

**FINISH THE EULOGY, BRAZIL: A CALL FOR THE END OF THE SUBJECT**

by

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## Abstract

*Difference* speaks. This much can be readily assessed when one surveys the global political-economic landscape. In the context of the Americas, *difference* screams; whether from black or indigenous populations (or other marginalized and subjugated communities), their words have been receiving some attention in the era of widespread faith in Liberalism. The goal of this thesis is to interrogate what *difference* has meant, what it means, and what it can mean. By reviewing major works that tried to rearticulate difference in the 20th century and tracing the construction of the current global reality through the articulation of the Modern Subject through *difference*, this work seeks to provide a critical account of how *difference* is deployed today, why it still means violence, and why it can only signify death and dispossession while it is articulated through *differentiation*. Finally, this thesis argues that *something else* is possible. That is, it postulates that *difference* can be something other than *differentiation* and self-determination. By engaging philosophy and critical race theory, I hope to excavate what lies within *difference*. I also examine two recent cases of violence in Brazil against its always already subjugated people - namely, black and indigenous populations. Finally, I propose that a shift in how *difference* is thought about, conceived of, perceived, and experienced is possible. To argue for this change, I try to show that reality actually means something else through quantum physics, indigenous thought, and critical theory works which call for the release of imagination and from certainty. With this, I hope to reflect and provide help for the project of social justice.

## Lay Summary

This thesis interrogates what *difference* has meant, what it means, and if it can mean something else. It's important to explore what meanings we attach to the concept because *difference* is often used - either by groups fueled by hate speech or that deploy liberal celebration discourses.

Despite of the inclusivity language and representation projects of recent decades, the headlines still report the ongoing killing and dispossession of black and indigenous peoples throughout the Americas (and other marginalized and subjugated communities across the globe). Therefore, regardless of a discourse of acceptance of difference via multiculturalism, violence is still the norm. This thesis, then, asks: what would happen if we experienced *difference* as inseparability? What could change in our social relations if we thought about and practiced *difference* without self-determination? What would be transformed if we didn't see anything separated from anything else? What if everything was within every-thing and every-thing within everything?

## **Preface**

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Pedro Daher.

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For Camille, always.



## Introduction

*"in the poetics of Relation, one who is errant strives to know the totality (...) yet already knows (...) will never accomplish this (...) [one] challenges and discards the universal (...) [one] conceives of totality but willingly renounces any claims to sum it up or to possess it"*<sup>1</sup>

*"the Hawthorn Archive is an imaginary and real infrastructure (...) [which] is a kind of consciousness I call being in-difference and how it can be developed and sustained in practice. Being in-difference is a political consciousness and a sensuous knowledge: a standpoint and a mindset for living on better terms than what we're offered, for living as if you had the necessity and the freedom to do so. By better, I mean a collective life without misery, deadly inequalities, mutating racisms, social abandonment, endless war, police power, authoritarian governance, heteronormative impositions, patriarchal rule, cultural conformity, and ecological destruction"*<sup>2</sup>

*Difference* speaks. This much can be readily assessed when one surveys the global political-economic landscape. In the context of the Americas, *difference* screams; whether from black or indigenous populations (or other marginalized and subjugated communities), their words have been receiving some attention in the era of widespread faith in Liberalism<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, in the period of multicultural/multiracial celebration of Universal human rights, *difference* continues to be deployed. Whether to continue the genocide and dispossession of black and indigenous peoples or to promote projects of economic so-called empowerment via including the subaltern in the game of eternal-infinite accumulation, *difference* is always the lexicon chosen to articulate political projects and social existence. What informs the current conceptualizations of *difference* are the philosophical and scientific projects of knowledge from the Modern text. Worse: even works that try to free *difference* from this grammar constantly fall into its claws again and again. Thus, this thesis seeks to interrogate what *difference* has meant, what it can mean, and if it is possible to rethink it in order to articulate *something else* toward social justice.

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<sup>1</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, *The Hawthorn Archive*, v.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Fukuyama, "The End of History?".

This project is divided into three central sections and a concluding one. Over the first three chapters, I chart what *difference* has meant and how it was constructed by providing an overview of Modern thinking (in Europe and in Brazil). In addition, I review three major attempts to rework *difference* from within Modern metaphysics to argue that they can only take us far enough in the project of social justice. Finally, I propose an alternate way of perceiving, thinking about, conceiving of, and experiencing *difference*. After the first three sections, the conclusion arrives as a reminder; a point of return and departure simultaneously.

Therefore, in the first chapter, *Difference and the Subject*, I start with a review of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Nahum Chandler accompanied by Denise Ferreira da Silva's and Gayatri Spivak's critical analytical tools. In this first part, I argue that the first three authors' projects have some limitations for they are trying to rework *difference* from within the Modern text. As I contend during those sections, the Modern grammar does not allow any type of writing which does not mean self-determination, self-consciousness, and Universality. In short, it always requires a space of transcendental self-actualization. As I argue during the chapter, while there is space for transcendentalism, there is room for *differentiation*. While there is *differentiation*, *difference* remains bound to repeat the violence of the Modern text. After discussing the traps of reworking difference from within the Modern text, I move to a discussion of the Modern Subject through the works of Cedric Robinson, Michel Foucault, Sylvia Wynter, Denise Ferreira da Silva, and Hegel. This discussion is key to the "outcome" of this thesis for it is the figure of the Subject that sustains and is sustained by *difference*. The discussion of the Subject is fundamental to this work because *human* and *racial differentiation* were articulated precisely in order to delimit the space of the ones who are able to be Subjects and inhabit Universality and the ones who are not able to be Subjects and, consequently, cannot inhabit Universality. Moreover, after

*racial differentiation* was "silenced" by the multicultural/post-racial discourses of the recent decades, the Subject was kept in place by the imperial-capitalist projects of accumulation, dispossession, and genocide by promoting the idea that every person can be a Subject. This trap is frequently successful in co-opting social justice movements since inclusion has been the most successful (legal) language subjugated populations have been able to articulate. What inclusion promotes, however, is the continuous killing of the people who cannot be Subjects in the insatiable lust of capital for infinite growth through exploitation of people and natural resources.

Following this discussion, the second chapter, *The tracing*, travels to Brazil to provide an empirical example of how the Modern text organizes *difference*. In this chapter, I discuss how Brazil adapted the Modern grammar to its own reality by reworking *miscegenation* as not only a positive lexicon but as the *essential intrinsic difference* of the country. Brazilian denial of racism is the country's trademark trait of social existence. In order to pursue and account for the simultaneous avowal and disavowal of *difference* in Brazil, I start and finish the chapter analyzing recent texts published by public figures: Antonio Risério, an anthropologist, and Cesar Benjamin, the current Secretary of Education of Rio de Janeiro (city). Both articulate *difference* through the fundamental text of Brazilian sociality with their own particular tweaks, that of *racial democracy*, written by Gilberto Freyre. I then review the cases of Rafael Braga Vieira, a young black man, and the Akroá Gamella indigenous people and their fight to regain their land, in order to argue that the text of *racial democracy*, the one responsible for developing the avowal and disavowal of *difference* in the country, not only is based on racism but also serves as the perfect disguise for the continue exploitation and killing of black and indigenous populations. My arguments are informed by Ferreira da Silva's device, the national text, which she developed in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*; this analytical tool works to reveal how the fundamental texts

that articulated Brazilian reality are a reproduction of the Modern grammar, which wrote the Universal Subject, reworked to fit with the country's specific conditions. After seeing the failures and limitations of distinct projects of reworking/celebrating *difference*, arguing that they all keep some degree of *differentiation* in place, I finally move to the third chapter, *Difference rethought*.

In the final chapter, I argue that *difference* can signify something else. Before articulating what *difference* can mean, I start by claiming that the Subject needs to end. I review Zizek's *The Fragile Absolute* in order to argue for a shift in how sublimation occurs in social justice movements. With this move, I ask that one moves away from trying to become a Subject and end the sublimation process which keeps the Subject intact since the Subject cannot be anyone else than the Universal/Spirit Subject of Western Europe. To complement this claim, I go over Ferreira da Silva's *On difference without separability* and Deleuze's *Michel Tournier and the world without others*. In addition to these two works, I also get help from quantum physics from Robert Nadeau's and Menas Kafatos' *The non-local universe* and Carl Mika's *Indigenous Education and the metaphysics of presence*. These four works are central to the articulation of the intra-realm of *difference* where there only exists a dimension of intra-exchange of shared mutuality. In this conceptualization, *difference* is articulated as a completely inseparable reality, where everything and every-thing is always already here and exist in 'no time'. The end of the Subject and the new realm of *difference* are stages which occur simultaneously. Just like the Subject cannot exist without *difference* and vice-versa, *difference* cannot mean anything other than *differentiation* while the Subject remains.

While writing the introduction, I realized it's not easy to finish an initial outline. Therefore, I'd like to end with a few questions that were running along the writing of this inaugural section: what happens when one loses oneself into the depths one was trying to escape

from? Worse: into the depths one was sure they had risen above? Is it truly possible to flee? Is there a movement which can avoid repeating Modern being? What demands to be let go? How to listen and read instead of speak and write? Can one conclude with certainty and security? Better yet: *should* one conclude with certainty and security?

## Difference and the Subject

*"A long strip of sun-scarred beach, an anticipation of natives, pleasant or unpleasant, a full unending gasp of water called ocean or the savage sea which has shipwrecked you on this island, and which is the barrier between you and civilization"*<sup>4</sup>

Several scholars have been discussing who is the Modern Subject, how he came to be, who/what informed his formation, what philosophies and sciences shaped him, and so on<sup>5</sup>. Others focused their work on challenging western metaphysics in order to deploy difference in a new fashion<sup>6</sup> or, at the very least, reject difference as differentiation and/or self-presence. The former group has highlighted the necessary intra-connection between the Subject and *difference* while the latter has at worst failed to achieve such theorization and at best achieved it but retained (some of) the most important ontoepistemological descriptors that they themselves were trying to undo in their projects. The central task of this thesis is to investigate and think about *difference* - especially from the 15th century onwards. With this tracing, I will be asking throughout this text: can *difference* be something else?<sup>7</sup> Can it *mean* something other than *differentiation*? Finally, I will conclude the thesis by arguing that *difference* can, in fact, be something else and that a "simple" shift in the way *difference* is perceived, conceived of, and experienced is all that is required for this other ontoepistemological, ethical, intellectual, imaginative, empirical, reality to be freed from the shackles of *human-racial differentiation* and multicultural liberal political-economic-philosophical projects of "giving voice" to the other of difference.

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<sup>4</sup> Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, and Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom".

<sup>6</sup> For example, see Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, and *The Logic of Sense*.

<sup>7</sup> I ask the reader to notice that the verb "to be" was deployed instead of the verb "to become". When I move to Carl Mika's work, this decisive difference in wording will be(come) clear.

What's at stake for this thesis, then, is to map out what difference has meant and how its deployment happens according to the combination of *human differentiation* and the writing of the Subject, i.e., how for the latter to fully arise in its total embodiment a complete theorization and deployment of the former was required. Thus, one of my tasks in this chapter is to understand who the Modern Subject is, the Subject that, as it will be contended, is the philosophical-scientific ultimate ghost<sup>8</sup> and material thing which continues to inform our contemporary socio-political-economic project, reality, and moment. I will chart how he was written with human differentiation, or simply *difference*, as its most important defining factor-truth. After establishing who the Subject is, I will move on to chapter two to see his deployment in Brazil and look at some of the country's most recent violence against its always already subjugated peoples - indigenous, African-Brazilians, and their descendants - to demonstrate how the logics of the Modern project of *difference* still inform the country's present. Finally, then, I'll be able to enter chapter three wherein I'll return to *difference*, the concept-idea that "started it all", to look over the possibilities of rethinking and redeploying it in a way which makes possible envisioning a completely new society, radically different from the ones we know and have been building till this very day.

Since difference is the central piece of this thesis and the concept I am trying to rethink, I will start the chapter and the investigation as a whole by addressing some of the attempts made by French intellectuals to rework difference. I will go over Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and

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<sup>8</sup> This is a direct reference to Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters*, wherein she selects haunting as the language to frame her investigation for it allows to look at the structures that, in a sense, 'hide in plain sight' in our daily lives (in)forming our social relationships and processes in an entanglement of past-present-future. Haunting opens possibilities for it requires something-to-be-done, that is, it demands something different then before in order to go away. What seems central in Avery's articulation of haunting is that the ghost is just as haunted as the ones it haunts: there is no causal relationship between one event and an-other but only a seemingly (because it is possible to move on from the ghost) permanent interrelatedness of nevertheless distinct appearances/situations/experiences. Haunting, therefore, is the everywhere-everything all around always weighing on social reality-history that presses against, with, and within everyone.

Deleuze's *Difference & Repetition* to argue that both their articulations of *difference* can only take the project of a completely new conceptualization of *difference* so far. Derrida's contribution to deconstructing/undoing western metaphysics by revealing that presence is nothing but a fantasy, since what marks the existence of the sign/word is a simultaneous play between absence and presence, retains a conception of a self-reflexive Subject and *differences* that exist in separation. Deleuze's refashioning of representation into difference-in-itself, albeit a very interesting and productive way of debunking this philosophical project, cannot help but rewrite the Subject and the traditional western ontoepistemological conditions of *difference* as *differentiation* for his articulation writes difference as forever *differing* from one another in a transcendental space. Needless to say, neither of them tackle race, the central concept for *human differentiation*. Thus, I will review Nahum Chandler's *X- The Problem Of The Negro As A Problem For Thought*, which deals directly with race by articulating Du Bois as a precursor of *différance*. I will also revisit Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, more specifically the version of *Can the Subaltern Speak?* that she published in the "History" chapter, wherein she shows how cultural difference is nothing but the same question of *difference* which Western thinking developed. Denise Ferreira da Silva's notions of *sequentiality*, *determinancy*, and *separability* are my main analytical tools, however, which she articulates in her article *On Difference Without Separability*. In this piece, Ferreira da Silva rearticulates *difference* into a "plenum" with the help of quantum physics to reject the Kantian and Hegelian solutions of self-determination (determinancy), Universality (separability), and Historicity (sequentiality)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Ferreira da Silva's project is not that different from mine. In chapter 3, I will come back to her notion of the "plenum" to explain the slight distinction between our ideas. In chapter 1, what will be important are her analytical tools to help in the critique of the other texts who try to rework difference.



It is impossible to talk about *difference* without talking about the Subject. Therefore, I have to finish this chapter by charting the Modern Subject since it is through and by him that *difference* is deployed/conceptualized. I will go over Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* and Michel Foucault's *Society Must be Defended* to articulate what was the role of race in pre-modern and Modern Europe through the former's tracing of the existence of race prejudice as the most important determinant of social existence/organization and the latter's tracing of the shifts in the historical discourse of race in Europe which led to state racism in the 20th century. Their articulation is important to my project for they reveal how *human differentiation* was always at stake but fall short since neither attempt to tackle the figure of the Subject nor difference itself. I'll move on to bring another of Foucault's work into the text, this time *The Order of Things*, and the response to his book produced by Sylvia Wynter in her article *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth*. Foucault reveals to us how the three different moments in Western knowledge and cultural practices (that is, the Renaissance, Classical, and Modern periods) made possible the birth of the figure of *man* (or, the Subject) but he, again, does not tackle this figure nor the racial constitution of his (*man's*) existence. Wynter brings race into the discussion by tracing how the European Subject/Same developed/consolidated itself through its Other via the figures of Christian, Man<sub>1</sub>, and Man<sub>2</sub> in a direct response to Foucault's lack of interest in dealing with race in this particular book. Her work is central to this thesis because she articulates the figure of the Subject and engages with difference but her project "*Towards the Human*" misses the opportunity of rethinking *difference* because it wishes to dismiss or get rid of it entirely<sup>10</sup>. I

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<sup>10</sup> I am not claiming that Wynter's project is a homogenizing one. Rather, what I mean is that, while proposing a shift in "consciousness awareness" and "subjective understanding" are great tools toward social justice for they call for a different way of experience reality, they still restate *difference* as their ontoepistemological background - not as racial-human differentiation but as a social existence in which individual subjects work/think/exist striving toward the collective well-being and interests. The problem here is that while all reality (social, spiritual, collective,

will then move to describe the figure of the Modern Subject by reviewing Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, wherein he describes the European male as inhabited by Spirit and because he knows he is inhabited by Spirit he is the ultimate representation of self-consciousness. To finish the outlining of the Modern Subject, I will go to Denise Ferreira da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, wherein she maps, step by step, how philosophy and science created and delimited the mapping of the world through the deployment of the figures she names as "transparent I's" and "affectable others". The former, the white European male, are the Subjects inhabited by Universality/Spirit/Reason and the motors of Historicity while the latter are all his others (African, indigenous, Asian) which are only affected by Universality/Reason and do not produce History. Thus, the guiding questions of this chapter are: what has been tried to do with *difference*? How has difference been deployed over the last 500 years or so? How is *difference* thought about, conceived of, and experienced? Who is the Subject? How is he the one who sustains and is sustained by *difference*?

### **The trap of reworking the modern grammar**

Difference, whether discussed in academia or in popular circles, is not a new subject of debate. In recent decades, the loud call of multiculturalism has made itself heard either through projects of recognition or via the politics of difference<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, we witnessed the rise of

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economic, political, etc.) remains an experience of individual life, even if individual subjects do not hierarchically *differentiate* in terms of gender, race, sexuality, or class (for example), and think about the collective desire/good, *difference* is still experienced in terms of separation and, thus, this organization runs the risk of leaving space open to *differentiation* in terms of "my needs" and the "other's needs".

<sup>11</sup> The reader may refer to Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur concerning projects of recognition and Iris Marion Young to politics of difference. I will not dwell on a critique of their work but the latter's project assumes that difference can signify a Subject, or inhabit Universality, or be a transparent I. That is, it is a project of making "difference speak", in a sense, wherein claims are lost within the web of neoliberal socialities. Concerning Taylor, the reader may refer to Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks*, wherein he goes over the failure of a politics of recognition for it assumes a discrepancy between a Subject and an Other who needs to be recognized by the Subject

intersectionality and identity politics, which articulate their projects for social justice according to the particular needs of each individual and group - needs that arise because of multiple sites of oppression<sup>12</sup>. Because of these movements, difference became the central lexicon of political-economic discussions. In this section, my task is to review philosophical rearticulations of *difference* which although brilliant cannot help but still stay trapped within modern thinking. After discussing the interventions made by Deleuze, Derrida, and Chandler, it will become clear why their philosophical projects that sought to rethink difference fall short of a more fundamental and radical shift in how *difference* is perceived, conceived, and experienced. Deleuze affirms the existence of *difference in itself* to prove its ontological preeminence in order to end with the violence that comes from representation, that is, the fundamental logics of western metaphysics of Same (identity) and Other (difference). Derrida and Chandler deconstruct the supremacy of presence as the ontological positioning of the I/word/reality, since more important than presence is absence itself, in order to end the violence of *differentiation*. I will argue, however, that their work retain the two most important descriptors of Modern thinking, i.e., Universality and Historicity, by following the critical analysis of Denise Ferreira da Silva's *On Difference without Separability* and Gayatri Spivak's *Can the subaltern Speak?*. The former argues the need to think from outside Universality and Historicity if any social

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in order to enter the realm of politics, economic, juridical, etc. Ricoeur's *The Course of Recognition* is what I have in mind. It is there that he articulates his program of mutual recognition toward social justice through adopting the Hegelian dialectics of (self-)recognition.

