Decoloniality, Embodiment and Othering Emotionality: Decoding and Countering the Inter-Imperialist Foundations of Intersectional Abjection

La Descolonialidad, el Encarnar y la Otredad en las Emociones: Descodificando y Contrarrestando los Fundamentos Inter-Imperialistas de la Abyección Interseccional

Padilla, Alexis*

University of New Mexico, Estados Unidos.
apadilladiv@gmail.com

Resumen

This paper interrogates the intersectional place of disability, race and the corporal dimensions of gender in the global north-south epistemological divide with regards to allowable domains of othering and emotionality. This approximation is undertaken via LatDisCrit understood as superdiversity from diaspora/border-crossing subaltern standpoints. LatDisCrit integrates critically LatCrit (Valdés, 1999) and DisCrit (Annamma, et al., 2013), two intersectional literatures centered on the interplay of race/ethnicity, diasporic cultures, historical sociopolitics and disability with multiple transmodern Latinx identities. The paper postulates that global south is a transgressive emancipation space, particularly in the sphere of emotions. Thus, it expresses through sentipensante epistemologies. As such, it demands exploring the power of its rich complexity and ambiguity through Decoloniality as a way to filter knowledge dependence on settler/colonial purely rationalistic ways, imposed through various hegemonic strategies. The paper stresses global posthuman disability, diasporic interrace and non-binary gender visions and experiences as modes of trans-regional precarity, aligning global south epistemologies of disability, interracial diasporas, feminism and non-binary gender options with complex identity notions such as superdiversity. The latter is a notion which has been used almost exclusively to allude to urban global north contexts.
Keywords: Intersectional disability studies; LatDisCrit; Superdiversity; Inter-imperial subaltern resistance; Decolonial theorizing; Global south epistemologies.

Resumen

Este ensayo cuestiona el lugar interseccional que ocupan la discapacidad, la raza y las dimensiones corporales del género en la división epistemológica global norte/sur con respecto a los dominios permisibles de las emociones y la otredad. Su abordaje se realiza por medio de LatDisCrit entendido como una manifestación de superdiversidad desde las perspectivas subalternas de las diásporas y los cruces de fronteras. LatDisCrit integra de manera crítica LatCrit (Valdés, 1999) y DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013), dos cuerpos interseccionales de literatura que se centran en la confluencia de la raza/etnicidad, las culturas diaspóricas, la sociopolítica de lo histórico y la discapacidad junto con múltiples identidades latinas Transmodernas. El ensayo postula que el sur global es un espacio de transgresión emancipatorio, especialmente en lo que atañe a las emociones, por lo cual se expresa por medio de epistemologías sentipensantes. Como tal, demanda que se explore el poder de su rica complejidad y ambigüedad por medio de la descolonialidad como una forma de filtrar la dependencia del conocimiento anclado en mecanismos puramente racionalistas cuyas pautas se imponen por los colonizadores a través de diversas estrategias hegemónicas. El ensayo enfatiza las experiencias posthumanas de discapacidad, diásporas interraciales y visiones no binarias de genero a nivel global. Se resalta su naturaleza como modalidades trans-regionales de precariedad, alineando las epistemologías de la discapacidad, las diásporas interraciales, el feminismo y las opciones de genero no binarias en el sur global con complejas nociones de identidad tales como la superdiversidad, una noción que hasta ahora se ha usado casi exclusivamente para aludir a contextos urbanos del norte global.
Palabras clave: Estudios interseccionales; LatDisCrit; Superdiversidad; Resistencia subalterna Inter-imperialista; Teorías decoloniales; Epistemologías del sur global.

* Sociology & Education PhD, University of New Mexico. Independent Researcher, Phillips Theological Seminary. Tulsa, Oklahoma. USA.
ORCID ID 0000-0001-9655-964X

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Introduction

This exploratory theoretical paper adopts a flexible/ambiguous stance toward the possibilitarian (Brosio, 1990; Senese, 1991) spirit of global south epistemologies. They are seen as hopeful spaces for emancipation's sake, seeking to unearth the contours of complexity that unite and separate the intersectional disability, diasporic interrace, feminist and non-binary gender identity experiences that separate global south from those of global north contexts. I do so particularly in conjunction to emotionality's links with material precarity repertoires (Joly & Venturiello, 2013; Scribano, 2012; 2020).

