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Perception / *Poiesis*:
Neosophist Pedagogy for a Neoliberal Age of Technoscience Empire

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Rubén Mendoza

June 2017

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Vorris Nunley, Chairperson

Dr. Alessandro Fornazzari

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The Dissertation of Rubén Mendoza is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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The constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity argues that the self and all of its productions and actions are relational, social endeavors that emerge as generated effects only through collaborative work. This dissertation has been possible only with the generous help, support, and love, of numerous individuals and communities throughout a long, difficult process of learning and becoming.

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I wish to express deep appreciation to my committee chair, Dr. Vorris Nunley, for taking seriously from even before the very beginning my rhetorical, pedagogical, and metaphysical lines of inquiry into art, aesthetics, affect, and the body. His skill as both a rhetorician and a rhetor facilitated my acquisition of the language and rhetorical *technê* necessary to push beyond (institutional) meaning, as I attempted to oscillate delicately and precariously between orthodox academic discourse and heretical productions of presence.

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I thank my family for their love and support throughout my entire educational process, in both institutional structures and other forums of pedagogy. This dissertation culminates a period of precisely forty years of institutional education conditioning since I rode the bus by myself in September 1977 to attend my first day of school in a public kindergarten classroom at Bachrodt Elementary School on Sonora Avenue in pre-Silicon Valley San José, California. But my education begins even before that, in the early 1970s

at the dawn of the neoliberal age, with my mother Bonnie Wray's trips to the public library as a teen with her three young children, and with her embodied aesthetic-rhetorical practice of reading with us on the living room couch to try to open as best she could other alternative futures and possibilities in the face of the daunting sociopolitical, sociocultural, and socioeconomic limitations and challenges confronting us.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Perception / *Poïesis*:
Neosophist Pedagogy for a Neoliberal Age of Technoscience Empire

by

Rubén Mendoza

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, June 2017
Dr. Vorris Nunley, Chairperson

This dissertation focuses on development of sophistic rhetoric methodology and application of this methodology toward cultivation of arts-based, bodily focused critical pedagogy that can intervene in neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. The teaching outlined in this dissertation facilitates development of critical-imaginative modes through the figure of the artist-educator. It potentially can disrupt static experiences of self by facilitating student engagement with processural modes of becoming. At the same time, it can open alternatives to neoliberalism's speculative instrumentalization of future with a creative, non-market based future orientation of critical imagination and practice. In response to neoliberal pedagogy and rhetoric, I forward a neosophist pedagogy that applies the rhetoric and pedagogy of the ancient Sophists to developing critical pedagogy. A core concept of this pedagogy is the *pharmakon* as critical heuristic toward a *techné* art-of-living set of practical skills centered on bodily oriented, aesthetics-based *phronesis*, *kairos*, and *mētis* intelligences. Working from a sophistic methodology that

conceptualizes cognition and meaning as bodily based and collaborative, this dissertation asks: How can we use habituated and conditioned perceptual, linguistic, and bodily orientations against themselves, in order to disorient and then re-orient sensorium, perceptual, and attention apparatuses, to prime the body for different modes of perception and thus different ways of thinking and being/becoming? In addressing this question, I draw on theorists in rhetoric studies, including Susan Jarratt, Richard Enos, and Sharon Crowley; theorists of affect, perception, and mind-body cognition, including Alva Nöe, Bernard Stiegler, Brian Massumi, and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht; and, critical pedagogues including L.S. Vygotsky, Paolo Freire, and Augusto Boal. This dynamic lens of rhetoric methodology is applied to outlining pedagogy that can effectively respond to neoliberalism understood as a multimodal, transdisciplinary project of rhetoric and public pedagogy. I draw from a diverse field of aesthetic and theoretical approaches. The diversity and scope of this lens is reflected in the areas of aesthetics examined in my case studies, which demonstrate how these areas are especially relevant to countering neoliberalism. These areas include: The contemporary Chican@ art of Harry Gamboa, Jr.; Post-1968 Latin American Narratives of Neoliberalism; and Post-World War II Science Fiction.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

At a recent academic conference, I observed a panel of community college instructors discuss a student-initiated Freirian program with which they assisted. The program integrated academic curricula with community social justice work and functioned as a support bridge to meet the academic needs of a diverse group of mostly underrepresented students (many undocumented). On the surface, the program demonstrated a critical pedagogy committed to social justice. But as the presenters provided details, I noticed problems with how issues like migrant labor were framed by a corporate-mediated, multiculturalist ethos of cultural tourism and consumerism. For example, students took a bus trip to nearby fields to “experience” migrant farmworker life on a tour that included a meal prepared by a farmworker family and served to students in the family’s home—for a \$40 fee from each student. Discussing the variety of languages spoken by students at the college, presenters displayed a “menu” students had put together for a project that listed student languages and cultures under headings like “Appetizer,” “Main Course” and “Dessert.” Along with this highly problematic multicultural consumerist approach to language and culture, the program’s activities also included an event where students used water guns to “race” rubber ducks across a tub of water, each duck representing, respectively, an immigration officer, a human trafficker “coyote,” and an immigrant attempting to cross the border, with prizes awarded to the “winner” of the race.

But aside from more obvious issues like these was something more subtle: Descriptions of the program's collaborative mentoring, playing, and creative group work drew comparisons less with Vygotskian or Freiran/Boalian classrooms than with playful work-“communities” at high-tech companies like Google. These corporate environments blur lines between work and social spheres with playrooms and recreational activities intended to foster affective fields conducive to the immaterial labor of creative collaboration.¹ The comparison is not random: This college is located in the high-tech heart of California's Silicon Valley.² Ultimately, my impression was that along with a problematic training in “progressive” consumerism and cultural tourism, these students were acculturating to the work environments of the surrounding immaterial labor economy. Clearly they were learning to perform a more socially conscious, engaged citizenship, but these identity performances were embedded in and subordinated to the inculcating of subjectivities they would embody as worker-consumers in this techno-consumerist service economy.

Critical denigration or dismissal of these instructors is not my intent, as they were clearly well-intentioned. Keeping in mind the political, economic, and pedagogical constraints within which critical teachers must operate in institutional frameworks is important. As a community college professor myself, I am well aware of and very familiar with the growing influence and impact of neoliberalist policies and practices aimed at privatization and instrumentalization of education under the guise of efficiency, effectiveness, and a data driven emphasis on numerically quantifiable goals rather than on process and quality of learning experience. Further, their curricula productively

engaged a wide array of social justice issues and conversations atypical of contemporary U.S. classrooms, while their mentorship fostered academic achievement with a lauded program. I also acknowledge the necessity of acquiring certain levels of cultural and human capital for survival value, even as I critique the ostensibly uncritically assessed model of human capital³ at work and the market valuations underlying it.

However, what I do draw attention to as the focus of my analysis is how this program points to key areas that contemporary critical pedagogy needs to address more effectively. These areas include the subjectivities produced by neoliberalism, the neoliberal governing rationalities at work in and through this production, the rhetorical and pedagogical mechanisms through which this production is accomplished, and how affect shapes and is shaped through these rationalities. I contend that without adequate attention to rhetoric and neoliberalism, programs and approaches like this one, despite the best intentions,⁴ risk leaving unchallenged the production of neoliberal subjectivity at work in institutional education structures and other spheres of pedagogy. In fact, as these examples demonstrate, they run the risk of actually contributing toward this production, often with new iterations of neoliberal subjectivity, perhaps inflected with progressive social justice concerns and commitment to community issues, yet still shaped and governed by market logics masked with a “progressive” exterior. Even as they provide knowledge-content about social justice issues, lack of attention to the rhetorical and pedagogical mechanisms of neoliberal rationalities can help maintain and reproduce ways of being and perceiving that market rationalities aim to produce in neoliberal subjectivities and their social relations. The result is often a two-fold process that

includes, on one hand, co-optation of alternative forms by those very efforts to articulate and manifest them, and on the other, continued reproduction of neoliberal governance and subjectivity production through that co-optation.

As the aforementioned critique implies, this dissertation argues for the rethinking and repurposing of rhetoric, pedagogy, and teaching, around the specific issue of neoliberal governance and subjectivity. Informed by critical pedagogical methodologies and practices, and by the affect-oriented embodiment focus of recent trends in visceral theory, this dissertation explores how a rhetoric methodology might be used to develop teaching approaches capable of countering the effects of neoliberal governance on education in classrooms in general, and more specifically, in composition and Chican@ Studies/Ethnic Studies classrooms. Of course there are myriad effective methods and practices to enhance instructor approaches and student knowledge production and learning, depending on the implicit contexts and politics of institutions. Nevertheless, the integration of a critical rhetoric methodology focused specifically on neoliberalism into the development of critical pedagogy is sorely needed. My contention primarily is supported by an understanding of neoliberalism not merely as an economic logic, but as a sophisticated multimodal, transdisciplinary political project of rhetoric and public pedagogy manufacturing the very subjectivities and social relations it claims merely to make legible. Such an understanding recognizes and seeks to address the reality that pedagogy and learning no longer are primarily located in educational institutions, but are dispersed over a wide yet intertwined array of public and popular institutions and fields that work to (re)produce neoliberal subjectivities and governance. In response to this

reality, the central focus of this dissertation is the development of rhetoric methodology that can be applied toward critical pedagogical approaches that aim at countering neoliberal subjectivity formation. In the case of my own teaching approach, this means the application of rhetoric toward production of an arts-based, embodied critical pedagogy. This is an embodied pedagogy that focuses on the somatic in the sense that it takes the body and its interactions with other bodies through affect, emotions, intensities, and other encounters, seriously as key sites of persuasion, learning, and subjectivity (trans)formation. Arts-based pedagogy implicitly takes all of the aforementioned into account. From a basis in rhetorical methodology and aesthetics, this pedagogy asks what kinds of critical teaching practices can effectively intervene in the biopolitical structures and the neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities of the contemporary neoliberal order. A rhetorical methodology avoids scriptural adherence to a particular discipline or field, and an anticipated deployment of the usual suspects of scholars. Rhetorical methodology is open to interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinarity, as it is invested more in producing particular affects and effects around instructors and students than it is in disciplinary legitimization.

Rhetoric methodology deploys the usual and unusual, the academic and non-academic. It draws on teachers and activists, academics and artists, to offer alternatives to neoliberal-driven pedagogies. Most importantly, it has the potential to offer students different ways of being and becoming than those scripted by the conditioning of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities, as well as those offered by other critical pedagogical practices that do not incorporate attention to rhetoric and neoliberalism. This

dissertation therefore both argues for and focuses on providing a rhetorical basis for a pedagogico-aesthetic teaching approach. It begins from a diverse, multimodal interdisciplinary archive as the source of self-reflexive, critical, and critical-imaginative modes of teaching and learning practiced by the figure of the artist-educator. As forms of technology, these critical and critical-imaginative teaching approaches can potentially disrupt static, normalized notions of which pedagogical theories and practices are authorized (including those that self-identify as critical). Further, they can work toward possibly shifting and expanding student experiences of self by facilitating student engagement with processural modes of being in which self is understood and experienced more accurately as *becoming*. The dissertation returns to more complex development of this point throughout, but to simplify: Being and becoming here represent different understandings of and relations to self. *Being* describes a static orientation toward subjectivity that is conditioned to militate against transformational potential. *Becoming* reflects active, agentive engagement with the potentialities and possibilities inherent in the flux and growth of a subjectivity always in process of change, and always engaged in critical self-reflexive examination of the normalized habituations and conditionings of subjectivity. As with all institutions, neoliberalism's pedagogical mechanisms inherently are invested—as institutional—in working to lock subjectivity into a static, habituated *being*. Under neoliberal governing rationalities, this kind of paralysis is achieved by engaging the self in the repetitive performance of a static orientation toward subjectivity structured specifically around a market-logic instrumentalization of processes of *becoming* toward commodification.

A key premise of the kind of pedagogy proposed in this dissertation is that neoliberalism captures, conditions, and orients attention, affect, and perceptual apparatuses, according to this same market logic of commodification. This capturing and orientation of attention and perception is effected, for example, through well-intentioned projects involving cultural/linguistic “appetizers,” “main courses,” and “desserts;” technocultural mediation; and, somatic experience. In response, the strategies of the critical teaching technology I am developing primarily seek to reorient conditioned affective inclinations and perceptual abilities on intertwined sensorial and cognitive registers. This reorientation occurs through a bodily based, allegory-mode language-art *poïesis* developed through a methodology of aesthetic rhetoric. Operating through the production of aesthetic affects and effects, such aesthetic rhetoric potentially is capable of persuading, teaching, and catalyzing transformation through both reason and somatic experience. Aesthetic rhetoric’s focus on affect and embodied experience operates primarily outside of the fields of intelligibility and legibility framed by classical notions of reason, which is rarely ideologically neutral and, as such, functions on cognitive registers as a primary mechanism of general institutional instrumentalization and ideological conditioning apparatuses. Furthermore, with specific regard to neoliberalism, I argue that aesthetic rhetoric can address and counter the targeting of affect and embodied experience by the apparatus of neoliberal governance. This somatic targeting paradoxically parallels neoliberalism’s ideological dominance through the “reason”-based framing of legibility with bodily focused conditioning through technomediation and “gut-based” appeals to pathos. For example, in some recent instances in American

politics, in fact, such appeals have completely dispensed with any claim to reason, logic, or even just a basic anchoring in reality, with “irrational” appeals to “alternative facts” that run directly counter to clearly visible empirical evidence. At the same time, the pedagogico-aesthetic approach proposed in this dissertation can open alternative possibilities to neoliberalism’s speculative instrumentalization of futurity—its nihilistic narrowing of possibilities toward market imperatives—with a creative, non-market based future orientation of critical imagination, imaginative curiosity, and critical-imaginative practice.

Contemporary neoliberal conditioning is a rhetorical technology and pedagogical practice above all else. As such, critical response to it fundamentally requires development of rhetoric methodology, specifically around critical pedagogy. This is the core argument of my dissertation, and this is the primary purpose of my dissertation:

To develop and apply a rhetoric methodology that is effective both in deconstructing neoliberal subjectivities and rationalities, and in constructing a critical pedagogy capable of effectively countering them.

Toward this end, my dissertation therefore is less concerned with fully developing my own (or any) particular teaching approach, than it is with developing a rhetoric methodology capable of generating such a critical teaching approach in a variety of disciplines, student populations, and general contingent circumstances. Thus, while I indirectly outline the specific form of pedagogico-aesthetic critical teaching noted above, my central focus here is on: 1. Development of the rhetoric methodology itself, and; 2. Application of this methodology in a rhetorical analysis of pedagogical, compositional, and aesthetic practices. This application excavates useful critical teaching approaches

from various art works and practices that employ forms of aesthetic rhetoric as technologies of critical teaching.

This critical teaching research and practice initially evolved from my graduate work in Chican@ Studies analyzing the interwoven pedagogy and art practices of L.A. Chicano artist, Harry Gamboa, Jr. However, my approach ventures beyond the merely theoretical to experimental practice: Prior to my doctoral studies, I worked with Gamboa as a mentee for over a decade in performance and media productions. During this time, I was able to closely observe, participate in, and benefit from his embodied aesthetic-rhetorical practices. As an instructor of English and Chican@ Studies, I subsequently have worked to develop my own pedagogy from this transformative experience with Gamboa and from my scholarly research around it. This praxis is also heavily shaped and informed by a rhetoric studies methodology developed with Dr. Vorris Nunley around analysis of Gamboa's work and theorization of my own pedagogy. This methodology of rhetoric, aesthetics, and critical pedagogy, produces the kind of protean interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary lens necessary for generating critical pedagogy that can respond effectively to the complexities of neoliberal rhetoric and pedagogy. As a praxis-oriented combining of education with decolonial practice and critical theory, my interdisciplinary approach to critical pedagogy is shaped around the work of critical pedagogues such as Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, L.S. Vygotsky, John Dewey, Ira Shor, and Henry Giroux. Like Gamboa, these pedagogues have developed a significant body of work to counter and demystify the "banking model" conditioning of masculinist, authoritarian, and capitalistic institutional education models. Most importantly for my project are those

points at which these approaches operate as well on the ontological level of being/becoming and the experience of being/becoming on mundane, everyday, affective registers of meaningful survival and existence. To various degrees, the critical pedagogy in which this project is invested specifically aims at inculcating singularities (identities and ways of being/becoming not based solely on difference and resistance), as well as alternative identities and subjectivities. These are subjectivities oriented toward ways of being/becoming and doing based in creative egalitarianism and a socio-ethical commitment to self and communal economies of care and contribution. I squarely base my own work on these approaches to critical teaching, with particular focus on those practices and strategies aimed at the ontological. For me, Gamboa's work exemplifies this focus. In the context of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism and its roots in the Euro-American imperialism and colonization that have impacted Chican@ history, Gamboa's pedagogy and art are intertwined in a Boalian decolonial model of aesthetic rhetoric. I analyze and draw from Gamboa's approach as an aesthetic-rhetorical practice that fosters subjectivities oriented toward creativity and critical-imaginative modes through mentorship and multimodal, new media. In fact, this arts-based teaching work anchors my figure of the artist-educator as well as my argument for the effectiveness of specifically *arts-based* pedagogico-aesthetic practices in critical teaching.

My own work as an artist-educator and activist builds and expands upon these approaches. My dissertation deploys a methodology anchored in rhetoric studies in order to address the aforementioned key areas requiring more effective attention in the development of contemporary rhetoric and persuasion and future critical pedagogy. A

discussion and examination of critical pedagogy and neoliberalism is more than an academic exercise. Neoliberalism is arguably the world's most pervasive paradigm. More than an economic project, more than a manifestation of Late Capitalism, neoliberalism redefines the very terrain of reason, of the human. As it constructs and implements the very subjectivities and modes of being it claims to only describe, neoliberalism's primary method—one broad in its application and effects—is pedagogical. This dissertation approaches neoliberalism as a ubiquitous political governing rationality that seeks to order all aspects of life—social, cultural, religious, political, as well as economic—according to market logics and a belief in the sovereign neutrality of “free markets” in which ontology itself is market based. Neoliberalism evokes a slow but seemingly inexorable shift from Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum* (I Think, Therefore, I Am) to *Ergo material non consumam* (I Consume, Therefore, I Matter). My understanding and use of the notion of neoliberal governing rationalities is heavily informed by rhetorician Norris Nunley, theorist Wendy Brown, and critical pedagogue Henry Giroux. Brown applies the concept from Foucault's notion of a political rationality as “a specific form of normative political reason organizing the political sphere, governance practices, and citizenship...[that] governs the sayable, the intelligible, and the truth criteria of these domains” (693). Giroux defines rationality as, “a specific set of assumptions and social practices that mediate how an individual or group relates to the wider society,” and that is shaped by “a set of interests that define and qualify how one reflects on the world” (Giroux qtd. in Nunley 10). In conversation with Giroux, but operating from an explicitly rhetoric studies analysis, Nunley places emphasis on the ontological and affective, while

Giroux places emphasis on the epistemological-ideological of the pedagogical and its ideological-social effects. In *Keepin' It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric*, Nunley writes: “[R]ationalities are the very terrain—not the background or horizon—upon and through which subjectivity, meaning, experience, and being both construct and are constructed” (10).

Nunley’s ontology-oriented rhetoric studies analysis focuses more precise attention on the relationship between neoliberal rationality and neoliberal subjectivity, and on the key role of rhetoric in shaping this relationship. His focus undergirds the argument for critical rhetoric studies in understanding and countering neoliberal governance and pedagogy at the ontological, pedagogical level of subjectivity production. In line with Nunley’s argument, and in response to neoliberal pedagogy and rhetoric, I posit what I am identifying as a *neosophist pedagogy*. This is a pedagogical approach that applies ancient Sophist aesthetic rhetoric and pedagogy to development of an arts-based contemporary critical pedagogy. As I develop in more detail in Chapter Three, ancient sophistic modes of pedagogy and aesthetic rhetoric subverted the performance of reason as the sole conduit to real knowledge. They were bodily centered, self-reflexively critical, and future-oriented, around a praxis of critical-creative *poiësis*. I argue the rhetorical and pedagogical praxis of the ancient Sophists as a key site for both understanding, and developing, rhetoric methodology aimed at construction of an arts-based critical pedagogical response to contemporary instrumentalist pedagogy. This contemporary instrumentalist pedagogy is one that views pedagogy as apolitical, as a mere skill, rather than as the intellectually informed, politicized practice allowing for the smuggling in of

neoliberal rationalities (and the subjectivities they manufacture) that it actually is. This approach draws from and expands on neosophists who have theorized and re-examined the Sophists against the grain of masculinist, Platonic dismissal and denigration of the Sophists. It does so in the context of contemporary pedagogy and rhetoric studies during the “neosophist” recovery of the last three decades.⁵ The contribution I make to this conversation is at least twofold. First, my dissertation illuminates and enhances the usefulness and relevance of the Sophist (and neosophist) project in developing rhetoric methodology that can serve effectively as the basis for a contemporary critical pedagogy capable of countering neoliberalism.⁶ Second, it theorizes and offers a unique aesthetics-based pedagogy that acknowledges the connections between affect, the somatic, and persuasion and learning.

A core concept of this pedagogy is the *pharmakon*. This is the Platonic notion of a mediating force that is both remedy and poison, both disease and curative. In terms of the pedagogy I suggest above, I see the *pharmakon* as a critical heuristic toward a *technê* art-of-living set of practical skills and crafts centered on bodily oriented, aesthetics-based *phronesis*, *kairos*, and *mētis* intelligences. *Phronesis* is a skillful “prudence” intelligence of deliberative practical wisdom and knowledge that guides appropriate ethical decisions and behaviors in contingent situations. *Phronesis* requires the wrenching of pedagogical theory from ethereal abstraction to corporeal practice. *Kairos* is the skillful, improvisatory intelligence of the opportune moment—of understanding the most effective verbal and behavioral response to given circumstances that are always in flux. *Mētis* is a wily, cunning trickster intelligence of quick tactical improvisation closely

intertwined with kairos that seeks to make the most of every moment and that stands in contrast to dominant strategies as a tactical resistance.⁷ Working from a relativist and Nietzschean sophistic rhetoric methodology that conceptualizes cognition, meaning, and experience as always fundamentally bodily based, collaborative, and aesthetic, I draw on the skillful dissensual antilogic method of the Sophists. Such an approach does not deny logic's uses; rather, it sculpts room for informed improvisation and experimentation to further serve student learning, in order too rethink the very ground of the rhetoric of logic and reason in the context of the everyday. As a form of *pharmakon* itself, the antilogic method reflected and articulated Sophists' conception of reality as composed of contradictory elements and possibilities in constant flux navigated and negotiated through contradictory subjective perceptual experiences. My dissertation therefore develops and applies rhetoric methodology toward production of a critical teaching technology of bodily based language-art techniques from this antilogic core of the *pharmakon*. It asks:

How might rhetoric methodology function in development of critical pedagogy that can use habituated and conditioned perceptual, linguistic, and bodily orientations against themselves, pharmacologically, as the basis of disruptive somatic and aesthetic teaching techniques that can disorient and then re-orient sensorium, perceptual, and attention apparatuses, to prime the body for different modes of skillful perception and thus different ways of thinking and being/becoming?

This question at the core of my dissertation finds an initial basis in my transformative experience working with Gamboa, as I detail in Chapter Four, in which I examine my work with him and his use of a *pharmakon* approach in transformative performance and media production work. Beyond this experience, this question finds a theoretical basis in Richard Shusterman's notion of somaesthetics as a somatic and

aesthetic training toward skillful, artful living. It also grows out of the related technoculture work of Bernard Stiegler. Stiegler not only focuses attention on the need for transformative recovery of lost knowledge bases necessary for artful living, but also on the market-oriented techno-psychological apparatuses responsible for this loss. As Stiegler details in his study of twentieth and twenty-first century technomedia, this loss has occurred through disruption of attention formation processes and intergenerational circuits of exchange. Shusterman draws on the pragmatist ethos of John Dewey, William James, and American Transcendentalist thinkers. His experientialist somaesthetics resonates with the Sophists' integration of physical, aesthetic, and intellectual training, in its emphasis on a four-part program of disciplined somatic training and study in sensorimotor-cognitive skills. This disciplined somatic training is part of a general embodied philosophical practice of artful living in which the body and its habituations and conditionings are identified as the key site for transformation through systematic focus on those habituations. With more of an emphasis on technics and technoculture, Stiegler draws on theorists like Winnicott and perception-focused phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty, to articulate his notion of *pharmaka* as mediational "transitional" spaces and objects that can work toward healthy or unhealthy transindividuation. Stiegler analyzes tele-visual and other media techno-apparatuses as having taken the place of traditional *pharmaka* that once served to make possible healthy processes of transindividuation. Instead, through these contemporary techno-apparatuses, the role of *pharmaka* has been exploited for capturing and channeling perception, attention, and libidinal energies, toward consumerist functions. According to Stiegler, this

consumeristic exploitation has worked to disrupt and disable healthy transindividuation by effecting destruction of the collective, of “long-circuit” intergenerational support networks and attention-formation processes, of culture, and of *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre* knowledges. However, for Stiegler, these exploited transitional spaces and objects function as *pharmaka* because at the same time they are a site of the consumer industrial system’s channeling and exploiting of energy toward addictive consumer-oriented drives, they are also the potential site of countering this toxicity—they are both illness and cure. Stiegler therefore argues attention to contemporary *pharmaka* as necessary for recovering *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre* in an aesthetics-based “pharmacology of spirit” practice that seeks to use those same technocultural *pharmaka* against themselves through critical pedagogical practice. Stiegler’s analysis is not explicitly rhetoric-based, but his notion of the *pharmaka* as a (linguistic) mediating device, and his examination of the effects it generates in terms of subjectivity formation, highlight the underlying rhetorical (and pedagogical) nature of his arguments. Furthermore, as with Shusterman, Stiegler’s sophistic mentorship teaching model involves a pedagogy focused on aesthetics and the somatic as key sites for transforming habituation and conditioning. This further underscores Stiegler’s (rhetorical) attention to the generation of (pedagogical) effects in the world.

For both theorists, and for my own dissertation, attention to aesthetics and the somatic reflects an underlying premise of affect, embodied subjectivity, and learning through persuasion. Most importantly, it therefore reflects an underlying premise of embodied *rhetoric*. This underlying premise reflects similar work by theorists like

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in texts such as *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, which also heavily informs my argument and approach. Drawing on thinkers like Lakoff and Johnson, I examine how the body and its affective fields are primary sites of subjectivity formation. Because of this relationship between subjectivity and the body, it is primarily through bodily enactments, habituation, and repetition—not the simple utterance of ideological and epistemological tropes—that governing rationalities take hold of subjectivities, shape them, and reproduce themselves through those subjectivities. Neoliberal subjectivities are first and foremost biopolitically charged, *embodied* subjectivities rhetorically and pedagogically produced by neoliberal governing rationalities that specifically target the body and affect through rhetorical attention to bodily experience (e.g., manipulating affect through desire, fear, anxiety, and uncertainty). It is through those embodied subjectivities that neoliberal rationalities are then sustained and reproduced, as subjects habitually affect and are affected by unconscious and conscious bodily rhetoric, generating and re-generating affect-emotion-reaction-response intensities. How might rhetoric studies then serve as the ideal discipline through which to develop the kind of somatically focused and aesthetics-oriented critical pedagogy outlined by theorists like Shusterman and Stiegler? How does the underlying rhetorical focus of their arguments implicitly demonstrate rhetoric methodology already at work in other attempts to develop critical pedagogy? And, how does it call for more explicit development of such a methodology in the formation of similar bodily and aesthetics-based critical pedagogy, particularly in the context of neoliberal governance?

Drawing from a wide-ranging archive is necessary for addressing such complex questions. These questions require examination of a diverse, rich field of aesthetic and theoretical approaches and practices in the fields of rhetoric, critical pedagogy, performance studies, media studies, Chican@ Studies, and beyond. Developing a rhetoric methodology activates and legitimates such a gesture. It opens possibilities for application of a rhetorical methodology to many disciplines and teaching situations. This interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary imperative is a key part of what makes the wide-ranging and flexible field of rhetoric studies the ideal lens from which to approach the questions and problems posed here. Because the pedagogy I aim toward is arts-based and aesthetically oriented, I have focused rhetorical attention on areas of aesthetic production that are of particular relevance to understanding neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities in a variety of sociohistorical and geopolitical contexts. At the same time, these particular aesthetic practices I have focused on represent rich sources of aesthetics-based critical pedagogical strategies. Applying rhetoric's interdisciplinary potential to rhetorical analysis of these aesthetic practices is what makes possible the excavation of their pedagogical value. In addition to the arts-based teaching of Harry Gamboa, Jr., I develop my rhetoric methodology through application of it to areas of aesthetic production that similarly tie art practices and strategies to the rhetoric-oriented pedagogical aims of generating critically transformative effects in a neoliberal context. The scope of this lens is reflected in two other specific areas of study that I incorporate into my dissertation as a way of grounding this rhetoric methodology and pedagogical development in the aesthetic production of particularly sociohistorically relevant areas of literature and film

that dovetail with Gamboa's performance and media work: Post-1968 Latin American Narratives of Neoliberalism (with emphasis on dictatorship and postdictatorship Southern Cone texts), and Post-World War II Science Fiction (with emphasis on North American texts). Both areas are especially relevant and vital to the contemporary context of neoliberalism. From different trajectories that triangulate, these areas help to periodize neoliberalism's intensified development and technocratic globalization throughout the Americas and beyond since the 1970s. At the same time, they help me focus a critical aesthetic lens on neoliberalism's shaping of reality through rhetorically and aesthetically savvy manipulation of technocultural apparatuses and through a kind of fictionalizing process involving utopian discourse and speculative "casino capitalism" finance. My dissertation puts these areas in conversation with Gamboa's Chican@ arts-based teaching in a kind of allegory-mode juxtaposition that indirectly outlines a critical pedagogy through a refractory mode of sophistic parataxis. By tracing and retracing points of intersection and resonance throughout these areas of aesthetic practice, I use a rhetoric methodology to weave together interdisciplinary responses to the following guiding questions:

-How might a sophistic rhetoric methodology contribute in making productive interdisciplinary connections that can provide a complex foundation for critically understanding and responding to neoliberalism?

-How might the recent and contemporary performance and media work by Harry Gamboa, Jr., be seen through a rhetoric lens as a rich source of sophistic critical teaching strategies in the context of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism?

-How does recent and contemporary Southern Cone writing and filmmaking provide a rich source of innovative aesthetic strategies for

both understanding neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities and developing critical pedagogical approaches to neoliberalism, understood in terms of its particular national iterations and as an intertwined hemispheric American phenomena?

-Similarly, how do recent and contemporary science fiction narratives provide rich sources of innovative aesthetic strategies for understanding more specifically the biopolitical mechanisms and technocultural practices of neoliberal governance and subjectivities and for developing critical pedagogical approaches to neoliberalism—again, understood in terms of its particular national iterations and as an intertwined hemispheric American phenomena?

Methodology and Overview

My research in Sophist pedagogy and rhetoric focuses on their critically self-reflexive modes of dissensual dialogue language-art and their bodily centered focus on sensorial perception, aesthetics, and poetics. From this sophistic anchor, I also take into account recent and contemporary phenomenology and pragmatist philosophy that intersects with the Sophists. In addition to the aforementioned work of Stiegler and Shusterman, theorists such as Alva Nöe, Lakoff and Johnson, and Brian Massumi, guide my rhetorical approach in their attention to the body as *thinking*-body, or soma—the “living body” that Shusterman calls “a sensing, sentient soma rather than a mere mechanical corpse” (“Thinking” 3). Like the Sophists, these theorists direct their phenomenological and philosophical lenses toward the connections between sensorial perception, aesthetics, and notions of embodied knowledge, cognition, meaning, and self. For example, in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson echo the Sophists in their in-depth argument for the body and its experience as the source and basis of cognition, of linguistic structures, and of meaning itself. In particular, I draw on their sophistic

linguistic connections between these notions of embodied philosophy and bodily based metaphor in *Metaphors We Live By* in developing my argument for bodily centered allegory modes of language-art *poiesis*.