<sup>12</sup> As it happens with (almost) everything, the popularity of intersectionality has, to a certain extent, cost it its original anti-capitalist stance. If one looks back to Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, and Angela Davis, it becomes clear that their project is an anti-capitalist one. If one looks to the most recent pieces of intersectional public policy research, for example, most of the articles adhere to the liberal configuration of inclusion through capital in order to achieve social justice. For example, "Transforming Poverty-Related Policy with Intersectionality", Canan Corus et al., and "Intersectionality and Public Policy: Some Lessons from Existing Models", by Olena Hankivskya and Renee Cormier.

justice project wants to be successful and the latter reveals how *difference in itself* is nothing less than the redeployment of the modern conception of *difference* the philosophers tried to undo.

Before moving to Deleuze, Derrida, and Chandler, I will begin from the articulations put forward by Ferreira da Silva's *On difference without separability* and Spivak's updated version of *Can the Subaltern Speak?* published in her *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. In her article, Ferreira da Silva argues that for an "ethico-political program" to be capable of "not reproduc[ing] the violence of modern thought", it needs to "re-think sociality from without the modern text"<sup>13</sup>. What she is organizing is a strategy which would not form its project from the three central ontoepistemological descriptors of the modern grammar: *separability*, *determinancy*, and *sequentiality*<sup>14</sup>. These three headings, Ferreira da Silva argues, are what determine the I's notion of self-determination and certainty of its rationality. *Difference*, then, has always been conceptualized and experienced as if these conditions were its natural traits - the conditions that inform and are informed by Universality and Historicity. Her explanation helps me set the stage for my critique of the philosophical works that will soon appear for it shows how this experience of *difference* - that is, the experience of the self-determined I which knows it is self-determined because it can separate things in the world for itself (its knowledge) and can bring his self-consciousness to everyone and everywhere else because it is inhabited by Reason - is the pervasive mode of relating to and experiencing the world. Moreover, it shows that while any conceptualization of *difference* maintains any type of *differentiation*, it will not be able to shift our empirical, abstract, ethical, and philosophical realities.

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<sup>13</sup> Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," 58.

<sup>14</sup> The first two terms come from "the Kantian program" which articulates that "all that can be known (...) is gathered by the forms (space and time) of the intuition and the categories of the understanding (quantity, quality, relation, modality)" (*separability*) and that knowledge "comes from the understanding's ability (...) to determine (decide) the true nature of the sense impressions gathered by (...) intuition" (*determinancy*). The third is articulated by Hegel as that which "describes Spirit as movement, in time, a process of self-development, and describes History as the trajectory of Spirit" (*sequentiality*) (Ferreira da Silva, 60–61).

Spivak's *Can the subaltern speak?* is a sharp critique of intellectuals who assume a project of the "speaking subaltern" through an affirmation of cultural difference. *Difference* is the ontoepistemological condition of the ongoing colonial-imperial project but now it hides behind the discourse of development through the figure of the woman: "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution [through global-liberal financial development policies] and object-formation [through racialized-classed patriarchy], the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development"<sup>15</sup>. With her critique, Spivak articulates that *difference* is not some sort of before/instinctual category but that, rather, it's actualized through the economic because of the philosophical narratives of *differentiation* put in place by the capitalist colonial-imperial world project. Thus, projects to allow/make/recognize "*difference* speak(ing)" are doomed to fail for they cannot help but retain the conditions of separation and self-determination which keep the subaltern as subaltern<sup>16</sup>.

With that said, I will now go over Deleuze's *Difference & Repetition*, Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, and Chandler's *X-The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*. In their

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<sup>15</sup> Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 304.

<sup>16</sup> Spivak articulates her critique in terms of "transparency" as well. That is, the project of making the "subaltern (difference) speak" claims that the subaltern can or already is inhabiting the space of transparency developed by western thought. Of course, when the subaltern seems to occupy the space of transparency, they are reduced into their position of subaltern permanently for they become legible for the true transparent individual (the European). This project (of the speaking subaltern) restates the Subject through its total privileging of desire and power as the two categorical constitutive movements of the individual, which repeats the institution of the "Other as the Self's shadow" (Spivak, 266). If the individual subject articulates itself through these two categories he cannot help but to instantiate himself, develop his self-determined self-notion, by seeing as the only possibility of actualizing his agential force through inaugurating the Other via desire/power. More than this, she makes the point that the intellectuals miss what consciousness is truly about in Marx: class consciousness is not a before/instinct but actualizes itself as difference (Spivak, 258) and this consciousness happens and doesn't happen at the same time because similar conditions form a class and a lack of feeling of identity/community keeps the group from forming a class. Thus, the (French) intellectual (runs the risk of) restating himself as a transparent subject/keeps the transparency thesis intact because he only thinks in terms of desire/power as self-determination on individual level and takes himself (as the Subject) out of the equation of economic dispossession of the subaltern.

attempts to rethink *difference*, they remain locked within the modern grammar I've mentioned above through the work of Ferreira da Silva and Spivak. Deleuze's solution for *difference* repeats Kantianism when he writes that Kant discovered "Difference (...) in the form of a transcendental Difference (...) no longer in the form of an external difference which separates, but in the form of an internal Difference which establishes an a priori relation between thought and being"<sup>17</sup>. Contrary to what Deleuze affirms, transcendentalism keeps *separability* and *determinancy*, two of the main descriptors of the modern grammar which maintain *difference* as a realm of differentiation and separation. When he articulates the space where the mind is indivisible from being, he rehearses western metaphysics even if his goal was to undo it. In his project of *difference* being rewritten into everything because there is only Difference, Difference has to be seen as something in-itself. For Deleuze, "difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differentiate it (...) Difference must be shown differing"<sup>18</sup>. This conception of difference retains *sequentiality* for it is thought of as a series of differences in an infinite continuum where they permanently always already differentiate themselves, "each term of a series, being already a difference, must be put into a variable relation with other terms, thereby constituting other series devoid of centre and convergence"<sup>19</sup>. Even with his refusal, or, maybe deconstruction of the scene of representation, when stating that "this is what the philosophy of difference refuses (...) the general alternative proposed by infinite representation: the indeterminate, the indifferent, the undifferentiated or a difference already determined as negation (...) In its essence, difference is

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<sup>17</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 86.

<sup>18</sup> Deleuze, 56.

<sup>19</sup> Deleuze, 56.

the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference"<sup>20</sup>, what I find, in addition to isolation and *sequentiality*, is self-determination since a *difference* is a *difference* for it is self-determined as such. *Difference*, here, is self-consciousness<sup>21</sup>. As I'm about to explore, a similar problem happens within Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. His fundamental work of deconstructing the "metaphysics of self-presence" also retains the transcendental dimension within the space wherein the trace (or *différance*) happens. It is still somewhat Hegelian for the interior, the *arche-writing*, accounts for the exterior - that is, the exterior, where things exist, are accounted for by the interior transcendental space where things form themselves.

Derrida's investigation on the division between writing and speaking shows that both acts exist in a certain simultaneity, that is, one does not precede the other but rather both exist in a 'originary' moment that is, actually, a 'non-original' because one cannot trace the precise instant where one or the other began. Although he articulates the non-existence of a transcendental difference between signifier and signified, Derrida opens up new possibilities of writing. Nevertheless, the movement of *différance* happens in an *a priori* transcendental space of the interplay of presence and absence. Even though the tracing of self-presence as the ultimate ontoepistemological determinant that created the conditions for the emergence of *difference* as *differentiation*<sup>22</sup> helps destabilize such construction it cannot remove separation and self-

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<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, 52.

<sup>21</sup> Even if Deleuze rejects Hegel's movement of recognition (the master-slave dialectic) for one of "essential encounter", some traits of Hegelianism are to be found within his Kantianism. Although it is certainly productive to shift from a relationship of recognition to one of fundamental encounter, what really changes in empirical and ethical life if the encounter is between two transcendental, separated minds-beings, who are series of differentiated differences (in themselves, for themselves, and as themselves)? Very little can truly change. In this context, I remain stuck within differentiation. While there's differentiation, the gates of violence are open. Difference has to be something else.

<sup>22</sup> Or, the phone as a "moment of economy" that put the "system of hearing oneself speak" as responsible for having "even produced the idea of the world (...) that arises from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 7). What Derrida is writing about here is more than a justification for the West's colonial, imperial, conquest, capitalist goals. Rather, he is writing about precisely the *writing* that had to be done not

determination from *difference* and, thus from the Subject<sup>23</sup>. What happens to the articulations devised by Derrida and Deleuze if race becomes part of the project? Nahum Chandler's work will help me show the shortcomings of the French philosophers and also discuss the limitations of a project of *difference* if it tries to rework western metaphysics.

What Nahum Chandler thinks in his *X-The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought* is the inaugural moment of difference as the instant wherein the absence of *something* is what marks the presence of the *difference* between the I and the Other; and the mark of difference is that of *racial difference*. He articulates his investigation on *difference* through Du Bois, who was dealing with what his presence brought up between himself and his interlocutor. Chandler's goal is to overturn the hierarchy of the opposition, or, the hierarchy of the inaugural moment of difference, to make possible the emergence of a new concept which *could not be* in the old regime. To carry out his project, he articulates that the denial of difference does not lead to the overturn of the hierarchy of the inaugural opposition produced by racial difference<sup>24</sup>. "The problem of pure being", or simply the distinction between the African-Negro and the European-white, must be displaced "through the movement of the productive elaboration of difference - as

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simply to justify but to inscribe permanently self-presence as the moment wherein the separation between Subject and other can occur so that violence can proceed unbothered.

<sup>23</sup> Difference, within the metaphysics of self-presence, happens through relationality (I, Other), Time relating to Space, giving birth to the Same, or, the Subject, or, as Derrida explains the "origin of the experience of space and time (...) permits the difference between space and time to be articulated (...) in the unity of an experience" (Derrida, 65-66), that is, as self-sameness. For Derrida, however, what actually takes place is the notion of spacing, or the "word [which] speaks the articulation of space and time, the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space" that "is always the unperceived, the nonpresent, and the nonconscious" (Derrida, 67). If the main argument is to reveal that speech and writing form an origin which has no original place for it is [they are] a trace, because of how metaphysics is organized, interiority always had the supreme position in relation to exteriority, or, presence has always had the advantage against absence. With Derrida, this arrangement will stay somewhat untouched. With *différance*, or the trace, Derrida keeps in place the Subject. What he is attempting to do is simply to rewrite the Subject into what he 'actually is', that is, presence and absence simultaneously, which refuses the necessary violence of self-presence. This process still requires the Subject who knows about this operation wherein he cannot see himself as a representation of the Same, of the identity, of the Logos, because the origin is precisely a moment of non-origin since what one becomes only becomes one because of the absence of what one is not. The Subject re-emerges and western metaphysics remains the dominant.

<sup>24</sup> Chandler, *X-- the Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*, 15.



articulation - perhaps even according to necessity as the performative announcement of a differential figure"<sup>25</sup>. That is, through *difference*, racial differentiation, the fundamental ontoepistemological condition of the production of the Modern sociality, can be displaced because it becomes possible to re-imagine an "originary scene of possibility". What Chandler is articulating is the "movement of difference", a strategic mechanism wherein *difference* doesn't carry its traditional negative conceptualization but rather signifies no absolute origin or beginning nor final difference. This "movement of difference" must initiate itself with the constituted difference in order to achieve the "radical otherwise". With this, Chandler wishes to achieve the "desedimentation of the presumption of purity, or pure being"<sup>26</sup> attached to the subject and difference. For Chandler, the solution for the problem of the "originary scene of possibility", which exists is currently and since the 16th century and us occupied by the negative formulation of *difference* through the inaugural move of difference as *racial differentiation*, is simply to change *difference* into something "understood as nothing in and of itself"<sup>27</sup>. This re-opens the space of a radical (in terms of roots) *difference* which has been occupied by the negative-racial difference<sup>28</sup>.

Chandler's work is brilliant. However, his finding of deconstruction in Du Bois proves that, no matter how much one tries to (successfully) show that the modern grammar is fundamentally a delusion, the modern lexicon will continue to haunt and inform our social reality. If one's project is based on revealing that the modern grammar actually *means* something

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<sup>25</sup> Chandler, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Chandler, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Chandler, 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Chandler's investigation is centered around "the question of the grounds for deciding a racial subject or identity as one thing or another" (Chandler, 26). This is what the difference he has found inaugurates and this is what his proposed movement of difference is supposed to avoid. Within his "movement of difference", *racial differentiation* would not be possible for the Subject would realize that his separation according to his own difference from the Other would be *transcendentally* impossible.

else, one is bound to repeat some (if not all) of its descriptors and maintain *difference* stuck in its traditional mode of metaphysics<sup>29</sup>. Chandler organizes his "movement of difference" through Du Bois's opening of the field of historicity by transforming the negro into a historical construction instead of a physical (not disconsidering that the physical plays a role in the historical). Du Bois shows that both identity constructions (White European-African Negro) are not essential configurations but rather developments of modes of thought in which a presupposition of certain historical determinations create the conditions under which their fixed identities become possible. To engage the problem of thought, therefore, you have to simultaneously "go beyond essence" and stop "just before you conclude that essence is not a given"<sup>30</sup> due to the fact that *difference* is always a possibility. Chandler reworks Derrida's absence-presence through racial difference. I believe this articulation stops short of truly finding a radical mode of thinking *difference* because there is still some sort of differentiation at play (since one has to assume that the constituted essence of differentiation is the point of departure and will always be there) and also a separation between entities which form the non-essence essential existence of difference and same since what informs the displacement of the violent difference of western metaphysics is an approach to *différance* through race. This is a philosophical-historical project which reveals that one identity only exists because of the absence that exists in presence. Chandler's project is one of, as he writes it, "paleontology", or using existing concepts in a new manner. This is an extremely productive analysis and project but I believe it misses the opportunity of thinking *difference* in a truly new fashion. At the end of the day, Chandler's project still assumes the existence of separated entities (even if no longer separated by racial differentiation since it could,

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<sup>29</sup> More on the impossibility of escaping the modern grammar will come over the next sections when we tackle Denise Ferreira da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.

<sup>30</sup> Chandler, X-- *the Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*, 58.

would, be displaced). While there's separation, there's room for the modern project of *human differentiation* to fester.

In this section I covered the limits that reworking *difference* with deconstruction or rearticulations of western metaphysics face. Denise Ferreira da Silva and Gayatri Spivak helped me show that for *difference* to mean something other than differentiation it has to be thought from without the modern philosophical-scientific project. I charted the limitations of Deleuze and Derrida's tackling of the question of *difference* since their projects keep transcendental, self-determination, and separation. Then, I went over Nahum Chandler's critique and review of Derrida's deconstruction project through Du Bois's work, a project that takes us much further in the fight for social justice, but that still falls short of a truly radical (root) shift in how *difference* is conceived of, thought about, and experienced. With this, I will now move to tackle the figure of the Modern Subject to provide a clear philosophical-scientific outline of how the ontoepistemological project of modernity deployed *difference* as human-racial differentiation through the Subject.

### **Race on pre-modern and Modern Europe**

Over the next sections, the figure of the Modern Subject, or simply, the Subject, will be the central discussion of this thesis. As it will be contended, it is through him that *difference* as *human differentiation* that eventually became *racial differentiation* is deployed. Not only that, I will chart how the Subject stays alive in emancipatory projects because its ontoepistemological conditions still inform our contemporary moment. As long as this figure, who is responsible for

organizing how societies function<sup>31</sup> is restated (even if inadvertently), it will be impossible for *difference* to not be experienced, thought, and practiced by *determinancy*, *separability*, and *sequentiality*. In other words, *difference* will remain, at best, an experience of an interconnected self-determined relationality, or, at worst, separation and differentiation. Basically, then, I will argue that while the Subject exists (as the articulated thing that informs political, economic, social, intellectual, ethical, etc. disputes), *difference* can *only* mean *differentiation*. Since I spent the previous section exploring reworkings and redeployments of difference to show that they do not offer enough in the project of shifting the ontoepistemological descriptors of differentiation, outlining the Subject is essential to my argument because *difference* is what sustains him (and vice-versa). It is only by understanding who the Subject is and how *difference* is produced and practiced through him that I can articulate an strategy to end the Subject through difference itself. To start tracing the Subject, I will go over Cedric Robinson's and Michel Foucault's works because of their monumental effort in showing how the presence of race prejudice (difference, differentiation) was always already at play in Europe.

Throughout his *Black Marxism*<sup>32</sup>, Robinson shows that *difference* (through the lens of *human differentiation* centered on race) was always already part of European social existence<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Since the 19th century, as I will show with Ferreira da Silva's work, and variations of him since the 15th century, as I will show with Sylvia Wynter's work.

<sup>32</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*.

<sup>33</sup> He does three major works: he traces how race and slavery were always central tenets of European self-organization and were later redeployed in the project of imperial expansion, explains how and why the figure of the Negro was created, and reveals what and when were the conditions which made Black radicalism articulate itself. A summary of Black Radicalism could be gathered from the following passages: "Black radicalism is a negation of Western civilization, but not in the direct sense of a simple dialectical negation (...) some of the objective requirements for Europe's industrial development were met by the physical and mental exploitation of Asian, African, and native American peoples. This experience, though, was merely the condition for Black radicalism - its immediate reason for and object of being - but not the foundation for its nature or character (...) The cargoes of the slave ships were real human beings (...) Marx had not realized fully that the cargoes of laborers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, beliefs, and morality. These were the actual terms of their humanity. These cargoes, then, did not consist of intellectual isolates or deculturated Blacks-men, women, and children separated from their previous universe.

Since before the transatlantic expansion and colonial-imperial project which began at the mid-15th century (Portugal arrived at Western Africa in the 1440s), Western Europe arranged its systems of trade, labour, social hierarchy (simply, its entire existence) upon the differentiation of its peoples between races and classes<sup>34</sup>. Robinson establishes that *human differentiation* was always part of how Europe thought about and formed itself<sup>35</sup>. However, what is of major interest for this thesis lies within Robinson's tracing of the development of contemporary capitalism through *human differentiation* within civilized Europe<sup>36</sup>. During the pre-colonial era, what Robinson reveals is a pervasive scheme of *differentiation* between races where *differentiation*

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African labor brought the past with it, a past that had produced it and settled on it the first elements of consciousness and comprehension. This was the embryo of the demon that would be visited on the whole enterprise of primitive accumulation. It would be through the historical and social consciousness of these Africans that the trade in slaves and the system of slave labor was infected with its contradiction" (Robinson, 74, 122).

<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it only makes sense that the bourgeoisie's main source of revenue was slavery. Thus, "Tartar, Greek, Armenian, Russian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Circassian, Slavonic, Cretan, Arab, African (Mori), and occasionally Chinese (Cathay) slaves - two-thirds of whom were female" were to be found in rich households as well as in middle-class homes (Robinson, 16). Quoting the historian Friedrich Hertz, Robinson shows that, following the Greek/Roman vs. barbarian established dichotomy, the nobility of feudalism and of the absolutist state also deployed a similar human differentiation between themselves, the pure-blood, better people, against the poor peasants, the latter condemned by Noah to slavery for they were the sons of Ham. Eventually, Ham's narrative would be replaced: "If it was to be Europe's earlier encounter with the peoples of Neolithic Berber stock in the Canary Islands and their conquest and exploration of these people on the ostensibly 'just' ground of their idolatry - with their lands being therefore perceived as legitimately expropriable (...) Columbus would (...) take possession of the islands at which he arrived (...) in the name of the Spanish state, while [writing] the indigenous peoples as slaves for sale on the 'just' grounds that they were idolaters (...) it was also (...) [on] the same mode of juro-theological legitimation that under the auspices of the slave-trading system out of Africa that had been established by the Portuguese in (...) 1441 large numbers of peoples of African descent would be transhipped as the substitute slave labor force (...)" (Wynter, "1492: A New World View," 11.).

