can be thought of as a place of desire, of anarchist futurism and imagination which becomes a haunting utopia. It is not regressive nostalgia but a melancholia of attachment to the object that is always present in a not-yet memento. As Mark Fisher claimed:

In Freud's terms, both mourning and melancholia are about loss. But whereas mourning is the slow, painful withdrawal of libido from the lost object, in melancholia, libido remains attached to what has disappeared [...] Haunting, then, can be construed as a failed mourning. It is about refusing to give up the ghost or – and this can sometimes amount to the same thing – the refusal of the ghost to give up on us. The spectre will not allow us to settle into/ for the mediocre satisfactions one can glean in a world governed by capitalist realism (2014: 19).

Melancholia doesn't give up, though there is a delusional component to it that we cannot ignore. He then writes, “[t]he power of Derrida's concept lay in its idea of being haunted by events that had not actually happened, futures that failed to materialise and remained spectral” (2014: 59). Melancholia finds a political dimension that refuses a giving up while addressing itself in an impossible temporality.

This libido understanding of the attraction to the object conveyed by melancholia has to do with the *potentia gaudendi* force that Paul B. Preciado uses in his alterity manifesto (2008) since the occupation of the city space is an act of political imagination imbued in the orgasmic force that anal liberation movements have meant for the past decades. It is not the nostalgic past that haunted us, but the melancholy for the spectres of those who were able to imagine a better future.

Indeed, hauntology is all about the spaces the spectres occupy, their ability to trespass locked doors or even visitate us in our dreams. Fisher already thought about this when merging hauntology with the sonic realm. In one of his famous posts, “Home is where the Haunt is: *The Shining*'s hauntology” (2006), K-Punk warns that “hauntology is a question of hearing what is not here, the recorded voice, the voice no longer the

guarantor of presence [...] Not phonocentrism but phonography, sound coming to occupy the dis-place of writing” (2014: 67).

The connection between the “politicised melancholia” that Fisher announces, and the orgasmic force contained in Preciado’s *potentia gaudendi* drives from this shared sense of being lost in the horizon of a futurity which, nevertheless, pushes us to move, groan and erect. The void, as discussed in the previous chapters, is not only saturated by ghostly presences, but rather serves as a *milieu* to explore. Jumping into the void is time-travelling to a past where there was a saturation of futurities. The Bologna experience is a very particular chronotope. Its brevity, a momentary occupied queer transfeminist space, makes it ephemeral, the main temporality of okupation experiences.

The spectre, in Fisher’s words, “cannot be fully present: it has no being in itself but marks a relation to what is *no longer* or *not yet*” (2014: 18). Following Martin Hägglund’s analysis of Derrida’s work (2008), when arguing that the hauntological project is a reformulation of time where the ontological present identifier is abandoned in favour of other dislocated presences, the *no-longer* and *not-yet* are combined. The spectre haunts and is haunted in order for it to bring new understandings of the presences of the past which embrace the current experience.

2.5. Emergencies in emergence. Terrifying romance through intimacy

I want to start this section by quoting an impressive and inspiring thought that I read in Homi Bhabha’s introduction to Franz Fanon’s *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952; 1986), that “the state of emergency is also always a state of emergence” (1986: foreword, xi). In an impressive interpretation of Fanon’s work, Bhabha acknowledges the dialectics of oppression without attributing standardised response-ability to the subjects involved. The idea has been explored previously when disentangling queer racialised identities from certain values and affects of visibility, responsibility and positivism, as framed in Manalansan’s analysis (2014). This formulation triggers reductive ideas of deviant subjects which even from our anti-state and institutionally disruptive positions, we still

reproduce. This way, woke¹⁶⁷ and oppressed positions flourish in an amalgam of possibilities, where the singular view of the adequately oppressed subject remains critical of both: the subjects attitude towards violence and also the unrecognised and invisibilised violences. The affectivities involved in these disidentifications, following Muñoz's formula of identity cracks (1999), are ugly (Ngai, 2005), fail to fit into identity programming (Halberstam, 2011) and are dislocated in their orientations (Ahmed, 2006).

In her celebrated text, *The Spirit of Intimacy* (1999), Sobomfú Some rescues all those alternative forms of intimacy that go beyond the generalised notion of love as romantic love. As she writes:

Romantic love is an attraction that cuts up spirit and community, leaving two people to invent a relationship by themselves. It is the opposite of a relationship that lets spirit be the guide. Romance ignores all the stages of a spiritual coming together, where we begin at the top of the mountain and gradually travel in unison to the top. The elders teach us that if our relationship with people around us is focused on sexual attraction, it diminishes our capacity for friendship and our eyes will not allow us to see others as they really are (96-97).

The public space gets sometimes open to new scenarios for intimacy. Such was the case in the protests of BLM after the murder of George Floyd, as I have analysed before. In this case, the sense of the public sphere is fragmented and disordered to show new types of relations that exceed the fundamental rigidities of association within statal systems and modern western ideologies we have discussed above. Following Jürgen Habermas's work (1962), the notion that he offers of the public sphere as a place of connection and dismantling of traditionally confined states of affectivity, normally occurring in the private sphere, is replaced by social contemporary movements which do not depart for bourgeois standards but do use this socially.

Let us explore the extent to which the concept of *intimacy* can add new nuances to my challenging of private spaces conducted in previous chapters. Intimacy, and the disarranged locations where it takes place, are the spaces of possibility I engage with

¹⁶⁷ Term referring to people aware and committed to social activism against inequalities. The term was first used to speak about people specifically fighting racial injustice.

when speaking of a queer utopian, merging with José Esteban Muñoz's temporality (2009). The intimacies moved from community resistance challenge ideas of how bodies come together and what temporalities are involved in their conjunctions. As Laurent Berlant evaluates while deepening in other forms of relationality (1998):

[D]esires of intimacy that bypass the couple or the life narrative it generates have no alternative plots, let alone few laws and stable spaces of culture in which to clarify and to cultivate them. What happens to the energy of attachment when it has no designated place? (285).

The impossible here becomes an imagination out of time and space. In Muñoz's words, "Unlike a possibility, a thing that simply might happen, a potentiality is a certain mode of nonbeing that is eminent, a thing that is present but not actually existing in the present tense" (2009: 19). A political possibility which is out of order. A space from where to move towards a horizon that has no fixed direction and disidentifies without a compulsory recognition. This rhythm without a fixed temporality is also *failure* in its potential figurations (Halberstam, 2011). Time dislocations happen in these affective arrangements. As Rita Monticelli points out when speaking about memory, it is "a process, also includes the future as one of its dimensions" (2011: 136). In this relating *otherwise* memory is activated through presentness in its utopian futurity.

Following these other forms of affectivity and intimacy in the relation towards others also includes a specific critique to the taken-for-granted values of family kinships that are dealt with as already existing, possible and desired. In this sense, some family bonds are unwanted, as we have seen in the explosion of queer childhoods and subjectivities and other identities that are uncomfortable to handle sometimes inside the limits of a family norm. In other cases, the impossible existence of a family comes from stories migrations and other global movements that appear as barriers to this relational typology. The affectivity and intimacy I work through here is generated from desire, a desire existing inside the privilege of a loving and present traditional family which has also sustained my impulses towards other forms of association in this world.

2.6. Dissidentifications

The publisher's note in Muñoz's *Disidentifications* (1999) states one of the most paradigmatic sentences in identity studies: "There is more to identity than identifying with one's culture or standing solidly against it". This statement exposes the main problematics that have been central to Queer Studies for so many years: queer normativity and the binary reproduction of ambiguities between, for example, existence and resistance. Other conflicts with queer normativity, such as those in the already reviewed critiques of *homonormativity* (2002) by Lisa Duggan, have exposed how misleading it is to take for granted the link between queerness and revolution. Peter Drucker also reflects upon this in his "The Politics of Some Bodies" (2017), where he recalls Marxist György Lukács's theories to insist that being in struggle does not guarantee a critical and political consciousness, and that this is sometimes the case in queer experiences. In Muñoz's consideration of identity disarrangements, the multiplicity of pieces that ensemble in one's subjectivity is granted a wider space for discussion. Muñoz queers identity theories by means of disidentification, that goes "a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture" (Muñoz, 1999: 31). Disidentifications shift the idea of identity formation and speak about intra-active entanglements of agential-cuts, "which do not produce absolute separations, but rather cut together-apart" (Barad, 2014: 168). This New Materialist understanding of identity opens up a rethinking of the contradictions of being outside-within, breaking the binary position between identity and counter-identity and showing that to disidentify is not always possible, desired or allowed.

Breaking with certain paradigms of identity and corporeal traditions also speaks about a particular politics of location. Essentialist assumptions about queer people infantilise them as intrinsically kind and peaceful, incapable of agential violence while saturated by excessive presence. The friction between visibility and invisibility was, indeed, axiomatic to our experience since we weren't even regarded as a political component of affective life. Beyond the institutional *killjoy* (Ahmed 2010 in Nicolazzo 2017), queers are too sissy and inoffensive to be taken seriously as institutional killjoys.

Yes, we do make people uncomfortable, but this often takes place at a more “personal and “intimate” level.

In this analysis of the deviant body as infantilised and rendered impossible as an unreal threat, as a disruptive fantastic force, I want to bring back Butler’s *Performativity* (1990, 1993) through the concept of *drag* which can be approached through *saturation*, as an organising concept, following C. Riley Snorton and Hentyle Yapp’s *Saturation: Race, Art, and the Circulation of Value* (2020). Butler’s *drag* is an excess of gender’s performativity whose repetitions can have the potentiality of attaining social exposure. Nevertheless, these theoretical pillars are based on an idea of motion which needs further nuancing. To introduce *saturation* in Snorton and Yapp’s uses entails incorporating other rhythms in these excessive representations and presences. The imitation game is cancelled to make room for the motionless, parody is not mocked. In their words, “The concept of ‘saturation’ refers both to a materiality of pigment and to the sense of something becoming so full that it is weighed down, rendered immobile, or unable to be added to- a reading that suggests current paradigms cannot fully encompass the complex contemporary reality of race” (2020: xii). The queer body disidentifies at the same time as it is disidentified from the outside from certain motions of resistance granted to other sexual and gendered subjectivities. To resist power, to respond to violence, to enact wickedness, are only some of the faces of a cishet envy. As in the case study explored here, the queer disidentification becomes a double bind: on the one hand it allowed us, as a queer corpus, to embrace and imagine the city differently, while, on the other, it evicted us from participating actively in its signifying. The masculinisation of violence is linked to many other signifiers which build up this particular rejection of queers and trans having access to other than victimising and infantilising resistance. Exploring how non-violence can be patriarchal and racist, Peter Gerdeeros writes:

The entire idea that violence is masculine, or that revolutionary activism necessarily excludes women, queers, and trans people is, like other premises of nonviolence, based on historical whitewashing. Ignored are the Nigerian women occupying and sabotaging petroleum facilities; the women martyrs of the Palestinian intifada; the queer and transgender warriors of the Stonewall

Rebellion; the innumerable thousands of women who fought for the Vietcong; women leaders of Native resistance to European and US genocide; Mujeres Creando (Women Creating), a group of anarcha-feminists in Bolivia; and British suffragettes who rioted and fought against cops. Forgotten are the women from the rank and file to the highest levels of leadership among the Black Panther Party, the Zapatistas, the Weather Underground, and other militant groups (2017: 69).

That History has failed once and again to recall the multiplicity of responses to conflicts and events while only attending to historical milestones is known to critical researchers defying historical narratives, as we have seen previously in this thesis. Still, when we were dismissed as possible dangerous subjects for the status quo, another layer of subjectivity was inflated in our bodies: we were not allowed violence because violence was too masculine for us, queer, to perform. In connection to the assumptions that the queer body is attributed, other forms of resistance and action come to be considered beyond enduring formulas. In the words of Alexander Weheliye writing about the subject:

[W]e might come to a more layered and improvisatory understanding of extreme subjection if we do not decide in advance what forms its disfigurements should take on [...] Why are formations of the oppressed deemed liberatory only if they resist hegemony and/or exhibit the full agency of the oppressed? What deformations of freedom become possible in the absence of resistance and agency? (2014: 10).

It is fundamental to undertake a new look at the ways in which those oppressed and violated can relate to resistance and agency through disidentifications and at how this may particularly affect queer subjects of colour. As Muñoz reminds their readers,

disidentifications is *not always* an adequate strategy of resistance or survival for all minority subjects. At times, resistance needs to be pronounced and direct, on other occasions, queers of color and other minority subjects need to follow a conformist path if they hope to survive a hostile public sphere (1999: 5).

That queerness is a different experience for those living it through whiteness and queers of colour takes me to reflect on how the possibilities and potentialities of queer strategies are as many as the multiple experiences from where they spring. In the specific case of the experience here narrated, probably the most important moment was not the activation of state forces of power against our performance of resistance, but the absence of other companions solidarising with our cause. The disidentification happens after a first level of identification in which certain subjects who have been assembled from the outside to and have internally resisted together, disentangle from this general force. Certainly, the identifying process is not single but multiple. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's puts it: "to identify as must always include multiple processes of identification with. It also involves identification as against" (1990: 61). When a new level of identification is added, the social assemblage shakes.

3. Resolution. *Side B: Adrift*

As in the chapters preceding this one, art becomes here the concrete site from where to finally reflect back on the case study experience which set it off and the concepts triggered from it. And, once again, this reading works diffractively, invigorating all elements involved in it through their intra-action.

On this occasion, I am using *Side B: Adrift*, a collection of three modern dance pieces: *The Missing door* (2014), *The Lost Room* (2015) and *The Hidden Floor* (2016) performed by the Peeping Tom dance company, directed by Franck Chartier and Gabriela Carrizo, who are also the authors of the pieces (see annex 5). The chosen trilogy has played a significant role in my upbringing as a theorist, and has also been the inspiration to all the *side b* aspects of this thesis.

In the accumulative praxis that this thesis follows, I also want to find new understandings of the "living" body and its vibrancy in the *Side B: Adrift* performance, while giving new meaning to corporeality in Butler's texts. These diffractive readings will, hopefully, help me connect with the questions and concepts above and act upon specific readings for a case study that is hard to grasp.

Just as Rosi Braidotti recognises her use of anti-humanism to shift towards posthumanism, so does Judith Butler when addressing the structuralist stand of the importance of language in the generation of “reality”, while working from a poststructuralist tradition. As each of them state:

[T]he posthumanist position I am defending builds on the anti-humanist legacy, more specifically on the epistemological and political foundations of the poststructuralist generation, and moves further. The alternative views about the human and the new formations of subjectivity that have emerged from the radical epistemologies of Continental philosophy in the last thirty years do not merely oppose Humanism but create other visions of the self (Braidotti, 2014: 38).

In Butler’s words:

For surely it is as unacceptable to insist that relations of sexual subordination determine gender position as it is to separate radically forms of sexuality from the workings of gender norms. The relation between sexual practice and gender is surely not a structurally determined one, but the destabilizing of the heterosexual presumption of that very structuralism still requires a way to think the two in a dynamic relation to one another (1993: 239).

As commented before, I recognise Braidotti and Butler as main leaders of my thought. They are part of my epistemological tradition and my contestation to some parts of their works is only possible thanks to this admiration. Following from my discussion of Braidotti’s texts in the previous chapter, I now look at Butler’s discussion on bodies, violence and precarity in the above-mentioned works. I focus on Butler’s text framing how bodies come to matter through specific embodied responses. Following these stands, I read all this through Carrizo and Chartier’s *Side B: Adrift*. In the case that occupies us right now, the reading of Butler creates a theory framework that helps solve the tensions discovered in the assembled bodies experience (eviction) and opens this chapter through a diffractive reading of the contemporary dance-theatre creation.

I first encountered *Side B: Adrift* in November 2017 while on my GEMMA mobility at Utrecht University for the 2017-18 academic year. It was a show run by the

Netherlands Dance Theatre (NDT) in its main theatre at the Hague. My mother had bought the tickets since she happened to be in the city. I had always heard her talk wonders about NDT, her favourite dance company. What I witnessed that day, however, was something I did not expect. Some weeks after, I returned with the person who would become my partner some months later. In retrospect, I feel that this experience affectively built-up for our connection, since the emotional state that the trilogy brought us into made us interact in unexpected ways. A sensual experience which reached me very deep and made me write about it immediately afterwards. One of my final papers at Utrecht was, in fact, the result of the many meditations triggered by the experience and the origin of what I include here now.

In my focus on how bodies come to matter through specific embodied responses, following Butler's analysis, I address the identity factors the trilogy explores. As presented in the theatre's pamphlet, "We think we remember correctly, but then it turns out we've given shape to a story as we see it in present or even future time" (2017:4)¹⁶⁸. In this reflection on memory, the borders of subjectivity become nomadic in time, in a posthuman way of understanding the framing of reality and going beyond the normative conception of the self. The trilogy blurs the borders between reality and fiction, past and future, self and other destroying, at the same time the binary system of understanding the subject.

In *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*, something similar to what takes place in *Datamatics [2.0]* happens: when the lights go out, the audience loses control of their own understating of what a body is. The three pieces, *The Missing Door* (by Gabriela Carrizo), *The Lost Room* and *The Hidden Floor* (both by Franck Chartier) rework space, time and connection in unimagined standards. *The Missing Door* stages the last minutes of a life, where the liminality between both stages, life and death, produces a sense of omnipotent presence that allows us to "stay with the trouble" of its ambiguity. We can feel the anxiety of the dying body while he tries to come back to the living world but can only manage to arrive at his memories (see Annex 5). The ambiguous space between life and death determines also the liminality of temporalities in *The lost room*, intertwining past and future and dealing again with memory as an entanglement of these time limbos. On a step further

¹⁶⁸ Taken from the NDT performance pamphlet, 2017.

into experiential reminiscence, memories are told simultaneously and, as the website reads, the piece “could be seen as a melancholic nostalgia for the future”¹⁶⁹. And as I write this, I get a flashing from Mark Fisher’s ideas about melancholia in its relation to the future (2014), where this linear temporality haunts us in expectation. Finally, in *The Hidden Floor* hope is abandoned in favour of bodies going adrift, recognising their corporeal limitations and entering a spatial labyrinth without agential direction. Questions of identity, of exceptionality linked to the human body and of time and space are activated in me, transforming those bodies into fragments that intra-act with each other in new material formulas (Barad, 2014). In the hitting of the floor, the liquidity of the scenario, the fragmentation of the bodies or the banality of them having sex, the performance lets go from the discursivity that is normally linked to the human body. The challenging of the notions of subjectivity, which drives from a critique of identity as property (seen in previous chapters), connects with a sense of individualism which is abandoned gradually throughout the performance. In this loss, the potentiality of theories regarding bodies and communality, such as the texts by author Judith Butler used in this resolution, are called into re-examination. *Bodies that Matter* (1993), *Precarious life* (2004) and *The Force of Non-violence* (2020) are diffractively revisited here through a reflection on the corporeal approaches that the performance offers. I criticise the force of non-violence from a non-individualistic formula, since non-violence can only be a choice of individual response (Butler, 2004, 2020), while the subjectivity that reaches me from the performance affectively interpellates me on how bodies are materialised beyond human exceptional paradigms (Butler, 1993).

3.2. A conversational interview with Franck Chartier

The diffraction of Butler’s above-mentioned texts and the eviction experience can be cut by some of the reflections drawn from my conversation with Franck Chartier on the 23rd of November 2022 at the Teatro Nacional de Cataluña. I was planning to travel to Barcelona to visit some friends who were holding an art opening at a social centre there when I came across the fascinating news that *Side B: Adrift* (aka *Triptych* when on tour)

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.ndt.nl/en/agenda/side-b-adrift/> (Last access 09/06/2023).

was being performed at the TNC precisely that weekend. I immediately contacted the theatre offices, which, very kindly, liaised me with the Peeping Tom company manager. After the many places the piece had taken me years before, I wanted to try and get in contact with the company, to see if it would be possible to speak to any of the organisers. I was surprised when they answered I could speak directly to Franck Chartier, one of the two company directors, just before the performance at 19 hours. It was 13 and I was unprepared for what I could ask him, since the number of affects the play had triggered in me every time I had attended the shows seemed impossible to order in my head. When I arrived to the TNC I felt ridiculous and confident at the same time. Franck walked in, introduced himself and said, “shall we go out?”. Maybe this was the first time I was interviewing someone I was not familiar with, since those in the past had been with people whose work I already knew from my research or/and personal circles. Once outside, lying down on the grass, he takes a cigar out and, after understanding I am also a smoker, he lights it up. I do the same. After this sharing, the interview very much takes the form of a burning conversation. Having introduced myself as a queer researcher, I explore together with Franck a series of elements which had been of my interest the two times I had seen the piece at the Netherlands Dance Theatre the Hague headquarters, back in 2017. My personal circumstances had shifted in those five years since and so had my theoretical foundations. As another layer of disruption, such as the ones I experienced through the piece -which actually took me to choose it for my thesis- this conversation also disturbed my way of thinking about theory. It was so thanks to the caring way in which Franck would divert sometimes from my theoretical apparatus, bridging to his own positioning in the piece. To refer to Franck by his name is a decision based on the gratitude of finding connection and intimate conversations in research and sometimes being able to break the distance existing in research interviews.

Starting from the materiality of the body in *Adrift*, I would like to reflect on my bridging to Braidotti’s and Butler’s frames. Along these lines, the corporeality of the bodies on stage is beyond the sensorial feeding of human exceptionalism, a central point to Braidotti’s posthuman figuration. The connection to Butler happens in the excess of Butler’s performativity through the place of gender and sexuality. This means, in the matching together of Butler’s three texts, the performativity applied to their text of 1993,

Bodies that Matter, finds a new connection beyond the individuality of identity, through my reflections on body responses, such as those facing precarity and violence (2004, 2020 respectively). As has been addressed above, the way a body is affected and finds responses to specific oppressions based on their corporeality exceeds the individuality attached to identity politics. It provides new communal senses of performativity which can also encounter new understandings of subjectivity and its materialisation. As Franck explains when reflecting on how he directs the dancers' bodies:

I have a phrase that I like to... that they have it in the mind is like “go where you’ve never been before” [...] With this “go where you never been before” I think it’s bring you to your extremity of your body but you can go more, you know, you can go... and it's interesting also because we destructure also the human body and we try to find a way to move that is really personal because each dancer will go where they have never been before and he will find movements very personal and then, yeah, this is also nice to be there, to create new movement (2023; 19:06-20:32)¹⁷⁰.

The limits of the human body are here expanded towards no particular directions, disoriented (Ahmed, 2006), materialised through performativity (Butler, 1993), with no concrete rhythms and in the wholeness of being *adrift*, in the present without future expectations (Muñoz, 2009). Nevertheless, the element of memory, which articulates the order of the narrative, keeps the body bound to its immediate surroundings. This awareness, which works besides agential consciousness and connects to body affectivity rather than to discourse, is the potential element which I claim from *Bodies that Matter* (1993) to be rescued within Butler's more recent theoretical approaches dealing not only with gender and sexuality but also with other embodied experiences, such as those concerning precarity. In my words, *affectivity*. In Franck's, *tripping*. This is the way we both make sense differently out of the morphology of a trilogy standing on the liminality between memories and the oneiric. The audience enters the inner thoughts of the bodies

¹⁷⁰ This is a transcription of his exact words and expressions. The interview is provided on the attached DVD.

on stage and, once they are inside their moves, the surreal takes over. *The Missing Door*, *The Lost Room* and *The Hidden Floor* match a reality which also operates in invisible ways. As Franck states,

for us it's nice because we can shift from a reality to the memories or the fears, I don't know what, and play with a super realistic but something strange that happened, that is not in reality...it's not possible. And then *whhhoap*, come back to reality and we don't know if it was the reality or not and this instability between is its reality or memories or fear or... this we like to play with this because then it makes the audience a bit unstable (2023; 31:43-32:10).

The bodies on stage, which are nomadic in their crossing of time and space, travel from the characters to the dancers, from the possible to the uncertain, making the oneiric more capable of speaking about reality than the factual staging of the characters. The bodies become fluid formulations that allow the spectator to blur this distinction between reality and fiction. The commonplace of bodies that matter in Butler's reading of performativity is dislocated to make room for alternative experiences which lead to extraordinary reactions, some of which we cannot get to grasp in their significance. My critique to Butler's defence of non-violence as aggressive resistance goes back to a commonplace limitation: in this performance there are bodies that matter in many senses. They matter as subjects of their own memories, offering an alternative sense of time, a time otherwise, and a new experience of the past, which is not framed as a cause of the actions taking place but rather as a consequence. This is, the past is dislocated in its meaning since what is happening on stage is actually shaping the current memories. Following this diffractive approach, Butler's 90s text is also framed as consequential to the reading of their most recent writing: reconsidering the critique to violence and alternative disruptions to it is what actually informs the reading of *Bodies that matter*. Using diffraction in Barad's sense, the past is here materialised, transformed and informed by elements from the present. The bodies that inhabit these two spaces are not fully dead or alive, but rather activated or not. They are not real or fictional bodies, but instead they are symbolically triggered when applying to each case the elements which sustain their opposite.

Being on stage for over five years now, *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*, has had consequences in the dancers/actors' lives. It is so since, following this idea of *tripping*, of submerging into deep intricate emotions, of abandoning reality, the frontiers between the actor's life and its character are blurred somehow, as we have seen in Carrizo and Chartier's own practice in pieces such as their famous *Le Salon*, where they, partners in real life, introduced their own daughter in scene, in 2004¹⁷¹. Following performativity, as proposed by Butler, the fact that a body exercises itself in repetition has material consequences in its identitarian stands (1990). This being applied to the case study gives new information of the agency of a body itself.

Ontology is called into question through *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*, pointing to Barad's onto-epistemological accounts for how gender and violence are socially fixed through language. In the analysis brought some pages above, in which Ochoa Espejo reflects on the many ways outside identity marks in which space can be divided or organised, there is a strong critique on the paternalistic and infantilising perspective of certain subjects whose identity is reduced to one categorical activation. To come back to the experiential case study at the start of the chapter, the infantilisation of certain subject as unable to resist also connects to this categorical activation of identity through linguistic performances uttering those who count and those who don't. In *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*, language also loses its joint. As Chartier states:

[W]ith theatre you feel that you can go deeper because [with] just 2 or 3 words, one phrase you can go *whoa*, you can put a layer on top of it that's more... yeah you can go deeper in the story and the scenario, but maybe because we come from the dance world for us it was more effective to do it than to tell it, you know, to tell the story [...] We know where we are [...] what we don't know is who we are. We are in this situation that is quite like this [gesturing the stage], it's not a garden,

¹⁷¹ The piece became famous because of the continuous kissing scene where the two actors are acrobatically entangled via the union of their mouths and the holding of their, at that stage, baby daughter. Over the years their daughter grows into a young girl while they still keep the choreography as in its original version, which makes it even more difficult to perform given the heavier weight to carry. You can find the piece at <https://www.peepingtom.be/en/production/le-salon>

it's something quite, eh... But who we are we don't know. We have to create it (2023; 39:30-41:28).

There is somewhat a capacity in this non-prefixed ideation of the character to find new forms of becoming. Activism, in the face of the experiential eviction narrated in these pages, is also outside of language. It is a positioning that does not need a language or decentres from it. Discourse is in the movement, in the passivity of sitting down, of waiting. It is a narrative that walks beyond language and, thus, reconfigures history and the archives relating to them. Still addressing the fixed discursive categories already existing in an embodied subjectivity, while Franck speaks about the liminality between actor/dancer and character, he also speaks of the potentialities of being outside the rhythm of verbal language. By the dance movement, the motion on stage, the looseness of being lost on the non-character, the body can also explore other material possibilities which, then, can build up into a character. With Barad in mind, while defending this search for materiality, long lost in the linguistic and discursive turn, I recognise what it is in Butler's shift that does not quite hold from my point of view. It is that of the actual abandonment of anthropocentric values to language and discourse. Again, this is not to say discourse and language can be completely evicted from a human body, but it is a claim to speak of bodies in non-universal and reductive forms about what bodies can or cannot do in still discursive terms. In this sense, though the alternatives to violence fixed in the discursivity which marks Butler's tradition and is coherent with their 90's work, to speak of bodies as actual materials which can also react outside discursive apparatuses, is something left unexplored by Butler which, therefore, leaves out many of the experiences lived from precarity, oppression and desire. I insist on desire because I do not want to reproduce the idea that only bodies cut by violence can react to it from their bodily materiality. The answer, once again, is to be found in Barad rather than in Butler.

In the values of the materialism which Barad proposes, I find in Chartier and Carrizo a concentration of energy of new imaginations for how to conceive the body. Barad asks, "[w]hy are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable[...]" (2008: 120, Ibid). In the mediation between language and matter, Barad finds the alternative of performative discursivity, in

which discourse is granted a fairer amount of importance by restructuring the means of performativity. For Barad, performativity,

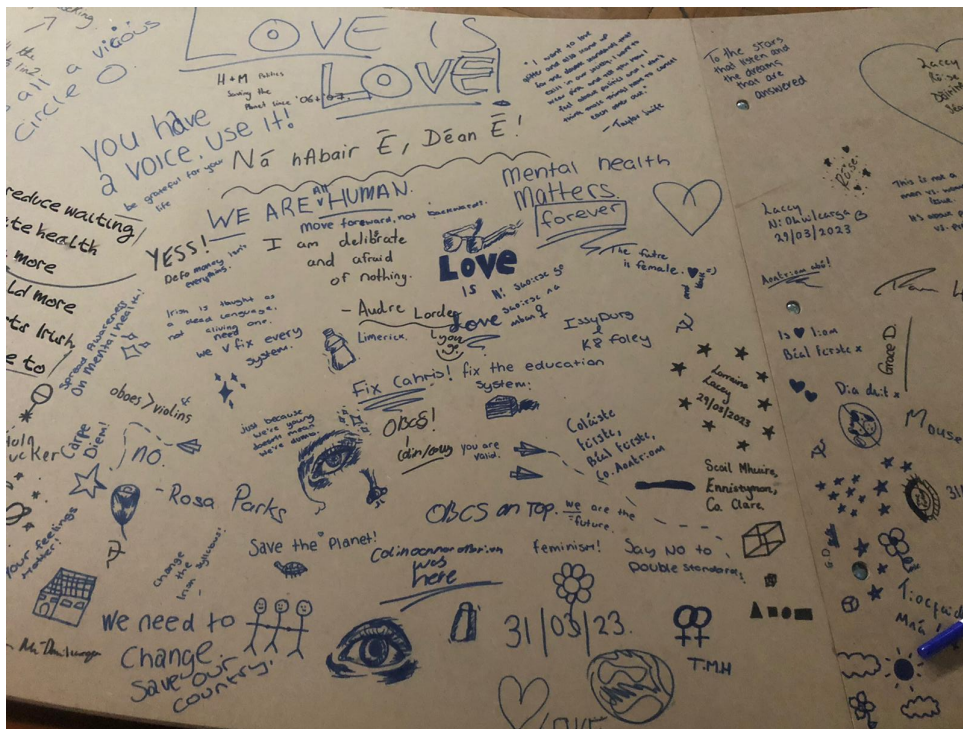
is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real. Hence, in ironic contrast to the misconception that would equate performativity with a form of linguistic monism that takes language to be the stuff of reality, performativity is actually a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve (2008: 121).

In this sense, considering embodiment as already a structural piece of the representational system discussed throughout this thesis, we could quite simply, say that the human body is not exceptional but rather constituent. Carrizo and Chartier's pieces partake of this cognitive limitation. They hold the spectator as part of the memory, undoing the representational opposition between stage and terraces, sinking in reality through memories. In Barad's lines, we could describe the *Side B: Adrift* experience as blurring the limit between "representation, and entities to be represented" (2008: 123). The presence of bodies, the presence of one's body, the past someone remembers through a false memory or the future which unfolds but is retained as hostage are simultaneously working in this experiential dissonance. As the flyer reads, "[w]hile soundscapes of everyday noises turn into lost rhythms, the man performs a lonely battle with time, space, and those who are absent". Absent presences, extinct rhythms, saturated positions and forgotten noises come into the scene as tools to experience bodies and their mattering otherwise.

Intra-acting all these reflections with the misreading of our queer bodies in assembly during the eviction experience which has lashed out the ensuing debates in this chapter, makes me realise that both *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)* and the conversation with Franck reshapes the excess of our evicted bodies as a performative act of refusal. Our otherised bodies were put on halt, bound to passivity, misread as childish and innocuous.

As side b. Perhaps, I now think, we were untranslatable in our corporeal motions, pending signification but saturated by our suspense. Perhaps our untranslatability is the answer to the initial question in the title of this chapter: Is resistance always radical? Or, in other words, how can we activate our resistance radically? Perhaps by disorienting ourselves beyond official representation. Perhaps the queer *new horizon* should simply be our going adrift.