Nöe and Massumi help to develop a more focused and precise analysis of perceptual processes. Specifically, their visceral theory focus on perception, microperception, and affect, help to develop understandings of how perceptual processes and apparatuses are sites of both pedagogical exploitation by neoliberal rhetorical mechanisms, and at the same time, pharmacologically, potential sites of critical intervention and teaching. Visceral theory is significant to the trajectory of my argument as it plows through the important linguistic turn in the humanities and rhetorical theory to account for embodied experience. It takes account of how the world impacts bodies, how bodies impact other bodies and the world, and how subjects bodily create or occupy subjectivities and belonging in the world, or in a classroom. A pedagogy that ignores the aforementioned is severely hampered. As suggested above, when I argue for a bodily centered critical teaching practice from a rhetoric studies methodology, I begin from a consideration of how neoliberal subjectivities generate affects/effects and are simultaneously generated as *effects*. These are effects that rest upon the conditioning of a foundation of particular sets of sensorimotor and perceptual habits and skills in individuals. This consideration expands Stiegler's analysis in *For a New Political Economy and Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*. Here, Stiegler focuses some attention on the somatic and kinesthetic dimensions involved, particularly around the synaptogenetic neurological shaping of developing brain structures exposed to high levels

of technocultural mediation via television and other “technopsychic” apparatuses for attention capture and control. However, Stiegler’s work more generally is concerned with the psychological, sociological, and political dimensions involved in casino capitalism’s consumer-industrial capturing of attention and libidinal energies. Through their focuses on perception, Nöe and Massumi help me to develop this consideration with a more refined focus. Nöe’s notion of an “enactive” approach to perception posits perception as an active sensorimotor skill that we perform, rather than a passive intake of sensory data. Furthermore, his connection of perceptual concepts such as this to notions of presence and proto-cognition helps to refine my own development of critical teaching practices aimed at intervening in conditioned perceptual processes. Similarly, but from a slightly different angle centered on micropolitics, Massumi’s attention to perception and proto-cognition draws attention to the role of affect at the liminal point of emergence between the virtual and the actual.

Nöe and Massumi assist in bolstering my argument that an in-depth rhetorical understanding of perception and somatic experience must form the foundation of any critical teaching practice that aims to counter neoliberal pedagogical and rhetorical mechanisms with inculcation of alternative subjectivities. This argument is particularly bolstered by my drawing on Massumi’s affect theory-oriented analysis of micropower, the micro-political, and of possibilities for countering the conditioned militarization of contemporary subjectivity under consumerist and neoliberal regimes by what he terms “ontopower” control. Neoliberal subjectivities, in other words, require (the learning and habituation of) specific sensorimotor skills and practices; by the same token, alternative

subjectivities require (the learning and habituation of) alternative sensorimotor skills and practices, and at the same time, the *un*learning of those sensorimotor skills and practices habituated and inculcated under neoliberalism. All such learning/unlearning requires careful, in-depth study of affect, (micro)perception, and other bodily experience, as the somatic bases of knowledge, meaning, and subjectivity. Again, my argument is for a specifically rhetoric methodology as the most effective approach through which to develop such a careful, in-depth study. My dissertation will concentrate on developing and applying such a methodology toward critical-creative technologies of this kind of learning and unlearning.

* * *

Placed in conversation with the Sophists and with the neosophist project, the work of these theorists forms the basis of my rhetoric methodology and of my rhetorical approach to Harry Gamboa's work, to Southern Cone dictatorship and postdictatorship texts, and to science fiction works. In a pharmacological mirroring of neoliberalism's own complex interdisciplinarity and diversity of forms and voices, the rhetoric methodology I develop and employ allows me to weave vital connections across diverse disciplines, aesthetic approaches, and forms of cultural production, in a rhetoric-oriented case study analysis of various aesthetic practices and productions. In each area of case study analysis, the work I do in addressing my dissertation's underlying questions is framed by a sophistic, Nietzschean rhetorical focus and rhetoric hermeneutics that understands how the performance—written or spoken—of reason is rhetorical, and that understands rhetoric as aesthetic and that can account for aesthetics as rhetorical. A

sophistic, Nietzschean rhetoric frame can help to make visible the context of sociohistorical, political, and economic conditions of production and audience reception for a given work. Most importantly to my dissertation's concerns, it centers attention on the kinds of *effects* and *affects* generated by various aesthetic strategies and works in response to particular effects and affects generated by dominant systems of neoliberal governance. As a rhetorician, I put primary focus on the underlying verb rather than noun form of the term "work" itself in looking at the kind of (rhetorical) *work* that these aesthetic "works" *do* in the world.

The case studies in these areas demonstrate how they are privileged sites for critical pedagogues aiming to generate effects that can counter the rhetorically generated effects of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. This demonstration and rhetorical approach help me point toward how I have drawn on these areas of study and on the connections between them in developing my own critical pedagogical response to neoliberalism through a rhetoric hermeneutic. As noted, in an indirect mode, my analysis in these areas draws attention to aesthetic and rhetorical tactics and strategies that can be applied in critical teaching and in developing critical pedagogy, without actually, fully developing such a critical pedagogy directly. This is because while I indirectly formulate a specific pedagogical approach, my primary goal is not to present a framework for teaching practice meant to be replicated; rather, it is to demonstrate the rhetoric-based experiential and theoretical *processes* of my particular formulation at work as a potential for critical pedagogues in shaping their own teaching approaches—from their own archives, and for their own contingent teaching situations. In this sense, my dissertation's

development and formulation of critical pedagogy seeks to function on multiple levels (again, in an allegory-mode). On one level, this model provides specific archives for critical teaching that I have found particularly relevant as sources of both teaching content and teaching tactics and strategies in the context of neoliberalism. At the same time, a more general rhetoric methodology approach to developing critical pedagogy emerges. This methodology provides a model for pedagogues to adapt and further develop, while demonstrating the fundamental necessity for rhetoric studies in developing critical pedagogy. Thus, this demonstration of how aesthetics-oriented rhetoric methodology can be applied in developing critical pedagogy seeks less to prescribe specific texts or approaches than it does to provide a framework for how such a methodology and approach could be used by critical pedagogues in other areas of specialization in literature, film, performance, media, and aesthetic and cultural production, or even in other fields such as various areas of science, philosophy, communications, or mathematics.

Before delving into these case study analyses, my dissertation first lays out in more detail the problem of neoliberal rhetoric and pedagogy that it addresses. **Chapter Two** contextualizes this problem within an interdisciplinary conversation. This contextualization first situates and periodizes neoliberalism in the contemporary United States with specific emphasis on its relationship with institutional education. This contextualization is in conversation with a parallel periodization of neoliberal projects in significant experimental sites like Chile and Argentina in order to help lay groundwork for subsequent chapters, particularly my chapter on Southern Cone works. The parallel

developments of neoliberal thinking and practice in the United States and in these and other countries have been intertwined in symbiotic, bidirectional relationships of influence developed since the 1920s that bear significantly on institutional education, thus also on critical pedagogy. The chapter looks at these relationships, then develops a reading of the specific challenges facing critical pedagogy with regard to neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities in contemporary United States. Through Henry Giroux, Morris Nunez, and Wendy Brown, the chapter then examines neoliberalism as a pedagogical, public, and rhetorical project that, in keeping with its market rationality ethos, simultaneously manufactures and shapes the subjectivities it claims merely to analyze under rubrics of human capital theory and other market-based analytics. Guiding this examination are the questions: What exactly are the unique problems facing critical pedagogues in the context of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism? What kinds of neoliberal subjectivities do we face in the contemporary classroom as instructors, and how do these subjectivities call for specific, unique critical teaching responses? How do neoliberal governing rationalities shape educational institution structures, relationships with colleagues and mentors, and relationships with and between our students? Why and how is rhetoric vital to addressing these problems? In addressing these questions, I draw on Bernard Stiegler's and Mark Fisher's analyses of how neoliberal rationalities have negatively impacted both institutional educational structures and the sociocultural structures of intergenerational relationships between teachers/mentors/parents and students/youth.

From this general contextualization and periodization, **Chapter Three** then draws from and expands upon neosophists like Susan Jarratt, Sharon Crowley, John Poulakos, Richard Enos, and Victor Vitanza, who have theorized the Sophists in the context of contemporary pedagogy and rhetoric studies over the past three decades in the fields of rhetoric and composition studies. In this chapter, I examine the significance of Sophists and their thinking and pedagogy in relation to neoliberalism. My focus on rhetoricians like Jarratt and Crowley, who have made direct connections between contemporary critical pedagogy and the Sophists, allows for a teasing out of especially relevant elements of sophistic teaching and rhetoric as I build on their rhetoric methodologies to develop my own. I review the relativist linguistic theory of Sophist rhetoric and their theorization of education as a dispersed primary entraining in *nomos* (normative sociocultural convention, custom, tradition, and law—as opposed to *physis*, or the nature of “natural law,” unchanging and fundamental to existence). This strengthens and contributes to the neosophist argument for continuing relevance of sophistic teaching and rhetoric. Theorizing the Sophist analyses and critiques of normative dispersed education and their *own* methods of alternative dispersed education is a productive rhetorical lens for approaching neoliberalism’s manufacturing and shaping of subjectivities and how its entraining of normative rationality involves a public pedagogy dispersed across multiple spheres. I ask how the rhetorical techniques and theories employed and taught by the Sophists to develop a general critical, self-reflexive stance toward normalized structures of convention, socioethics, commonplaces (*topoi*), and beliefs (*doxa*), might represent effective strategies and practices with which to develop contemporary rhetoric

methodologies that can critically confront neoliberal dissemination and naturalization of a market rationality *nomos*. Sophist techniques and strategies reflect their critical and creative approach to language as *language-art* through a *poïesis* of bodily-centered aesthetic rhetoric. The chapter thus lays the conceptual and theoretical groundwork for the argument that rhetorical creativity informed through visceral theory, and the critical reflexivity sophistic pedagogy demands, can inform efforts to address the crisis of language generated by neoliberal free market nihilism with a sophistic mode of creative and ludic yet critical dissensual language-use.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six, draw on this foundation of sophistic rhetorical methodology as I shift to applying this methodology to case study analyses in the areas of aesthetic production noted above. These include the contemporary performance/media work of Harry Gamboa, Jr., post-1968 Southern Cone writing and filmmaking, and post-WWII science fiction, with emphasis on North American sf. I argue that these aesthetic practices are key sources of strategies and techniques that can inform a contemporary technology of somaesthetic language-art teaching techniques and practices. These case studies incorporate Brian Massumi's aforementioned notion of ontopower control and Alva Nöe's "enactive approach" conceptualization of perception and consciousness. As previously noted, contemporary theorists like Stiegler, Nöe, and Massumi, echo the Sophists' emphasis on negotiation of meaning through shared linguistic communication of subjective sensorial experience. Drawing on these and other theorists, I examine these aesthetic works and practices for their pedagogical potential. Through rhetorical analysis, I excavate their aesthetic-rhetorical technologies as sources for developing an aesthetics-

based approach to teaching alternative socio-ethical relations and the necessary skillful sensorimotor intelligences of *phronesis*, *kairos*, and *mētis*. This approach links the somatic (perceptual, affective, bodily experience) to allegory-mode *aturdimiento* (“disturbance”) language-art techniques of *technê psychagôgia*⁸ *poiësis* that generate effects of cognitive-affective estrangement as the basis for disruptive critical teaching. What these artist-educators demonstrate through their aesthetic rhetoric are forms of teaching that can effect critical intervention into habituation and conditioning on the ontological levels of affect, perception, and the somatic, as well as on the epistemological levels of cognition and ideology. Sophistic mytho-poetics and the Nietzschean notion of rhetoric as eristic and aesthetic inform my focus on metaphor and its narrativized forms of allegory and parable as the basis for this mode of teaching. Said focus clarifies the connections between the (neosophist) Nietzschean aesthetic turn in rhetoric and the work of theorists such as Lakoff and Johnson, who examine metaphor in depth as part of a larger body of work outlining an embodied “philosophy in the flesh.” These connections underlie my argument for allegory modes as central to the *poiësis* of the somaesthetic language-art that I seek to develop in pedagogico-aesthetic teaching.

Chapter Four focuses on my menteeship with Harry Gamboa, Jr., through case studies detailing my experiences working with him in impromptu performances involved in photo and video productions. In the absence of any record or concrete object of study, constructing a narrative representation of these events provides an object for interpretation while self-reflexively demonstrating my underlying argument for incorporating aesthetic practices into development of pedagogy. It also reflects an

underlying experientialist approach based in the somatic pragmatism of not only the Sophists, but more recent pragmatist philosophers like William James and John Dewey. These experientialist case studies apply my rhetoric methodology to enhance the connections between Gamboa's arts-based teaching practices and concepts of somaesthetic and micro-political practice. For example, I analyze how Gamboa critically deploys performance and media production in a *pharmakon* mode to disrupt conditioned perceptual response and habituated behaviors in his mentees and students. The underlying argument is for Gamboa's work as a source of arts-based, bodily centered strategies that critical pedagogues can draw from through rhetoric methodology in developing critical responses to neoliberal subjectivities and governing rationalities. In the context of neoliberal subjectivities, this chapter asks: How might the performance and new media work of Harry Gamboa, Jr., be seen as a sophistic rhetorical *technê* of bodily based pedagogy that facilitates radical transformation and that transmits and produces a kind of decolonial knowledge through a focus on affect, perception, and a production of presence? How might participation in this production catalyze disruption and critical transformation for the neoliberal subjectivity through deployment of disruptive rhetorical techniques involving performance, media production, and an allegory-mode aesthetic rhetoric? Finally, how might this participation facilitate engagement with a transformative, processural becoming, that is not only effected by Gamboa's sophistic rhetorical *technê*, but that actually self-reflexively develops in participants the *mētis*, *kairos*, and *phronesis* skills, of this sophistic rhetorical *technê*?

Chapter Five investigates allegory modes in Southern Cone writing and film as similar sources of critical pedagogical strategies of disruptive, somatically oriented language-art technology for responding to neoliberalism. Examining the work of Latin American writers and filmmakers and Latin Americanists produced over the past forty years as part of the same hemispheric matrix of critical aesthetic response to neoliberalism, I focus specifically on Chilean and Argentine allegory-mode narratives. During this time, a neoliberal order has emerged in Latin America through violent dictatorship-facilitated transitions from state to free market economies. As a result, the cultural productions of Southern Cone countries like Chile and Argentina, where intensive neoliberal experimentation resulted in catastrophic violence, were dubiously “privileged” as sites for understanding neoliberalism. Such an understanding is essential to the development of aesthetics-oriented critical pedagogical responses to an unruly but effective neoliberal nexus that comprises a global phenomenon, a set of specific and unique national and transnational iterations, and a hemispheric American phenomenon.

Working from these premises, the chapter provides case study analysis of the novel *The Flight of the Tiger*, by Daniel Moyano (Argentina), and Patricio Guzmán’s recent films, *Chile: La memoria obstinada*, and *Nostalgia de la luz* (Chile). These works are placed in conversation with Chilean Pedro Alejandro Matta’s *testimonio* tours of Villa Grimaldi, the former detention torture center where he was held captive under Pinochet, and Diamela Eltit’s *El padre mío* (Chile). Most of these works self-reflexively, metafictionally demonstrate some kind of mechanism at work within the text that engages, stimulates, generates, an allegorical mode. I argue that they also often

metafictionally allegorize the text itself and its creation as a way of *teaching* this mode of expression and critical-creative, critical-imaginative work. Various mechanisms of counterhegemonic communication and creative production are figured as pharmacological technology (for example, the allegorical and allegory-producing narrative-generating machine in Ricardo Piglia's *The Absent City*, or the development of percussive language and other aesthetics-based strategies of resistance in Moyano's *The Flight of the Tiger*). I am interested in how these texts engage the reader in thinking allegory mode as a creative technology and apparatus—specifically, as a technology of refractory, resistant language art that functions as *pharmakon* by using dominant forms against themselves. I also investigate how these texts potentially entrain the reader in, and inculcate in the reader, this kind of artful *technê*. If, as Alva Nöe argues, perception is something that we *do*, rather than something that just happens to us as sensory input is passively processed, then what does it mean to argue for a creative way of perceiving in an allegory mode—of *doing* perception, *allegorically*? What is a creative act of allegory-mode perception, and how do these works reflect—and teach—such a mode? How is such an act fundamentally rhetorical in nature? How do we teach and train students and potential teachers in this skillful sensorimotor-linguistic act through an allegory mode of perception—a kind of skillfully acquired, developed, and practiced bodily language-art allegory technology of *kairos* and *mētis*? What is the critical potential in such a mode in the specific context of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities and in terms of the potential development of alternative socio-ethical relations and economies of care? These

questions underlie my approach to all of these Southern Cone works, and they are the basis of the connections I make between them and to previous chapters.

Chapter Six places science fiction in conversation with the aesthetic rhetoric of the Sophists and with the work of Harry Gamboa, Jr., and Southern Cone artists discussed in the previous chapters. This chapter similarly looks at sf as a key source of pedagogical strategies and approaches for countering neoliberalism. Focusing rhetorical attention on critical science fiction written since WWII, during roughly the same period of neoliberal ascendancy, I look at how these aesthetic forms theorize and demonstrate potential strategies for disrupting and countering mechanisms of biopolitical control and neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities, particularly through the allegory mode of the parable form. As with my analysis of Southern Cone writing and film, the focus here has also been on *pharmakon* aesthetic practices based in allegory modes that use the technoscientific discourses and rationalities of the technoscience empire against themselves. Through this emphasis, I develop a parallel understanding of neoliberalism in the technocultural context of the United States, whose dominance and central role in development of neoliberal thinking and policy also make it, like Chile and Argentina, a “privileged” site for understanding neoliberalism. Excavating the critical potential from sf is key to confronting neoliberalism as a public pedagogy project. Both sf and neoliberalism depend on sophisticated uses of rhetoric and aesthetics to generate effects and affects on mass scales, and I premise the chapter on their parallel, counterpoised development as popular mass forms of pedagogy and rhetoric from the 1920s onward. SF’s critical utopian/dystopian discourse counters neoliberalist utopian discourse.

Furthermore, in critical modes, sf's future-oriented opening of alternative possibilities and realities can be disruptive of neoliberalism's nihilistic instrumentalization of future.

What interests me most as a rhetorician and critical pedagogue is sf's "science-fictional" "mode of thinking" induced by a "science fiction *effect*." In *Learning from Other Worlds*, editor Patrick Parrinder describes this effect as the cognitive estrangement of "a dialectic of analogy and difference" (6), and I see it as the most significant pedagogical dimension of sf. **Chapter Six**, then, considers what it would mean to use an "sf effect" in teaching. It posits specific critical sf authors as sophistic pedagogues deploying aesthetic rhetoric and *pharmakon* practices from which critical pedagogues can learn. I see these future- and allegory-oriented techniques as resonant with both the disruptive uses of allegory modes in Southern Cone writing and the Sophists' language-art strategies of future-oriented, critical dissensual poetics. Expanding on this point, I examine how sf's forward-looking impulse can help readers develop imaginative skills involved both in navigating unstable, multiple, contradictory contemporary realities always in flux, and in creatively envisioning alternative futures. In case studies of several sf works, I examine through a rhetoric hermeneutic how sf authors disorient and then engage audiences in re-oriented perceptual and imaginative modes. I specifically excavate the pedagogical potential in James Tiptree, Jr.'s *Up the Walls of the World* (Alice Sheldon) and China Miéville's *Embassytown*. These works meta-critically intervene in habituated perceptual and affective response, as both readers and characters navigate the effects of cognitive-affective estrangement of characters swapping bodies, perceptual apparatuses, language modes, historical/temporal paradigms, and modes of

being and meaning-making. I demonstrate how these sophistic, other-oriented modes tether language and meaning to the body as the basis of possibilities for alternative futures, realities, and ways of being that can counter the market-oriented imperatives of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. In addressing these works, this chapter asks: What does it mean to examine science fiction and its authors as engaged in a popular pedagogical project of sophistic aesthetic rhetoric and thus as a potential source of (neo)sophistic teaching techniques, elements, approaches, and modes, that can be integrated into critical pedagogy? How do these teaching techniques, approaches, and elements, parallel/reflect/connect to, similar aesthetics-based critical pedagogical approaches (e.g., L.S. Vygotsky, Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, Harry Gamboa, Jr.)? How does science fiction's analogical allegory-mode make it a privileged site for developing critical pedagogy in our contemporary technocultural, technoscientific age of neoliberalism? Finally, how does sf help counter—pharmacologically—Cartesian dualisms of cognitive/affective and “rational”/“non-rational” experience through their aesthetic (mis)use of technoscientific discourse and rationality, and how does this countering help us to reconceptualize cognition, perception, and consciousness according to a sophistic sentient-body model of integrated mind-body process?

Chapter Seven concludes the dissertation by offering some specific applications of these pedagogical approaches in community college and university Chicana@ Literature, Chicana@ History, and English Composition classrooms. First, the chapter discusses my general application of a rhetoric studies methodology to incorporate a sophistic, bodily oriented pedagogico-aesthetic approach into my teaching practice. Then,

examples of specific materials, lessons, and strategies demonstrate how I have sought to perform the role of “artist-educator” by putting into practice a pedagogico-aesthetic emphasis on practical, experiential *phronesis*-oriented learning, arts-based collaborative learning, critical awareness of discourse communities, and the body as key site of learning and knowledge production and transmission. This teaching model aims not simply at the epistemological problem of demystification, but at the *ontological* problem of radical transformation at the level of somatic experience. The chapter then provides content-oriented examples to demonstrate how I have drawn on my dissertation’s case study analyses and used specific materials as a way of facilitating demystification around neoliberalism. This includes, for example, science fiction works and Latin American narratives that raise issues around neoliberal rationalities and biopolitics. However, to reiterate: The goal is less prescriptive than it is oriented toward stimulating similar application, in readers’ own critical teaching development and practice, of the dissertation’s concepts, archival sources, developmental processes and approaches, and above all, sophistic rhetoric methodology.

CHAPTER TWO:
NEOLIBERALISM, RHETORIC, AND
THE TASK OF REFASHIONING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Taking as its starting point Henry Giroux's call for the need to refashion critical pedagogy in response to neoliberalism, this chapter lays out the problems and issues involved in such a refashioning and in efforts to develop new forms of critical pedagogy. In it, I develop a periodization and contextualization of this problem that looks at both critical pedagogy and public institutional education in relation to neoliberalism, as well as at key points of historical and contemporary intersection between them. My justification for this contextualization is twofold. One: To develop a complex picture of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism and its relation to institutional education and to pedagogy understood more broadly. Two: To make visible the position and role of pedagogy—particularly public pedagogy—within a neoliberal rhetorical vision. While my next chapter develops this latter point in more depth, this chapter's primary focus is on the former point in order to provide contextualization of the specific challenges facing critical pedagogy in the contemporary United States. Through Henry Giroux, Vorris Nunley, and Wendy Brown, I examine neoliberalism as a governing rationality that functions through pedagogical, public, and rhetorical mechanisms of subjectivity formation. Situating and periodizing neoliberalism in the contemporary United States in relation to education, I make an argument for rhetoric studies and rhetoric methodology as vital to any effort at refashioning critical pedagogy that can effectively address neoliberalism understood as such a pedagogical and rhetorical project.

My argument for rhetoric rests on the need to approach neoliberalism as fundamentally a problem of particular modes of governance and subjectivity whose mechanisms of inculcation and entraining function through sophisticated, globally intertwined rhetorical and pedagogical systems. As noted in my introduction, in developing a fuller picture of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism and its relation to institutional education and pedagogy understood more broadly, one key subtextual conversation that emerges is a discrete yet inter-related parallel periodization of neoliberal projects in key experimental sites like Chile and Argentina. Aside from the groundwork this conversation helps me lay for subsequent analysis of Southern Cone aesthetic production from Chile and Argentina in later chapters, this conversation is also essential to understanding contemporary forms and structures of neoliberal rationality and subjectivity in the United States. I therefore begin by staging it as a way into my chapter's analysis.

Hemispheric Policy/Pedagogy: Chicago<>Santiago<>New York

The influence of neoliberals like Milton Friedman and Henry Kissinger on the 1973 military coup of Salvador Allende's democratically elected Chilean government by General Pinochet is well known. But as David Harvey points out in his analysis of the New York City Fiscal Crisis of the 1970s, neoliberal policies, tactics, and strategies exported from the Chicago School (and the United States and Europe more broadly) and implemented in Chile after the coup, were then re-imported and applied to New York City in another kind of coup through the end of the 1970s. Among other devastating

effects of privatization on public infrastructure, this financial coup had a direct impact on efforts to expand educational access and to mount critical pedagogical practices in New York, particularly at The City University of New York (CUNY), as I detail below. Observing (and supporting) the success of the neoliberal-backed military coup in Chile, Wall Street financiers deliberately allowed New York to default into bankruptcy in order to stage a take-over of city financial control. The result of this privatization was a gutting of social and public programs and the implementation of harsh austerity programs as financial corporations took control of the city's public economic policy and funds. At the same time, Harvey notes, as the Saudis were required to recycle petrodollars through Wall Street and New York banks as a result of the 1970s OPEC crisis, massive funds found themselves in need of profitable outlets because of a generally (deliberately) depressed local national economy. Seeking outlets abroad, these same financiers who bankrupted New York City then looked to developing countries for investment opportunities. In the process, they inaugurated a new form of US imperialism as many of these markets (like Chile) required "strongman" governments to help pry them open to foreign investors and loans.

However, while the 1970s marked the key moment of neoliberal ascendancy through events like the Chilean coup and the financial coup in New York City, this kind of complex, multidirectional flow of influence actually was not new. In fact, from its beginnings in the 1920s, the neoliberal project has been shaped by similar bi- and multi-directional global flows of influence and exchange. The lessons learned by neoliberal policy makers in different parts of the world informed one another and helped shape

subsequent approaches in the decades leading up to the 1970s, and then through the 1980s and beyond. Countries like Chile reshaped their approaches in response to changing circumstances and closely watched results in other parts of the world, and the United States and England similarly drew from Chile's and Argentina's examples in reshaping their own neoliberal policies under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. The New York City model of imposed austerity and privatization has since been refined and re-exported to other countries and to other cities and parts of the United States in the decades that followed. More recently, it has been implemented on wider scales within the United States, as both local and national public infrastructure and services are deliberately bankrupted and allowed to deteriorate—in cities like Detroit, for example, and Chicago. Similarly, this ongoing, evolving process continues to be seen, for example, in savvily deployed neoliberal rhetoric and policy around “failing” public schools and the widespread push for charter schools and other forms of privatization as a response.

I highlight this last specific example of attacks on public education because of its obvious relevance to my dissertation, but also because it demonstrates how these ongoing efforts to undermine public institutions with aims of privatization reach back to the above-mentioned 1970s New York City fiscal crisis and its impact on public education. In *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*, Ira Shor details his efforts at developing Freirean pedagogy at CUNY during its historic but brief and embattled period of open enrollment during the 1970s crisis. This period of open enrollment was a small window that closed after only a few short years precisely because of the financial coup and its neoliberal attacks on public education and other public services detailed above. However, Shor's

account provides an illuminating counter-narrative at this key historical moment of neoliberal ascendancy, as its emergent privatization tactics and strategies came into direct contact with parallel early counter-efforts at developing critical egalitarian teaching practices that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, student movements, and decolonial movements, of the 1960s. While CUNY's open enrollment and the efforts of educators like Shor ultimately "failed" in the face of such enormous political and economic influence, the strategies he and others developed on the ground in the face of such pressures provide key lessons in how to develop and practice such strategies in the first place, given reactionary political constraints. For example, one of the key lessons conveyed in Shor's text is how easily such efforts at critical teaching can become subsumed in administrative and political battles precisely because of neoliberalist reactionary response to them rhetorically mounted through media outlets, school board meetings, and administration. For those contemporary pedagogues struggling against increasingly powerful forces pushing for privatization, this is no small lesson to draw from. As Shor details in his book, while he was successful in developing and implementing Freiran teaching practices despite neoliberal attacks, at the same time, he and other critical teachers found themselves completely exhausted (emotionally, psychologically, and physically) as increasing energy was diverted from teaching to fighting off these attacks. This diversion of energy and time was—and is—of course, deliberate. It reflects a deliberate *rhetorical* strategy aimed at generating precisely these kinds of effects and affects experienced by Shor and other critical teachers. It is a key example of how neoliberalism's rhetorical and pedagogical strategies focus on affect and

somatic experience, and it is an important lesson to keep in mind when attempting to confront critically the realities of neoliberal impacts on contemporary U.S. educational structures. Most significantly, it signals to critical pedagogues the vital necessity of contextualizing and examining closely the historical connections between neoliberalism, institutional education, and pedagogy understood more broadly, through a specifically rhetorical methodology.

In addition to taking into account these kinds of impacts of neoliberal privatization on public education and concurrent counter-efforts at critical education like Shor's, a more complex periodization of the relationships between neoliberalism and contemporary U.S. educational institutions must also include consideration of student movements both in the United States and other countries, including Southern Cone countries like Chile. As is well-known, student movements in the United States and Chile, as well as France, Mexico, and throughout the world, were instrumental in the late 1960s in countering emergent neoliberal tendencies. In fact, they formed a large part of the praxical basis for the work of critical pedagogues like Ira Shor. Significantly for my dissertation, this also includes, for example, the Chicano Student Movement and its East L.A. "blowouts," of which Harry Gamboa, Jr., was a leading high school student organizer. As with the attempts at developing and implementing Freirean pedagogy by Shor and other critical pedagogues during the 1970s, understanding how these student movements functioned not just as a struggle for equitable educational access against historical disenfranchisement, but as central points of conflict and pushback against emergent neoliberal policies in the past, helps to contextualize contemporary student and

educator responses. It also helps to make clear the ongoing, persistent potential of student activism in spite of the recent appearance of general depoliticization and the dominance of neoliberal subjectivities among students, professors, and administrators. A strong Chilean student movement continues to prove pivotal to countering contemporary neoliberal policies (albeit in spurts, and with mixed results), for example, and over recent years and the past year especially (2015-16), student movements in many other countries including the United States and Mexico have been at the forefront of critical responses to neoliberal efforts, in particular to austerity programs and privatization programs that target public education among other social services.

However, it also is important to understand how *rightwing* student movements (e.g., the “Chicago Boys” and the *gremialistas* in Chile) have played a central role in neoliberalism’s ascendancy. Such an understanding helps us better address and respond to contemporary attacks on U.S. institutional education by neoliberal policymakers and thinkers who seek to instrumentalize and privatize education under a free market logic through influence on administrators, educators, and students. In Chile, for example, the *gremialista* movement of neoliberalist students and professors was instrumental in bringing Pinochet and neoliberal economists to power. Trained in neoliberal economics at the University of Chicago in a carefully orchestrated exchange program throughout the 1950s and 60s, the “Chicago Boys” helped significantly to lay the groundwork for the 1973 military coup of Salvador Allende. Their neoliberalist political activism and economic theories and programs undergirded the coup through their involvement with the ultraconservative, proto-fascist *gremialista* student movement, which included both

professors and students on Chilean university campuses. This activism ultimately effected a radical transformation of Chilean economic policy and society under Pinochet, as many of these same rightwing educators and student-activists were then appointed key economic positions after the coup.

On a more obvious level, related warning signs of proto-fascist tendencies in contemporary U.S. educational institutions include the increasing constraints, censoring, and censoring, of professors, who find themselves targeted both by administrative pressures that include economic sanction and by neoconservative student-activists who record lectures and report instructors for potentially subversive material in a post-9/11 environment. These signs also include the way U.S. students increasingly find their free-speech rights curtailed by administrative policies that preemptively limit and contain protest with rhetorical mechanisms like “free-speech zones” and administratively approved times for protest and demonstration activity. These impacts on institutions of learning reflect a broader societal and cultural shift in the United States toward rightwing, proto-fascist tendencies. Such tendencies are reflected in the growth and strengthening of white supremacist hate groups and violent anti-immigrant groups like the Minute Men and Save Our State, the popularity of white supremacist and neo-fascist Donald Trump in the current 2016 presidential cycle, increasing police brutality and police militarization, and mass control mechanisms. These include an increasingly powerful corporate-dominated rightwing media, increasing deportation and racial profiling of immigrants, increasing widespread surveillance technologies, increasing incarceration of American

society's most vulnerable populations, increasing use of drone technologies in civilian contexts, and a general militarization of everyday life.

But as the *gremialista* movement demonstrated through its role in the Chilean coup and its incorporation of the Chicago Boys into its efforts, these proto-fascist developments ultimately find their real base in neoliberal economics. The problem, then, is not of a depoliticized or neutralized environment, as is often lamented by politicized instructors confronted with a seemingly apathetic student population, for example. Rather, it is precisely the opposite: An *ultra*-politicized and *non*-neutral environment masking itself as disinterested and non-political. Structures of the educational institution are reshaped according to the political and economic aims of a neoliberalist free-market governing rationality. Subtly, curricula, department structures, and social dynamics between faculty, between administrators and faculty, between students, and between students and faculty, all reflect a neoliberal rationality and an underlying pedagogical aim of producing neoliberal subjectivities. These are subjectivities that are paradoxically neutralized and depoliticized by an ultra-politicized neoliberal agenda. This agenda works to shut down any possibilities outside free-market rationality. Instrumentalized, education is increasingly framed by overpaid administrators as a product being manufactured by faculty for students figured both as consumer-entrepreneurs, and at the same time, as *products themselves* of that manufacturing. Students are at once consumer and product of this factory-model production line of educational service who make investments in their own human capital with the primary objective of achieving a profitable return on their investment rather than gaining knowledge, understanding, or

critical thinking skills. This consumerist market orientation reflects deeper, subtle shifts toward privatization driven by administrators who are expected to function like CEOs, as they run educational institutions in the same way students run themselves and their own human capital—like corporations, with a primary goal of generating profit.