<sup>35</sup> "The creation of capitalism was much more than a matter of the displacement of feudal modes and relations of production by capitalist ones (...) Indeed, capitalism was less a catastrophic revolution (negation) of feudal social orders than the extension of these social relations into the larger tapestry of the modern world's political and economic relations (...) And from its very beginnings, this European civilization, containing racial, tribal, linguistic, and regional particularities, was constructed on *antagonistic differences*" (Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 10).

<sup>36</sup> "The tendency of European civilization through capitalism was thus not to homogenize but to *differentiate* - to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into "racial" ones. As the Slavs became the natural slaves, the racially inferior stock for domination and exploitation during the early Middle Ages, as the Tartars came to occupy a similar position in the Italian cities of the late Middle Ages, so at the systemic interlocking of capitalism in the sixteenth century, the peoples of the Third World began to fill this expanding category of a civilization reproduced by capitalism" (Robinson, 26, emphasis added).

was contingent upon certain conditions of social organization<sup>37</sup>. After showing that this belief in race was rooted among Europe, Robinson concludes that "after some centuries of racial indulgences the substratum of Western thought was unprepared for anything else"<sup>38</sup>- that is, the transatlantic slavery and the killing of indigenous populations was somewhat of a 'natural' consequence of this mode of social organization/thinking. Robinson's account helps the tracing of the Modern Subject, the figure that's part of a long and ongoing project of domination and ordering through *difference*. Thus, what I find within *Black Marxism's* account of the outset of the modern capitalist system of relations is a tracing which shows that *difference* was the most determinant motif not *underneath* but *within* the project of (pre)-modernity. Subject and *difference*, one cannot exist without the other under those (these) ontoepistemological conditions. Where will this relationship lead? Foucault has answered that question (at least one part of it).

In both his *Society Must be Defended* and *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault sets out to determine how and when the notion of population came to be and why it implicates the birth of modern post-enlightenment racism. In these two famous genealogies, Foucault traces the transformations of power throughout European history until it achieves its current form, or biopower - i.e., the modifications from a system of legal-judicial power, to one of disciplinary power, and finally of regulatory disciplinary power, are articulated because of *difference*. I'll focus more on the former book<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Eventually, "new mystifications, more appropriate to the times, were required, authorized by new lights" (Robinson, 26) and "race became largely the rationalization for the domination, exploitation, and/or extermination of 'non-Europeans' (including Slavs and Jews)" (Robinson, 27).

<sup>38</sup> Robinson, 76.

<sup>39</sup> In *Security, Territory, and Population*, Foucault traces how the notion of state-government changed from pastoral power, to *raison d'État*, to finally *raison d'État* plus the economy. He is tracking the population by looking directly at the state. Putting it in simpler terms, he shows the birth of modern Liberalism and how we live under its neoversion today. Throughout the book, the two state apparatuses that Foucault names as the most important ones are the military-diplomatic and (the) police. The former accounts for when Europe decided to become an ensemble of competing nations and to do so it had to devise a strategy of negotiations, agreements, and, obviously, pre-emptive

What is key for my argument that I find in *Society Must be Defended*<sup>40</sup> is how Foucault reveals that *difference* is the conduit of State racism because of the shift from the "historical discourse of sovereignty" to the "historical discourse of race struggle" as the dominant one - a modification that transforms the thesis of sovereignty; instead of a sovereign Figure that controlled history the historical discourse became about self-sovereign internal nations/groups (nobility, bourgeoisie, etc.). This is how Foucault marks that *difference* is the means through which society organizes itself. With this shift, the state becomes the space of power dispute

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strike possibilities if one of its members were getting away from and threatening the previous agreed upon scenario. The military part, thus, is simply about a display of literal force. The latter is a bit more complicated: before the domination of modern Liberal thought, that is, when the population arises as what must be managed through the deployment of an apparatus of security that allows it to follow its natural path - which creates the police, or, the repressive, violent form of the internal apparatus of security to allow the state to grow infinitely -, police had a more 'affirmative' meaning. It was the responsibility of the state, through police - policy - to make itself as strong as possible by making its people as strong as possible, that is, by avoiding scarcity (hunger), unemployment, disease, poverty in general, idleness, and so on. What dramatically changes with the late 18th and throughout the 19th century is that what dominates the public discursive practice is a notion of 'naturalness', as Foucault writes, or the notion that everything, from wealth to the individual or the population, has a natural path to follow and that the state's goal is to preserve the naturalness of this social process-progress instead of intervening to guarantee (or at least making the effort to secure) the well being of its population. Basically, the idea that regulations should not come from the state because everything will self-regulate gains full traction. And if through this self-regulation someone or some people or some group dies, so be it, because this was the natural process that was always already in place. What's important for us is to see how the state, or, the emerging nation-state, developed mechanisms to write the Subject, or the figure that will decide who will live and who will be let die. The Subject that Foucault writes about arises from his tracing of race struggle that informed the evolution of power into biopolitics and the changes concerning the role of sovereignty within the state, nation, and nation-state, reveals that the Subject, just like Robinson argued, was a figure always already infiltrated by *human differentiation*. What I find in these two works is that race was always central to the thinking that occurred under different moments of European history/culture and, therefore, would ultimately inform biological scientific projects of knowledge. Scientific projects which would map the globe that we live in today.

<sup>40</sup> Since this text's concerns are related to *difference*, racism and the writing of racism, there won't be a in depth-look toward Foucault's tracking of the changes within power. If one wishes to look through it, they find an analysis that consists in understanding the inter-relations of power, right, truth - a type of intra-feeding triangle. An economy of discourses of truth is what allows power to be exercised, discourses of truth that were produced by relations of power in the first place. Discourses of truth are twofold: philosophy itself and our obligation to confess the truth at all times. Juridical thought, as he shows, was always concerned with the top echelons within Western societies. The theory of right had one concern: "establish the legitimacy of power". Rights (law, institutions, apparatuses, etc.) implement relations of domination - it isn't "simply" an instrument of domination - and several forms of domination coexist within society. That is, right is not about legitimacy, but implementing subjugations. Power, therefore has constitutive effects, which are the most important aspect that one needs to analyze to see how socialities function. What does the formation of the Modern Subject constitute in terms of subjects themselves, socialities and their social relations, notions of nation and state, and so on? Key, then, is to find the techniques and procedures that implement the exclusion, repression, etc., because this is how power inscribes itself in its subjects and not by following causal logics to establish how social processes animate themselves.

among the nations that exist "beneath and beyond" the state itself to determine who will inform the emerging nation-state<sup>41</sup>. It is here that I find the limit of Foucault's archaeology of the Subject. When identifying State racism through his carefully crafted genealogy, what is missed is the non-"megalomaniac" form of racism, that is, the racial as the tool that every single Western society deploys daily by keeping the writing of universality intact, or the text that inscribes the social fabric as a historical reality that writes indigenous peoples and black people outside the ethical imperative of Universal Reason/Law/Spirit<sup>42</sup>. Obviously, Foucault is correct in identifying how this discourse came to be (through history-society and science-biology), how it led to Fascism, and how it is easy to see this discursive practice in place today<sup>43</sup>. What I'm contending is that this specific type of racism, that is, an open racist discourse about obliterating every social group that is not heterosexual white male, is not the one that keeps the racially subaltern peoples in their conditions of subjugation. The 'logics' behind racial subalternity are more complex and operate 'hidden' on our daily lives with the writings of the categories of Universality, Ethical, Liberalism, or, simply, the Modern grammar that is intact until this day.

I have charted how race played a central role in Europe's formation since before the 15th century imperial expansion and how it was redeployed in a global scale following the colonial project with Robinson. With Foucault, I showed one of the destinations that the relationship between the Subject and *difference* leads to. Nevertheless, there is much more to be analyzed and

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<sup>41</sup> The three functions of State racism for Foucault are: first, to establish "a biological type caesura within a population that appears to be a biological domain" (*Society*, 255), that is, it will be possible to write the population that must live and the population that can be let died (or actively killed). Two, it is precisely by killing that one will live more; if society protects itself against the races that shouldn't be a part of it, society will live longer, safer, healthier, more secure, etc. (*Society*, 255). Three, State racism emerges because the biological inferior is not a political adversary but someone to be exterminated for they are a threat to the dominant species-race: "in a normalizing society, race or racism is the precondition that makes killing acceptable" (*Society*, 256).

<sup>42</sup> This argument is a central part of Ferreira da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race*.

<sup>43</sup> The last year demonstration of Neo-Nazi white supremacy that took place in Charlottesville is one (obvious) example which shows how his tracing remains relevant.



discussed. It is time to tackle the ontoepistemological changes that occurred in Western Europe between the 15th and 19th centuries in order to start clarifying who *really* is the Subject and how he came to be. What were these changes? What did they allow to occur? How they organized not only knowledge production but also the truths which articulate reality and existence?

**Three modes of ordering: resemblance/Christian, representation/Man<sub>1</sub>, beyond-representation/Man<sub>2</sub>**

I reviewed Robinson's and Foucault's arguments about how Western Europe always articulated notions of *human differentiation* and deployed race against its neighbors (Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Northern and Eastern Africa) and within itself in order to understand, conceptualize, and consolidate itself. Then, how race eventually was used throughout the globe so that Western Europe could further understand, conceptualize, and consolidate itself as the only entity that harbored humans and could lead humanity in the march of progress. Finally, I started to discuss how this process is still ongoing and to further this point, I will review Foucault's *The Order of Things*. There, he discusses the shifts that occurred within Western Europe knowledge and how these transformations, which happened thanks to certain underlying conditions, also were conditions themselves in the project of global *racial differentiation*. After Foucault, I'll review Sylvia Wynter's *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom* to see another way of analyzing these three distinct moments of the ordering. Wynter's article maps the ontoepistemological shifts within Western knowledge through the figure of *man*, as Foucault did, but centers the discussion on *difference* and, especially, racial difference. In her mapping of the global differentiation process organized by the figures of European thought that she names Christian, Man<sub>1</sub>, and Man<sub>2</sub>, Wynter materializes what Foucault cannot. Whereas

Foucault claims the discontinuity, the ruptures, that occur in the shifts in European cultural practice and thought, Wynter finds that the epistemic transformations have a "continuous" thread because the modifications are about the "politics of being: that is, a politics that is everywhere fought over what is to be the descriptive statement, the governing sociogenic principle, instituting of each genre of the human"<sup>44</sup>. This is what Foucault misses or perhaps cannot comprehend: the changes in episteme are part of larger scale project of determining who is *human through difference*.

The most important part of the *Order of Things* for my argument is how it articulates a discussion about Same, Identity-Difference, and 'the' Same<sup>45</sup>. Difference is the central concept in Foucault's explanations of the shifts from an era of "resemblances" (Renaissance), to one of "representation" (Classical), and finally to one of "meaning and signification" (Modern). These modifications in the "episteme" reveal that what guides thinking has always been *difference* as

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<sup>44</sup> Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," 318.

<sup>45</sup> The first is marked by the era of "resemblances" when it was thought that things were organized according to their kinship, all together in one big system, being differentiated because they *more or less resemble* one another: "[the] identity of things, the fact that they can resemble others and be drawn to them, though without (...) losing their singularity (...) the whole volume of the world (...) supported, maintained, and doubled by this space (...) which ceaselessly draw[s] things together and hold[s] them apart" (Foucault, *Order of Things*, 25). The second is based on "representations": things are "representations" of themselves and can be ordered in a total project of complete knowledge of nature, or, as Foucault explains, a complete "taxonomy" that can be put upon a table according to the identities and differences between things. The intuitive, attentive intelligence looks for identity, difference, measurement, and order: "order (...) is established without reference to an exterior unit (...) one can know that which is the simplest, then that which is the next simplest, one can progress inevitably to the most complex things of all (...) terms are established according to increasing *differences*" (Foucault, 53, emphasis added). Western thinking became obsessed with understanding and determining the order of everything - a scientific, historical, etc., project - through difference and identity, that is, through a process of differentiation which would produce order empirically and philosophically, in the realm of truth and in the realm of being. In the third, the Modern episteme, thought is reorganized to explain reality according to the identity of the internal relations of things - putting it simply, science will understand and differentiate things based upon a total internal system which explains why the external things are what they are; it is here that *man* is born. Here, I find the shift that Ferreira da Silva delineates in her *Toward a Global Idea of Race* between interiority and exteriority as the modes that dominated Western thought: Classical age was obsessed with how the outside determined every-thing, the visible world of representation being out there to be known as the order of things (the realm of exteriority explaining the realm of interiority and reality). When the Modern age comes, the interior of things (objects, words, bodies) will explain the order of things because it is the interior that explains why the exterior is what it is (the realm of interiority explaining exteriority and reality). Identities and differences in the Classical age vs. the identity of the relation between the elements and the functions said elements perform within the objects/words/bodies in the Modern age.

*differentiation*. Foucault traces the figure of *man* and with his archaeology it becomes clear that *man* was slowly developed through *difference*. When Modern thought erupts and representation is left behind, 'the' Same and the "transcendental Subject" come into being: "the links that can join its various elements together (...) [are] beyond (...) immediate visibility (...) [this internal relation] uncovers a transcendental field in which the subject (...) determines (...) all the formal conditions of experience in general"<sup>46</sup>; there is an organization/system (the 'Same') which comes before the things themselves and make possible for things themselves to be(come) what they are; these things can only be known by *man*, which is he himself the knowing subject and *the* object of knowledge. What do these modifications in cultural reality and thought ordering mean in terms of *man*, the ultimate descriptor developed by the ones who claim to be the only humans? How is this figure influencing our lives today?

In hers *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom*, Sylvia Wynter, as Foucault, traces the same moments and shifts to outline the figure of *man* but brings another critical theoretical element, one which Foucault did consider: race<sup>47</sup>. Instead of looking at the cultural-epochal-epistemic shifts from the perspective of resemblance, representation, and beyond-representation (or, meaning and signification), Wynter explains that the three different ontoepistemological moments were always written based on *differentiation*. She names the moments via the figures of Christian (until 16th century: "the True Christian Self" [members of the church] vs. "the Untrue Christian Self" [the ones lost to the passions of the flesh]), Man<sub>1</sub>

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<sup>46</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 238, 243.

<sup>47</sup> Her project is against man, the figure that Foucault has deemed destined to vanish, towards the Human, or, simply, towards something-else-than-man: "Can we, therefore, while taking as our point of departure both the ecosystemic and global sociosystemic 'interrelatedness' of our contemporary situation, put forward a new world view of 1492 from the perspective of the species, and with reference to the interests of *its* well-being (...)? The central thesis of this essay is that we can" (Wynter, "1492: A New World View," 8.). Regarding the vanishing of man, Foucault writes: "it is comforting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form" (Foucault, *Order of Things*, xxiii).

(between 16th till late 18th centuries: the juridical-legal self-authorized subject of the state vs. the "subrational Indian, Negro Others to Man<sub>1</sub>"), and Man<sub>2</sub> (late 18th until present day: the division of human [Man<sub>2</sub>] vs. Other ["native and nigger Others to Man<sub>2</sub>"]). The three figures "overrepresent" the human because they "represent the being of being human" while putting every-thing else in the non-Human/Other space. For Wynter, therefore, the struggle of our times is the struggle against Man's overrepresentation, or the "central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle"<sup>48</sup>. In Wynter, *difference* and the invention of man provoked "'the rise of Europe' and its construction of the 'world civilization' on the one hand, and, on the other, African enslavement, Latin American conquest, and Asian subjugation (...) *race* (...) was this construct that would enable the now globally expanding West to replace the earlier mortal/immortal, natural/supernatural, human/the ancestors, the gods/God distinction as the one (...) [that had defined] what it is to be human, and to reground its secularizing own on a newly projected human/subhuman distinction instead"<sup>49</sup>.

From Foucault and Wynter, then, I found important mappings of *human differentiation*. The former allowed me to understand the ontoepistemological shifts that created the figure of *man* and that *difference* was always the central concept propelling western Europe's thought organization . The latter brought into light how race was central to the project of *differentiation* and colonial-imperial expansion by showing that the struggle was *always* one of defining who is

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<sup>48</sup> Wynter, "Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom", 261

<sup>49</sup> (Wynter, "Unsettling the coloniality", 263-64, emphasis added). The solution Wynter proposes for the scheme of human differentiation based on race which is still the dominant mode of being in our societies has to depart from us: we need to realize that the current formulation of human, that is, Man, is nothing more than a "descriptive statement" of truth production by an "ethnoclass regime" that is "globally hegemonic" which actualizes our socialities. Then, to end the ongoing reproduction of differentiation between Human/non-Human made possible by Christian, Man<sub>1</sub>, and Man<sub>2</sub>, towards the Human as a new articulation of the human itself, we have to come to terms with the fact that the human is something else than Man<sub>2</sub>; we need to go outside our "conscious awareness" of what the human is - that is, completely abandon the ontoepistemological constructions/conditions/characteristics which make Man exist as the only possible social reality/truth/descriptor.

human and who is not-human in order to consolidate the accumulation of humanness itself via *difference*. What neither of them, although Wynter's argument comes close, articulate is *human differentiation* as *racial differentiation*, something that only Denise Ferreira da Silva has done in hers *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Her analysis is central to my argument for she shows that the *racial* is the fundamental philosophical-scientific concept that articulates how *difference* is responsible for the mapping of the globe between Subjects and his Others (subaltern, subjugated populations), wherein the Other's "social trajectory is an effect of (...) biological, cultural, and social position"<sup>50</sup>. Her work allows me to do one thing that it's not a part of her book: if it is through *difference* that the "self-determined mind" secures itself according to what it produces in the outside world, I am able to argue for the end of the Subject through *difference* itself since, in actuality, there is no separation between any of the parts that compose reality. This argument, however, can only happen for I will be able, thanks to her argument, to step out of the modern text to propose something that does not repeat the same movements of *differentiation*.

### **Outlining the Modern Subject**

In this section I finalize the tracing of the figure of the Subject through the works of Denise Ferreira da Silva and Hegel. This is a key section for my final argument in this thesis, that is, while *difference* is trapped within the figure of the Subject, it will be impossible for it to mean anything other than *differentiation*. By understanding that the Subject sustains *difference* and is sustained by *difference*, a project that wants to not only shift but abandon the ontoepistemological conditions which make the Subject emerge and *difference* stay stuck within him is possible. In *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, Ferreira da Silva traces, almost in step-by-step

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<sup>50</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 266.

fashion, from Descartes until Hegel then from Cuvier until Darwin, how the Modern Subject of Post Enlightenment Europe came to be and how he is not only alive but how, in fact, it is from the same ontoepistemological conditions that guaranteed his birth that social justice movements still make their claims<sup>51</sup>. It is important to also review Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* for it is there that the Subject is articulated in the philosophical project of the mind/self-consciousness.

*Toward a Global Idea of Race* is a monumental work that covers the path of the self-determined mind in order to reveal how the mapping of globality was drawn in the 19th century through the rearticulation of *difference* into *racial differentiation*. Not only that, by explaining that Universality and Historicity still mark our contemporary moment, Ferreira da Silva argues that it is precisely because critical works (either from academia or social movements) keep these ontoepistemological descriptors in their articulations their projects are bounded to fail. The first issue is the most important part for this chapter of my argument. The second claim will be reviewed further in chapter 3, when I chart my project of *difference*.

Ferreira da Silva's central contribution, then, comes when she argues that only when the Post Enlightenment moment arrived - that is, after Hegel and during the development of biological anthropology, or the science of man - that *racial difference* became the ultimate ontoepistemological descriptor of a symbolic tool, the *racial*, that longed for unearthing the truth of man and, thus, mapped the global reality according to its classifications of race. For Ferreira da Silva, then, the scientific project of proving the inferiority of the others of Europe cannot be dismissed as "scientific fabrication"<sup>52</sup>. What she articulates with her analysis of the scientific

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<sup>51</sup> Universality and Historicity, but I'll get there. As a preview, one can think about how almost all claims for social justice write themselves by demanding to become part of a equality project under an Universal Subject of Rights.