CASE STUDY 4. TOWARDS CONCLUSIONS. IRELAND AND ANTHONY HAUGHEY'S INTERVENTION AT THE YPA. *Is radicality always radical?*



CHAPTER 7. CASE STUDY 4. TOWARDS CONCLUSIONS. IRELAND
AND ANTHONY HAUGHEY'S INTERVENTION AT THE YPA. *Is
radicality always radical?*

“People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them”

James Baldwin, “Stranger in the village” (1958, 1998: 119)

“In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower”

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (1984: 112)

“However, in spite of the unequal power relationships located in marginal communities, I am still not interested in disassociating politically from those communities, for queerness, as it is currently construed, offers no viable political alternative”

Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” (1997: 450)

This case study works both as a knot and a dissolver. It brings together the reading of the experience of the *Young People's Assembly*, a project directed by Anthony Haughey and held at the National Museum of Ireland, in Dublin from 29th-31st March 2023, which focuses on young citizens' voices as leading political thinkers which I intra-read with the previous case studies. This chapter uses diffraction to bring the strong critique to institutions, to see who is left behind, who does not fit in, who does not want to, in these anti-institutional propositions.

The reasons why this case study has been framed as the closing research chapter are twofold: the need for a case study to round the search up given the structure of this thesis as academic research, and my own autoethnographic recognition of my change as a researcher throughout the years. The former talks of how the initial requirements about the form of this work has taken me to further reflections that, rather than forced, have also

been situated from the personal decision to acknowledge this division. In connection to this idea, the second refers to how I have found in this chapter a temporary gift of finishing with new feelings towards some inquiries that date many years ago.

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, the many locations where these derivations take place go as far as to spaces where power has been challenged and it, cognitively, decentred. Still, as in a contamination regime of control, these derivations of power take form in unsuspected ways. In this chapter, these forms of power are to be found in the intersection between institutional places of knowledge and unadulterated locations of identity, represented by the museum and schools on the one hand and the adolescent exploration, on the other.

As we have seen, the complexity of power contaminates many other places which deontologise the identified locations of power - such as institutions, governmental buildings, and bureaucratic systems- these extend to activism and anti-statal practices (to name some analysed examples). In this widening of the consideration of places of power and control, the holes in these systems also need to be deontologised so as to see how they can take form in official places such as schools, museums or political places, being three of the locations embedded in this case study. The propositions which evolve from this experience are partially limited by the officiality of their location and do not try to resolve themselves through these spaces. Rather, they are another node of action and activation for momentary conjunctions.

This case study stands in a space of liminality physically, temporary and symbolically. It holds in the middle space these signs of *potentia* read through *potestas*, and vice versa.

1. The experience. The Young People's Assembly

1.1. Those days

I arrive around 6 pm. The bus stops far away from the hotel but since I did not know what the timing during my visit to Dublin would be, I decided to walk town for a bit that day. I had heard from my Irish colleagues that the situation in the city was raw, in terms of

dignified and secure housing. What I did not expect is to feel surprised by the amount of people I saw in this situation just in my first round about. People in different situations were living in tents, in the middle of the main road, to ensure, at least, being visible for safety reasons, or so I thought. I got to the hotel and sitting down in bed I thought to myself how I was being participant to that expulsion of inhabitants in the city.

I contact Anthony Haughey around January. I remember well because it was part of my new year's resolution to set the steps to address my last case study. One of my thesis supervisors, Pilar Villar Argáiz, head of EFACIS Centre for Irish Studies at the University of Granada, had suggested me to get in contact with him since in, her opinion, his work was both radical and practical. Radical because it worked from inside the critique to the many systems of oppressions surrounding contemporary Irish life, and practical since it was linked in many cases to institutions, educational groups and cultural spaces to give responses to these inquiries.

From the first moment Haughey appeared receptive to my emails. After a few messages, he suggested to speak through skype, to know each other's work and see how I could collaborate in what he was doing at that moment. We spoke for an hour, about many things. I was instantly interested in his work because of how he related to it. I saw him so involved in the projects he was in that I knew I wanted to work with him for my last case study. The project he was about to initiate was the *Young People's Assembly*. This project was part of his collaboration in the *Decade of Centenaries* project, being one of the artists in residence of the National Museum of Ireland. As he already explained back then, the project was dedicated to the youth, involving them in politics to see what their claims were, to give voice to a population which lacks political agency and also to bring forward contemporary claims in the Irish culture. The project would involve 5 groups of 15 to 20 participants around 16 years old, who would read the "Manifestos for the Future", manifestos that would be preparing previously to the actual assembly, in March. These manifestos would be recorded and make an installation with the videos from the three-day experience, that would be installed together with the table that would be used as the specific artefact that would come out of the readings. The table had been designed to serve as a material place where to gather around, since it was circular, and the idea was that while the manifestos were read by participants of the groups, the rest

would reflect on its materiality, intervening on its surface. The groups from North and South schools, would dialogue and explore different political issues and interest form their own locational experiences.

After some weeks planning my visit, I was happy to be finally in Dublin. Even if so, my reflection on being part of the touristification and gentrification process that I criticise made me feel uncomfortable. I decided to stay in the hotel that first night. The following morning, I walked until the archaeological museum of Dublin, where the recordings of the conversations for the consequent installation were to be held. I was surprised by the location of the Ceramics Room at the National Museum of Ireland since it is contingent on Leinster House, the Irish Parliament. I was very nervous because the thoughts from the previous night had also taken me to think in my own position inside the experience, which I was previously assuming solely from a research point of view. Haughey had sent me information about the location, the project and also put me in contact with one of the researchers working in the project, who had been also part of the preparation moment. I spoke to them for a bit when I arrived and they told me about the previous weeks, when the groups had been preparing the manifestos and debating in their own schools. When Haughey arrived, I was already quite relaxed since I had sensed how everyone was connected to the project in different ways, but all were dubious of what would actually happen in the recordings. These would register the readings of the manifestos, that had been written by different people in the groups. These would be read in the circle around the table. Around it, different cameras would focus on the reading of these manifestos, but also the rest of the people that would be listening and reacting to these, maybe intervening in the artefact of the table, materializing their own reflections into its surface. The table, at the start only with the presences of some sentences, made me reflect on how these days would work: I remember thinking to myself “if they want this tablet to be full, I think this is going to fail”. The first sentence I saw was related to women’s freedom and equal rights. It read “Women should be safe and free from physical abuse. Women should have equal rights in the workplace and all sections of society. Better sex education for all to support women’s rights”. This placed gender and sexuality at the centre of the discussion, as I was secretly expecting it to be.

Since my position as an observant participant was also conscious of the information limitation I had, since I was there for only three days, I decided to maintain myself aside, taking notes of how the experience took place, not only through the specific conversations happening around the table, but also the previous and posterior circumstances surrounding the recordings.

After having meet the many people involved in the project, such as the teachers from the different schools, the museum organisers and directors, the historians, one for each group, that would be part of the circle and would give a context to the conversations, the first group entered the room. Apart from their normal nervousness for their public intervention, I noticed how Haughey was observing the group's reactions and studying their disposition that precise day. It was interesting since, even if he had met them before, during the preparation weeks, he maintained himself observant of the specific circumstances that day, to know how to direct his words to the group. After reminding the participants of the dynamic for some minutes, Haughey stopped to create a sense of comfortability in the room, telling everyone that anything that happened during the recording was fine. Obviously, this was contextualised under the already approached topics regarding critiques and limits that had been set and having reminded the groups that a safe space for everyone meant that attitude involving racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia or aporophobia were not allowed in this generated space. The particularity of this space was reminded by Haughey every morning before the assembly started. As he stated during those days, the importance of making the museum available to the public, in this instance to young people, stands in reciprocity of, on the other side, engaging in social issues which take place outside the museum. In this inside-out work, the continuity between the two spaces disrupts the fixity of space, especially a place like the museum, and also deals with the symbolic spatial-opening of the archive, in its plural sense. In this context, I found very interesting how Haughey was able to welcome the experience in a wide sense, allowing immediate and non-planified scenarios to the conversations. The assembly process of coming together in a circle, listening to the people speak about certain issues and been able to react to them through the artefact of the table was already a heavy material for me to start thinking on the potentiality of this whole experience.

The first group sat down. It was a school for women. The table is still pretty much empty, only a few sentences written down in it by the organizers to inspire the first interventions. After the intervention of one of the historians, who provided the context of the space where we were and made some links with the topics that were about to be treated, the participants start reading the “Manifestos for the Future”, the material that they have been preparing which will recollect and synthesise the particular claims, debates and thoughts that have come out during the previous weeks. Everyone has a pen in their hand, flicking from one side to another, some trembling, from nervousness or laughter, since there are some holding their breath not to burst into rawring at the of seeing their friend speak in public, as if they were someone important. The person reading speaks about the gender difference in sportswomen being paid, in comparison to men. Someone nods, another looks more serious than before, and then the vibe changes. There has been a trigger. They have heard something that they know is important for them. They are still nervous, but none is laughing but concentrating in what is been said. One of them starts drawing in the table. I am so frustrated I cannot reach to see what it is. Some seconds after, another person in front of the first one starts writing down things on the table. A while after, they are already pretty much intervening naturally in the table. The manifestos’ reading finish. There were a few and little has been said about topics involving trans rights, topic that I am always willing to discuss. When the second group arrives, the first thing I notice is the visible diversity in it. As in the previous group, Haughey and the rest of the people involved go through the basics and, again, he insists in the fact that they should feel relaxed because there are not expectations, but it is them that count today. If they get nervous, they tread over their own words, blush up, it is ok. It is easier to get into the table intervention for this group, since it has already been started by the previous group. I am amazed. I see a naturality in their ways that I have never seen in myself. They are sure about their claims. It is a burst of issues, concerning racism, housing, workers rights and gender, but the latter is discussed indirectly. I think to myself: is it possible identities outside the gender binary have been integrated into these generations so as to make them speak of other things besides these issues? When they finish, I go to the table to see what has been written on its surface. Many things, but one new sentence caught my attention: “good luck for the next group. You’ve got this”. It is

simple but powerful. It is direct but settled. It makes me think of their own activated empathy and I feel happy I have been able to see them interact.

The following day the two groups attending touch other topics such as the differences between the north and the south of Ireland. The first group is reading their manifestos in Irish so I cannot understand. Their interventions are also in their language. Someone translates some parts: housing, the distance of the two Irelands, social stereotypes, many hashtags in claims of incomes and graffitis with some names. There are also some sentences from songs they like. It is not completely full, but there are some words clashing from one intervention to another.

The second group of the day also has many topics to bring into discussions, concerning youth's rights, racism and activities for young people to spend their time in. Gender is not absent but is also not central. As the morning ends, I do not know what to write down, since I am confused by this lack. The groups walk out. Everyone is thanking them for their hard work and their reflections. They are heard, and it is clear they noticed. The last group of the day leaves and while walking out of the room, one of the organizers, that I read as a man stops two participants, to congratulate them personally. From a gender presentation, they are read as a woman and a man. The organizer directs his gaze to the guy and at some point, the person I identify as a woman says, "enough with the mansplaining, G". They have the words, they know the critique, but somehow, they have not activated it in specific in their manifestos.

I go out that night. I meet a guy climbing. We go out for some beers and instantly get confident with each other. After a while I tell him about this, and we start discussing different things. He is a feminist, but he does not talk about gender in a daily base. At some point, he asks me "do you live through the topics you activate politically?". No, of course I don't. I don't tell him, but it makes me go silent, thinking. It is true. I have the words to be inside the critique, but my experience is distanced from some of the issues I constantly bring into conversations. I go to my hotel. The next day only one group will be there. As usual, Haughey is there to speak to them. Give them advises on how to be confident and trust them in what they have prepared. They walk around the table, reading what the previous groups have written down. They are smiling, talking quick and pointing to different things they see in the table. The topics raised in the manifestos are not so

different to the ones raised the previous days, but I have shifted from listening to seeing their interactions, their complicit looks, their movements and gestures. I am more interested today in recognizing complicity in their gestures rather than in their language. It is there. It is so much there. The recordings finish and some of the participants hug. Different bodies coming together, laughing, commenting existed the things that happened, some ask if they looked to nervous, others are rushing to leave the place, one is taking a selfie.

The days are over and the recordings are ready for the team to put together for the installation that will be ready before 2024. Everyone is tired so I meet Haughey the following day to speak for a bit. We spend some hours together in the Decorative Arts and History museum, where his studio is. He is artist in residence in the museum as part of the *Decade of Centenaries* and shows me around. He takes me to the place where the *Young People's Assembly* project will be installed. The museum is canonical in its architecture, but the interventions around have changed its narrative visually. Haughey tells me about the different projects he has been involved in this space, with topics surrounding gender, racism and xenophobia, that he maintains as essential to change a museum's discourse.

The *Young People's Assembly*, through the preparation of the "Manifestos for the Future", was not only directed towards these concrete archives but rather gave space to the in-between spaces of conversations, discussions, unresolved questions and intimate relations which were also at the core of these written materials. The manifestos were part of Haughey's proposal inside the context of the *Decade of Centenaries* programme, one of the Museum's initiatives, dedicated to the past century in Ireland from a diversity perspective. *Decade of Centenaries* was launched in 2012 and tries to challenge narratives from the past, to give them new meanings, locate them into new identities and rework the problematics involved in more reparative forms. In this context, "Manifestos for a Future Ireland" was the form that this initiative took form when Haughey was announced as the artist in residence at the National Museum of Ireland from 2021 onwards. These manifestos were translocated to the young groups involved in the *Young People's Assembly* (YPA)¹⁷² to activate their own visions of History in its past, present and future.

¹⁷² Stands for *Young People's Assembly*, as it will be referred to from this point onwards.

Almost every person present in the circle had some minutes to define previously discussed ideas through the reading of such manifestos, but not everyone had to participate, preserving a feeling of agency of deciding how to participate in the discussion. The topics connected the narratives of the past, through histories, archaeologies and material cultures from the past, and the factual concerns based on the presence of the political thinking of the youths of the assembly.

As I have briefly introduced before, Anthony Haughey is an artist and an educator. In the alliance between these two positions, and because of my personal reflections upon the experience of the *Young People's Assembly* (YPA), I would add that Haughey is also a mediator. I mean this since I think mediation stands in the intersections of art and education. As an artherapist, this bridging of the two disciplines is essential for the practical and political uses of my own practice. Art beyond aesthetics and education, beyond productive discourses, finds its connection through mediations of practices between them two which can bring a more responsible and potential use of both. Haughey's artistic work deals with the multiple contestations of inequalities surrounding topics such as class, gender, "race", ableism and conflicts. He focuses on the frictions existing between settlement, border and liminalities, transposing but also differentiating the Irish partition to other geographical motions. In these works, dealing with questions of citizenship, History, territory and the idea of the future, Haughey gives priority to participation in these political contingencies. It is so in the YPA, in which there is a focus on questions of how to make different groups involved in discussions that are culturally detached from them. From what I take of our conversations, these contestations, for Haughey, happen in the intersection between the inside and the outside of the cultural spaces of the Museum and Academia. Working as a radical thinker and a political activator, Haughey has researched into the contestation of many historical narratives, mostly the ones lived through museum spaces but also affecting the liminal places surrounding it. In my conversations with him, I recall many references to the intimate and personal connections with the people involved in the projects that brought discussions to its development. In many cases, these people and discussions were not directly reflected on the results of the activity but did taint decisively its construction.

As a social institution for knowledge and responsibility, the museum has stagnated into the aesthetic project of coloniality. The processes through which the Museum has the potentiality of moving sociality beyond and finding accessible ways of knowledge and identity, are frequently disregarded. Thus, the artistic landscape becomes another site of cultural commodification. Cultural commodification is here referred to as the discursive process through which societies are constructed around cultural values, these being reflected on divisions between who is included in this knowledge process and who is locked outside.

Haughey reflects upon these many questions, engaging in memory, archives and art interventions as momentary and unsettling responses. In his work, he uses his acknowledged privilege to give space for people to explore politics otherwise. In his works series “Home” (1991-1992)¹⁷³, “The Edge of Europe” (1996)¹⁷⁴, “Settlement” (2011)¹⁷⁵ or “Citizen” (2013)¹⁷⁶, he displays landscapes of contingencies, where unspoken conflicts are shouted out at the spectators, forcing them to look at the pieces, to deal with the uncomfortability of their rushed colours, unsettling lights and disturbing buildings. In the present case study, the liminal space selected for the intervention speaks up these quests, deepening into the functionality of space, as symbolically capable of materialising new experiences.

In the *Young People’s Assembly* (YPA), the location is dislocated. The museum becomes something else than an exhibiting space. Furthermore, the project does not only take place in the venue of the recordings, which is already something to study in detail, but it engages ulterior spaces, which exceed a fixed temporality and space. This looping, that the intervention takes when taking it to a future temporality, also stresses the importance that the experience poses in the immediacy of the conversations held during the recordings around the table.

¹⁷³ <http://anthonyhaughey.com/projects/home/>

¹⁷⁴ <http://anthonyhaughey.com/projects/the-edge-of-europe/>

¹⁷⁵ <http://anthonyhaughey.com/projects/settlement/>

¹⁷⁶ <http://anthonyhaughey.com/citizen-2013/>

2. Triggering

As I have announced in the introduction, the twist which takes form throughout this chapter is my own reflections about the thesis in general and the possibilities which are driven from it. If I had to point to a trigger to this case study that would be the many activations from the uncertainty of the project which have led me to very specific concerns: who was I leaving outside while only reclaiming spaces existing outside institutional atmospheres? It is from this particular question that I want to conduct a diffractive reflection through an intra-reading exercise with the previous chapters.

2.1 Art and activism: aesthetics and aesthesis

As a trained art therapist, my use of artistic practices for social purposes has a long trajectory. It is so since my background as an art historian already sought to perceive the cracks from which art could breathe out other possibilities exceeding artistic cultures of capital and accumulation. This was enhanced through my further education in art therapy, via my first master's degree in "Arteterapia y Educación Artística para la Inclusión Social" where I was able to relocate art as that space of active engagement in social issues, not from a victimising consideration of vulnerabilities and oppressions, but rather making the subject under those circumstances gain agential power in processes of justice. Many are the stories I recall from that era. In some cases, they are critical stories of the lacks I sensed in the discipline and in my own practice of it. In other cases, these self-vulnerabilities helped me construct new meanings and knowledges about what it means to position oneself inside different practices and these new meanings opened the path for my subsequent GEMMA training in Gender Studies. In any case, art in conjunction to activism- what is referred to as *artivism-*, is essential to my work. Its dear value keeps updating at the same pace as my own experiences do. For many professionals working with art for different aims, through therapy, mediation, activism, and so on, "[a]rt can often function as a framework. [It has] [t]he ability to contain and hold" (Lev, 2020: 3). Art represents to me, as researcher and educator within Academia, a potential to help deconstruct unjust discourses and the mediation to intimate stories which become

political when they are told since their narrative has an impact upon social change. In this sense, the present case study directly connects with this potentiality of art to be, beyond its aesthetic uses and contemplative practices, a tool for social change.

My conflict with art has always been multifocal and, as this thesis proves, the issue of power has been the common denominator to each of these conflicts. What was signified as artistic, aesthetic, meaningful or beautiful is intrinsic and has an effect on my way of thinking about bodies, the one held by the self and the one viewed in others. In Nisha Sajnani's work (2016) an interesting concept arises, which is *relational aesthetics*. What Sajnani refers to by this notion is how practitioners of art involving social action can make audiences relate in unpredictable ways. This enacted proximity is important in this case study since when the members of the YPA were speaking about personal questions during the experience, the distance between members, facilitators and material entities was totally dismantled. The institutional and ageist¹⁷⁷ wall fell and the relations between the group became horizontal. Even admitting that no space can ever be totally safe for everyone, Haughey's reminder that "anything which happens is fine" certainly helped create a "safer" space where the young participants could enter certain conversations which were held from vulnerability, exposure, joy and confusion.

The terminology of *aesthesis*, proposed by Walter Mignolo (2010) together with others, like Rolando Vázquez (2013), marks a term in the praxis surrounding artistic experiences. As has been briefly introduced in case study 1, the concept of *decolonial aesthesis* emerges as a response to the colonial representational systems, starting from the 16th century interchangeable market from Abya Yala¹⁷⁸ to Europe, and reaches us in the present day. As Vázquez and Mignolo explain:

Decolonial aestheSis¹⁷⁹ is a movement that is naming and articulating practices that challenge and subvert the hegemony of modern/colonial aestheSis.

¹⁷⁷ Recent research, such as that by Vissing (2023), maintains that children and youth can be considered another minority group since their experience is subject to the same types of discrimination as other minority groups, such as unequal treatment, lack of agency in political and social decision making or violence based on stereotypical images of fragility.

¹⁷⁸ Abya Yala is the name used to refer to America by indigenous communities. It means "matured land" or "blossomed land" in Kuna language and it is a term which highlights the presence of native communities in this land prior to colonisation.

¹⁷⁹ This is the way it is spelled in Mignolo and Vázquez's text.

Decolonial aestheSis starts from the consciousness that the modern/colonial project has implied not only control of the economy, the political, and knowledge, but also control over the senses and perception. Modern aestheTics have played a key role in configuring a canon, a normativity that enabled the disdain and the rejection of other forms of aesthetic practices, or, more precisely, other forms of aestheSis, of sensing and perceiving. Decolonial aestheSis is an option that delivers a radical critique to modern, postmodern, and altermodern aestheTics and, simultaneously, contributes to making visible decolonial subjectivities at the confluence of popular practices of re-existence, artistic installations, theatrical and musical performances, literature and poetry, sculpture and other visual arts (2013. Online) ¹⁸⁰.

This revision of the visibility-invisibility divide of coloniality is a constant intervention to apply to contemporary assumptions. Representational systems which stand upon strong genealogies reproduce the ways we open to the world through the visible aspects informing our experiences. When speaking about aesthetics, we are not only speaking about beauty. As we can extract from a vast number of critiques, *beauty* and the issue of *the body* in feminised corporealities have of long been at the centre of the feminist agenda (Young, 1979; Bordo, 1993; MacKinnon, 2006; Muñoz et al., 2007). The notion of beauty is activated in its connection to only certain bodies, those presented as beautiful to make them visible. Nevertheless, the question of aesthetics in connection to visibility goes way beyond the notion of beauty. Sometimes this aesthetics require a reconceptualisation through notions of *ruin*, *abjection*, *shock*, *mess* or *chaos* to become visible. In the case studies seen in the previous chapters, the hegemonic aesthetics at work requires these elements to be arranged through chaotic and messy elements. It is through these destabilising aspects that they fit in the aesthetics linked to their signifiers. The turn towards *decolonial aesthesis* holds in its value the immediacy of the sensation drawn from the *aesthesisal* experience. As the term unfolds, and diverges from normative *aesthetics*, what matters is the stimulation which emanates when we encounter some other entity that

¹⁸⁰https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthesis-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/ (Last access 02/06/2023).

activates this sensation. Thus, *decolonial aesthetics* also connects to the alternative temporalities evoked in the previous chapters. In these otherwise-temporalities, the holding-on to a past or/and a future typical of the aesthetic experience is dissolved: on the one hand, the past is liberated by dismantling the traditional form which has been saturated by an aesthetical signification; on the other, the future, as a project for progress and happiness, is dropped when leaving aesthetics aside and deepening into other stimulations.

The immediacy that *decolonial aesthetical* forms imply also arises from the development of practices which go beyond anthropocentric foundations, another trace of colonial epistemologies. Towards the engagement in the immediacy of the relationality between a body and an entity there is a placed agency between elements. These, following Barad's theoretical background, come into existence in their very contact, rather than pre-existing to it (2007; 2014), giving them a vibrancy beyond human exceptionalism. As Haughey suggested to the groups by opening the possibilities of what could take place during those three days with his "anything which happens", the momentary agential-cut captured in the project was immediate in its causality since, indeed, everything and nothing could have taken place. Immediacy refers to that specific time and space, insisting upon its momentum, since this time and space locality could have been any other. The instantaneous contact can be felt in the future, affecting the past, or digesting the past, as Oswald de Andrade imagined (1928).

The decolonial aesthetical project has more to do with other forms of materialities- New Materialisms and otherwise-, than with traditional understandings of aesthetics. Adolfo Albán Achinte deals also with the fresh paradigms of aesthetics as *aiesthesis* so as to account for sensorial multiplicity. As he writes:

It is maybe at this point that we can think about the aesthetics of re-existence, first understanding aesthetics as *aiesthesis*, i.e., as the vast world of the sensible, and re-existence as any dispositif historically generated by communities to re-invent life in opposition to the patterns of power which have determined the way these communities should live and to their systems of representation which have been invalidated through the occidental conception of art and delegitimised by

institutions which are given the power to decide what is and what is not an aesthetic/artistic expression (2012: 290. My translation) ¹⁸¹.

These other forms of representation, which are not rooted upon the bases of representationalism since they are disruptive in their fundamentals, give new understandings of the possibilities that emanate from the friction between reality and imagination. In the present case study this friction touched not only the experience itself, but also the reworking of my own expectations, that had an aesthetic root. The discourses on critical studies which I was expecting before joining the group were dropped and with them every closed reading of the sentences that started permeating the table. Walking through this tension, the liminality between both spaces, the material and the fictional, is sustained into accountability while also addressing the ways in which reality, as that ontological category, is already impregnated by the ideas held by traditional representations. As Albán exposes, these new *aesthetical* morphologies are in,

counterflow to the narratives of cultural, symbolic, economic, socio-political homogenisation, which are located in the frontiers where it is difficult for institutionalisation to co-opt the constructed autonomies and in those liminal spaces where power fractures and reveals its cracks, those of the impossibility of its full realisation (Ibid: 292. My translation) ¹⁸².

Power is everywhere. Still, a decolonial account of power stands both on impossibilities and on potentialities since power cannot be fulfilled completely. The cracks are always there to be found. In the recognition of the multiplicity which other ethical approaches to

¹⁸¹ “Es quizá en este punto donde se pueda pensar en las estéticas de re-existencia, primero entendiendo la estética como aiesthesis, es decir, como el amplio mundo de lo sensible y la re-existencia como todos aquellos dispositivos generados históricamente por las comunidades para re-inventarse la vida en confrontación a los patrones de poder que han determinado la manera cómo estas poblaciones deben vivir y a sus sistemas de representación invalidados por la concepción occidental del arte, deslegitimados por las instituciones que se abrogan el derecho de decidir qué es o no es una expresión estético/artística” (2012: 290. Original).

¹⁸² “contracorriente a las narrativas de la homogeneización cultural, simbólica, económica, socio-política, las que se ubican en las fronteras donde a la institucionalidad le cuesta cooptar las autonomías que se construyen y en esos espacios liminares en que el poder se fractura y deja ver las fisuras de su propia imposibilidad de realizarse plenamente” (2012: 292. Original).

sociality stand for, the account for different possibilities helps to disrupt totalising ideas of experiential paradigms. In power, we can also sense a further recognition of the fragments in which power can be dismantled. It is not that power can be erased once and for all, but it is good to see its many forms, viewing them also in their own motion, and on how they can also be read as the spaces where certain deactivations of power can actually happen. Representation is paradoxically needed and undesired but what matters is the alternatives in liminality and immediacy. It addresses social responses in a transitional way, engaging in its ambiguous value and maintaining an active critique to keep on finding new forms of becoming, of representing. As discussed in this case study, the strategic use of art in this experience is also positioned in this in-between space, symbolically, physically and temporarily. Those in-between spaces are held accountable for their own materiality, since liminality is not only that place from where to negotiate “realness”, but a material space in itself. In-between is both a symbolic account of possibilities but can also mean a space of historic recognition: it can stand for Middle Passage¹⁸³.

2.2. Art otherwise through fictional ontologies

My use of *aesthesis* is reparative rather than informative. Let me explain: the fact that I use decolonial and antiracist propositions, such as the aesthesical turn, responds to a reparative justice and not to a theoretical impregnation. My task, while remaining aware of the genealogical avoidances which have informed my consciousness, stands far away from a desire to saturate these theories from my white embodiment. Instead, in using these theoretical alterations- decolonial and antiracist ones-, and even if I let them penetrate my research, I renounce guiding these concepts. This rejection has its limits, of course, since as a legal, working, abled, privileged person I do direct on many occasions, through teaching, political representation, activism, and so on, specific ideas that I have learned

¹⁸³ Here the middle passage is meant to stand by both, the liminal signification of spatial realities, and the historical event of the African diaspora and the forced trip of enslaved people to the “New World”.

from these epistemological turns. Still, I want to remain aware of my own adherence, which has restructured my previous conceptions of the world, “reality”, affects, experiences and resistances.

When seeking for reparations and the use of disciplines to attend to these restitutions, how we seek healing becomes fundamental. Robbie Shilliam (2013), for instance, offers art as a reparative resistance for colonised subjects. It is here to remark my positioning in healing as an external movement and only accountable from a recognition of the necessity of white people, as genealogical colonisers, to do their round in repairing these systems of power. In this direction, a concept which connects both movements is the notion of *melancholy*. Melancholic affects haunt the white body preventing reparations and recognition of present problematics concerning racism, colonialism, imperialism and whitening. In reference to this, Shilliam writes that “[m]elancholy guards against the entrance of healing agencies into white publics and facilitates the deferral of responsibility for historical injustices” (2013. Online)¹⁸⁴. On the employment of art as a way of collective healing, Shilliam works through decolonial and antiracist embodied histories. In his account for other worldings, Shilliam aims to “*renew* the world by retrieving and redeeming *aestheSis* that have been dismissed by colonial masters as superstitious, irrational, ugly, and primitive” (Ibid). In a reflection on the case study in question here, when bringing down to earth the possible actions and reparations towards justice which the participants in the YPA reclaimed through their many discourses, I see this account of renewed imaginations. These artistic interventions exemplify what Shilliam states when writing that, “even if entangled with colonial-modernity, such redemptive works-of-art do not follow the logic of inside or outside society/modernity: their logic is other-wise” (Ibid).

“Thinking otherwise” brings Macarena Gómez-Barris to mind again. Her work, already analysed in the previous chapters, is imbricated in the decolonial practices of artists based in Abya Yala. She proposes a “refute to the monocultural imperative” (2017: xvi) and offers a methodology of beyond in her use of submerged perspectives. These otherwise landscapes of knowledge are submerged since they are “transitional and

¹⁸⁴ https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/be-bop-2012-black-europe-body-politics/ (Last access 07/06/2023).

intangible spaces as geographies that cannot be fully contained by the ethnocentrism of speciesism, scientific objectification” (2017: 12). As such, these perspectives find new ways of looking which can decentralise the human gaze, universalised through colonisation. In this gaze otherwise, Gómez-Barris sees through a fish-eye episteme (Ibid). She exposes how the concept of “*el buen vivir*”, which permeated local cosmologies in Abya Yala, has been unrooted and commodified to serve governmental extractivism (2017: 24). The *leitmotiv* for this thesis has been the use of concepts as methods to give responses to situations and resignify conceptual commodifications. As was the case with the misuse of intersectionality, cut from its antiracist genealogy, “*el buen vivir*” is still another example of dominant ways of domesticating languages and practices. Our case study here offers an alternative to such practices since the notions brought to the assembly table became methods for change: they were constructed as ephemeral islands of thought, giving more information about the potentiality of communal thinking than about the building of a concrete political language. In these new circulations, Gómez-Barris explores other possibilities which already take place in decentralised realities. In explaining the case of indigenous phenomenology, she goes back and forth to the construction of Western and Anglo-based critiques. In this analysis, the author displays examples in which, unlike the individual construction of subjectivity in the West, these otherwise experiences delink from the individual biological conception of the human body (2017: 49), deconstructing the idea of the body as property, as analysed in the previous chapter. It is interesting to explore how this disarticulation of signification does not abandon the claim of human embodiment rights, but rather connects these embodiments to more complex systems of relations, activating collectivity in encouraging ways. This was central for giving space to action in the YPA experience, as Haughey tranquilised the group with the repeated phrase “anything that happens is ok”: anything was ok because already so much was contained in the communality lived through the circle.