The proto-fascist shutdown of dissenting discourse—or of any discourse at all—is not the fundamental problem, then. Rather, this shutdown and its attendant neutralized, depoliticized subjectivity formations, are *symptoms* of a deeper problem of neoliberal rationality and subjectivity. Contextualizing contemporary U.S. neoliberalism and education in relation to historical precedents like 1970s Chile and New York City helps to get at this deeper issue and the underlying challenges facing contemporary critical pedagogues.

A Crisis of (Rhetorical) Imagination

For Henry Giroux, the impacts of these free market logics on education both reflect and help generate wider societal breakdowns in an intertwining and overlapping of crises produced by the imposition of neoliberal rationalities onto all spheres of life. In “Cultural Studies in Dark Times: Public Pedagogy and the Challenge of Neoliberalism,” Giroux defines neoliberal free-market rationality and discusses its effects on democratic structures, social and cultural spheres, and education. “Wedded to the belief that the market should be the organizing principle for all political, social, and economic decisions,” Giroux writes, “neoliberalism increasingly drives the meaning of citizenship and social life while waging an incessant attack on democracy, public goods, the welfare

state, and noncommodified values” (n.p.). He argues that neoliberalism’s permeation of the social order generates a crisis for democracy, as “[f]ree-market fundamentalism rather than democratic idealism is now the driving force of economics and politics” (n.p.).

Giroux’s analysis facilitates the parsing out of what is at stake in conversations around institutional education and critical pedagogy in terms specific to the neoliberal order and its crises. As Giroux notes, “The naturalness and commonsense appeal of the neoliberal economic order produces a crisis of political and historical imagination, on the one hand, and an educational crisis on the other” (n.p.). In another context, Giroux argues for a refashioning of critical pedagogy to

recaptur[e] the vital role that an expanded notion of critical education might play...by providing a language of critique and possibility which addresses the growing threat of free market fundamentalism to an inclusive democracy and the promise of a cultural politics in which pedagogy occupies a formative role in shaping both critical agency and the radical imagination. (n.p.)

Giroux’s call for refashioning critical pedagogy in this particular article resorts primarily to an argument for cultural studies as vital to this refashioning. Given cultural studies’ long and ongoing history of critical pedagogical intervention and its early efforts to implement critical pedagogy, including most significantly the initial development of the field by educators like Stuart Hall working at adult schools and community colleges with working-class students in the 1960s and 70s, cultural studies (as well as critical theory) must certainly play a significant role in such a refashioning. These developments

by Hall and others were integral to the work of educators like the previously discussed efforts of Ira Shore. Giroux, who comes from a similar cultural studies background as Shor, is correct to hone in on the field as particularly vital for developing and refashioning critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberals' manipulation of popular sociocultural forms and channels as key sites of pedagogy and rhetoric.⁹ However, Giroux's argument also suggests a disavowal of the importance of rhetoric in such a refashioning even as he implicitly underscores the significance of rhetoric in terms of how neoliberalism "drives meaning" with a "natural," "commonsense appeal." "Teaching students how to argue, draw on their own experiences, or engage in rigorous dialogue," he writes, "says nothing about why they should engage in these actions in the first place" (n.p.). Giroux's aim is to argue cultural studies' primacy in reshaping critical pedagogy by pointing to what is missing in this model of argumentation: "How the culture of argumentation and questioning relates to giving students the tools they need to fight oppressive forms of power, make the world a more meaningful and just place, and develop a sense of social responsibility is missing in contemporary, progressive frameworks of education."¹⁰ But the tools of the "culture of argumentation and questioning" are specifically *rhetorical* tools within a broader method not recognized here as inherently rhetorical; they are the tools with which students can make those vital connections between argumentation, questioning, discourse, biopolitics, and the challenging of oppressive logics. Giroux is correct in calling for a clear understanding of *how* this culture of argumentation and questioning relates to fighting oppressive forms of power, and for establishing the reasons of social responsibility for *why* students should

engage in such a culture toward bettering the world. But ultimately, no matter how much critical understanding students might gain, they will not be able to “fight oppressive forms of power” without these vital tools of rhetoric. Rhetoric is, in fact, what makes possible the development of a critical understanding of the *how* and *why* in the first place. It is what makes possible any critical analysis at all—whether in cultural studies, critical theory, literary analysis, and so on.

Part of my concern with Giroux’s argument here rests on what seems to be his focus on a content-oriented model of demystification and a cultural studies hermeneutics. Cultural studies as hermeneutics aims at demystifying cultural forms and practices with close-reading analysis. As such, it is indeed vital to any critical pedagogy (and as such, it also is inherently *rhetorical* in its close-reading analysis of texts). But I want to suggest that it is important to acknowledge the key role that rhetoric plays in making this particular form of cultural studies critical interpretation possible in the first place. As Vorris Nunley argues, drawing on Aristotle, “rhetoric as a hermeneutical activity... is a practical art focused on practices and effects around the probable, with how and what texts function in an attempt to create certain effects, with what makes texts persuasive to specific audiences.” Thus, it “provides a critical lens and taxonomy that account for rhetorical elements, forms, and tactics in texts and how they function in terms of audience, spatiality, and occasion” (159-60). Steven Mailloux similarly argues for “rhetorical hermeneutics” as a mode of interpretation that takes into account a text’s sociohistorical context of rhetorical exchanges and power dynamics and its reception and effects within that context.¹¹ Cultural studies’ interpretive focus on power dynamics,

exchanges, effects, and the sociohistorical context of audience, spatiality, and occasion, suggests that rhetoric should be taken into account as a necessary element of cultural studies. It suggests, in fact, that it is precisely a rhetorical hermeneutic that is the basis of such an interpretive focus.

This significant, fundamental connection should be made explicit in any approach to refashioning critical pedagogy. It is not, as Giroux suggests, so much that rhetorical training has been divorced from the political context of an analytical approach like cultural studies. This is an important issue to consider, but the bigger issue implicit in his own argument is in fact the opposite: Analytical approaches like cultural studies have been divorced from their underpinnings of rhetorical practice and study (the “culture of argumentation and questioning”) that make them possible to begin with. Analysis of a cultural object’s generated effects involves a critical argumentation and questioning of its *rhetorical* functions as an object of *rhetoric*. At the very least, as Nunley points out, “rhetoric as a hermeneutical activity serves as a distinctive complement to close reading” (159). I want to push this idea even further to argue that close reading is not just complementary to rhetorical hermeneutics, but is in fact inherently rhetorical. Analysis of any human expression or communication is always already a rhetorical analysis by the very nature of its focus. Close reading *is* rhetorical analysis.

In this sense, Giroux’s analysis seems to forward one key aspect necessary for refashioning critical pedagogy (cultural studies) while downplaying the equal necessity of another (rhetoric). In shifting the argument’s focus to cultural studies and away from an explicit discussion of rhetoric (with an implicit disavowal of its value), Giroux misses an

opportunity to fully parse out the pedagogical and rhetorical stakes involved. We see another example of this dynamic when Giroux makes a point about neoliberalism's public pedagogy:

Within neoliberalism's market-driven discourse, corporate power marks the space of a new kind of public pedagogy, one in which the production, dissemination, and circulation of ideas emerge from the educational force of the larger culture. Public pedagogy in this sense refers to a powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain. (n.p.)

The point here is vital (and I return to it in my discussion of the Sophists and their theorization of a general sociocultural circulation of education in Chapter Three). The insight that neoliberal pedagogy comprises "a variety of educational sites" as a public pedagogical project is an important intervention, and it is one that theorists like Nunley develop at length in looking not just at the (interwoven) public and institutional channels of neoliberal pedagogy and rhetoric, but at the public sites of counter-pedagogies and counter-rhetorics. But here, again, Giroux's critique of the culture of "argumentation and questioning" and "rigorous dialogue" would seem to stand at odds with the clearly *rhetorical* issues involved when we speak of the "production, dissemination, and circulation of ideas," and of "forces" that generate the effects of "produc[ing] competitive, self-interested individuals."

My point here is not to counter or dismiss Giroux's argument. In fact, our aims of refashioning critical pedagogy coincide. Ultimately, we are making similar arguments for the same needs, albeit from slightly different angles. Instead, I want to use Giroux's key insights into neoliberalism and the public nature of neoliberal pedagogy as a productive starting point while maintaining pressure on these insights. The objective is to draw explicit attention to the importance of rhetoric (*as well as* cultural studies and other hermeneutics) in refashioning critical pedagogy that can respond to neoliberalism. Aside from the point I explore in Chapter Three that it was precisely such a rhetorical understanding of education as socioculturally dispersed that undergirded Sophist pedagogical practices and their germinal theorizations of education and rhetoric, rhetoric is important here because the pedagogical issue is not just about how content and learning experience are shaped by free-market rationality in our contemporary context. The issue involves more specifically how neoliberal governing rationality operates toward and through the production and generation of market-oriented subjectivities and socialities by regulating and entraining behavior, perception, and language use. To reiterate my introductory remarks, here I draw on Giroux, Nunley, and Wendy Brown, in my understanding of neoliberalism as a governing rationality versus as merely an ideology. Where Giroux defines rationality as, "a specific set of assumptions and social practices that mediate how an individual or group relates to the wider society," and that is undergirded by "a set of interests that define and qualify how one reflects on the world" (Giroux qtd. in Nunley 10), Nunley places emphasis on the ontological¹², in his identification of rationalities as the terrain of subjectivity construction (10). Giroux's

epistemology-oriented focus draws attention to the set of interests that shape how a subjectivity “reflects on the world” and “relates to the wider society”—how a subjectivity *knows*, based on the filters and screens of social assumptions and practices. By contrast, the ontology-oriented focus places emphasis on how a subjectivity *is* and *is becoming* (more on this distinction later) while connecting this way of being to the dialogical construction and navigation of meaning, experience, knowledge, and sociocultural reality. The difference is important. This latter emphasis, operating through a rhetoric methodology, directs more focused attention to how subjectivities are formed and shaped (and potentially re-formed and re-shaped). From the perspective of rhetoric methodology, the question then is not just how sets of assumptions shape the way one reflects and relates; it is how those sets of assumptions shape, and are shaped by, subjectivities.

Similarly pushing beyond Giroux’s analysis, Wendy Brown argues that, “to comprehend neoliberalism’s political and cultural effects, it must be conceived of as more than a set of free market economic policies,” because “as a political rationality, it also involves a specific and consequential organization of the social, the subject, and the state” (692). Like Nunley, while she shares Giroux’s concern with neoliberalism as an ideology with a set of assumptions and screens shaping how subjectivities reflect on and relate to the world, she directs more specific attention on the particular kinds of subjectivities that themselves constitute and are constituted by and through screens of neoliberal governing rationalities. As Brown and Nunley suggest in their approaches to neoliberalism as a governing rationality, the matter of responding critically to these subjectivities and rationalities is more complex and nuanced than a demystification

project of simply raising consciousness or clarifying the “how” and “why” of argumentation and questioning. In contrast to Giroux’s hopeful (but somewhat vague) call for demystifying tools of a “new language” and “new vocabulary,” Brown points to the more pessimistic reality of a

hollowing out of a democratic political culture and the production of the undemocratic citizen...the citizen who loves and wants neither freedom nor equality, even of a liberal sort; the citizen who expects neither truth nor accountability in governance and state actions; the citizen who is not distressed by exorbitant concentrations of political and economic power, routine abrogations of the rule of law, or distinctly undemocratic formulations of national purpose... This is the hollowing out that confronts us as a sustained political condition. (692)

For, “As neoliberalism produces the citizen on the model of entrepreneur and consumer, it simultaneously makes citizens available to extensive governance and heavy administrative authority” (705). The result is a “non-deliberative submission to authority....a resolute, even patriotic, refusal to think or desire for others to think, let alone think differently” (709)—ultimately, “a pacified and neutered citizenry” (710). Giroux’s description here of non-deliberative submission to authority provides a key insight, for example, into how the nostalgia of the slogan, “Make America Great Again,” instrumentalizes future—why it generates hopeful futurity for neoliberal projects precisely designed to limit such hope to fewer and fewer citizen consumer-entrepreneurs.

This “pacified and neutered citizenry” is the result of tropes of nostalgia (i.e., the return of jobs, the demise of identity politics), combined with a regulatory logics, filtering through and enforced by educational institutions alongside and intertwined with other channels of neoliberal pedagogy and rhetoric through a set of market-based conventions and commonplaces that both enforce and are enforced. This enforcement does not merely filter and shape how subjectivities see the world; the enforcement *fabricates* market-oriented and infused (and as Brown points out, fundamentally undemocratic) subjects and ways of being, naturalized by a “goes without saying” neoliberal consensus. This conceptualization, which I borrow from Latin Americanist discourse and which I further develop below,¹³ helps us understand how a pre-established “consensus” inherently functions to shut down any discourse that might challenge its logic. What I wish to emphasize is that this closure of discourse does not simply call for Giroux’s “new language” because it both aims at and is accomplished, in part, by producing subjectivities that *cannot even conceive that something has gone without saying in the first place*. Tethered to this notion of neoliberal rationality is neoliberal *being* as static—or fluidity without movement, fluidity without politics—as opposed to subjectivity on paths of critical, transformative processes of *becoming*. And both this production of subjectivities and this tethering of a neoliberal ontology to neoliberal rationality are effected through rhetoric.

These effects and affects of what is said and what “goes without saying” are central (rhetorical) concerns in developing critical pedagogical responses to neoliberalism that understand political rationalities as necessarily always-already rhetorical. Rhetoric

focused on subjectivity, ontologies, and epistemologies is indeed an issue of arguing, questioning, engaging in dialogue. But it also is an issue of challenging what “goes without saying” by developing not just something to say in response, but *ways to say* and, most importantly, subjectivities *capable of saying* in the first place. When Giroux calls for “a new language...a new vocabulary for talking about what educational institutions should accomplish in a democracy and why they fail,” he highlights the fundamentally *rhetorical* nature of the crisis he addresses. It is the “culture of argumentation” that makes possible the necessary work of first developing and learning the skills of *how* to say and of gaining the insight that *how* and *what* to say are, over time, intertwined with subjectivity. As Latin Americanists like Thayer, Richard, Levinson, Fornazzari, and others make clearer through their focus on the linguistic dimensions of this neoliberal consensus and the linguistic crisis it produces, the issue is indeed one of language.¹⁴ But as their theorizations foreground—significantly, through implicitly rhetorical interdisciplinary analyses of literature, cultural production, and sociopolitical and economic conditions that examine the material effects and the limits of language in the context of contemporary neoliberal rationality—the crisis is not just of the need for a “new language,” but of an increasingly toxic relationship between language and subjectivity that points pessimistically to a creeping failure of language itself.¹⁵ This failure of language arises from neoliberal rationality’s shutdown of discourse and language through its rhetorical mechanisms of unquestioned consensus and its production of subjectivities through these mechanisms. In rhetorical terms, the issue partly is one of a deliberately effected slippage between *nomos* and *physis*.¹⁶ Rhetorically, a “goes

without saying” consensus, whether in temples of religion, centers of government and policy, or academe, inherently disavows its own specific constructedness as *nomos* through a process of naturalization. In the case of neoliberalism, this process of naturalization equates the neoliberal order not with human convention, power, and regulation, but with the *physis* of nature and natural forces.¹⁷ Disavowal of the constructedness of consensus is simultaneously disavowal of the parallel construction of subjectivity, which also then is naturalized through a normalizing rhetoric of “human nature.” Explaining the nature and crisis of this “consensus,” Brett Levinson parallels Giroux’s insight about the “naturalness and commonsense appeal of the neoliberal economic order,” when he notes that this consensus seemingly is “established ‘naturally’ or without negotiation...as an ‘it goes without saying,’” at the same time that it naturalizes market rationality and the idea “that [the market] is the destiny of man: inevitable and necessary” (2). “Once that is a given,” Levinson continues, “oppositions and alternatives...can only appear useless, even absurd” (2). More to my point: Oppositions and alternatives cannot even *emerge*, not just because they have been preemptively excluded from legibility and rational possibility, but because this would require subjectivities capable of imagining and mounting them in the first place.

This is a crisis, then, of governmentalities, biopolitics, and necropolitics, deployed with and through language. It is a crisis of the limits of language in relation to subjectivities and the possibilities for Giroux’s “critical agency.” In other words, it is a crisis that demands a rhetorical method and hermeneutics *as well as* other approaches. As Wendy Brown explains, “A political rationality governs the sayable, the intelligible, and

the truth criteria of these domains” (693). Brown echoes the above Latin Americanist analyses of neoliberal consensus. Both analyses implicitly highlight the rhetorical dimensions and stakes involved in neoliberal rationality and subjectivity production. Like the Latin Americanist connection between neoliberal “consensus,” neoliberal governance, and a “goes without saying” crisis of language, Brown’s explicit connection of this notion of governing rationality to what is “sayable” and “intelligible” helps center the conversation about exactly *how* neoliberal rationality “redefines” and “exerts influence” (Giroux’s terms) more squarely on rhetoric.

These are not just theoretical concerns. Along with other critical pedagogues, I face students in classrooms who embody a range of entrepreneurial- and consumerist-oriented subjectivities with the “deep sense of hopelessness and cynicism” and the general “growing sense of insecurity, cynicism, and political retreat on the part of the general public” (n.p.) to which Brown and Giroux refer. As Mark Fisher puts it in *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, “By contrast with their forebears in the 1960s and 1970s, British students today appear to be politically disengaged. While French students can still be found on the streets protesting against neoliberalism, British students, whose situation is incomparably worse, seem resigned to their fate” (21). While Fisher’s focus obviously is on the students he teaches in England, his assessment could easily have been addressed to their American counterparts. Echoing Giroux and Brown, Fisher notes that “the affects that predominate in late capitalism are fear and cynicism,” emotions which “breed conformity and the cult of the minimal variation” (76). Significantly for my ontology-oriented argument, for Fisher, the issue here is not just one

of political apathy and disengagement, but one of neoliberalist-induced pathology that works preemptively to foreclose possibilities of political engagement on the level of subjectivity production. In fact, Fisher rejects outright the notion that the problem is one of cynicism or apathy in the first place, relegating these outward expressions to a status akin to symptoms. Fisher's analysis deploys a term that helps hone in instead on the practical impacts of these crises on students, and the ontological stakes involved, in a way that pushes beyond the obvious sense of cynicism to which Giroux refers. This seeming resignation to their fate on the part of these students, Fisher argues, "is a matter not of apathy, nor of cynicism, but of *reflexive impotence*" (21).

For Fisher, this notion of "reflexive impotence" reflects how students "know things are bad, but more than that, they know they can't do anything about it. But that 'knowledge,' that reflexivity, is not a passive observation of an already existing state of affairs. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy" (21). As "an unstated worldview amongst the British young," this reflexive impotence correlates with widespread pathologies that include not just learning disabilities and difficulties ("the number of students who have some variant of dyslexia is astonishing," he notes), but numerous mental health issues, including endemic depression (21) and bipolar disorder (35). Fisher argues that these mental health and learning problems are so endemic and entrenched, in fact, that "it is not an exaggeration to say that being a teenager in late capitalist Britain is now close to being reclassified as a sickness. This pathologization already forecloses any possibility of politicization" (21). In the same way he specifically locates the source of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in consumerist technoculture (similar to Bernard Stiegler)

by identifying this disorder as “a consequence of being wired into the entertainment-control circuits of hyper mediated consumer culture” (25), Fisher is clear that this more generalized pathological and pathologized condition of being a teenager in contemporary Britain finds its source in late capitalism. As he describes, this is not merely a matter of feeling apathetic or cynical; rather, it is an inculcated condition and generalized state of habituated being that works preemptively to foreclose political engagement by (ontologically) targeting ways of being. The generated effects of mental health problems, learning difficulties, and attendant affective states like cynicism, reflect how this ontological targeting hones in on affect, perception, and cognitive experience. Further, such pathologies as tethered to depoliticization through preemptive foreclosure on political engagement foreground how affect, perception, and cognition are key sites of pedagogical and rhetorical intervention through which subjectivity is produced and shaped according to market logic rationalities. They are instrumentalized functions whose deliberate delimitation and manipulation by this shaping ensures subsequent reproduction of neoliberal rationalities, subjectivities, and social relations. The result is the generation of subjectivities shaped by various pathological and pathologized conditions clustered around a “reflexive impotence” that then generates the kind of cynicism and apathy that Giroux and Brown identify. The whole system then functions in a kind of self-perpetuating feedback loop. In describing this impotence as reflexively self-fulfilling, and in pointing to specific examples of how it is generated, such as “being wired into the entertainment-control circuits of late consumer capitalism,” Fisher suggests the

subjectivity conditioning and habituation involved. Reflexive impotence is not just a condition, in other words; it is a conditioning.

For critical teachers, the difficulty addressing these issues often further adds to the sense of reflexive impotence—both for students, and for themselves as teachers and as co-participants in neoliberal governance working at the critical nexus of education and the late-capitalist consumer culture Fisher critiques. Fisher historicizes contemporary post-Fordist institutional education as a new kind of experimental lab for consumerist late capitalism, what I interpret as such as one of the key sites for the production of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. “[E]ducation,” he writes, “is the engine room of the reproduction of social reality, directly confronting the inconsistencies of the capitalist social field” (26). In this “engine room,” “[t]eachers are caught between being [post-Fordist] facilitator-entertainers and [Fordist] disciplinarian-authoritarians” (26) as they “are now put under intolerable pressure to mediate between the post-literate subjectivity of the late capitalist consumer and the demands of the [Fordist] disciplinary regime (to pass examinations, etc.)” (25-26). For both students and teachers, “as [w]ork and life become inseparable” under post-Fordism, “[and] as production and distribution are restructured, so are nervous systems” (34).

This last point about impacts on the nervous system is a minor one in Fisher’s analysis that he does not develop at length. However, notwithstanding Fisher’s favorable claims about French student politicization as compared to British student apathy, this point about subjectivity conditioning at the level of the nervous system is one that Bernard Stiegler develops in depth around similar issues facing French youth and

education. His analysis focuses more precisely on subjectivity formation at the (intertwined) levels of neurological structures and inter-generational structures in a way that ultimately helps support my case for incorporation of rhetoric into development of critical pedagogy that can respond effectively to neoliberalism. In *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, Stiegler applies a Freudian analysis to the impact that consumer capitalism's "psychotechnologies" have had on disrupting attention and perceptual apparatus development on one hand, and individuation socialization development in the intergenerational processes of maturation, on the other. These are processes of "becoming adult" through guidance from immaturity to maturity by older generations. According to Stiegler, older generations in the mature positions of fully transindividuated members of their sociocultural milieux fulfill their sociocultural responsibilities to new generations by functioning as a living bridge that connects new generations with past, deceased generations. In this vital ongoing transmission of human culture over time, older generations guide youth toward healthy sociocultural integration processes of transindividuation. "[T]his *becoming* adult," Stiegler writes, "develops from infancy through a relationship of identification with parents who educate the child" (4). However, "This process of identification is precisely what the contemporary culture industry subverts, in diverting and capturing the attention of young minds in their time of 'brain availability,' passive in the face of demands to consume but increasingly subject to attention problems generally accompanied by hyperactivity" (4). As a result of "marketing becom[ing] the central function of social development, replacing traditional social regulation...the crippling limit of this attention-control apparatus...destroys

attention itself, along with the ability to concentrate on an *object* of attention, which is a social faculty” (13). As he puts it elsewhere,

What parents and educators (when they are themselves mature) patiently, slowly, from infancy, year after year pass on as the most valuable things civilization has accumulated, the audiovisual industries systematically destroys, every day, with the most brutal and vulgar techniques, while accusing the family and the education system of this disaster. (72)

Stiegler’s keen intertwining of social faculties with perceptual and attention faculties foregrounds how consumer capitalism’s psychotechnologies function to disrupt both social and neurological development precisely because these developmental processes are really discrete aspects of a larger unified process of maturation, and not discrete processes in themselves. More importantly, this intertwining highlights the multivalent, interconnected ontological stakes involved when we speak of a production of neoliberal subjectivities. This is ontology and subjectivity understood as reflected and experienced at the macro-level of social relation networks, and as reflected and experienced in one’s individual, subjective perceptual, somatic, and cognitive experience, at even the micro-level of neuronal networks. “[A]llowing psychotechnologies to take control of the child’s developing attention,” Stiegler elaborates, “means letting the culture industry destroy those transitional spaces...[which] form the basis of all systems of care and nurturance: a *transitional* space is first and foremost a system of caring” (15). At the same time this kind of social destruction is effected by targeting these systems of caring,

an intertwined destruction of desire and libidinal energy through a targeting of attentional and perceptual system apparatuses also occurs:

Short-circuiting generational inheritance effaces both what differentiates children, parents, grandparents, and, at the same time, cultural memory, consciousness, and attention to what is passed down through the myriad human experiences accumulated as secondary and tertiary retentions underlying cultural knowledge. Systems of sliced and segmented audience capture...[and] replace the psychic apparatus that should be constructing both ego and id...with a psychotechnical apparatus that controls attention yet no longer deals with desire but rather with drives, short-circuiting past (and present) experience by foregrounding future experience (i.e., any future as experience) in advance. (13)

Citing Katherine Hayles and recent brain imaging studies in neuroscience research, Stiegler connects these impacts to neurological structures and development. Further grounding ontology and subjectivity formation simultaneously in both the macro-level of social relations and the micro-level of neuronal development, Stiegler helps me clarify the “Technoscience Empire” of my dissertation’s subtitle and how it is connected to the “Neoliberal Age” that my dissertation addresses. He writes:

[S]ynaptogenesis is profoundly modified by contemporary media, which create an environment that Katherine Hayles has described as one in which the brains of the youngest children, living in a numeric world of “rich media,” are structured differently from those of the preceding

generation. And more specifically, these young brains are having increasing difficulty reaching what Hayles calls “deep attention.” (19)

Echoing Fisher’s notion of reflexive impotence and its symptoms of apathy and cynicism, Stiegler connects this deliberate shaping and delimitation of neuronal development to consequent generated effects of specific affective modes that undergird generalized states and ways of being. In a similar vein as Fisher’s reflexive impotence, Stiegler identifies what he calls a “performative nihilism” at work in youth culture. Consumer culture’s psychotechnologies shape and produce subjectivities by manipulating desire and libidinal energies according to market logics, as well as other affective states such as fear, anxiety, apathy, and so on. In so doing, they operate as *rhetorical* mechanisms aimed not just at persuading consumers to consume, but at generating and manipulating affective states conducive to fostering market-friendly addictive drives. And they do so in a highly effective and successful manner. Stiegler argues that one of the results of this kind of manipulative conditioning of drives and destruction of desire on the level of neuronal development is “*performative nihilism* as the state of the juvenile mind” (41) in what “amounts to nothing less than the triumph of nihilism and the destruction of desire” (46). But more than this, as Stiegler’s citation of brain imaging studies and Hayles makes clear, these rhetorical mechanisms manipulate, train, and condition not just affect and perceptual experience around market logics, but the very *somatic*, cellular ground upon which perceptual, cognitive, and affective experience play out in the first place. As such, their psychotechnological rhetorical and pedagogical practices aim at producing not just a particular given state, but particular subjectivities—

neoliberal subjectivities—as generated effects. Like reflexive impotence, then, performative nihilism is a self-fulfilling worldview. This worldview reflects more than just a particular epistemology and way of perceiving through ideological filters; it reflects the deliberate synaptogenetic manipulation and delimitation of perceptual, attentional, and general somatic apparatuses and capabilities at the neurobiological level of cellular networks.

Stiegler makes clear the deliberateness in this capturing and channeling of attentional, perceptual, and affective experience, in his description of how it arises from a calculated program of conditioning and habituation necessitated by market needs. He writes:

In order to be made available to marketing imperatives, the brain must early on be literally deprived of consciousness in the sense that the creation of synaptic circuits responsible for the attention formation resulting in ‘consciousness’ is blocked by the channeling of attention toward the programming industry’s objects. The young brain, having been treated in this way, disaffected—and which takes all the more risk of incurring an attention deficit (and failure at school) if it has been exposed early on to television programming...is that much more available to the reconstruction of transindividual long circuits that have characterized knowledge thought the course of human history. (72-73)

Significantly, and echoing Nunley’s previous points about popular pedagogy, Stiegler frames this analysis of consumerist conditioning with a contextualization of education as

a dispersed mechanism of entraining. As my next chapter makes clear, this point resonates strongly with early theorizations of pedagogy by the ancient Sophists, and helps lay the groundwork for my argument there around the relevance of the Sophists in developing contemporary critical pedagogy in response to neoliberalism. According to Stiegler, this consumerist conditioning is a process of education that operates not just through institutional education on one hand and popular education channels on the other, but through the exploited overlaps and interactions of these *intertwined* pedagogical fields:

In the twentieth century, chiefly following World War II and with the development of electronic technologies, the educational system and audiovisual—that is, programming—industries have worked together to capture children’s attention through psychotechnologies. By the end of the twentieth century, under immense pressure from marketing—and in the context of the emerging energy crisis, the then-powerful “conservative revolution,” and globalization as world economic warfare—this partnership has precipitated a set of conflicting forces, attentional deficiencies brought about by psychotechnical attention capture, whose current result is an immense psychological, affective, cultural, economic, and social disaster. (58)

He does not explicitly invoke rhetoric, but as my above analysis of the generated effects of this conditioning suggests, Stiegler’s analysis implicitly identifies the underlying rhetorical method involved in such a (governing rationality) program of

attention capture and conditioning, and the parallel underlying orientation toward influencing ontology over epistemology. When he states that, “The goal of the programming industries, as the armed wing of the telecracy, is complete control of the behavior-formation programs regulating social groups...and their adaptation to immediate market needs” (58), Stiegler foregrounds how the desired governing-rationality goal of the telecracy is to generate effects of conditioned subjectivities (primed for neoliberal governance) by targeting attention- and behavior-formation processes across fields of educational influence from the earliest ages. Where Fisher links late capitalism to production of mental health issues and affective states of cynicism and apathy through a self-fulfilling reflexive impotence, Stiegler more finely hones in on how neoliberalism’s technoscience empire depends on an ultra-sophisticated and technologically advanced mechanism of rhetoric and pedagogy aimed at subjectivity on the micro-level of neurological development. The critical relationship between the individual subject and the “terrain” of governing rationality that Nunley identifies as the very background upon which her/his subjectivity is shaped perhaps could not be articulated in more biologically and technologically precise terms than this. And the fundamental, *dire* need to incorporate an ontology-oriented *rhetoric* focus in developing critical pedagogical responses to the devastating impacts wrought by the psychotechnologies of such a sophisticated, pervasive telecracy, should be clear:

When they construct children’s day-to-day environment, psychotechnologies modify the synaptic organization of their developing brains, to the detriment of the structuring of the cerebral plasticity nurtured

by the psychotechniques Katherine Hayles analyzes as ‘deep attention’ critical consciousness, which education is responsible for inscribing as the basis of rational disciplines. (94)

As a critical pedagogue confronting the realities of market-based neoliberal subjectivities and rationalities, how do I critically intervene in these subjectivities (with a firm belief in their possibilities of “critical agency”)? These are subjectivities of “hollowed out,” “undemocratic citizens”—the “pacified and neutered” subject primed by “reflexive impotence” and “performative nihilism” for various pathological and pathologized conditions and manipulated/manipulable affective states. They are primed for preemptively, neuronally delimited perceptual and attentional capabilities, revealed in both the kinds of widespread specific learning disabilities and disorders Fisher describes, and in the more general attentional and cognitive difficulties Stiegler discusses. Finally, these are subjectivities primed for “submission to administrative authority”—the subject who “loves and wants neither freedom nor equality,” and “who expects neither truth nor accountability in governance and state actions.” As posed, this question appears directed at the subjectivities of our students. At the same time, however, the wording is purposely ambiguous because I also direct it, self-reflexively, at our *own* subjectivities as educators, at our own condition(ing)s of reflexive impotence and performative nihilism, mental health issues, and precarious positions within the educational telecratic “engine rooms” of the “reproduction of social reality”—*neoliberal* social reality. How do we intervene in these subjectivities in order both to teach them critically and to teach *as* them critically? How do we confront Giroux's “deep sense of hopelessness and cynicism,” Fisher's self-

fulfilling reflexive impotence, and Stiegler's performative nihilism, not just in our students, but in *ourselves* as subject to the same forces of neoliberal rationality and subjectivity production?¹⁸

It is with these practical and timely questions in mind that the next chapter turns—perhaps paradoxically, at first glance—to the rhetoric and pedagogy of the ancient Sophists. Drawing on the work of contemporary neosophists connecting the ancient Sophists to critical pedagogy, I illuminate their contemporary relevance and their importance to critical pedagogy. Further developing my case for rhetoric as vital to development of contemporary critical pedagogy, I also lay a foundation for understanding how the Sophists' rhetoric and pedagogy informs and shapes both my own pedagogy and the rhetoric hermeneutics of my approach to specific areas of cultural production in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE:
“OUT OF THIS MISH-MASH OF EXPERIENCES”:
***NOMOS*, NIHILISM, AND**
NEOSOPHIST PEDAGOGY FOR A NEOLIBERAL AGE

The (neo)Sophist turn in rhetoric and composition over the last three decades has resulted in a large body of work that makes compelling arguments for the Sophists as highly relevant to contemporary rhetoric and critical pedagogy.¹⁹ As noted in my introduction, my analysis here draws heavily on and is in conversation with this work. In this chapter, I explore these connections throughout my argument for Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy as key sites for understanding and developing critical pedagogical responses to neoliberalism. However, with the specific crises of neoliberalism and the pedagogical questions of the previous section in mind, I approach this argument in a way that might seem counter-intuitive, but that helps ultimately to underscore my point: I look at how neoliberalism *itself* demonstrates the importance of and helps make the case for drawing on the Sophists through its own pedagogical and rhetorical focus.