<sup>52</sup> In a direct dialogue with Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Ferreira da Silva writes: "What I want to highlight in Spivak's account is how she misses that these 'master narratives' constitute the context of emergence of the racial when she immediately dismisses the latter as an 'alibi' —an ideological construct, a false representation of

project that wanted to prove that the only self-determined self-consciousness mind belonged to the European is that this project was responsible for finalizing *globality*, the mapping of the globe which "fuses particular bodily traits, social configurations, and global regions, in which *human difference* is reproduced as irreducible and unsublatable"<sup>53</sup>. *Difference* is responsible for drawing the lines that only allow the production of "transcendental I's" and "affectable others", as Ferreira da Silva identifies, because it articulates a mode of thinking and being in which the Subject is always already *racialized* and, therefore, it always already belongs within Universality or outside but not excluded from it<sup>54</sup>. Worse and more dangerous: this articulation promises that every person can be a Subject when, in fact, only white male Europeans can occupy this position.

To understand my last claim, I believe it is important to return to Hegel. The most important task for the philosophers (Descartes, Locke, Kant, Leibniz, Herder) was to securely establish the condition of man as a self-determined thing for his mind is the ruler that can apprehend and actualize the totality of existence. Hegel is the one to successfully write this project. The threatening dictum of interiority-exteriority is resolved because, in what Ferreira da

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the relationship between man and the 'native informant' —for economic exploitation and juridical domination" (Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 12). Theirs is not that different of a project for social justice, however. Both identify the Subject as the site of struggle. [Robinson also dismisses the centrality of the scientific project: "even the shift in eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Western thought from a basis of a religious and philosophical epistemology to that of modern science had made little difference. In point of fact, it had merely served to extend the terms and rationales for the fantasy of racial inferiority (for the Jews, Irish, Slavs, and Asians as well as for Blacks). Western scientific thought simply took its place as the latest formal grammar for the expression of a racial metaphysics to which its most natural response was acquiescence. Indeed, during much of the nineteenth century, one of the most persistent projects for which Western science was employed was the attempt to demonstrate what was already understood to be the natural order of the races" (Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 76). Of course it is a fantasy. Nevertheless, it is a fantasy which delineates the reality of thought and global existence.]

<sup>53</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, xix.

<sup>54</sup> Outside because the Others of Europe are not a part of Universality for they do not have Reason. Not excluded because the writing of Universality requires them in order to write itself, as I have showed with Chandler's work, for example. Universality/White Identity can only be written because blackness and indigeneity are not part of Universality itself. The Subject can only understand himself because of something that is absent from him (which nonetheless is present within him). Or, as NourbeSe Philip has written about *silence* and the black woman: "[they are] spirit, intelligence, memory, creativity (...) more than a state of non-submission. It is resistance (...) A different text lying there, a spirit world, an imaginative universe (...) on the European text. *Not* on the margin. But *within* the very body of the text where the silence exits" (Philip, *Genealogy of Resistance*, 91, 99, 103, 95, emphasis added). Outside Universality, not excluded from it.

Silva names as the scene of engulfment, exteriority becomes a moment of the trajectory of the transcendental (interior or temporal) subject (Spirit). How does Hegel achieve this? By resolving truth into being, cognition into recognition, and reason into freedom<sup>55</sup>.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel ([1807] 1979) writes that consciousness reaches the Understanding [Force] (truth into being), articulates the lord and bondsman relationship - i.e., mutual recognition of self-consciousnesses, who *are for* themselves, that comes after the master and slave dialectical movement (cognition into recognition)-, and the Transcendental 'I' who finally knows it actualizes Spirit (reason into freedom). Self-consciousness is safely written within Reason and not operated by Reason. Spirit has always already been the driving force of everything and the most perfect representation of Spirit lies within the European Subject for he is the one who realizes this accomplishment of Spirit *through him for* him because he knows he is actualizing Spirit: "in this object, in which it finds that its own action and being, as being that of this particular consciousness, are being and action in themselves, there has arisen for consciousness the idea of Reason, of the certainty that, in its particular individuality, it has being absolutely in itself, or is *all reality*"<sup>56</sup>. The Subject becomes the absolute, infinite, inner-difference but as a *difference* that is sequential and isolated from "other" differences. That is, each Subject, albeit being an 'actualizer' of Spirit-Universal Reason, is its own absolute *difference* within itself and forever distinguished-separated in sequences to its others (its literal others, the others of Europe, and its 'inner' others, that is, other Europeans)<sup>57</sup>. Infinity is what

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<sup>55</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 68.

<sup>56</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 138.

<sup>57</sup> The Hegelian sequential force can also be found in his description of Africa - and the rest of the world - which will be taken over by Spirit with its strong Desire to actualize itself all over the globe, bringing History, Reason, and Universality with him: "In Africa proper it is the sensuous nature at which human development is arrested: sensuous enjoyment, great muscular strength to sustain labor, childlike good nature, but also unreflective and unfeeling ferocity (...)The first part of Africa is therefore Africa proper, which we can leave aside since its points of contact [with history] are minimal (...)These peoples have never emerged out of themselves, nor have they gained a



holds the Subject as one entity that has unity and *difference* within itself. It is here that self-consciousness arises for "I distinguish myself from myself, and in doing so I am directly aware that what is distinguished from myself is not different [from me]"<sup>58</sup>; self-consciousness, or interiority, is everything and every-thing. Precisely because the Subject is an "unchangeable" who actualizes the "Unchangeable" because of its intrinsic capacity of grasping that the rift between self-consciousness and Spirit actually does not exist, he has Reason and he is free: "through this middle term the one extreme, the Unchangeable, is brought into relation with the unessential consciousness (...) This middle term is itself a conscious Being"<sup>59</sup>. In other words: the Subject becomes the Subject because he has always already been the Subject. This happens so that the Subject can "truly and completely deprive itself of the consciousness of inner and outer freedom"<sup>60</sup>. The interiority-exteriority quandary is finally resolved and the Subject is born.

To finish the chapter, it's important to highlight that the figure articulated by Hegel, who carries unity (of thought with being) because it deploys *difference* within and outside itself, led to the development of the scientific projects aforementioned when I went over Ferreira da Silva's discussion of *globality*: "civilized man's intellectual and moral attributes testify to his adaptive advantage over all other living things, including the savage races (...) the human body and social configurations [become] scientific signifiers, representations of exterior determinants of the interior (mind's) productive powers that are unique to human beings [man]"<sup>61</sup>. This project of knowledge deploys *difference* to account for European socialities and Subjects being written as

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foothold in history (...) This Africa remains in its placid, unmotivated, self-enclosed sensuality and has not yet entered into history (...); At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movements in it-that is in its northern part-belong to the Asiatic or European World" (*Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* 196, 197; *The Philosophy of History* 117)

<sup>58</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 102.

<sup>59</sup> Hegel, 136.

<sup>60</sup> Hegel, 137.

<sup>61</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 109, 113.

superior because their social, juridical, political, economic, spiritual, and cultural dimensions show clearly how they are the only ones that can actualize Universality, or Spirit, while the other spaces of the globe merely reproduce/are operated by Universality. This is the map of globality<sup>62</sup>.

In this chapter, I reviewed attempts to rethink and redeploy *difference* which tried to free it from the modern grammar. The works cited in the first section (Deleuze, Derrida, Chandler) take difference as a project seriously. They're not dismissing difference or simply trying to do away with it. Nevertheless, I found limitations in their work because their articulations required separation (at best) and self-determination (at worse). These authors keep difference in a realm of transcendental existence where they cannot help but to rewrite separate entities which, even if articulated in a field of inter-connection, still require some sort of *differentiation* at place. In this thesis, the goal is to rethink *difference* in a way that doesn't deploy any sort of *differentiation*. Deleuze's infinite series of differences differing, Derrida's *différance*, and Chandler's movement of difference are brilliant philosophical moves, but still retain ontoepistemological conditions of the modern lexicon (*sequentiality*, *separability*, *determinancy*). Then, I discussed the Subject for it is this figure that has always actualized *difference*. It's extremely important to understand that he sustains and is sustained by *difference* if my project of 'ending' the Subject by shifting and abandoning the conditions that have determined how *difference* has been conceived of, though

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<sup>62</sup> It is precisely this idea of mapping that is central to Sylvia Wynter's *1492: A New World View*. There, she draws a detailed description of the mapping of the globe that began to be actualized by Columbus upon his arrival at the Americas. This mapping relied upon a rejection of the previous cartography developed by the Europeans. That is, a world-map that wrote habitable (European) and inhabitable (African) places, only to redeploy the same ontoepistemological notions into the new mapping drawn by Columbus and the ones that followed him. From this moment on, argues Wynter, the mapping of the people who were to be always already outside of Universality (indigenous people as the other to the human/Man and people of African descent as the absolute-extreme other of both) was permanently drawn as the site of perpetuating the subjugation, exploitation, and dispossession of both indigenous and African people. Wynter's proposed solution, thus, is that, if Columbus was only able to achieve his writing of the human because he defied the writing of the human that was in place during his time - and, therefore, the *mapping* that was the official one-, we will only be able to successfully challenge and write a new existence for the human if we fully reject the writing of the human that is place now (instead of articulate projects that long for to become part of it). Wynter's is not a recuperative or retrieving project, however.

about, and experienced is to have any chance of thriving. Thus, it was important to track this figure via the works of Foucault, Robinson, Wynter, Hegel, and Ferreira da Silva. They help not only my goal of understanding and establishing who the Subject is and the need of getting rid of it but also believe that *something else* is possible. In the next chapter, I will visit Brazil as an example of how *difference* through the figure of the *Subject* is deployed in the country's context. After, I will be able to move to chapter 3, wherein my project of *difference* will be articulated. Because of my outline of *difference* and the Subject in chapters 1 and 2, it will be possible to argue for the total ontoepistemological, intellectual, and ethical shift I am trying to propose.

## The tracing

*"But I want to say more than this. I want to do more than recount the violence that deposited these traces in the archive. I want to tell a story about two [people] capable of retrieving what remains dormant (...) without committing further violence in my own act of narration"*<sup>63</sup>

*"Only the brazen can say, 'I was not here, I did not do this and fell that'. One hears that all the time in [Brazil]; about what people feel they are and are not responsible for. People use these arguments as reasons for not doing what is right or just. It never occurs to them that they live on the cumulative hurt of others. They want to start the clock of social justice only when they arrived. But one is born into history, one isn't born into a void"*<sup>64</sup>

In the last chapter, I traced how the Subject sustains and is sustained by *difference* and looked over some attempts to change what *difference* means. In this chapter, I move to Brazil to discuss how *difference* is articulated in the country, provide two empirical examples of its deployment, and argue that our current formulations of *difference* need to be rethought if we wish for a society without systematic/structural violence. I start the chapter with a brief comment on two recent expositions of Brazilian-type racism made by two public intellectuals - Antonio Risério, an anthropologist, and Cesar Benjamin, the current Secretary of Education of the city of Rio. In their texts, I will chart the articulation of *difference* that guides Brazilian existence and thinking, namely the text of 'racial democracy' and its variations. Risério and Benjamin fiercely defend the notion that we are, above all, a *miscegenated* people and, therefore, racism *only* exists when practiced by individuals. Putting it simply, Brazil is incapable of racism because "all colors" live together. To argue that Brazil actually lives under *racial differentiation*, I discuss the cases of Rafael Braga Vieira, a 29 year-old black man who has been mercilessly persecuted by the juridical apparatus since 2013, and the Akroá Gamella indigenous people, who have been

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<sup>63</sup> Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts".

<sup>64</sup> Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return*.

fighting to regain control of their land in the state of Maranhão and been viciously attacked during the process. I argue that it is precisely because of the Brazilian modality of *difference*, central to the texts written by Risério and Benjamin, that the violence that Rafael Braga and the Akroá Gamella suffer is not only state-sanctioned and authorized but it is part of how the country necessarily organizes/understands itself because it is how Brazil wrote itself.

This conceptualization of *difference* comes especially from Gilberto Freyre, the author of the "racial democracy" text. Thus, I review Ricardo Araújo de Benzaquen's work to show that Freyre's articulation of *difference* is alive and still guides how Brazil relates to *difference*. I also go over Roberto DaMatta's discussion of the "myth of the three races" to chart how even texts which acknowledge the existence of racism in Brazil cannot help but rehearse Freyre's original articulation and, therefore, keep *difference* trapped in a false state of inclusion. To help with my critique of their work, I will depart from Ferreira da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, wherein she deploys the national text as an analytical tool to find the "*slightly tanned transparent Subject*" as the articulation of *difference* in Brazil. What I will gather from her is the fact that our formulation of *difference* works to write the *mulato* as the figure that is the symbol of Brazil for he is, as Freyre wrote, a living example of the Brazilian "balance of antagonisms". In fact, the *mulato* is the always already foreclosed figure, the Subject who can only articulate himself as such in the "horizon of death", as Ferreira da Silva has written. Finally, I review Abdias do Nascimento and Carlos Hasenbalg's work to argue that the denunciation of racism is not enough as a critical tool to bring about social change. Both authors understand race as an exclusion signifier and not as *racial differentiation*, the concept develop to permanently inscribe blacks and indigenous people as subaltern.

## Risério and Benjamin, part I

Brazil's pervasive account of *difference* lives between conservatism and liberalism. The country's formulation of *difference* occurs through *racial differentiation*. However, *racial differentiation* hides itself beneath the discourse of *miscegenation*. The latter, articulated by Freyre and rewrote *ad infinitum* with slightly different articulations from author to author (as I will discuss further in this chapter), claims that every 'part' of the colonization process was equally relevant to the creation of the Brazil's culture. This writing tried to articulate the image of a society that was interested in and valued cultural contributions from African and Indigenous peoples, which has never been the case. African-Brazilians and Indigenous peoples were not a part of the national-Subject project in terms of equality, respect, or whatever positive lexicon one might look for: they were only seen as the bodies to be completely exploited, erased, and required to write *difference* in an apparent inclusive and undifferentiated fashion. The essence of the Brazilian is *mixture*, an essence occupied by the traits of the Portuguese, the indigenous, and the African, claims this articulation. *Difference*, therefore, is written as inexistent and existent simultaneously: it exists because the country is a cauldron of diverse cultures and inexistent because since everyone is *miscegenated*, there is a complete disavowal of *difference* because there is an outright denial of *racism* (*difference* as *racial differentiation* since we don't see *difference*) and *differentiation*. The pervasiveness of this thought is clear when one reads how public intellectuals articulate Brazil as a nation<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Their project is the Modern project that one finds in Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*, for example. Brazil's *intrinsic difference* comes from the fact that there exists an infinite amount of popular culture outside the urban centers while the urban centers are the perfect example of the country's development as a civilized, modern society. It is precisely because Brazil hadn't (hasn't) found a way to balance these "antagonisms" that Macunaíma, the anti-hero black-indigenous protagonist of the book, is lost between the city and nature, confused as to whether embrace capitalism or popular folklore. His death at the end of the book cannot be read as simple narrative mechanism. He decides to die because his task is impossible.

Recently, the Brazilian anthropologist Antonio Risério published an article at *Folha de São Paulo*, Brazil's biggest newspaper, titled *Black social movements repeat the logics of scientific racism*<sup>66</sup>. In this piece, which he wrote as a response to a protest in São Paulo when black activists lift a sign that said "miscegenation is also genocide", he claims that black movements in Brazil are imposing a "love-sexual apartheid" since they would be promoting the idea that blacks and whites should not have relationships. Because of this supposed articulation of an erotic apartheid, Risério claims that black activists are falling for the fantasy of racial purity imposed by scientific-biological racism. For him, black activists fail to grasp what is the main characteristic of the Brazilian people: that is, *mestiçagem* (miscegenation). For Risério, black activists are trying to "imprison us within the jail of the *racialist realism*" because they repeat the "fantasy of an essential insuperable inequality between the races". Finally, his thinking is guided by the idea that we are, above all else, a mixed people: "if we don't understand our *mixtures*, we'll never understand ourselves". Not long before him, another text with a similar vein was published by Cesar Benjamin, the secretary of Education of the city of Rio de Janeiro, on his Facebook page<sup>67</sup>. He was more direct than Risério when articulating his view of *racial difference* in Brazil by directly stating: "fuck all the races". For Benjamin, the "Brazilian people" does not see race because the most important construct that we have is the "Brazilian people" itself. What marks this population? Well, *miscegenation*, of course. For him, Brazil is marked by economic inequality and nothing else: the most important trait that the country has, probably uniquely possesses, is the notion of *difference* as *cultural difference*. According to Benjamin's articulation, Brazil is one big melting pot of *different cultures* that live harmoniously (which

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<sup>66</sup> Risério, "Movimentos Negros Repetem Lógica Do Racismo Científico".

<sup>67</sup> Benjamin, "Pessoal, Eu Sei Que Fui Derrotado". One can still find the post made on November 20th but with a much shorter version than the original text since Benjamin made alterations after receiving a lot of criticism.

doesn't mean without violence) and in mutual exchange. Violence only exists due to inequality (lack of access to education, health, sanitation, etc.) and, well, random acts of violence.

I want to highlight that Benjamin and Risério both put forward the pervasive account of *difference* in Brazil. That is, *difference* is articulated by simultaneously ignoring/dismissing *racial differentiation* since the country's *intrinsic difference* is its "natural" condition of *miscegenation* and by affirming *cultural difference*, that is, celebrating the contributions of all the cultures that live in Brazil which mark the nation's social body as an infinite complex amalgam of *difference*. This conception of *difference* and how it is thought of and experienced in the Brazilian context is extremely dangerous and damaging because it denies the systematical-structural genocide and subjugation of indigenous peoples and black populations. Worse even, it falls perfectly within the neoliberal program of celebrating *difference* while using it to keep the subaltern populations subjugated. How can black or indigenous people claim that they are structurally subjugated if the nation's discourse is one of "racial blindness/celebration"? I discuss two recent cases of violence against black youth and indigenous peoples in the country to provide an empirical example of how, in Brazil, *difference* follows the articulations of *human-racial differentiation*. One final note: it is important to go over Risério and Benjamin for their articulations do not *deny* racism but rather articulate Brazil as one big *miscegenated* family with the occasional rotten fruit here and there. I'll return to their pieces to conclude this chapter to argue that the current conceptions of *difference* are not enough and introduce my arguments for the final chapter.

### **Rafael Braga Vieira and the Akroá Gamella**

What does the Brazilian articulation of *difference* mean for the daily life of its population? This is the central question of this section. By going over the stories of Rafael Braga Vieira and the



Akroá Gamella indigenous people, I intend to show that the country's version of *difference*, that is, that of *disavowal of difference*, is the perfect veil for disguising the ongoing violence and dispossession experienced by blacks and indigenous peoples as individual/economic/random problems rather than continuous writing of them as subaltern. The country's reality is informed by *racial differentiation*, the modality of *difference* that is deployed following the logics of separation, sequence, self-determination, self-consciousness charted in chapter 1. Since this is the how the country thinks, writes, and organizes itself, the Subject, outlined in the first chapter, is alive and well. I chart how he was transported to Brazil in the next section. For now, it suffices to say that the ontoepistemological conditions that wrote him were redeployed in Brazil in order to prove the country's capacity of being a modern nation and a part of the march of progress.