Through these bodies otherwise, Gómez-Barris explores the hidden archives of submerged perspectives. The fisheye episteme, which seeks to see below colonisation, serves to this subversive analysis of thinking beyond the limitations of domination, which taints nearly every structure of our paradigms of thought and epistemologies in the Global

North. In these perspectives, the widening of vision, the materiality of the body and human exceptionalism are forgotten in favour of remembering other imagined ontologies where a colonial background has not shaped every epistemological praxis. As in the case of Gómez-Barris, my research also has the intention to use artists and performers to bring these otherwise ecologies to the front, defending that not only academics and activists, from those realist discourses, should merge on this task, but also those seeking for what I call *fictional ontologies*. These otherwise ontologies use fiction as a way of dealing with time, space and relationality. In this line, *fictional ontologies* use a time that works through the ephemeral utopic horizons of José Esteban Muñoz (1996; 2009): they deal with the space of material imaginations and relate beyond identity. This way, *fictional ontologies* are fed by the onto-epistemological proposition that Barad works through (2007), giving importance to material realities but also amplifying their ontological meaning. My use of art, or more importantly, my coming back to its practice, follows this potential: providing specific locations from where to demand reparations without closing up our “weyond” imaginations. There. There are. There are possibilities. There are possibilities of doing things. There are possibilities of doing things differently. There are possibilities of doing things differently, outside the logics of conquest. As Negrón-Muntaner shouts out, this is decolonial joy.

2.3. Once more, affecting: on humanism and agency through decoloniality

Based on this joy, affective life and emotions need to be reconsidered for this purpose. The healing process Shilliam insists upon conveys yet another shift of the affective paradigm in use. As we could see in case study 3 (chapter 6) resistance and rage are the main articulating concepts for people engaging in activism. Still, as Shilliam reminds his readers resistance should also be thought together with healing. He launches the question of where does rage take resistance if it is not for an affective reparation? In his words healing orientates our struggles and resistances into “an intention to transcend the coloniality of power” (2013).¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/be-bop-2012-black-europe-body-politics/ (Last access 07/06/2023).

In connection with the above, it is important to deal with the affective frame from where these pages are written. The way in which autoethnography permeates my writing of this thesis comes and goes, enters and leaves. This last chapter completes the full circle since it comes back to the abyss which has haunted me for years and has pushed me towards affected writing every time, I've needed to produce final dissertations. This chapter is, therefore, also written from the vibrancy of sensorial affectivity. In this sense, the human body, the non-human one and the inert entities have been shaped from an anthropocentric tradition rooted in colonial tenets of expansion and exceptionalism. The use of fiction through artistic pieces as sites from where to imagine differently also locks other visions of the human body, which are beyond the reductive idea of humanity itself, as the posthuman project has sometimes done in confining other ideas that propagated other paradigms of power. When Shilliam refers to a renewed worlding, rather than a new (as in original) one, he also imagines other forms of accounting for the materiality of the body, writing that:

[T]here is no path towards a true humanity that can be charted through the immanent contradictions of colonial modernity; instead, the cultivation of a “new humanism” must be outrageous, resistant, and restorative all at the same time. Thus, rather than apprehending shock/outrage, resistance, and healing as elements in a dialectical relationship, I hold them as threads that weave diverse works of art intentionally and intuitively into a decolonial aestheSis (2013. Online)¹⁸⁶.

This part of my thesis claims this multiplicity of artistic purposes and possibilities, which works through the previously reviewed notion of *fiction as method*. Shilliam inspires me to think about what we could perhaps call *healing dialectics* in order to analyse the experience: those affected conversations around the table took place through experiential differences and embodiments. Differences, sustained through this dialectical healing, become, therefore, a site of potential answers and momentary responses. These deviant

¹⁸⁶ https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/be-bop-2012-black-europe-body-politics/ (Last access 07/06/2023).

identities based on gender, racialisation, capacitism, age and class, kept involved in the conversations because of the healing forms of that generated “safer” space.

The reflections of this case study recognise the self-determination of populations while also engaging into other contemporary conflicts, issues and political interests which go beyond the Irish division and reach a wider political imagination. The intervention here displays a multivocal and multifocal way of understanding politics and social change and allows for a vision of how sociality and its expectations are entangled in different morphologies. Following Karen Barad’s use of agential-cuts (2007, 2014), it is not a question of disentangling phenomena from their nodes, but rather of engaging in transitional responses which can help multiply our imaginations as citizens. As Pilar Villar Argáiz manifests in her approaches to the particularities of the Irish location, it is important to examine this space, “‘rethinking’ nationhood and belonging, by a process of denaturalisation of the supremacy of white heterosexual structures” (2018: 10). This consideration can also be applied to other locations where claims for independence lead their political life. Acknowledging the radical differences engaging direct violence towards certain populations, the anti-colonial independence fights taking place during the 20th century or the contemporary struggles of Palestinian or Sahara peoples illustrate the extent to which supremacist ideas of nationhood, citizenship and belonging can be found at the core of their resistances.

Following the standards of epistemic violence, explored by Gayatri Spivak (1988) or Ramón Grosfoguel (2013), colonial knowledge, if we deepen into the works by Vandana Shiva (1990), Edgardo Lander (1993; 2000) or Homi Bhabha (1994), and the problems with translation, defied by Rolando Vázquez (2011), alternatives to these colonial greeting spaces challenge these foundations. The account of different visions of the past and the future, in connection to the present, also breaks the temporality of synchronicity. As Bhabha writes, “[t]he present can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past and the future, no longer a synchronic presence: our proximate self-presente, our public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities” (1994: 4). Furthermore, in a sort of aftermath from colonial epistemic settlements, there have been many scholars referring to the specific role of Academia and places of knowledge in responding and activating in different ways, such

as decolonial ones. Many have been walking this path for years: Henry Giroux with his recovering of the hidden curriculum (1990), Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2014), Ashley Woodson (2017) or Leilani Sabzalian (2018), just to name a few.

With all these readings in mind and on further reflection about the YPA experience, the specific case of my most immediate cultural context became most present than ever before me. Because of the insistence of the YPA moderators and participants to think of their immediate surroundings- culturally, politically, socially or emotionally-, I found myself daydreaming about the conversations that I would have held around such table speaking of my own contexts. The proximity of their thoughts triggered my own immediacies. In the case of Granada, my place of action in the three relational, epistemic and activist senses, the uses of certain pasts overstep invisibility by the means of capital extraction and assimilation. Let me explain: the fact that the cultural values of our Muslim past provide Granada (and many other places in the peninsula) with a high rate of tourist and cultural significance, results in a false inclusion of this past. This is so since the past is used as an extractive source, never attending to the ways in which the abusive colonial expansion to Abya Yala and the elimination and expulsion of Arabs from the peninsula root together through the figures of the Catholic King and Queen. Aesthetics, as another face of epistemic violence, is present in these cultural artefacts.

In the perception of these conjunctions, curricula and programmes inside universities, schools, tour centres, museums and other places of cultural significance engage poorly with a responsible commitment to these past histories and possible reparations. These lacks are in tune with how other realities and presences are ignored in cultural and historical discourses such as those of the Roma and Gypsy communities, for instance. Although the situation is rapidly changing because of the cultural extractivism of flamenco for tourism, *payo*¹⁸⁷ xenophobic and racist attitudes are often overlooked. Aurora Muñoz Moreno, author and activist through @gipsycode, or José Hernandez (@josico.hernandez), have highlighted the many ways in which curricula, programmes and media can be decolonised. Muñoz Moreno also engages in a decolonial and anti-classist epistemology in which other aspects of knowledge are valued, such as the archive of dancers, customs, gypsy allies and parties. To search for references is not always easy,

¹⁸⁷ Term used by gypsy communities to name people who are not gypsies.

but to decolonise and to apply the inclusion of indigenous communities in our own research means searching otherwise. As in the case of the YPA the initial stands of antiracist and decolonial claims and curriculum stand through these elements: presence of diversity in the groups, in terms of racialisation, gender, sexuality, ableness and classism, the anti-ageist factor. This diversity led the conversations to topics which functioned as activators of the personal experiences related to such topics and left theory at the margins. This decentralisation of theory in favour of embodied politics releases a temporality in the conversation which works with transitional dialogues instead of anchored responses. The assembly became a performance, a video registered conversation letting go both of past tensions and of future intentions. This way of activating other rhythms is connected to the already analysed idea of the temporality of Heritage, which also connects to the next triggering of this case study, the decentralisation of the creator, the author, the artist.

2.4. The decentralisation of the “author”: the artist as facilitator

On a search for a critical aesthetics, there is also a task to tackle the ways in which Heritage, possession and privatisation contaminate the settled figuration of the artist. In the previous chapters I have examined how identity, when reduced to a singular category, is often seen as something to possess and how the figuration of certain performative identifications is also affected by this critique. The identity categories involved in artistic and cultural landscapes also fall into this reductive trap and work directly in the direction of Heritage, since their object of production is the actual cultural artefact. It is in this sense that this case study made me think of the connection between identity and Heritage and on how this was challenged and negotiated by Anthony Haughey. The artist category can become a cultural signifier for identity and hence also fall into this trap, generating the idea that art is possessed and determined through this property aesthetics: who acts, enacts, interprets and gives affective meaning to the art piece seems to be the “recognised” artist. In their critique of this whiteness of property, possession and authorship, artists and researchers Marisol Norris, Britton Williams and Leah Gipson (2021) challenge this idea.

From their embodied black experiences, they address the multiple meanings of possession and the entangled alternatives to it. As they write:

[T]he word dispossession [works] in two forms: (a) as an act of dislocating Black people from their physical land and sense of place, as persistently enacted with Indigenous peoples through violent means, and (b) as an act of depriving Black people of their autonomy, legacies, and genealogies. Both forms can be subjected to ideologies that create the meaning of what it is “to possess” and “be possessed” (2021: 9).

This resistance against white exceptional supremacist expressions of meaning, Heritage and authorship takes me back to the distinction between aesthetics and *aesthesis* with which I started the triggering to this case study. To speak about critical aesthetics, or to embrace other alternatives, such as *aesthesis*, means also to reconfigure what the central figure of the artist stands for. In the claim of other forms of aesthetics and art values, the artistic process is paid attention to and the centrality of the final product and, thus, the power of the figure of the artist, are questioned. As in the case of my proposition of “concepts as methods”, the powerful role of identity as possession should be reviewed here. Indeed, certain processes taking place through experience, such as the case study in question here, produce notions which can contest possession based identities breathe through other aspects of the concepts and artefacts. In my opinion Haugheys’ value was precisely this: he was powerful in his non-hegemonic role as *the artist in residence and in charge*. Before the many faces of oppression, Augusto Boal’s project on decomposing arts for the people and offering theatre as a tool for the oppressed was radical in many ways. It decentralised the artist from its ivory-tower position: communitarian thinking was central to the artistic meanings and the identity performativity engaged in the expression of one’s own subjectivity and the multiple existences around. The participant in the theatre experience not just a body for aesthetic consumption but also part of the artistic imagination which is active there and then. This turning of spectators from passive entities to active “spect-actors” within the piece (Boal, 1997: 13) dislocated the artist’s axis. As in the escalation from the previous case studies, where the performances under

analysis in *Side B: Adrift* (Carrizo and Chartier, 2014-16) or *Datamatics [ver. 2.0]* (Ikeda, 2006-2008) turned the oppositional scenario around, making the spectator part of the experience and blurring away the traditional distinction between agentive artist and passive spectator.

The discussing takes me back to Barthes's famous "Death of the Author" (1968)¹⁸⁸ where creation loses its authorship centrality under the pressure of a critical analysis of the text, while giving a main role to the receptor. As Barthes writes, "[t]he reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (148) and this is so because of the putting into circulation of the concepts living in the text through their vibrancy with circulating elements, entities or circumstances. Amid his particular historical moment and territory, Haughey seems to put various topics into circulation. The ongoing context of the two Irelands, the trauma histories located in past conflicts, divisions, the Magdalene laundries, the effects of Brexit in the whole territory and the political concerns of the younger generations, sustain the contextual multiplicity of this place, this specific roundtable. As Haughey himself thinks about his own positioning:

I see my role in the museum as a kind of mediator. A person who invites people in, to get involved in the culture of the Museum; and also bring the Museum out, to bring a reciprocal relationship to the wider public (2021: min. 00: 40).

Haughey decentralises his own power by searching for new forms and positionings. His work is embedded in working with people, it is compromised to new ways of narrating. Looking at the materials which are "already loaded" (min. 6:50) with many histories, Haughey attends to the importance of materiality in ways which also reflect upon the stabilising alternatives which are found through his work and projects, such as the materiality of the table in the project analysed in this case study.

2.5. Material culture and the materiality of the table: the limits of translation

¹⁸⁸ See earlier on in the thesis when I speak about my praxis of "concepts as methods" to explore the centrality of the concept in its relation to the context at work and in opposition to the usual worshipping of the figure of the concept's creator.

The conversations held through the sessions become materialised through the installation of the table as designed by Haughey, following the idea of material trace in which the words, ideas and discourses could be grasped somehow after the days of intervention. The material locus of the table and the video registrations of these 3-day conversations reshape the mentioned time-space from the friction between the potentiality of changing things from the inside and the limits imposed by the officiality and institutionalisation that is performed through these movements. Besides this, the table is the artefact for a saturation of wordings and worlding, as can be appreciated in annex 4, and deals with presences and absences with actual tangible results in an ephemeral temporality. It is only a momentum, a transitional response to specific demands, not a paradigm for action.

Haughey's concern with material culture and the limits of representation can be appreciated in some of his other projects. In *Anthem* (2021) Haughey responds to the fact that in Ireland there are over 90 languages spoken and his proposal to design "own flags" actually exposes the limits of representation and translatability, both in linguistic and spatial terms. During my years of research, projects of self-definitions have caught my attention because I sense they can connect with desired potentialities while dealing with a particular context. In my collaboration with Pedro Lasch, a Mexican artist based in the USA, during my participation in one of his Social Practice Labs, back in 2017¹⁸⁹, the topic of flags was touched upon and brought into material, by creating a happening in the city, with the topic of "abstract nationalism/nationalist abstraction". Through our own figuration of "digna rabia", a fictional actor with whom to react to the experiences throughout the city, Lasch, as Haughey would do years later, made me think about the cultural signifiers which make identity and inclusion more complex situations than the way they are sketched sometimes in theoretical settings. In this summer school, the spatiotemporal account of David Harvey's consideration of political action, which came through his concept of *dialectical utopianism* (Harvey, 2000: 182), was raised as central

¹⁸⁹ This lab was part of the "Sovereignty and Social Movements" Bologna Summer School organised by The Academy of Global Humanities and Critical Theory, which is a joint project run by Bologna University, University of Virginia and Duke University. The Laboratory took place on June 27-29 and July 3-6, in 2017.

to our debates and actions¹⁹⁰. Utopia, as an affected state of these artistic interventions, was viewed from these dialectic shapes as in need of concepts but also in need of transgression. Harvey, being present both as a lecturer in our classes and also- and I would say more importantly- as one more spect-actor (Boal, 1997) in the lab, handed us these possibilities to think with him about forms of critical imaginations for political alternatives. In the dialectics activated by Harvey, Lasch finds confronting ways of introducing new dialogues, such as the works cited above engaging with new forms of spatial inclusion beyond nationalism, or other projects by him such as “Black Mirrors”, (2007)¹⁹¹ which engage in a performative mimesis, in which reflections from colonial and precolonial art pieces engage into this conversation between aesthetics and aesthesis.

Haughey means a great inspiration for conceptual turns in memory studies and archaeological research since he gives a main role to the materiality involved in social processes. In his research of the triangulation of three conflicts, those of North Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo (2006), he seeks to explore the remains and artefacts which are outside the limits of aesthetics and are “framed markers of the conflict” (Wells, 2011: 184). As Alfredo González-Ruibal states, “there is nothing closer to experience than materiality” (2012: 2). Apart from this, materiality, in a post-anthropocentric vision, has an agency of its own, such as Carm Knappet and Lambros Malafouris remind us (2008). In the entanglement between things and humans, or humans and otherwise, we sometimes fall into the trap of categorisations. As has already been addressed, to categorise is to exclude, since the epistemics of ontology have relied on the existence of a monistic state of things. What I mean by this is that sometimes it is hard for us to think of entanglements, when applying these novel studies, as dependence and dependency (Hodder, 2012). What this translates into is the dissolution of the conflict between keeping human actors accountable for certain actions/events and speaking of their bodily

¹⁹⁰ Harvey actually gave the closing plenary to the school under the title: “Sovereignty, Movements and the Right to the City”

¹⁹¹ *Black Mirrors* is a series which began when the Nasher Museum of Art commissioned “From El Greco to Velázquez” exhibition to Pedro Lasch. Its play of transparencies and reflection engages in the impossible resolution of past-present in the pre-post colonial divide. In this sense, pre-Columbian and colonial art pieces dialogue in confronting ways which end the standby colonial reparations.

entanglement to other non-human agents that are also involved in these enactions. It is true that sometimes these transhuman theories have been used to overcome certain responsibilities of, say, the historical accountabilities of neo colonialist actions. Such is the case, for instance, with discourses about the superiority of some humans over others or of humanity over non-human animals or earth entities. Keeping the tension between human agency and non-human forces is the ethical point from where I imagine this “vibrant matter” (Bennet, 2009). In the claim of the material of the table, this reflection is important since the artefact works both as an object where the conversations can lean on, quite literally, through their writing on the sheets, and as an activator of the junction between the human and non-human agencies generating situations. When I think of Ian Hodder’s proposal that “[e]ntanglement can thus be defined as the dialectic of dependence and dependency” (2012: 89) and put it together with the influence upon my work by post-processual archaeologists¹⁹², the material place of the table becomes a matter that matters, and I see the table as the central piece of material remains in this experience. Haughey also seeks a fresh account of the temporalities involved in Heritage and memory processes, since these experiences call to a preservation of the present. Being one of my main interests of research Archaeologies of contemporary conflicts and issues, in the artefact of the table, “vibrant mattering” of those days were solidified, giving the possibility to speak of remains for the future from present tenses.

After having spoken about time, thinking about the materiality of the final table, and how it ended up the third day of intervention, I recall the work by Jian Neo Chen and Micha Cárdenas in “Times to come: materializing trans times” (2019). In Chen’s work, which I had the privilege to see in N.Y. together with Dora Santana and madison moore, during my research stay in 2020, I learn how to trust the questions which arise when listening to them. Santana’s “returning” (2017) helps me engage in otherwise temporalities which do obsess over the promise of a progressing future. Chen and Cárdenas’s article brings me to a decolonial temporality which decentralises straight time. In this, I see a connection with the topic which appeared in the final material of the table (Annex 3). Surprisingly, the messages, the sentences, the music lyrics, names, numbers

¹⁹² Movement inside archaeological studies that insists on the fact that any archaeological interpretation is bounded to the researcher’s subjectivity.

and paintings had little to do with my theoretical appetite and expectations. Thinking of the younger generations, I expected certain topics such as antiracism, gender and queerness, disability to be central in their conversations. As this was not the case, I was shocked, at first. The promise of generational newness, another consequence of settler futurism, and the quiet hunger for progress had guided my expectations towards a specificity that I could not find those days. In fact, the elements and ideas that appeared were directed to a multiplicity of topics which I was incapable of grasping at first. This was maybe due to the greatest lesson apprehended in these days: it was then that I realised how regulated my line of critical thought was. I recognised that it was based on a linear idea of genealogical production, in which only topics related to my theoretical background were introduced in my political desires and this, at the same time, was bound to an idea of overcoming, unconsciously invoking an optimism which thought of the future as immaculately free from any forms of power.

Along this line of thought, I also reflected on how art, as a fictional account of otherwise perceptions, allows for the potentiality of openness, of meaninglessness, of letting go from discursive closure. I recall Māori texts which I have read once and again in my admiration of the importance placed on letting go of meaning. In Matshidiso's interview on Sasha Huber about Māori genealogies, they reflect upon non-anthropocentric language. The fact that in Māori languages there are many non-words shows that "people are there to take care of the earth, that is why they don't name things after themselves" (2022, min.15:00). Caring for the earth can be here transposed to the way these adolescents were taking care of issues surrounding their embodiments and taking care of each other this way. The impossibility of translation, in this sense, resided in my own incomprehension of their arguments, which I was understanding linguistically, but was unable to grasp epistemically. As they continue analysing through the interview, the work by James Baldwin gets mixed in their conversation when speaking about Heritage and memory. As they remind, language is Heritage, translation stands in tension with erasure and concepts commodify the subjects involved in language. In Baldwin's words, this "authority which [...] [relies in]to everything they have- however unconsciously- inherited" (1953: 3). This Heritage goes as far as a Heritage of violence.

As has been examined in the previous chapter, going back to Coates' quote: "it is traditional to destroy the black body. *It is heritage*" (2015: 103).

The artefact of the table is powerful in my own political edification since it binds concepts and Heritage. The fact that the languages performed and arranged on the table are, in many cases, codified by the historicity of the moment at which they have been written makes it clear that the critique to translation is also enacted through this case study. This codifying is not only related to the fact that many messages from the actors in the assembly were written in Irish, a language which many have been forced to forget, but also to the quotes, music citation, intimate calls, acronyms hiding friendship conversations and relational political thinking. It was codified following an untranslatability that avoided commodification. In the search for alternatives which can manage transitions at the same time as material responses, the writings of both Paul B. Preciado and Karen Barad come to mind. On reflecting upon the transdisciplinarity and multifocality of positionalities, Preciado writes:

A philosophy that doesn't use the body as an active platform of technovital transformation is spinning in neutral. Ideas aren't enough [...] Only art working together with biopolitical praxis can move. All philosophy is intended to be a form of autovivisection- when it isn't a form of dissection of the other. It is an exercise in self-cutting, an incision into subjectivity (2013: 359).

These incisions into subjectivity unfold in Barad's use of agential-cuts which allow us to understand these transitional responses. They allow,

a contingent resolution of the ontological inseparability within the phenomenon hence the conditions for objective description: that is, it enables an unambiguous account of marks on bodies, but only within the particular phenomenon. Strictly speaking, there is only a single entity -the phenomenon- and hence the proper objective referent for descriptive terms is the phenomenon (2007: 348).

The agential “does not disentangle the phenomenon into independent subsystems” (Ibid) but rather enacts a local determinacy which can allow for the account of the continuous exchange and transition which the situations require by applying the strategies at hand in such situations. These strategies can go from material objects, such as the table in this case, or the use of certain concepts in circulation for the specific case. This exposes words which refuse to become commodified through Heritage but are still recollected as an important way to account for other ways of archiving time. In this untrained translatability, the temporal edges become liminal to the temporality of the intervention. As has been already said, it also speaks of the impossibility of translation. In the YPA the contestation to governmental powers relies upon untranslatability and transitional uses of concepts which are meant to serve as tools for the time being. These two circumstances illustrate what “concepts as methods” engage in: a recognition of shared transitional languages which help us move elsewhere.

In reflective feedback from my analysis now, months after the intervention, I would add that the generation of a “safer” space goes hand in hand with the release of control release that the experience activated. Now I understand that in order to generate the “safer” spaces it is primordial for any topic to be held in confidence and to be challenged, especially if the people involved are normally outside those reflections. Besides, the release of control, which came in the form of discourses and temporalities, I reflected on how these translational impossibilities had the potential to find alternative responses to the issues raised in the conversations. In the section which follows I pay attention to the centrality of dislocating time in the project.

2.6. The temporality of the intervention. Dislocation and liminality

Temporality can be first read in this case study as imbricated through a series of deconstructive perspectives which deal with antiracism, decoloniality, ageism, agency, queerness and critical thinking. That Haughey is the artist in residence for the *Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 Programme* speaks about the disruptive rhythms which Ireland has experienced throughout these years. In my conversations with him, Haughey insists that the changes experienced by the territory in the last century have made him think

beyond territorial claims to it and much more into the construction of cultural identities. He explains how:

A hundred years later, when we think of Ireland, cultural identities are much more complex. When we think of cultural identity I don't mean ethnicity. I also mean the broader scope of what people mean by sexuality, and class, and gender and all these kinds of questions (2021, min 1:00).

The broader scope of all those kinds of questions referred to by Haughey takes us to look at the temporality of the case study also through ageism, a perspective which is often ignored as a positionality from where to think about justice. Following Nolan Oswald Davis's project "No Conciliation is Possible" (2018-ongoing), we go back to the impossibility of conciliation with a settler time (Rifkin, 2017) which sees into the future as part of a linear temporality instead of dealing with the momentary practice structured around the present¹⁹³. No conciliation is possible, but still the intervention activates momentary responses which have to do with the transitional ages of the participants. As adolescents, they stand in this untrue age limbo, not yet politically represented while

¹⁹³ Colonialism is informed by such looking to the future strategies. As the introduction of *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (2017) - the collaborative project between Anna Tsing, Lowenhaupt Nils Bubandt, Elaine Gan, and Heather Swanson reads:

They looked straight ahead to the future, a singular path of optimism and salvation informing their dreams and deeds. This future is a characteristic feature of commitments to modernity, that complex of symbolic and material projects for separating "nature" and "culture." Moving toward this future requires ruthless ambition- and the willingness to participate in great projects of destruction while ignoring extinction as collateral damage. The settlers looked straight ahead as they destroyed native peoples and ecologies. The terrain carved out by this future is suffused with bad death ghosts. (Ibid: G7)

As Mark Rifkin nominates the particular connection between time and space (2017), here we can also notice how settler time is bound not only to a territorial linearity of past-present and future but, more importantly, to its geographies of both territorialising and deterritorialising. Following critical reflections over space and time, such as the studies by Tim Ingold (1993) or Susan Alt and Timothy Pauketat (2019), land and space are here viewed in their commitment of disentangling the meanings, activities, dynamics and enactions which take place in them. Detaching human exceptionalism from any epistemological or effective centre, Leroy Little Bear (2000), Macarena Gómez-Barris (2017) and Zoe Todd (2014; 2016) go on to explore those otherwise connections to the land which also imply re-adapting to non-normative temporalities.

informing politics and sociality in decisive ways. This is another example of liminality to be taken into consideration when speaking about time. We've seen the binding of place and time in the limited temporal signification Thermi and Moria, or the volatile chronotope of a squat. Time also refers here to the momentary occupation of the space in the Archaeological Museum, during the three-day intervention, which works through a sense of materiality in space, but maintains this transitional perspective of time.

Although infants, adolescents and other youths are focal points of action in living societies and often used as the space of political futurity, legal age systems across the world make underaged subjects invisible in terms of agency. Nevertheless, childhood has been central in the research agenda of gender and feminist archaeology for decades. The necessary link between maternity, childhood and feminism has helped feminist archaeologists delve into these topics. In their compilation of research about childhood in archaeology, in *Children, Spaces and Identity* (2015), Margarita Sánchez Romero, Eva Alarcón García and Gonzalo Aranda Jiménez bring forward historical analysis which has broken another layer of silenced subjectivities. From their approaches to the many directions childhood identity lives through, I am particularly interested in the agency that subjects under legal age have had historically in the generation of social realities. As the authors write in the first part of the book, children are,

considered not as an object of study, but as active subjects within societies of the past [...] The main issue [is] the invisibility of children in the interpretation of historic processes, which undermined their potential to contribute to social history in general (2015: 2).

Without falling into the trap of a "promising future", the agencies involved in the experience of this case study speak about the communality of a political life in which the diversity concerning must be accounted for. My critique uses Edelman's analysis of the future, in "The Future is a Kid Stuff" (1998) but engages in other temporal possibilities which do not get stuck into the muddy present. Having different ages come together in the YPA follows this idea and reinforces the deconstruction of the leadership of the artist who now becomes a mediator instead. Indeed, Haughey left complete freedom to explore

what topics were central to these groups of young and, to a high degree, unrepresented people. As I was speaking to Haughey, I realised that the notion of failure, as a political praxis, was active during this whole process. When I asked about the possibilities of something going wrong or just not happening, Haughey would reply “That’s also ok”. In those reaffirmations, I viewed the actual way of letting things happen and the role of art in those “letting goes”. When Chen and Cárdenas write about temporal non-direction they do so by relating it to the study of transness. As they express:

If trans implies a movement from one gender toward a different location, then transness is always imbricated with forward time and cannot exist without linear, teleological time. Yet if we imagine transness to be not about a crossing from one location to another but about a multidirectional movement in an open field of possibility, then time and its direction become more fluid (2019: 473).

I found the vibrancy to read the ideas brought forward during this three day’s project inside the multidirectional way transness is read by Chen and Cárdenas. In their multivocality, entropy and confusion, the experiences of the youth were joyful since they provided new codes to reconsider the momentum as a site of organisational resistance without it becoming stagnated. For the time being, let it be. It is a temporality of impetus which relates to a present situated outside the linear ordering of time¹⁹⁴, of straight time (Halberstam, 2011) as a settler practice of human rhythm domestication (Rifkin, 2017). In the face of this, to generate responses from material presences, and be affected by their emotional modulations such as joy or anger activates the potential to deform such arrangements and disengage from the inheritance logic of the times to come. It is incapable of producing consequential experience from the momentary response, but it also keeps updating these responses as time goes by. It entails failure since it is incapable

¹⁹⁴ The linear ordering of time and temporalities in which the present becomes significant through its relation to the past and the future.

of reproducing at the time it maintains active for its re-location. If this is failure, then let's fail.

In Santana's use of "returning" I see the potential of archiving in fresh ways, where going back does not serve a programming of the future, but rather an intention to make the past present again. This returning breaks with the idea of centrality and rather looks back at the margins; it looks back by turning them forward again (2017: 186). The chrononormativity challenged in Elisabeth Freeman's analysis of queer temporal disruptions in *Time Binds* (2010) is claimed through this return. Historical codifications are confronted with other temporal arrangements in which the past is emancipated from discursive regulations. This use of otherwise temporalities contaminates Freeman's work when using the temporal drag, a figuration attaining the excess of drag beyond gender mobility. As they urge to think:

[W]hat happens if we [...] reconsider "drag" so central to theorizing the mobility of gender identification and the visible excess that calls the gender binary into question, as a *temporal* phenomenon? As an excess, that is, of the signifier "history" rather than of "woman" or "man"? (2010: 62).

Freeman's drag is in an active dialogue with Butler's gender performativity, revealing new forms of the past which can be relevant to the present and working beyond the setting temporality of progressive time, in which the past should always be overcome by a better present, exemplified by many historical and political narratives.¹⁹⁵. To understand this point better, I quote Freeman:

Butler tends to read these as consolidating the authority of a fantasized original, even if citationality itself unsettles the idea of an origin: in *Gender Trouble*'s "repetition with a difference;" the crucial difference seems to be novelty, not anachronism [...]. Moreover, to reduce all embodied performances to the status of

¹⁹⁵ As the ultimate example of the neolithic revolution for which the past is discarded as unsophisticated and paradigmatically different to the present. In the case of gender and other political frames of actions, time has sometimes been used in this progressive sense, in which the past is something to conquer.

copies without originals may be to ignore the interesting threat that the genuine past-ness of the past- its opacity and illegibility, its stonewalling in the face of our most cherished theoretical paradigms - sometimes makes to the political present (Ibid: 63).

The excess used in Freeman's work is based on these necessary dislocations of sometimes illegible matters.

The temporality which I experienced while participating in this case study was beyond the genealogical past of identitarian novelty through queerness, as a main frame of reference in my work. Instead, I felt interpellated by the otherwise momentary strategies on claims which, though distant from what I brought to the experience as my central topics, became relocated as sites of political resistance. Engaging in anachronic distancing was important in order not to dismiss the responses given by the actors of the project. This is not to say that the voids and lacks existing around certain conversations, such as those regarding racism in some of the round tables, are not to be contested. It rather stays with the trouble, locating certain notions to interplay with other critical thoughts. As such, the sometimes-overseen gender and queer dilemma in politics, resonated through other political inquiries, such as the housing situation or the mental health system, which are materially and discursively experienced by these participant groups.

2.7. Art in the temporality of joy

As often as the critique is expelled from our institutional spaces, so does the resistance in joy. This is due not to the fact that as critique disappears from a central location of dialoguing, so do our aspirations to happiness, but more because of the fact that even in critique, imagining this joy is sometimes banned from our imaginations. When speaking about the term, some utopian narratives arise, for it is unimaginable to speak about violence and joy at once. In this sense, joy is at the same time adjacent but far away from Laurent Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011). On the one hand, it is near the concept since it engages in the bittersweet reality it holds in it while navigating through sometimes

contradictory affects. On the other hand, it distances from the concept since it reworks this optimism into critical happiness, making the sarcasm of disciplinary optimism considerate for living otherwise.

In the use of art, we see otherwise responses to justice and reparative situations. Being other the temporality of art, its linking to the notion of joy also adjusts it to this other temporality, in which the future is retained for discursive practices and thus, dislocated from the temporal rhythm of joy. As has already been dealt with, the *Remixing Reggaeton* project by Petra Rivera Rideu (2015), shows this otherwise languages which are provided through artistic expressions which overstep from power and aesthetics. As Edna Martínez wrote for *The Funambulist*, “culture through dance and music, partying and popular enjoyment” (2021. Online)¹⁹⁶.

In this temporal disruption of affective joy, its reshaped notion also binds with the theorisations of Queer Death Studies (QDS), in which the promises of the future and the compulsory happiness are abandoned in favour of a wider view of affective phenomenology which engages traditional negative feelings, experiences and mornings, such as death, in queering ways (Radomska et al., 2020; Lykke, 2022).