Consider the neoliberal use of popular public channels for the dissemination and normalization of market rationality touched on in the previous chapters. Along with a savvy rhetorical theory and practice, these neoliberal mechanisms of dissemination and normalization demonstrate a fundamental focus on pedagogy in terms of both formal institutional educational structures and pedagogy understood as a public endeavor. This approach parallels the Sophists’ theorization of education as a publicly dispersed primary

entraining in *nomos* (sociocultural convention and law”)²⁰ and *aretē* (civic virtue). As Susan Jarratt, G. B. Kerferd, James L. Jarrett, and others suggest in germinal works analyzing Sophist pedagogy and rhetoric, a key insight of the Sophists was their foregrounding of the sociocultural and political importance of a dispersed yet interwoven education in the formation of the subject. Paraphrasing Plato, Jarrett notes that when Plato’s Sophist “Protagoras”²¹ is asked what he sees as the source of *aretē* education, his “Great Speech” ultimately argues the need for professional teachers (like the Sophists) who can teach and hone *aretē* at a more advanced level. But first, Protagoras explains how this education initially is interwoven across public, personal, and institutional channels in its involvement of “everybody. Every parent teaches his own children, every citizen teaches his fellows from birth to death—our whole lives being a fabric of ethical discourse. And when children are sent to schoolmasters to learn to read, those masters continue their ethical training” (38). As Susan Jarratt puts it, “What we see laid out in the ‘*logos*’ of Protagoras’ ‘Great Speech’ is a program for a cultural education; we might call it an ideological education in the values of the community” (100). This “life-long cultural process of education in the broadest sense through which the individual is shaped in the mold of the group,” Jarratt explains, is “no less than a comprehensive process of socialization” (101). In the words of Plato’s “Protagoras,” civic virtue thus “is taught by the whole community through laws and punishment” (Plato qtd. in Kerferd 134).

Here, the focus is on civic virtue. But as Jarratt suggests, Protagoras’ “life-long cultural process of education” and “a comprehensive process of socialization” involves concern with more than just ethics and political skills. It is a pedagogical process of

subjectivity formation, or what Stiegler would identify as “transindividuation”— pedagogical subjectivity formation in relation to one’s sociocultural milieu through the mediational technology of *pharmaka*. Transindividuation and the meditational technology of *pharmaka* are forms of biopolitical practice. On one hand, as neosophists like Jarratt argue, part of the value of Sophist pedagogy lies in their formal conceptualization of education in the first place, which created a critical distance on education itself as such. In fact, an important point for all pedagogues to keep in mind, critical and otherwise, is that the Sophists were the first in the West to theorize education and its sociocultural and political importance. In this sense, they were, as Havelock, Jarratt, Jarrett, and others argue, not just the first rhetoricians, but the first pedagogues and the first to systematize and professionalize teaching in the West through application of their rhetoric methodology. Particularly relevant to my dissertation’s focus on conditioning and bodily habituation is that their germinal pedagogical theorizations focused on understanding education explicitly in terms of mechanistic habituation and unconscious practice. Jarratt cites Havelock in making this point:

Havelock draws attention to the critical value of simply bringing to light habitual, unconscious practice: ‘Sophistic sociology would then perform the historical service of discovering that there was such a thing as ‘education,’ which as handled within the family became an identifiable process though only part of the over-all mechanism by which society conserved itself’ (*Temper* 180). Not only did the Sophists bring to

consciousness an unconscious process, but more significantly they deployed their contribution to it in association with democracy. (101)

As Jarratt and Havelock suggest here, the Sophist concern with “bring[ing] to consciousness an unconscious process” of “habitual, unconscious practice” underscores a specific critical, self-reflexive rhetorical focus on the (regulatory) mechanisms through which this educational process occurred, with democratic aims; Sophist pedagogical theory was *critical* pedagogical theory that used rhetorical analysis to look critically at the nature of *nomos* and its normalizing, regulatory, and conditioning role in this educational process in relation to the possibilities for achieving democracy. Here, it is important to note that in Greek society, most of the Sophists belonged to a class of citizens known as “metics” (Protagoras was one example). These were second-class foreigners drawn and pushed to the city from outlying areas by forces of imperialism. They were subject to taxation and military conscription, but had no political representation. Many were former, freed slaves and had some limited legislative rights (mostly those necessary to conduct business), but their position within the legislative apparatus was unequal as second-class citizens. It is vital to understand that the Sophists were operating from this political position, and how this informed their focus on language and pedagogy around *nomos*. Metics were marginalized at the intersection of political, juridical, and economic spheres. They thus were very concerned, as second-class, marginalized subjects, with how this intersection was shaped and maintained by wider cultural forces, and sought access to power within these matrices. They were therefore concerned not just with a general shift in *demos* power dispersal, but, from a position of

marginalization and disenfranchisement, with how power functioned to exclude and disenfranchise. Their investment in “bring[ing] to consciousness an unconscious process” of “habitual, unconscious practice” reflected a counter-hegemonic, subaltern politics aimed at deconstructing exclusionary power structures toward more inclusive democratic participation.

When I discuss market-based subjectivities as a key contemporary issue for critical pedagogy, what I wish to highlight is the “habitual, unconscious practice” of subjectivities that have been shaped according to the “habitual, unconscious” pedagogical enforcement and naturalization of a hegemonic *nomos* power structure of neoliberal rationality. This is a rationality that is hostile to democratic participation and engagement, as Brown’s assessment of neoliberal subjectivities indicates in the previous chapter. The success of this particular pedagogical enforcement reflects neoliberals’ keen understanding of rationalities as contingent and constructed (notwithstanding their concerted efforts at instilling a naturalized sense of market rationalities specifically predicated on a disavowal of their contingency and constructedness). Further, this success reflects an understanding of the education of *nomos* value systems as dispersed across multiple spheres and central to shaping subjectivities. As the primary channels for enforcement and entraining in market rationality, neoliberal mechanisms and processes of education have been rhetorically designed, exploited, and implemented, with an understanding of education as a culturally dispersed “comprehensive process of socialization.” This is an “ideological education in the values of the community” that does not just shape how subjects see the world, but that rhetorically *generates* these

subjects, shaping how and who they *are* in the world around a market-value system. As I detail below, the dispersed yet interwoven dissemination of neoliberal education through sophisticated rhetorical analysis and mechanisms includes channels of popular culture and densely connected global networks of political and educational institutions and professionals. It involves a highly self-aware meta-practice and theory of rhetoric and pedagogy aimed at entraining mass populations in a *nomos* of market-oriented policies, laws, and social conventions whose contingency and constructedness is normalized and naturalized to the point of equation with human nature itself. This is a *nomos* based on *doxa* that cluster around a fundamental belief in the market (full faith in the free market's ability to order life) and *topoi* (commonplaces) that both generate and emanate from a naturalized vision of *homo economicus* as the “natural” *physis* state of human being. This includes, for example, the individualist commonplace that people will—and should—always act only in their economic self-interest, and the corollary that social relations and structures reflect and should serve an underlying and “natural” economic competition of a “survival of the fittest.” Through this entraining, neoliberal pedagogy redefines *aretē* through a naturalized²² lens of market rationality that re-structures citizenship and civic participation as purely a function of market forces that prioritize competition for resources and, above all else, consumption. This is a (re-)vision of democracy as marketplace, democratic engagement as consumer choice, civic virtue as the active, engaged participation of a “good” consumer. At the same time, neoliberal pedagogy exploitatively blurs and collapses boundaries (dedifferentiates) between the constructed (*nomos*) and the natural (*physis*), and between social, political, and economic spheres.

This process of dedifferentiation²³ seeks to apply market valuation to all spheres of life.²⁴ In this context especially, neoliberals recognize education as a prime site for regulatory exploitation because, as the Sophists first demonstrated, sociocultural education already functions in a dispersed mode of dedifferentiation across all social spheres. Drawing on the Sophists helps us understand, then, as Nunley puts it in analyzing neoliberal pedagogy as a public pedagogy, how “[e]xtending the education beyond the classroom allows us to consider how a variety of discourses and rhetorics we usually think of as peripheral to learning or lacking pedagogical effect indeed reflect and produce the educational force of the entire culture” (158). Additionally, it helps us see how neoliberals have operated from a rhetoric methodology premised on exactly such an understanding of education, and how this understanding has shaped their (successful and effective) rhetorical approach to education as central to their project.

This parallel to Sophist pedagogy in neoliberal thinking and policy dovetails with a neoliberal emphasis on rhetoric and language that also parallels the centrality of language in Sophist rhetorical praxis. Attention to rhetoric and language has been clear from neoliberals’ earliest collaborations in the 1920s to reach both elite-intellectual and mass audiences, which necessarily involved framing neoliberal rationality in a variety of discourses. In *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, editors Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe focus on the role of the Mont Pèlerin Society in pulling together a global network beginning in the 1920s to create what Plehwe calls “a *comprehensive* transnational discourse community” (“Introduction” 5). They do not explicitly identify this project as rhetorical in nature, and neoliberals

themselves may not have explicitly framed their project in terms of rhetoric. However, the use of “discourse community” to describe the aims of the neoliberals should make clear the underlying but vital role of rhetoric in how they approached their task of disseminating neoliberal rationality and producing neoliberal subjectivities. As Plehwe describes, the “collective effort” of this discourse community “was not restricted by a standard (pluralist, apolitical) understanding of a rigid separation of academic disciplines, or by the need to develop knowledge in a few restricted single-issue areas,” but instead, “can be described as “transdisciplinary . . . and transacademic” (5). Plehwe cites strategists of the Institute of Economic Affairs, one of the most important neoliberal think tanks, as assessing the result of these efforts “in military terms,” a framing exemplified over time by “an increasingly fine-grained division of intellectual labor” (6). The rhetorical nature of these efforts should be clear in how this division of intellectual labor has included the “long-range” artillery of “partisan think tanks that organize academic production of publications” and the “short-range” artillery of “think tanks and journalists dedicated to marketing neoliberal pamphlets (book reviews, interviews, dinner speeches, etc.),” while “hand-to-hand combat” is carried out by “neoliberalist politicians and other activist types” (6). This concerted discursive front has focused on “fundamental change in the long term, rather than opportunistically subscribing to feasible change in the short term,” and “combine[d] elite scholarship with popular writing and intermittent sophistication with populist simplification” (6).

Language and rhetoric have been, from the beginning, then, central to the long-term success and effectiveness of the neoliberal project—long before failures of post–

WWII Keynesian economics presented an opportune moment (*kairos*) for neoliberalists to more actively implement agendas they had been patiently developing and preparing over decades through rhetorical and pedagogical mechanisms. Development of rhetoric methodology, strategy, and practice, has been key to neoliberalists' ability to erect a *discourse* community network capable of disseminating its rationality through multiple channels of public pedagogy. Plehwe and other contributors to *The Road from Mont Pèlerin* describe in detail how this network has radically impacted policy and social structures on global scales. But it is perhaps the neoliberals themselves who make the point best about the centrality of language and rhetoric to their project. In his introduction to a re-publication of F. A. Hayek's seminal 1944 neoliberal text, *The Road to Serfdom*, John Blundell describes an exchange between Hayek and another key neoliberalist, Anthony Fisher, who would go on to play a central role in establishing over a hundred neoliberal think tanks and other centers worldwide. According to Fisher, when he informed Hayek that he planned to go into politics after reading *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek told him,

“No you're not! Society's course will be changed only by a change in ideas. First you must reach the *intellectuals*, the *teachers* and *writers*, with reasoned argument. It will be their influence on society which will prevail, and the politicians will follow.” (Blundell 20; emphasis added)

The blueprint for the neoliberal pedagogical approach and rhetorical strategy couldn't be clearer or more succinct. Hayek reveals their approach as self-consciously rhetorically savvy (even if not framed explicitly as such), as a self-aware pedagogical and

rhetorical project, albeit through other terms. While I will return to the notion of reasoned argument and its limits in my concluding chapter, what is clear is that the primary goal is to *persuade* minds toward *change* with what circulates as *reasoned argument* (indeed, to change minds with regard to what constitutes reasoned argument in the first place), in order to *effect political actions* through *influence*. Rhetoric and pedagogy, not politics or even economics, are central to the neoliberal project's approach. Political action and policy are part of the desired effects of neoliberalism's rhetoric and pedagogy. However, no policy changes will occur without first *persuading* minds and changing not only their thinking on economic matters toward neoliberal agendas, but changing the very grounds of what passes as meaningful, legible, intelligible, for those with the power to effect such changes in the first place (and, of course, the minds of those in the wider population who might resist them).²⁵ I emphasize this point here in order to highlight that the neoliberal rhetoric and pedagogy involved has been focused not just on achieving an epistemological shift, but on achieving an *ontological* shift. Effecting a shift in what passes as meaningful and legible implies not just a shift in knowledge base, but a more fundamental, underlying shift in ways of seeing and being. For such a project to succeed, dissemination of ideas and information is not enough; rhetoric and highly sophisticated rhetorical savvy, coupled with sophisticated manipulation of pedagogy based on a keen understanding of its relationship to *nomos* entraining, is required. Paralleling Plehwe's description, neoliberalist Blundell fleshes out this neoliberal blueprint for rhetorical and pedagogical success with a description of the eclectic materials and experiences of neoliberal thinkers: "Out of this mish-mash of experiences," he writes, "—academic,

business, political, journalistic—came the distinctive IEA approach of short monographs containing the very best economics in good, jargon-free English, written by academics (mostly) or quasi-academics, in language accessible to the layman but still of use to the expert” (22-23). The re-publication of Hayek’s text in a condensed version in *The Reader’s Digest* is itself, as Blundell points out, an example of the effectiveness of such an approach. This particular publication “finally reached a mass audience”—in addition to catching the pivotal attention of Anthony Fisher—after consistently selling out small publishing runs. Blundell then notes the first “success” of this approach as one of a significant shift in economic policy, a “fantastic reform” in 1964 when the policy of Resale Price Maintenance was repealed after a 1960 IEA study by Basil Yamey, *Resale Price Maintenance and Shoppers’ Choice*. So, although Hayek exhorts Fisher to stay out of politics, clearly, the aim is to fundamentally control and reshape politics at an ontological level—to *influence* policy and policymakers by *generating effects* through the *persuasion* of arguments developed and disseminated via a systematic pedagogical and rhetorical effort. This was an effort not just to reach as wide an audience as possible, but to entrain that audience in market-value ways of being that would prime them for reception of neoliberal ideas.

To pose an obviously rhetorical question: Is my point here that the neoliberals are modern-day “Sophists”? Of course, it is not (quite). Perhaps a finer way of putting this rhetorical question more directly might be to ask how we can see the neoliberals as practicing an un-self reflexive, uncritical sophistic rhetoric while unwilling to admit to the rhetoric of their own theories because to do so could destabilize their very grounds of

legitimacy. But perhaps a more ambiguous and troubling way of framing this question is to ask whether their canny, highly successful exploitation of language and education ultimately vindicates Plato's critique of Sophist manipulation of truth and reality through relativism, through ambiguous, paradoxical language, and through potentially morally ambiguous *technê* untethered from socioethical concerns.

As rhetoricians, the Sophists obviously focused significant attention on language. As Jarrett notes, along with his pedagogy, one of Protagoras' key contributions was "the systematic study of language," which reflects the fact that, "[a]ll the Sophists appear to have been language-centered in their thinking" because they were "concerned to order men's [sic] discourse, to get them talking lucidly and convincingly about the social order" (63). For the Sophists, language and its relationship to reality and perception were of particular interest because for them, subjective sense-perception is all that we can know of reality; thus, language plays a vital role in making sense of what we perceive and in negotiating "truth" among what Blundell might call a "mish-mash" of subjective experiences. As Susan Jarratt writes, the Sophists, "evinced a special interest in human perceptions as the only source of knowledge in all fields...and emphasized the significance of language in constructing that knowledge" (xviii). In particular, they "make possible an additional [philosophical] question...how does language create different answers to those questions [treated by 'philosophy'] at different moments in history?" (xviii). This worldview regarded all phenomena as a constant flux and as "characterised by the fact that all or most things in it both *are* and *are not*" (Kerferd 72).²⁶ The Sophists wrestled with the paradoxical implications of this "antilogical" way

of approaching reality. According to this approach, language is a site that “also must exhibit the same structure...by giving expression to two opposed *logoi* concerning everything” (Kerferd 72).²⁷

Critique of the Sophists from Plato through Foucault have oddly, self-servingly, and uncritically denigrated the Sophists, while benefiting from their proto-anti-foundationalist ethos. These critiques have centered on the Sophists’ skeptical, relativist views and on their parallel anti-foundationalist rejection of a philosophical ideal. Plato’s critique of the Sophists was not based on this flux-oriented conception of phenomena itself, but on their response to it. For Plato, Kerferd notes, the “changing character of the phenomenal world” was exactly what made it “incapable of functioning as the object of knowledge” in the first place because, “[k]nowledge must necessarily be firm and unchanging and it requires objects of the same character as itself” (67). In fact, Kerferd points out, it is precisely this world of the senses that Socrates rejects and seeks to escape, “and the reason for his need to escape from it is that it exhibits just those characteristics defined and identified by the [Sophist] people known as *antilogikoi*” (67). For Plato, the moral and ethical implications of this relativism are radically at odds with a Platonic conceptualization of philosophy²⁸ and thus unacceptable. Sophist skepticism and relativism with regard to phenomena and language (and the relationship between them) is seen as an embracing of moral relativism and nihilism. But as Sharon Crowley notes,

Protagoras taught that existence was an arena of insane strife, where two opposing *logoi*, or possible accounts of reality, exist in every experience. The subjectivity of individual perception forever deprived humans of the

opportunity to know which of these competing versions of experience was true. However, by means of discourse, people could articulate their perceptions in such a way as to bring these opposing *logoi* to light... Because of its tolerance for contradiction, discourse could balance alternatives against one another; further, it could make one alternative seem more probable or acceptable than the other, and hence could point to an appropriate course of action. (327)

And as a number of other neosophists argue, this kind of Sophist skepticism and relativism in approaching language through an ethos of antilogic actually was aimed at exactly these sorts of dangers of nihilism Plato feared by seeking to undermine overdetermined claims to universal Truth while developing ways of democratically negotiating reality. In fact, this argument about the critical potential in Sophist rhetoric is the basis of connections that neosophists like Susan Jarratt make between contemporary critical pedagogy and Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy. For example, Jarratt writes:

What makes the practice of ‘antilogic’ especially significant for an evaluation of sophistic education for democracy is its critical potential. The Protagorean account of the educational process emphasized the power of custom/law—of hegemony, in Gramscian terms—to dominate the student through all levels of education and to reproduce itself. By bringing the very process of acculturation to consciousness, ‘Protagoras’ implies the possibility of a critical relation to that process—an ability to stand outside of and perhaps control aspects of it. But the technique of antilogic

goes further, demonstrating how the Sophist and his students actually engaged in a critical analysis of popular belief. (104)

This “‘technique’ of antilogic,” then, “is...not merely a mechanical process of constructing contentless arguments but a natural outcome of sophistic epistemology with critical potential for engaging and shaping political thought and action in the polis” (104-05). As Jarratt puts it in linking the Sophists to critical pedagogues like Paolo Freire, Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, and Stanley Aronowitz,

One of the primary means by which critical pedagogues move students toward critical consciousness is the exposure of contradiction. Like the sophistic practice of antilogic, contradictions emerging out of cultural discourses are brought to a level of consciousness so that they can come under analysis. The aim is not resolution, but rather an awareness of the way culture, structuring thought and action, contains contradictory messages... (110)

I previously highlighted the significance of the Sophist intervention in terms of their establishment of critical awareness of education as such. Similarly, their rhetoric theorized the relationship between language and reality from a skeptical and relativist stance because they sought to establish a critical awareness of language as such. As Jarratt points out, these critical concerns over language and education were interwoven: “[A]ll the [Sophist] figures under consideration here see language teaching as the key strategy for developing critical consciousness” (108). This strategy includes “[t]hemes of naming, of working through common expressions (*topoi*) toward a critical reconnection

of their use, of distancing by making conscious an educational process” (108-09). The antilogic epistemic relativism of the Sophists was, I argue, better understood as self-reflexively supra-logical, supra-rational. They sought to take into account that which the logic of the prevailing *nomos* order would find illegible and therefore ignore—power dynamics, institutionalized politics, affect, and human perception (and its limits).

As with education, the Sophists’ focus on language demonstrated a need for critical attention to the relationship between language and reality. The value in fostering and developing a critical, self-reflexive stance toward *nomos* should be clear. But as Jarratt explains, it is *rhetoric* that makes this criticality possible with mechanisms capable of establishing meta-awareness of language and language-use, in the same way their critical attention to dispersed education made possible meta-awareness of cultural pedagogy as such. As they first formally theorized education, the Sophists also first formally theorized and practiced rhetoric toward such a critical awareness, specifically around *nomos* and *physis*. Jarratt writes:

[R]hetoric can be closely linked with *nomos* as a process of articulating codes, consciously designed by groups of people, opposed both to the monarchical tradition...and to the supposedly non-human force of divinely controlled “natural law.” These definitions help to locate an understanding of *nomos* in the context of the movement from *mythos* to *logos*. If the mythic world is based on an uncritical acceptance of a tradition warranted by nature (*physis*), then a sophistic interest in *nomos* represents a challenge to that tradition...If, on the other hand, *logos* in its ultimately

Platonic form signifies a...system of discourse allowing access to certain Truth, then *nomos* stands in opposition as the possibility for reformulating human 'truths' in historically and geographically specific contexts. (42)

The Sophists promoted a dialogical, pragmatic engagement with questions of the contingency of rhetorical exchange and with questions of social reality and ways of being and becoming. They understood truth as socio-culturally and contingently constructed and negotiated through these rhetorical exchanges. These are exchanges that impact and influence discursive participants on the ontological level of subjectivity. In place of a static, "habitual, unconscious" *being*, *being* unknowingly entangled in a culture-wide entraining in *nomos*, they sought to foster the conditions necessary for the practice of a democratically engaged subject always consciously involved in a self-reflexive social process of *becoming*.²⁹ This was a becoming articulated through a critical *aretē* that skeptically understood *nomos* as a constructed field warranted contingently by monarchical law and/or by the "natural" law of *physis*.

Platonic dismissals aside, then, the aim of the Sophist focus on language was not a nihilistic abandonment of truth in favor of self-interested relativism. As James L. Jarrett posits in connecting the Sophists to the pragmatism of James and Schiller, Sophist rhetoric pragmatically emphasized language and its relation to reality with the practical aim of navigating and negotiating relative truth toward "a better life." "Truth," Jarrett writes, "is...whatever is perceived or otherwise experienced by anybody," but "this is not to say that everyone's experience is equally satisfactory or praiseworthy any more than it is to say that everyone is equally healthy" (59). Jarrett develops this metaphor of health to

make clear the value to (healthy) subjectivity and (healthy) democracy of this relativist Sophist approach to language. Putting one's "truths" in self-reflexive dissensual dialogue with those of others is the critical process through which one changes and refines perception toward a better life—adjusting truths here, abandoning others there—in a dynamic and social process of becoming that reflects the Sophist understanding of all phenomena (including oneself and one's subjectivity) as constantly in flux.³⁰ Without such a dialogic process, and the perceptual-linguistic skills necessary for engaging it, "truth" takes on a static and non-negotiable character, along with its subjective perceiver(s). The need for a formal rhetorical analysis of language, for a critical linguistic theory and practice, is therefore a practical ontological one that arises from this effort at negotiating (truth) toward effecting and living a better life.

Still, neoliberalists would assert their focus on language as part of a particular vision of humanness angled toward democracy and precisely toward such a "better life." In fact, this is the basis of their utopian vision and language:³¹ The free market as a universal secular-theological ordering principle applied to all spheres of life, making those spheres *better* and *freer*. But as the dubious neoliberalist equation of individual and social freedom with the "freedom" of "free" markets indicates, these claims are at best disingenuous. As Mirowski notes, "*Neoliberals extol freedom as trumping all other virtues; but the definition of freedom is recoded and heavily edited within their framework*" (437; orig. emphasis). According to this neoliberal recoding, "Freedom is not the realization of any political, human, or cultural *telos*, but rather is the positing of autonomous self-governed individuals...striving to improve their lot in life by engaging

in market exchange” (437). The Sophists focused on pedagogy and rhetoric toward the development of citizen-subjects capable of critically participating in democratic processes³². This critical participation included pursuing a “good life” of socioethically oriented, enlightened hedonism³³ and harmonious maintenance of democratic public spheres and private households with “sound judgment in both private and civil affairs” (Jarrett 34).³⁴ By contrast, the neoliberalists’ market-based conception of democracy and the “good life” reduces political involvement to an electoral politics of consumerist choices among corporatist candidates, and the “good life” to purely self-interested, individualist hedonism, to produce what Foucault critiques as a “poor vision of man.”³⁵ While the neoliberal project does indeed demonstrate the nihilistic dangers Plato saw in sophistic manipulation of language and pedagogy, in fact, these nihilistic dangers are exactly what the Sophists developed their critical praxis to *confront*, not to promote. Their praxis was not a program on how to manipulate language and education toward selfish ends; it was a program on how to critically confront the manipulation of language and education by *others* and (self-reflexively) in *oneself* in order to secure the practice of democracy and a better life for the *demos*. So when Mirowski writes of the neoliberalists that, “they adopt the position that perception and cognition are not directly determined as unique representations of an independently given objective world,” and that, “the impossibility of objective knowledge lies at the very heart of Hayek’s notion of the market as the ultimate prosthesis for the process of the discovery of knowledge” (429), he is not describing the dangers of Sophist practice in action, but instead, the very kinds of dangers that the Sophists sought to confront through critical analysis and practice in the

first place. Like Plato, Hayek responds to the impossibility of objective knowledge not with the critical relativism of the Sophists, but with a false, totalizing claim to ideal truth and knowledge—in this case, an overdetermined truth founded in free market logic figured as *physis*. Similarly, Mirowski’s statement that “[t]he starting point of neoliberalism is the admission...that *their vision of the good society will triumph only if it becomes reconciled to the fact that the conditions for its existence must be constructed*” (434; orig. emphasis) does not validate inaccurate Platonic critiques of Sophist manipulation of *nomos*. Rather, it illustrates the need for awareness of *nomos*’ constructedness and manipulability—an awareness that the Sophists sought to cultivate precisely to *ward off* such overdetermining efforts to manipulate and control that construction.

Obviously, then, it is not my intent to condemn the Sophists by situating them as akin to neoliberals. Quite the contrary. Neoliberal examples underscore the contemporary value of the Sophists, whose work responded to and anticipated rulers like the neoliberals, thus the need for critical rhetoric and pedagogy. Unfortunately, too many Leftists continue to struggle with an earnest (Platonic, epistemology-oriented) insistence on speaking Truth (to power), on revealing the “true” state of contemporary reality and its conditions through dissemination of information, with little or no attention to rhetoric. In the meantime, neoliberalists have used rhetorical savvy to seize control of that reality and define its nature and, more importantly, the natures of its subjectivities, through a sophistic understanding of the contingency and relativism of truth. This savvy rhetorical manipulation of “truth” works to delimit and frame not only what information is

disseminated to whom, but what even counts as legible information in the first place, as the (potential) receivers of information are conditioned and habituated ontologically prior to any epistemological exchange. As my overview of neoliberal rhetorical and pedagogical strategies demonstrates above, neoliberalists have accomplished this through a systematic focus on rhetoric and pedagogy that aims at producing neoliberal subjectivities. They not only have understood the sociocultural and political importance of a dispersed yet interwoven education in the formation of the subject, but also seem to grasp the pragmatic Sophist principle that while there indeed may be an objective reality, to paraphrase Gorgias' paradox,³⁶ it is not something that can ever be known, and even if it could, it could not be communicated. On one level, Gorgias was talking about setting aside attempts to establish an objective notion of reality in favor of focusing on how reality, whatever it might be as subjectively experienced, ultimately is negotiated through language. And this gives language a powerful social force that must be both accounted for and engaged with by citizens who possess the critical capability to do both. Crowley underscores this point in clarifying Gorgias' maxim:

[L]anguage had enormous powers that went far beyond the representation of individual reality: It could interpret experience, and even create its similitude; further, it could conjure up the attitudes and emotions associated with experience in such a way as to deceive listeners, momentarily, into believing they were participating in "the real thing." Because of this, language harbored enormous social force. Skilled rhetors could use it to recreate experience and to stimulate people to act, even

when events themselves were so incoherently understood as to indicate no feasible course of action. (328)

When Hayek tells Fisher that “[s]ociety’s course will be changed only by a change in ideas” and that “you must reach the intellectuals, the teachers and writers, with reasoned argument,” he is not just making a point about how language shapes policy. He is demonstrating an understanding of how language “harbors enormous social force” not just in its representation and negotiating of reality, but in its capacity to shape and create reality, and our perception of it, in the first place—in other words, its capacity to shape and create *us*.

More recently, noted neoliberal Gary Becker helps make perhaps one of the strongest cases for a sophistic approach to understanding and responding to neoliberalism with a similar point. In conversation with François Ewald and Bernard Harcourt around Foucault’s critique of Becker’s human capital analysis, Becker articulates a remarkable acknowledgement of Foucault’s point (via Ewald) that, “the man produced by human capital is a fiction.” “It is,” Becker says,

But all theories are fiction...physics, biology, economics...any social science, any physical science, any biological—they’re fictions. So you’re taking certain aspects of behavior, and you’re saying, can I take these aspects of behavior...a very simple model of man...can I take that simple model about the world and understand a lot of things about the world and then help to prescribe things for the world? Yes, it’s a fiction—I’m proud of that...it should be a fiction...that’s what theory does—theory’s an

abstraction, it's a fiction, and the question is, when analyzing good and bad theories...which fiction works better, for whatever problem you have in mind...I think human capital has been a great fiction.

Becker's blunt, candid acknowledgment of his own neoliberal theory's contingency, constructedness, and relativism, makes clear neoliberalism's awareness—and exploitation—of *nomos* as a (fictionally) constructed set of prescriptive conventions central to subjectivity formation. In this case, the subjectivity is one based on a market-fundamentalist “very simple model of man” that Foucault (more accurately) describes as a “poor vision of man.” Ironically, the rhetorical savvy of Becker's glib and even prideful acknowledgment disingenuously functions as a disavowal of the ontological prescriptiveness of subjectivity at work here even as he confesses his aim to “prescribe things for the world.” He acknowledges human capital theory and its model of subjectivity as a “fiction,” but by positing it as *merely* a descriptive theory and basis for hypothetical prescription of (vaguely articulated) “things for the world” and *not* as the prescriptive mechanism of *subjectivity* that it really is, Becker dismisses the more important underlying critique of how this model has served to aggressively shape subjectivities and their social reality around a “poor vision of man.” In *Capitalist Realism: Is There Really No Alternative?*, Mark Fisher gets to the heart of the matter in describing the all-pervasive social reality of market logic that has resulted from this “great fiction” that foregrounds the prescriptive (versus descriptive) nature of Becker's “fiction” and its impact on reality. Fisher writes: “Over the past thirty years, capitalist realism has successfully installed a ‘business ontology’ in which it is simply obvious that

everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business” (17).