In 2013, Brazil was shaken by massive demonstrations that occupied the streets of hundreds of cities all across the country. In Rio de Janeiro, on June 20th, over a million people marched in the biggest avenue of the city's downtown (the economic center). As it usually happens, the demonstrations were brutally repressed by the police. On that night, Rafael Braga Vieira, a 29 year-old black man, was arrested and the only person convicted due to involvement with the demonstrations. He was taken into custody because he was allegedly carrying explosive materials and received a 5 year sentencing (after spending 5 months in prison waiting for his trial). In his backpack, the police found bleach and *pinho sol* (a type of sanitizer). Those substances (obviously) do *not* produce anything resembling an "explosive material". Rafael was unemployed at the time, collecting aluminum cans for recycling to try to help his mom and four siblings who live in Vila Pinheiro, in the neighbourhood of Penha. Sometimes Rafael wasn't able to gather enough money to pay the bus fare to go home and had to sleep in an abandoned property in Lapa, a neighbourhood part of the city's downtown and a popular tourist attraction

for its bohemian night-life and architecture. Rafael wasn't at the demonstration, didn't know the demonstration was happening, and didn't know what the demonstration was about. In an interview with Marcelo Freixo, a state congressmen of Rio de Janeiro who is a leading figure in the Commission of Human Rights of the state of Rio, Rafael revealed that he didn't even know who the governor of the state was at the time<sup>68</sup>.

Rafael was prosecuted by the Public Ministry of the State of Rio de Janeiro. After the forensic report attested that the combination of bleach and *pinho sol* had minimal possibility of working as an explosive, the judge responsible for the case decreased his sentencing from 5 years to four years and eight months. Eventually, Rafael was allowed to change his conviction from closed to semi-open conditions, being allowed to leave jail to work and come back to prison to sleep<sup>69</sup>. One day, Rafael was going back to prison after work when he saw a graffiti on a wall that said "you only look to the left and to the right but the state crushes you from top to bottom". He took a picture by the graffiti. This photo was enough for the judge to send him back to closed conditions and order him to spend 10 days in solitary confinement. After some time, Rafael was allowed to progress to semi-open conditions and, later, open-conditions; he "only" needed to wear an electronic tracking device on his ankle. The story is not over.

One morning, Rafael went out to buy bread for his mom and was approached by police officers. They didn't find anything on Rafael. Then, they took him to a back alley, assaulted him, and finally took him to the police station. At the station, he was charged with drug trafficking, association with drug trafficking, and collaboration with drug trafficking because he was

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<sup>68</sup> Justificando, "Rafael Braga Vieira - Coisas Que Você Precisa Saber #33".

<sup>69</sup> The law office João Tancredo employed Rafael and the DDH (Institute of Human Rights Defenders) is responsible for his legal defense.

carrying 9 grams of cocaine, 0.6 grams of marijuana<sup>70</sup>, and one small rocket<sup>71</sup>. Rafael was not carrying any of these items but they "appeared" under his possession when they arrived at the station. An eye witness, who is not related to Rafael, went before the court to testify that they saw Rafael passing by with empty hands and that the officers approached him with violence. Rafael and the witness denied the drug possession charges and affirmed that the case was a false flagrant. The only proof that sustained the police inquiry, denunciation, and accusation of drug trafficking was the word of the military policemen who arrested Rafael. Nevertheless, he was convicted. This time, his sentence was of 11 years and three months of closed regime. Several specialists considered this sentencing much harsher than what drug traffickers usually receive<sup>72</sup>. On September 15th of 2017, after contracting tuberculosis in Brazil's extremely overpopulated prison system, Rafael was allowed to go home to treat his illness. Mind you: allowed to go home but still convicted and considered guilty before the law. On December 12th of 2017, the *Tribunal de Justiça do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Justice Court of the State of Rio de Janeiro) denied an appeal made by his defense and reconfirmed the drug trafficking conviction. Currently, his legal team is trying to prevent that he is sent back to jail after the 5 month period that was conceded to him to treat his illness.

Back in April 30th of 2017, the Akroá Gamella indigenous people was brutally attacked at the Povoado de Bahias, a small village at the city of Viana - a municipality with a population of over 50,000 - in the state of Maranhão, in the Northeast of Brazil. The Gamella were already

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<sup>70</sup> The son of an *desembargadora*, or a federal appellate judge, was arrested with 130 kgs (approximately 286 lbs) of marijuana, weapons, and ammunition. He was released to receive treatment at a private medical facility. There were two warrants issued for his arrest before this apprehension - which were suspended by the justice system (Gois, "Tribunal solta filho de desembargadora preso com 130 quilos de maconha, arma e munições").

<sup>71</sup> In *favelas*, there is the role of the *fogueteiro*, whose job description is to use small rockets, fireworks, and so on, to let the leaders of the drug dealing cartels know that the police is arriving at the community.

<sup>72</sup> The website *Justificando - Mentis Inquietas, pensam Direito* has a number of articles commenting on this particular sentencing.

leaving the traditional area that they had recuperated precisely because they were fearing a new attack. After regaining territories from farmers in 2015, they had already suffered two major attacks in 2015 and 2016; while both of those attacks were vicious, involving guns and beatings, the one in 2017 was the most brutal: men invaded the area and not only fired weapons and beat the Gamella (children, women, and men) with their bare hands but they also carried machetes, threw rocks, and used enormous pieces of wood to do the most damage possible. As Inaldo Kum'tum Akroá Gamella, one of the leaders of the people, stated: "this attack was a lynching and the intention was to kill us"<sup>73</sup>.

The Gamella couldn't get to hospitals because the militia men occupied the road and didn't let them leave. The military police was *at the scene* before and during the attack and did not act to prevent it. The police chief of the Regional Civil Police Station of Viana, Jorge Mário e Pacheco, even said that he could not confirm the number of wounded because "nobody knows if they are indigenous or not"<sup>74</sup>. The attack was premeditated: after the Akroá Gamella regained a terrain on April 28th (that is, two days before the attack) a text was circulated via the messaging mobile application *Whatsapp* summoning people to a meeting<sup>75</sup>. The federal congressman of the

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<sup>73</sup> "We were organizing ourselves to pull back when the attackers invaded the farm through a small gate that gives access to the house (inside the rural property, just like a plantation) and they were shooting, throwing rocks, using machetes, and pieces of wood. More than 200 people attacked us. Five of us received injuries from the machete and firearms. One of us had both of their hands cut off. Others were shot, their legs were cut and they even tried to cut off some of our legs. I was shot at the left side of my head. Another was shot in the face. Others were beaten with pieces of wood, so the number of wounded is bigger. This attack was a lynching and the intention was to kill us", told Inaldo ("'Foi Um Linchamento e a Intenção Era Nos Matar', Diz Índio Gamela Atacado No Maranhão"). It is important to note that the current governor of Maranhão, Flávio Dino, from the PCdoB party (Partido Comunista do Brasil, or Communist Party of Brazil), a supposedly left-progressive politician, doubted that any indigenous peoples had their hands severed, which ensued into a discussion about what to cut off meant which, obviously, led to the typical emptying of the victims claims and victim blaming (similarly to the move made by men when women denounce sexual assault, for example).

<sup>74</sup> "Here's the thing, they (the Gamella) are not accepted by the local population as indigenous. This is a big issue here, not even I know if they are or if they are not indigenous, we don't know it, you know?" ("Ataque a tiros e facadas fere cerca de uma dezena de indígenas Gamela e deixa três baleados; não há confirmação de mortes").

<sup>75</sup> This was the message: "(...) we just had a meeting concerning the ones who call themselves indians but that actually are a bunch of thieves who invade other people's private property (...) they are really wanting to

Brazilian lower hose, Aluisio Guimarães Mendes Filho, member of the former PTN (National Worker Party) that has now rebranded itself to *Podemos*, called them "pseudo-indigenous". Farmers, lawyers, and leadership members of the *Assembleia de Deus* church (a neoPentecostal church with reactionary social views) used local radio and social media to invite people to the, unsurprisingly entitled, "Demonstration for Peace" - the main guideline of the demonstration was the question of the indigenous people identity as indigenous. (It's important to highlight that the Maranhão branch of *Podemos* is presided by Laércio Costa, brother of Evilásio Costa. The latter owns farms in the territory the Akroá Gamella are reclaiming).

The fight of the Akroá Gamella indigenous people is obviously not new. In 1759, when Brazil was still under colonial rule, they received a terrain of 14,000 hectares (about 34,590 acres) from the state as a *sesmaria*, a juridical measure created by the Portuguese in the 14th century and redeployed in Brazil to distribute territories to serve as agricultural production - completely changing the ways of inhabiting land that indigenous peoples practice. In 1822, the justice system of the State of Maranhão determined that the Akroá Gamella were in fact the owners of those 14,000 hectares and should continue to be so<sup>76</sup>. There is also a 1784 document wherein the then governor and general-captain of Maranhão and Piauí, José Teles da Silva, sent an official governmental communication document to Martinho de Melo e Castro, then State Secretary of the Navy, describing the Akroá Gamella's agricultural production and relation to the territory<sup>77</sup>. In addition to this, there is a map from 1765 which marks as "Indian land" the

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appropriate all the properties between *Itaquaritiua* and *Matinha*, *Santero*, *São Miguel*, and others (...) we are organizing as well, coming together to face these thieves (...) on the 30th, at 2 pm, there will be another meeting (...) we are uniting to defend what is your right. Today it's us, tomorrow it can be you. We are not free from these bunch of thieves that call themselves indians (...)" ("Ataque a tiros e facadas fere cerca de uma dezena de indígenas Gamela e deixa três baleados; não há confirmação de mortes").

<sup>76</sup> Cunha, *Índios No Brasil*, " Os Índios E As Leis Indigenistas".

<sup>77</sup> Document available at the *Biblioteca Digital Luso-Brasileira* (Luso-Brasileira Digital Library) website.

territory the Akroá Gamella are striving to recuperate<sup>78</sup>. Today, after centuries of invasion and plundering, about 700 families live in a 530 hectares territory. One of the farms that the Akroá Gamella regained had an area of 300 hectares.

Caroline Leal, an anthropologist and professor at the *Universidade da Integração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira* (University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony), has been working with the Akroá Gamella in order to build a stronger case before the Brazilian government. She explains that her work with the population concerns mainly researching and writing about their traditional way of occupying and inhabiting the land to help the juridical and technical organizations that are assisting the population with their legal case of trying to demarcate the territory. Leal explains that this work is crucial since the history of invasions and attacks by farmers and their militias is very old. Leal focuses on constructing the history and traditional ways of the Akroá Gamella population through their collective memory. The older people remember clearly the time of their parents and grandparents and how they related to the territory in environmental, hunting, and ritualistic traditions with other indigenous populations of the region. They still remember conflicts, the constant invasions of the territory, and the *grilagem*<sup>79</sup> processes; "it is a people that has suffered a lot of violence"<sup>80</sup>.

As I've highlighted before, both the police chief of the Regional Civil Police Station of Viana, Jorge Mário e Pacheco, and the federal congressman of the Brazilian lower house, Aluisio Guimarães Mendes Filho, openly stated the fact that the Akroá Gamella are not indigenous people. Nilson Silva Fonseca, a high-rank officer from the Military Police of the State of

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<sup>78</sup> Map "*Mapa da região do rio Pindaré e lago de Vianna com as sesmarias disputadas aos índios*" available at the Brazilian National Library website.

<sup>79</sup> Basically, *grilagem* means a process of aging false documents so that they look older than they are (and real) in order to steal land.

<sup>80</sup> Bedinelli, "Esse massacre recente é só uma faceta do etnocídio que assola o povo gamela".

Maranhão referred to the Gamella as "those who *say* they are indigenous"<sup>81</sup>. One man that was in the attack and was at the 'Demonstration for Peace' stated that "there were never any Indians here. This is just nonsense"<sup>82</sup>. There are two main threads to be traced in order to understand why the Akroá Gamella are not considered indigenous by the local population. Later, I argue that the denial of their identity is nothing less than the project of the Brazilian version of the Subject.

First, the Akroá Gamella, for many years, chose to hide their identity as indigenous precisely in order to avoid the physical violence that they have been suffering over the last three years<sup>83</sup>. Francisco Gamella, for example, shared that he remembers his grandmother explaining to him that they should/could not speak in their language because the whites forbade it and abandoning their language would make their cohabitation with the whites easier<sup>84</sup>. After most of their land was registered as private property during the 1960s, the group spread throughout the region and hid their identities to have a better chance of integration in a non-indigenous society. Caroline Leal highlights that the strategy of transforming one's identity into something invisible occurs among many of Brazil's indigenous peoples<sup>85</sup>. Secondly, the rejection of the Akroá Gamella's indigeneity stems from the fact that they 'don't look indigenous' because they are black<sup>86</sup>. Leal highlights that the negation by the local population of the Akroá Gamella identity as indigenous "is connected to the formation of the Brazilian imaginary regarding what *is* an

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<sup>81</sup> Sposati, "Eles São Mesmo Índios?"

<sup>82</sup> Sposati.

<sup>83</sup> Obviously they have been suffering violence since the Portuguese arrived but I am focusing on the most recent wave of genocide and dispossession attacks.

<sup>84</sup> Sposati, "Eles São Mesmo Índios?"

<sup>85</sup> "What I see in the elders' narratives is that identity invisibility is directly connected with an extreme real fear of extermination. [Fear] of the violence that materialized itself through the massacre they endured exactly when they self-identified as indigenous peoples. Throughout the years they place themselves in a condition of subalternity and invisibilize their identity as an strategy to linger in their territory" (Bedinelli, "Esse massacre recente é só uma faceta do etnocídio que assola o povo gamela").

<sup>86</sup> For most Brazilians, an indigenous person can only *be* an indigenous person if they are the exotic, untouched, 'pure' indian. That is, if an indigenous person wears jeans, they *are not* and *cannot* be indigenous.

indigenous person [that has] fixated itself in genetic elements and sharp cultural contrast"<sup>87</sup>. Leal goes on to say that both from the anthropological and sociological points of view this is considered a mistake since there is no such thing as a people "without mixture" (*miscegenation*):

Regarding the indigenous peoples of the Northeast and the Gamella people, the type of mixture that occurred led to a change in their appearance. They *look* very similar to the peasants and to the African people [from the region]. It's very common to classify these indigenous people as blacks and deny their identity. This process of mixture has to do, of course, with the process of invisibility. They gradually articulated themselves with the other social groups that were being violated like them. The Gamella people developed relationships, welcomed, and allied with rural black communities, the communities named today as *quilombolas*. This is not just a reality for the Gamella but rather is something frequent throughout Brazil<sup>88</sup>.

Corroborating what Leal is telling us, a local, poor farmer named Marilene Lindozo Cultrim, who says: "I've lived all my life here. I was born and raised here and never heard anything about Indians here. They were our neighbours, worked with us, studied with our children and now I can lose my house [because they are saying they are indigenous]?"<sup>89</sup>

Gilverson Ricardo Sousa, a 27 year-old fisherman, said "all the Indians that we know from TV have Indian characteristics [traits]. Visually, they [the Gamella] are practically similar [to us] to pass as Indians. They want to regress, be what it was before, but society is evolving"<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> Bedinelli, "Esse Massacre recente é só uma faceta do etnocídio que assola o povo gamela", emphasis added.

<sup>88</sup> Bedinelli.

<sup>89</sup> Bedinelli.

<sup>90</sup> Bedinelli.



What I'd like to highlight is that: 1) no ethical crisis ensued from this attack, in spite of the case being brought to the UN<sup>91</sup>, as no ethical crisis ensues from when other indigenous peoples are attacked, and 2) to understand that this attack is not only normal, state-sanctioned, and so on, because we already know all that, but to understand that this attack occurs precisely due to the fact that Brazil still lives under the national text written by Gilberto Freyre and the Brazilian Subject that ensued from his formulation. The celebration of miscegenation means absolutely nothing in terms of equal/fair/just/etc. living and the *mulato*, or the figure of the miscegenated Brazilian, lives on. If the Brazilian Subject was written precisely to delimit and write who would accomplish the goal to transform Brazil into a modern nation with Spirit via the figure of the *mulato*, his disappearance, exploitation, and genocide are processes ongoing and untouched. The Akroá Gamella are not only denied their lands, sovereignty, and life, but they are also written as blacks who cannot be indigenous and, obviously, blacks and indigenous are *not* the Brazilian Subject, but rather only give parts of themselves in order to form the *mulato*, the almost white figure of Brazil that has the capacity of carrying on the European Modern project.

What could possibly motivate this absurd persecution that Rafael continues to suffer? How can these judges, police officers, public prosecutors, district attorneys, the whole legal apparatus, be so blatant and care-free about their conduct? How come there is no, absolutely none, ethical, moral, political or *personal* crisis when cases like Rafael or the Akroá Gamella reach our lives? How come this treatment is not only allowed and accepted, but promoted by the

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<sup>91</sup> On May 31st, a few members of the Akroá Gamella accompanied by lawyers from the Ordem Nacional dos Advogados (National Order of Lawyers, or OAB), also went to Brasília, Brazil's capital, to try to expedite the process of their land being officially demarcated by the government (obviously official demarcation doesn't prevent attacks, as the 2016 invasion of the Bainã people's demarcated land happened without any problem). The Funai (Fundação Nacional do Índio, Indian National Foundation) and the government of the state of Maranhão are working together (or at least announced to be doing so in June 26th of 2017) to demarcate the Gamella land as quickly as possible. At the time of this writing, no news regarding their land had been announced. As I was writing this thesis, Funai had 476 claims of land demarcation from indigenous peoples. The plan is to demarcate 25 between 2016 and 2019.

State, the one that is supposed to protect? How can the law be so openly racist against Rafael and millions of other young black people in Brazil? How can the Akroá Gamella be denied their identity, land, language, traditions, existence? Why there were no arrests after they were brutally attacked? Why do they need to die to recuperate something that is theirs? Because Brazil lives *directly* under the deployment of the ontological, epistemological, intellectual, and ethical *difference* that signifies *human-racial differentiation*. Nothing has changed concerning these conditions since April of 1500. How was this *difference* articulated in the national imaginary, text, reality? Who wrote our existence in such a way to make life impossible for the indigenous and black people of Brazil? I will now pursue the articulation of *difference* in Brazilian thought through the works of Gilberto Freyre, Ricardo Benzaquen, and Roberto DaMatta to provide an account of how the country's specific type of *difference* was developed and is maintained until today. It is because of our articulation of *differentiation* that Rafael and the Akroá Gamella are permanently available to violence. The articulation signifies a disavowal of *difference* through the deployment of *cultural difference*. Moreover, it involves writing the text of 'racial democracy' and 'balance of antagonisms'. Over the next section, I will chart the connections of the Subject and *difference* in the Brazilian context.

### **The fable and the myth**

The traces of ontoepistemological, historical, and empirical violence are scattered all around. Brazil's articulation of *difference* comes from two major texts: the myth of "racial democracy" and the "fable of the three races". My review of the terms will be informed by Ferreira da Silva's account in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, wherein she deploys the national text, an analytical tool she developed in order to map how "modern political subjects emerge through the

simultaneous articulation of scientific and historical signifiers"<sup>92</sup>. Simply: how the ontoepistemological conditions of the Subject were deployed in Brazil. In this section I engage with Gilberto Freyre via Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo and Roberto DaMatta to explain in detail Brazil's articulation of *difference* through the former's "racial democracy" and the latter's "fable of the three races", articulations which deny racism in different ways. As it will become clear over the next pages, these writings are directly related to the mappings of *human* and *racial differentiation* that were established in chapter one. The reading I provide also shows how their writing (Freyre's, Araújo's, DaMatta's) ties with my argument that the notions of *separability*, *sequentiality*, and *determinancy* inform Brazil's formulation of *difference*. It is because Brazil writes a slightly different version of the Subject that I find important to go over the country's history in order to fundament my argument that, for *difference* to become something else, the Subject needs to die. The Subject cannot experience, practice, or conceive of any other form of *difference* that is not marked by separation and self-determination.