In the operation of joy as an uncomfortable disruptor, there is a break of the comfortable position of the exclusion from the cultural significations of active sociality and the sustained “positive” effects by oppressed subjects. In this choice, I pair with Paul Preciado in his use of *potentia gaudendi* (2008). Having used this term to explain the potency of the propositions of my research, in this last chapter I want to return to this route so as to give some ideas from my final positionings, after these almost five years of research. Even if explored in more detail in the conclusions, the orgasmic force which is used by Preciado to understand alternatives to embodied politics resonates to the specificity of the case study in question, since it builds upon the theoretical marks of the previous chapters and engages in a specific material circumstance which stands simultaneously inside and outside institutions, in that liminality with inhabits my own identity as an academic and an activist.

¹⁹⁶<https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/music-and-the-revolution/champeta-a-colombian-caribbean-cultural-resistance-2> (Last access 22/05/2023).

Coming back to the questions of identity and possession explored above, and to its relation to the case study in which intimacy, identity, Heritage and authorship are questioned, *potentia gaudendi* appears as that jump which challenges the limitations of potential horizons. As fiercely explained by Preciado:

What characterises *potentia gaudendi* is not only its non-permanent and highly malleable character, but rather, and above all, the impossibility of possessing and preserving it. *Potentia gaudendi*, as the energetic foundation of pharmacopornography, cannot be reduced to an object, nor can it become private property. It is not only that I can't possess someone else's *potentia gaudendi*, but also that I can't even possess that which appears as mine. *Potentia gaudendi* exists only as an event, as a practical relationship, as a becoming¹⁹⁷ (2008: 39. My translation)¹⁹⁸.

Potentia gaudendi does not stand in terms of possession, neither does it hold singular identifications, but it does not even match an exterior-interior divide of strategies of resistance. This is not a claim for ambiguity and ideological interpretation, but rather a call for the exploration of how to orgasmically contaminate any place, ingesting, digesting or puking out its meaning.

This takes me back, again, to the problem of translation, which has been named in many connections prior to this moment. Translation reaches a different level in connection to this case study, one which deals in institutional potentiality and thus engages with questions of recognition, visibility, representation, equality and so on. As mentioned in other parts of this thesis, translation lives many problematics in its two directions: as linguistic transformation and as spatial transfer. As has also been discussed in other parts of this work, one of my main interests is certain practices of refusal, which,

¹⁹⁷ “Lo que caracteriza a la *potentia gaudendi* no es solo su carácter no permanente y altamente maleable, sino, y sobre todo, su imposibilidad de ser poseída o conservada. La *potentia gaudendi*, como fundamento energético del farmacopornismo, no se deja reducir a objeto ni puede transformarse en propiedad privada. No solo no puedo poseer ni conservar la *potentia gaudendi* de otro, sino que tampoco puedo poseer ni conservar aquella que aparece como la mía. La *potentia gaudendi* existe únicamente como evento, relación práctica, devenir” (2008: 39. Original).

¹⁹⁸ “Lo que caracteriza a la *potentia gaudendi* no es solo su carácter no permanente y altamente maleable, sino, y sobre todo, su imposibilidad de ser poseída o conservada” (2008: 39. Original).

nevertheless, live through certain paradigms of representation. In this case study, as the ultimate and more-officialised one, the practice of refusal exists in the temporality of the intervention and the transcendence of its material. The discourses here born are given a chronotopic importance, attending to their validity in connection to the time, space and relationality existing in it. As a practice of refusal, it directs itself to “recognize a system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible” (Campt, 2019) ¹⁹⁹.

This is a transition, a transitional translation, a transactional transitional translation, a transgressive transactional transitional translation. In all their contradictory parts this is an event, a relation, a practice, a becoming: a body in excitement, an orgasmic force which “is the sum total of the potential for excitement inherent in every material molecule. Orgasmic force is not seeking any immediate resolution, and it aspires only to its own extension in space and time, toward everything and everyone, in every place and at every moment” (Preciado, 2008: 42). In short, this is a transitional state which stabilises through its own way of changing.

3. Resolution. he Void revisited

3.1. Diffracting the Void

I am going to challenge this last case study through the diffractive application of the ideas concerning the chapter of the Void. In doing so, while the previous chapters are dialoguing with each other in using specific artistic material to draw a resolution to the triggerings, this chapter comes into a diffractive space-time-relationality with the Void as another artistic material which emerged from an emergency. Taking the Void as a piece of creative writing, I want to reflect on how to bring material solutions to the case study in question. At the same time, this chapter also intra-reads through the previous ones by offering them a concrete image of how to merge some of the topics together in an artistic intervention. In a way- in many-, YPA in connection to the further projects that were endorsing the project, touches upon many landmarks placed in the previous chapters. On the one hand the void and negativity are intra-read through this case study to give it a

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt> (Last access 03/06/2023).

concrete application. On the other, this case study intra-acts with the previous ones: the ephemeral archive in case study one finds its moment, the collective activism in case study two is organised and the critical liminality of case study three is located.

At this point, I would like to coin a term to give sense of the many triggerings and explosions which have happened throughout the thesis in order to retake the multiple diffractions. The term is that of *transplosion*, a notion which I think as transitional burstings and trans detonations, this chapter is the first moment of the conclusions. It serves as a detonant for the conclusive part at the time it is, in itself, a bursting of concepts as methods. In this way, *transplosion* helps me find milestones which only help in the momentum, engaging in a transitional location. In this history is important, but it does not get stagnated.

Coming back to the chapter of the Void, I want to reflect and diffract some ideas which can allow me to settle the concepts as methodologies in use in this last case study. I explore the void in that mix between impossibility and agency which I explained in its chapter. This junction between both perspectives refers to the way in which the absences, abandonments, negativities and other voids are featured here not only as a response to an impossibility but also as decisions, agential-cuts (Barad, 2014). I have decided to introduce these aspects to speak about the limitation of the thesis in itself.

Taking into consideration my application of chronotopes, including the third element of relationality (apart from time and space), I have understood only in this final part how my own chronotope could not escape certain contacts. Contacts to privilege, to Academia, to work, to income and to the state. Throughout the thesis I have explored the disruptions that came in form of questions, interrogations, insecurities and anxieties regarding my double position as an activist, but also as an educator. In this diffractive part, the reflections on these topics have come to a resolution, through these agential-cuts that I was referring to, so as to conciliate through the impossibility of conciliation, as Nolan Oswald Davis explores (2018-Ongoing).

In the re-reading of Oyeronke Oyewumi's critique to westernised and colonial ways of looking for gender (1997)- in contexts in which gender may not be central or perceived in the same way as in the space of domination from where these analyses are made-, I have also set down some practical ideas. As I was able to grasp from the

experience in the YPA in Dublin, and as has been explained throughout the chapter, my limitation as a researcher dealing with critical thought was to expect certain discourses to raise up from these conversations. After nearly 400 pages speaking about the importance of space and the centrality of meaning in activation, I was unable to let go from personal expectations and swim towards what was arising from the context in itself. It was after some weeks that I came to the understanding on how queer, decolonial and disruptive this experience was, without it being saturated by questions surrounding these topics (gender, racialization and non-normativity, among others). On thinking about Oyewumi now is clearer since I have, in fact, engaged on how even if certain topics are important to build upon, taking for granted their being active in different chronotopes leads us to an epistemic delirium. As you can see, here I am not speaking so much of an impossibility, but rather of an agential decision of letting go, of materialising through disidentified discourses, following José Esteban Muñoz's ideas (1999).

In this path of disidentifying, and retaking the critique to the archive as a piece of colonial construction and time ordering, I also re-visit the question "is memory always a desire?", reflecting on how critical studies have also meant a certain contamination of the building of how to resist in life, without sometimes challenging internal ideas in these theories. In this sense, and exploring how memory in this linkage to colonial Histories is not always something from where to explore resistance, since there are many experiences in which desire comes from forgetting and an agential amnesia. Following these thoughts, and in the conjunction with the reflection on the specific temporality of this case study, which is active through the age of the participants, the idea of officiality and disruption is also diffracted. Even if my whole analysis during this thesis has challenged alternatives which were linked to institutions, normative relationalities and counter-spaces, the agency of these participants, citizens which were not-yet-recognised in an active way by the system, also changed some of my considerations from these ideas. Through them, I understood how many official places are saturated by non-normative identities. I am not speaking only about adolescents which are inside the law without being active creators of it, but also about many subjectivities which are in need of these official discourses, because of material limitations or affective ones. This is, the way I have been thinking about activism was another way of colonising its own movement.

Significance is empty as it is also full. The void is many things and works at many levels. The void, even if empty, is saturated with avoidance. Saturation speaks about those points of excess that remain uncovered and have their *potentia* on being restructured, rethought, redone or reimagined. In an account of *saturation* as a central concept for deepening into the complexities of “race” and representation, Soyini Madison explains through her application of fractal thinking’s horizontality:

Our thinking and creating together will exceed saturation points of what we either already know, want to protect, or want to dismantle about race, indigeneity, identity, and institutions, because the beauty of it all does more than hold our attention and intensify the present (Madison in Snorton and Yapp, 2020: 253).

This issue of being in and out of language (using concepts while destroying their singular points of signification, saturating meanings and imagining other forms of interactive intimate forces that oversee discourse), are what I return to in the next chapter when speaking about saturation beyond performativity, in that it represents other ways of disrupting normativity that do not assume prearranged gestures, such as compulsory movements or conclusive responses.

The interaction with the negativity explored in the Chapter of Void is important to bring into discussion in this chapter, because of the potential uses of practices and theories which expand affirmative politics. It is also important to consider the fact that to reclaim negativity is not the same as a politics of pessimism, such as Mark Fisher reminded us all in his writings (*Crack magazine*, 2014). From this idea, we can build the many spaces which have opened since the chapter of the Void was sketched, and which, in the subsequent case studies, have dealt with very particular uses of negativity. As I was already sceptical about in past reflections, there is a sense of negativity which I locate in privilege. Going back to Angela Jones, there are any emancipatory politics which come from experiences that cannot allow themselves to be inside the logics of negativity. It is true that claiming negativity is a multiple ethics and can mean many things. But here, what I am claiming in a specific way, is the fact that many bodies in need of these liberations are, somehow, bound to the officiality of governments, institutions, normative relationships and so on. As we can see through the adolescents, bound to a minor-age

which keeps them under parent/tutor/state control, this subjectivity can be expanded to many others. We are not anymore criticising Edelman's obliviousness in his own ideological position. No, the critique is deeper and reaches many extra-official movements which sometimes lack an understanding of the need to insist upon official spaces where these disruptions are also present.

I would not like to romanticise this through the recovering of certain ideas such as governments, states, grants or institutions, because I do not see in these spaces a possibility of disruption from powers and hegemonies but it is important to engage in and not abandon the many identities which may be trapped in those places. In this sense, we see negativity can be a tool in the sense of Saidiya Hartman and Tina Campt's use of *refusal*, so as not to abandon but simply reject any sort of commodification. Where we situate negativity and these practices associated to it, is also a practice of disruption.

SIDE A CONCLUSIONS

Over the years I have become more practical and exponentially less pragmatic. I realise this when finishing this thesis, that feels more as an exorcism than as a closing. I see the need to give a closure to a project of which I am unable to let go. It is so not because of the kilos of emotions inside these pages, or not only, but, more importantly, because I do not think it is possible to give concrete and stable answers and resolutions to all the questions and debates my body has gone through in these five years of research.

In these conclusions I want to bring back the art piece which has inspired me to give closure to this thesis: the “No Conciliation is Possible” diagram by artist Nolan Oswald Dennis (2018-Ongoing) and that is why I have chosen it as the cover here. Dennis’s artistic intervention addresses the impossibilities of absolute closures. Saving the distance of experience in his use of Franz Fanon’s words, since I depart from a white-documented position, I pair up with them two in fully endorsing their impossibilities. As the chapter of *The Void* happened, I started to realise the importance of working with the tensions, frictions and liminalities between the possibilities of offering responses to the experiences narrated in the thesis and the impossibilities of solving them or, at least, finding clear answers to the questions raised from these. This is why, considering the circularity of the thesis, the last chapter and case study closes with a diffraction with the void, retaking all its claims for the potential of impossibilities. In the practices of refusal that sustain these acknowledged voids (Campt & Hartman, 2015), there are also performed directions towards disarticulating taken-for-granted ideas of my own positioning, such as radicality.

The guiding questions at the start of each chapter have led me to fictionalise about facts that I do understand as stabilised locations from where to move on. Through the question *Is the archive always radical?* I can clearly answer: it is not. Even so, there is a material need for many who are absent in those recollections which has made me understand the ensuing queries. The last one, for example, *Is radicality always radical?* comes back to diffract upon the first one, agreeing in the need to work from the multiplicity of locations, so that no one gets left behind. *Is memory always radical?* then appears as an extension of the archive, also making room for new thoughts: not everyone

wants to remember. This is important for me to bring up here, at this point, since my own style of interviewing, researching, asking, narrating, and speaking to others has changed throughout this gradual realisation. In the many experiences going towards people and making them remember to tell their tales, I have sometimes opened up processes that I was unable to close. When *we*, as epistemological builders, pose questions to people we get close to because we are looking for answers for our research, we sometimes make them realise things which we are incapable of working through, leaving them pondering on all that information from which we *de-response-abilise* ourselves. Through these reflections, and already deep into case study two about Moria and Thermi, I discovered I needed to change my art therapist praxis of the consumption of others as objects of research. Suddenly I felt I needed to return to art and fiction as methods to delving differently into reality and its forms. It was then that my most profound meditations started, triggered by the question: *Is Resistance always radical?* I realised I had tried so hard to work critically around my anti-institutional claims that I had abandoned radical forms of engaging with those different encounters. After speaking to an activist friend one day, I opened my eyes to how they needed institutional support in order to resist, and that was my turning point from where I stared at how, from my own radical position, I had actually overlooked my own privilege in all its disruption. Radicality does not imply radicality.

In the structural and personal circularity of this thesis and my experience of it, is where I find the momentary closure for these conclusions. Through the accumulation of theories as methods and reflections around this work, I have found new locations from where to stand inside positions I did not know how to inhabit before this journey, such as those regarding art. The diffractive readings throughout this thesis have allowed me to work from both my queerness and my new materialistic politics. This becoming-continuous and continuous becoming has taken me to explore concepts I have myself devise, such as *weyond*, *subjective nomadities*, *fictional ontologies* and *transplosion*. These four reunite and reshape elements concerning universality and communality, mobility and location, fiction and reality and queerness and saturation, respectively. I have thought beyond the mimetic forms of reality and, working through these fictions, I have looked towards horizons that transform daily political, resistant and artistic

practices. *Weyond* refers to a movement in collectivity. In this collectivity which recognizes difference, losing orientation and drifting away from marked rhythms. *Subjective nomadities* speak about how space and movement are also subjective to who sees, who perceives and who acts. It creates room for other identities, recognized via *fictional ontologies*. These acknowledge the importance of sometimes engaging into (other times leaving alone) realities which are beyond normative systems of perception and control. *Transplosions* are free radicals, excesses that be-come from non-binary positions of the body and which refuse to settle down but appear by momentums.

Departing from the idea of *contamination* that has altered my thought, the most valuable location I have arrived at has been the personal full-circle trip into my work. After years debating in the oppositional locations of in and out, when, for example, speaking of my ambiguous position as a researcher and an activist, I have understood now that the practices of caring I have had with and from my friends and lovers have been essential to build up the theoretical/methodological/experiential life building you, readers, have encountered. In the Side B bibliography, I have fictionalised my deepest conversations, those which made me take turns in theories. Through *contamination* I have wanted to face the dying conclusions I have arrived to thanks to the people who have been with me for the past years. The immediacy you will find as the visual conclusions at the end of this section are inspired by Oswald Dennis's diagram. It is composed by non-linear temporality reflections, traumatic memories, interpretative possessions. It is haunted by interventions, rotten desires and decolonial confrontations. It follows ideas that I cannot continue myself, breaking with a sense of inheritance and futurability.

“¿Es el cuerpo un texto que se resiste a la publicación? Un proceso no busca nada en lo inmediato. O quizás lo encuentra todo ahí”
Dolores Martín “¡Ay!” (2022)²⁰⁰.

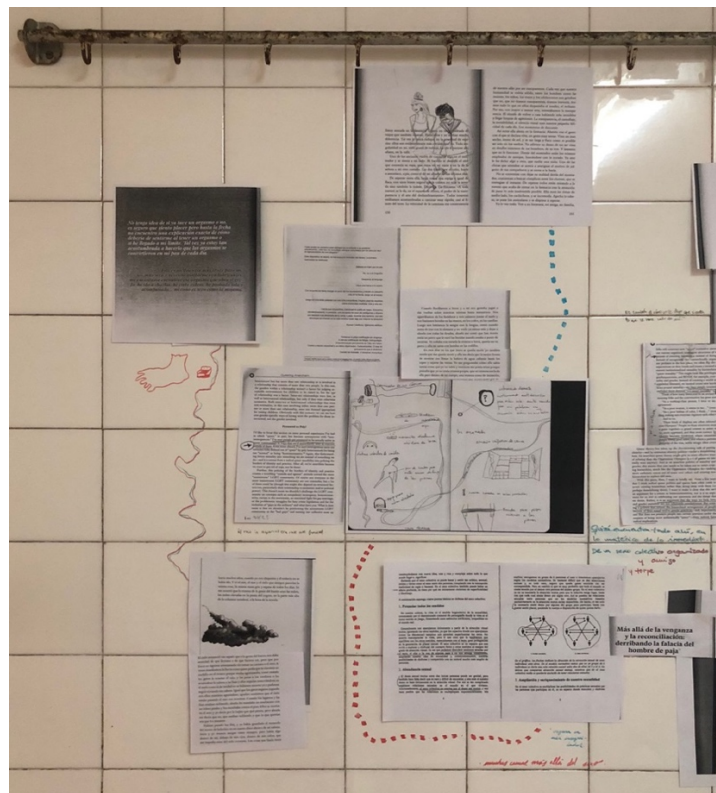
Looking back and looking away depart from the same sense of haunting. Haunting concepts are withstanding to this project. It is so because as Mark Fisher described our era, “our zeitgeist is essentially hauntological. The power of Derrida's concept lay in its

²⁰⁰ “Is the body a text that resists publication? A process doesn't look for anything in its immediacy. Or maybe it finds everything there.” (My translation). Taken from Dolores Martín's “¡Ay!” (2022), following Pina Bausch's reflections on the body.

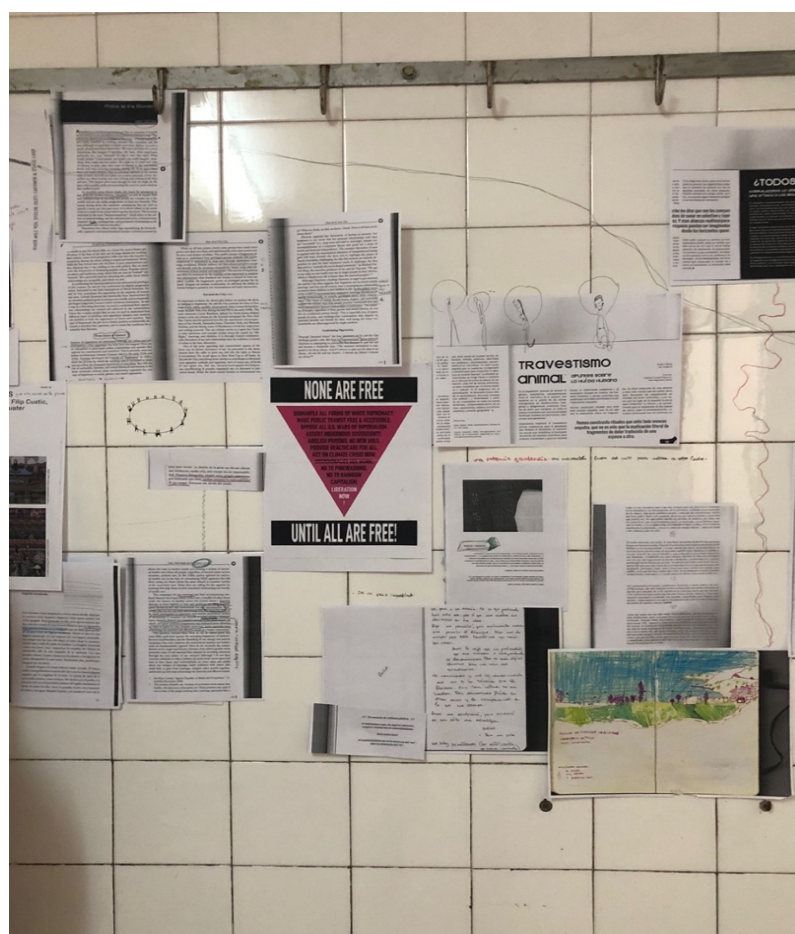
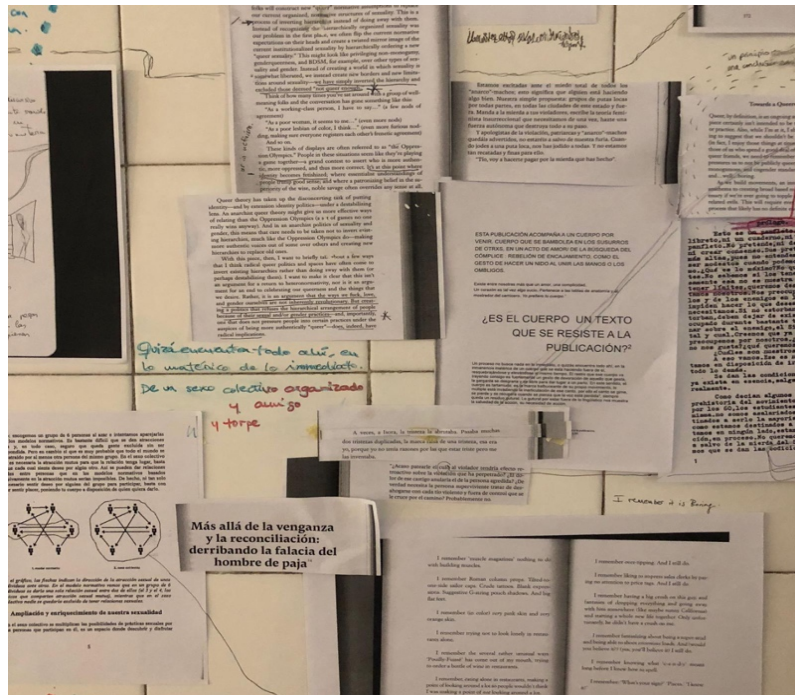
idea of being haunted by events that had not actually happened, futures that failed to materialise and remained spectral” (Fisher, 2014: 100). Hauntology embarks us on temporalities where the presences of the past possess us to redirect our gazes. We are haunted by uses and expectations that are phantasmagoric not only in their form but mostly in their capacity of execution. We are incapable of experiencing, grasping, understanding, or even letting affects in without sculpting them as intelligible signs for our recognition. We follow spectres without remains. We speak about materiality while bumping upon the invisibilised objects we succeed in steering clear of. In this thesis, places are haunted by embracing their minimum forms, their mythical existence and their subtle, ephemeral and futile traces.

The rest is silence.

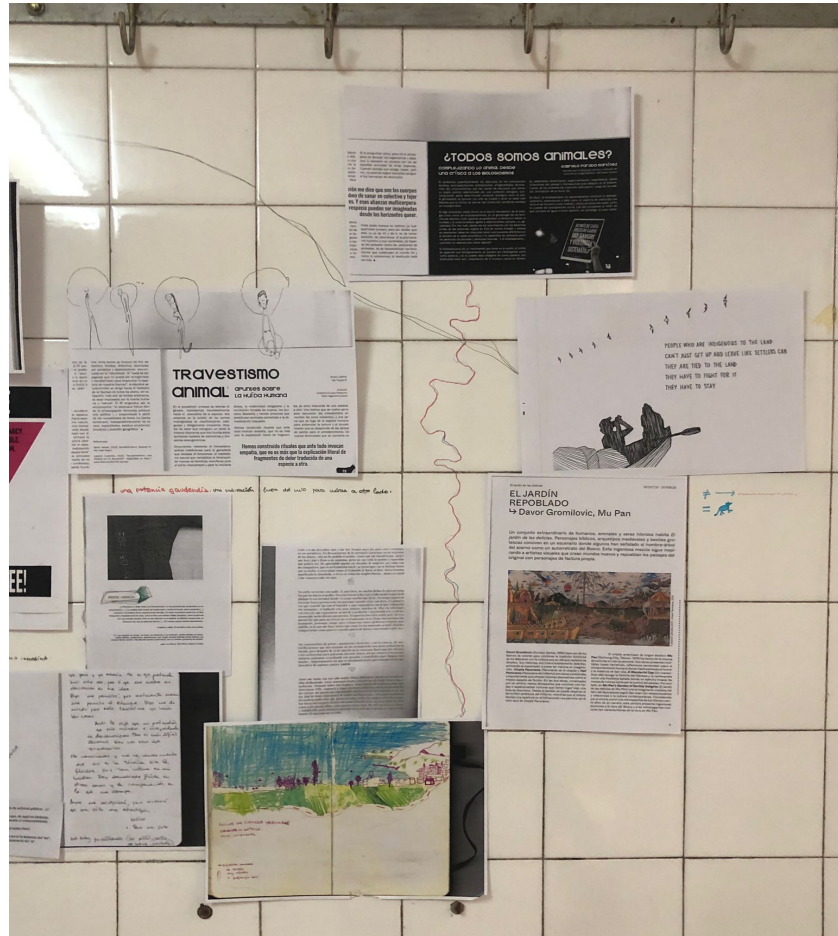
SIDE B CONCLUSIONS: *Building a house*



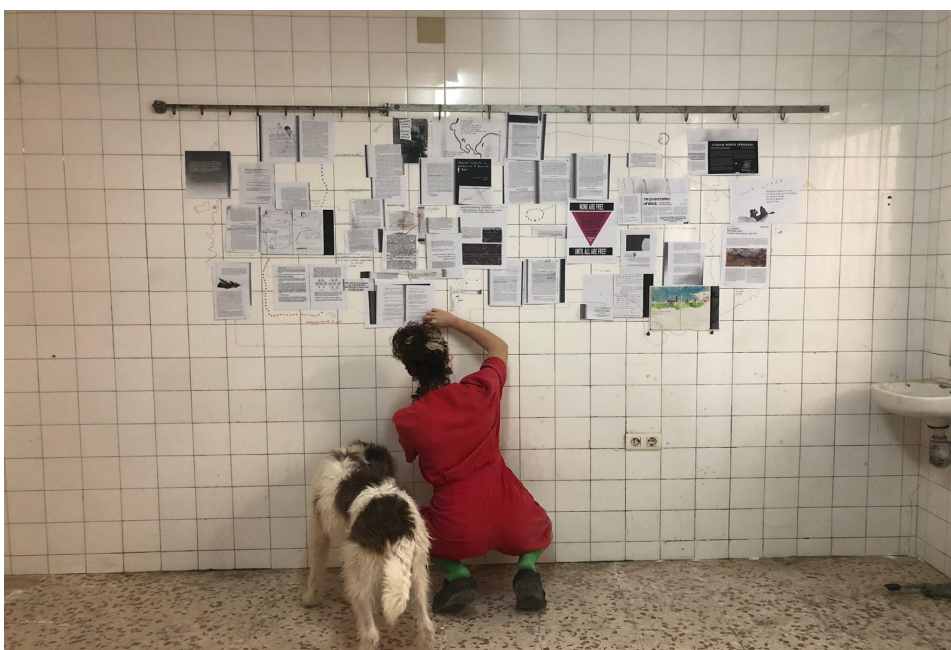
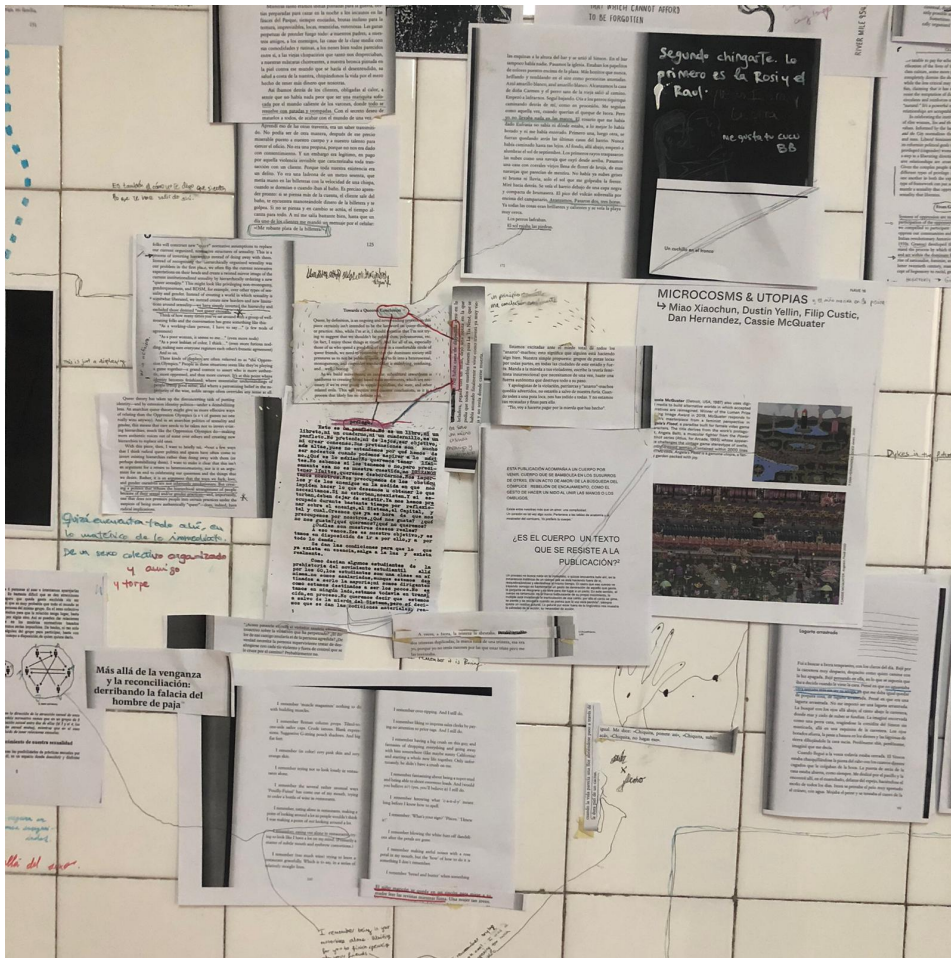
Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives



Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives

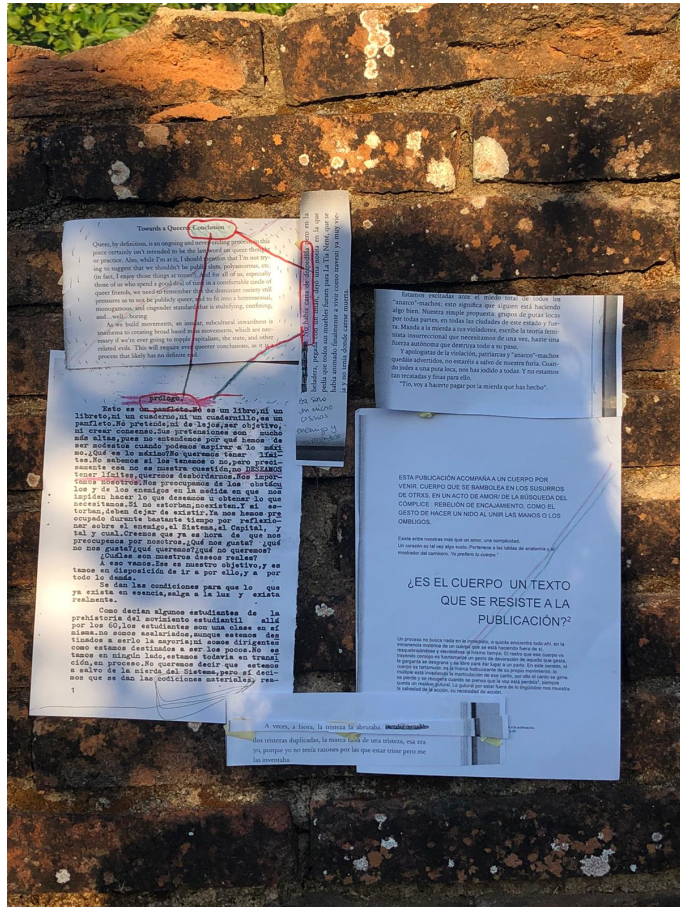


Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives





Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives



SIDE A BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is an extensive archive of the representative theorists appearing in this thesis. After many years discussing how to mention hundreds of references by people outside academic places, a conversation which started thanks to my chosen family in Bologna, during the GEMMA MA first year, I add to this a SIDE B bibliography, which started to take shape in the second-year of my MA at Utrecht, after watching *Side B: Adrift* for the first time. It organises acronyms which can sustain a minimum recognition of all those untheorised experiences which have given me fresh orientations from where to live and get affected by the main theoretical spectres in the thesis. Some names are fictional, since many are missed encounters at bars, bathrooms and demonstrations. Others are nicknames of intimate people who are part of my organising affective life. Others are invented names for people included in the official bibliography, who also part of this personal theoretical encounter. In this case, the fictional name is intended to differentiate their contributions between one and the other bibliographies, rather than a simple form of making them anonymous.