Aside from the obvious socioethical questions of asking for whom exactly Becker’s “great fiction” of human capital (and neoliberal ideology more broadly) works best, according to which definitions, and for which “problems,” I want to suggest a more generative question. It is one that Becker sidesteps through a fallacious inversion of cause and effect in which the human capital model of subjectivity is a “great” successful fiction because it accurately observes and reflects the *physis* of human nature “models of man” and then just faithfully applies this observation to economic, political, and social structures. In reality, this fiction actively works to *shape* and *generate* subjectivities and social relations according to its market logic *nomos*. It does not shape its model according to humans; it shapes humans according to its model. I ask: How does the “fiction” of an abstract theory and abstract model of human being become sociopolitical *reality*—and not just any sociopolitical reality, but an *all-pervasive* sociopolitical reality, the eponymous “capitalist realism” of Fisher’s study? Becker’s theories may be, according to him, merely “great fictions,” but as Fisher points out,

It is worth recalling that what is currently called realistic was itself once ‘impossible’: the slew of privatization that took place since the 1980s would have been unthinkable only a decade earlier, and the current political-economic landscape (with unions in abeyance, utilities and railways denationalized) could scarcely have been imagined in 1975.

Conversely, what was once eminently possible is now deemed unrealistic.

(17)

As Fisher puts it,

Capitalist realism as I understand it...is more like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier *constraining thought and action*. (16; emphasis added)

How exactly does this kind of conditioning work to generate its real-world effects through fictive constructs? How is such a “pervasive atmosphere” (rhetorically) produced from (rhetorically developed) models and fictions? How does such an atmosphere function, rhetorically, to structure subjectivities at the level of “constraining thought and action” (which includes behavior, affect, somatic response, and sensorial and cognitive perception)?

All of these questions are embedded in a sophistic rhetoric methodology responding to neoliberalism. For as the Sophists demonstrated, before we can begin to grapple with navigation of socioethical issues and the dialogue necessary for democratic action, we need a pragmatic, critical distance on sociopolitical reality with a *rhetorical* awareness of how it—and its subjectivities—are *fictively* constructed and shaped through rhetoric and pedagogy. As Becker’s statement suggests, this kind of distance is, in fact, one of the great rhetorical advantages that neoliberals have (notwithstanding their surface claims to be reflecting the *physis* “reality” of “true” human nature). In its fundamental premises, mine is not an original claim by any means. As Fisher notes, “As any number

of radical theorists...have maintained, emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a ‘natural order,’ must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency” (17). What I add to this effort, in conversation with the neosophist turn, is a call for rhetoric studies and more specifically incorporation of critical Sophist rhetorical and pedagogical theories and practices as vital to such emancipatory politics and to the project of “destroy[ing] the appearance of a ‘natural order’” in the particular context of contemporary neoliberalism. What Gorgias and Protagoras both were pointing to was the need for meta-critical distance on the linguistic and educational forces that shape our subjective perceptions of reality by shaping the very terrain upon which certain effects and affects can be made legible as subjectivities. And Protagoras’ argument for critical education in *aretē* beyond the “habitual, unconscious” practices and processes of *nomos* enculturation was an argument for advanced Sophist training in such meta-critical concerns as *de rigueur*.

Conclusion: Pyrrhonian Paralysis / Parataxis Paratactics

Becker’s response about “fiction” resonates with Giroux’s earlier position about the crisis of neoliberalism as a crisis of political and historical imagination. It suggests, as does Giroux, that critically confronting neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities involves the dimension of imagination and creativity. With this dimension in mind, I conclude this chapter’s analysis with a brief discussion of how and why the rhetoric methodology I am developing here specifically includes an emphasis on aesthetics and creativity around this sophistic focus on neoliberalism. This discussion helps clarify the creative, arts-based

approaches to critical pedagogy that I seek to develop through this rhetoric methodology, as well as my application of this methodology to excavating the pedagogical potential in the aesthetic practices and works that I examine in the chapters that follow.

Part of the dark reality of Becker's "great fiction" of human capital, and of neoliberalism more generally, is that neoliberals have not only seized control of reality and its definition; they have seized control of the means of even imagining reality and imagining future. This is important for understanding Brett Levinson's neoliberal consensus and its crises of language and imagination discussed in the previous chapter. These crises inherently rub up against a crisis of futurity, as all future is narrowed to specific market-oriented outcomes that exclude other possibilities. This chapter's historicization of neoliberalism should make clear that this crisis, and the neoliberal rationality that generates it, did not just suddenly appear. As Mirowski argues, "neoliberalism has not existed in the past as a settled or fixed state, but is better understood as a transnational movement requiring time and substantial effort in order to attain the modicum of coherence and power it has achieved today" (426). As an "intricately structured long-term philosophical and political project" (426), it was *imagined*, collectively, articulated through a utopian vision, and then disseminated through a utopian discourse on a mass scale, over a long period of time. Becker reaffirms as much in his acknowledgement of human capital as a "fiction" that he imagined based on a particular model of human being. Recall Plehwe's point about the neoliberals' focus on "fundamental change in the long term, rather than opportunistically subscribing to feasible change in the short term" (6). The reality in which we now live and that now

shapes our subjectivities was *imagined* and envisioned as the future in the 1920s, 30s, 40s, 50s, by neoliberals like Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Ludwig Von Mises, and Anthony Fisher. This vision of the future was then materialized, galvanized, and made reality through rhetoric and education.

In this context, it is important to reiterate that the Sophists were above all future- and action-oriented. Their rhetoric of possibility and probability sought to negotiate subjective experiences of truth toward right and good future action.³⁷ In outlining a neosophist critical approach to teaching composition, Kenneth J. Lindblom argues for Sophist thinking as a way to address the concerns that compositionist Patricia Bizzell raises about deconstruction's potential nihilistic paralysis. Bizzell's self-reflexively critical, Left-oriented concern after her anti-foundationalist work in composition is with how deconstruction can lead to the paralysis of a "Pyrrhonian skepticism, a nihilistic abyss of skepticism that refuses to regard even temporary truths" (Lindblom 93). Contrary to the general Platonic impression of Sophist methods outlined in the previous section, which saw Sophist relativism and skepticism as nihilistic, Lindblom supports his argument for the Sophists by contrasting the Sophists' dialogical approach with Hegelian dialectic. According to Lindblom, Hegelian dialectic actually leads to this Pyrrhonian impasse through its Platonic, hypotactic "progression toward Truth" in which "each step...is a negation of the step before" (97). By contrast, the sophistic paratactical approach "was a series of positive, practical steps toward action," in which "no thesis is ever completely eliminated; it may be brought back should it become opportune under new circumstances," in "a quest for truth in action, based on the Sophists' understanding

of *kairos*, or the opportune moment” (97). Where the Hegelian dialectic posits a hypotactic model of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, Lindblom writes, “[i]n the Sophists’ relativistic model of epistemology, knowledge is produced according to the following model: The past (thesis) is used as present (antithesis) to construct a possible (parataxis)” (96-97).

Lindblom’s argument is important for several reasons here. First, it illustrates how misunderstanding and critique of the Sophists as relativist, anarchic deconstructionists has involved a focus on only one half of their practice (critical, deconstructive analysis) and a failure to acknowledge the equally important other half (creative, constructive movement toward action and opening possibilities through an alternative dialogic model of parataxis and through the aesthetics of poetics). As with deconstructionists, critique of the Sophists has centered on the dangers of nihilism in reducing everything to a state of paralyzed non-action through the obliteration of any objective truth with deconstructive analysis and relativism. But this critique of the Sophists does not take into account their parallel creative orientation toward action and intervention as part of the same process. My own argument thus far has focused primarily on the critical potential in sophistic approaches to rhetoric and pedagogy; drawing on Lindblom’s argument for Sophist practices as a way *out* of a “nihilistic abyss of skepticism” and not the *cause* of such paralysis helps underscore the value of their approach for contemporary critical pedagogues, particularly in the face of the nihilism generated by neoliberal rationalities: His argument for the Sophists as important for avoiding deconstructionist nihilism on the Left dovetails with my argument for a sophistic methodology in approaching the task of

refashioning critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal rationality and subjectivity production.

The language-art techniques I examine in the following three chapters, and that I have sought to develop in my own teaching, reflect an arts-based approach to pedagogy that parallels this creative, anti-nihilist dimension of Sophist rhetoric and teaching. Aesthetics-oriented Sophist practices undergirded the Sophists' general creative approach to language as language-*art* through the aesthetic rhetoric³⁸ of poetics. These Sophist strategies include: an emphasis on literary analysis and poetics; the practice of antilogic and eristic modes; and, the intertwined use of antithesis and parataxis. I develop fuller analyses of these Sophist techniques later in my examination of contemporary pedagogical aesthetic-rhetoric, but briefly here, I want to provide a general sense of how these strategies functioned to clarify both the intertwining of aesthetics and pedagogy in Sophist rhetoric and teaching, and how the Sophists themselves applied a similar aesthetics-based rhetoric methodology to their own analysis of creative works. For example, the Sophist emphasis on literary analysis and poetics can be understood as reflecting not just a hermeneutical practice, but a poetic practice in their own rhetoric. In addition to literary interpretation, the Sophists examined poetry's form as a source of aesthetic techniques and approaches in developing their rhetorical and teaching practice. For the Sophists, rhetoric and poetry had always been necessarily intertwined, despite subsequent disciplinary categorizations that sought to sever their historical links. The Sophists thus drew from literary work as both content and as a source of language-art technique for their rhetoric and pedagogy.³⁹ Previously, I explained the Sophist use of

antilogic in terms of its deconstructive critical potential. But antilogic—a deliberate, refractory rhetorical engagement of multiple, contradictory arguments that can be seen as having roots in precisely such poetic practices—was also part of a more general creative approach to knowledge production. This was a poetic analytical approach to reality and multiple truths as always in flux, always contradictory and uncertain. The notion of reality as uncertain and contradictory, as always having a multitude of meanings, is in fact itself a poetic vision, a view of reality as poetic. The Sophists' analytical approach thus involved eristic modes (ludic, contentious, artful modes of imaginative argumentation aimed not at securing truth, but at opening and exploring possibilities),⁴⁰ and the related devices of antithesis and parataxis. Antilogic and the use of antithesis and parataxis as complementary elements involve the same effort at using language in a way that reflects the antilogical (poetic) structure of reality. They were based on a ludic, poetic approach to language and its relationship to this reality of contradiction and flux. Jarratt focuses on how the Sophists deployed antithesis, for example, (“a playful pairing of opposites”) and parataxis (“a loose association of clauses without hierarchical connective or embedding”), together as a complementary poetic “syntactic structure” in which the dissolvent “analytic effect of antithesis” is balanced by a “synthetic gesture” of generative, creative parataxis (24).⁴¹ Where “[a]ntithesis allows for laying out options...parataxis provides for their loose coordination in a narrative with a social rather than epistemological purpose” (Jarratt 27). This poetic and narrative technique interweaves parataxis with “antithetical dissolution” as “[t]he story-teller plays with the material...the point is not exposing or discovering the unknown, but rearranging the

known. Invention is collapsed with arrangement as a single rhetorical canon” (Jarratt 28). Significantly to my own methodology, Sophists both drew these techniques from poetic works and applied them poetically in their own aesthetic rhetoric. As just one example, this aesthetic rhetoric often used arts-based practices like allegory and parable storytelling modes. Ironically, it is perhaps Plato himself who most famously demonstrates these poetic techniques, the great irony being that he uses them to attack the Sophists (e.g., the fictional Protagoras’ “Great Speech,” which makes his argument for Sophist teaching through an allegorical recounting of the Prometheus myth; Plato’s general performative and theatrical staging of fictional dialogues, in which fictional Platonic figures rhetorically destroy fictional Sophists; and of course, there is Plato’s other, best-known *allegory*—of the cave).

The task of refashioning critical pedagogy in response to neoliberalism is served by rhetorical attention to the Sophists not just because of the critical analysis that their rhetoric and pedagogy make possible, but because of the complementary aesthetic orientation toward *imagination*, creativity, possibility, and future action. My own work around a somatically centered critical pedagogy based in language-art draws on this sophistic aesthetic orientation to develop a creative, arts-based approach to teaching. In the chapters that follow, I build on this chapter’s analysis of neoliberalism’s own rhetoric, pedagogy, and aesthetic dimensions, by applying a sophistic rhetoric methodology to recent and contemporary cultural production. This includes, for example, the Chicano arts-based teaching practices of Harry Gamboa, Jr. discussed in the next chapter. The goal with Gamboa’s work, for example, is to use a sophistic rhetoric methodology to

understand how his pedagogico-aesthetic arts practices employ aesthetic rhetoric to disrupt subjectivities on a somatic level and engage them in transformative processes of *aretē* training through critical awareness of neoliberal *nomos* and how it has shaped them. Similarly, as noted in my introductory remarks, I apply this sophistic rhetoric methodology to specific forms of literature and film that I see as valuable sources of effective critical-aesthetic strategies and techniques for responding to neoliberalism. This includes, for example, the fiction and films of Southern Cone Latin American artists touched on previously, as well as the work of science fiction writers. Both bodies of work offer numerous examples of highly innovative responses to neoliberalism and biopolitics. As with the Sophists, my attention to this literary and cinematic production centers on it not just as content, but as a formal source of critical-aesthetic rhetorical and pedagogical techniques/practices that can be applied to critical teaching. Examples include a specific focus on how dictatorship and post-dictatorship Southern Cone writers and filmmakers have used allegory modes to critically assess neoliberal rationalities, and how they have developed and employed what Chilean theorist Nelly Richard calls a dissensual “refractory art”⁴² to disrupt hegemonic language and subjectivity formations at the somatic level and open linguistic and imaginative possibilities. Similarly, I use a sophistic lens to look at how science fiction uses allegory and parable forms, as well as aesthetic strategies and devices like cognitive estrangement through the introduction of *novums*, to disrupt normative, habituated ways of perceiving and being at the level of the body, via dispersed popular culture channels.⁴³

These are only several of a multitude of potential archival sources that provide rich material with which to develop critical pedagogy that effectively can respond to the crises of language and imagination engendered by neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. When placed in conversation with Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy around neoliberalism, and when excavated for pedagogical potential through a sophistic rhetorical analysis, these works demonstrate the aesthetic-rhetorical practices of artist-educators who use their poetics to effect transformative learning in the specific context of neoliberal and biopolitical regimes. I turn now to application of the sophistic rhetoric methodology I have developed here to demonstrate not just these aesthetic-rhetorical practices and what we can learn from them as critical teachers, but how critical pedagogues might similarly conduct such an aesthetic-rhetorical excavation of their own archives toward development of critical teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR:
EXILE IN CHICANOVILLE: PERFORMANCE, DIGITAL MEDIA,
AND THE SOPHISTIC DECOLONIAL TECHNOLOGIES OF
HARRY GAMBOA, JR.'S URBAN POETIX

Introduction

This chapter examines the cultural production of contemporary L.A. Chicano artist, Harry Gamboa, Jr. Using the neosophist rhetoric methodology developed in my previous chapters, I analyze Gamboa's aesthetic-rhetorical practice through an experientialist weaving of narrative and analysis of ephemeral events that took place between 1999 and 2017 in my work with him and with his now defunct "Virtual Vérité" performance troupe (a fluctuating group of about fifty to one hundred members that operated between 2005 and early 2017, when Gamboa made the decision to formally terminate "Virtual Vérité" as a descriptor for any current or future projects). Gamboa is one of the most important and prolific international photographers, multimedia artists, and writers of the past four decades, with numerous international exhibitions and hundreds of publications, performances, and media productions. Much has been written on his work as a founding member with the germinal avant-garde Chicano multimedia performance group, *Asco*, in the 1970s and 80s. However, very little has been written on Gamboa's more recent and contemporary work in performance and media, particularly since 2000. This is despite his continued prolific output and consistent development of community and social networks through arts practices. As previously noted, over the

course of about a decade leading into my doctoral studies, I worked with Gamboa as an observer and participant in various performances involved in his media production. This experience was radically transformative for me. My analysis of this experience in the context of decolonial transformation and practices formed the basis of my initial graduate work in Chicana/o Studies. In that work, I developed the notion of the “artist-educator” as I asked how Gamboa’s pedagogico-aesthetic practice functioned as an arts-based decolonial approach to critically transformative pedagogy and community building through mentorship and media productions framed by “happening”-like performance events. In expanding on this work, and as previously noted in my Introduction, my current project reframes these questions through a rhetoric studies lens that looks at various aesthetic works and practices as relevant sources of critical teaching strategies and techniques aimed at countering neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. This chapter therefore applies my dissertation’s rhetoric methodology to understand from a neosophist perspective how Gamboa’s approach parallels Sophist practices. The aim is to identify and excavate critical pedagogical approaches and techniques that could inform development of an arts-based critical teaching response to neoliberalism. Toward these ends, I provide two specific case study analyses of experiences I have had working with Gamboa.

In these case studies, I examine how Gamboa’s Chicano aesthetic rhetoric involves a sophistic praxis of performative bodily arts and critical learning. This critical learning includes a kind of praxical training in creative, decolonial urban tactics for Chican@s in the context of contemporary U.S. neoliberalism. It also includes training in

a practical rhetorical *technê* set of art-of-living skills based on development of *mētis*, *kairos*, and *phronesis* intelligences. Using the Sophists and the neosophist project as a foundation, I connect the pedagogically oriented aesthetic rhetoric in Gamboa’s use of performance and media production to the decolonial work of Paolo Freire, Augusto Boal, and similar critical teaching techniques that involve aesthetics. I argue that his sophistic rhetorical *pharmakon* practice produces and transmits decolonial knowledge by generating effects of transformative, disruptive “ruptures” in the conditioned *habitus* of neoliberal subjectivities and rationalities. These disruptive, estranging effects are the result of somatically focused aesthetic rhetoric technology that can disorient and unsettle entrenched neoliberal subjectivity formations, and reorient bodily habituation and cognitive processes toward a critical-imaginative mode of processural becoming. I look at how these effects are generated through sophistic rhetorical approaches that include technomediated aesthetic engagement in productions of presence, a concept I draw and develop from Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. I focus on how the ephemeral “happenings” in Gamboa’s performance and media production gatherings function as what Brian Massumi identifies as micropolitical “events” of “micro-shocks” in his analysis of “ontopower” control and aesthetic interventions into it. I posit the event in Gamboa’s work as a transformational catalysis that disrupts conditioned somatic response on an affective, micro perceptual level, to re-orient attention, perception, and the sensorium. This catalysis emerges and functions through affective resonance in the production of presence involved in participation in the technomediated events of Gamboa’s media work. Participants become hyperconscious of their performed personae/subjectivities

through an intensification of perception and affective response in an engagement of presence. This intensification occurs in, and pharmacologically mines, the contemporary context of the spatialities, social fields, and structured/structuring *habitus* of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. As *pharmakon*, these practices use that very *habitus* against itself as the material of critical transformation. Through repeated participation in these ritual events and their rhetorically generated effects, performers' subjectivities engage in an agentive, active process of ongoing, transformational becoming that is accumulative in nature. Participants become practiced in the sophistic *antilogic technê* of rhetorically and poetically juggling multiple, contradictory realities and possibilities always in flux. My rhetoric methodology connects affect theory and Massumi's event-analysis of micropolitics and microperception to Bernard Stiegler's critique of consumer capitalism's capturing and exploitation of attention and libidinal energies. In analyzing what I argue is a Stieglerian *pharmakon* practice of homeopathically oriented socio-therapy and self-care in Gamboa's work, I contend that this work functions through such aesthetic-rhetorical strategies and practices to inculcate in students a *technê* art-of-living set of skills and crafts that addresses Stiegler's call for the need to re-capture attention and re-direct libidinal energy through aesthetic practices, and to develop economies of care and contribution.

As a way into these specific areas of focus in my case studies, I begin with a brief analysis of the more general role of urban walking in Gamboa's work. By analyzing it as part of a sophistic performative rhetoric and pedagogy of poetic counter-cartography that disrupts the habituation structuring and structured by urban spatiality, I make

fundamental direct connections to Sophist rhetoric and aesthetics. These connections form the basis of the case study analyses that follow. In these case studies, I then develop these foundational connections more fully in relation to the specific theoretical concerns raised above.

Walking the Talk of Critical Pedagogy: Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s Sophistic Urban Spatial Practice as Aesthetic-Rhetorical Counter-Cartography

Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s use of absurdist, Surrealist poetics relies on unresolvable juxtapositions, as with the eristic use of poetics, affect, and antilogic modes of expression in the Sophists' aesthetic rhetoric. As Richard Enos notes, "sophistic discourse ...[was] 'non-rational': a discourse structured by the conjunction of opposing *logoi* through which 'meaning was indirectly revealed and experience heightened through artistic awareness'" (Enos qtd. in Jarratt 7).⁴⁴ Gamboa's contemporary practice similarly uses poetic rhetoric centered on somatic experience to question and reveal meaning through deconstructive interpretation and indirect expression. One important dimension of contemporary neoliberal *nomos* that his hermeneutical rhetoric interrogates, for example, is the way dominant epistemologies and ideologies are inscribed into, and by, urban space.⁴⁵ This interrogation functions through bodily practices to question the sense of permanent, certain "reality" that urban space's rhetoric seeks to produce. Further paralleling Sophist practices, Gamboa's hermeneutical poetic rhetoric arises through a pragmatic praxis and pedagogy of bodily arts. While this praxis comprises many elements, more of which I explore later in my case studies, I limit my focus here to the key bodily act of walking in

Gamboa's work. I analyze it as part of a performative aesthetic rhetoric of counter-cartography. To contextualize the role of walking in Gamboa's work, I first explicate the Virtual Vérité performance troupe production of visual media in which this walking takes place. I then provide contextual information on Sophist rhetoric and analysis drawn from theorizations of urban space and the everyday by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau. Drawing further connections to the Sophists, I look at how Gamboa's practice involves sophistic elements in both its rhetoric, and its training *in* that rhetoric. The specific sophistic elements involved in this contemporary practice that I focus on are: 1) Emphasis on an adaptable, tactically deployed intelligence; 2) Development of what the Sophists' saw as "the mind-body complex" through a bodily art rhetoric that integrates intellectual and physical engagement in performance (Hawhee 87); and, 3) Ludic approaches to material experience through bodily based aesthetic rhetoric.

I begin with the Virtual Vérité group performance/production of Gamboa's videos and fotonovelas. These generally involve the ritual gathering of a "pre-performance" meal and conversation, followed by a walk to the site of a photo shoot that Gamboa spontaneously chooses. Here, performers follow Gamboa's minimal action and dialogue cues in improvised scenarios, which he then films or photographs. This footage is edited into video works, full-length films, fotonovelas, and other media forms. However, it is in the performance and "pre-performance" that a sophistic aesthetic rhetoric most clearly appears in this work. For the Sophists, context and situation were primary. All rhetorical performance and training therefore revolved around developing the fluid, improvisatory intelligences that the Sophists saw as key in addressing varying contingencies and

situations—namely, the previously noted *mētis*, *kairos*, and *phronesis*. As Detienne and Vernant explain, *mētis*, a cunning and wily form of intelligence, is “a way of knowing... a complex but... coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behaviour which combine flair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism... and experience acquired of the years” (3–4). *Kairos* involves a “right time and place” awareness, also based on integration of experience and present moment, for more effective deployment of *mētis* intelligence in a given situation. As Detienne and Vernant argue, the point is to tactically navigate “situations which are transient, shifting, disconcerting and ambiguous, situations which do not lend themselves to precise measurement, exact calculation or rigorous logic” (3–4). For the Sophists, a skillful combination of *mētis* and *kairos* was key to their aesthetic rhetoric because it provided the most effective tactical response to any situation. However, this skillful combination is not just the foundation of their particular rhetorical form. It must be understood specifically in a sociopolitical context of power dynamics, especially in applying it to Gamboa’s Chican@ art praxis. It is worth reiterating my point in Chapter Three that most of the Sophists belonged to the metic class of citizens. As second-class foreigners, they had limited legislative rights and no political representation. Marginalized, they were concerned with understanding how power functioned to exclude and disenfranchise through intersections of power matrices; their rhetoric and pedagogy therefore aimed at access to power within these matrices. From a position of marginalization and disenfranchisement that parallels Chican@s’ historically second-class citizen position with the imperialist structures of the United States, Sophists

developed counter-hegemonic, subaltern politics aimed at deconstructing exclusionary power structures toward more inclusive democratic participation. Understood in this context, the political value of *mētis* and *kairos* should be seen then in their skillful use as tactically deployed rhetorical weapons.⁴⁶

In the context of Gamboa's work, sophisticated deployment of *mētis* and *kairos* occurs during the performance process in his construction of scenarios around "virtual" performers, and in the performances themselves.⁴⁷ Using *mētis* and *kairos* to read performers' emotional and physical states and social dynamics, Gamboa appears to devise an appropriate scenario through impromptu cues. Performers then engage in improvisatory interactions with each other and with surrounding elements. The sophistic emerges here in a *mētis*- and *kairos*-based integration of memory and present. As Gamboa explains in an interview:

"I make my selection based on what I see and hear in the background... Additionally, the person portraying a particular character has an impact.... The juxtaposition of the two oftentimes results in an irony. ... By altering the sanctioned or expected behavior within a particular environment, I attempt to change it conceptually so that the environment, rather than the behavior, suddenly seems strange or different." (72)

Here, Gamboa implements rhetorical devices similar to antithesis and parataxis. Recall that, as Susan Jarratt explains, antithesis consisted of "playfully pairing opposite words...as a manipulative device for eliciting emotional effects," while parataxis was the related practice of putting such juxtaposed pairings and elements into narrative play

through non-hierarchical organization—“a loose association of clauses without hierarchical connectives or embedding” (21; 51).

Part of the rhetorical work here—for Gamboa as well as the Sophists—is not just articulation of a flexible interpretive response, but deployment of an embodied pedagogy through which such a flexible response might be conveyed and learned. In Gamboa’s case, I argue that it is through these constructed performance situation events that performers hone the rhetorical *technê* of these skills. These are skills that depend on a kinetic, bodily art of materially and affectively responsive mind-body engagement and interaction. As Deborah Hawhee explains, “It is precisely the moment when learning is connected to performing that the [sophistic kairotic] art’s embodied aspects come to the fore” (70). Scott Consigny provides contextualization of the pedagogical and rhetorical function of such practices. He writes: “[*K*]airos emerges only when a player is engaged in the contingencies of a particular situation and occurs within that situation” (Consigny qtd. in Hawhee 70). Because *kairos* awareness involves integrated mind-body experience and a sophistic, fluid sense of possibility, openness, and reality always in flux, it “depends on a ready, perceptive body...[and]...moves onto a nonrational register” (Hawhee 71). Part of the benefit of this praxical approach lies in what Hawhee describes as a “spatial intermingling of practices...[of] an art learned, practiced, and performed by and with the body as well as the mind” (111).

Key here is Hawhee’s emphasis on the “nonrational.” It points to how this art of *kairos* and *mētis* integration is one that necessarily develops indirectly because it operates on pre-cognitive, affective, somatic registers. In Gamboa’s performance work, this

indirectness is reflected in an underlying otherly allegory mode of pointing beyond. I more fully develop this notion of allegory-mode expression and perception, and its connection to the Sophists, in subsequent chapters. In terms of Gamboa's work, this allegory-mode indirectness is seen in an aesthetic rhetoric of refractory elusiveness and decoy tactics based on the inherently experientialist nature of this kind of learning. As with the Sophists, the experiential dimension of the pedagogy at work here renders it inexpressible in any direct way. Instead, skills are conveyed and developed through repeated praxis, rather than being directly taught through verbalization. Hawhee notes: "[N]o system of knowledge can teach kairotic response; rather such response emerges out of repeated encounters with difference—different opponents in different positions at different times and places" (148).

On another level, the *Virtual Verité* troupe's repeated, ritualistic meetings also demonstrate affinity with Sophist emphasis on critical communal and civic engagement. Here, the engagement involves not just Consigny's "contingencies of a particular situation," but community-building through repetition of social practices and habits in social situations. Hawhee identifies this interactive engagement as the "*suniein*" of Sophist practice, which she defines as, "a verb meaning 'to come together' ... 'to associate with' ... [a] 'habitual or constant association,'" (149). The noun form is "*Sunousia*," which "produces relations, alliances...[and underlies]...a pedagogy of oneself in close relation to those who practice the arts one is pursuing" (149). For Gamboa's performers, the pre-performance "performances" of ritual meals provide repeated opportunities to talk, network, and develop camaraderie. This performance then

informs the subsequent, formal performance event, as I explore later. But in addition, this communal performance of social relations develops, over time and through collaborative repetition, effective, everyday life rhetorical strategies of interpretation, survival, resistance, and responsive action. As Jarratt describes with Sophist pedagogy, such a dialogical social interaction functions by, “[I]ocating the source of knowledge about reality in the conversation of a social group” (9). For the Sophists, rhetorical attention to community-specific discourse and its use, “concentrated on the power of language in shaping human group behavior explicitly within the limits of time and space... as an instrument of social action in the *polis*” (Jarratt 11). This is part of the rhetorical training in *aretē* (civic virtue). Thus, Gamboa’s poetic scenarios function not just artistically in a photo shoot, but rhetorically—on an indirect register of allegory mode multilayering—to open a democratically engaged interpretive space. They function to foreground and question oppressive behaviors and ideological structures, to trigger transformation of such behaviors and structures in oneself and the group, and to map and put into practice other kinds of consciousness, other forms of social relations and civic engagement, and other economies (e.g., Stiegler’s economies of care and contribution). Gamboa’s pedagogy therefore resembles Sophist training in citizen development and participation through democratic dialogue that critically interrogates the prevailing *nomos* while developing a critical-creative counter-*nomos*. Through social relations of collaborative experience in performance, Gamboa’s work re-integrates alienated individuals into communal political agency in a Bakhtinian poetics of social voice and self-definition. Participants thus are trained also in the rhetorical *technē* required for democratic civic

engagement and communal development of alternative economies of care and contribution.

As noted above, one of the key elements that Gamboa uses in the aesthetic rhetoric of this bodily oriented, experiential pedagogy, is the social and bodily act of walking. Michel de Certeau contends that, “[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered,” and that walking thus constitutes “a space of enunciation” (97–8). Whether walking through the city from one point to another in *flâneur*-like mode with a small group of participants, or walking from a meeting site to a photo shoot site, Gamboa always incorporates into his poetics de Certeau’s “long poem of walking” (101). In fact, much of Gamboa’s work explicitly foregrounds and focuses on walking as part of its subject matter.⁴⁸ This incorporation involves an awareness of how pedestrians use that poem to “[manipulate] spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be ... [to create] shadows and ambiguities within them” (101) in “a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system” (97; orig. emphasis).

As with de Certeau, underlying this element of walking in Gamboa’s work is a politics of spatial intervention informed by the 1960s Situationist International and the Surrealist movement out of which it partly developed. Henri Lefebvre’s analysis of late-capitalist space is especially relevant. He notes that, “[a]ctivity in space is restricted by that space; space ‘decides’ what activity may occur. ... Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered. It is produced with this purpose in mind; this is its *raison d’être*” (143). In response to such restrictions,

other Situationist theorists like Guy Debord argued for the subversive, disruptive potential of spatial practices like the *dérive*. Deron Albright conceptualizes this tactic:

[T]he spectacle presents a given (urban) environment which renders a certain psychogeographical effect. This effect is discovered and analyzed by means of the *dérive*, wherein one or more persons...drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. (93)

As Albright notes, the *dérive* “acts not only as response to the psychogeographical effects of the spectacle in a given place and time, but itself is an analysis of the space” (93). The *dérive* thus is an embodied rhetorical hermeneutic. And as de Certeau’s “long poem of walking,” it specifically can be understood as an *aesthetic*-rhetorical hermeneutic. *Dérive* practices like Gamboa’s that engage urban space with a spontaneous play of bodies-in-space subvert its parameters by taking advantage of “gaps” in the delineated boundaries of authority. As “players” carve their own space, drawing from a Chican@ history of European and U.S. imperialist colonization, they transgress spatial manifestations of authority and markers of officially sanctioned and regulated use. In so doing, these aesthetic-rhetorical hermeneutics deconstruct the rhetoric of what Lefebvre terms late-capitalism’s produced “abstract space.” According to Lefebvre, this “abstract space ... founded on the vast network of banks, business centers and major productive entities, as also on motorways, airports and information lattices” (53), is naturalized (in rhetorical terms, as part of the *nomos* fabric), “when social space is placed beyond our range of

vision ... [because] its practical character vanishes and it is transformed...into a kind of absolute” (93). Further, the performances call to mind the creative force of storytelling that de Certeau describes as the insertion of another form of time (memory) into normative spatial orders. He writes:

Memory mediates spatial transformations. In the mode of the “right point in time” (*kairos*), it produces a founding rupture or break. Its foreignness makes possible a transgression of the law of the place. ...a “*coup*” modifies the local order. The goal...is thus an operation that transforms the visible organization. (85)

Within the *nomos* “law of the place” of this “local order,” walking thus opens possibilities of a counter-cartography that arises through aesthetic-rhetorical “operations” that challenge and subvert survey maps (de Certeau 97). The pedestrian’s active engagement with the “ensemble of possibilities” presented by the organization of the “spatial order” changes and opens possibilities. This is because the walker “moves them about and...invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements...[thus transforming] each spatial signifier into something else” (98). These poetic rhetorical counter-inscriptions function against-and-through neoliberal, late-capitalist space to produce a different kind of map, similar to practice-based maps that de Certeau contrasts to colonizing geometric maps. One particularly relevant example de Certeau cites is the Aztec itinerary map, which narratively depicted events over terrains. These maps, made by “tour describers,” foregrounded practices and actions, demonstrating a radically different relationship to

space/place—one grounded in *experience* of space, and in how that experience creates place.