In *Guerra e Paz*, Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo revisits Gilberto Freyre's foundational work that finalized the writing of the Brazilian national text and Subject, *The Masters and the Slaves*<sup>93</sup>, and other important writings from Freyre. The most important part of their work is their articulation of *difference*, which relies on four basic pillars: hybridity, miscegenation, balance of

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<sup>92</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 32.

<sup>93</sup> The title of the book in Portuguese is *Casa Grande & Senzala*. Casa Grande means big house and Senzala were the terrible 'lodgings' within the enormous rural properties wherein the slaves lived. Recently, a course offered by the school of architecture of the *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (Federal University of Minas Gerais, or, UFMG) organized by professor Otávio Curtiss asked the students to design 800 square meters (a little over 8,600 square feet), high-end apartments within 7,500 square meters (a little over 80,700 square feet), from where a sophisticated condominium is to be built. In the project, the housekeeper's bathroom and room are separate from the owners and their guests' bathrooms, living rooms, etc. Before one finds out the name of the course, this seems just like yet another project designed for the country's richest people, the type of housing that has kept the separation between the owners of the property and their maids, which is directly reminiscent of the structures of the plantation properties, wherein the lords and their families lived in the 'big houses' and the slaves in the inhumane lodgings. The name of the course? *Casa Grande*, or, Big House.

antagonisms, and heterogeneity. It is precisely within these pillars that one finds the writing of the ongoing violence against black and indigenous peoples. Their articulation of *difference* begins in the tropical *hybris*, marked by an "excess of sexual nature"<sup>94</sup> - neither author, albeit mentioning violence occasionally, openly and clearly names what those interactions were: rape -, which was responsible for creating a permanent state of exchange of cultural influence between the Portuguese-Brazilian colonizer and the African-Brazilian slave<sup>95</sup>. In their writing, the relation of proximity was more often than not harmonious and, therefore, Brazil's path to modernity could not be exercised by adopting racist theories of Europe and the United States since they made no sense in a country that had founded itself through *miscegenation*<sup>96</sup>. Since their writing of *difference* denied that *racial differentiation* exists in Brazil, they had to rewrite *miscegenation*, the country's *intrinsic difference*, as something positive<sup>97</sup>. Freyre's re-articulation of

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<sup>94</sup> Araújo, *Guerra e Paz*, 59.

<sup>95</sup> Thus, Freyre and Araújo claim that social relations in Brazil could not be influenced by race since Brazilians were living representations of "balanced antagonisms". Araújo renames this articulation to "luxury of antagonisms" that, albeit "in equilibrium", refuse to "reunite themselves in a separate, original, and indivisible entity", which allows for the creation of a society that is "hybrid, syncretic and almost polyphonic", that is, a society indefinitely "undefined between Europe and Africa" (Araújo, 44).

<sup>96</sup> The implications of their writing goes further than the celebration of the Portuguese colonizer and system of colonization. It created the roots for the belief that, since social relations were forged in a symbolic realm of harmonious proximity and amongst syncretic relations of mutual exchange, of hybridity, miscegenation, heterogeneity, and balance of antagonisms, race is not a factor in Brazil. However, hybridity and miscegenation in fact require human differentiation as racial differentiation instead of the supposed integration the authors claim since they are consequences of social relations that are based on two separate types of human (the Portuguese-European and the African-Indigenous).

<sup>97</sup> Freyre was writing against the "Whitening Ideal". Thomas Skidmore's *Black into White* explains what this articulation was by revealing that the abolitionist campaign in Brazil was dominated not by a desire to truly emancipate and create mechanisms of reparations and social equity for the black population. Instead, as Skidmore shows, Joaquim Nabuco, the leader of the abolitionist project, "left no doubt that his goal was a whiter Brazil" (Skidmore, 19). The abolitionists did not believe that Brazil had any trace of racism while the country's elite thought that "Brazil had escaped race prejudice" (Skidmore, 23). For them, race had an evolutionist historical meaning: with time, the white element would triumph. Quoting Nabuco, Skidmore writes "European immigration, attracted by the generosity of our institutions and the liberality of our regime, may constantly bring to the tropics a flow of lively, energetic, and healthy Caucasian blood, which we may absorb without danger" (Skidmore, 24). Since Brazil could never be written as a pure white nation, the abolitionists, Skidmore elucidates, were making the effort to reject Agassiz's, Buckle's, and Gobineau's open racist theories (that miscegenation could only bring evil because all the best traces of the "white man, the Negro, and the Indian" (Skidmore, 31) are effaced, creating a "mongrel nondescript type, deficient in physical and mental energy" (Skidmore, 32) population that had traction during mid-19th century and still had adepts in the beginning of the 20th (Skidmore, 38) in order to prove the country's worth.

miscegenation and its celebration meant the writing of black women as nothing more than vessels toward the whitening of the population through rape<sup>98</sup>, black men as mere bodies to be exploited for profit, and social control<sup>99</sup>, to outline the figure of the *mulato*, the national Subject - always foreclosed - that would bring the country into its future as the Europe of Tropics<sup>100</sup>. (The text hasn't even discussed the role-figuration of women. Needless to say, it follows the same methods of writing).<sup>101</sup> That is, the *mulato* was either written within the whitening ideal, i.e., as the living proof of the destiny of the country's toward whiteness, or written within an articulation of multi-raciality and innate democracy in the racial democracy text, conceived to deny the latent racism within Brazilian sociality<sup>102</sup>. Nevertheless, not all of Brazilian writings about *difference*

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Thus, the abolitionists justified the mixing of the white colonizer with the colonized as a necessary form of adaptation to the tropical climate; the mixing would render possible to conquer the entirety of the South American land and would guarantee the eventual total whiteness of the nation (the whitening ideal).

<sup>98</sup> For a further account of this chapter of the national text, see Ferreira da Silva, *Facts of Blackness: Brazil is not quite the United States*. Here are two examples: "the creative force, the ability and inclination to mix and assimilate, belonged to the coloniser, whose inherent predisposition to miscibility constitute the slightly-tanned Brazilian subject"; "Because the apology for miscegenation is ultimately a celebration of rape in which the very existence of consensual sex is rendered unimportant since black female desire is explained by the effects of her subordination the national text sanctions the idea that the black (and mulatto) female body is a sort of collective (male) property, in respect to which basic (patriarchal) moral rules do not apply" (Ferreira da Silva, 220, 221).

<sup>99</sup> Also see Ferreira da Silva, "Facts of Blackness", pages 221 and 227, for example.

<sup>100</sup> *Facts of Blackness* is again extremely helpful to understand the development and deployment of the *mulato* figure in our national text, as it is possible to see, for example, in page 205, when Ferreira da Silva explains: "Whether identified as a mere strategy toward the complete whitening of the population, or celebrated as the only means to construct a morally integrated multiracial nation, the basis of racial democracy, miscegenation became the central concern in Brazilian nationalist texts, and has become the very core of our national discourse."

<sup>101</sup> As Spivak has shown, "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears" (Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 304). Examples? 1) Over 33% of the country's population think women who are raped somehow deserved what happened and are to blame for the violence. 2) President Michel Temer's speech on March 8th of 2017: "I'm absolutely convinced, due to my family formation and for being alongside Marcela [Temer, his wife], of how much the woman does for the house, for the home. Of how much she does for her children. If society is going well in any way and the children growing it's because they had an adequate formation in their homes and, surely, that's [a responsibility] not performed by the man, but by the woman". 3) Not to mention inequalities in salary, hours worked during the week, different compensations for performing the same functions, and other economic realities. 4) The "UN approach" is also the leading strategy to solve social issues, as one can see in the organization's report of 2016 *More equality for Brazilian women*. It's all about (pleasing) the market.

<sup>102</sup> Ferreira da Silva, in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, says best when she writes that with time, Brazil's Spirit would finish its travel around the country and self-actualize itself, rendering a sociality and a subject that were nothing less than a slightly different (unique) version of the Spirit of Europe. In short, the *mulato* was what and who ensured the successful trajectory of an European I in the tropical region for it represented Europe's desire, self-consciousness (self-determined), and Universality. Racial democracy is able to deny the racial, deploy the cultural

follow the conservative model of Freyre (who wrote his text in order explain and advocate for the sustaining of the order of Brazilian society). That is, some of the articulations of *difference* acknowledge racism but simultaneously disavow it. This is the case of Roberto DaMatta's work and it is important to revisit it for it is another way of thinking and deploying *difference*.

In *Relativizando*, DaMatta forwards an analysis of Brazil that is slightly different from Freyre's. For DaMatta, Brazilian racism was created by what he names the "fable of the three races". He argues that the writing of the fable is extremely noxious since, due to its widespread acceptance, Brazilians aren't able to focus on the *true* nature of the colonizer-colonized relationship: political and economic interests<sup>103</sup>. According to DaMatta, the fable was developed

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and globality, and keep the illusion of the lack of existence of racism in Brazil. In this scenario, Indigenous women and African women are written as doubly affected, as things that are outside of Universality twice: one, for their juridical-economic subaltern position and two, for their placement outside the moral rules of patriarchy - which was the intrinsic difference of the Portuguese, the fundamental characteristic that allowed him to create the *hybris* where the influence of slaves was just as important as the Portuguese's concerning the formation not only of the culture, practices, behaviors, of the 'big house' but of Brazil as a whole. Within this scenario, African men's bodies and sexuality - as white women's - were always written outside of Brazilian history for they were always controlled by the Father, or, the Portuguese colonizer. History was moved by the sexual lust of the Portuguese through the violence against Indigenous and Black women's bodies, the movement that gives birth to the *mulato*, the perfect mixture that the Portuguese created by obliterating African and Indigenous populations. Racial democracy is the project that was able to show that the Brazilian Subject was always already the Subject that had the necessary attributes for constructing a modern civilization in the tropics via assimilating the inferior races and cultures (Indigenous and African) and also, through stating that the Indigenous was always already vanishing and the African was being erased through miscegenation. All of this is informed by globality, the main result of the deployment of the racial by the scientists of life and man, which renders regions and peoples of the world as always already transparent or affectable things. (Transparency and affectability are Ferreira da Silva's terms to clarify that what the projects of scientific knowledge achieve, and that is furthered by the future sciences of society, is the writing of transparent subjects, that is, subjects transparent to themselves for they know to be inhabited by Universal Reason, and subalterns who are merely *affected* by Universal Reason.)

<sup>103</sup> According to DaMatta, in this highly hierarchical society, where interpersonal connections were considered fundamental (even more valuable than the Law), the relations between master and slave took place in a more intimate, confident, and considerate manner. The master did not feel threatened - for the African body had no other place to be but at the bottom of the social fabric - or guilty for enslaving another man but rather saw the African male as a natural complement to him. It is here that DaMatta, who disagreed with Freyre's argument of the harmonious relation between master-slave because for the latter the Portuguese were violent toward Jewish and Moors in Portugal and therefore would not be peaceful toward the African and Indigenous populations, reinforces Freyre's *hybris* and the proximity that characterized the slave-master relationship. In a direct critique of Freyre, DaMatta writes that "if blacks and whites could interact freely in Brazil in the plantation properties, it was not due to a more humane or open colonial system, but only because blacks and white had specific and ambiguity-free places inside society, inside a totalized hierarchy well established" (DaMatta, *Relativizando*, 79). Is this really a critique, though? Can't we read that, in spite of admitting the inhumanness of coloniality, DaMatta rewrites the 'freedom of interaction' as the Freyrian cultural exchange theory.

by the elites after independence because they needed to create a set of ideologies and mechanisms of rationalization to account for the country's *internal differences*. The pursuit of an identity was required. By the end of the 19th century, he goes on, the 'fable' was the most powerful cultural force in Brazil<sup>104</sup> and allowed Brazilians to think the country, ideally integrate their society, and also claim a unique culture - thus, creating a national-identity and subject<sup>105</sup>. He argues that the fable allowed everyone to accept that the highly hierarchical society, wherein "every person knows their place", was, in fact, an integrated totality based upon human bonds that were forged through sexual relationships and racial attributes. Moreover, the uniqueness of Brazilian cultural-identity as a nation stems from the harmonious encounter of the three races.

What I find in DaMatta is that, even in a text that openly says that Brazil *is* a racist society, racism only exists because of inflexible hierarchical stratification. That is, in a perfect, equal, hierarchy-free version of the Brazilian sociality, there would be no racism. DaMatta, thus, fully disavows *difference* in his articulation twice. Firstly, because he believes that *difference* does not require thinking since it only exists because of economic dispossession. If Brazil was to fix its inequality, *difference* would no longer exist. Secondly and most importantly, he completely dismisses the centrality of *difference* as *racial differentiation* in the building of contemporary Brazil. Even though he recognizes that the country was developed based on the

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<sup>104</sup> DaMatta, *Relativizando*, 70.

<sup>105</sup> Still on page 70, DaMatta writes that "the three race myth unifies society at a biological and natural plenum, prolonged through Umbanda, cordiality, carnival, women (especially the *mulata*), food, and music". What I find here is Ana Maria Gonçalves' *White Brazilians Don't Want To Accept Their Racism In Controversy Over African Head Wraps*, written in 2017, concerning how everything that is African-Brazilian is claimed to be "everyone's" but everything else has its own cultural specificity: "Pizza! ('It's Italian food!'). Acarajé, from the Iorubá words akara (a fried rice cake) and ijé (food) — ('IT'S MINE! It's from Brazil! It's everybody's!'). Hashu'al ('It's Israeli!'). Congado ('IT'S MINE! It's from Brazil! It's everybody's!') Kimono! ('It's Japanese!') Ojá! ('IT'S MINE! It's from Brazil! It's everybody's!') Kung Fu ('It's Chinese!'). Capoeira! from the Tupi word ko'p'wera or the Umbando kapwila ('IT'S MINE! It's from Brazil! It's everybody's!'), she writes. What is at stake? Precisely the 'fable of the three races', or 'racial democracy'. This writing has been so fiercely inscribed within the souls of Brazilians that we cannot see our latent, obvious, genocidal racism. Always already in place within the text of Brazilian society is the writing of erasure of black and indigenous peoples. Even within their symbols, their heirlooms, their traditions, indigenous and black people find themselves invaded and violated.

exploitation and dispossession of black and indigenous people - rendering both populations at the bottom of social existence - he argues that *racial difference* is only a tool of exclusion and not a construct that systematically and structurally keeps black and indigenous populations available to violence and dispossession. Unfortunately, this conception of race as a mere tool of exclusion is how one of the most important critiques of Brazilian society is organized in the work of Carlos Hasenbalg. In the next section, I will revisit his *Discriminação e Desigualdade Raciais no Brasil* and Abdias do Nascimento *O Genocídio do Negro Brasileiro* to provide an account of the limitations that the project of denouncing race prejudice harbors. Abdias's work will also help me articulate my claim that while *difference* and the Subject inform projects of social justice, they will always fail. The project of a new articulation of *difference* is my goal precisely because I wish to flee *differentiation* completely and, by doing that, end the existence of the Subject.

### **The (limits of the) denunciation of racism**

In his major work, Hasenbalg argues that Brazil created the best of two worlds: it maintains the structure for white privilege and nonwhite subordination intact while avoiding the constitution of race as a principle of collective identity and political action<sup>106</sup>. Hasenbalg presents a country that,

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<sup>106</sup> Hasenbalg's analysis was conducted with data from the end of the 1970s and published for the first time in 1979. Nevertheless, the situation that he depicts has hardly changed over the last four decades. When analyzing data from the 1976 PNAD (Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra por Domicílios, or National Research Sampled by Residence), when he convincingly showed that nonwhites always start with a number of disadvantages in the race of the meritocratic liberal social competitive market: whites and nonwhites from the same social background have different levels of education, distinct gains from achieving the same level of education, types of jobs, salaries, and so on. Concerning social mobility, whites and nonwhites from the same social background also experience different futures: whites tend to "jump" to better positions with much more ease than nonwhites and they "jump" to higher new positions as well. Obviously, current data are available concerning the claims that Hasenbalg made. Two examples, drawn from the last national census conducted in 2010 (the census divides the population in whites, browns (*pardos*), blacks, yellow (Asian), and indigenous): 73,3% of Brazilians with a higher degree are white, 3,7% are black, and 20,8% are *pardos*. If one compares the number of whites with a higher degree with the total number of whites in the population, 12,7% have a higher degree. The same calculation will show that 3,9% of blacks have a higher degree while 4% of *pardos* possess the same level of instruction. Concerning average monthly income, the results were: white R\$ 1,750.77, *pardo* R\$ 911.58, black R\$ 906.56, and yellow R\$ 1,782.82, respectively \$ 547.97,



since the very beginning, constructed itself through racial exclusion to create its class-stratified society. By the time abolition came (1888), Hasenbalg argues, the stratified class society was already so well established based on racial exclusion that there was no need for legal segregation to be enforced; nonwhites were at the bottom and whites at the top, responsible for distributing and deciding the division of the social "goods". Hasenbalg states that this lack of legal discrimination and the fact that open forms of racism are disapproved in public are the means through which the myth of "racial democracy" perpetuates itself and the belief in an integrated, harmonious society is kept intact. Focused on social mobility, one of his arguments is that precisely because a small number of nonwhites are able (or allowed) to climb the class ladder, it's easy to pretend there's no racial exclusion. The limitation of Hasenbalg's denunciation of race exclusion is that he disavows racism, or *racial difference*, as the primary tool of Brazil's social organization. When one only articulates race as a principle of exclusion, not only does one miss the fact that *racial differentiation* is the guiding principle of the text that will not allow structural changes to happen for it is the writing that actualizes a society based on *human differentiation* through the *racial*. Moreover, one maintains *difference* as a principle of separation itself because is thought of in terms of multicultural-multiracial celebration. To elaborate on this point, I review, very briefly, Abdias do Nascimento's *O Genocídio do Negro Brasileiro* and finish this section with a more comprehensive explanation of the idea I forwarded before, that is, that *difference* in Universality/Spirit/Reason can only mean subjugation/outside (but not exclusion).

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\$ 285.31, \$ 283.74, and \$ 558 in American dollars. The data analysis must be much more detailed and take into consideration an infinite number of additional factors (gender, urban or rural area, neighborhood, family, etc.). These were poor and not complex enough examples, but this text is not about a sociological, number driven analysis, it is about uncovering and understanding the writing that has allowed for the present historical reality of immense inequality and, above all, the social text and fabric that has been written as nothing less than endless violence against subaltern populations.

If Hasenbalg provided an account of racial exclusion but was unable to even name racism as the guiding principle of Brazilian society, Abdias do Nascimento attempts a critique directly toward Brazil's version of *difference* (the text of racial democracy). He is forthright: fully rejects any conception of racial democracy and states that Brazil, as a country, was always already created on the basis of racism and genocide. What I find in his debunking of the most common myths<sup>107</sup> regarding racial relations in Brazil is a writing that denounces the Freyrian ideas of metarace, or "racial democracy", and the *mulato* as the figure the Brazilian subject-discourse as the perpetuation of whiteness as the dominant and the racial others as the dominated. When the national subject is a *mixed* entity that carries every cultural influence from all the ethnicities, he argues, the dominant symbolic group can feel at ease when exploring and using racialized peoples symbolisms and bodies. After all, he explains, everyone is mixed. At the same time, Nascimento argues that this articulation maintains its dominance over the racialized others precisely because it can claim that there is no racism since Brazilians are all one big mixed population. The *mulato* was the symbol to justify Brazil as the Europe of the tropics and, at the same time, to be slowly killed off from the country's future as a Modern Sociality<sup>108</sup>. While Nascimento's work is important for it is able to articulate and rebuke the Brazilian discourse of *difference*, it still falls short of a more fundamental critique of *difference* for it still tries to write black Brazilians as Subjects. In a nutshell, these projects of subaltern subjects have not worked

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<sup>107</sup> Myths such as: 1) equal share of opportunities for blacks and whites in a country where race and/or ethnicity do not play a role in social relations, 2) the benevolent relationship of the master toward his slave, 3) the African as co-colonizer alongside the Portuguese, 4) the survival of African cultural practices as a sign of amicable and relaxed relationship between master and slave, 5) that there was no racism during or after colonization but only a society divided by class/social status, 6) the proximity between master and slave in the plantation properties portrayed as a mutual exchange of influences and not violent, 7) the *mulata* as a symbol of racial harmony instead of a product of the sexual abuse of black and indigenous women by the master both directly and 'indirectly' by prostituting her for yet another form of profit, 8) the myth of the "freed" African, 9) and the *mulato* as the symbol of racial democracy - both because he had a role during colonization that was placed between the slave and the master and was the symbol of the whitening country.