In another order of thought, during the last days of my writing a class with professor Sayak Valencia came to mind (Sep. 2019). While engaging in t Gore capitalism and the strategies of necropolitical systems, Sayak made us reflect on the importance of unofficial forms which allow new identities to enter into our powerful academic spaces. With powerful I do not mean potential, but potestal power, which commodifies the imagination of who we use in our research. On this account, I finally decided to include whole names in the reference, rather than just initials, as I had been archiving for the past five years. In doing so, I would like to support an opening of the images and imaginations which come to our mind when thinking about references, theorists, artists, writers and friends. In this sense, I am skeptical of gendered binary reading of names. On the contrary, I would like readers to unlearn the instant white cis-maled image which is invoked when thinking of these theories.

In the mixture of initials which are codified for anti-institutional reasons, authors who refuse to be written under capital and pseudonyms, this bibliography is the most precious thing in this thesis, since it speaks about the entangled genealogies in this work

and breaks free from the innovative pressure. It engages in the importance of memory, of looking beyond, recovering voices and delving into new paradigms of thought.

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SIDE B BIBLIOGRAPHY. *Fiction as method*

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*Is memory always radical?*²⁰¹

Vale. (c. 2022). “Bisexual feminist terrone.” *Amorphous ontologies*.²⁰²

Aries Pau. (c. 2021). “Joyful/disfrutona. Sliding through language”. *Haunted desires*.²⁰³

Dan. (c. 2020). “Breathing outside the vampire zone”. *Is memory always radical?* ²⁰⁴

Dolores Martín. (c. 2020). “Hay una herida siempre abierta que me hace gozar”. *Haunted desires*. ²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Somewhere I read “Nostalgia as fascinated disgust”. When I tell you about my experience, I feel strange to put my memories in front of you to see. 10 years of therapy have told me it is important to remember but also to forget about things, to abandon them over the years. I am scared to enter the dreamhouse. “Nostalgia (noun) The unsettling sensation that you are never be able to fully access the past; that once you are departed from an event, some essential quality of it is lost forever. A reminder to remember: just because the sharpness of the sadness has faded does not mean that it was not, once, terrible.”

²⁰² There’s is a specificity of your south that locks you into nothingness. I mean, you are not a racialized experience, but you do live the consequences of a southern island. The resistances there are overseen and you have finally found the spot where you want to put your political energy in.

²⁰³ I look at you and I am amazed. You’re so fluent in your own corporeal language that it seems for me impossible to aced to it. You have told me so many times life is joyful, and it is so true you make the most of it. You fuck, learn and fight as in a borderland, remaining conscious of its limits but seeing the potentiality to expand yourself beyond. “Yo me preguntaba cómo ella sabía tantas cosas que yo no sabía y entonces me ponía triste porque pensaba que yo no tenía tristeza propia, que mi tristeza era la de ella pero dentro de mi cuerpo, una tristeza como de imitación, dos tristezas duplicadas, la marca falsa de una tristeza, esa era yo, porque yo no tenía razones por las que estar triste pero me las inventaba.” (go to Dan c.2020).

²⁰⁴ We have been suggested to do a performance. A suggestion that we follow, knowing that is much more than that. We decide to speak about academic exhaustion, production and the lack of imagination we are going through. It is a disastrous performance since everyone is tired. They look at us in disgust, telling us we should have put a bit more effort if we wanted this to be understood by the public. As ridiculous as it sounds, we agree to their comments.

²⁰⁵ You’ve changed your name to honour her memory (go to Dolores Martín c. 2020). You read from Weil “Beauty always promises but never gives anything” and it is in this ugliness you follow that you cry in ways that make me smile.

Dolores Martín. (2022). ¡AY!. *Haunted desires*.²⁰⁶

Marce. (c. 2020). “Religious silence as radical absence”. *Is memory always radical?* ²⁰⁷

Lucia del Valle. (c. 2021). “This is not our party”. *Poliamori and other forced reflections*.²⁰⁸

Stef. (c. 2018). “Holding a hug”. *Pending affects: otherwise corporeal tensions*. ²⁰⁹

I Zizzy. (2023). “By the time people realize what was actually important, they won’t be in it any longer”. *Ephemeral affective archives of history*. ²¹⁰

Anabela. (2023). “Encamadas”. *Pending affects: otherwise corporeal tensions*. ²¹¹

²⁰⁶ I look at you and I am amazed. You’re so fluent in your own corporeal language that it seems for me impossible to aced to it. You have told me so many times life is joyful and it is so true you make the most of it. You fuck, learn and fight as in a borderland, remaining conscious of its limits but seeing the potentiality to expand yourself beyond. “Yo me preguntaba cómo ella sabía tantas cosas que yo no sabía y entonces me ponía triste porque pensaba que yo no tenía tristeza propia, que mi tristeza era la de ella pero dentro de mi cuerpo, una tristeza como de imitación, dos tristezas duplicadas, la marca falsa de una tristeza, esa era yo, porque yo no tenía razones por las que estar triste pero me las inventaba.” (go to Dan c. 2020).

²⁰⁷ Sometimes, when I am high, I enter temples. I get down on my knees and speak to you. I have to concentrate so much, but when I do, I feel calm, in a sense of communication I never had when saying goodbye to you. When I meet M. I feel calmed to see queeress in the name of God, or something like that. It makes me think on that time P. and me walked 3 km up the hill to go to church (go to Vale c. 2022). I also remember, in silence, the way you would normalize anything your friends would find disgusting (go to Angustias Arcadas 2020).

²⁰⁸ We know them. Some of us from a distance. Others quite personally. You are telling me about things that have happened the last years and we speak about the regimes of truth certain social characters implement around us. (go to Stef c. 2018).

²⁰⁹ I don’t enjoy affect very much. It is for many reasons so but mainly because it makes me feel very small. The best thing of that year is that I have met you. The worst is that you hold me in hugs for way too long. After some months of friendship, I tell you I don’t feel comfortable and you build the space for this uncomfotability to be spoken up.

²¹⁰ We debate a lot. I listen to you, and you listen to me, reading some chapters of this thesis and reflecting on the ridiculous and fucked up things that take place through history, not as in the time-place sequence that we live through but the narrative of it.

²¹¹ It has been a rough year. We lack an intimate space where to hide for days so we decide to design our own bedly cities.

Ale. (c. 2017). “Don’t love me without consent”. *Poliamori and other forced reflections*.²¹²

B. M. (2020). “Cruising bathrooms and claiming prides”. *Haunted desires*.²¹³

Emisissippi. (c. 2018). “We can recall people’s reclaims if we have that privilege”. *Amorphous ontologies*.²¹⁴

Terezza. (2019). “The binary claims of a war: east European feminism”. *Amorphous ontologies*.²¹⁵

Angie and X. (2019). “Friendship in a sinking boat: I don’t want to speak but you are crying”. *Pending affects: otherwise corporeal tensions*.²¹⁶

²¹² I am finally having a great time at a party. We have come all the way to Amsterdam and it is the first time I see you I know I want to kiss you. It has been months I don’t want to be with anyone after something happened in Italy. We chat for some hours and, while we are dancing, I feel it is the time to kiss you, so I do. You hold the kiss, maybe enjoying it with me. When we separate you look at me and say “please, don’t kiss me without asking me first ever again”. I am thinking for weeks about this, but it makes so much sense for so many other experiences. You come to a party with some friends. As usual, it is a queer sex-positive party. When we go in people approach us to dance very close and we feel sexualized in ways we cannot take. We go out to the canal and stay there speaking for hours. (go to Dolores Martín 2022).

²¹³ We have paid 5 \$ to hire this room. I am completely shocked with political organization here. We are speaking about reclaiming pride and a cruising architect has come to the meeting to explain his project for those days. A gender-neutral cruising area. He asks us how we want to make consent work. We are debating for 4 hours.

²¹⁴ I am still thinking of all those river semesters I’ve missed. It amazes me listening to you. How enthusiastic you are about life. You can be. But also, you want to bring closer stories that they are asking you to tell somewhere else. The day my grandfather dies, I understand I miss you more than what I remember you.

²¹⁵ Since that time in Beograd, I feel intimidated by you speaking. You’re so straight forward and tender at the same time. Years have passed and J. P. is giving the keynote. At some point, they unfortunately generalise the situation with the war in Ukraine and Russia. In front of 400 people, with you red items moving from one side to another, stand up and speak to all of us: where is decoloniality and anticlassism for the east European feminist experiences?

²¹⁶ We are missing the drag ball. Their hands are in between our legs and holding their mobiles. I am trying to make them think we are ok with it, but I can feel you trembling by my side. After one hour without knowing what is happening, I hold your arm and jump out of the boat. (go to Elsa S. 2021).

Elsa S. (2021). “There is no language I can refer to myself”. *Impossible claims and refusal*.²¹⁷

F. (c. 2019). “Your genealogy has made me walk away”. *Impossible claims and refusal*.²¹⁸

Angustias Arcadas. (2020). “Don’t leave: my hand is just an extension of all the strength I have lost” *Impossible claims and refusal*.²¹⁹

Angustias Arcadas. (2019). “Trauma and sex work”. *Haunted desires*.²²⁰

Paolo. (c. 2016). “Self-regulations and shame”. *Impossible claims and refusal*.²²¹

²¹⁷ I am so happy to see you again. I know we have changed. I have also integrated many things I did not understand 5 years ago, when we were part of the same political group. Back then in a group assembly they all asked “how do you use neutral pronouns in Spanish?”. Not knowing what I was responding to I replied “we write with the X”. A year later I met my first non-binary friend and lover. Back in the city you tell me how sometimes you prefer speaking in English than in Italian because you have no pronouns to refer to yourself in your language, and it is even more disappointing when you misgender yourself than when others do.

²¹⁸ You simply tell me to accept my white genealogy has fucked with you, from ever but more recently in concrete outcomes. I feel ashamed, sad, frustrated but I know I have to accept it. Your reparation for now is for me to walk apart.

²¹⁹ You’re in bed with me, after you tried to kill yourself: death studies. I accept it. You say, “hey, I might be gone soon”. I get it. It is 4 months later I want to disappear myself.

²²⁰ Of course, it is more complicated than a general claim. Everyone comes from a different experience and you come from trauma and abuse. I hear you well, too well, but I would never be able to face sex in the same way you do. What makes me feel shit gives you minutes of joy, of compassion with yourself, of power that you lost the third time a guy entered your room while you were asleep. (go to B.M. 2020).

²²¹ The year has been hard to both of us. Me because I have grown up in friendship, that is to say I have stopped trusting everyone. You because sometimes you are so high you can’t even speak about the torsos of Greek kouros. I have never been moralist with drugs so I go through a plan with you so you can reduce your heroin consumption that you have been addicted to since 17 years ago. You are 36. After a few weeks I feel redeemed with the world for being able to cure you. We are in my house, at a dinner. You use the bathroom. You use. You come out and your eyes are zooming out. Everyone makes you feel comfortable and does as if your eyes were wide open. I look somewhere else disappointed because I could not save you. I hope life is still holding you.

Angie. (c. 2017). “Yes, I am a lesbian, but I’m also brown, so cut the shit”. *Impossible claims and refusal.* ²²²

Claudia. (c. 2017). “Posso chiamarti nena?...ma si, come no?” *Amorphous ontologies.* ²²³

J. R. S. R. Magos. (c. 2018). “They are defended by women but its men that know they work”. *Is memory always radical?* ²²⁴

x.x.x. (c. 2019). “I am coming from everywhere”. *Is memory always radical?* ²²⁵

²²² You are visiting my best friend. I didn’t think I would like you but I guess the structure of the night has taken me to desire our encounters in the dark. The next day we are speaking about many things. I through my empathetic bullshit of lesbian sameness into you but you are sick of those moves that we, white people, do. You tell me we are not a total.

²²³ After 9 months involved together in the same queer political group, we have entered an indistinct intimate zone. I know you more than any of my recent friends, but I am also learning how to engage in radical desires and so are you. When we speak, there is a forced paused in our words that allows us to think what we are gonna say next, and it is good that way. You say nena after inviting me out that night but immediately after you know maybe this is an overstep so you ask. It is ok, but I mentally go through the automatic language I use with others.

²²⁴ You are in your usual coach: the sex work debate is starting in Spain. In the news, I mean. You say, “they need their rights”. I look at you and think on how fascist Heritage has haunted our locations how can you vote for them thinking like this?

²²⁵ I have put my name down to help in the festival. Sitting down next to you, words are spitting out of my mouth: “where are you from?”. I see in your face you thought me better. You tell me you have not visited your hometown for years, and have lived in 5 places since then so what exactly do I want to know. I am silent and you continue “I am coming from everywhere, but if you ask me of recent events, I have been living in Berlin”.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: *Valor y Cambio*. A conversation with Frances Negrón-Muntaner and images from the project

This conversation with Frances Negrón-Muntaner was held on the 8th of April 2020, during the first lockdown, after the State of Alarm was declared by the Spanish Government the 14th of March that same year.

Angie Harris Sánchez: Uno de mis casos de estudio va a ser, evidentemente, *Valor y Cambio*, y después tengo el capítulo que nos han pedido desde *researching y eccentric methodologies*, que estamos escribiendo cada persona de del doctorado estamos escribiendo sobre algo. Entonces yo basándome en valor y cambio como caso de estudio estoy haciendo como una introducción como una teorización y después se evidencia en una entrevista contigo una serie de preguntas que son generales, pero para que vayamos charlando y a partir de ahí como que voy cuestionándome diferentes cosas que me planteo no. Una de las cosas de las principales cuestiones cuando estamos hablando de *eccentric methodologies*, qué significa el uso de conceptos, a lo mejor históricos, pero que realmente no tienen como acepciones decoloniales, feministas, etc. ¿cómo conceptos revolucionarios, o que lo han sido anteriormente, cómo pueden ser reconceptualizados o reactualizados en el tiempo. Entonces, a partir de ahí pues claro la experiencia de *Valor y Cambio* evidentemente al ser un proyecto de economía comunitaria alguna o circular, como como se pueda como conceptualizar, realmente supone darle una vuelta de tuerca al concepto de economía

Frances Negrón-Muntaner: ¿Las preguntas aparecen como entrevista o tú las incorporas como citas digamos?

A: Yo tengo pensado que tengamos una conversación y en base a eso no podemos o directamente poner preguntas específicas o yo decirte qué piensas sobre el concepto de reconceptualizar el concepto de economía no eso lo puedo poner y después como transcribir lo que tú me vayas diciendo y a partir de bueno eso va a aparecer como en la

última parte del artículo pero sobre todo este artículo es porque va a aparecer como en la tesis entonces va a ser una un pequeño fragmento de la tesis de pues eso, la experiencia en *Valor y Cambio* que realmente pues tendremos o sea ya tendré que ver como forma parte de otra forma se puede ser audio nada más porque si no me tengo que peinar sí... sí, sí te lo pongo con el móvil entonces si quieres vale... vale... vale genial pues espérate vale mira te voy a hacer una serie de cuestiones vamos charlando yo básicamente tenía el... el esquema de la entrevista estaba basado en antes de llegar a Nueva York ahora con todo el tema del Covid con todas las protestas de pues antirracistas en Nueva York y en todo Estados Unidos como que la he ido modulando un poco vale así que lo que vaya saliendo. Lo primero que te voy a preguntar es, yo más o menos he estado leyendo la última las últimas noticias que ha estado presentando el tema de introducir *Valor y Cambio* a un nivel más institucional desde la educación puertorriqueña entonces ¿cómo está la situación actual o cuál es el panorama actual? ¿dónde está situado *Valor y Cambio*?

F: Tenemos la cita con la Universidad de Puerto Rico para hablar sobre el valor y circular la moneda después de las protestas del verano del 2019 y la razón que eso me parecía relevante es que *Valor y Cambio*, entre otras cosas, quería proveer una plataforma para que la gente se cuestionará este concepto, pero las protestas proveyeron otra plataforma para la agencia hacerlo entonces queríamos ver si había cambiado y si te acuerdas la tercera pregunta que hace la... la experiencia es ¿qué persona o grupos tú conoces que hacen lo que tú valoras? Esa fue la pregunta que más personas tuvieron dificultades en responder. No conocían a nadie, o decían que no conocían a nadie, o ninguna organización... o muchas veces decían *Valor y Cambio* era lo... la experiencia que estaban teniendo al momento. Luego de las protestas, que una de las cuales trajo casi 1000000 de... tal vez 1000000 de personas a la calle pues empezaron a circular el nombre de grupos de personas que están haciendo este trabajo. Yo quería saber si ese escenario de protesta había de alguna manera transformado a la gente en la asunción que tenían de grupos y personas haciendo lo que ellos valoraban. Entonces queríamos ir en febrero. ¿qué pasó? Bueno, en febrero pues ya habían varios meses de... de los llamados *swarm* de terremoto, más de 3000 terremotos y todavía está...ayer hubo otro o sea que eso continúa. Entonces... precisamente había afectado el lugar que queríamos ir porque la primera vez que

estuvimos para *Valor y Cambio* en Puerto Rico mayormente estuvimos en San Juan, queríamos salir de San Juan y queríamos ir a Ponce, queríamos ir a lugares del sur que fueron de los más afectados por los terremotos. Entonces dijimos “bueno OK, no vamos a en febrero” pero abril era nuestro punto límite porque las elecciones que iba a comenzar. En Puerto Rico las elecciones no son como Estados Unidos donde tú no sientes las elecciones hasta prácticamente dos o 3 semanas antes de votar. En Puerto Rico las elecciones comienzan 6 meses antes de noviembre y se sienten en todo el país. O sea, se sienten en la calle, se sienten en la... en los medios, es una tensión. Es otra cosa. Entonces no queremos que el proyecto se confunda con esa ... con esa coyuntura vamos a ir en abril. Bueno, pues en abril ya no era posible porque el Covid. Entonces esa esa parte la... la última visita de *Valor y Cambio* a Puerto Rico está pendiente. Es posible que si abre el Museo de Arte contemporáneo que también es parte de la exhibición de “Dialéctica y anarquía del deseo” es que entonces nosotros podemos hacer de esa una base para hacer un Tour final, pero eso está pendiente en este momento. Mientras tanto el museo y yo habíamos hablado sobre cómo nos dimos cuenta que los maestros de Puerto Rico y los estudiantes los chicos habían venido al proyecto autónomamente. Nosotros no hicimos ningún output particular, pero ellos se aparecieron. Entonces nosotros queríamos explorar eso más y hablamos sobre hacer lo que llamamos el *Valor y Cambio* Kit que era este ... unos materiales que los maestros podían usar para utilizar los billetes como forma de... de enseñar... de aprendizaje de distintas cosas. Entonces lo que llegamos es hacer dos talleres que lo hicimos por ... dos talleres de 40 maestros cada uno, de escuelas de Puerto Rico y fue increíble, fue increíble porque los maestros pues rápidamente vieron la posibilidad de usar los billetes para integrar prácticamente toda la escuela en la enseñanza y algunos maestros que ya (o maestras. Casi todas son mujeres) eh que... que ya tenían proyectos ecológicos, que ya tenían este... distintos proyectos que integraban asignaturas. También, por ejemplo, había en la primera reunión de 40 maestros ellos se dividieron en pequeños grupos y de este...de esa sesión salieron cuatro proyectos de moneda social. Uno de los cuales estaba perfectamente diseñado desde el principio porque era una maestra que ya tenía un proyecto de reciclaje en una escuela (estamos hablando de niños de cuarto grado, quinto grado, niños pequeños y ella veía el uso de la moneda para expandir el proyecto e incorporar eh ... agricultura agroecológica. Entonces vamos a decir

que tú eres un nene que participas, tú haces tu reciclaje, te dan monedas, usas esa moneda en... en estos otros espacios y la circulas ¿no? integras la comunidad y de paso enseñas matemáticas, economía, historia, etcétera ¿no? y los maestros rápido vieron que el proyecto podía permitir la integración de aprendizaje de todas las asignaturas, incluso el idioma también porque por ejemplo tú puedes hablar del proyecto en inglés, puedes hablar del proyecto el términos de historia, de literatura, de migración, economía, salud pública, o sea todo. Entonces pues ese proyecto ahora mismo, después de ahí el éxito que tuvimos con el diálogo, el museo nos pidió una propuesta para el museo y nosotras, Sarabel y yo directamente apoyar al menos 2 proyectos en las escuelas aparte de crear el recurso que cualquier maestro puede usar. O sea que eso es el frente de las escuelas. Entonces está al frente a New York que hay un grupo constituido que se llama *JustXchanges* que está lanzando la moneda social de Nueva York que se va a llamar justX que suena como *justice* pero es JustX. Ese proyecto pues ya se hizo el código para que las personas entren porque va a empezar con una moneda virtual dado el Covid. Ya existe el código, la página web ya casi está terminada...hubo una actividad, una intervención preliminar un poco anunciando *soft lunch* anunciando un poco, pero va a haber más en el futuro y ¿qué más? pues la moneda de...del paso del caño Martín Peña continúa. Claro, bajo el Covid pues no hay tanto movimiento y demás, pero esa ese proyecto continúa. Entonces personalmente yo estoy aparte de como *advisor* de los proyectos yo estoy terminando la película que es *Valor y Cambio, the movie* y lo que es cómico de la película es que como sabemos la experiencia en Puerto Rico del proyecto fue muy emotiva y...y alegría y demás, uno de los tonos fundamentales de la película es la comedia porque enfrentamos muchas ... enfrentamos retos y cómo lo resolvemos, ya que añade humor a la trayectoria. Y en lo otro que estamos trabajando es el informe de lo que contienen las grabaciones y ya están las grabaciones que son como 2000 están transcritas y... estoy trabajando con los estudiantes y con un bibliotecario de *Digital Humanities*, para poder analizar la data. Es decir, vamos a hacer un informe de quienes participaron de la data que recogimos, qué valoran, cuáles son los obstáculos que ellos ven y qué es lo que ellos piensan quién... quién ya hace lo que ellos piensan y vamos a compararlo por género, por edad, por educación, por localización (si están en Nueva York o están en Estados Unidos) y preliminarmente hay... es interesante... Nueva York es un lugar mucho más heterogéneo.

Puerto Rico fue más homogéneo en sus respuestas y la que la gente dijo pues yo creo que el punto de hacer el informe aparte de devolver el narrativo a la gente es también proveer un punto de partida para que la gente vea que a pesar de que eh...cómo traducir eso a política pública y a infraestructura política pues es mucho más complejo que simplemente decir. Yo creo que el informe sugiere que la mayor parte de la gente está de acuerdo en lo que quiere. El cómo es otra cosa ... es mucho más... pero es... es increíble que la mayor parte... estoy hablando de 90% de la gente, piensa que la educación, después de la familia, es lo más que valoran y no quieren decir educación como movilidad social. Quieren decir educación en el sentido de...de cómo se relacionan con el mundo, consigo mismo y con otros. Y eso también fue interesante porque claro... se dice hay que educarse para tener un buen trabajo, para hablar, pero eso es lo que la gente estaba diciendo y eso es muy interesante.

A: Y creo que eso es como muy importante ahora mismo con todas las protestas de Estados Unidos con... con todo el tema de George Floyd y todo el reclamo antirracista, decolonial, etcétera, creo que es muy importante centrarse en eso no cuando tú haces un reclamo y resistes y te activizas no desde...desde eso desde esa movilidad social que al final es como el escape del sueño del...del proletariado que tenemos en Europa que es el sueño europeo de edúcate, edúcate, edúcate, trabaja, trabaja, que algún día no pertenecerás a la clase obrera ¿no? y al final el reclamo de *Valor y Cambio* es otro. Es valora, transforma estos conceptos y resiste desde aquí ¿no? y al final reconceptualiza. Y una de las cosas más interesantes que te oí decir en una de las conferencias fue al final eso mismo ¿no? cómo la Academia o vosotras lo que estabais haciendo era simplemente ser un medio que estaba poniendo posibilidades en un espacio que podríamos conceptualizar como público, pero que al final las relaciones que se estaban creando de ahí eran privadas, pero no desde ese espacio privado de propiedad privada, sino íntimas ¿no? Me acuerdo un día que estabas diciendo “la cola al final no era lineal sino que se había creado una especie de círculo más asambleario” casi, podríamos decir y eso me llamó muchísimo la atención ¿no? porque ahí era como la reconceptualización del binario de lo público y lo privado, de qué es fuera de la Academia y dentro, qué es tener contacto entre...entre barrio que... que a priori no tienen, porque a lo mejor tienen otras

temporalidades también de trabajo y sobre todo eso ¿no? el ... el sueño de escapar de la situación social que te ha tocado vivir y no resistir desde ahí... que se está viendo eso mucho en la noticia de George Floyd .. es como 20 o 22 días (no sé cuánto lleva la gente de la calle) y el reclamo no es superar una situación sino reclamar y resistir desde ahí. No sé cómo lo estáis viviendo desde allí o si ves algún tipo de conexión con ...con eso.

F: Bueno, la crisis del Covid... una persona que está estudiando a Puerto Rico nos preparan de una manera diferente a ver lo que está ocurriendo en Estados Unidos porque cuando de momento ciudadano neoyorquino se da cuenta “ah, nuestra infraestructura de salud es problemática porque se le ha quitado tantos fondos ... porque está privatizada” se empieza a dar cuenta de una serie de cosas que desde Puerto Rico nosotros lo sabemos muy bien y llevamos mucho tiempo organizándonos. Entonces es curioso. Yo escribí una cosa que se llama “staying alive in Puerto Rico” porque era como el Covid ciertamente pues presentaba una nueva coyuntura, unos nuevos retos, pero por otro lado, hay una continuidad con la crisis de María, con la crisis de los terremotos, con la austeridad, porque ya Puerto Rico ya más de una década tratando de mantenerse vivo literalmente. Entonces el Covid da otra otra... otra manera de vivir eso, pero no es una lógica nueva, por lo tanto la gente pudo responder inmediatamente porque ya saben que el punto de la política de... transformadora en Puerto Rico es mantenerse vivo y hacer un *over-turn* o sea transformar las condiciones de vida de raíz. No hay reforma. O sea, realmente la reforma mientras que en Estados Unidos es la primera parte de esto que, antes de George Floyd, que fue el Covid ... bueno teníamos que echar *patrás* también porque fue la campaña yo pienso de Bernie Sanders. O sea, si estamos pensando en la corta duración hay... hay una serie de cosas que han ocurrido en los últimos par de años que yo pienso hicieron que este terreno fuera fértil para lo que está ocurriendo ahora. Ciertamente ha habido, hay un movimiento de... de repensar la justicia que incluye los niveles de encarcelamiento, o sea sabemos que las tasas de encarcelamiento, mayormente de los hombres, pero de las mujeres también, son de... o sea altísimos, sabemos que Estados Unidos tiene el sistema de... o las tasas de encarcelamiento más alta del mundo y por más tiempo... entonces había ya un movimiento cuestionando eso, claro cuestionando la brutalidad policial pero es un todo no es solamente los policías ¿no? Entonces eso era

como una parte. Segundo es cada vez más atención a la... al racismo como sistemático y este es interesante porque me preguntaron si quería participar de un... de un grupo de periodistas para ver qué terminología deben usar los periódicos en español para hablar de este tema y una cosa interesante que en ... en lo que les mandé que no había pensado hasta ese momento realmente es cómo durante el ...qué sé yo... hace 10 o 15 años atrás hubo como una suerte de... de cambio donde la gente prefería que se les llamara afroamericanos o African American, hay una preferencia hacia esa término y ahora el péndulo regresó a Black y parte de eso es liderado por *Black Lives Matter* pero es porque hay una radicalización de la perspectiva que se... se... la revolución es realmente (repensar en cómo) la supremacía blanca, la organización racista jerárquica de la sociedad ha cambiado de forma pero no de raíz este ... o sea que eso... eso ya también se venía gestando este... por varios años. Entonces le sumas a eso la situación económica de la polarización, los jóvenes cada vez con menos opciones de trabajo, aún con la educación y con educación avanzada, el Covid que hace consciente a mucha gente de lo que es... ha sido el impacto neoliberal sobre el Commons de todo lo que es o lo que debe ser común ... y entonces tienes el *trigger* digamos de George Floyd que dentro de ese contexto pues explota. Y hay una cosa también, la campaña de Bernie Sanders es interesante también porque Bernie Sanders ofreció un vocabulario para entender lo que estaba ocurriendo en Estados Unidos que no fue apoyado por lo por la mayor parte de los electores afroamericanos y lo que se impone en... en esta coyuntura es el vocabulario racial para pensar... no el vocabulario de clase ...y eso te indica nuevamente que es que la... la categoría de raza y racismo son las formas en las cuales se piensa la desigualdad no ... no... en este momento y por muchas décadas ... no la terminología... o sea que en ese sentido Bernie Sanders hablaba de una insurrección o de revolución pero en el vocabulario que no la iba a poder generar. Pero de todas formas sí contribuyó al llamar la atención sobre elementos estructurales económicos.

Pero bueno, entonces *Valor y Cambio* dentro y...y las proyectos que han salido luego como yo JustXchanges pues obviamente ven en esa nueva conciencia o... de más gente... más gente tiene la conciencia de que hay unos cuestiones estructurales del capital y que hace falta hacer una tras una transición una transformación de raíz desde una economía basada en la explotación la acumulación y la extracción a una que pone al centro el

bienestar de la comunidad y cada vez hay más gente, vamos a decir, que está de acuerdo con eso versus, digamos, antes del Covid. Por otro lado la crisis misma... que la gente había perdido tantos empleos este que el gobierno haya respondido con tampoco apoyo ha generado muchos proyectos nuevos de ayuda mutua, por ejemplo, que no es exactamente es lo mismo que una nueva moneda pero son nociones que muchas veces coexisten y que inciden en la necesidad de la transformación, o sea, que a las preguntas sobre la economía pues ciertamente cuando tú miras el capitalismo desde una colonia que pues entonces tu... tu versión o tú o tu perspectiva y experiencia del capitalismo este... no es aventajada, entonces ve cosas que el que está en Nueva York incluso le da mucho más trabajo ver porque aunque tú seas digamos pobre en Nueva York tú estás en un lugar de gran cantidad de abundancia mientras que aunque tú tengas dinero en una colonia tú no estás en un lugar de abundancia entonces esas esas *disjunctions*, disyuntivas, disjunctions, tú sabes, pues proveen perspectivas diferentes sobre cómo funciona el capital, la intensidad es diferente.

A: Supongo que cuando estamos hablando porque... evidentemente *Valor y Cambio* tiene un componente artístico como decolonial ¿no? decir como que se basa en lo que podríamos decir cuando creo que Walter Mignolo habla del *aesthesis* y *aesthetics*, ¿no? cuando al final la estética del arte se ha conceptualizado desde un panorama de esa modernidad, de ese proyecto de futuro, de esa temporalidad siempre que va avanzando y *Valor y Cambio* lo que hace es reconceptualizar eso y decir, “bueno no, estamos usando el arte como imaginación política” y supongo que esa imaginación política a través, por ejemplo, de un concepto que puede ser tan básico como el de economía cambia radicalmente entre una colonia entre una persona pobre emigrante o racializada en el centro de Nueva York y cambia en no sé o lo podríamos decir cambia en sociedades indígenas donde el mismo concepto de... de economía ni siquiera existe ¿no? entonces ¿cómo opera ese... es decir qué cambio hay en esa imaginación política desde ese punto de vista más artístico en *Valor y Cambio* entre la experiencia en Puerto Rico y la de Nueva York (antes de analizar eso esos resultados)? Es decir, las sensaciones que da en ese momento.