What Gamboa’s focus on walking demonstrates is a commitment to such an aesthetic rhetorical counter-cartography. His online photos, videos, and fotonovelas function—together with the walking and performances that produced them—as cross-media itinerary maps of Chican@s urban experience. This experience takes place on a multitude of “stages,” spaces activated by performers who join Gamboa in the revived work of de Certeau’s “tour describers.” In response to the neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities imposed on Chican@s within the rhetorical and material parameters of late-capitalist urban space, the *dérive* practices of these tour describers disrupt this spatial rhetoric with their own deconstructive aesthetic rhetoric. Like Sophist rhetoric, this deconstructive poetic rhetoric involves “antithesis” and “parataxis” juxtaposition, deployment and development of *mētis* and *kairos* intelligences, and communal *suniein* development of *aretē* democratic citizen participation. What emerges is a sophistic bodily art aesthetic rhetoric of conceptual reclamation based on use—poetic traces of the improvisatory, transformative passages of Chican@s through the spatial order of Los Angeles. This is a counter-cartography of active spatial engagement and of bodily inscription of digital glyphs into urban space, effected through embodied, sophistic aesthetic rhetoric. In the process of making these inscriptions, participants not only transform urban space, but are transformed themselves through engagement with a critical pedagogical process effected by the aesthetic rhetoric of Gamboa’s practices.

In order to understand this transformational process more fully, I turn my rhetorical, experientialist lens now onto case studies of two specific experiences I have had (among many others) in working with Gamboa. In the first, I focus on Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's notion of a production of presence as I examine an interview Gamboa conducted of me for his *Chicano Vista* website project. In the second, I draw primarily on Brian Massumi and Bernard Stiegler in examining the technomediation involved in the production of Gamboa's digital fotonovela, *Angst in a Parking Lot*.

Hasta La (Chicano) Vista: Inter-viewing the Disappearing Self in Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s Production of Presence

In 2000, I agreed to be interviewed on video by Harry Gamboa, Jr., for *Chicano Vista*, an online digital project that Gamboa invited me to participate in creating with other "virtual performers." The invitation came a month after my photo shoot for Gamboa's *Chicano Male Unbonded* series. As I explore elsewhere, this photo shoot had left me feeling empowered and confident. After participating in the *Chicano Vista* interview, however, and the fotonovela shoot for *Angst in a Parking Lot* around the same time, whatever sense of stability I had secured standing proud as a "Chicano male unbonded" had dissolved into destabilization and insecurity, as I was left psychologically and emotionally disrupted, a "Chicano male undone."

This case study is the story of what happened in this disruption and transformation. It asks how Gamboa's aesthetic rhetoric functions through *pharmakon* practices in bodily based, presence-focused modes of decolonial transformation and

pedagogy. In the context of neoliberalism and its subjectivities, how might the performance and new media work of Harry Gamboa, Jr., be seen as a rhetorical *technê* of affect-oriented, bodily centered pedagogy that facilitates decolonial transformation and transmits and produces decolonial knowledge specifically through production of presence? How might participation in this production catalyze decolonization for the neoliberal subjectivity, particularly participation in which that neoliberal subjectivity is used against itself as *pharmakon*? In addressing these questions, I argue that Gamboa manipulates an oscillatory interplay of actants⁴⁹ in a sophisticated, embodied pedagogical rhetoric of artistic praxis. This sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric produces and transmits decolonial knowledge with homeopathically healing, transformative, disruptive “ruptures” through aesthetic engagement in productions of presence. Participants become hyperconscious of their performed personae/subjectivities through an intensification of aesthetic perception in the context of neoliberalism’s spatialities, social fields, and structured/structuring *habitus* and practices (Bourdieu “Structures” 52). Through a *pharmakon* approach to critical transformation, it is those very practices of conditioned neoliberal *habitus* that make possible such transformation. While my analysis is based on Gamboa’s visual work here, it is not primarily focused on the product, but on its production. The aim is to examine the elusive production of presence involved. Within an overarching frame of affect theory, I first develop Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s notions of presence. I then focus on the *Chicano Vista* interview, intertwining storytelling and analysis in a self-reflexive use of aesthetic rhetoric. In addition to Gumbrecht and affect theory, my rhetoric methodology in this analysis also draws on psychodrama therapy and

decolonial performance theory. Specifically, I incorporate Fritz Perls' Gestalt therapy and decolonial approaches of Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal.

In the absence of any direct record, constructing a narrative representation of the production of this interview makes sense in providing an object for analysis. But the narrativization involved here is also a consciously deployed aesthetic-rhetorical strategy of storytelling/teaching-story rhetoric—a *presentation*. This approach gets at the heart of the oscillation in Gamboa's work. This is the kind of oscillation that Gumbrecht argues is necessary to circumvent the limitations of hermeneutics. In *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Gumbrecht suggests that in focusing on "presence," we "conceive of aesthetic experience as an oscillation (and sometimes as an interference) between 'presence effects' and 'meaning effects'" (2). The oscillatory tension here is between what can be verbalized and interpreted, and what is beyond meaning—the "presence effects" of an embodied, experiential connection to Heidegger's "being-in-the-world" and the "happening of truth" in *Being* (72). Gumbrecht articulates production of presence and "presence effects" as follows:

Something... "present" is supposed to be tangible for human hands, which implies that... it can have an immediate impact on human bodies...

"[P]roduction of presence" points to... events and processes in which the impact that the "present" objects have on human bodies is being initiated or intensified. (xiii)

Gumbrecht follows Heidegger in privileging art and aesthetics as the most effective site for these intensifying events and processes in which production of presence occurs. For

Gumbrecht, experience of its oscillatory tension requires the aesthetically focused “specific framework” of a “situation of ‘insularity’ and the perceptual disposition of ‘focused intensity’” (107). I argue that such an aesthetic framing situation and its “focused intensity” is at the heart of the pedagogical effectivity in Gamboa’s aesthetic rhetoric. It is also the basis of this case study’s use of narrative as an aesthetic-rhetorical device of knowledge production to both present and analyze that work.⁵⁰

As an educator, Gumbrecht examines presence in a pedagogical context to explore the changing relationships between aesthetics, history, and pedagogy. He raises the question of “how close to actual artistic practice some of our academic activities can be” (96). Here, as above, Gumbrecht privileges aesthetics “because of the specific epistemological relevance inherent to the type of *epiphany* that it can provide” (94). He therefore argues for “‘the arts’ to play a much more prominent [academic] role than that of merely being a traditional part within the name for a cluster of academic disciplines” (95). He describes how he has brought aesthetics into his courses in an attempt to produce epiphany by “evok[ing] for my students and...mak[ing] them feel specific *moments of intensity*” (97). Toward this end, he presents aesthetic objects with a presence- and intensity-oriented, rather than interpretively oriented, facilitation. His aim is to guide students toward presence-conscious, aesthetically based modes of perception.⁵¹ Here, Gumbrecht suggests the kind of “artist-educator” role that I seek to develop in my own teaching based on the example of Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s aesthetic pedagogy. However, he ultimately concludes that due to its elusive, ephemeral nature, “there is no reliable...guaranteed way of producing moments of intensity” (99). He notes that for

educators interested in developing what Seigworth and Gregg describe in the context of affect theory as “pedagogico-aesthetic” (9) projects, there is “no systematic...pedagogically guaranteed way of leading students...‘toward’ aesthetic experience” and “no predictable, obvious or typical yield that aesthetic experience can add to our lives in the everyday worlds” (102). While I agree with Gumbrecht about yield and predictability—in fact, this sophistic creative potential of unpredictability and unquantifiability is exactly what makes aesthetics and aesthetic rhetoric effective as devices of knowledge production and transformation—I disagree that there are no “systematic” or “pedagogically oriented” methods of leading students toward such experiences. In fact, while it is beyond the scope of my study to fully theorize such a system here, what my presentation and rhetorical analysis of Gamboa’s work demonstrates are some sophistic techniques and practices of precisely such a system of “pedagogico-aesthetic” poetics and “experiential pedagogy” designed “to develop a creative responsibility for modes of living *as they come into being*” (Bertlesen and Murphie qtd. in Seigwith and Gregg, 15; orig. emphasis). This case study seeks, then, to demonstrate through rhetoric methodology such a system at work. It suggests how such a system might be developed and used by the figure of the artist-educator. As noted, my oscillation between aesthetics and analytics surveys the flickering of meaning and presence in Gamboa’s work while seeking to demonstrate that flickering itself. At the same time, it also seeks to disrupt the dichotomy between these fields in a larger project of “pedagogico-aesthetic” intervention through sophistic aesthetic rhetoric. I begin, then, not with analysis, but with a story.

Capital and Camouflage: Doing the Neoliberal Shuffle on a Desert-ed Urban Stage

As noted, participation in the video interview for *Chicano Vista* left me destabilized, insecure, and psychologically and emotionally disrupted. Around this event were several similar experiences with Gamboa. While all worked together in a larger process, each functioned through unique frameworks, spaces, and effects, with different techniques and foci. In this case, the interplay of performance and media in the genre of individual interview focused on self-consciously performed subjectivity/persona in relative isolation. This is in contrast to other experiences with Gamboa that involved group dynamics,⁵² such as the production of the *Angst in a Parking Lot* fotonovela examined in my second case study. In order to trace how this *Chicano Vista* interview addressed and contributed toward subjectivity transformation, I begin with a brief contextualizing framework for my neoliberal subjectivity when the interview occurred.

At the time, I worked for The Capital Group Companies, Inc., currently “the most powerful controlling shareholder in the global stock market” (“The Capital Group”). In part because of the incestuousness of clients and holdings in its pivotal, behind-the-scenes role in transnational capital flow, the Capital Group maintains an extremely low profile.⁵³ Given the size and scope of its holdings and the necessity for confidentiality, it makes sense that the firm has fostered a camouflaging invisibility that protects its information resources and deflects unwanted attention. But something else makes it anomalous among U.S. investment firms and sheds more light on this anonymity: Where most firms are based on the East Coast, the Capital Group has based headquarters in Los

Angeles since the early 1970s.⁵⁴ In an interview, Harry Gamboa has described Los Angeles as a kind of “urban desert:”

“[I]n Southern California...you...drive forty miles to the desert and you can walk through...and go, ‘Wow there’s nothing here.’ But...there are a lot of living creatures there. Except they all blend in...camouflage...remain motionless; they do not want to be noticed. And people are like that here. It’s kind of an urban desert....[T]he people who are really flashy are the people who are either putting up a totally artificial threat, or the people who are totally threatening. Sometimes you really can’t tell...” (qtd. in Flores Sternad, “Ephemerality”)

This passage resonates with my life in Los Angeles when I met Gamboa, as I struggled with the everyday (im)balancing of anonymity and alienation, economic/job security and psychological/spiritual insecurity. At the time, I still worked in a cubicle on the 50th floor of Capital Group’s headquarters. The inverse of Gamboa’s “flashy” people who are artificially threatening, the Capital Group’s lack of flashiness, grounded in the “urban desert” of downtown Los Angeles, served to conceal the very real threat of neoliberal violence in its covert, central role in global market flows. Dutifully, and with a typically conservative, individualistic neoliberal subjectivity based in free market rationality, I performed my responsibilities in maintaining this key aspect of neoliberal order. As a twenty-eight-year-old marketing assistant and copy editor, I traced a monotonous path from apartment to cubicle and back in faithful performance of a *habitus* of neoliberal subjectivity—knowing I was supposed to consider myself lucky, given my upbringing in

poverty as a first-generation Mexican-American. But despite the Capital Group's neoliberal indoctrination, and my own working-class conditioning (as an "exceptional" neoliberal subject, I initially saw my path from welfare childhood to this job as proof of success), it hadn't taken long to recognize the trap I'd entered. Trying to blend in and transit unnoticed, while feeling increasingly alienated, isolated, anxious, and depressed, the costs of cultivating Gamboa's urban desert anonymity and invisibility had become all too familiar.

My narrative begins with the Capital Group because that is where my experience with Gamboa began after having read his collected writings, *Urban Exile*, and initiating contact through email. As a Chicano from a working-poor background, this particular time was a culminating crisis point of a colonization begun through educational institutionalization. While this institutionalization helped me escape poverty and a violent home, I nevertheless had begun to unravel as I felt the effects of internalizing the dominant, neoliberal ideology and value system: A sense of alienation, disconnection, and despair.⁵⁵ Thus, although my seeking out of Gamboa lacked clear sociopolitical awareness of my colonized status as neoliberal subject, my contacting him, and my willingness to participate in his creative work, reflected a decolonial impulse toward change; awareness would emerge later through that transformation. I turn now to the main narrative of a key event in this process to trace that transformation and the knowledge and awareness that emerged. Note that while analysis follows this narrative, throughout it, endnotes act as "placeholder" referents for key areas and concepts

developed later in order to provide a guiding, yet minimally invasive, map between narrative and analysis.

“Some of What You See Here is Real:” A Quantity Theory of the Disappearing Self

While some of my memory of events is hazy and fragmented, I begin with the clear memory that when Gamboa and fellow *Asco* collaborator, Gronk, met me in front of my workplace to interview me for *Chicano Vista* (a digital hub of works by Chicana@ writers accompanied by interviews and profiles), I was reading Will Self’s wildly manic and sharply satirical *The Quantity Theory of Insanity*. Forever afterward, that book’s “insane,” surreal absurdity and satire was intertwined with my unnerving experience with Gamboa and Gronk that day as part of the general assemblage of actants involved.⁵⁶ After initial greetings, the three of us crossed the street to the Wells Fargo Center for coffee at an empty Starbucks.

Not that anyone needed caffeine. While I was on edge and hyper-vigilant, feeling vulnerable and anxious at meeting with these world-renown artists, Gamboa and Gronk exuded a giddy energy, engaging in volatile, almost manic, repartee. An anxious energy circuited between us and charged the space of the café, threatening to pull us into a delirious vortex at any moment. At the time, I was under the suspicion that I had been the butt of some avant-garde joke over the past few months, or that I had been excluded from key information about the nature of my work with Gamboa, while others (like Gronk) were “in” on the secret.⁵⁷ Therefore, when Gamboa showed Gronk a digital photo-poem I’d recently sent on his laptop, rather than being set at ease, I grew more suspicious and

anxious, as Gronk's trademark sardonicism did little to conceal the bemused irony of his Andy Warholish, "Mmmm, wowww... You *made* that?" Playing good-cop trickster to Gronk's bored-cop jokester, Gamboa covered the moment with a comment about looking forward to putting the piece online.

I don't remember the dialogue after this, but it ended with Gronk making a flip remark implying the existence of online materials in which I was included, but of which I was unaware. I laughed, trying to give the impression that I wasn't surprised, that I was as sharp and cool as they. In actuality, though, I really *wasn't* surprised, as Gronk had confirmed one of my worst suspicions. Immediately, I imagined every tortured, pretentious email I'd sent Gamboa over the past year being posted, circulated, and ridiculed, by a multitude of similarly sharp artists. Each email ran through my mind, filtered via imagined eyes in a kind of horrific mirror of cognitive dissonance.⁵⁸ And this was the moment to put me in front of the camera to produce the introductory video for my portion of the site.

Feeling more vulnerable than ever, I followed Gamboa out of the Starbucks to the Wells Fargo Center's slick, symmetrical outdoor eating and lounging area, with its parallel, facing lines of benches and carefully sculpted trees.⁵⁹ My sense of destabilization and hyper-vigilance were accompanied by growing anxiety, nervousness, and ultra-self-consciousness. I found myself worrying about co-workers passing. Then I worried about *anyone* passing. It was not a matter of embarrassment. Nor was it merely a matter of being seen while feeling exposed and vulnerable. Something else was at play here—something beyond my initial anxieties. This scenario was indeed more public and

visible than other productions in which I'd participated. But more importantly, it was closer to my everyday work life: My office was less than a block away; I frequented this Starbucks and ate lunch here; I passed through the Wells Fargo Center several times a week—in fact, Wells Fargo was *my* bank, where I cashed the paycheck I earned across the street.⁶⁰ I looked at my corporate surroundings, thought about my pretensions at being a writer, and finding my body graphing the intersection point of mutually exclusive realms, I felt absurd.⁶¹ Of course, this was the moment Gamboa picked to turn on the camera and pose his question: “So, Ruben, why are you an artist? Why do you create?”⁶²

Setting aside what I perceived as his own thinly concealed irony (by this time, Gronk had disappeared), the question provoked exactly the kind of self-reflection I wanted to avoid right then. Struggling to respond, I stared at the camera without speaking at first, hyperaware of the awkwardness of my limbs and posture. I had trouble deciding how to place my arms, for example. As I began to speak, I became aware of my habit of gesturing clumsily with my hands. I became aware of how I looked away out of an anxious habit of avoiding eye contact. Then, just as I'd gained a measure of ease and begun articulating more clearly, Gamboa prompted me to walk forward while he walked backward, following my mechanical, unwieldy steps, until he'd have me stop again, then walk forward again. This occurred several times as I tried to answer his question, which had pinpointed the dissonance between my pretensions at being an “artist,” and the reality of this neoliberal space and my role and performance in it. With the camera's eye on me, I experienced a mirroring sensation as my consciousness split.⁶³ In my projection of the future video, I saw my awkward movements, anxious expressions, and bland, checkered

shirt and khaki pants, all mediated back to me, mirroring (publicly) my own fraudulence—the image of an office worker performing as a wannabe “artist” waxing philosophical about the creative impulse. Whatever I said is lost even to memory (the website was later dismantled).

After this meeting, there were no defiant poems expressing an assertion of self (as with the previous *Chicano Male Unbonded* photo shoot). There was no sense of having taken part in some strange, but cool, experience. I left shaken and unnerved. Later, when the interview appeared on my section of *Chicano Vista* as part of my online digital “persona,” I was certain which camp I fit into in relation to others when Gamboa announced in a short video on the front page, “Some of what you see here is real. Some of it is not real. But...some of it is real.” Like other artists on the site, I had sent Gamboa several texts for my section. Unlike other artists (I’m assuming), I eventually came to see mine as one of those “not-real” portions—the fraudulent, digitally mediated persona/performance of a fake. Just as I’d envisioned, the interview mirrored back to me a hesitant, anxious performance and obvious phoniness. By the time I saw it, very little about myself, my perceptions, and my experience of the world, felt “real” or stable anymore. On one hand, I was uncertain what to think with regard to Gamboa, unable to determine if his intentions were good or not. Meanwhile, the more I saw myself reflected back as performed, as a set of scripts and pre-structured behaviors and practices, the more I felt myself vanishing as that performed subjectivity began to unravel. At the same time, though, I intuited that this growing awareness and vanishing was exactly what I needed.⁶⁴ Despite the pain and frustration,⁶⁵ I would have to push through and face the growing

consciousness of my lack of consciousness, of the unconscious roles I played, and of the parameters that shaped them. I was becoming conscious of both the vanishing, unconscious, decontextualized subjectivity, and another, emergent sense of contextualized *being/becoming*—a more consciously deployed and performed agentive subjectivity. I turn now to my analysis of this shift in consciousness and its connection to this event.

Sketching the Shadows of a Ghost: Analysis, Oscillation, Ephemerality

What the above narrative and my analysis of it below seek to demonstrate is how Gamboa manipulates an oscillatory interplay in an embodied sophistic rhetoric that produces and transmits decolonial knowledge. This practice facilitates homeopathically healing, transformative “ruptures” for performer-participants through aesthetic engagement in productions of presence. As I did in this interview, participants become hyper-conscious of their performed personae/subjectivities through an intensification of affect and aesthetic perception within one of Gumbrecht’s aesthetically focused “situation[s] of ‘insularity’ and...‘focused intensity’” (107). But as Gumbrecht points out, the insularity and intensity of such situations is always inherently ephemeral. Thus, analyzing this event presents a difficult task. But addressing this difficulty provides a good point of entry into analysis.

As with this narrative, much of what I am able to relate about my work with Gamboa since 1999 comprises nothing more than memories, guesses, innuendo, undocumented storytelling/“consejo” sessions, defunct digital texts, and untraceable

movements through Los Angeles. It is a narrative largely built on what James C. Scott calls the private, non-public, “hidden transcripts” of resistant performance and communication in a colonial situation.⁶⁶ The result is that, while I have observed and participated in Gamboa’s work, trying to *write* about that work is like trying to sketch the shadows of a ghost. Like Sophist rhetoric, it is poetically oriented toward contingency, contradiction, and flux. In it, a multitude of codes, forms, and registers, intersect while functioning on different levels in ephemeral productions of presence, creating momentary allegory-mode juxtapositions of elements that point outside and beyond interpretive modes, and then are gone.

For Gamboa’s is above all a *trickster* aesthetic. His sophistic aesthetic rhetoric is a playful deployment of practices that, as with the Sophists’ rhetorical cunning and poetics, purposely obscures itself to evade surveillance and detection. Its nature as a production of presence inherently and deliberately evades analysis. One of the results of this elusiveness is that the work seems to erase itself as quickly as it forms, leaving only traces, hints, and rumors. As Gumbrecht theorizes about the nature of presence, the “Being” of Heidegger’s “truth as something that happens” is a “double movement of unconcealing and hiding” (67–68). Presence is quick and subtle; it flashes in and out of view on affective, embodied registers. Gumbrecht writes: “Presence cannot become part of a permanent situation...it can never be something that...we would be able to hold onto” (57–58). As a production of presence focused on affective experience—as in both my framed interview for the camera, and my unframed “interview” in the café—much of

the ephemeral production in Gamboa's work is thus beyond articulation and intellectualization because it occurs through this "double movement."

However, as previously suggested, it is through such aesthetic engagements that a perceptible, flickering oscillation occurs between presence and meaning, and that possibilities open. In explaining his privileging of art and aesthetics in the context of presence production, Gumbrecht draws on Niklas Luhman's analysis of the "art system" as "the only social system in which perception...is not only a precondition of system-intrinsic communication but also, together with meaning, part of what this communication carries" (107). Luhman's theorization here "highlights as a specific feature of the art system...a simultaneity of meaning and perception" (107), which, for Gumbrecht, represents "the possibility to experience...meaning effects and presence effects in simultaneity...as a tension or as an oscillation" (108). This possibility involves David Summers' notion of play as "permutational in the sense that it tends to realize all possibilities" while being "liminal in the sense that it seeks the limits of possibilities" (Gumbrecht 106). In Gamboa's work, a set of decoy refractions results from this kind of aesthetic-rhetorical play. This eristic mode of aesthetic rhetoric (intentionally) creates difficulty for any attempt to examine the work. As Gamboa himself has noted,

"I'll put something up [on the Internet]...and then it's gone and there is no way to access it...So, it's playing a little bit with memory, but also with the whole mechanism of academia, which is so inclined to document and footnote.... One of the things I have always been interested in is establishing decoy art and decoy ideas...designed to send people off on a

wild goose chase. On some level that's also...performative. I can then incorporate the reader, the viewer, into performing an act that otherwise would have not taken place but is sort of bouncing off of an element in a script that affects their lives." (Gamboa qtd. in Flores Sternad)

Beneath, and at play with, Gamboa's surface of ploys and decoys, is what I interpret as an antilogic oscillatory movement that arises through affect-based aesthetic engagements like the one outlined in my narrative. These aesthetic engagements reflect deployment of a sophistic aesthetic rhetoric centered on soma and a conception of reality as always contradictory, always ephemeral and in flux. In this case, the affectivity of my embodied performance of the (decoy?) interview for the (decoy?) *Chicano Vista* site, for example, oscillates with the conceptualizing in my efforts to articulate a response to his aesthetically oriented question about my identification and motivation as an artist. As I explore below, this manipulation of the interplay and spaces between codes around productions of presence opens a transformative breach of possibility. This interplay and manipulation of spaces or gaps thus functions as a site for critical, transformative pedagogy.

One of the more important spaces manipulated here is that between the ephemeral and the archival, as suggested in Gamboa's quotation above. The device that Gamboa puts into play in this dynamic of presence production is a kind of scenario, performatively and digitally mediated, that is akin to the scenario device identified by Diana Taylor in her analysis of similar Latin American performance art. In Gamboa's case, the scenario functions on the micro-level of a specific video or photo shoot as well

as on the macro-levels of a subject and its community putting new elements into play in life, “performing an act that otherwise would have not taken place...in a script that affects their lives.” Most relevant to my application of Taylor’s conceptualization here is her observation that “the scenario forces us to situate ourselves in relationship to it; as participants, spectators, or witnesses, we need to ‘be there,’ part of the act.” (32). Similarly, Susan Bennett notes that “[t]he capacity to detect the presence of impersonal affect requires that one is caught up in it” (xv). I argue that in Gamboa’s work, this requirement of participation and *presence* in a context of performativity and unpredictability can open decolonial possibilities. I turn now to some of the specific psychodrama and decolonial approaches I see reflected in Gamboa’s work to tease out exactly how such an aesthetic production of presence can effect a critical pedagogical transformation.

On the surface, my account here would seem to indicate that my paranoia and anxiety were a response to the manic scenario created by Gamboa and Gronk. In reality, it is more accurate to say that *they* were responding to *me*. As Fritz Perls describes in his theorization of Gestalt therapy, the anxious, angst-ridden “neurotic” seeking treatment approaches each situation “tied to the past and to outmoded ways of acting, fuzzy about the present because he sees it only through a glass darkly, tortured about the future because the present is out of his hands” (44). For Perls, this state of mind reflects a general existential crisis of conditioned subjectivity.⁶⁷ While Perls’ analysis does not explicitly articulate colonization/decolonization or neoliberal subjectivity, it provides a useful model for approaching the neuroses that result from colonization more generally,

and the inculcation of neoliberal subjectivity specifically. My point is to draw Perls' ideas into the decolonial discourse of neurotic behavior and psychological disequilibrium in the work of theorists like Freire, Boal, and Fanon, for example. In this context, Perls' work is applicable to the homeopathically and pharmacologically therapeutic nature of Gamboa's decolonial performance and pedagogico-aesthetic work. For example, Perls' description below of a moment of angst and existential crisis resonates with both my narrative and with the decolonial moments of cognitive dissonance that arise in Freirean pedagogy when, as Freire puts it, "through existential experience" the student realizes "that their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human" (61).

Perls writes:

Whatever fantasies flit through his head as he approaches, whatever appearance he presents, the patient comes for treatment because he feels that he is in an *existential crisis*...he feels that the psychological needs with which he has identified himself...are not being met by his present mode of life. (44)

For Paula Gunn Allen, alienation and neuroses similarly represent an existential crisis. Her explicitly decolonial analysis of genocidal colonialism's devastating effects on Native Americans focuses on how colonization specifically is a source of this kind of crisis. According to Allen, alienation and related neuroses find their source in colonization's warping distortion of "an individual's sense of self" through "the impact of contradictory points of view" (90). Allen posits ritual as a vital form of healing in response to the psychological and spiritual violence of colonization. But where Allen

suggests a healing ritual practice that is comforting and non-violent, my experience with Gamboa and Gronk would seem to indicate that these two artists were not only refraining from comforting my anxiety, they were purposely *exacerbating* it. Indeed, their response demonstrated a kind of irreverent, flippant, sarcastic violence that heightened my alienation by mirroring it and throwing it back at me in a way that generated more alienation and anxiety. Such practices would appear to be quite at odds with a process of “healing.”

However, I posit this contradiction as one that exists in appearance only. In reality, the inducement and manipulation of a rupturing violence that feeds off the already present violence of the colonized subject’s own neuroses is an important element of Gamboa’s decolonial healing practice and production of presence as healing—*homeopathic* healing. Frantz Fanon states that “decolonization is always a violent event” (*Wretched* 1). Here, Fanon speaks not only to the physical violence of uprising but to the psychological violence that must occur in order to upset the internalized, violent patterns and structurings of colonized subjectivity. For Paulo Freire, the process of *conscientização* involves a similar puncturing through the subject’s narrow, hopeless perception of what Freire terms the “limit-situations” that govern its existence. In the context of neoliberal subjectivity, these “limit-situations” can be understood as similar to Bourdieu’s structured/structuring relation between *habitus* and its social fields and practices. Freire describes “limit-situations” as “temporal-spatial conditions which mark [subjects] and which they also mark” (100). In order to break the perception of powerlessness and hopelessness with which the subject experiences these conditions,

Freire argues that the liberating cognition of decolonial praxis “cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection” (52). Freire’s pedagogy therefore seeks to instigate practical cognitive dissonance through a similar kind of oscillation, a point I further develop in my later chapter’s analysis of science fiction. This practical instigation appears to constitute a necessarily violent *force*. It seeks to facilitate students’ breaking through, on affective registers, layers of conditioning that have resulted from how colonizing, banking education “anesthetizes and inhibits creative power” in a “*submersion* of consciousness” (68).

In Gamboa’s work, this kind of instigation is effected through the aesthetic-rhetorical construction of Gumbrecht’s insular, intensity-focused framing situations. In this case, the situations involve scenarios like an interview or photo shoot, where various layers of performance interact in a production of presence. Performers use their bodies aesthetically to help produce media objects, but at the same time, they are involved in a process of producing *presence* as the lines blur between framed performance and the unframed performance of everyday life and self. Gamboa applies a rhetorical *technê* of *mētis* and *kairos* intelligence to draw on participants’ current psychological and physical states in the moment, as well as their interactions with each other and their individual and collective histories. These histories are culled from a prior process of careful observation and extensive conversation getting to know participants over time beforehand. This process echoes both Perls’ method of psychotherapy, as well as Freire’s approach of initial information-gathering from students. Gamboa then assembles these elements

within particular spatial contexts into a kind of swarm production of presence framed within a production of media. The nesting and framing of productions here reflect the multilayering and pointing beyond of an allegory-mode aesthetic.⁶⁸ The result is a carefully, rhetorically orchestrated, yet improvisationally open, disruption of that other, everyday performance. In this case, what was disrupted was my everyday performance of self as a neoliberal subject employed at the Capital Group. This aesthetic-rhetorical engagement through performance and media production thus facilitates the kind of epiphenal re-connection with presence through aesthetics that Gumbrecht seeks to point students toward. In the process of experiencing this violent disruption, the subject's sense and awareness of self shifts with and through perceptual shifts that occur through a re-orientation of attention to aesthetics.

In Perls's Gestalt therapy work, it is also a form of violence that necessarily addresses the "layer of confusion which separates...self from...self-concept" because "the patient mobilizes every means at his disposal to avoid viewing clearly his areas of confusion" (50). Perls argues that "[t]he patient has taken great pains to build up a self-concept" that "is often a completely erroneous concept...each feature representing the exact opposite of its actuality" (49). Similarly to Fanon and Freire, a deconstructive violence is employed in addressing that "layer of confusion." As with Gamboa's interview, Perls' notorious method includes placing the subject in uncomfortable situations that focus attention on behaviors and "self-interruptions," often through insistent questioning. Pre-figuring Bourdieu's notion of the embodied behavioral history of *habitus*, Perls argues that the neurotic is caught up in patterns of behavior and

thinking—practices—formed in past, “interrupted” situations. These patterns continue to shape the present through frustrated, unresolved emotions produced by the original interruption that are then repeated through compulsively performed interruptions into the present. Therefore, the neurotic “has to transform his thoughts about the past into actions in the present which he experiences as if the now were the then” (65).⁶⁹ However, just as Freire insists on a praxical fusing of reflection and action, Perls similarly argues that this transformation cannot emerge through psychoanalysis, for analysis intellectualizes and leaves the memory of an experience “isolated as a deposit of the past” (65). But neither can change occur through catharsis, which maintains an as-if distance between subject and experience (110). Instead, Perls argues that therapy must draw on the oscillatory force of psychodrama. This is because the neurotic’s clever “manipulations” allow one to avoid “total involvement” in the moment, to perpetuate unfinished situations created in the past, and to engage in (*perform*) “self-interruptions” (110). In other words, to circumvent these meaning-oriented, self-sabotaging rhetorical tactics, therapy must draw on *aesthetics*. Transformation can only emerge on affective, embodied registers, through the performance of psychodrama.