I am particularly concerned with material and other modes of imposed, subaltern (Quijano, 2000; 2006) precarity and marginality, regardless of whether their location corresponds to global north or global south geographical or geopolitical territorialities (Minich, 2014; Mitchell & Snyder, 2010). The decolonial theorizing approach I use throughout the study is grounded on two key concepts: LatDisCrit and inter-imperialism (Padilla, 2018, 2021a, 2022). I also explore a special mode of theorizing that falls under intersectional/ decolonizing critical hermeneutics (Allen, 2015; 2016). Therefore, I proceed through an applied interpretative interrogation of LatDisCrit as a form of superdiversity that nonetheless evolves within the metaphoric imaginaries and the practical confines of inter-imperialism. In the sections that follow I aim to (1) understand and explain governing metanarratives of intersectional disability in trans-Latinidad spaces, i.e., multiple ways to express and transform the emotional spatialities and embodiment of being black Latinx, indigenous Latinx, global north diasporic Latinx, etc.; (2) single out the colonizing global north epistemology implications of superdiversity in conjunction to intersectional disability and diasporic spaces of material precarity; and (3) open up ambiguity/strategic flexibility spaces for the interdisciplinary theorizing and practical interpretation of both LatDisCrit and global south epistemologies in relation to diasporic dynamics of material precarity (Escobar, 2020).

Material precarity is not a phenomenon exclusive to the global south. It also affects in profound ways the existential becoming and emotional unfolding (Maldonado-Torres, 2001; 2004; 2005; 2007) of vast global north intersectional disability segments of the population (Justesen, 2020; Meekosha, 2011; Mitchell and Snyder, 2010; Norstedt, 2019), although this is conveniently disguised by consumption propaganda and hegemonic axiological and epistemological devices aimed at perpetuating the hierarchical contours of an ethos which proclaims global north superiority and rationalistic self-sufficiency (Choudry, 2011; Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Meyers, 2019a; 2019b).

Beyond superdiversity as cosmopolitan post-multiculturality

For the past two decades, superdiversity explorations have been primarily confined to pluri-linguistic phenomena. Some sociolinguistic scholars criticize superdiversity's tendencies to mask 'modernist reactions to postmodern realities' (Blommaert 2009a: 415). Linguistic anthropologist Jan Blommaert shows how, in an asylum case in the UK which involved a Rwandan refugee, the home officer questioned the refugee's nationality on the grounds that his linguistic repertoire was said to be 'abnormal' from the perspective of the home officer's knowledge of national linguistic expectations for incoming refugees from that particular African nation. Blommaert's sociolinguistic examination of the Rwandan refugee's repertoire, however, supported the applicant's credibility. In theoretical terms, Blommaert (2009a; 2009b) sees this as the manifestation of a broader pattern which involves the clash of two opposite versions of sociolinguistics: one grounded on national order understandings and one open to recognizing the global postmodern complexity and dynamicity of sociolinguistic speech and repertoires in intermingled

use and interchange (Bauman R. & Briggs, 1990; 2003; Bauman, 1991; Benhabib, 2018; Benhabib & Resnik, 2009; Blommaert, 2009b; Castells, 1997; Foucault, 2007; Jacquemet, 2005; Silverstein, 2004).

Beyond sociolinguistics, the critical exploration of superdiversity includes social theorists who, like Sofya Aptekar (2019) are concerned with its 'post-racial' ethos. They look intentionally for metatheoretical and methodological ways to re-center issues of power, inequality and matrices of hierarchization. The concepts in Aptekar's symbolic interactionist reassessment of superdiversity as a methodological tool elevate the value of power and inequality considerations. In her case, power dynamics are exposed through ethnomethodology and micro-relational gestures and spatial arrangements (Anderson and Snow 2001; Berrey 2015; Biehl 2015). These give performative intercultural meaning to interactions beyond hierarchy-neutral considerations of ethnicity (Meissner 2015; Vertovec 2007). While "researchers orient themselves to new emergent patterns of complexity, particularly while looking for 'key forms of space and contact that might yield positive benefits' … they should not assume that the rise of super-diversity necessarily brings a decline in the role of the 'old' categories of race, class, and gender" (Aptekar, 2019: 55). Aptekar questions Padilla, Azevedo, and Olmos-Alcaraz's (2015) bold assertion to the effect that "research with a super-diversity lens can help break the cycle of reification of ethnic Otherness" (Aptekar 2019: 56).