F: Yo tomé la decisión de... de utilizar o de diseñar un proyecto artístico a modo de proveer esa plataforma o ese espacio precisamente porque había hecho una ... un sondeo entre activistas y los activistas habían dicho que... o sea rechazaban todas las formas convencionales de pensar en... por ejemplo no querían asamblea, no querían reuniones, no querían, ni tan siquiera irse a un campo a algún sitio para pensar, no querían hablar con otra gente haciendo lo mismo o parecido es... articularon que se sentía exhausto, que no tenían más energía, que lo único que podían hacer era dedicarse a lo que estaban haciendo en la comunidad donde estaban y que no querían hacer otra cosa. Entonces eso me planteó “necesitamos otra forma de tener esta misma conversación que no se sienta como trabajo, que no se sienta que... que no te drene la energía”. Entonces en ese proceso pues fue que yo empecé a pensar en diseñar una moneda. Entonces la pregunta era ¿pero cómo usamos la moneda para conversar ... para circular otras ideas, otras narrativas? y poco a poco pues fui llegando a...al concepto de ...de *Valor y Cambio* como intervención artística y... yo describiría el éxito es estrategia. Uno, la prensa el principio pues no nos entendía ¿verdad? porque nunca habían oído de lo que era una moneda social etcétera. Pero una vez conseguimos la atención de algo periodistas tanto en la televisión como en la prensa impresa e hicieron artículos, yo te puedo decir que en 24 horas desde la prensa no cubrimos y la prensa cubrimos yo entraba a espacios y todo el mundo estaba hablando de moneda social. El concepto que desconocían el día anterior. O sea, que eso amplificó el mensaje, circuló un nuevo vocabulario. En Puerto Rico eso es particularmente importante porque en Puerto Rico la política es... tiene una intensidad y una violencia que tiene que ver con el contexto colonial en gran parte y...y pues la traición o la cultura política del país, mientras que este nuevo vocabulario que estábamos presentando era bien diferente en relación al colorismo que Puerto Rico se...se limita a la idea de si eres... si apoyas la estadidad para Puerto Rico la independenciam... gente de todo tipo, en relación a ese debate, podía participar de este vocabulario que no tenía el bagaje, ese bagaje en ese contexto. Y entonces eso fue increíble, o sea, estar un día completo explicándole a la gente que era una moneda social y al otro día entrar en otros espacios donde la gente está... ya estaba manejando los conceptos y viendo qué aplicación podrían tener y demás, eso fue un asunto. Claro, antes de eso sería la manera que el proyecto constituyó nuevas comunidades y nuevas posibilidades que no llevan tal vez al tercer asunto que es la

adopción inmediata de ... de la idea de moneda social para suplir necesidades o necesidades locales inmediatamente ¿no? Y claro, así el proyecto se fue conociendo más allá de Puerto Rico, pues hizo posible otro tipo de colaboraciones a nivel global porque sabemos que está... como la economía capitalista es una economía global, el activismo alrededor de su transformación también va a ser global para poder este... tener el impacto que queremos. En fin, o sea, que esas son... hay un debate muy grande muchas veces sobre alguna gente creen realmente que no puede tener ese tipo de impacto... pues depende, honestamente. En nuestra experiencia, en todas las otras opciones que hubiésemos tenido, que pensamos: asamblea, reunión, activistas, este... protesta, qué sé yo, no creo que hubiesen tenido el impacto que tuvo esta intervención en los participantes y en todo el... y por eso estamos haciendo la película y por eso estamos haciendo el informe entre otras cosas porque queremos compartir la experiencia para cualquier persona en cualquier sitio que diga “bueno, tenemos este reto ¿cómo lo hacemos? pues a veces lo mejor que puedes hacer es diseñar una experiencia que no se sienta como que le estás imponiendo nada a nadie, que la gente pueda intercambios, y que realmente no existe la experiencia sin la participación o sea yo... yo hubiese si hubiese puesto eso allí y nadie hubiese venido no hubiese pasado nada.

A: Sí, sobre todo la, o sea, la parte que nos toca como a lo mejor peña privilegiada que también tenemos otra forma de comunicarnos a través pues, a lo mejor, del lenguaje estructural o post-estructural casi... y cuando llegas... yo me acuerdo cuando estaba haciendo arteterapia que... que fue la primera vez que reconocí como una persona privilegiada a través de esa epistemologías más tradicionales ¿no? porque yo no me daba cuenta que la manera de comunicarme también tenía una raíz muy concreta aparte de ser blanca pero también en un contexto muy concreto de una educación privilegiada de unos padres con un nivel adquisitivo que me había permitido tener un círculo de apoyo X transfeminista, decolonial, etcétera ¿no? y muchas veces me planteaba “¿cuál es el punto de... de activación, como políticas, en gente con la que me estoy relacionando que no tienen ese *background* concreto desde el privilegio epistemológico?” ¿no? y el arte se abrió como eso... como otra forma de comunicar en la que la persona no necesariamente tenía la responsabilidad como tienen en asambleas, por ejemplo, de tener que expresar o

comunicar realmente lo que de alguna forma ha hecho en ...en como en la transcripción hacia el arte ¿no? Entonces había como una creación artística que por una parte les servía como el lenguaje pero era un lenguaje que no tenía por qué tener acceso nadie a ese lenguaje ¿no? Casi como *La Frontera* de Anzaldúa: “yo decido quién accede y quién no ha este texto”, y me parecía como un reconocimiento también de otro tipo de epistemologías ¿no? y al final la pregunta que me hago también es, porque yo muchas veces sentía cómo... como personal investigador de la Universidad de Granada o Complutense o donde esté en ese momento ¿no? cuando hacemos de alguna forma acciones directas en...en porque estamos haciendo pues... al final estamos haciendo activismo académico ¿no? y estamos haciendo acciones directas o las estamos llevando a cabo, estamos iniciando el proyecto por eso mismo porque hay muchas comunidades que todavía por lo que sea no tienen contacto entre sí entonces parece interesante como, a lo mejor, hacer proyectos de poner en contacto ¿no? pero muchas veces me... me queda como la responsabilidad de “vale yo no soy o no voy a ser una figura constante en ...en este espacio como concreto” ¿no? de... de... de una localización concreta, ¿cuál es la responsabilidad de que esto no sea simplemente como una marca investigativa y después cuando me vaya simplemente se deshaga el proyecto porque realmente no... hay gente que no tiene tiempo como para seguir reuniéndose, o seguir haciendo asamblea, o seguir haciendo arte, o seguir haciendo lo que queramos implantar? Entonces eso es una cosa realmente que como ¿cuál es la responsabilidad que tenemos ahí de... de implantar proyectos que realmente no sabemos si van a seguir fluctuando en el tiempo o se van a quedar estancados?

F: Bueno, hay un par de cosas que quería decir. Una era que cuando yo empecé cuando empecé a ver que gente lloraba y se emocionaba cuando le salían los billetes y yo les decía preguntar porque mucha gente me dijo que era porque era arte ... que el billete era arte, y es interesante porque sabemos que una de las primeras cosas que los gobiernos neoliberales hacen es cortar todos los programas de arte, todos los fondos para el arte eh, mientras que la gente que vino y... y por lo que vemos a hasta la fecha de... de los datos que recogimos de quienes a los participantes, pues muchos de ellos tenían grado universitario no todos pero era todo el mundo tenía una apreciación y un reconocimiento

de que la ...la experiencia ... que una de las razones que la experiencia era valiosa era porque era arte. Entonces eso es un poco de crítica y... y resignifica y reta la idea de que el arte es una cosa elitista... o sea, lo puede ser, y obviamente la manera que se manejan los museos, las jerarquías de arte y todo eso, pues son todas problemáticas pero que hay una también una valorización por parte de la gente de la experiencia artística como modo de conocimiento, valioso. Y lo segundo que habría que decir en el contexto de Puerto Rico que muchas veces la gente está más abierta a una intervención artística por, precisamente porque el... los artistas a veces se valoran más que otros agentes de representación como los políticos, vamos a decir. Entonces los artistas se ven como un grupo que interviene que... que aporta ... que produce algo de valor y que le provee continuidad a la colectividad que trae preguntas que son urgentes, que no tienen al menos el mismo proyecto de... de poder de ... de otros sectores y no... no tiene los mismos objetivos y hay una apertura a ella. Sobre las preguntas de asuntos sobre uno comienza algo y se va... Bueno, a mí... yo empecé este proyecto y no sabía que iba a tener digamos un éxito que tú puedes decir inmediato ... o sea que puedes ver el impacto inmediato a algún nivel, yo no lo sabía. Me tropecé con el trabajo de Rubén Albés que era un brasilero que ... que estudiaba la religión eh... después fue... o sea, dejó de hacer trabajo académico y mayormente se accionaba como poeta. O sea, seguía teorizando y seguía pensando, pero de otra manera. Y él tiene una línea en un poema o dos, que dice que hay que sembrar aún sabiendo que no vas a ver lo que el árbol va a producir. Usa el árbol de dátiles ¿no? tú siembras un árbol de dátiles y no... no vas a ver el dátil... tú no lo vas a ver. Y yo a veces pensaba...terminaba describiendo el proyecto como una semilla. Entonces por eso son sin embargo la diseminación y el dejar estas... estos trazos de lo que tratamos de hacer que ¿por qué lo hicimos? ¿qué ocurrió? ¿Qué pensamos que ocurrió? y de tener múltiples registros de la experiencia y hacerlos disponibles a la gente porque a lo mejor, por ejemplo, ahora ... ahora mismo hay impacto. A lo mejor de aquí a 10 o 15 años no, pero queda el *record*, queda el material que hay para acceder y la gente puede retomar porque no es lineal ese proceso ¿no? Recientemente estaba pensando en eso también porque pensando en cómo una figura como James Baldwin, que había sido bastante olvidada por décadas, en parte por su homosexualidad en parte porque él no...él no era el mismo paradigma del ... del héroe digamos como Martin Luther King o...

mientras que transformaciones que ha ocurrido políticas y sociales y demás ahora lo hacen a él y su voz mucho más importante. Por lo tanto, hay que mantener hay que mantener estos materiales y que circulen y que tenga accesibles para ...para ahora y para luego y...y sabiendo que a lo mejor el árbol se tarda en crecer y...y no importa porque el proceso es eterno.

A: Sí, sí. O sea, a mí me parece, De hecho, como te lo estaba preguntando por eso mismo ¿no? porque muchas veces desde la Academia hay muchos proyectos que se llevan a cabo pues a nivel de calle, a nivel de activismo, y realmente ahí como casi una mente de masturbación de “voy a este sitio, implantó algo, hago un análisis de los datos y luego como que me lavo las manos y me voy” ¿no? Entonces la raíz de realmente de dónde nace ese proyecto está en la propia investigación académica y no en simplemente que haya como una conversación entre la calle y...y la Academia no y en este caso como que lo veía muy... radicalmente diferente. Hay una recogida de datos, hay como conversaciones entre diferentes lugares y al final sí como que se crea esa esa idea de semilla no es decir “yo tengo la responsabilidad puesto que parto de un privilegio como material, en este caso, voy a dejar esta semilla y después como queda de alguna forma delego, sin saber exactamente qué va a pasar” porque no sabes si se van a crear asambleas comunitarias, si se van a crear casas ocupadas como para que haya comunidades de cientos de personas , o si va a haber realmente como una comunidad que sea... partiendo de un barrio... realmente ahora sea cohesionan 20 barrios entre sí ¿no? Entonces la forma que será no tienes por qué saberla, pero sí, de alguna forma, no ir con... con la cosa de “bueno, hago mi investigación y luego desaparezo sin más” ¿no?

F: Claro. El tipo de trabajo que yo hago. Si yo estoy haciendo estudios decoloniales en grandes rasgos, si yo estoy trabajando asuntos de jerarquía coloniales y raciales y de género y demás, y yo no hago un esfuerzo porque eso ... ese pensamiento, esas reflexiones, eso ... esos caminos sean compartidos con otros, no solamente para diseminar, porque eso es otra cosa muy importante. Cuando yo empecé el proyecto mi idea era sacar lo que yo había aprendido sobre la deuda, el concepto de moneda social etcétera, sacarlo de la Academia y ponerlo en la calle. Pero lo que ocurrió fue que la

calle... o sea, hicimos eso ¿verdad? pero lo más importante al final fue que la calle me proveyó a mí y a otros un espacio para repensar un montón de cosas. Por ejemplo, yo no creo que el concepto *decolonial joy*, alegría de colonial, hubiese surgido de mi trabajo académico. Surgió del espacio que creamos el espacio que compartimos, lo que sentimos. O sea, que no solamente no ... no es tampoco todo pensamiento en el sentido de cartesiano. Eso también fue un espacio de... de... de sentir de conexión, de transformar el espacio, el imaginario, o sea porque eran muchas cosas más allá de lo que llamamos pensamiento en la tradición occidental. Y... y cuando yo me siento, o sea cuando yo estaba haciendo ese proyecto con esas reuniones con talleres con los maestros etcétera, o sea, es un intercambio, o sea, que tú estás sembrando su semilla y...y... pero lo pero también estás recibiendo semillas de... de otra gente y de otras ... otras perspectivas y ... y no me ...no... no entiendo por qué una persona escribiendo estos temas se va a dedicar a escribir para otras personas en su disciplina o en su área de estudio cuando este conocimiento y lo que... lo que hace posible lo necesitamos todos. Entonces mi proyecto desde que yo entré a la Academia era como salir de la Academia.

A: Total, total.

F: Es más, como exploro esos recursos y tu hablabas de los privilegios y demás, cómo usar esos recursos eh... para hacer transformaciones dentro y fuera de la Academia.

A: Sí y sin necesidad de... Es decir, yo también cuando terminé el máster GEMMA me planteaba mucho, cuando estábamos escribiendo el TFM, era como “¿cómo cito toda la gente que no tiene ningún tipo de renombre dentro de la Academia? No tienen ningún libro publicado, etcétera, etcétera, pero realmente esta tesis está escrita por ellos”. O sea, es decir, esta tesis está escrita por todos los activismos que he ocupado que... que he gestionado, que he formado parte, saliendo por la noche pues a lo mejor no dentro de ningún tipo de institución o de legalidad, pero eso es lo que realmente ha formado el pensamiento crítico que tengo hoy en día. Aparte de la base teórica que haya podido apoyar las teorías para que tengan validez dentro de la Academia. Pero realmente quien

formaba todos esos pensamientos más radicales eran la gente que no tenía ningún tipo de nombre y apellido.

F: Pero...la Academia es un dinosaurio. Las teorizaciones siempre siguen a la práctica, no antes, no son anteriores a la práctica. O sea, ¿de dónde salió la idea del... el género como performance? Pues de décadas de travestismo. O sea, no es que la teoría se inventó y ahora la vamos a aplicar. Los... los movimientos, la forma en que la gente ocupa el espacio, las... las formas que la gente se configura su cuerpo, esas... esas teorizaciones salieron de ahí, no the other way around. O sea, que en ese sentido la Academia lo que hace es organiza, vincula cosas, las reproduce, hay unas funciones que los...los académicos y la Academia tienen. Pero si te pones a ver los conceptos fundamentales, no es que salen de la cabeza de los académicos.

A: Sí. O sea, como los conceptos que pueden estar comodificados, de alguna forma normativizados desde la Academia sí creo, es decir ,como que es la dificultad o como la problemática que yo tengo, por ejemplo en el activismo como queer en España ¿no?, que realmente como que se comunican conceptos como puede ser lo de *dragizar* algo o *queerizar* algo y está partiendo de una experiencia que te han contado de terceras personas jugándosela delante de la policía pero tú lo estás usando para ganar dinero a través de un artículo, por ejemplo, ¿no? Y ahora, dentro, por ejemplo, del... del departamento de prehistoria y arqueología, en el que estoy, conceptos como por ejemplo el de patrimonio ¿no? *Heritage*, que podría como considerarse entre patrimonio, herencia, etcétera, muchas veces cuando yo estaba pensando en *Valor y Cambio* decía “eh, veo la problemática como dentro del... de este mismo concepto dentro de la arqueología” ¿no? Cuando tú estás hablando de algún tipo de genealogía histórica, como estás hablando en arqueología, muchas veces empiezas a pensar “bueno, ¿y qué significa patrimonio? ¿qué significa una herencia? ¿qué significa una genealogía? y ¿quién está creando esa genealogía?” ¿no? Porque tienes todo el conflicto, por ejemplo, indígena en Australia, donde hay gente que no puede usar las cuevas donde hay pinturas de hace miles de años porque se van... se van a desestructurar y entonces el ritual que tienen asociado al lugar no se permite porque de alguna forma como que se da prioridad a los turistas ¿no? que es

otro movimiento colonizador. De alguna forma me planteaba ¿cuál es el tipo de *heritage*, patrimonio de herencia, de... de genealogía que se crea a través de proyectos como el de *Valor y Cambio*? en el que hay una autogestión del propio conocimiento con... en esa línea que no viene del pasado, presente y futuro, sino que realmente hay una temporalidad que se *queeriza*, nunca mejor dicho, ¿no?

F: Bueno, es muy interesante porque hay un componente del proyecto que estaba trabajando esa misma cuestión. Es las historias que circulan los billetes. Y bueno, y ...y cómo lo hicimos, hicimos una encuesta informal e identificamos cuatro valores: equidad, solidaridad, justicia eh y... me falta uno. Y entonces lo que hicimos con esos valores fue la encuesta: ¿qué figura o qué lugares, lo que sea, tienen estos valores para ti? Entonces de eso nosotros cogimos las 6 figuras. Pero el que... el objetivo también de las 6 figuras era es circular la idea de que Puerto Rico había enfrentado crisis anteriormente peores que las actuales, porque hay una cuestión de cuando hay una educación colonial, tu perspectiva histórica es muy limitada. Yo me acuerdo cuando en el 1998 que fue el aniversario del centenario de la invasión de Estados Unidos y en una encuesta en Puerto Rico le preguntaron a la gente qué pasó en 1898 y la mayor parte de la gente no sabía. Y si hay un dato que se reproduce y te lo dicen en la escuela 20 veces la gente no se acordaba, no... no sabía. Entonces era decir “sí la crisis actual es... es en cierto sentido nueva, en algunos sentidos nueva, pero en otro sentido no y está enraizada en crisis anteriores”. Lo segundo es que como siempre hemos vivido en algún tipo de crisis colonial, hemos producido un conocimiento sobre eso de cientos de años que no se nos enseña, que no se nos transmite, que no tenemos acceso y que ese... esas maneras de afrontar estas crisis coloniales son diversas. Por ejemplo, una cosa de los billetes en que tenías tanto unos negros libres en el siglo XIX cuya fe cristiana era el fundamento de su labor educativa hasta tener un anarquista feminista a finales del siglo XIX, principios del XX, que era organizadora laboral que... etcétera, hasta, digamos, un pelotero negro de Puerto Rico que utilizaba su fama y sus recursos para aliviar la pobreza y dar más opciones y ayudar a hacer trabajo de ayuda humanitaria y demás. O sea, que había varias maneras de articular qué era la problemática y cómo se debería acercar y que eso es conocimiento que no se nos da. Y, si te fijas, la mayor parte de los billetes son afrodescendientes negros

o afrodescendientes mulatos y recuerdo que alguien me hizo la pregunta que si eso había sido adrede o apropiado, haber incluido más figuras negras que blancas y realmente no fue a propósito sino que cuando nosotros dijimos quiénes son las personas que tienen estos valores y actuaron sobre ellos y actuaron sobre puntos que todavía son crisis actuales, como la salud y la educación, etcétera, pues, la realidad era que muchas de esas figuras eran negros mulatos. Y no era coincidencia, yo pienso. Por ejemplo, según la investigación que hicimos sobre los hermanos Cordero y Rafael Cordero en el principio del siglo XIX ya sabía que había una conexión entre raza, falta de acceso a la educación e ir a la prisión. Él le tocaba la puerta a la, prácticamente las llamadas madres solteras negras, pidiéndole por favor que mandara a su hijo a la escuela porque si no iba a terminar en la cara. En la en la teoría académica o en la en la en las guías académicas y cuando se empieza a hablar de ese el el reason to el (...) Hablando de esa cuestión de la genealogía académica, de quien sigue a quien, Rafael Cordero es un señor a principio del siglo XIX cuya educación... era un hombre educado, pero, o sea, la educación aquel momento era saber leer, escribir, aritmética y en el caso de él un fundamento cristiano a través de La Biblia y demás. Este señor ya entendía la relación entre raza, educación y...y la prisión que es digamos que en la historia académica es algo que se empieza a hablar hace unas décadas atrás ¿entiendes? O sea, que por eso digo que este educador en esa ... en ese contexto, ya había de relacionado... nunca escribió sobre eso. Ahí vamos a la otra cuestión del archivo ¿no? Nunca escribió sobre el asunto y mayormente conocemos sobre él a través de sus alumnos, los que eran blancos y educados que sí escribieron. Pero por eso te digo que... que hay una diferenciación entre lo que el cómo se produce el conocimiento político, por ejemplo, que pienso que es en la práctica fundamentalmente y que se recoge luego por el por... académicos, por escritores, por periodistas, etcétera, por personas que escriben, por ponerlo de alguna manera. Y entonces la importancia del archivo. Entonces, la pregunta de tu estar diciendo que tu tesis se escribe desde el activismo, pero personas que no solamente escribe o que no tengan récords, que sí que te puedas citar. Peor ahí está la labor del académico, contar el cuento, circularlo ... este... qué era lo que los billetes estaban tratando de hacer: ese “vamos a contar estos cuentos, vamos a familiarizar a la gente con la idea de que hemos tenido otro reto”, tenemos un amplio conocimiento de confrontar este tipo de retos y podemos hacer de más de

perspectiva. O sea, que no es cuestión de imponer una... una posición ideológica sino, si usted si... si usted mira la realidad desde un punto religioso usted puede radicalizar su fundamento, si usted es organizador de laboral o feminista o... médico, en el caso de Betances abolicionista, etcétera, ¿no? hay muchas maneras de producir conocimiento y muchas maneras de llegar a...a un conocimiento transformador.

A: Total Cómo se llamaba la persona de la que me estaba hablando que, en el siglo XIX, el educador.

F: Rafael Cordero. Con ese billete hicimos varias cosas. Contamos la historia de Rafael Cordero pero hicimos también otra cosa, que va también al asunto del archivo. Se celebra ampliamente a Rafael Cordero porque Rafael Cordero llegó a enseñarle a chicos blancos hijos de familias de dinero y esos chicos crecieron para hacer pues, va a ocupar sus lugares hegemónicos en la sociedad y escribieron sobre él. Pero él tenía doce hermanas que administraban y...y enseñaban una escuela de niñas. ¿Por qué sabemos menos o casi nada de ellas? Bueno, porque las niñas crecieron a ser mujeres y siendo esposas de estos señores ¿no? No escribieron sobre sus maestras, por ejemplo, Este... hay *record* de una de ellas y son *records* en cartas del Cabildo y es un documento de extraordinario. Si va a la website del proyecto se ven las cartas al cabildo exigiéndole apoyo a la escuela de niñas, exigiéndole un salario, haciendo exigencia, una mujer negra, cuando la esclavitud todavía... ella no es esclava, pero la ... la esclavitud aún es la ley bajo el imperialismo español; exigiéndole al estado que esto es lo que había que hacer. Eso es extraordinario. Entonces parte de lo que hicimos fue incluir a las hermanas. O sea que ese billete son los hermanos Cordero. Todos trabajaban, en algún sentido, juntos en esta... en esta... esta de fundar la educación pública en Puerto Rico. Entonces eso nos confrontó con un dilema que poca gente da cuenta y es que no hay imágenes de las mujeres. No hay ni una. No hay una descripción física. No hay nada. Mientras que de Cordero al menos hay... hay... varios e imágenes pintura incluso. Una de las pinturas más famosas del canon del siglo XIX por Francisco Oller, que se llama *El Maestro Rafael*. Entonces que el dilema era “no hay imágenes, ¿qué haces?”. ¿No las representas? O te las inventas, qué fue lo que hicimos. O sea, nos... nos... buscamos todo lo que pudimos, fotos de la época, este...

obviamente las imágenes de Rafael y nos las inventamos. Y claro, eso... eso es complicado y...y genera nuevas preguntas y...y demás. No es que se resuelve nada, ¿no? pero lo hicimos y...y así se abre la posibilidad de hacer las preguntas y las críticas y tal vez no hay... algún día alguien encuentra otra cosa porque lo pusimos... este... de esa forma ¿no?

A: Sí. Es casi como ... estábamos.... estábamos en un seminario de Sayak Valencia y nos decía que una de las responsabilidades que ella tenía como profesora de Universidad de temas decoloniales, antirracistas, etcétera era, dentro de las normas APA, que siempre te viene como el apellido y el nombre con el punto, ¿no? Decía “yo siempre que estoy poniendo o estoy haciendo estudiar a alguien en clase, siempre adjunto una imagen de esa persona” porque al final no cambia el ... el imaginario colectivo ¿no? Es decir, eso ha pasado muchas veces en las clases que estaba dando en este año sobre todo en arqueología, en figuras históricas, en figuras revolucionarias, que como siempre pones el nombre punto, no sabes que esa persona a lo mejor no es identificada como un hombre, necesariamente, ¿no? O que esa persona es una persona negra, ¿no? Y eso todavía les explota en la cabeza. Cuando estás leyendo a lo mejor, que lee el quinto texto de una persona, te da ya la curiosidad, vas y dices ¿cómo una... cómo una persona antirracista puede ser al mismo tiempo como ... (evidentemente puede ser racista, ¿no? porque a mí todavía me pasa)? Es decir, estoy leyendo sobre alguien lo busco y todavía me choca y digo “joder, sí. Y ¿por qué no se me había ocurrido antes? ¿por qué todavía ese imaginario colectivo no lo tengo?”, ¿no? Pues porque nunca nos han enseñado a... a tener en cuenta a ese tipo de figuras. O si sí, bueno pues la han tachado como, vale... como si fuera de alguna forma casi anecdótico, ¿no? esa figura que aparece... Malcom X, pues que tienen también como nombres extraños, pero no tienen apellidos que tú vayas a reconocer o a citar en tu bibliografía. Entonces me parecía como una...como una cosa como esencial para meter en ...todo el tema del imaginario de... de representar... de la imaginación política también de que si no existe la figura o la imagen de esa persona totalmente interesantísimo inventársela ¿no? porque por lo menos al final va operando algo nuevo.

F: Claro. Entonces la cuestión de la imaginación, el archivo y la cuestión de la imaginación, es que el proyecto en sí era un ejercicio de imaginación. Primero, plantearse que uno pueda inventarse un dinero cuando la gente tiene esta idea que el dinero es lo más concreto y lo más material. En verdad no. El...el dinero es nada y lo único que nos mantiene utilizándolo es nuestra confianza en lo que representa y en el sistema en general. En el momento en que tú dejas de usar una moneda, la que sea, pues se cae, se colapsa, porque en sí misma no tiene nada: no... no tiene fuerza, no tiene materialidad. Entonces, en ese sentido el dinero es ...es *Good to think with* porque porque para...para tu producir dinero, hacerlo circular y usarlo, necesitas una gran imaginación. Y es que el dinero también es una tecnología que vincula a la gente y crea entonces relaciones sociales. Esa era una de las preguntas las tres preguntas que yo tenía sobre el dinero: ¿qué es? ¿cómo adquiere valor? y ¿sirve para otra cosa especular, tener interés, explotar? o sea existe... puede usarse de otra manera, ¿no? Pero todos esos son preguntas de imaginación, como tales, preguntas de imaginarse cómo eran estas personas, como es imaginación decir “pues ya voy a colocar estos elementos en una nueva narrativa” porque, por ejemplo, nosotros en la confección del billete también incorporamos la fotografía, que una forma de incorporar el archivo, incorporamos narrativas, incorporamos color, por ejemplo, los billetes cada uno de esos colores está pensado. Por ejemplo, el billete de Betances es... porque es otra manera de comunicar.... el billete de Betances tiene los colores de la bandera de Lares, que fue una de las una de las actividades anticoloniales que más conocidas de él, que fue la revuelta más ambiciosa en Puerto Rico en contra del colonialismo español en el ... en el siglo XIX. O sea, que el color también tiene conocimiento. El billete de Luisa Capetillo es blanco y negro porque ella era anarquista, ¿no? O sea que el color connota historias, archivos, perspectivas, teorizaciones, actividad, emoción, porque cuando... cuando uno asocia a colores con ciertas cosas que uno también produce ...le produce una sensación ... sensorial. Entonces, volviendo al archivo... porque en otros proyectos, sabes que yo soy curadora de un archivo en la Universidad, y estoy escribiendo un libro sobre una persona que fue el que construyó el archivo más importante y más grande. O sea, que se convirtió en el archivo más grande y más importante de la diáspora africana. Entonces, yo pienso que esa es otra tarea importante, tanto para la conversación que tenemos de la semilla como para producción de

conocimiento. O sea, sabemos que los archivos históricamente han sido producidos por el poder, por el estado, por el... por el *establishment* médico, por lo que sea, pero hay que hacer, encontrar otro tipo de archivos y...y yo he traído como 10 archivos a la colección y cada vez que yo interactúo con esos archivos en una revelación. Yo estoy escribiendo ahora mismo la introducción a un libro de presentando la ... la obra de Manuel Ramos Otero al público angloparlante. Fue el primer escritor *openly* gay ¿verdad? en la historia literaria de Puerto Rico. Y, pues, se ha escrito bastante, al menos en Puerto Rico, sobre él y mucha gente lo conoce. Yo he hablado con mucha gente que lo conocía, pero cuando yo empecé a leer el archivo de él y empecé a leer las cartas, él murió de sida, cuando enfermó, empiezo a leer las cartas de cómo estaba tratando de distribuir lo que él tenía, su pensión, su apartamento y como le respondía la gente. O cuando miro que él siempre estaba *pelao* porque no podía conseguir trabajo o no podía...este... conservar los trabajos y tú sabes... tú empiezas a leer todo eso y te da dimensiones a lo que ya supuestamente se conoce e incluso puedes retar lo que ya pensamos que conocemos. A mí me parece una práctica sumamente importante y por eso pues, cada vez que tengo la oportunidad, yo trato de entrar al archivo. O sea, a través de esa historia oral, a través del arte, a través de lo que sea, que... que, o sea cualquier medio a mi disposición para que estas perspectivas se conserven porque desde cómo la gente habla, no solamente lo que dice, cómo habla, cómo se expresa y demás es fundamental para la complejidad del pensamiento y de la acción.

A: Y sobre todo eso como lo vinculó mucho al, cuando estás hablando de alguna forma parece como que el conocimiento ha sido institucionalizado ¿no? y llegas al punto en el que dices “bueno puede ser un archivo radical?”... un ... un concepto opuesto a todo el tema de las.... de las instituciones de las que ha teorizado por ejemplo Foucault. Pero de alguna forma, también como desde un privilegio de reconocerse dentro de un imaginario de conocimiento. Entonces poder renegar de esa institución ¿no? pero realmente bueno ... ¿cuáles son los sujetos que introduces cuando está re-contextualizando el mero concepto de institución, no? Porque al final también es como lo que estábamos hablando un día, que me acuerdo que estábamos diciendo “bueno, entre esos conceptos spinozianos de *potestas* y *potencia* ¿no? que al final es “yo puedo ser anarquista pero también tengo

el privilegio de poder no reconocirme dentro de un estado”. Pero ¿qué es la *potencia* dentro de esa potestad de Estado, no? o ... o ¿quién se reconoce? Porque también hay mucha gente que ... que no tiene la posibilidad de... o que necesita ser reconocida ...o que necesita que radicalmente las instituciones y los archivos cambien. Y esa es la reconceptualización de la que hablo en el artículo ¿no? Me parece muy interesante lo que acabas de decir.

F: Es muy compleja porque yo por ejemplo tengo posiciones y...y entro en mucho conflicto con mi institución, que es donde está el archivo ¿verdad? Me doy cuenta que... que reproduce mi propia posición dentro de esa estructura y demás y yo pues he reconciliado esos conflictos hasta cierto punto siendo una especie de Robin Hood, ¿no?, tomando de la institución y distribuyéndolo a espacios que no tienen ese acceso. Pero eso no resuelve todas las contradicciones, ¿no? Ni todas las problemáticas. Los materiales que he traído de Puerto Rico pues...siempre está crítica y que hace sentido, que uno está removiendo de Puerto Rico a los Estados Unidos, aunque sea un lugar donde hay más de un millón de puertorriqueños y ha sido un lugar de asentamiento puertorriqueño por más de cien años, pero aun así...aun así entran en unas contradicciones políticas en el sentido de poder, ¿no? Pero, por otro lado, teniendo la experiencia como cineasta en Puerto rico de buscar materiales de archivo y ver cómo los botan, o los dejan deteriorar, o se evaporan, entro en la contradicción. Entro a sabiendas que es una contradicción y una problemática de...de al menos estar en algún lugar. Está en algún lugar, y tendremos muchas más peleas en el futuro sobre dónde deben estar, y cómo se deben organizar y quien debe custodia de esos materiales y demás, pero tendremos la posibilidad de tener esa discusión. Y claro, hay gente que, que tiene otra posición, pero en mi caso, como investigadora y como cineasta...yo lo encuentro un gran recurso. Y viniendo de esa... esa genealogía negra que aquel archivo ha sido de tanta importancia porque ha sido esos contra-archivos eran las fuentes y fundamentos de una elaboración discursiva en contra de la supremacía blanca y demás, este... y de nuevo, no es que esté libre de contradicción sino que es una estrategia más de... de poder subalterno. Y claro... y cuando estás en la institución y estás en todos esos asuntos que describiste pues entonces es más el cómo uno, mira esos materiales, cómo los usa, cómo los relaciona. Por ejemplo, el tener material

que están ahí ahora tú empiezas a ver relaciones entre cosas que antes. Por ejemplo. Ahí hay correspondencia de dos personas que tuvieron una gran pelea y puede... tienes los materiales de ambas colecciones. Hay materiales de Jack Agüeros que era un poeta neoyorquino puertorriqueño haciendo reseñas sobre el trabajo de Manuel Ramos Otero y se decía antes de que no había ninguna conexión entre escritores puertorriqueños y los escritores *nuyorican*. Pues ahí tú tienes... Jack Agüeros que es más diferente a Ramos Otero no puede ser, escribiendo reseñas sobre su performance 70' en una publicación como el bridgeport entonces pues esos... esos detallitos de... de inmediato te complejizan la historia, retan lo que piensas se abren otras posibilidades de investigación, de... de pensamiento y de acción.