<sup>108</sup> As I'll soon show, Risério will (perhaps purposefully) misread Nascimento's work regarding the *mulato*.

to the extent that they wish because all the writing they have tried to articulate depart from letters, alphabets, lexicons, grammars, and texts that have never been theirs. Social movements have been demanding to become part of Universal Reason, Spirit, Transcendentality, that is, they have tried to become Subjects. However, they can't become him since the writing of Universality requires precisely their subjugation. As I've shown, what was achieved in the late 19th century was the securing of Universality-Reason-Historicity-Spirit within Europe's boundaries. A map was drawn that wrote clearly and inscribed violently: the Subject is within Universality, the racial other is *excluded from* but *not outside* of Universality for Universality does not operate within him but only from without him. The other is *excluded from* because she cannot be within Universality. She is only a thing out there that exists write *difference* as the signification of *differentiation*. She is *not outside* of Universality because she is part of the text of Universality<sup>109</sup> since Universality can only be written through differentiation<sup>110</sup>. This writing is more than the contrivance of an alibi or justification for colonization, exploitation, imperialism: it was devised in order to create the ontoepistemological grounds that would establish the conditions of permanent subjugation of non-Subjects - even if the globe eventually invented multiculturalism and other inclusivity discourses. The Modern ontoepistemological project, tools, strategies, analytics, and so on, have not and will not be displaced for they have inscribed themselves within the Subject and throughout the globe. What I am highlighting is that the intellectual, ethical, empirical, and ontological claims articulated by 19th century Europe were deployed all over the

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<sup>109</sup> As Nahum Chandler has written that *difference* "presupposes the possibility of an infrastructural organization of an oppositional distinction of thought, that of producing an ontological distinction, in this case both between humans and an other and among humans, determining any so-called human being as one kind of thing or another (...) [and] it presupposes the status of a European, Euro-American, or "White" identity, subject, or mode of identification as coherent, as homogeneous, as a pure term" (Chandler, X, 22, 23).

<sup>110</sup> David Lloyd's forthcoming work deals with this issue of Universality producing the transcendental Subject while at the same time producing the one who cannot be a part of it but has to written within its (Universality's) domain in order for the transcendental to be articulated. I have in mind the article "*Race Under Representation*", which will be a part of his new book.

world and are still how existence is written. *Difference* as *human differentiation*, *racial differentiation*, and, more recently, *multicultural-multiracial differentiation*, is the ultimate ontoepistemological philosophical-scientific tool developed to make us experience life. What I mean is that *difference* as *differentiation* is both how the capitalist-colonial-imperial project was written before decolonization and it is how the capitalist-colonial-imperial project is written in the so-called postcolonial era. *Difference* wrote the Subject in order to create the conditions under which black and indigenous life could not mean the Subject for he was the white male European. Later, *difference* was deployed to claim that everyone was a Subject and that colonialism/slavery was a sort of "misappropriation" of what the philosophical project actually means - as if colonialism/slavery were simply projects of a certain mindset that dominated "bad men". My contention is that *difference* is, in fact, *the* text that sustains *differentiation* and therefore can only support a project of permanent exploitation and killing of black and indigenous life. Thus, my project is to entirely shift what *difference* is in an attempt to free it from the claws of Modern thinking. Before moving to this proposition, I will briefly return to the pieces that opened this chapter (Risério's and Benjamin's) to finalize my argument that *difference* has to be rethought - both for Brazil's sake and for the world's sake.

### **Risério and Benjamin, part II**

I've reviewed all this literature concerning Brazil to reveal that it is this tradition of thought that animates Risério's and Benjamin's pieces. The latter's piece was an extremely rude and inaccurate text in response to what he named "Brazilian Racialization" - his text was sparked by a talk given by Thaís Araújo, a famous black Brazilian actress. At an event called *Mulheres que Inspiram* (Women who inspire), she stated that "in Brazil, my son's skin color is the color that

makes people change their side on the sidewalks, hide their purses, and have armored cars. His life will only be less difficult than my daughter's"<sup>111</sup>. Benjamin replied by stating that he "hates the racialization of Brazil", something that was created, according to him, by the State Department of the United States. He claims that Brazil's biggest achievement is the "concept of the Brazilian people (*conceito de povo brasileiro*)" and that this concept has disappeared among the "intelligent ones". He writes, mentioning Araújo's speech: "any racial imbecility prospers and the recent one comes from a pretty and perfumed actress who claims people change sidewalks when they see her son, who must also be pretty and perfumed"<sup>112</sup>. He goes on to affirm that "luckily, the concept of the Brazilian people hasn't vanished where it matters, in our own people. I fight to preserve it. Against the majority of you. *Fuck all the races*" (emphasis added)<sup>113</sup>. As if this was not enough, he claims that the argument about the majority of the prison population being composed by young black men is not true because when he was in prison (as an activist against the dictatorship) "whites were the minority. Blacks were the minority. The majority was of *morenos* (*mulatos*, browns), with all the gradations of our people"<sup>114</sup>.

It might seem simple to see how this is a racist and sexist text, and it should be, but it isn't. This is Brazilian-Liberal racism and sexism at its "finest", informed by the narrative of "racial democracy" and the figure of the *mulato*. Benjamin isn't exactly saying that there aren't racists in Brazil. What he is saying is that, albeit it is possible to encounter racists here or there, we are a people who is, above all, *miscegenated* and, as such, reject racism and live together with no systemic racial issue. Moreover, with no systematic *racial differentiation*. It's clear that, for

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<sup>111</sup> "A cor do meu filho faz com que as pessoas mudem de calçada", diz Taís Araújo em palestra"

<sup>112</sup> Benjamin eventually erased the words describing the actress being "pretty and perfumed".

<sup>113</sup> Benjamin also erased the "fuck all the races" phrase. The original post can be read in Ana Maria Gonçalves piece at the Intercept under the title "A Aula de Racismo e Machismo à Brasileira do Secretário de Educação do Rio".

<sup>114</sup> Benjamin, "Pessoal, eu sei que fui derrotado", emphasis added.

Benjamin, there are no races; he screams it with his curse word. For him, it was not the Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Dutch who brought the notion of race into Brazil and kept it in place from the 16th century onwards; it was an invention by the American State Department! Not only he reinforces Freyre's articulation through his Liberal lens<sup>115</sup> but he completely dismisses a black woman's account<sup>116</sup>. Benjamin's text is the most simple and insufficient form of dealing with the country's conceptualization of *difference*. It's our adapted version of "color blind" racism. Risério's piece has similar claims and I'll review them before finishing the chapter.

In his *Black social movements repeat the logics of scientific racism*, Risério writes a piece to criticize black social movements who, during a demonstration, lift up a sign that read "*Miscigenação também é genocídio!*" (Miscegenation is also genocide!). In the article, he not only is extremely disrespectful toward Elisa Larkin Nascimento and Abdias do Nascimento but, again, repeats the mantra created by Freyre even if he seems to criticize people who believe in the narrative of "racial democracy". For him, the black social movements are "explicitly promoting the implementation of a love-sexual apartheid in the country" and repeat *scientific racism* because they only support "afro-centric love, an ideological label which is nothing less than an euphemism for erotic segregation", or, putting it simply, the author claims that Brazilian "racialism" reproduces the discourse that genes are inherently superior or inferior, separating races in a country that is totally and completely *mestiço*. He concedes that our *mestiçagem* (*mestizaje*, miscigenation) does not mean that there is no discrimination. Nevertheless, in a

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<sup>115</sup> In a comment on his post, he claims that Brazil lives in a state of "undeclared civil war" wherein everyone is at constant risk of suffering violence. There is some truth to that; Brazil is a violent country. Nevertheless, what is missed or ignored in analysis like this, are the racial and gendered foundations of our society and how so many of our problems could be avoided if we were to tackle these issues seriously. A final note: Freyre's lens were conservative one's for he was advocating for things to remain how they are, as I've argued before. Benjamin's wants change through his liberal articulation (against inequality) which won't bring the change social justice hopes for.

<sup>116</sup> As I have shown with *Facts of Blackness*, Brazil's racism is articulated through race and gender since black and indigenous women were subjugated in order to make room for the Portuguese self-productive desire-force.

country where "*mestiços* are born daily all over the [territory]", where we can only "understand ourselves" if we understand "our mixtures", racism is something random, that does not make sense in our social reality. He finishes his piece by stating that "through miscegenation, the genocide of blacks is inseparable from white suicide".

Risério's piece deserved a whole section (or even chapter) dedicated to unpacking his racist article but I do not have time. It will suffice to say that Risério reproduces the logic behind Freyre's articulation in six major ways: 1) he reaffirms that what defines us as a people, our most important identity trait, stems from the fact that we are a mixed population and, therefore, experience a coexistence of races mixed together within ourselves signifying that our essence is one of racial mixture and co-inhabitation of differences, 2) he willfully misreads Abdias do Nascimento *O Genocídio do Negro Brasileiro* as a work of "colonized racialism" - because his book is supposedly a copy of American racialism - where, according to Risério, Nascimento "chains *mestiçagem* (miscegenation), whitening, alienation of black identity" and "miscegenation, whitening, and annihilation of the black race", when, I've shown, Nascimento simply points out the historical reality of the desire to whiten the country during colonization by simultaneously using and discarding the African body (male and female) and, later, after slavery was outlawed, since literal-biological whitening could never occur, the plan was always one of cultural, economic, and political whitening through legislation, lack of reparations, state promoted violence, that is, the liberal of way of celebrating (we are all mixed and live in the same place with equal opportunities!) and eliminating (it's your fault that you are poor! There is no systemic racial, gendered, sexual, class structures that impede you from succeeding!) its racial other, 3) writes that miscegenation can "no longer be seen as violence against black women", as if the history of the Portuguese productive-constitutive force through the rape and genocide of

African and indigenous women had no impact in the present, as if the construction of the African and indigenous female body as nothing more than vessels for the conquering of the territory in order to reproduce the logics of permanent racial-gendered subjugation and capitalist accumulation were not central tenets of our present time, as if the *mulata*, the "not-so black" female body wasn't viewed as public male property and the reason why Brazil always makes the list of the most popular countries for sexual tourism (that is, forced prostitution of women), as if the celebrated *mulato* population of Brazil wasn't a direct result of the violence against African and indigenous women inaugurated by the Portuguese, 4) completely misses the critique that black activists make when they claim that "miscegenation is also genocide"; they are not forbidding or trying to forbid relationships between blacks and whites but are simply pointing out the historical fact of what miscegenation represents and pointing out the cultural, economic, and political ramifications of miscegenation as the ideal behind our national Subject, 5) when he names the black population as "neoblacks" who are nothing more than "mulatos", he again willfully ignores what black activists are trying to articulate in terms of regaining and recuperating cultural and historical African culture for themselves in a country that since always has appropriated traits of blackness and indigeneity deemed acceptable into mainstream society, 6) simply, then, rehearses the thesis of Brazil's version of Universality/Historicity/Spirit, maintaining African and indigenous peoples at the only position they can occupy within these conditions of ontoepistemological reality/truth: subalternity.

With this, I can finally move to chapter three, where I argue for a total rethinking of *difference*. Brazil's account of *difference*, which claims that whiteness is displaced because of *miscegenation* through the discourse of *cultural difference*, is only able to rewrite black and indigenous peoples available to violence and dispossession. While *difference* is stuck with the



logics of *differentiation*, *human differentiation*, and *racial differentiation*, it will always signify separation and self-determination. While it retains any trace of these ontoepistemological conditions, *difference* will only be able to produce violence since it will be actualized by the version of the Subject developed in Post Enlightenment Western Europe. Nevertheless, *difference* can mean something else, something that does not rely upon the Modern grammar to write itself. To achieve this signification, the Subject needs to end. For the Subject to end, I argue for a shift in the sublimation process and for a new mode of thinking about, conceiving of, and experiencing *difference*. One can only happen simultaneously with the other.

## Difference rethought

"i wondered if these people had ever thought of driving their car off a bridge? had they ever felt an overwhelming need for release? (...) suicide's not something you do to other people, it's something you do for yourself"<sup>117</sup>

"One may not call these ways practical but they certainly suggest a mastery of way-finding. So much so that no known map is necessary, nor any known methods of conveyance. Except escaping the body"<sup>118</sup>

I would like to start the final part of this chapter by echoing Ferreira da Silva's scream in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*: "How much longer will it take until it is acknowledged that the conditions under which they rewrite their own history is not of their making, that the difference that marks them as subaltern subjects also instituted the place of those who exploit and dominate them?"<sup>119</sup>.

That is, for how much longer will social justice movements fall into the trap of Universality?

How long will it take until they realize that, albeit one could argue that progress has been made, the authorization of violence against them will never be displaced or overcome because their claims are being made in a manner that repeat Modern ontoepistemological articulations? How much time will be needed until it is realized that the longing for recognition and self-determination cannot do anything but keep the same notions that were created to render them subaltern in the first place? How long before *difference* is not celebrated as isolation, separation, and self-determination?

What I have argued so far is that the Subject and *difference* were/are constitutive of each other. *Difference*, within this account, is the central tenet that sustains and is sustained by the Subject. *Human differentiation* as the obvious racist account and *human separation* as the, at

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<sup>117</sup> Simpson, *Islands of Decolonial Love*, 81.

<sup>118</sup> Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return*, 44.

<sup>119</sup> Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 251, emphasis added.

best, 'non-obvious' racist account. Instead of falling into the liberal multicultural celebration of 'our differences', what would happen if imagination was set free<sup>120</sup>, liberating reality to a radically different mode of thinking about, relating to, conceiving of, and experiencing *difference*? Difference, within this proposition, means seeing the globe as one inseparable plenum, the universe as *oneness*, every one thing as inhabited by everything and every-thing else and the everything as inhabited by every-thing. By starting to see things as *undifferentiated* but still *particular* things, it's possible to envision a sociality wherein difference does not signify superiority nor separation, supremacy nor self-determination, the Subject nor *differentiation*.

To help me tackle the project of ending the Subject, I will rework Zizek's reduction of the subaltern subject's as a thing that, in order to be free, needs to kill itself in the *The Fragile Absolute*. I return to Ferreira da Silva's *Difference without Separability* and visit Deleuze's *Michel Tournier and the World without Others*. With both of their works, I argue that a new relationship with *difference* is possible. Carl Mika's *Indigenous Education and the metaphysics of presence* is essential to my project for he proposes a relationship to the world wherein everything is present in every-thing. I also get help from quantum physics to argue that reality is, in fact, one big inseparable dimension, echoing Mika's articulation.

### **Ending the Subject by shifting sublimation**

So far, I have argued that the Subject and *difference* constitute one another. If *difference* is to be signified into something it has not been able to mean in social reality, it seems that the only

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<sup>120</sup> I have Saidiya Hartman's *Venus in two axes* in mind when thinking about imagination. Her work is precisely to free history from itself through imagination. In this way, she hopes to not rewrite the violence of coloniality.

solution is to get rid of the Subject. Žižek<sup>121</sup> argues that capitalism destroys the subject because it prevents sublimation since it is a system concerned with automatic refilling one's already *consumed* desire by yet another object to be promptly consumed. Capitalism has "resolved personal worth into exchange value"<sup>122</sup> and, quoting Lacan, Žižek distinguishes between reality and the Real: "'reality' is the social reality of the actual people involved in interaction, and in the productive process; while the Real is the inexorable 'abstract' spectral logic of Capital which determines what goes on in social reality"<sup>123</sup>.

Žižek's subject and the Subject I've been discussing are not the same. 'Mine' is the Modern Subject of Post Enlightenment Europe, while his is the split, cultural subject wherein raciality, gender, sexuality, are strategies deployed by capitalism to keep itself secure. However, I believe his arguments concerning the "situation of forced choice" - within *Fragile*, this reads capitalism - can help this thesis. When one finds oneself in the "situation of forced choice", the subject can only exercise free action if he cuts "himself loose from the precious object through whose possession the enemy kept him in check"<sup>124</sup>: one attacks its most precious object (oneself, one's children, etc.). It is with this sacrifice that ethics can be politicized, or, in Žižek's terms, make the

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<sup>121</sup> This text will not dwell in his critiques toward Multiculturalism wherein he states that Multiculturalism is nothing but repressed racism and simply another moment of Western superiority because it keeps the distinction between the almighty West and all its others - for him, however, the cultural difference presented and articulated by Multiculturalism is *not* a direct heir of the racial mapping and geography that happened during the mid to late 19th century. Albeit it's difficult for one not to agree with his diagnosis of Multiculturalism-Neoliberalism when claiming that racism is far from over even within a society that strives for showing themselves as politically correct, multicultural celebrators, etc., - nevertheless one has to disagree with his articulation of racism without ideology, that is, when he presents racism as something that abides the Id-Evil pair since the subject longs for violence because the other is either on its way of acquiring the object or has already acquired the object. Racism is much more complex as the ultimate tool of the Modern Text to keep subjection intact always and forever. One also has to strongly disagree with his position that gender or sexuality are inventions of neoliberalism put in place only to keep our attentions away from what really is going on: economic power relentlessly exploiting the world population and getting richer infinitely.

<sup>122</sup> Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute*, 14.

<sup>123</sup> Žižek, 15.

<sup>124</sup> Žižek, 150.

"Absolute appear in all its fragility"<sup>125</sup>. However, I'd like to shift and disagree with Žižek concerning sublimation by looking at social life. So far, inclusion in Universality to prove that one is a Subject is the most successful tool social justice movements have had in their plight for equality. Social justice, therefore, maintains a movement of sublimation that *requires* the positioning of the Subject and Universality-Spirit-Reason: it always has (had) an element-object-cause of desire that it chases in order to fill its Void only to find that it cannot become the Subject nor enter Universality. Thus, it makes yet another claim, and it fails to become and to enter, and so it goes endlessly, keeping the Subject alive. For Žižek, capitalism is destroying the subject and the symbolic for it (almost totally) prevents sublimation and it is through this mechanism that capitalism secures itself as the Real that informs reality. While I am contending that, when the Modern Subject is in question, sublimation happens 'normally' since social justice is always trying to reach Universality to become the Subject since inclusion has been the most successful vocabulary so far. By destroying *this* sublimation process that longs to prove that subalterns have History, are Subjects, and belong within Universality, I claim there's a chance of ending the Subject and the modern text, opening a space for a sociality wherein *difference* is its Real and reality. Moreover, this abandoning of the figure of the Subject and the ontoepistemological conditions which animate him, can only happen through *difference*. In the next section, I explore different ways of thinking about *difference* to illustrate this point. I claim that if one starts to think and experience *difference* in a manner that does not require *differentiation*, the path toward the end of the Subject opens.

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<sup>125</sup> Žižek, 159.