Latdiscrit as radical otherness and emotional ambiguity

Alejandro Vallega (2010; 2014) suggests that this radical otherness operates beyond reason as a sort of self-abjection. It exists in an intrinsic and often emotional way through what he calls, following Levinas, radical exteriority. Radical exteriority is especially relevant at the level of intra-identitarian configurations of complex multi-ethnic hierarchies such as those of trans-Latinidades in their performative manifestations of thought, decolonial agency and creative imagination. If this is so, one cannot presume that a given methodological stance wipes away its profound existential, emotional and phenomenological roots. Likewise, Valentine (2008) cautions researchers to be cognoscente of the gaps between superficial everyday practices of urban inhabitants of superdiverse cosmopolitan spaces and the values and beliefs they hold deeply as guiding matrices of their ultimate hierarchical conceptions about human self and otherness. This is a very important aspect. Its significance becomes much more evident as one dives into the intricacies of diasporic intersectional disability in global north contexts (Erevelles, 2011; 2014; Erevelles and Minear, 2010; Malhotra, 2017; Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Russell, 1998).

There is Another crucial problem. Being born as global north epistemologies, even though they help highlight certain dimensions of relationality, both symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology are circumscribed to micro-level, transactional, that is, non-emotional units of analysis for meaning making (Goffman 1986; Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 2015). Consider the following macro-historical example of imperialist expansion. It illustrates how the meeting and overlap of two or more imperial frontiers impact the lives and identitarian configurations of those who inhabit the emerging spaces of ambiguity and deeply held emotionality that such transformational encounters generate. When the U.S. took over large portions of the territory of what used to be Mexico in the 1840s, folks of Mexican origin were given the option of being Mexican or U.S. citizens. The inhabitants from Mesilla (located today at the northern side of the border and thus part of the U.S.) wanted to be Mexicans. Therefore, they moved the location of their town south several times. However, their desires were not fulfilled due to geopolitical imperialist reasons. Should this town be considered part of the global north or the global south? What should be the ontological and epistemological criteria to make this determination? How should the dynamicity of inter-imperial complexity be understood and analyzed?

Latdiscrit as inter-imperial border-crossings of disabled intersectional subalternity: crafting ambiguous material precarity spaces of resistance as sentipensante embodiments of emotionality

To tackle the ontological and epistemological dimensions of inter-imperial complexity with its implications for trans-identitarian relations of race/ethnicity, disability and collective action (Bolt, 2014; 2019; 2021; Padilla, 2021a, 2022) grounded on emotionality and sentipensante paradigms (Fals Borda, 2016; Scribano, 2012; 2020), it is helpful to reflect on two of the most strikingly recurrent tropes in trans-Latinx imaginaries since the times of the Spanish empire. These two tropes have something key in common. Both of them are linked to disability. I am alluding here to el Quixote, with his masculine embodiment of ethical madness and the 'Lazarillo' (which in Spanish means the male child who leads the blind), with his picaresque embodiment of ambiguous yet apparently non-emotional interdependence in contexts of extreme material and probably also moral

precarity. For instance, literature Nobel Prize winner Camilo José Cela (2019) has composed a 20th century version of the Lazarillo's misadventures, very much in line with this literary tradition which is certainly much more than a mere coincidence. It reflects a broad discursive practice. It mirrors many deeply held LatDisCrit beliefs, values and metanarratives (Bolt, 2014 and 2019; Padilla, 2021b) which are concerned with the interactional understandings of disability as an exceptional space of precarity and alternative morality. Its representation often evokes feelings of both ethical and physical abjection, what Shildrick (2002) calls the "monster" both perceived outside of us and feared as a potential part of our own self. Furthermore, this "abnormal," alternative sense of morality is often infused within a baroque or surrealist aesthetic aura which justifies behaviors and activates expectations not necessarily transferrable to spaces of normalcy, of decency and ableness, e.g., begging in multidiverse cosmopolitan urban contexts such as those of Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo or Mexico city (Ferrante & Joly, 2017; Joly & Venturiello, 2013).