A: Sí. Al final, claro se me viene a la cabeza cuando José Esteban Muñoz hablaba ¿no? del cruising utopía ¿no? que al final es la ruptura de la temporalidad de progreso en el que tienes que llegar a un archivo concreto, un concepto concreto y un estado revolucionario concreto. Al final estamos hablando de conceptos que de alguna forma ponemos en conjunto, estamos hablando de espacios liminales que siempre están en esa transición y estamos hablando de esos archivos que son espacios de reconocimiento, pero no tienen por qué ser los... los últimos espacios de reconocimiento. Es decir, no significa que siempre se vaya a quedar en ese espacio institucional, sino que necesitamos ese archivo para seguir recontextualizando y para seguir estrechando ese concepto utópico que nunca tiene por qué llegar ¿no? que al final es la perspectiva de la... de la temporalidad queer.

F: Y además que si lo tratas... si tratas demasiado de llegar, tendrás distopia, ¿no?

A: Claro, total.

F: Y si lo tratas de hacer de verdad, en ese sentido pues sabemos en qué queda eso. Pero sí, definitivamente yo no lo veo como... es más, en mi práctica incluso yo nunca lo pienso "que aquí se va a quedar por siempre". Aquí está ahora.

A: Pues en esas estoy yo diciendo ¿qué me interesa? ¿escribir una tesis o escribir artículos? Porque al final es mucho eso... escribo una tesis durante 5 años y al final tiene que tener como una coherencia o cohesión entre todas las partes o escribes artículos que de alguna forma estén como localizados y situados en el tiempo y en situaciones concretas.

F: Mira, mira, te voy a resolver el problema. No lo plantees de forma binaria porque yo he escrito... Mira, ahora mismo yo voy a empezar una revista, Asterix, una revista latinX y...y lo estoy conceptualizando como un espacio que va a tener, podcast, que va a tener escrito, literario, ensayo, de todo. Ahí van a ser lo que sea. Y estoy también... hay movimiento, un pequeño movimiento ahora dentro de la industria editorial que yo creo que... que resuelve en parte este problema que estás planteado que es este libro corto, lo que se llama un panfleto, que es un libro de menos de 100 páginas o 125 páginas. Y, de hecho, hoy precisamente voy a hablar con alguien que acaba de empezar una línea de editorial de libros cortos. Yo creo que eso resuelve un poco la cuestión de *timeliness*, este... vas a escribir un libro de 400 páginas académico. Cuando ese libro salga pues, a lo mejor, la coyuntura pasó, o sea, es otra cosa. Pero, yo pienso que es cuestión de decidir. Por ejemplo, yo... mis preguntas, más temprano en mi carrera, “¿esto debe ser un libro, un artículo o una película?”. Y poco a poco ya yo voy discerniendo, o sea ya no me es tan problemático decir esto tiene que ser una película por X razón y esto debe ser un artículo por X sea razón, y en ese sentido teniendo un repertorio de posibilidades, porque también es cierto que lo... la tecnología del libro no solamente llega a más gente en cierto sentido. Es una tecnología que se... se circula de una cierta manera. También te provee un espacio sostenido para pensar en una caja más grande, ¿no? Un artículo breve *you can do so much*, pero a lo mejor eso lo que hay que hacer en ese momento. Es posible que termines haciendo distintas cosas para distintas coyunturas. La tesis es un requisito para obtener un grado y yo creo que si la ves así no tiene por qué tomarse miles de años. Y de la tesis tú creas un fundamento para hacer un libro corto o un libro académico. De la tesis pueden salir varias cosas pero mientras tanto... por ejemplo, una persona como...este... ¿cómo se llama ella? ¿La bloguera cubana? Yoani Sánchez. Yoani Sánchez perfeccionó el artículo de 3 párrafos. ¿Tú has visto su trabajo alguna vez?

A: No.

F: Búscate *generación G*. Era su blog. Ahora ya tiene un periódico que se llama 14 y medio o algo así. Pero, por muchos años, ella tuvo un blog y ella escribía muy frecuentemente pero ella escribía unos artículos de 3 párrafos que tenían una efectividad porque... o sea, era una manera de comunicar una idea con mucha potencia, mucha... ella también tiene mucha destreza literaria y fue el blog más leído en el mundo... porque la gente en todas partes del mundo lo traducían. Tienes que buscar lo viejos, porque ahora es un periódico y es otra cosa. Y es impresionante que era traducido a como 30 idiomas. [...] Pero te comento eso porque es un ejemplo de una persona que se adaptaba a la coyuntura.

A: Esto ha sido una entrevista inspiradora, inspiradora. Pues Frances, yo creo que con esto... no sé si quieres decir algo más.

F: Te quería decir que yo escribí una cosa que se llamaba “Decolonial Joy”, te lo he mandado, donde puedes encontrar las cosas que te he dicho articuladas. Yo empecé a escribir una cosa con una amiga, que se llama “Adiós a la economía”. No creo que esté demasiado presentable en este momento pero puedo eh... también buscar algunas cosas que articulan ... por ejemplo, nosotras lo que estamos ahí es cogiendo el concepto de economía y viendo cómo, cuándo y con qué efectos se empezó a equiparar con capitalismo. Porque sabemos que la raíz de la palabra economía, *Oikos*, era la administración del hogar. Entonces ese concepto fue cambiando hasta el punto digamos para el siglo XIX que ya empezaba a equipararse con capitalismo que es lo que... y bueno pensamos en la coyuntura actual cuando la gente dice “hay que abrir la economía”. Están hablando eufemismos. O sea, que el concepto de economía fue... fue de concepto, a eufemismo a capitalismo. O sea, que no es mi concepto yo diría y yo... yo lo tengo que ver casos de permanencia en mi Universidad de la... la escuela de... de Business o del departamento de economía ves como que en esas disciplinas realmente son auxiliares al capitalismo y no tienen pensamiento autónomo porque asumen que la economía es el

capitalismo. Entonces no... no pueden salirse de esa. Pero puedo investigar ahí si hay algo que podría abundar algo sobre ese tema de la economía, que me preguntaste. Entonces te mando esas dos cosas. Si te hace falta algo visual, fotos, no sé...

A: Me parece interesantes fotos de la máquina. Que haya un cajero físico.

F: En la *website* hay algunos artículos, no sé si los viste, hay cosas...hay un artículo que escribió una mexicana, Bárbara Curiel, que es de los mejores que se ha escrito hasta la fecha.

A: Gracias, Frances. Muchas gracias.

Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives



Images of the pesos puertorriqueños.

ANNEX 2: *¿Archivo Queer?* Images

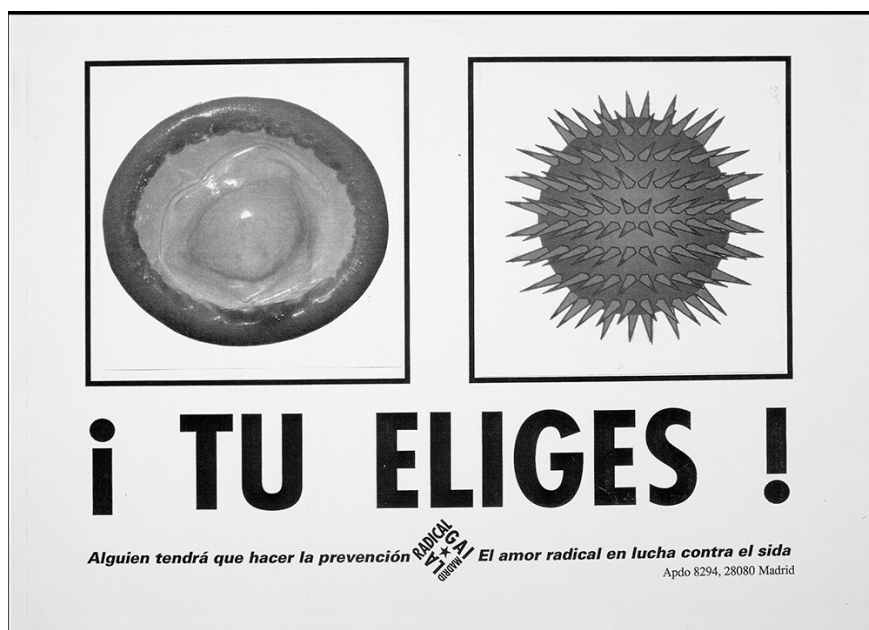
Images from the *¿Archivo Queer?* archive, from Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid.



LSD. *No conozco a ninguna lesbiana con sida. Ahora conoces una/ I don't know any lesbian with AIDS. Now you know one.* Madrid, (199-?), Centro de Documentación Collection. Reina Sofía Museum.



La Radical Gai, *Silencio = muerte/ Silence=death*. Madrid, (199-?). Fanzine covers.



La Radical Gai, *¡Tú eliges! Alguien tendrá que hacer la prevención. El amor radical en lucha contra el sida/ ¡You choose! Someone should prevent it. Radical love fighting AIDS*. Madrid, (199-?).



La Radical Gai, *¡Así es la vida! Protege tu amor del sida. Utiliza condón y lubricante en todas las penetraciones. Alguien tendrá que hacer la prevención!* *¡That's Life! Protect your life from AIDS. Use condom and lubricant.* Madrid, (199-?).



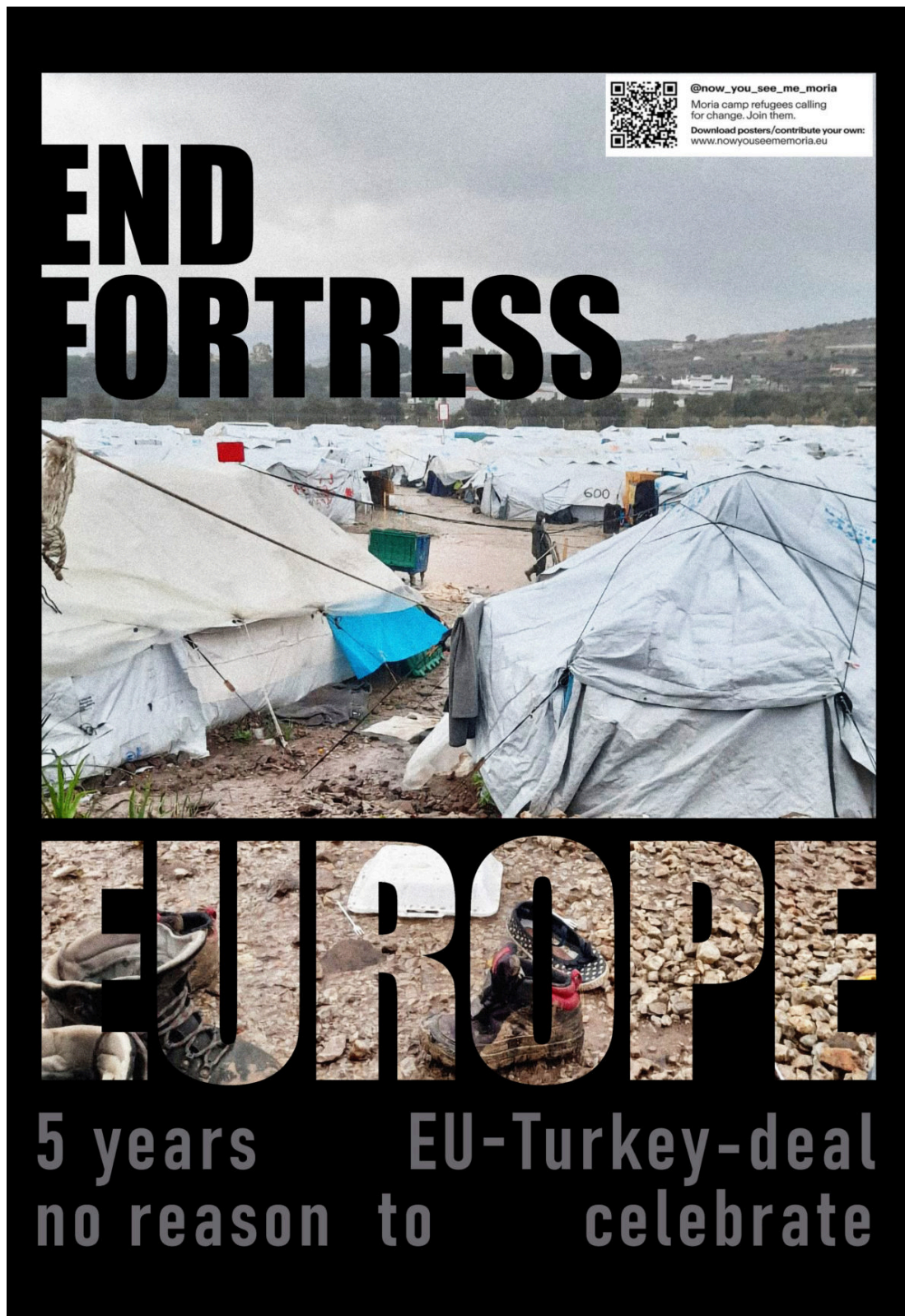
Andres Senra. *Action at Puerta del Sol in Madrid. World AIDS day. 1st December, 1995.* LSD and La Radical Gai collectives.



VirBophoto, March, 2021.



VirBophoto, March, 2021.



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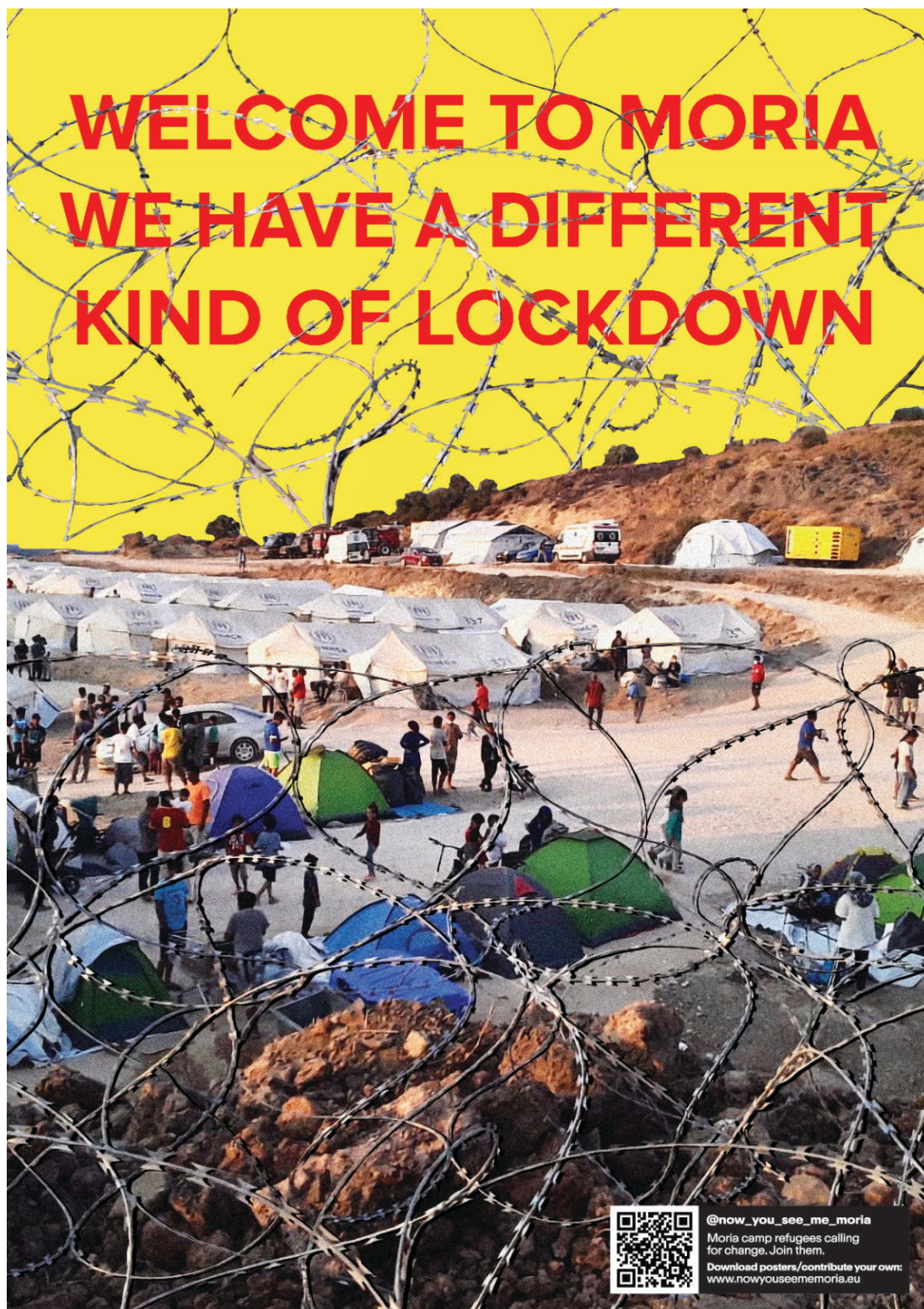


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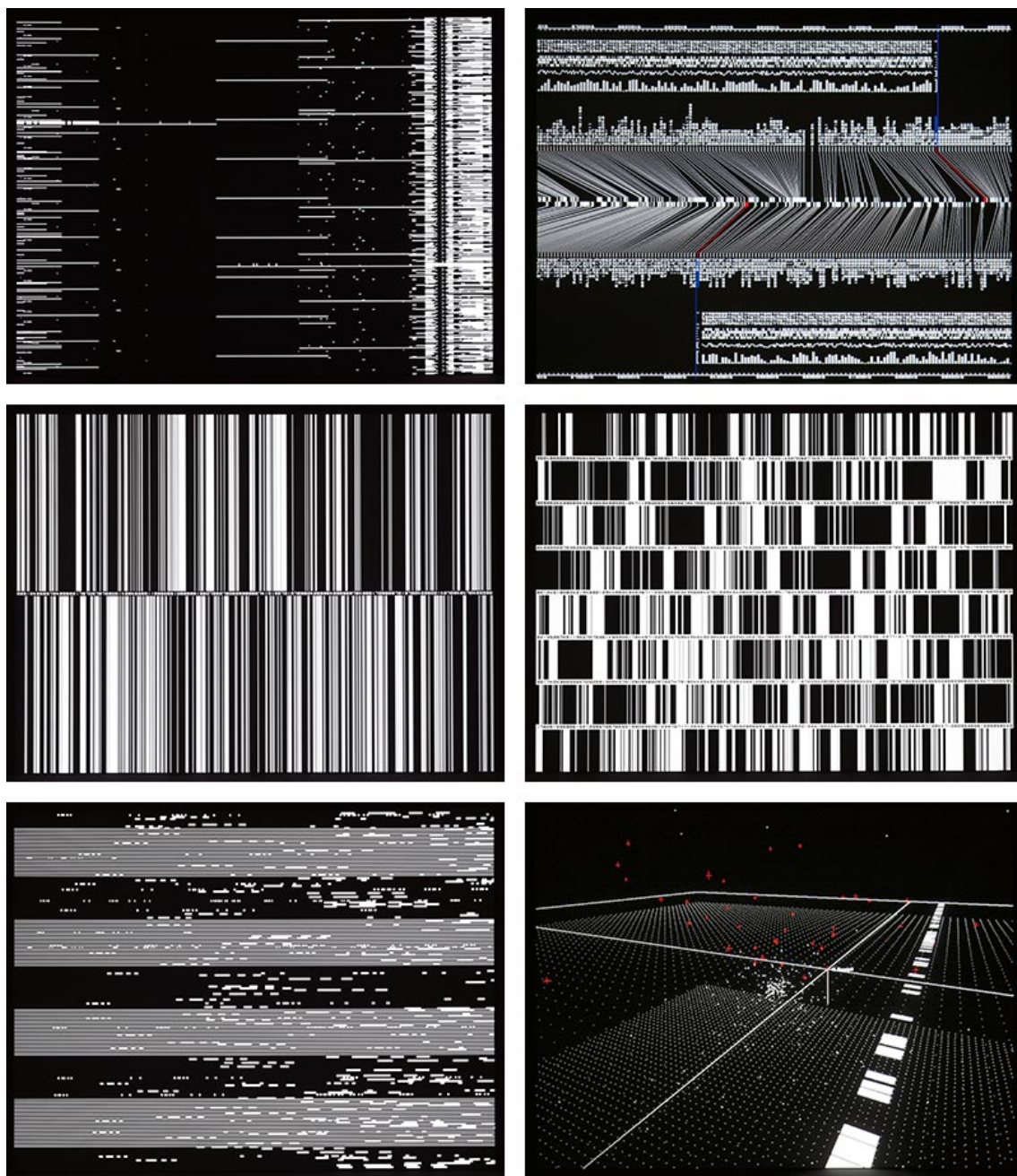
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ANNEX 4: *Datamatics [ver.2.0]*

Extracts of Ryoji Ikeda's performance *Datamatics [ver.2.0]*.



Ryoji Ikeda. *Datamatics [ver.2.0]* (2006-2008).

ANNEX 5 : *Side B: Adrift (Triptych)*

Photos of the *Side B: Adrift* Trilogy, by Rahi Rezvani, from the website <https://www.ndt.nl/en/agenda/side-b-adrift/>. The show and these photos are extracted from the three pieces: *The Missing Door* by Gabriela Carrizo and *The Lost Room* and *The Hidden Floor* by Franck Chartier.



Rahi Rezvani. *The Missing Door*. Gabriela Carrizo.



Rahi Rezvani. *The Hidden Floor*. Franck Chartier.



Rahi Rezvani. *The Hidden Floor*. Franck Chartier.



Rahi Rezvani. *The Hidden Floor*. Franck Chartier.



Rahi Rezvani. *The Lost Room*. Franck Chartier.

ANNEX 6: A conversation with Franck Chartier

This conversation was held with Franck Chartier prior to the performance of *Adrift*.
November, 2022, Teatro Nacional de Cataluña, Barcelona.

Angie Harris Sánchez: We apply queer and feminist studies to cultural facts which are not intertwined with gender necessarily so even if maybe you're not speaking about sexuality, gender identity, in a very like explicit way we do apply things that we think that are breaking laws for example, like the conception of breaking the binaries and breaking the boundaries between that oppositional gaze we sometimes have of reality. The subjects in this performance break, like I perceive them..., test this simplification by addressing the liminality between reality and fiction. All of this I connect to the conversation between dance and theatre on the one hand, and physicality and emotion, on the other, which I see through this piece in particular. This is the actual potential which I see in the piece and use for my own analysis. And this happens also with other pieces, also structured by those trilogies, that were a point to start thinking of the possibility of interviewing you while also thinking through the fact that maybe this analysis didn't resonate with your own process of creation.

Franck Chartier: During these 20 years we... we remarked that with the company we went with more with theatrical. It's not that we lose interest in movement and dance because we love this but we were more attracted to the story. from the beginning with Gabby we ... we create Peeping Tom because we was really attracted by scenarios stories... yeah... try to go deeper in the reality and to go deeper in the theathrality, characters in the family to go to talk about taboo or talk about something that we never talk and we was always attracted to for this we call it Peeping tom, to show something that we hide inside of us and to talk about things that's we never talk and this was then more and more we went more with theatrality we was more attracted by it and when we arrived to NDT when we create this piece it was the first time that we were confronted with pure dancers that were not used to do theatre. When we took a dancer in the company it's not just a dancer, it's also to create your character and of course with sometimes memories from their own personality with personal movements. But when we were

writing NDT there were amazing answers and I for us it was a yes to them also because of this because we really like the way they move and the intelligence of the company is quite super hot. Also they are used to work with so many different choreographers and it's really this rich aspect of their work. of course we for them it was really new to touch the more the technical part they never did so much and for me it was quite new to golly deep in the movement and the virtuosity and I really enjoy it a lot and this was a big confrontation because working with the we was with the company was working more theatrical and more the situation and here I was more concentrated on the movement and it needed more work for me to find my theatricality in the story but I had the chance that for example gabby made missing door the first piece and it was quite clear they said it was the cinema set and the characters were in their private life and then the person that they have to play then didn't develop so much as an artists but more like a character. but there was this two... two sides of reality and fiction and this I really liked. I tried to develop it also with them but more the external point but it didn't work because there were no actors, there were only dancers. I realized quickly that, "Ok, let's focus on inside the movement" and then with these missing doors make me think where do these doors go? I imagined working around it and imagine a sea and I was like "OK maybe it's a boat", you know, it's a big boat done and then I said "let's go in there and follow this woman, who is dead, and where do we go next" and I think "OK let's go in a room" and team liked it. It was also important the idea to come back rivers in the time and to see what's happened before and if you were to reverse and pass all the trauma maybe the characters had what would happen? And this was basically the base for *lost room*. Of course, a main focus was to give this trilogy naturality. The room has a bed, there is a closet there, and this makes it hard to not make theatricality. when you are in a set so realistic you know you're not going to make just movements it's easy to start to invent what's happened, you know, and especially coming from the piece of Gabby where there the character is already dead and she will be free by reversing and seeing what's happened the last day of her life, what's happened before she died, then it was easy to make it a bit. we try to we reach the border between dance and theatricality because for us movement is not just virtual movement or conceptual. We are attracted by something in the connection with the character. With this woman, for example, we asked, how she going to react?

What's going to happen in her body? If she is scared, should she say so? which is the sensation in the body. We try to analyze also with the textuality how is she going to move. You know, you can see every human basically having a unique way to move, to work, to give place to, and you can read in the body already what's happening in their mind and this idea of being able to read the thought of the people when they move, in French we say "la pensée et le mouvant", the movement and the thinking in the movement. you can read the thought of the... the... this person when this is something we try to be always to work on it to be and the border it's really thin. How dance starts: now I do a movement, for example, it can become a dance, but you have to work through this border, we try to erase it, the possibility from the actual move we chose to keep. For example, with the dancers is the same. In *Hidden Floor* someone falls in the water of the scenario and because he tries to survive, he drinks some water and he start to move from this starting schema. You don't know what direction he is going to go, but in the end, he succeeds to make amazing movements, and always comes back with this sensation of coldness from this first movement from the water, we try to hide the movements in the theatrical situation to erase the border. we don't see only like a solo dance. For example, the guy who can't put he's coat and breaks into cold continuously, gives you the sense that sometimes it starts from a real situation which you try to apply and sometimes we tell them "take care of the theatrical. Of course, don't forget the amazing movement you have". Don't forget the amazing dancer with amazing movement, the women entering the memory is a moment when we are just trying to find the "wow movement". Sometimes we look just for a wow movement without any situation, but after, when we see the piece, we say 'oh, maybe, when you did this situation we can add this movement, add this layer on top". Also sometimes you can move and from there can start after situation that's but it has to be the same character it... it has to be technical sometimes in the movement as it take... take care stay... stay... stay in the theatrality, don't go for the movement, and is this also before the show I always stimulate them or try to sometimes, you know, we play nine time it's hard you know and you play a lot to be to enjoy your to... and it's also my role to feed them to next they... they have excitation and they find something to... to... to meet every night so anyway you know then it's... and sometimes it's this it's like if they are in a trip on stage you'll be going to trip in the characters if they make mistake

with the movements we even should we don't see because it's clearly a woman and you can see she's in her trip in her stuff and if she do something and she fall and something it's human it's very normal we... we... we don't we don't see it we don't after if you're not in your trip and you make movement and you fall and you see actually fall the ballerina fall you know they don't perform is this I think if you theatrically are in your trip then you can do whatever mistake we will believe in it since the character is this you know is... you play with it...but if you're not in a trip you're not in your character and you make mistake or you know we see it was a mistake. I try to tell them go into trip, you know, going to the character, in the theatricality, forget the movement (they will never forget because they are dancers). Try to go in a trip. Also is for this that we call our name on stage it's more easy for us to... to be realistic or to be more in the persons now what's happened now I'm on stage now and we take care when we believe that the situation is strong, then you don't have to play you don't have to... to... to carve in around the painting you know the painting is strong you don't need any she around you know you... you just need to do this situation normally like you are today now in the persons and they don't play just have to be normal and... and... and if one day you're tired. But this situation is strong. Or... or if you were super nervous and do it more nervous when they... why not it's nice to but be present be in the trip going a trip in in your feeling and the theatricality is always super present even if it's just pure movement. Sometimes it's clear, they Make Love or, in the end, they have to be all in there to die and making love and then they have to freeze, cold freeze, and it's this is clear you Make Love in the water, that is fucking cold and you will die of freezing in the water. And they know theatrically what they have to do. We have a good trick, you know, they have to shake before the before the... the freeze, but they can also do whatever they want, you know, they can the trip in this cold and then they have the freedom to do it and for them I think it's nice also because they go in the theatricality, they go in their story there's no just making movements.

A: Yes, the choreography part is broken or lost in that sense. But I mean, for example, when we are speaking about identity or the identity of the character and the author or the author of that movement, that is the artist... do you think that's like the breaking of that boundary between who is acting and the character that they are performing? I mean,

because when we speak about *tripping* when we are dancing when we are closing our eyes when we are going into the character, how much of our own identities are played also in the scene? I mean, how are actors allowed that part of, like, personal trip inside those characters? Have they got agency to decide on the characters or is it something that the director has to focus on very much in pinning down the main points of the character? Is it something that embraces the character with the artist for the dancing in this case or the actor in this case?

F.C.: Right, I don't know if I understand well the question, but maybe I answer you and you tell me if it's what you want to know. For example, now we play nine time and... and... and some dancer they're not used to... to play so much theatrical you know the it's a bit new for them and so they need to be dead for two hours on stage every night and to be in love with somebody else and for them it's confrontation you know. I don't mean that they fall in love each other but it's possible you know it's possible that they start to depress (*themselves*) because they are dying every night and he did like this every night and then you start to feel depressed and is this it's because they are dancers and they are not used too much to act to play. As I said before I like to be in the present and in the mood where you are today and this is really and something has happened on stage because you're true, you don't fake it...and we feel real from doing this thing and then we try to be super realistic and... and of course the... the borders are more dangerous because you are in this horrible scene. With the experience I... I can but unconsciously I'm not no... I'm not sure that I can still make the difference I constantly I think it's effective and it's really interesting. With them is different because they create a, create your own. we give them out 10 minute to think an idea this shows the idea. What I mean is that the it's their situation the... they have attitude and me I just write the situation and we interfere and then like if I flash some something I can guide them continue these reaction or another. But the material come from them, not everything, but a lot come from them. then it's also something very close to them the material. Then it's also this, after, when they have to play, they play something that it's really close to them because they want it, they found it, then it's also really special and really interesting also because sometimes you make creation and you talk about something and two years three years later it will happen in

your private life and you're like "shit". We create something and two years later it's happening now it's really interesting. The next piece we are going to make is a triple stage where we explore the relation between the actors and the personalization of the characters.

A: That, that was exactly what I was referring to... like how, obviously, we think about posthuman theories that maybe you're not familiar with but we are.

FC: What is it?

A: Well, theories that are not focused only on the human but also how nature and sociality and the context and, maybe, like the boat and not the character is the one that has influenced the character more than the other characters so the human is not the centre of everything but there're other elements of life that intertwine. For example, there's a wish and we don't know if you are the creator of that wish, we don't understand and are outside discourse but are things in reality, or in ontology, that are happening and we don't even understand them. You were speaking of characters, and maybe there is a violent scene, and you think, who is it that is being violent in my life now, the character or is it Frank? who is the agential part there because the actor and the character are both in fiction but are also co-creators of what's actually taking place on stage. That was the most radical idea that I grasped the first time that I saw the... the piece because it was like "I have no sense of what the human and the character is in this piece anymore" I think the public was challenged to think about the body and identity in the scene.