Similarly honing in on how “[e]ach human being creates his own character in real life...[with] a particular way of laughing, walking, speaking, with habits of language, thought, and feeling” (165), Augusto Boal also draws on the aesthetic rhetoric of psychodrama to bring unconscious performance to the foreground. Boal’s exercises in the “Rituals and masks” techniques act as a similar kind of insistent questioning. This form of questioning functions through performance to “[reveal] the superstructures, the rituals

which reify all human relationships, and the mass of behavior that those rituals impose on each person according to the roles he plays in society and the rituals he must perform” (154). Boal’s “Joker” facilitator uses a kind of aesthetic rhetoric to pose questions and instigate situations that force “spectators” to participate in the process of becoming “spectators” in their own lives. Similarly, at the core of Perls’ practice is the therapist’s analogous posing of hyper-observant, well-aimed, and well-timed, questions. The need for highly developed skill in sophistic rhetoric should be clear, as such improvisatory questioning necessarily involves a rhetorical *techné* of careful observation and *kairos* response, as well as a deft facility with antilogic and allegory-mode approaches capable of posing unresolvable contradictions through multilayering, startling juxtaposition, and attention to somatic experience. Similarly as well, Perls’ questions are focused pharmacologically on the subject’s often completely unconscious behaviors as the very material with which to disrupt and transform those behaviors precisely through their own unconscious, affective dimensions. A honed sophistic rhetorical attunement to body, affect, and verbalization, aims at instigating a situation in which the subject might become cognizant of those unconscious behaviors and affective experiences in the moment (110). As a skilled rhetor and rhetorician attuned to the aesthetic dimensions of bodily perception, experience, and expression, the Gestalt therapist must throw an image of the subject back on themselves with questions that function as “interruptions of some on-going process in the patient ... intrusions, very often miniature shocks” (76). Like the often awkward, uncomfortable, hard-to-watch video footage of Gestalt therapy sessions, with their “shocks,” the language here makes clear the violence inherent in such a

practice. And just as Freire's invocation of cognitive dissonance takes shape around the colonized subject's reality of limit-situations, Perls' "shocks" form around and in response to the patient's own neurotic, violent, self-interrupting tendencies.⁷⁰

In mirroring back to me and exacerbating my own paranoia, anxiety, fears, and insecurities, Gamboa and Gronk were indeed practicing a form of healing, one taken even further when Gamboa turned the camera on and posed a perfectly aimed, Perls-like question. But this was a kind of *homeopathic* healing designed to disrupt colonization's violence. It was one based on a *pharmakon* approach of utilizing elements as both illness and remedy at once (in this case, the specific contours of my conditioned neoliberal subjectivity). This is the same kind of violence Gumbrecht points to as inherent in the moment of aesthetic epiphany. He writes that because "epiphany always implies the emergence of a substance...that seems to come out of nothing, we may...postulate that there can be no epiphany and...no genuinely aesthetic experience without a moment of violence—because there is no aesthetic experience without epiphany (114). By affectively exacerbating rather than quelling my suspicion and anxiety, Gamboa and Gronk used my own neurotic manifestations as the very tools with which I might begin to see and address them in myself.

Central here is the specific question Gamboa posed. As Boal demonstrates, the idea of "unmasking" a subject through performance is another articulation of the psychologist's mirroring tactics. For Perls, unmasking this performance involves inducing in the performer a self-awareness of the performance/mask through insistent

questioning that focuses attention on it. But what questions exactly does Perls pose? He writes:

If the therapist were limited...only to asking three questions, he would eventually achieve success with all but the most seriously disturbed... These three...which are essentially reformulations of the statement, “Now I am aware” are: “What are you doing?” “What do you feel?” “What do you want?” We could...include... “What do you avoid?” “What do you expect?” (73–4)

Just as Gamboa’s questioning here destabilized me through an insistent focus on my performed mask(s), Perls’ neurotic is “throw[n]...on his own resources” with questions that “bring him to a recognition of his own responsibility, ask him to muster his forces and his means of self-support...[and] give him a sense of self because they are directed to his self” (74). In other contexts, Gamboa has consistently posed similar, well-timed lines of questioning. But this example here of posing such a direct line of questioning (“[W]hy are you an artist? Why do you create?”) from behind the mediation of a video camera in the specific space of my neoliberal everyday life and practices parallels how Perls’ “therapist’s questions...will be based on [the therapist’s] observations and directed towards bringing certain factors within the area of the patient’s awareness” (75).⁷¹

What this particular moment of the video interview demonstrates is one of those key junctures at which I became aware of my own roles and rituals as I grappled with the disruptive oscillation between meaning and presence effects, affective experience and intellectualization, put into play and manipulated by Gamboa. Gumbrecht notes that “the

tension/oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects endows the object of aesthetic experience with a component of provocative instability and unrest” (108). Here, in one of Gumbrecht’s “situation[s] of ‘insularity’ and...‘focused intensity’” (107), the hyperaware experience of my body, heightened by the self-consciousness of the framed interview performance and the anxiety produced by the unframed performance, was manipulated with the environmental elements and spaces of my everyday *habitus*. As Gamboa explains, his estranging practice seeks to highlight the “strangeness” of a given environment:

“The juxtaposition of [a particular character and a prospective background] oftentimes results in an irony.... By altering the sanctioned or expected behavior within a particular environment, I attempt to change it conceptually so that the environment, rather than the behavior, suddenly seems strange or different.” (qtd. in Chavoya 72)

As this video interview experience demonstrates, Gamboa’s canny, defamiliarizing insertion of “strange” or “different” behavior—conducting an interview about making art in the middle of this environment—did indeed foreground the strangeness of the space. At the same time, while the interview functioned to foreground the naturalized produced environment through “strange” behavior that rendered the space strange, it also highlighted my normative behavior in that environment and similarly rendered it strange.

For Gumbrecht, one of the more “dramatic” ways of entering the event of such a situation is what he calls a “modality of being caught by an ‘imposed upon relevance’” in which “the sudden appearance of certain objects of perception diverts our attention from

ongoing everyday routines and...temporarily separates us from them” (103). Here, Gumbrecht appears to reinscribe a subject/object split in which the framed insularity creates and heightens intensities between subject and art/aesthetic object. In my work with Gamboa, however, I argue that a more complex interrelation between subject and aesthetic object, between subject and aesthetic engagement, occurs. This complexity arises from a performative participation in the production of the aesthetic object—here, the interview. The participation blurs the lines between the two, drawing subjectivity more directly into aesthetics through various layers of performance and thus more directly in contact with presence. The performer must participate in its production, not simply come into proximity with it. Rather than presenting an “object of perception” to divert the subject’s attention, Gamboa involves the subject in the production of that object and thus in the production of presence in an effort to provoke cognitive dissonance and decolonial transformation. The subject is an actant in an assemblage of other actants. Gamboa’s approach therefore pays keen attention, as Freire and Perls do, to the subject’s particular context. This sophistic focus on contingency necessarily includes one’s surroundings and environment. This is a pedagogy that meets the student where they *are*, on all levels—emotionally and psychological as well as literally in terms of the physicality of one’s body, its everyday surroundings, and the relations between them. Gamboa and Gronk literally met me where I was—at my place of work in downtown Los Angeles.

This pedagogical and aesthetic siting in one’s everyday life and practice, I argue, is necessary if one is to develop capabilities for creative, aesthetic perception and

engagement with that life. In fact, I would argue that what Gamboa's, Perls', Freire's, and Boal's approaches all demonstrates is that it is *only* through engagement with one's everyday spaces and practices that real transformation can occur. For where else can one re-connect with "being-in-the-world" than exactly wherever one happens to be at any moment in their everyday life world? I agree with Gumbrecht that the "desire for presence" is "a reaction to an everyday environment that has become overly Cartesian," and that in the face of this reaction and desire, "it makes sense to hope that aesthetic experience may help us recuperate the spatial and the bodily dimension of our existence...[and] give us back at least a feeling of our being-in-the-world" (116). But what Gamboa's work suggests is that effective transformation of subjectivity occurs through an aesthetic, affective engagement precisely with that subjectivity's everyday spaces and practices as sites of possibility for moments of intensity and production of presence.

Presence, Possibility, and Pedagogy: Affective Angst/Accumulative Euphoria

Gumbrecht poses the question, "[*W*]hat is the effect of getting lost in the fascination that the oscillation between presence effects and meaning effects can produce?" (116). While Gumbrecht emphasizes a kind of euphoric engagement with presence and aesthetic epiphany, my experience in response to this video interview illustrates anything but euphoria. Indeed, every participation in Gamboa's work, whether as a performer or as an observer, has left me feeling disrupted. But as Fritz Perls writes: "[B]y the time the session is over, the patient is in *contact with himself*, and this is the

first step to making contact with others” (95). I argue that part of the aim of Gamboa’s disruptive practice here was to put me in “contact” with myself in a way that I wasn’t before the participation. With some performance events, this effect is euphoric. With others, like this interview, it is not. Most often, it is a combination—an uneasy oscillation—of the two.

Significantly, this sense of being in contact with oneself is an *embodied* sense of contact with one’s feelings, which often include ugly, unacceptable feelings that have been repressed. Perls centers the original experience of internalizing a foreign, invasive, unassimilated way of being and thinking in the body’s *physical* experience of that moment. These emotions manifested physically when they first arose, and they continue to do so because they still reside in our bodies. Our bodies still feel, act out, and perpetuate these interruptions. They are the locus of habituated patterns that form our conditioned personalities. They are the site of that conditioning. And therefore, from a *pharmakon* perspective, they also are the site of potentially disrupting that conditioning. Thus, it is imperative that we reconnect with these ongoing bodily experiences through embodied practices that break through logos with affect, precisely through those very bodily experiences. This is exactly the point of Perls’—and Boal’s, and Gamboa’s—psychodrama techniques to disrupt through a re-connection to presence. Perls asserts that after a therapy session, “[i]f the patient can stay with his fog long enough, it will clear up” (98). This interview is one such moment, among others, of my first steps toward what Perls calls “withdrawal into the fertile void.” Elaborating on the “payoff” of such a painful experience, Perls echoes Gumbrecht’s notions of aesthetic epiphany in his

description of how the subject, if “capable of staying with the experience of the fertile void—experiencing his confusion to the utmost,” may experience “a sudden “aha” experience...a blinding flash of realization or understanding” (99).

The important point is to surrender oneself to the pedagogical process of the “fertile void.” Some small moments of epiphany may arise out of process. However, *as* a process, it functions more accumulatively through repetitions of Spinoza’s *affectio*. In a similarly pedagogically oriented study of affect in the teacher-student relationship at the primary level, Megan Watkins examines the accumulative role of affect on student learning processes when consciously deployed in creative classroom practices by instructors. She highlights how Spinoza distinguishes “*affectus*” (“the force of an affecting body”) from “*affectio*” (“the impact [this force] leaves on the one affected” [269]). Watkins’ project centers on the “capacity of affect to be retained, to accumulate, to form dispositions and thus shape subjectivities” (269). Each unique engagement with Gamboa’s productions of presence, carefully designed to address specific parameters and issues in the moment as the subject changes over time, might trigger various kinds of shocks. But as a pedagogico-aesthetic project, the real transformative knowledge production and transmission involved occurs gradually in the accumulation of *repeated* embodied impacts that open up new possibilities for subjectivity by putting the subject repeatedly in contact with presence. The result over time is a re-orientation of subjectivity around the kind of aesthetic perception and receptivity that Gumbrecht seeks in terms of presence. Re-orientation of subjectivity begins with re-orientation of perception specifically and somatic activity more generally. To reframe Alva Nöe’s notion of

enactive perception as something we actively *do* rather than something that happens to us in a passive mode of reception, the re-orientation here is a shift both in how we *do* perception and how we *do* self. And this perceptual/ontological re-orientation is both aimed toward, and effected through repeated accumulative practice with, aesthetic experience of presence.

This element of repetition and accumulation is vital to understanding how Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s work is systematic, countering Gumbrecht's assertion that "there is no reliable...guaranteed way of producing moments of intensity" (99), "no systematic...pedagogically guaranteed way of leading students... 'toward' aesthetic experience," and "no predictable, obvious or typical yield that aesthetic experience can add to our lives in the everyday worlds" (102). For pedagogues interested in developing and implementing critical pedagogico-aesthetic practices, the example of the video interview is just one way of "producing moments of intensity" and "leading students 'toward' aesthetic experience" in a larger system of similar sophistic techniques. How might a deeper understanding of such techniques and systems help educators incorporate aesthetics and art into their teaching in ways that can lead students beyond the limits of hermeneutics and toward moments of intensity and contact with presence? How might the aesthetic-rhetorical performance of an "artist-educator" subjectivity in this kind of teaching help students become more conscious of their own subjectivities?

In what follows, I continue to apply rhetoric methodology to analysis of my experiences working with Gamboa in order to tease these questions out further along other rhetorical dimensions.

Angst for Nothing/No Parking on the Dance Floor: Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s

Technomediated Performance Events as Catalytic *Pharmakon*

In my first and second chapters, I drew on the work of technocultural theorist Bernard Stiegler in understanding how neoliberal subjectivities are shaped and conditioned through the public pedagogy of techno-psychological apparatuses. In this second case study of Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s work, I shift my rhetorical lens to a slightly different angle to examine Gamboa’s pedagogico-aesthetics from a technocultural standpoint in order to expand on my first case study’s points. This technoculture lens takes into account Stiegler’s analysis, along with other relevant technocultural theorists, including the previously mentioned Brian Massumi. Here, I excavate pedagogical potential specifically in the technomediation of ritual event group productions of Gamboa’s media objects. These objects have included online video interviews as in the previous case study, digital images and videos, print materials, and photographic prints. While I again look at some specific dimensions of how the finished media objects interact with the performance, the primary focus in this case study once more is on the ephemeral production.

Where I previously focused on the ephemeral production of presence as pedagogically transformational, here I look specifically at dimensions of technomedia in relation to performance, pedagogy, and *pharmakon*. I posit the technomediated performance event ritual in Gamboa’s work as one of Brian Massumi’s “micropolitical events.” These events generate and deliver “micro-shocks” on microperceptual levels of affective experience. In Gamboa’s work, performance “micro-shocks” occur through

technomediation understood as another of Gamboa's aesthetic-rhetorical devices. They act to re-orient attention, perception, and the sensorium. My methodology connects Massumi's event-analysis of micropolitics and microperception to Bernard Stiegler's critique of consumer capitalism's capturing and exploitation of attention and libidinal energies. Specifically, I draw on Massumi's notion of the deployment of "ontopower" through militarized operationalization of attention and perception in "total spectrum" domination ("Perception Attack"), and on Stiegler's related analysis of how libidinal energies are harnessed, exploited, and desublimated into addictive short-term drive satisfaction.⁷² Massumi analyzes how ontopower's total spectrum domination forecloses on future by targeting and habituating perceptual response toward militarily oriented outcomes. Similarly, Stiegler examines how toxic dominance of consumer capitalism through technomediation forecloses on future through the disinvestment that arises from "the structural short-termism" of its economic and "generalized irresponsibility" and through the "spread of disassociated milieus" (*For a New Critique* 59). According to Stiegler, this disinvestment reflects consumer capitalism's exhaustion and destruction of libidinal energy and thus desire, will, and motivation. I argue that Gamboa's Stieglerian *pharmakon* practice of homeopathically oriented socio-therapy and self-care⁷³ functions through technomediated performance to intervene in normative neoliberal subjectivities with a *techné* art-of-living set of skills and crafts. This aesthetic-rhetorical intervention into normative, conditioned subjectivities addresses Stiegler's call for the need to re-capture attention and re-direct libidinal energy through aesthetic practices and to develop economies of care and contribution around development of an art of living. Echoing the

decolonial and psychotherapeutic aims of the previous case study, and the key role of aesthetics in achieving those aims, Stiegler characterizes this development as a “deproletarianizing” recovery of *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre* knowledges. I connect this analytic to Massumi’s similar call to counter ontopower’s control specifically through the aesthetic practices, perceptual attunement, and gifting of aesthetically oriented micropolitical events. As with Stiegler’s aesthetics-oriented processes of deproletarianization, Massumi’s aesthetic of the micropolitical event and ethos of gifting seeks to regenerate processes of self-renewal in a matrix of reconfigured social relations. These processes address “how to live more intensely, live more fully.” They do so through social and perceptual technologies of “creat[ing] a small, moveable environment of potential” (“Micropolitics” 18) via reconnection to affective registers and care-oriented relations.

As with my previous case study, I employ here a narrative description of ephemeral events I have experienced in working with Gamboa. Drawing primarily on Massumi and Stiegler, as well as on the technoculture and media theory of Patrick Crogan, Susanna Paasonen, and Matthew Causey, I then provide rhetorical analysis. I draw parallels to the previous case study by connecting these technology and media theorists to the decolonial pedagogical work of Freire specifically and to similar decolonial psychotherapeutic techniques more generally that involve performance. This matrix of technoculture/media theory and decolonial/psychotherapeutic pedagogy shifts focus from more general considerations of affect and production of presence to a more refined focus on perceptual experience at the micropolitical level of microperception and

technomediated affect. The questions I address center on how Gamboa's ritual performance events engage participants in a process of transformation specifically through technomediation. I ask: How does this transformation involve Massumi's affective "micro-shocks" of micropolitical events? Similarly, how does it involve the "pharmacology of spirit" of a Stieglerian "socio-therapy" that can intervene in and disrupt the technomediated conditioning of neoliberal *habitus* that occurs through Stiegler's techno-psychological apparatuses? How is an embodied engagement of imagination through these technomediated aesthetic-rhetorical practices and perceptual re-orientations integral to ongoing critical transformation of the subject? How does the previously discussed accumulative effect of repeated engagement in these practices work also toward meeting what Stiegler characterizes as the need to develop "long-circuit," intergenerational investment models and re-open a sense of future possibility toward other-oriented economies of care?⁷⁴ To tease out these questions, I again look at oscillation in another experience in my work with Gamboa. I trace how transformation involved a feedback loop of temporality and affective resonance made possible by Gamboa's oscillatory manipulation of live performance and media object. I see this manipulation as an aesthetic-rhetorical sophistic practice involving an eristic poetics of antilogic and antithesis, among other rhetorical devices. In this way, I expand on the previous case study's discussion of (un)masking and mirroring to explore how this media/performance loop functioned as a kind of refractory, recursive mirroring device that rhetorically generated transformative effects.

* * *

Before turning to the past, I first address the future, because the problem I explore here is a temporal one. As suggested above in Massumi's and Stiegler's points, it is the problem of future—or rather, a lack of future. As Massumi points out, the problem is not simply a macropolitical one of hope—of overcoming the hopelessness and desperation of the current global apocalyptic zeitgeist with a sense of hope. In fact, Massumi argues, taking full and accurate account of the problems humanity faces leads to the conclusion that “there is no rational ground for hope” (“Micropolitics” 18). Instead, it is an issue of the micropolitical and of the development and practice of what he calls a “pragmatics of potential” through the aesthetic and affective politics of micropolitical events. Here, he echoes the Sophists in their pragmatic future-orientation toward “right” action via a paratactical opening of possibilities. For Massumi, the “micropolitical” in a micropolitical event refers to the precognitive microperception of affect—that pre-verbal moment of experiencing and finding oneself caught up in Gumbrecht's presence. It involves “returning to the generative moment of experience, at the dawning of an event, to produce a modulatory commotion internal to the constitution of the event,” and is “a question of reconnecting processurally with what's germinal in your living, with the conditions of emergence of the situations you live” (18). The transitional modulatory commotion at work here—a “micro-shock” (4)—is a disruptive reconnection to the somatic, pre-cognitive experience and awareness of the affective. Massumi refers to this experience via Deleuze and Guattari as “microperception”—“perception of a qualitatively different kind...something that is felt without registering consciously. It

registers only in its effects” (4). Here, Massumi also resonates with Gumbrecht’s very similar points about the experience of presence in the disruptive aesthetic epiphany.

The problem, then, is temporal. But as such, it is also one of bodily resonance and sensorium experience, of perception, process, and potential, on micropolitical scales. In developing the sophistic *technê* of a pragmatics of potential, how do we re-orient sensorium, perceptual, and attention apparatuses, to prime the body for an “affective attunement” (Stern cited in Massumi 4) to this different mode of perception? In terms of critical pedagogy’s aims, how do we do so in order to engage and (re)generate a continual process of unfolding critical potential and emergent transition over time? The question is not just proprioceptive; it is also one of the self. As Massumi also points out, the body is not separate from the self, but “is that region of in-mixing from which subjectivity emerges” (4). It is therefore also a question of how to effect and maintain an ongoing process of self-renewal, through the soma and its perceptual/affective activity. The catalytic micro-shock of affective modulatory commotion in the microperceptual event is a break or cut into the habituated perceptions and bodily responses through which subjectivity (re)emerges in a temporal unfolding. Paralleling Bourdieu’s *habitus*, as well as Fritz Perls’ understanding of how the neurotic is “tied to the past and to outmoded ways of acting” and thus caught up in patterns of behavior set in the past, Massumi notes that, “A habit is self-deciding. It is a self-effecting force from the past that acts in a present which appears only in a next-effect” (“Perception Attack” 76). Transformation arises then through the kind of affective disruption into temporal structures of habituated perceptual processes as previously examined in the specific context of productions of

presence. But what Massumi gets at here is not a singular shift from one state to another, from one sense of self to another. What Massumi's model helps articulate instead is a sophisticated *transitional* sense of self, reality, and future, as ongoing, unfolding process, as perpetual transformation, flux, and becoming—not one state to another, but subjectivity as the very in-between, transitory transitional of transformation itself. In sophisticated terms, what Massumi hones in on is the micropolitical aesthetic-rhetorical exchange involved in negotiating subjective perceptual experiences of a contingent reality always in flux. And he does so at a finely detailed level of microperception that fills in some of the vague edges of Gumbrecht's analysis of the affective experience of presence and what is beyond meaning with more precise contours.

Massumi's model focuses attention on the catalysis in the experience of the microperceptual event not so much as a break in a teleological framework, but as the ephemeral connective tissue through which potential and possibility open and proliferate in ongoing transition. When I speak about subjectivity engaged in a sophisticated critical processural becoming, I am speaking of the soma actively operating on intertwined cognitive-affective registers through somatic apparatuses that are aesthetically and perceptually primed to allow the body, and therefore subjectivity, to always be effectively, agentively engaged with the perpetually unstable process of reality's constant flux and contingency. In his analysis of what he terms "ontopower," Massumi pinpoints what is at stake in focusing on experience at this level. Because we perceive present "only in a next-effect," our experience actually occurs through a kind of syncopation in which the habituated "self-effecting force from the past that acts in a present" results in

“the present of the force’s actual operation [being] elided” (*Ibid.* 76). In a similar way, Massumi posits attention as the baseline of perception; we don’t direct our attention; rather, our attention directs us (“Perception Attack”). The syncopated rhythm of the “next-effect” can be instrumentalized, and this is something the U.S. military knows well and exploits in its deployment of “total spectrum” war and domination.⁷⁵ Massumi calls this “operationalizing the elided present of attention” (77).

He is concerned, then, with how the temporal elision involved in our attention and perception processes is a key site of exploitation toward habituated perceptual response. Specifically, he addresses how contemporary technomediation and other rhetorical devices habituate perceptual response toward a mode of life as constant, low-boil war. This is a mode in which we exist in a perpetual state of “waiting,” of “life primed” for particular kinds of militaristic responses to events.⁷⁶ Thus, “ontopower” is a kind of rhetorical apparatus that “focuses on a pre-decision process occurring in an interval of emergence antecedent to both informed knowing and deliberative action... a point before know-ability and action-ability have differentiated from one another” (79). As Massumi notes, “At that point, a modulation of perception is directly and immediately a change in the parameters of what a body can do, both in terms of how it can act and what it will know” (79). It is “proto-epistemological—and already ontological, an *ontopower*: a power through which being becomes” (79). Through a perceptual exploitation of the “elided present”—a pre-emptive repetitive modulatory conditioning of our behavior and knowledge that is accumulative—our ways of being and life are pre-emptively conditioned and channeled before we reach a point of knowing and acting in the moment.

This is because our *perception itself* is always already pre-emptively primed to take in and respond to stimuli in pre-conditioned ways. Through Massumi's analysis, it perhaps becomes clearer why the Sophists intertwined careful attention to perceptual and bodily experience with critical attention to sociocultural entraining in one's given *nomos*. What Massumi helps center attention on is how it is the body's experience generally and attention and (micro) perception specifically that are the primary terrain on which such *nomos* conditioning and subjectivity formation take place.

From a similarly sophistic orientation toward critically understanding the relationship between subjectivity formation and *nomos* conditioning at somatic levels, Stiegler critiques how, in the twentieth century, "[t]he mechanical turn in perception...engendered a process of collective *disindividuation*" ("Age" 17). This is "a process that destroys the collective and destroys culture...a kind of *proletarianisation*, given that the proletariat in fact refers to those who have lost their knowledge—their *savoir-faire*, their *savoir-vivre*, and their theoretical knowledge" (17). For Stiegler, the "transitional" (parallel to Massumi's catalytic modulatory commotion) is expressed as *pharmaka*. In what he terms a "pharmacology of spirit" oriented toward relations of care, these *pharmaka* are "the basis of what becomes, as transitional space, an intermediate area of experience where objects of culture, of the arts, of religion and of science are formed" ("Pharmacology of Spirit" 296). Stiegler addresses the toxicity of the consumer industrial system's use of *pharmaka* to channel and exploit libidinal energies toward consumerism. He poses the problem of countering this toxicity as a "pharmacological and therapeutic question constituted by the transitional space of those transitional objects that

are *pharmaka*” (297). Citing Winnicott, Stiegler clarifies the inherent pharmacological and pedagogical potential for both healing and toxicity in this transitional space. The transitional “intermediate area of *experiencing*, to which inner reality and external life both contribute,” constitutes a “potential space” (297). This “transitional space” is one that, under healthy conditions, “presupposes care... a process of learning... through which an art of interiorization is developed—an art of living—...creativity” (297). Here, as with Massumi, the transitional is also ontologically bound up in the constitution of self, in the process of individuation. For Winnicott, Stiegler notes, “the self (‘the interior’) is constituted” from this same process of adoptive interiorization of transitional space (cited in Stiegler 297). What Stiegler outlines here is a healthy process of *nomos* acculturation. This is a process in which the subject is entrained in the *nomos* of the sociocultural milieu in which it is embedded while still maintaining a critical, individuated distance on that set of sociocultural conventions, made possible by what I argue is a critical sophistic, self-reflexive “art of living” *technê*. But toxicity arises when this transitional space instead “installs a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognized... as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation” (Winnicott qtd. in Stiegler 297). In a foreclosure on future, this process of healthy adoption and acculturation is rhetorically manipulated. As with Massumi’s ontopower priming of perception toward militarization, the transindividuation process is channeled into one of colonized adaptation through “general proletarianization.” As poison, the transitional space of *pharmaka* under consumer capitalism thus “short-circuits those whom it inscribes in the circuit of production, consumption and speculation, and does so

by destroying *investment, that is, the desiring projection of imagination*" (298; orig. emphasis).

In response, Stiegler argues the need for a socio-therapeutic "detoxification" and "deproletarianization" through creative work like that carried out by his own *Ars Industrialis* collective. For Stiegler, this pharmacological work involves the very digital and technomediation apparatuses through which libidinal energies are toxically controlled in the first place. As he points out, "Like writing, and according to Plato's word, the digital is a *pharmakon*, that is, at once a poison, a remedy and a scapegoat. Only the digital itself, insofar as it can be a remedy, enables an effective struggle against the poison which it also is" ("Age" 19). Part of Stiegler's call for a new critique of political economy in our current neoliberal, consumer capitalist context involves, then, the re-channeling of attention and libidinal energies away from capitalist imperatives and toward creative, imaginative modes of thinking, perceiving, and being, precisely through the very devices used to capture them. His call also is about development of an economy of care and contribution around and interwoven with such re-channeling. As with Massumi's ontopower, the problem here is not simply epistemological; it is ontological. It is about developing, through a pharmacology of spirit, "long-circuit" network economies of care that can sustain other ways of being (for example, ways of being based on the kind of "affective attunement" to microperception that Massumi proposes). This is why, as with Gumbrecht, art and aesthetics are involved in both Massumi's and Stiegler's proposed ways of addressing the problems they raise. As sites of creativity and potential shaped around affective and perceptual response and libidinal flow and exchange, art and

aesthetics can open up new ways of perceiving and therefore of being. In particular, I argue in line with Stiegler's understanding of the digital as *pharmakon* that the aesthetics of performance and new medias present rich pharmacological potential. For if the problem is one of technomediated affect and habituated performance—habituation of the sensorium, pre-cognitive microperception, “proto-epistemology” and ontopower, embodiment, libidinal energies, behaviors, practices, and gestures—then the site at which performance and new media intersect is a key site of micropolitical intervention and transformational catalysis.

Like Stiegler, Massumi addresses the problem of temporality, perception, and control, to flesh out a multifaceted understanding of and response to it. One context he explores is particularly useful for concluding my theoretical framework and opening my case study by returning to the temporal question of how we might engage and (re)generate a continual process of unfolding potential and emergent transition over time. Massumi examines the problem of the virtual in contemporary architectural design. Drawing on Bergson and Deleuze and Guattari, he works from the notion of the virtual as “the mode of reality implicated in the emergence of change: the *event*” (“Sensing”). As event, “the virtual is not contained in any actual form assumed by things or states of things. It runs in the transitions from one form to another” (*Ibid.*). The temporal problem for architecture is in extending its virtuality beyond the completion of its forms. How does architecture maintain a sense of transitory event and emergence of change once the virtuality of its design phase has been realized in concrete forms? How does it avoid containment and stasis, given its “finished” nature as a stable form? Massumi points to

topology as a way out of the impasse that arises from this problem, where “[t]opology deals with continuity of transformation” that “engulfs forms in their own variation.” Key here is his point that

[w]hen the focus shifts to continuity of variation, still-standing form appears as residue of a process of change, from which it stands out (in its stoppage). A still-standing form is then a *sign*: of the passing of a process. The sign...envelopes in its stillness a deformational field of which it stands as the trace: at once a monument of its passing and a signpost of its potential to be repeated. (*Ibid.*)

Through this kind of generative deformational practice, Massumi’s architect then becomes a prospector of formative continuity... New form is not conceived. It is coaxed out, flushed from its virtuality. The architect’s job is in a sense catalytic, no longer orchestrating. He or she is more a chemist (or perhaps alchemist) staging catalytic reactions in an abstract matter of variation... (*Ibid.*)

I want to bracket some of the deeper implications in Massumi’s theorization of the virtual and the catalytic architect and return to them later in my analysis. For now, I want this model of the catalytic architect—a kind of alchemist working with the elusive, ephemeral “material” of the ongoing emergent change and flux of the virtual—to serve as a key part of the rhetorical frame with which to approach my analysis of Gamboa’s transformational work with his “Virtual Vérité” troupe of performers in media production performance events (and the deformational fields of their “finished” media object residues and traces).

Holding this model in mind helps clarify Gamboa's method and approach as resonant with Massumi's catalytic architect-chemist. Further, it clarifies what is at stake in this work: The emergent potential of the virtual as *event* as part of a micropolitical catalytic intervention effected through sophisticated aesthetic-rhetorical technomediation. At stake as well is the somatic rhetorical capacity and faculty to participate in the transitional, creative transformation necessary for continual self-renewal and regeneration, and for imagining and realizing multiple proliferating possibilities and futures.

I turn now to my narrative description of another transformational experience of live performance media production working with Gamboa in order to explore this kind of interventional catalysis. As with my previous case study, I follow this narrative with analysis.