One must keep in mind that in Latin America, literary phenomena such as the so-called 'boom' of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was not a mere incidental outburst of individual creative efforts. Instead, it was a complex process of narratives and counter-narratives that in many respects could be categorized as cultural modes of inter-imperialism. It was a cultural phenomenon coupled with an elaborate articulation of critical analysis and political legitimation battel fields that sought to define the epitome of Latinxness as a subversive space of utopian imagination (Aparicio and Blaser 2008; Iber, 2015; Rojas, 2018).

Therefore, this section's argument goes as follows. The global south/north divide is powerfully articulated through the ambiguous political economy and trans-identitarian contours of inter-imperialism as it plays out in power and knowledge dimensions in both sides of the divide (Gordon and Webber 2007; Holloway 2002; Stahler-Sholk 2010; Vanden, 2007). Spaces of resistance in both global south and global north contexts are not immune to this ambiguous articulation. Rather, they are fully infused in their very emancipatory synergy by inter-imperialism.

In building this argument, I use two paradigmatic examples of anti-racist and anti-colonialist struggles in the Caribbean: Frans Fanon and C. R. L. James. James and Fanon themselves are racial, class, and gender/male archetypes of non-emotional existentialist approaches to collective struggles. They are byproducts of the unique inter-imperial location of Trinidad and Martinique during the 20th century (Dei, 2017; Dei and Hilowle 2018;

Haigh, 1999; San Juan 2002). Spatially and in their postcolonial realities, both of these islands illustrate well imperial borders and residual hegemonic power. By looking at Fanon and James as intellectual counter-hegemonic manifestations of anti-imperialism in inter-imperial border regions, I highlight their unique intersectional resistance as well as the theoretical and strategic value of inter-imperialism for analytical and resistance social movement building purposes.

This unique look at radical intellectual sovereignty within the ambiguous spaces afforded by inter-imperialism rests on contextualizing the non-emotional contours of global south struggles for emancipation. One needs to place its praxis within the epistemological and axiological confines of structural and discourse heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1986; 1990). In the Caribbean, this heteroglossia expresses tangibly in the linguistic configuration of Creole language. Creole exists within a subversive mingling of old imperial languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, and Dutch) combined with African vestiges. Creole expresses the freedom of the oppressed to counteract the cannons of orthodoxy and aesthetics imposed by empires. It also expresses a sense of trans-geographical mobility that transgresses the imposed limits of imperial hegemony. Of course, it is not simply that speaking Creole provides a magic pathway to emancipation. Rather, in the kinds of reality construction afforded by Creole there are potential basis for opening innovative emancipatory resistance avenues. In Fanon, these avenues start with the psychoanalytical contours of non-compliance. Thus, Fanon (1965a; 1965b) adopts a non-emotional, quasi-therapeutic approach to identity transformation (Bernasconi and Cook, 2003; Bulhan, 1985; Gendzier, 1973; Gordon, 1995; 2020; Wright, 2004; Wynter, 2003a; 2003b). This transformational humanistic approach looks toward breaking the chains of acceptance for patronizing relational modes of micro and macro dimensions of colonizing (Cervio, 2021). It entails no longer being docile addressees of alienating oppressors' language.

In James, on the other hand, these emancipation avenues are linked to a post-Marxian awareness of class and race difference which allow the oppressed to develop a sense of separate identity from imperial ideologies of geographical and cultural subjugation. James' identity transformation approach rests on the experience of Diaspora defined either in terms of geographical trans-location or in terms of the constant mutability of ways of being for survival's sake (James, 1953; 1977; 1989; 1993; 1996; 1999). It avoids rigidified nationalism and ideological stagnation. James' ideological and intellectual anti-

colonial and anti-imperialistic trajectory from Trinidad to the British imperial metropolis to the United States is an excellent illustration of how this process of complex awareness raising and critical stance toward the alienating effects of imperial allegiance ideologies operate.