## The realm of *difference*

The new sociality has to start by seeing itself no longer in sequences, determinants, and separations<sup>126</sup>. But for a new sociality to arrive an old one must no longer exist. This is not a call for a rupture in its usual representation but rather an asking for change in our approach of *seeing* sociality itself. What I am trying to argue is that this realm of *difference* without *differentiation* is already here. It's not coming from somewhere else. It's a call for enacting our social existence as a boundless reality, with no lines and structures. For ease of illustration of a society without lines but that retains the ability of reading at the same time, Deleuze's essay *Michel Tournier and the World without Others* is helpful. There, he explains that we live stuck inside the structure-Other. This is the structure "that around each object that I perceive or each idea that I think there is the organization of a marginal world (...) where other objects and other ideas may come forth in accordance with laws of transition which regulate the passage from one to another", it assures the "margins and transitions in the world (...) is the *sweetness* of contiguities and resemblances, (...) *prevents* assaults from behind (...) makes things incline towards one another and find their natural complements in one another"<sup>127</sup>. However, in a world without the structure-Other, there's nothing but "Elements", only a "groundless abyss, rebellious and devouring", where the category of the possible "has collapsed", gone are the "transitions (...) the *sweetness* of contiguities and resemblances" that make room to nothing "but (...) absolute distances and differences"<sup>128</sup>. The disappearance of structure-Other "allows consciousness to cling to, and to coincide with, the object in an eternal present", creating a free-flow of elements and thus ending linear, separable,

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<sup>126</sup> "An ethico-political program that does not reproduce the violence of modern thought requires re-thinking sociality from without the modern text. Because only the end of the world as we know it, I am convinced, can dissolve cultural differences' production of human collectives as 'strangers' with fixed and un-reconcilable moral attributes" (Ferreira da Silva, "On difference without separability", 58).

<sup>127</sup> Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*.

<sup>128</sup> Deleuze, 306, 307, emphasis added.

and sequential conceptions of time and space. Finally, the disappearance does "not simply disorganize the world but, on the contrary, open[s] up the possibility of salvation"<sup>129</sup>. I find here a different approach to *difference* than the one in *Difference & Repetition*. It's still a transcendentalist articulation, I still read *differences in themselves* and *repetition for themselves* within this text, but Deleuze does something in *The World without Others* that he doesn't in *Difference & Repetition*: by writing a world without lines, shapes or contiguities, he liberates the elements to *be* in a dimension of *difference itself*. Deleuze's "eternal present"<sup>130</sup> promises a reality without *sequentiality*, *separability*, and *determinancy*. Nevertheless, even in a reality wherein the Structure-Other is dissolved, self-determination and, thus, *differentiation*, still exist. In a reality without lines and contiguities, where elements (*differences*) are not enclosed by the limitations of the perceiving 'I', *differences* themselves still appear as self-determinate entities that are interconnected with one another. The articulation of a transcendental space-time wherein *differences* are not enclosed by the contours of empirical reality promises a shift in ontoepistemological conditions but falls short for it keeps *differences* as elements that actualize themselves in a sequence. Deleuze writes about a sort of universal "big oneness", but *differences* still *differentiate* among themselves, they still *separate* from one another because their mutual exchange departs from a movement of two self-determined *differences* which albeit realizing that they are constituting the world without physical-empirical separation. They are still *differences* which *differentiate* from one another because they know they exist as separate *differences*.

In her *Difference without Separability*, Ferreira da Silva departs from a critique of the inability of cultural difference to stop the writing of Otherness - thus, writing violence -, calls for a program based on thinking outside the modern text, and mixes concepts of quantum physics,

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<sup>129</sup> Deleuze, 311, 315.

<sup>130</sup> Deleuze, 311.

such as the principle of nonlocality, to propose a sociality based on entanglement rather than *separability*. Ferreira da Silva calls for the release of thinking "from the grip of certainty" so that imagination<sup>131</sup> can be freed in order to "create with the 'unclear and confused' (uncertain) impressions"<sup>132</sup>. She proposes nonlocality as an epistemological principle and virtuality as an ontological descriptor, that is, notions that state that particles are always and only expressions of each other coexisting in a quantum entangled dimension of permanent intra-exchange of shared mutuality - what she names "the plenum". Nonlocality reveals a complex reality wherein "everything has both actual (spacetime) and a virtual (nonlocal) existence"<sup>133</sup>. What takes place within nonlocality is that *difference* ceases to be something un-resolvable or the ultimate descriptor of separation. Rather, it becomes the "expression of a fundamental *entanglement*"<sup>134</sup>. For this to become the 'norm', I contended that the Subject must die. Entanglement is already very close to what this text has been trying to articulate, but still runs the risk of keeping the self or self-presence intact as the primary way of thinking. Thus, it risks rewriting the Subject. With the Subject terminated, this notion of *difference* can be our Real, our reality, our historical past-present-future, our sociality without the necessary violence that the he entails.

**All is one (thing) and one is all (things)**

Deleuze's proposition is not enough since it requires a transcendental space wherein the 'I' (that is, *difference*) actualizes itself by *differentiating* from the Other (that is, another difference). Ferreira da Silva's "plenum" of "entanglement" in the non-local universe gets very near the articulation I propose over the next pages. What happens if the intra-realm of *differences* that

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<sup>131</sup> As Robin Kelley has written, "a new society, a peaceful, cooperative, loving world without poverty and oppression, limited only by our imaginations" (Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, 196).

<sup>132</sup> Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability", 58

<sup>133</sup> Ferreira da Silva, 64

<sup>134</sup> Ferreira da Silva, 65, emphasis original



Deleuze wrote about actually had *no separation* whatsoever? What if *presence-absence* is only one of the movements of the self and not the most fundamental one? What happens if the "plenum" of "entanglement" can be even more radical, that is, what happens if the "plenum" is a step towards something *deeper*, further *within* than entanglement? I'd like to tackle the first question by visiting Robert Nadeau's and Minas Kafatos' *The Non-Local Universe* for I believe they provide a way to help end the current and forever ongoing racial reasonability of differentiation that informs human existence. How can non-locality help with my project?

If correlation between particles occur "even if the distance between [them] is [of] millions of light-years (...) [and] instantaneously, or in '*no time*'", a completely new "relationship between parts (quanta) and whole (universe)" establishes itself, entirely changing what was thought to be the fundamental property of the entire universe - that is, mechanical physics and its order of rational separation, isolation, non-inter-intra-connections and causality - to a reality that "manifests as an indivisible or undivided whole (...) and undivided wholeness [that] exists on the most primary and basic level in all aspects of physical reality"<sup>135</sup>. If every particle of the Universe was, at a certain moment, in connection with, maybe even within one another, why *difference* has to signify separation instead of intra-exchange of shared mutuality? If when I slice out one subatomic elementary particle to see it either as a wave or as a particle and at the moment another elementary particle appears *without* me looking at it, is directly influenced/entangled/informed by the 'other' *without* them touching each other, if their *difference* actually signifies intra-connection, why does separation resist in my mind? Why does the body resist the collapsing, the entanglement, as the reality of the total inseparability of existence? Because if reality is inescapable, if "all of physical reality is (...) nonlocality, or non-separability,

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<sup>135</sup> Nadeau and Kafatos, *The Non-Local Universe*, 2-4.

as the factual condition in the entire universe" <sup>136</sup>, I have to shift how I think about, conceive of, and experience *difference*. To achieve this shift, I should realize that everything is always already present. How can this idea become the primordial ontological, epistemological, intellectual, and ethical condition of existence?<sup>137</sup> Carl Mika's work leads me in this project.

In *Indigenous Education and the Metaphysics of Presence*, Carl Mika articulates an educational project based on his notion of worldedness: "one thing is never alone, and all things actively construct and compose it"<sup>138</sup>. He explains that, within indigenous thought<sup>139</sup>, the most important ontological, intellectual, and ethical stance is the idea that what exists is the "eternal convergence of the world within any one thing (...) this fundamental collapse of the All within the one also has significance for the nature of thought itself"<sup>140</sup>. Continuing, he illustrates this notion further: "In indigenous thought, as I go on to say, the idea is a material entity that is constituted by all other things in the world; it is as equal to the situation as my own neurological decision to think is"<sup>141</sup>. For him, therefore, "the aim (...) is to understand the oneness that sits at the core of indigenous philosophy as education itself. This oneness is not simply inert or static; it

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<sup>136</sup> Nadeau and Kafatos, 81.

<sup>137</sup> The opening paragraph from Karen Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway* provides a initial compelling outline-proposition: "Matter and meaning are not separate elements. They are inextricably fused together, and no event, no matter how energetic, can tear them asunder. Even atoms, whose very name, atomos (atomos), means 'indivisible' or 'uncuttable,' can be broken apart. But matter and meaning cannot be dissociated, not by chemical processing, or centrifuge, or nuclear blast. Mattering is simultaneously a matter of substance and significance, most evidently perhaps when it is the nature of matter that is in question, when the smallest parts of matter are found to be capable of exploding deeply entrenched ideas and large cities. Perhaps this is why contemporary physics makes the inescapable entanglement of matters of being, knowing, and doing, of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, of fact and value, so tangible, so poignant" (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 3).

<sup>138</sup> Mika, *Indigenous Education and the Metaphysics of Presence*, 4.

<sup>139</sup> "It is to be acknowledged that amongst indigenous peoples there may be different ways of explaining their own modes of perception, but their general resistance to a view that the world can be apprehended in its pure visibility means that, despite the plurality of indigenous experiences, an 'indigenous' deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence is possible" (Mika, 12).

<sup>140</sup> Mika, 1.

<sup>141</sup> Mika, 2.

is much more *formational*<sup>142</sup>. Mika articulates (t)his indigenous ontoepistemological ground as precisely the lack of a final ground, critiquing the metaphysics of presence from this position, gathering support for his argumentation from Heidegger, Derrida, and Novalis. The reader might find strange that a critique of the Western philosophy from an indigenous perspective will rely as well, to a certain extent, on Western philosophy itself. It is here that lies one of the beauties of Mika's work: if we are to change our perspective, thinking, ontological, epistemological, intellectual, ethical, claims by inhabiting and adopting the indigenous conception of everything is in every-thing, it is impossible to deny that the metaphysics of presence is part of indigenous thinking, no matter how much the two differ. In my goal of seeing *difference* as something even more fundamental than Ferreira da Silva's "plenum", Mika is *extremely* helpful for it requires the end of separation, self-determination, and self-consciousness as it has been always articulated<sup>143</sup>.

If *difference* becomes the one and the all, the oneness and the singular, the Thing and the thing, a complete shift concerning how we relate to ourselves, to others, to nature, to the globe, to the universe happens. With Mika's articulation, I can flee from Hegel's Unchangeable Absolute and unchangeable subjecthood. Finally, there is no more Subject for I will not see myself as isolated, present, fixed, rational, separate, space-time *stuckness*. Rather, what happens to the self is its own end to give place to a 'non-self' that only sees, feels, exists in the "interconnectedness of concepts and things in the world (...); for indigenous peoples the complexity of the world lies in its thorough interconnectedness (...) the world is not just as

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<sup>142</sup> Mika, 2, emphasis original.

<sup>143</sup> An extremely beautiful passage might help illustrate this point: "An indigenous student, at junior or tertiary level, utters the word tree in a sentence, either in his or her own native language or in another. What are the possibilities for that word and the self as far as the indigenous student is concerned? From an indigenous metaphysics, the self is one with the tree through genealogical links. So is the utterance itself. A tree is tied to other things in the world also, and so is the utterance. Thus, the utterance always already contains to it something of all those other entities, even though they are not declared in the sentence. All those other things emerge from a ground that infuses throughout everything and so that ground, as I have suggested, is indeterminate. But that ground additionally persists throughout the utterance – as both a separate entity but simultaneously as the totality of all those entities" (Mika, 25).

interrelated, but animate (...) its entities are animate as well"<sup>144</sup>. Mika mentions, in addition to the interconnectedness, the idea of interdependence of everything and every-thing. I would like to add this question: what happens if I change the prefix *inter* for *intra*? Obviously, I am not trying to undermine or claim that interconnectedness is a *wrong* concept. My wondering stems from the desire to further indigenous thinking into my own (and, hopefully, the reader's) mind. It seems that a simple change in the prefix would create the possibility of inhabiting and experiencing existence as an endless and boundless intra-exchange of shared mutuality, making the final move to end the Subject who has always been written. This proposition is not about *becoming* something else but rather simply *being difference*. Entanglement still occurs in a dimension of measurement, of "I" and "you". With the prefix *intra*, *difference* has no possibility of restating certainty or self-determination. Since everything is always already present, shifting our ontoepistemological conditions of thinking and existing doesn't require finding something that is not here; rather, it asks us to give up *differentiation*, self-determination, and certainty; this shift would make possible another mode of *being (with)in difference*, in one single inseparable universe of intra-connections shared in 'no time'.

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<sup>144</sup> Mika, 4, 19.

## Conclusion - A final note on being, or *vivência*

*"a voyage to Utopia is a circular voyage, relentlessly leading back to the point of departure (...) I need, however, something to show me the way, to guide me through the implausibilities of the voyage. What I need is a map., but not just any map. What I need does not exist, because such a map would have to change fractally and follow the permutations of its user (...) everything is only a stage in the itinerary, regardless of the illusions of arrival"*<sup>145</sup>

*We begin now where we aren't yet* -- "Unreachable", John Frusciante

As time went by, from a number of different directions, I was faced with the question: "what is it that you want to do with your thesis?" Similar to many aspiring Brazilian academics, who tend to believe the world is one text away from being changed, I replied with variations of: "I want these ideas applied to politics and legislation"; "I want social justice!"; "I want people to reflect on why they feel separated from one another and consequently self-authorize acts of violence"; "I need to help Brazil"; and so on. Obviously, I wasn't under the impression this work would, *in fact*, change anything. It would, at best, change myself into a "better" being. Nevertheless, the common Brazilian belief mentioned above, that the world is one text away from being changed, will never die within any of the versions of 'my'-self. This text will *not* change the world but it can still help to make room for the text that *will*. This is not about saviourism or a sense of self-aggrandizing. When claiming this, I have in mind the professors at the Social Justice Institute, for example, who *are* changing the world by creating the space that works such as this can happen and become more common. I can only write what I write because someone(s) made *something else* possible before.

What I failed to realize when doing this incipient research was that, in my fever to de-articulate articulation, I repeated Hegelianism for I wrote that the 'truth' of reality is always

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<sup>145</sup> Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, "Mapping Utopias", 136, 137, 153.

already within the non-Subject. In my fever to de-articulate articulation, I got lost within the feverish dreams of finding *an* answer to *difference*. Feverish dreams provoked by the 2018 versions of Brazil, Canada, the US, and the globe. In my fever to de-articulate articulation, my rage and internal desperation to "get something done" sent me deep into the caves of Modern conditions of being. And there I was, drowning in the desire to make room for something new from within, striving for surety and safety. In my fever to de-articulate, I articulated. With this in mind, I'd like to quickly reflect on the shortcomings of my own writing but, at the same time, accept that these shortcomings are necessary because they have to be the first step toward the shift in experiencing *difference* as a mode of reality that is within my reach but that requires that I never stop trying to reach it.

### ***Vivência* as experience**

What is a point of departure? What can it look like? Where does one depart from? What is a map? How does one map? How is one mapped? What is this "intra" *reality* I've been trying to articulate? According to the previous pages, I claimed that I necessarily depart, map and am mapped, from the conditions that wrote *difference* and the Subject as woven together via the (self-)productive desire of ontological (self-)security and epistemic (self-)certainty<sup>146</sup>.

Nevertheless, I tried to argue that it is possible to depart from conditions which do not reproduce the ontoepistemological articulations of Modern thought. But if I necessarily depart from these conditions, it is *very unlikely* not to repeat them *at first*. The mode of existing and experiencing *difference* that I proposed *cannot* be reduced to an intellectual claim, epistemological articulation, or ontological final destination. This was precisely what I failed to see. If it

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<sup>146</sup> The ideas concerning ontological security and epistemic certainty can be find at Vanessa Andreotti's "Multi-layered Selves: Colonialism, Decolonization and Counter-Intuitive Learning Spaces".

necessarily departs from the Modern project and mode of being, it can be the inaugural moment in the path of shifting *difference* into something other than articulation. How is it that one can shift *difference* in a way that does not repeat what Vanessa Andreotti has defined as our desire to "to want change to happen on terms that do not jeopardize our perceived entitlements, securities and self-images"?<sup>147</sup> (Un)fortunately, there is no answer. There is only *vivência*.

*Vivência* means an entanglement of existing, being, and living as practice and/or experience. With this, I merely intend to, in a way, let go of the intellectual, epistemological, and ontological pronouncements and absolutisms. Thinking about *difference* is a mandatory ethical-intellectual task but living *difference* is, at first, a bodily impossibility. It is impossible because *difference* is always trapped in the realm of articulation, of transcendental determinations of the mind. However, by attempting to *live difference*, the possibility of shifting *reality* into a sphere of *intra-reality* flourishes - a sphere that does not wish to be transcendental but affectable<sup>148</sup>. To *live difference*, I need to go through the stages of thinking about what *difference* has meant so that I can experience what it *can* mean. This first step cannot not happen. It's not a simple matter of articulating a new theory. It's about learning to exist in the realm of imagination, of the *something else* that is not this, the realm that has been foreclosed by Modern thought. As Andreotti has written about decolonization, *vivência* is not "a point in time (...) rather [it is] a

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<sup>147</sup> Andreotti, "Multi-Layered Selves": "The claim of awareness of oppression becomes a claim to innocence that re-centers the needs, entitlements and investments of those who are claiming it. We may even say we want to learn from discomfort, but when it actually happens, when we lose epistemic privilege, we feel wronged and fight to re-gain that privilege again (...) Facing the magnitude of the task of enabling a world without colonial relations requires more than a change of narratives, convictions or identities. It requires an interruption of harmful desires hidden behind promises of entitlements and securities that people hold on to, particularly when they are afraid of each other and of scarcity. It requires listening without projecting our ideas of ends and means".

<sup>148</sup> For a project that abandons transcendentalism and embraces affectability, refer to Ferreira da Silva's "Bahia Pelo Negro", 323: "the lyrics deploy these social scientific signifiers of human differentiation [race, class, and culture] to produce the economically dispossessed black Brazilian as a self-consciousness emerging in the place of affectability (...) in short, this black subject is neither an *actualization* nor an *expression* of an African 'essence', but a modern political figure, an *existing* thing, which can only be re/assembled with the tools of knowledge that carved its place of emergence".

lifelong and life-wide process"<sup>149</sup>. What *vivência* promises is the possibility of the nothing-everything that exists beyond the wall<sup>150</sup>. *Vivência* is the permanent state of actively listening to and reading instead of speaking and writing. It's never finished; it's always to come; it's a repetition of *being difference*; thus, it is *always already here*. One can only construct from what has been (t)here<sup>151</sup>. If the Modern project of knowledge and the claim of the right to certainty-security is an illusion, disillusionment has to occur. The question will always be around learning how to proceed with the process of disillusionment without falling for the illusion again. This is what *difference* promises: the intra-reality of being/experiencing/practicing, wherein the "I" recognizes that there is 'me in you' (...) [and that] there is 'neither me nor you'<sup>152</sup>, wherein existence, or *vivência*, is a intra-realm of learning and experiencing *difference* as one inseparable intra-dimension of shared mutuality. No (self-)definition, no clear path, no certainty. Only the travel towards permanent disillusionment.

That's how I leave this thesis: by remembering that one always necessarily returns to the first step, the Modern onto-epistemological conditions, in order to not forget the fundamental need of abandoning the desire for epistemic certainty and ontological security.

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<sup>149</sup> Andreotti, "Multi-layered Selves".

<sup>150</sup> "The Crack in the Wall. First Note on Zapatista Method"

<sup>151</sup> As Dionne Brand has stated in *A Map to the Door of no Return*, 82: "only the brazen can say, 'I was not here, I did not do this and feel that'. (...) It never occurs to them that they live on the cumulative hurt of others (...) one is born into history, one isn't born into a void".

<sup>152</sup> Andreotti, "Multi-layered Selves".



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