F.C.: when we create we know that, and we and in the period of creation first you create because you have to find idea every day and every hour and it's in the beginning it's a bit superficial you know you look a bit around you and you finally... you know, you in the street and you see this woman what she's doing: "OK I will try the same" or you see you movie and then you think "oh this is good". This is the most superficial (*part*) and after one month you start to be a bit empty because you don't have any idea then you try to look more on yourself and in your family, what's happened in your family, and then it's more interesting. This goes also with the thought. The thought is really important and it's

really super nice motor of course in creation you have to take care that's it doesn't go to a depression, but the thought is super nice and then everybody goes in himself. Of course, it's not that every creation we're going to create a new a new Frank or a new Conan or a new Lorena. It's just that we use some... for example I smoke and I want to make a scene where I just never stop to smoke. You also appreciate some part of yourself, and you appreciate presently so I don't want to just to see or to deny. It's not that the character is really clearly a part of myself but still yeah it's very... because it's a part of us and sometimes I can ask them also for example, I ask this couple of Sabina and J. I wanted it this image of this beautiful girl and a man which is hyperviolent to her, she will be the hyper victims, you know. I was from the beginning looking for it and in the end in the piece it's really a little departure you know he's really a *motherfucker*. This was already the plan from the beginning I asked him "can you look for this? sometimes we can have a clear indication that guide them. Of course, Josh is not like this, you know, but I can understand it for him playing this piece after five years, wow. This also can be super hard because I'm sure I consciously to be motherfucker like this and to be violent, I'm sure it's there is some question like "now am I Conan in this moment?"

A: Yeah. I mean like things from repetition for me are very important like I'm... I have a formation in Art Therapy and I think one of the most important parts of my job was, at first, changing repetition acts in everyday life for people to act different in their own life character because, obviously, your identity, my identity now, daily... is already a character. These parts of repetition and little repetition... everyday repetitions would have an impress on that person's personality at the end of the day, so I think this connects very much with what you're saying, like "what are the consequences of someone acting violent during five years? Like, because they have to have very strong resistance to violence and to jealousy and to romanticism or whatever... to first not be violent to their partner or not fall in love with someone you are meant to fall in love with every night (in the scene), you know...like: what's real? is it real that you're in love from 7:00 to 9:00 o'clock at night or is it real that you don't love them the rest of the day? What's the fiction there?"

F.C.: Yeah, especially on this character there is another layer because, in France there is a TV series in the 80s, Derrick, it's really famous, but it was an inspector, police inspector that he I think he did it I don't know how many season but all his life he made this serious inspector and I don't know how it come but maybe you know you so much your inspector for everybody then maybe you will buy bread in the morning, and people say hello to you saying "hey, inspector, ç ava?" and after a moment he was sure that he was the inspector Derrick. And for his wife and the children he was inspector Derrick, and they call him inspector. We talk about this because when the set is... when the piece is finished and we change the set the audience stay there you don't understand, you don't understand that it's a game... and you see her girlfriend to go and place a new set and he's lost until the end of the show, when the audience bow and at the bottom of the situation he is still on stage looking at them and...and he's still there "what's happened?", you know. He talked about this and also for him it's hard because he has to play also like this: he is a guy that is lost but he can't go out anymore and he's afraid also because there is a door going out of on stage to go and he's looking, and he don't wanna go he's afraid... he's afraid to come back to reality. It's very interesting I really like this.

A: Yes, I had a friend who was playing for five or six years... he was performing a drag and in the end he was having a conversation with me because he was saying like I do have an identity as a man but I cannot rely or deny my identity also as a woman because five times a week at night I am a woman, so in the end I go into gender, for example. We're going also into violence and going also into... you have a partner in real life but then you have a partner in fiction and then you have to have a conversation with your partner because it's not just "I'm acting", it's what you said about "I am going so much into the character, I am shipping so much into the character that in the end there's a sense of real love that is happening in the scene" and that's something also... like when I was speaking to the public, the first time that I saw it, people didn't understand because they were like "as a spectator I cannot consume this piece as normally I would because I cannot grasp anything for real". It's just like pieces and fragments of things are just happening and the way that we consume art is very structural sometimes, you know, you need the character and a character that is fully entered in the character. When the character is fragmented

and, like, the scenario is more a character than the character itself because it's just like this animality of movement, it's just like as spectator... there's also a breaking of the boundary between who is on stage and what's the theater stand? you know, because the stand was just... like...they thought: "what's going on?". There was this agitation in the public because people didn't know how to consume art in a very traditional way of consuming theatre. You know, you go like to a traditional theatre and then you see like this is the character, this is the structure of the relationality with the characters, but here the relationality between the characters is just like it's drifting all the time, you know, it's just soaked with water and you cannot grasp anything so it's like the narrative there also is lost into fragments and are very like intuitive fragments that come to your mind and just, like, makes your mind move in different ways there's not like... I cannot write an essay from this.

F.C.: It's also this we go to repeating itself. It is also this because for the movement, for example, we really love when...you can see the personality and the thought of the person when they move and the personality and for this we can see directly the answer if he go from class to class with some professor across the board or somebody that work along you know where I can see directly and for us it's much more interesting somebody that work around and somebody that work with classes because to develop his own personality movement and it's also this everyday we warm up and we don't never have somebody in the centre. Everybody warmup alone and do whatever they feel with how they feel this morning and what they need and they followed their body and they do it alone. I have a phrase that I like to... that they have it in the mind is like "go where you never been before" when you warm up because they do this warming every morning...some habits that you do every morning and to warm up and then open the legs like this and then this and then 45 minutes, we have some good things that we do every day... but it's this, you know. If you try to go where you never been before you can go there but maybe you never turn your head here (*directing their head to the back*) and then turn the head somewhere else and the day after "well I... I've been here yesterday, then maybe I want to go there" ... and then the movement start and then I can go there and then the movement starts, I start to... to... to move and to make new movements and is this this phrase "go where

you never been before” is the bottom because already in the warm up they start to create and they start to open their artistic brain and they have to... to go where ... they, they go so in the extreme in the body because if you really take care of this you can see you can go more extreme. And of course you work also with your extremity of your body and this is for so the right thing because we were working with the girl that was in the Olympic Game, artistic gymnastics, named Carolina, and well it was a big lesson for us coming from dance because, of course, she had a technique of stretching... it’s super it’s crazy it’s much more explicit than the dancer. But it was really interesting for us because they they don't have the limit. They don't say they have limits very quickly... They said “yeah but I can go more”. With this “go where you never been before” I think it’s bring you to your extremity of your body but you can go more, you know, you can go... and it’s interesting also because we destructure also the human body and we try to find a way to move that it's really personal because each dancer will go where they have never been before and he will find movements very personal and then, yeah, this is also nice to be there, to create new movement. And we like the extremity. For us is... we like to... we don't like...it can be minimalist and it's no problem but depends. We like to have a balance between extremity, virtuosity and also very intimate if it's really small and it's has a reason and. For example, in *Tryptich* now we made a scene, I mean I will never put it on a piece as script, but because this scene was built when the piece was already made and then I fell to have this on but it's really stupid ... she's doing ventriloquial, *whua whua*, as if the baby crying and she calm the baby and then the cleaning woman comes and goes *achuu* (*sneezes*) and wake up the baby and then the baby. It was in the middle of two scene and there was this moment and then and now I developed it like this because... because it comes from a super strong scene before, then I need a bit of rest, you know, a little bit of nothing, and they're very talent scene like this and very... I think it's also movement sometimes can be really... depending what you want... we work with dancers or Bill, who is 82 years old or a child, or Simon that he's 70 and we work also in the movement which is not from a dancer, because it has an emotion that the dancer will never have, you know, because there is an identification process that the non non-dancer will bring more emotion and we will give (*at this case*) a shit of the movement but it's just, the intention will be there and it's touching and it's and the dancer will sometimes don't succeed to do

this, because he has some rules that he can go there, and he has to stay straight. The non-dancer is in this fragility and the contrast is... one hour of virtuosity and you are bored... but the contrast when you see 5 minutes of virtuosity and then you see somebody who is not a dancer making an intention super clear it's like "wow", it's the same effect of the and then when the virtuosity will appear again we will say "wow", it's then this balance of minimalism-extremity also is important

A.: And like the thing that, maybe, the contortion of the body is not only by virtuosity but also by, you know, like how someone that weights 100 kg can also be very brutalist or extreme in their own movements by not doing...nothing more than someone who can stretch their backs in a way that is super *contortious*, someone who is from the circus, for example, you know, and I think that that contrast ...I didn't see it but it's... another like limit place that you created in the scenario.

F.C.: In this piece we don't use it because we was in NDT then there was just dancers. I think tonight is more like dancers. You can see it changes depending on the company.

A.: I will see it in a bit. It's at 19:00, no?

F.C.: Yes.

A.: I have a lot of questions more, but I know that you have to go in.

F.C.: No, it's OK I have time.

A.: Yeah? Ok, so I want to go for a last question, in case it's also a question for you, if not we can keep it open because, obviously, I'll be writing about this and it's also my own interpretation of how I feel the piece, but, like, how important it is in these kind of, like, pieces of art of what's the lexicon, like, the lost lexicon?, the non-word, and without the discourse, but just the shouting and the ventriloquy parts are sometimes more communicative than a word in a piece of theatre art, for example, like: how important it

is also when the bodies are smashing into the water...like: the sounds of the water are more effectively communicative to the public or to the dancers themselves than a word, a script or a dialogue, like traditional art pieces for example.

F.C.: I was working with a company, and it was really after a time I was a bit... I also wanted to change a bit because they want to explain the situation and so this heater, I don't know ... they need to explain this like “the woman arrived and the man come and then you will shrink and then she said...”. They explained this situation and I was like “why can't we do it, and it's gonna be maybe even stronger than just explaining it”, it's shocking sometimes, but why can't we just do it? and it's this it's sometimes, of course, with theater you feel that you can go deeper because just 2 or 3 words, one phrase you can go *whoa*, you can put a layer on top of it that's more... yeah you can go deeper in the story and the scenario, but maybe because we come from the dance world for us it was more effective to do it than to tell it, you know, to tell the story to and it was a dream for me to start from a book you know because we're always praised the story with the dancers, with the creator, we know where we are we start with the sets then in the beginning of the day on vacation and that we know where we are now we're gonna start dictation in January I know exactly where we are working on the set and generate could be ready we have the settings but what we don't know is who we are. We are in this situation that is quite like this (*gesturing the stage*), it's not a garden, it's something quite, eh... But who we are we don't know. We have to create it. But to work with the scenario with the text so it's a book it's like “*wow*”, it was always a dream for me, and it's for this I say yes for this opera also because we have a libretto, the story was a white man story but that's OK, we found a way to change it and to find them more interesting story in it, you know, but it was nice to start with some restriction of ... it was always a dream but... and is this the I think it didn't make me afraid...for example the blindness in this book of Saramago, or to to start for example from some story like this it's like “*wow*”. It can be super restricted and super... and there is already some scene, there is something we can just... it would be nice to do this but I'm afraid. And when I talk with theatrical people is the inverse: they have the book and for them it's like “*ugh*”. I still have something, you know, I'm super afraid to start with nothing and to create. I have my book, my story, then I have

something some text to stick to... I don't know, I don't know how to do setup piece, I have no idea. Sometimes we use the dancers, creators, use a lot of texts in the scene and when we like this situation we always try to curate it. we say "OK, this scene was really theatrical", and we discuss why we like it: "We like it because this and this". And then we think "Why don't we try to put away all the rest?" and to keep... to see if it's work with these phrases and sometimes, because we are not actors, for us it's more easy to make it physically, and to make the situation, to...do the situation instead of telling them.

A.: And also, going back to Saramago, and the question of like how...there is another engagement with the kind of senses that you enact in the public for example, because for me it's also like a blindness when you're speaking of that dream, of that oneiric part, of the piece that you know. When you're dreaming and when you're in a coma, when you're in a state of mind that you lose the sense of reality, or of one particular sense because you're blind, there's this kind of movement. This is the vision that you have when you're dreaming, right? There's only a path but that path is possible of everything. Also going into the part where you're speaking about memory: is memory already oneiric? Like, how do you remember? is memory already something that is impossible sometimes to grasp into, like, a book or a script or something tangible? Because how do you write about the past? and how do you write about the future? and how do you write about your dream or something like these other senses that are performative?

F.C.: I don't know when we discovered this in the creation... we really want to put the audience in like in the movie, we say "OK, we're gonna work on this", first with the songs to really make the audience be with us. After, we try to hypnotize the audience also, and because we change countries, and the language also changes, we try with the music. For example my sister they was listening to Pink Floyd when I was young and if you put me a Pink Floyd now today, I remember clearly when I was younger, and the vision of my sister dancing and singing this and then "OK, I will take it" and we use it like this, you know, we put some music that maybe in your past will make you in this kind of...and we rearrange it. We rearrange it and sometimes it's a relaxing list or we transform it a bit, new arrangement, with new instruments. Then we have music, there is another layer it's

not exactly... it's not the same. And we try to zoom like a movie, to try to zoom in the... in the character, and but zooming in cinema it can be 20 centimeters. In the stage you still need 20 meters (*from the audience to the character in stage*). Then we said "OK, why we don't zoom in the head of her and see what she thinks and then we...we try to ... for example with the lights, now we are outside it's hard to explain, but if we were on stage and suddenly we...we make a focus on you and everything becomes dark and then suddenly you turn your head and you see somebody coming in. And it's also who can go in your mind, it can be with a song that is in your mind, in your head, maybe we transformed the song that is passing through the radio, Pink Floyd, maybe we make an effect on it and then the Pink Floyd (sounds of a part of PF), you fall away, you know. We try to make a zoom that Jones is clearly making go inside your head and then we see this man coming in and then this, after we can play it can be your memory, can be your ex-boyfriend, the day he did this to you, and we can do the same. Or it can be the fears of you new boyfriend or girlfriend doing this now to you, or you feel that maybe she will do this or then it can be maybe, I don't know, the situation can be the fear that you have or it can be memories, can be fears, can everything or maybe something that you dream. It can be a super nice scene that you will never have in your reality and then we...we went out of you ... come back to reality and it's fucking horrible because the reality is not the same at all ... or the inverse. Is this kind of zooming the thought of the person...we like this because it's...we don't use it always like this and it's a way that the audience can understand that we are in the head of this woman... in this piece we don't play like this, but it's... for us it's nice because we can shift from a reality to the memories or the fears, I don't know what, and play with a super realistic but something strange that happened, that is not in reality...it's not possible. And then *whhhoap*, come back to reality and we don't know if it was the reality or not and this instability between is its reality or memories or fear or... this we like to play with this because then it makes the audience a bit unstable and, I don't know if I actually responded.

A.: It's...its totally that. And this is like a personal fact but I...like when I saw the piece...in the last five years I have been grieving loss, like death loss, of bodies that have disappeared from my life and like that sick part that I see sometimes... not pieces... it's

not like I recognise a Pink Floyd memory that reminds me of my grandfather necessarily, but the way that you zoom in and out in this scenario makes you recall the important facts of grief, or of emotionality and affect, that is happening in your life and it's...it's quite shocking that someone, or a lot of people can generate that in a so diverse public, because everyone is going through a very diverse process, but then that everyone has a very particular and intimate way of relating to the piece it's just like "wow", super effective, you know. Like, for me, it was super synesthetic of moments where I was just like holding in my chair because, again, it was in the moment of consuming art in a way of "oh went to this piece of art and then it's.. the narrative was a woman was slapped by a man". No... I couldn't tell what I had seen because it was so connected to my own personal process. They...it was like: "fuck, I cannot write a critique of this right now because it's...it's, like, so personal, so intimate".

F.C.: I remember when we created *The Salon*, we were playing with Gabby together, it was the second piece we made in *Peeping Tom*, and we just had a child and she was three months and we said "well, we're not gonna give her to...we're gonna bring her to the studio" and we were creating a scene and, yeah, Gabby, the mother, the first fear that she has right in this (that) moment it was to lose her baby... and all the scene she made was around this. And then, in the story, in the end, it was this. It was a bit unclear in the beginning because there was this, this painting, this portrait of this little girl on the wall, but it was clearly a couple that's loosed the baby, because the baby after moments in the piece disappeared and then it was clearly the baby died and...how the parents deal with this with the situation of losing a baby. And Gabby for her life. It... it was amazing the scene that she made on this piece it was... Every night I was on stage I was crying every night. I don't know if it was because I was the father but I think also was to...was super confronting because she made seem super sad and it was really super strong. And, of course, it happens sometimes after the show that we talk with the audience and they ask "who is the baby?" and this is also super confronting, you say "oh shit, sorry", you know? because you talk about something that's fears that you have but it's happened to people so ... and it's... I remember once there was an old man in the house, and the piece was around this, and then always, after the audience would speak of "oh, yes, it was my

father”. Yeah, it's hard, because we... we talked about fears that we don't talk because they've happened in our life, but people after confronting...confronting to these, they are living this in their life and some people pitch to stay sometimes. I remember some woman that left the audience when the piece in the salon because... I don't know what's happening in their life...maybe they lost a child, I don't know. And this, of course, is... it's a bit dramatic. But for us it's important because I don't know... Or in *The Salon* Simon he is 60 and it's the first time that he's been in pain. For us it's important to talk, or in dance is common that we...we don't talk on contemporary dance, then for us it was important there to talk about this and...and because Simon when he created he was coming more from the theatre, and he wanted to do a child and he tried, tried, tried, but we didn't find any interesting parts ... and then he loses his father during the creation and then he was one week super sad, he was not able to create. He was in the studio but he was really sick. Then, one day we said “why don't you play your father before he died?” because he always talked about him and he was saying super strong situations, you know? because he was a bit...he lost a bit his head, and he was telling stuff. And we said “why you don't talk about your father? maybe showing this would maybe...?” and then he said “OK, I will try” and it was very nice for him and then it was ticket, ticket, ticket, ticket. Everything he showed was on the piece, it was amazing what he made and then he played his father on stage and he's super touching. Then we like humanity. We like to use the stuff that's happening now. Like *Kinds*, when we were creating it, the company there was two Brazilian, and it was when Bolsonaro won the election. Then they were super touched. They were really depressed, they were not able to create. And we insisted, “make a scene about this” and this... For us is always... always to talk about how you want to see intimacy, topics we are afraid to talk about, its what's interesting for us... And in the company is crazy because we are so much... because when you were looking for material like this for five months of creation, you are much closer to each other than maybe your boyfriend or your girlfriend, or your parents or I don't know... because you...you do some stuff or you say some stuff you never said to nobody and then we are super close and we have rules to protect each other. We need to find this context where we are free to express and to talk these things and not judge because we are looking for a character... it's not you gonna make this thing, it's you character who's gonna make this, you know? Then

everybody's involving in the process that we give everything and it's based on reality on what we live now and today and tomorrow we'll make the new scene because tonight I dreamt about this thing, and ... and it's really relaxing something human, something special or so. It is, of course, a bit extreme because if you talk about something that you never talked, it's gonna be something that affects you.

A.: I'll write from this perspective of grief, actually. I don't want to relate to the pieces in a very, like, high theory, like academic and university language. I mean, this is a conflict I have, right? because I'm speaking about my own experience being affected by the performances and by pieces, but at the same time in society it has to be (*written about*) in a very particular language so it's like you know I think this is super inspiring... how to generate new languages also in Academia which haven't got to be scripted, you know? Like, I haven't got to speak about this piece in a particular way but in an affective way and I think this is, like, the most interesting part of how I view as a spectator and experience these kinds of events in my life or we experience it, right? because today I'm gonna see after five years... I don't know what my emotions are gonna be today, if I'm more anxious, if I've lost two more people in my life how is this gonna come to me and how I'm gonna confront it.

F.C.: Yeah, and this is interesting and sometimes we discover new things and it's really interesting also because when you create, when you are a performer creator, like me, I am writing and you make scenery and I will say "OK, we keep for your character. Keep this thing and this try to make more in the end. You can start with this thing will work really well if it's after this one because if it's before it has no sense. Let's try to make this for a moment." And then suddenly you realize that you were three months of research of material. You went everywhere you know and suddenly there is this character and it comes to life. It's super surprising to see who is the character you create instinctively. You can create something that you like a lot of something and me I will just keep this part and not this part that he was dreaming. Sometimes people hated me in the end because I just choose this and not this because ... and because you create something you love this scene and you want to make the following part in that but maybe for me... maybe I love it, but

for the piece it doesn't work, I don't know, for the story...then I will just keep this but... Sometimes I really like them, and I try to put it after or before. But being on creation is really hard. They really need to believe on you because it can be really... I remember somewhere right in the studio it's like the revolution they are looking like this because we made it a showing the day before and I cut the scene they liked. It's this, you involve yourself in a in a character and you give so much and ... when you create you discover in the end what you create and, for example, in the first part Gabby put a little light in the door and then I used the same effect in the next piece, the little light. I never saw the meaning, but then I was like "oh, is the lighthouse, you have the harbour"

A.: Yeah, the orientation.

F.C.: I never thought about ... "ah, it is ...it's like a like a lighthouse". I never thought about it, but it has a sense, you know? and sometimes it's instinctively you do stuff and you don't know... you like it you don't know why and two days ago I realized this (*the lighthouse symbolism*). To see you show, the perspective that you have, for me I see it all the time, but I discover new stuff and sometimes... I mean, yesterday I was in the mood and after the show, I stood up, I walked a bit and I almost faint. I sat again and my head was like... its affected me. And it is different in each city. Depends on the audience. Depends on the perception and the mood you are.

A.: Like similar to what happens when you were speaking about how two bodies are making love or just, like, fucking, in a more, like, very, like, particular way and then because they're cold they're just like shaking and there's kind of non-control. And it's not a rational control, like, you're in an act of love or of communication with another body but then, obviously, there's, obviously, something happening in your body and it like paralyzes... you know. Again, going back to the post viewing of the first time in the Netherlands it was like... I saw it twice. Once with my ex-girlfriend and another time I took my mother and it was super different because in one I was just like bound to control myself in front of someone that I was meeting at that point because we were starting to love each other, and then I was like ... "I... I cannot have a date right now. I know that

we have to have some beers now and we'll go to her house and we'll have sex but I'm too affected to just relate now in a rational way". And then with my mother because she knew all the history that was coming from that moment I was like "OK, I'm in a mood. I don't want to be stressful with you, but I don't want to speak" and it was super different because then I went the second time and when it had ended and I was going back n the bus and I was like without speaking for half an hour thinking "OK, I'm super depressed right now and I can... I can allow myself to be depressed".

F.C.: Yeah. We always have this image of making a tattoo in the brain, you know? And the role is not to change people. But making a "tattoo in the brain" to make the connection nobody has gone there before...to shake a bit the brain, you know?

A.: Yeah... that's my question constantly. Does art change the world or does it change me?

F.C.: Maybe yes, the revolution, I don't think we have so much power on it. But I think changing somebody emotionally or changing the world, or the political way maybe not, but changing people yeah I think we change people. We change the sensibility. First it affects us, and this is the thing that I like. It will shake a bit people.

We were doing a scene, in *Le Sous sol*, and it was someone that was 80, and there was a scene where I torture her, and that day, because something else, she has a little bit of blood on the dress white dress and then the article was around this "yeah they torture her, and she has blood on her dress" and she was super angry said "what? we talk about this", we talked to shake the society. A woman of eighty years old, she can play on stage like a normal actress, she can have a dance on the piece, she was like super active person, and you break everything with your stupid article. She phoned and she said "what did you write? We are fighting to change the society, to change its old people's image of sitting all day" and then the other person was like, "sorry, sorry".

A.: Totally. I think we can leave it here. Well, Frank it was still so nice meeting you.

F.C.: Yes, if you want to talk after the show.

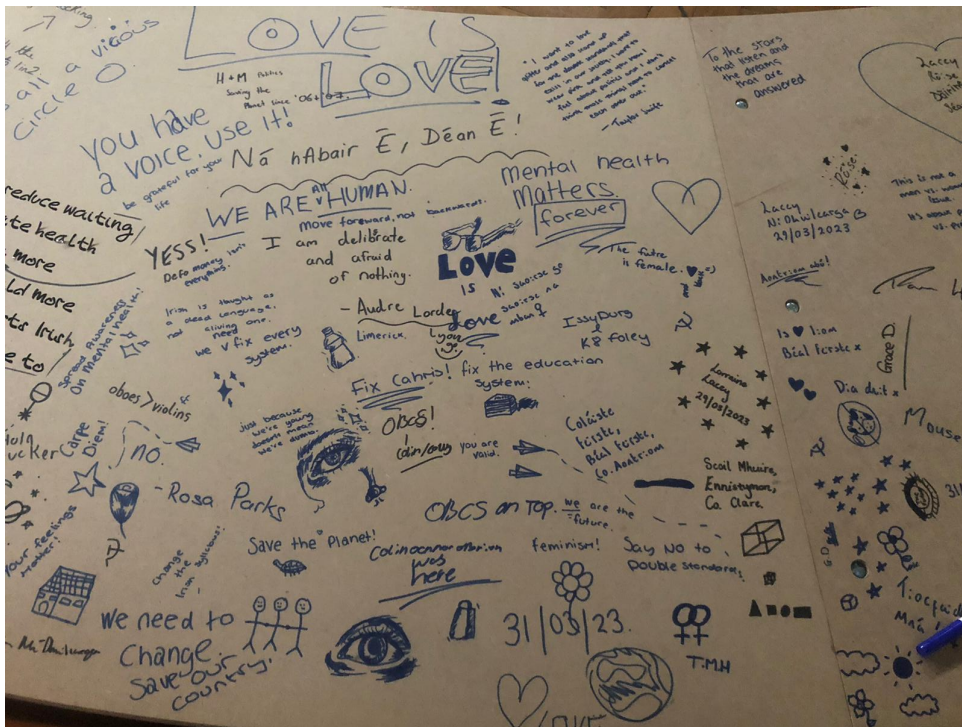
A.: Of course.

F.C.: To see the feeling you have.

A.: Bye, good luck. *Mucha mierda*, as you say in Spain.

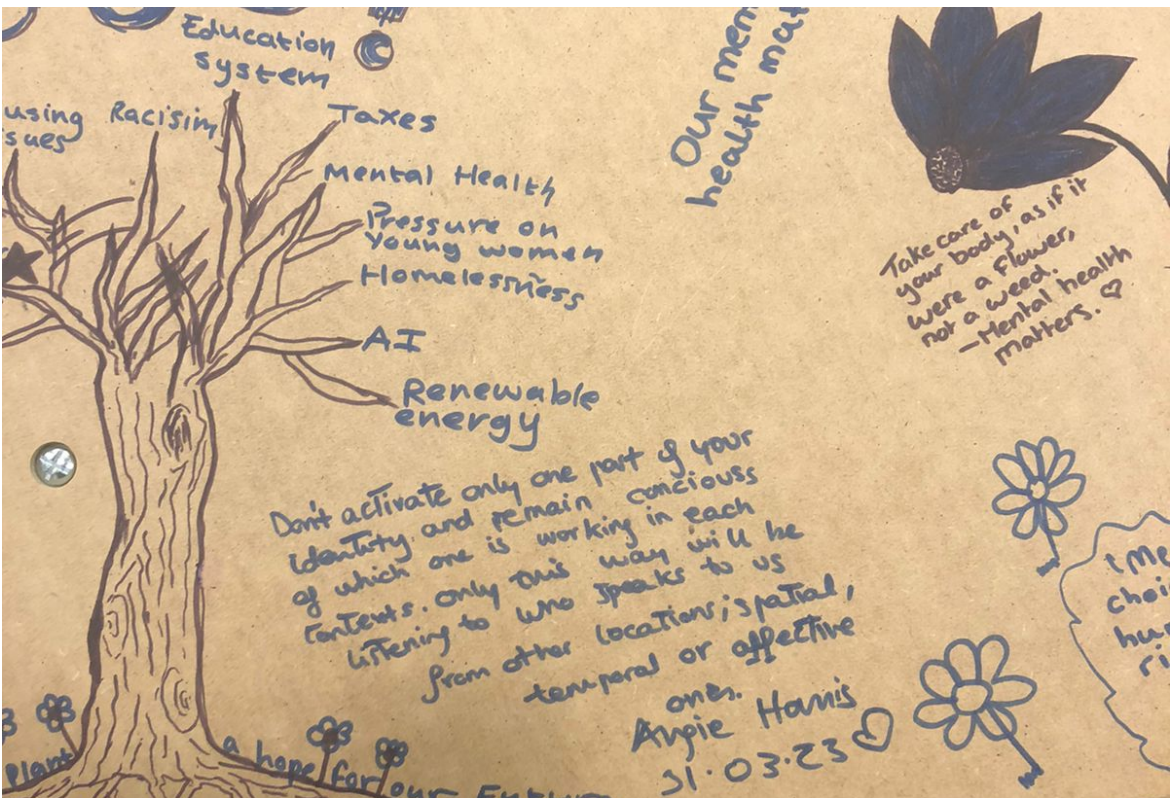
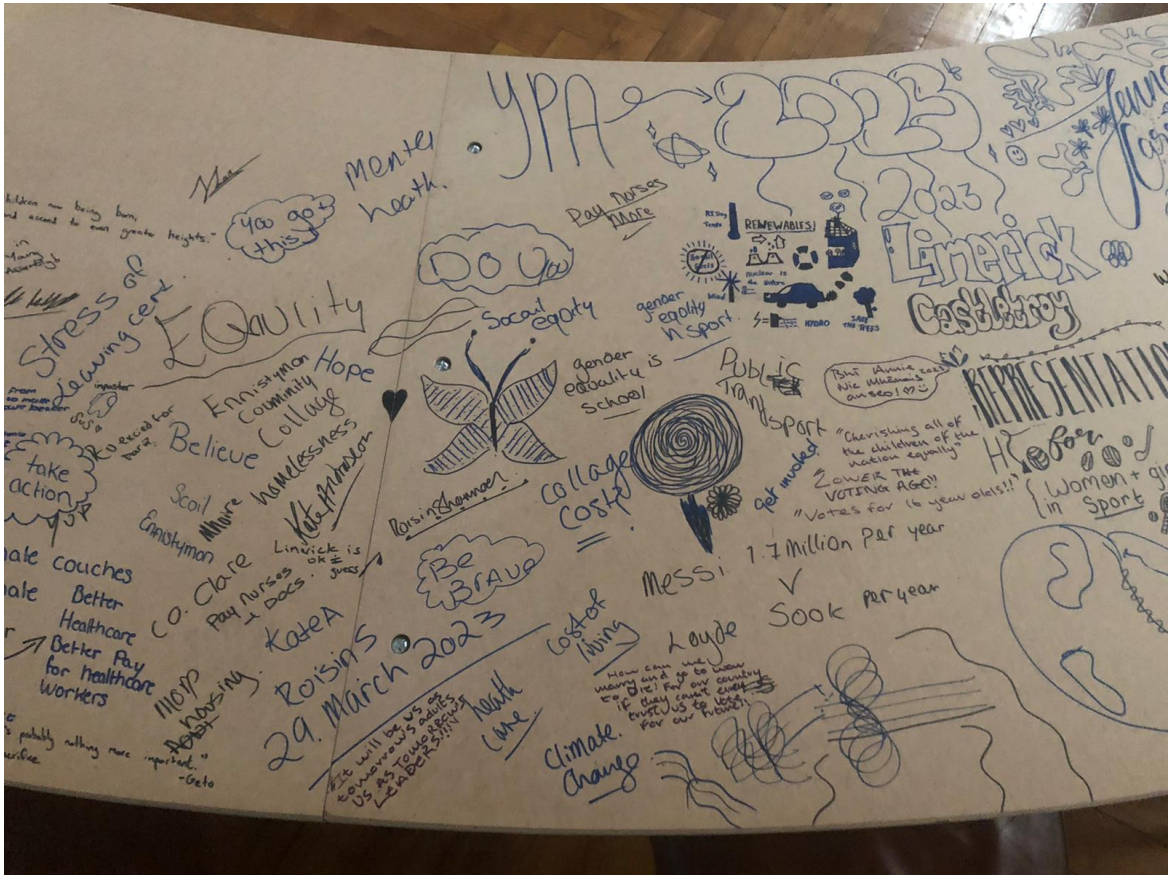
ANNEX 7: Images from the YPA project

These photos were taken by me at the end of the three-day intervention of YPA project. They represent the material archive which remained after the experience.



"The present is blinding - and distorting.
But good historians enter the country
of the past with their minds as open
and alert as possible, particularly
attentive to the forgotten and the
silenced, yes; suspicious of the official
narrative, of course - but also continually
alive to the possibility of the unexpected, the
unimagined and even the undesired"
Zadie Smith

Power in Public Art Spaces. F(r)ictions, Performativity and the Generation of Counter-Hegemonic Narratives



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