In sum, the practical manifestation of this interaction between inter-imperialism and heteroglossia depends on two simultaneous forces. First, it rests on a sustaining articulation gap. Secondly, it depends on a crucial movement toward rupture with the vestiges of inter-imperialistic oppressions. The metaphor that Stewat Hall (1996) uses for representing this complex functional duality is that of an articulation. As in the body, articulations unite and divide. They at once bridge and demarcate. Their real force resides in not being as rigid as bones, in bridging, in not being core. Thus, they are especially vulnerable for ruptures and for the coordination of further links and ulterior spheres of mobilization. In the sociopolitical, sociocultural and socio-historical contexts of LatDisCrit's modes of inter-imperialism, these dual forces are generated by inter-imperial immediacy and exchange. For instance, Latinx folks are in the borders of the imperial realities imposed by the United States, even if they do not reside within the limits of the American state. Yet, at the same time, the vestiges of many other empires are intrinsic to their identity and their sociopolitical embodiments of cultural and epistemological mestizaje (Castro-Gómez 2005; 2007; 2008; 2011; Padilla, 2021a; 2022). Inter-imperial proximity, continuity, and discontinuity exacerbate what Edwards (2003) calls a "décalage" dimension of Diaspora which refers to the superdiversity residues of untranslatable discourse, as well as cultural, institutional, peoplehood/nationhood and structural perception differences. These multifaceted differences open the door to the uncertainty of concrete, context-based change articulation among various imperial actors. "The notion of articulation is crucial not just because it combines the structural and the discursive but also because it has a flip side: such societies structured in dominance" are also the ground of cultural resistance" (Edwards, 2003: 12).

Contrasting/bridging global north and global south existential and sentipensante epistemologies of intersectional subalternity and emotional embodiment

Santos (2015; 2016; 2018), for instance, fails to address explicitly issues of disability with the crucial intersectional implications of embodiment reductionism this entails. Nevertheless, he does take seriously differential trans-identitarian and sociopolitical considerations, underscoring the distinctive realm of global south epistemologies and showing the unique value of possibilitarian collectivism and situated emancipation as intrinsic to global south epistemological distinctiveness. Santos emphasizes the concrete political vitality that results from elevating the epistemological, not so much the geographical global south which in turn entails seeking to understand, honor and diffuse their underground knowledges, including emotionally grounded ways of knowing. These knowledges are born out of emancipatory learning in the multifaceted struggles for cognitive and distributive justice around the globe. Thus, Santos and Meneses (2020: XVI) define the epistemic global south as "the ways of knowing and the wisdom generated in the resistance against abyssal exclusion and the ontological degradation and political nullification it entails." Furthermore, they assert that The "goal of epistemologies of the South is to achieve global cognitive justice, thereby empowering in new and more efficient ways the oppressed social groups and actors in both the geographical global South and the geographical global North" (Santos and Meneses 2020: XVI).

In terms of disability specific global south dimensions, Grech (2009; 2011; 2017) emphasizes a nexus between disability and development. This nexus is born from the policy and research realization "that poverty and disability are locked in a vicious cycle of deprivation and marginalisation, and as a result of which disabled people are among the poorest of the poor" (Grech 2011: 87). Of course, this kind of blanket, acritical inference forgets that global north contexts also have a good share of the poorest of the poor. Therefore, there are problems in thinking of material precarity exclusively in terms of development, namely, in terms of a never-ending catch up game through which global south nations are pressed to be more and more like their global north counter-parts for the sake of an utopian deception which invokes material prosperity promises that (1) do not end up materializing; (2) mask global north's own inequality and epistemological gaps (Anesia, 2019; Goodley & Lawthom, 2011; Meekosha, 2011; Soldatic, 2015; Ware, et al., 2014); and (3) erases via selective ignorance the emotionality dimensions associated with coping on a daily basis with such dire conditions of embodied, material and dignity depriving modes of continuous and inalterable, that is structurally promoted forms of precarity. Grech (2009, 2011 and 2017) is among the few global north grounded scholars who regard the treatment of the global south as a unidirectional epistemic process imposing global

north knowledge, civil society strategies and policy solutions which in turn suppress the rich epistemic, policy and strategic specificity of the creativity often adopted by local disabled person organizations (DPOs) and other intersectional subalternity actors in global south contexts (Kennedy, 2004; Uvin, 2004).

There is a great deal of ambiguity and emotionally charged plurivocity in the intersectional linkages between disability and decolonial processes. Their interplay often shows creative situated emancipation solutions that would not work in other global south or global north contexts and whose ethos appears completely counter-intuitive to those outside the context in question (Meyers 2019a and 2019b).

From the emotional embodiment/ sentipensante standpoint underscored in the present analysis there is another crucial existential aspect that deserves epistemic attention. There is a special capacity in global south actors to cultivate hope in the midst of institutional and material precarity conditions (Trinidad Galván, 2006). These conditions tend to discourage and even paralyze mainstream actors among emerging generations in global north contexts. One can think of the dramatic case of radical solidarity vacuum in industrialized countries like Japan. Japan is a nation rich in non-western traditions. Nonetheless in multiple respects, including many disability policies, it has adopted western epistemic and hierarchical practices. The "imaginary of social change has been uncommon in contemporary Japanese society. The disillusionment of politics is widespread. A sense of powerlessness is deeply immersed, and it seems that no political ideology provides hope…" (Tamura, 2018: 2). Tamura cites as an illustration an essay published by a 31-year-old Japanese part time worker where the young male writer claims that his hope is war. Why war instead of revolution? He "shows no hope for social change through collective action because he knows that there is no chance to gain support. He notes that, according to the prevailing norm of Japanese society, it is his own fault that he is a precarious worker" (Tamura, 2018: 2).

This "blaming the victim" approach is too typical of neoliberal ideologies around the world. Even though the basis for the Japanese belief system cited here may not be grounded specifically on western neoliberal policies, the existential and above all emotional consequences are the same. Most likely, their pervasiveness is such that it ends up affecting folks with disabilities in a higher proportion than other people who experience extreme poverty. Their plight as disabled unemployed or underemployed lumpen proletariats (Russell, 1998) is compounded by intersectional dimensions that make it unlikely that they will be valued as equally human as their able-bodied wage-earning fellow humans around the globe (Annamma 2018; Erevelles 2011; 2014). What does superdiversity have to say about these exclusionary phenomena? How do LatDisCrit's diasporic global south knowledges with their "sentipensante" (Fals Borda 2016) possibilitarian epistemological stance contribute to the conversation? How does an inter-imperial macro and micro-analysis of material precarity within the rhetoric and political realities of the global north/south divide enriches what we think we know about interdisciplinary ways to understand/ explain the textuality (Ricoeur, 1971; 1974; 1981) of social action in these marginalizing situations toward potential emancipation avenues?

Concluding remarks

This exploratory metatheoretical paper interrogated intersectional metanarratives of disability in conjunction to the unique kind of decolonial subalternity afforded by LatDisCrit. First, it showed the contours of LatDisCrit as an ambiguous superdiversity space whose decolonial resistance evolves in paradoxical ways within the confines of inter-imperialism in both global north and global south contexts. Secondly, the paper singled out the colonizing global north epistemology implications of superdiversity in conjunction to intersectional disability and diasporic spaces of material precarity, emphasizing superdiversity's ideological role in masking class, gender and race-based matrices of hierarchy and exclusion. Third, it opened up an invitational road toward the creation and examination of ambiguity/strategic flexibility spaces for interdisciplinary theorizing and practical interpretations of both LatDisCrit and global south epistemologies in relation to diasporic dynamics of material precarity, realizing how this dimension articulates disability resistance innovations in global north contexts by relying on the possibilitarian ethos of global south knowledges.

Above all, the paper served to underscore the crucial link between emotionality and embodiment. It has done so particularly through an exploration of the complex underpinnings of racialized and ableist modes of abjection and possibilitarian resistance which interact in dialectical ways through the macro contours of inter-imperialism and LatDisCrit's identitarian micro-politics of radical exteriority.

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