Angst for Nothing: Anti-Dance of Zombie Drag

Like the video interview shoot with Gamboa and Gronk for *Chicano Vista*, one of the other experiences most significant in working with Gamboa was also one of the most difficult and painful for me. As with the video interview, the 2000 photo shoot for the *Angst in a Parking Lot* fotonovela in the parking lot of Philippe the Original restaurant in Los Angeles produced jarring cognitive dissonance through affectively registered "micro-shocks," or "modulatory commotions." Also as with the video interview, this dissonance arose from the parking lot event's foregrounding of just how disconnected, socially alienated, and unconscious my understanding and "performance" of self had been up to then. But where that event involved a more individualized context through a one-on-one

video interview, this event is useful for looking at the social, relational, and ritual dimensions of Gamboa's work: As with all of his fotonovelas, this shoot involved several of what Gamboa has called his "virtual performers," a group that later evolved into the current "Virtual Vérité" troupe. In this case, with ten participants, this was the largest gathering I'd been to.⁷⁷

Contrary to expectation, it did not help that this session involved several performers with whom I'd already worked on previous shoots. In fact, it was the cold response I received from several folks I already knew that put me on guard and ill at ease when I first arrived at the restaurant. Thrown off, I found the nervous friendliness with which I'd walked in dissolving quickly into mere nervousness. I pressed on though and tried to remain open and friendly as Gamboa introduced me around the table. Once introductions had been made, I attempted to engage in small talk as we waited for others to arrive and as Gamboa made arrangements for food.⁷⁸ In trying to participate in the general conversation, I avoided the cold, guarded responses and focused on getting to know some of the new people. I found that two performers in particular whom I'd just met seemed open to talking and being friendly with me.

Obviously, this was a welcome comfort, but it didn't last long. The two performers who "latched" onto me were good friends in their early twenties, a bit younger than I was, but close enough in age for us to relate more as peers. The young man and woman seemed very excited to meet and talk with me. This was not just comforting, but somewhat flattering—until I began to suspect that they were perhaps a little *too* excited. I started to perceive that there was something overly fawning and

flirtatious in how they spoke to me. Something seemed off. Caught in the antilogic extremes of the overly cold dismissal of performers I'd already known, and the overly warm, sycophantic attention of these new performers, I began to have the uneasy feeling that both reactions were nothing more than performances. But it wasn't until I looked up at one point and caught Gamboa staring directly at me, watching me intently (bemusedly?), from the other end of the table, that I suddenly retreated into a position of complete insecurity, paranoia, and hyper-vigilant, anxious guardedness. According to my quick decoding of the situation, I was being played, and Gamboa was busy observing my responses.

Which meant that not only was he observing, but he'd played a role in constructing the situation in the first place. As the young man and woman continued pressing me for information and posing odd questions, I grew increasingly uncomfortable. The young man kept asking, for example—in an overly excited, manic way—about my chess-playing abilities, because he'd recently learned to play and was looking for opponents to help him improve his game. The young woman, on the other hand, played another game: Costumed provocatively in a tight, revealing dress, she flirted in an obvious, overly sexualized manner. Together, the two of them thus formed another level of affective antilogic juxtaposition. In addition to being caught between the “cold” and “warm” responses, I found myself in a highly charged affective field between the airy but manically engaged abstraction of intellectualism (here, a particularly pretentious articulation, with that quintessential symbol of the refined intellectual, chess), and on the other hand, the earthy, profane bawdiness of overt sexuality and flirtation.⁷⁹

I started to sweat profusely and my body felt awkward. As in other experiences working with Gamboa, I became hyper-aware of how I positioned my body, and of my gestures and facial expressions. My clothing felt stiff, uncomfortable, and too tight. As I struggled on both cognitive and affective registers to keep up with the barrage of conversation and libidinal energies transiting between us while trying to ignore Gamboa's observing, analytical eye, all I could imagine was the discussion before my arrival. I pictured Gamboa setting up the scenario, preparing the two and making directorial suggestions about things to say and do in order to push my (paranoid, anxious) buttons and elicit a response from me. By the same token, I imagined instructions to the others as well—only in their case, the directions were to act cold and dismissive. And now, he was sitting back, watching the whole performance unfold.

By the time we finally made it out to the parking lot, I was in a high state of agitation, nervousness—and angst. Both the apparent “performances” and Gamboa's observation of them had continued in the restaurant.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, I'd retreated further into alienated silence. My armpits were soaked and my forehead continued to produce a never-ending stream of sweat that I had already wasted several thick wads of restaurant napkins on in vain efforts to mop myself dry. I felt uneasy and queasy. I felt anger at the sense of exclusion through faux inclusion. In the parking lot, Gamboa led us to a row of empty spaces against a wall. Here, all ten of us were instructed to cram ourselves into one narrow parking space. Nearby, a few curious passersby stopped to watch briefly. But for the most part, as with most of Gamboa's photo and video shoots in public urban spaces, no one seemed to register what was happening in the lightning-quick few minutes in

which the media production performance took place.⁸¹ Once we were all within the parking space's painted lines, Gamboa then asked us to move around in a kind of zombie dance. We were to imagine and physically project the feeling of being frustrated and confused, our bodies heavily laden and pulled down. Most importantly, we were to perform as if we were filled with angst, because even though we were in close proximity within the tight confines of this space, we could not verbally communicate with or physically touch one another.⁸² I had little difficulty performing this particular set of emotions and physical sensations in that moment. At the same time, I remember imagining how these images would look, how I would appear later (overweight, sweaty, nervous). This added yet another layer of insecurity and angst.⁸³

As we followed Gamboa's directions, he danced around our disturbed movements with a sprightly, agitated quickness, photographing us from various angles. As with most of his performance production events, the actual photo shoot here lasted for no more than a few minutes of intensely focused experience. Later, the photos of our anguished facial expressions and body language would reflect this intensity. Digitally edited with visual effects, audio recordings, and written text, they became part of Gamboa's short Flash-Shockwave digital fotonovela, *Angst in a Parking Lot*.⁸⁴ When Gamboa signaled that we were "finished," we all stood around the parking lot talking. More accurately, the other performers talked, while I stood in impatient, impudent silence, wanting to leave as quickly as possible. By this point, I'd resolved never to participate in another fotonovela shoot again. Where the agitation of the *Chicano Vista* shoot would leave me feeling destroyed later by the feeling that I had been subjected to some kind of avant-garde hoax

that poked fun at my sense of self as a “wannabe artist,” the agitation of the “Angst” shoot left me feeling more angry than anything. This was the first moment when the possibility fully hit me, beyond my earlier suspicions with Gronk, that I was somehow being “played” by all these crazy performers who were acting “fake,” while I saw myself as simply trying to “be myself.” I angrily wanted to just remove myself from the whole scenario. I pretended to be in a rush, preoccupied with the need to leave, and even made up some reason. Of course, I had nowhere else to go but to my apartment nearby to ruminate on and anguish over the past couple of hours.

As I was leaving, the manic chess player and the young flirt made one final gesture at friendship, inviting me to a local bar to have a drink with them. But I once again read the moment as another performative attempt to mess with me and make me look the fool. Cynical and angry, I imagined arriving at yet another “fake” scene in which everyone would be “performing” (and observing and laughing at me because I was not in on the fun). Mumbling something regretful about running late, about friends waiting for me, about somewhere else that I really needed to be at that moment, I finally rushed off. Walking away, I felt like some kind of phantasmic ghost in the process of dissolution, dragging ragged bits of myself that trailed behind me even as I struggled to keep them all bundled up together at my chest.⁸⁵

Decolonial Disco Splits: No Parking on the Pharmakon

I begin analysis of my experience of this micropolitical event by looking not at the event, but at the finished media object, the *Angst in a Parking Lot* digital fotonovela. Doing so provides context for understanding the form and how Gamboa uses it. At the same time, as will become clearer below, it provides necessary background for understanding how this particular form is especially suited to my rhetorically oriented questions around affect, perception, sensory experience, and subjectivity transformation, in the catalytic interplay between live performance and “finished” media object.

In “The Fotonovela,” Jane L. Reed opens her discussion of the dramatic photoplay form by asserting that “[t]he...genre per se is not well known in [the United States]” (4). She notes that despite this lack of awareness in the U.S. (Latino populations notwithstanding, a distinction Reed does not make), the fotonovela form has nevertheless been widely employed internationally since the nineteenth century. Reed focuses on the melodramatic Mexican pulp form, which from the 1950s on, “took the forefront, spinning tales of love and lust with social and psychological episodes” (4). The article details how more recent artists around the world have appropriated the fotonovela form. However, Reed does not make the connection between the popularity of fotonovelas in Mexico and Latin America and their parallel presence in the United States in immigrant and Chican@/Latin@ communities. She therefore fails to grasp how for Chicano artists like Gamboa,⁸⁶ the fotonovela functions in a unique, highly charged liminal space between national, cultural, and aesthetic boundaries. Further, if we examine the visual/performance form with an awareness of pre-Conquest Indigenous practices and

aesthetics, it becomes clearer perhaps *why* the fotonovela gained such a foothold in Latin America (and among U.S. Latin@s), and why the form is particularly useful in Gamboa's work and in this study of it. Indigenous graphic forms of text-pictograph hybrid images have of course pre-dated drama-based fotonovelas for centuries. They constitute the bulk of pre-Conquest and post-Conquest graphic and written representations by Indigenous and mestizo scholars and artists. But in addition, as performance theorist Diana Taylor notes in a salient point here, the use of pictographic writing by Aztec scholars and artists usually accompanied a *performative* dimension, functioning as both a call to some kind of ritual, ceremony, or act, and as an archival "mnemonic aid" in the transmission of history and knowledge carried out through embodied performance (17). These mnemonic technologies and their links to knowledge and ritual social performance resonate with Stiegler's theorization of how technics has always already been imbricated in a tri-part transductive process of technics, individual, and social individuation, through the *pharmakon* "tertiary retentions" of *hypomnesis* ("Biopower"). This connection is vital in understanding how Gamboa's fotonovelas and their performances function together as *pharmakon* and provides further insight into his extensive use of the form.

One of the primary concerns of Gamboa's work is the intersection between media and performance. The fotonovela therefore presents, through its static visual/textual representation of dramatic performances, an effective form through which to explore those intersections with juxtapositions of text and image, performance and media object. Especially significant about "Angst in a Parking Lot" in the context of this study, however, is that it is a *digital* fotonovela. This intersection of digital technomediation and

live performance makes it helpful in examining other levels of juxtaposition at work in the aesthetic rhetoric of Gamboa's fotonovelas. As a Stieglerian digital *pharmakon* produced through performance in the kind of micropolitical event theorized by Brian Massumi, this fotonovela serves as an effective object through which to examine the questions of affect, perception, and subjectivity, at the heart of my argument for Gamboa's work as transformational catalysis through technomediated performance.

Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy is illuminating from another angle that helps demarcate this transformation as decolonial and that builds on some of the previous case study's points. His theorization of the dissonant moment of *conscientização* that occurs through the subject's confrontation with a "coded existential situation," and his concept of "splitting," provide entry points into understanding how the media object of the digital fotonovela functioned decolonially as a Stieglerian transitional object *pharmakon* in relation to the "modulatory commotion" of the micropolitical event of the live performance. Freire writes:

When an individual is presented with a coded existential situation [reflecting one's existential reality] (a sketch or photograph which leads by abstraction to the concreteness of existential reality), his tendency is to "split" that coded situation. In the process of decoding, this separation corresponds to the stage we call the "description of the situation," and facilitates the discovery of the interaction among the parts of the disjointed whole. This whole (the coded situation), which previously had been only

diffusely apprehended, begins to acquire meaning as thought flows back to it from the various dimensions. (96)

Freire was writing in the 1960s. Given the kind of saturating digital technomediation that currently “short-circuits” and “proletarianizes” subjects in Stiegler’s analysis, developing a method of identifying the Freiran “complex of contradictions” that might represent the cracks and fissures for a decolonial, deproletarianizing intervention is perhaps more complex than ever. This is what makes the use of technomediated performance in the production of a digital fotonovela such an effective rhetorical choice in a contemporary aesthetics of transformational catalysis. As Freire argues, it is the “complex of contradictions” (107) of individuals that mediates between them and their experiences of reality. These mediations are similarly seen as pharmacological by Freire, as they potentially are exploitable against themselves to induce cognitive dissonance (107). The “codification” of these contradictions into “objects” can later be used to “mediate the decoders in their critical analysis” (107). Images of the codifications help participants “externalize their thematics...and begin to see how they...[have] acted while actually experiencing the situation they are now analyzing” (108). Decolonization is catalyzed, through cognitive dissonance, by aesthetic-rhetorical mediational objects that code the subject’s colonized situation.

In one sense, the “splitting” involved in my experience of the fotonovela as a media object coding of my existential reality could be said to have occurred after the fact when I saw and cognitively registered the finished object online. Indeed, seeing myself and connecting those images to my experience of the performance produced an affective

micro-shock of self-recognition that triggered cognitive reflection on my reality, similar to my viewing of the *Chicano Vista* interview. But there also is a more complex temporality and splitting at work here. It arises in that connection of performance and self-image through Gamboa's rhetorical, *kairotic* manipulation of affect and sensory experience in the live performance event, in the subsequent viewing of the object, and more complexly, in my imagining of the future finished object as I was in the act of producing it. While Freire's theorization is useful in articulating some of the cognitive aspects involved in decolonial critical analysis through cognition of the coded existential situation, it is limited precisely by its focus on cognition, codification, and analysis. Freire centers the object's potential for catalysis solely on the cognitive. Further, in terms of Massumi's notion of the catalytic versus the classical architect, Freire's theorization posits the object as "finished" and therefore static, and thus fails to articulate a way of extending the emerging change of the virtuality of the transitional event. The more complex temporality and uncanny splitting involved in the fotonovela's interplay with the event of its production, however, gets at the problems raised by Massumi and Stiegler in terms of individuation and self-renewal in specific relation to affect, temporality, perception, and the *uncodifiable* transitional flux as a space of potential.

In "The Screen Test of the Double: The Uncanny Performer in the Space of Technology," Matthew Causey explores the effect of technology and digital media on the nature of performance and subjectivity. He addresses questions of how the space of technology has altered the ontological status of the "liveness" of performance, and how this alteration bears on representations and performances of subjectivity. Analyzing this

convergence of performance and media practices, Causey focuses on the “uncanny” moment of confrontation with one’s technologically mediated performed other. Echoing Freire’s “splitting,” Causey argues that this uncanny experience of split subjectivity and self-as-other is a key element in the enactment of a new, uncanny cyber-subjectivity of morphing identities. He focuses on the “uncanny” moment “when the presence of the Double is presented through mediated duplication, the simple moment when a live actor confronts her mediated other through the technologies of reproduction” (385). Causey focuses on this moment of confrontation to make his primary point that, “the experience of the self as other in the space of technology can be read as an uncanny experience, a making material of split subjectivity” (385). Causey cites Ronell’s discussion of Freud’s notion of the uncanny. He states that, “[t]he confrontation with the Double, the recognition of yourself outside of yourself” and “a kind of being in cyberspace with morphing identities that exist within the fragility of the digital hypertext, present the technologically triggered uncanniness of contemporary subjectivity” (385).

I draw on Causey’s analysis to argue that Gamboa’s use of digital media with performance as *pharmakon* functions through a curative use of this uncanny splitting as an affective mirroring device. On one level, this particular micropolitical event of the fotonovela shoot was designed to induce a Freiran *conscientização* awareness of these “uncanny” but naturalized experiences of technomediated subjectivity by presenting participants with a coded cognizable object reflective of their existential reality of technomediated alienation and angst. Significantly, this is an object created through their own bodily performances and affective experiences. It thus fosters an awareness of their

everyday life neoliberal *habitus* not just as performed, but as a *technomediated* performance of neoliberal subjectivity. The point here was not simply to make me aware of my uncanny experience of technomediated neoliberal self, but to find a way to use that experience against itself in a pharmacological manipulation of performance and digital mediation in order to catalyze transformation. Gamboa's invocation of this uncanny experience of technomediated subjectivity through the juxtaposition of performance and media object indeed functions as a mirroring device akin to Freire's "cognizable objects." But as performance, and in its manipulation of temporality, it does so on affective registers and through bodily, sensory experience. It is more about pre-cognitive perception and affect than cognition and critical analysis. In fact, it aims at circumventing cognitive processes by putting performers in contact with Massumi's microperception and Gumbrecht's presence. This manipulation plays on Causey's uncanny doubling/splitting of consciousness by "construct[ing] a space wherein we double ourselves and perform a witnessing of ourselves as other" (386). The key insight that emerged from this particular experience for me was an awareness of the performativity of my own everyday life triggered by a technomediational "doubling" and "witnessing" of myself in/as performance. Eventually, this awareness developed and grew through critical analysis to include an awareness and understanding of my own conditioning, (neoliberal) *habitus*, and (proletarianized) patterns of behavior. This insight arose not only from the performance proper of the fotonovela shoot in the parking lot, but from my experience during the pre-performance "performance" inside the restaurant and my post-performance viewing of the fotonovela. More than anything, it was the sophistic,

allegory-mode antilogic juxtaposition of multiple, intersecting temporal and spatial levels of performance, reality, and affective experience, that was key in creating the micro-shock of modulatory commotion. While it took me a while to intellectually grasp what had occurred, it was through the *affective* register of this intense experience that I first began to develop awareness on a pre-cognitive, intuitive, bodily and sensory level.

This manipulation of time on affective registers created a kind of feedback loop in which the mediating presence of a camera prompted my present performing self to imagine my future self looking back at this performance through a digital document of the moment. The fotonovela thus functioned like a textual call to performance and a mnemonic device by working in multiple, overlapping temporal directions. The imagination of my future self perceiving this digitally mediated past performance functioned, along with Gamboa's prompts in the moment, as part of a kind of syncopated performance prompt, to which we responded with a performance. This performance was highly attuned to our affective registers, to physical sensations, perceptions, and instincts, and to flows of libidinal energies circulating and resonating among our bodies and surrounding objects and spaces. The liminal transitional space of the digital *pharmakon*, used toxically to short-circuit individuation by capturing attention and perception and channeling libidinal energies toward consumerist subjectivities, was instead used against itself. It put me and my sense of self in a liminal, temporally unstable transition both in the performance and afterward in the viewing of the Freiran "cognizable" object. In this way, the emerging change of the virtual event and the co-individuation of my self and this transitional object extended beyond and through the object. As with Massumi's point

about catalytic, alchemical architecture, the point was not to transform from one state to another, but to reconnect, through affect and presence, to an ongoing process of transformation and self-renewal in a co-individuating engagement with the event of *pharmaka* transitional objects.⁸⁷

The work therefore is about intensifying and modulating affect in general, through rhetorical practice. In a study of the “carnal resonances” involved in online pornography viewing, Susanna Paasonen provides context that helps to get at how affect and intensity function here. While I do not entirely agree with her application of this theorization to pornography,⁸⁸ her focus on art as primarily affective and her discussion of haptic images, carnal resonance, and somatic archives, shed light on the role of affect and bodily experience in Gamboa’s juxtaposition of performance and media object. Drawing on Grosz’ notion of “art as something that produces and generates intensities” and as “that which directly impacts the nervous system and intensifies sensation,” Paasonen discusses how “[a]rt submits its materials to intensity and sensation with no predetermined format, hence affecting the bodies of people” (Grosz qtd. in Paasonen 187). The question, then, of separating “the artful from other forms of cultural production” is partly one “of the properties and affordances of different objects—the ways in which they resonate, the kinds of encounters they invite, and the modes of analytical engagement they facilitate” (187) in “[t]he movement and translation taking place between the performed, the mediated, and the sensed” (195).⁸⁹

Here Paasonen’s general concept of carnal resonance applies to the role of affect and libidinal energies in Gamboa’s aesthetic-rhetorical events and in the objects they

produce. This is reflected in their visual objects' nature as *haptic* rather than merely representational (like Freire's cognizable objects). As Paasonen notes, "Haptic images have certain properties that give rise to particular kinds of resonance and intimacy...their effect is more direct than that of representational images" (Marks cited in Paasonen 191). In this case, the intense affective experience of participating in the production of the images imbues them with a haptic resonance that is constitutive of the mirroring process in the interplay between performance and object that I outline above. In terms of the performance event itself, Paasonen's resonances are the very "material" through which perception and attention is re-oriented and through which libidinal energies are re-channeled toward long-circuit individuation processes of ongoing transformation. By engaging in these events (as I did for this and have continued to do for many subsequent photo shoots), performers learn to re-orient perception and attention along affective registers through practice. They develop aesthetic-rhetorical skills and faculties of microperception in performatively interacting with and responding to flows of carnal resonance and the "properties and affordances of different objects." Through the accumulative process of an ongoing, repeated practice, the subject's body—and thus subjectivity—is primed for a different kind of perceptual/affective response and way of being than the militarily instrumentalized one outlined in Massumi's ontopower. Paasonen's analysis provides insight into this accumulative dimension through her discussion of somatic archives. She argues that, "as people experience and experiment with embodiment, memories...and imprints—of bodily sensations, pleasures, and their associations to people, incidents, locations, and moments—accumulate and change over

time and give form to somatic archives or reservoirs” (202). She makes the point that “[t]he body is shaped by historically layered skills, experiences, and sensations that bring forth particular ways of relating to other bodies and reverberating with them” (202).

As Paasonen makes clear here, this is a shared social accumulation of associations and “relating to other bodies.” In “The Wrong Turn of Aesthetics,” Henry Staten draws on the rhetorical notion of *technê* as a skill or craft developed through diligent, long-term practice, in order to suggest a redefinition and reconceptualization of art. As he notes, “The most crucial fact about *technê* is that it is in the first instance a social, not an individual, possession, a practical knowledge that has been accumulated across generations” (226). Henry conceptualizes “craftivism,” an aesthetically oriented “approach that leverages the power of socially motivated peer production, open source initiatives, and the wisdom of the crowd, to solve specific problems in a localised context” (95). He draws on Sennet’s definition of craft knowledge to make the point that, “Crucial... is the social aspect: the inalienable capital created (and shared) through networked relationships based on trust and reciprocity and shaped by norms established by the group” (95). Especially relevant is his point that “this type of knowledge cannot be accomplished by social sharing alone but relies on the transformational power of time. The acquisition of any ‘skilled’ activity needs repeated and meaningful exchanges between a person (the craftsperson) and the task/material” (95). Acquisition and development of a craftivist approach also requires “establishing the optimum environment to foster and nurture socially motivated peer production” (95). What Gamboa’s micropolitical events demonstrate is the establishment of such a pedagogico-

aesthetic “optimum environment.” Through attentive mentorship and the kind of alchemical, catalytic architecture Massumi theorizes, Gamboa’s work applies a sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric toward creating such an environment across an array of spaces over time. It is therefore partial, fragmented, and ephemeral in one sense—portable (Massumi’s “small, moveable environment of potential”)—but it is also linked and constructed over time by repeated activities within these spaces. Its ephemeral event moments thus facilitate engagement with the transitional space of ongoing transformation and self-renewal, and the necessary acquisition and development of the microperceptive *technê* skills of Stiegler’s art of living. In this *technê*, the virtual “object” of one’s “art,” like the transformation in the creative process of ongoing emerging change, is the (ongoing, never-ending) becoming of oneself.

In rhetorical terms, these art-of-living skills reflect development of embodied *mētis* and *kairos* intelligence in the only way one can develop these intelligences, as demonstrated by the Sophists and as previously noted: Through direct bodily action and practice in a variety of contexts and settings. Participating in an embodied practice of flirtation, of intensely engaged interaction, and of attention to carnal resonances and affective exchange, primes the body for microperceptive, creative response and social relationality that evades foreclosures on future and instead opens potential and possibilities. The soma learns to evade both cognitive traps of analysis and intellectualization and pre-emptive operationalization of the perceptual process by reconnecting to pre-cognitive affective, microperceptual experience. Through aesthetic practice and engagement with presence, it learns to re-orient attention and *do* perception

in new ways. It learns to re-operationalize Stiegler's transitional *pharmaka* to re-channel libidinal energies toward desire and creativity, and to function *as* the transitory space of emerging change in Massumi's virtual. At the same time, in developing and practicing this sophistic mode of attentive, creative response and social relationality in these ritualistic, technomediated gatherings, subjects also practice the skills necessary to build Stiegler's economies of care and contribution. This involves practicing and recovering the *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre* involved in dressing up, coming together, and having a fun time appreciating good food, drink, and company, while *making* something (a performance; a media object; a community; oneself). As Stiegler might put it, the process is transductive, as the individual and the social co-individuate through the pharmacological mediation of performance events and their media objects. The "virtual" in "Virtual Vérité" thus refers on one level to the ongoing, transitional emerging change of the event, while the "vérité" refers to the always open potentials and possibilities for imagining and realizing other realities. The dynamic between the terms is a reciprocal one, and it is one that strongly resonates with the Sophists: Creative, imaginative openness to potentials and possibilities both enables and is enabled by open engagement with the flux and contradiction of event, self, and reality.

CHAPTER FIVE:
ALLEGORY MODE AND *ATURDIMIENTO*:
THE UNTIMELY POETICS OF *PHARMAKON* PERFORMANCE IN
DICTATORSHIP AND POSTDICTATORSHIP NARRATIVES OF
CHILE AND ARGENTINA

Introduction

In *The Untimely Present: Postdictatorial Latin American Fiction and the Task of Mourning*, Idelber Avelar mines the allegorical dimensions of works like Argentine writer Ricardo Piglia's 1992 novel, *The Absent City*. Through a Benjaminian lens, Avelar analyzes how Piglia and other postdictatorship Latin American authors have used allegory to stage memory politics that deal with the past trauma of dictatorial violence in a postdictatorial contemporary neoliberal moment of "untimely present."⁹⁰ This is a moment in which official narratives seek to efface that past and its catastrophic violence, at the same time they work to mystify current free market structures and their underlying relation to that prior violence. Avelar's implicitly rhetorical analysis draws on Benjamin to focus attention on how aesthetic strategies of allegory may be effective both in potentially working through trauma in the face of official efforts to impose a regime of passive forgetting, and in demystifying market relations. He particularly is interested in how Latin American postdictatorship literature uses allegory to resist passive forgetting by maintaining a melancholic relationship to dictatorial trauma. His analysis stakes out a position for allegory as functioning to express and effect evasion of a Freudian

“introjection” of loss by insisting on maintaining and making (indirectly) visible an “incorporative” melancholic remainder of past trauma. Drawing on Abraham and Torok, Avelar articulates introjection as “the horizon of a successful completion of mourning work, whereby the lost object is dialectically absorbed and expelled,” in contrast to melancholic “incorporation,” in which “the traumatic object remains lodged within the ego as a foreign body...unnameable except through partial synonyms” (8).

Avelar’s argument for allegory’s critical potential in making possible mourning work rests on the connection between allegory’s structuring around partiality and fragment, and the structure of the incorporated traumatic object as melancholic fragmentary remainder. The partiality, fragmentariness, and “resistance to figuration” in allegory’s structure parallels an “incorporative refusal to mourn” (9) the traumatic object in “the insistence of incorporation” (8). Avelar uses this parallel connection to argue that allegory therefore can function to generate a text that operates as “a mediating force” capable of effecting mourning work by exteriorizing the “lodged” fragmentary object of loss through indirectness and metaphorization. As he puts it in reference to Argentine author Tununa Mercado, “the labor of mourning has much to do with the erection of an *exterior* tomb where the brutal literalization of the internal tomb can be metaphorized” (9). For Mercado, the mediating metaphorization of the “internal tomb” through allegory structures of fragmentary, indirect, and refractory expression in her writing makes possible a process in which she “writes her way from melancholia into mourning work” (9). As Avelar notes of postdictatorial literature in general, the critical potential of allegory’s refractory expression therefore rests on how it “reactivates the hope of

providing an entrance into a traumatic experience that has seemingly been condemned to silence and oblivion” (10) through a kind of paradox in which the very object that binds one to melancholy through incorporation is precisely that which makes possible the mourning work of introjection. In *Speculative Fictions: Chilean Culture, Economics, and the Neoliberal Transition*, Alessandro Fornazzari helps to better understand this paradox in the “logic of the purported ethical primacy that melancholy has over mourning” (55), and how this paradox represents for many critics like Fornazzari limitations in arguments for allegory, like Avelar’s. For Fornazzari, the argument for refractory expression’s critical potential in its “radical suspicion of all narratives” and “intrinsic mistrust of representation” rests on strategies that not only “are contrary or dissident, but that...work at undermining the very grammar of signification and means of representation that the dominant order employs” (56). In this sense, according to Fornazzari, “[the] refractory strategy that invests in the fragment the quality of resistance to any incorporating machine...parallels the melancholic’s identification with the lost object and the melancholic remainder’s unexchangeable singularity” (56). However, the problem here for Fornazzari appears to be that beyond this critical potential, allegory and refractory poetics reach a limit of expression in that they fall short in articulating, for example, the emerging “relation between the aesthetic and the economic...in neoliberal times” (56). The limit here, as articulated by Fornazzari, is due in part to allegory’s Benjaminian demystification potential being “exceeded and rendered obsolete by the commodity form” (3)—by consumerist modes in which the commodification process of commodity fetish itself rests on allegory structures. Fornazzari’s more salient argument against

allegory, however, is that neither a melancholic stance nor its refractory modes provide the necessary *constructive* basis, beyond a deconstructive critical stance, from which to effectively articulate through literary and cultural expression the emerging relations and structures of neoliberal governance.

The terms of this debate are important to rehearse here, given this chapter's focus on allegory in the context of neoliberalism and Southern Cone narratives, as well as the recent literary theory around dictatorship and postdictatorship period literature that I draw on, much of which has staked out similar positions on either side of this argument. It is important then to position my own work here in relation to the terms of this debate. However, part of the difficulty in doing so is that this is a debate primarily centered on questions of literary expression and representation, which, for a rhetorician, are secondary concerns. My rhetorical concern and my focus on developing critical pedagogy are not centered on issues of how useful allegory as a literary expression may be with regard to mourning work and demystification. Instead, as with other case study analyses throughout this dissertation that examine aesthetic-rhetorical practices as sources for developing arts-based critical teaching, my analysis in this chapter is more interested in how the critical potential in these aesthetic strategies of refractory poetics have value for intervening in neoliberal subjectivity formations with the kind of *aturdimiento* disturbance that I analyze in depth below. At the same time, it should be clear from other chapters that there is a strong parallel between, on one hand, Avelar's paradoxical articulation of how allegory functions in relation to both melancholic incorporation and mourning introjection in its generation of an exteriorized mediating object, and, on the

other, my own focus on the notion of the *pharmakon* as a paradoxical mediating object that functions as both illness and cure at once. This parallel aside, I argue that the question of mourning/melancholy and demystification does not represent the extent of allegory's rhetorical potential, nor is it the only dimension of allegory's significance in relation to the neoliberal transition. In some ways, from a rhetoric studies perspective, Avelar limits the potential of his own argument by framing it within a literary analysis. As previously noted, his examination of allegory is in fact an implicitly rhetorical one, in that he is interested in the *work* that allegory does vis-à-vis mourning. He then examines various texts, like Mercado's and Piglia's, to argue that these literary applications of allegory achieve effects of working through mourning. However, along with remaining focused on this single rhetorical dimension, his analysis also tends to center more precisely on how these works use allegory to *express* postdictatorship efforts to work through mourning, rather than on how they actually generate rhetorical effects of working through mourning. This focal shift is understandable, because his framework is a literary one. However, I argue that in making this shift, Avelar leaves unexamined the full rhetorical potential of allegory that he initially raises.

From the angle of a sophistic, rhetorical lens, these other rhetorical dimensions—rather than issues of literary representation and the memory politics question of mourning and melancholy—are what most interest me in my focus on allegory in relation to neoliberal subjectivity and governing rationality. More important to my rhetorical analysis here is what Fornazzari articulates as the “radical suspicion of all narratives” and “intrinsic mistrust of representation” of allegory-mode refractory strategies. My focus

here is on rhetorical dimensions that bear directly on critical pedagogy aimed ontologically—not just epistemologically, at the level of demystification—at disruptively intervening in the learned, habituated performances of neoliberal subjectivities. My rhetorical concerns around developing critical teaching practices therefore gravitate to how these aesthetic strategies “work at undermining the very grammar of signification and means of representation that the dominant order employs,” as Fornazzari puts it, because from the perspective of a sophistic rhetorical lens, such rhetorical potential indicates that these strategies therefore are of great rhetorical value for developing teaching practices that aim at intervention, disruption, and “undermining the very grammar of signification” that neoliberal governing rationalities employ in the formation of neoliberal subjectivities. Therefore, I agree with Avelar’s identification of rhetorical potential in allegory, even if he limits his examination of this potential to a specific focus on mourning and to questions of literary expression, and at the same time, I agree with Fornazzari’s point that “[t]his kind of critique is what melancholy [paralleling refractory strategy] does so well” (56). Ultimately, allegory in literary expression may not do the work that Avelar argues for in terms of mourning, failing to provide for the kind of movement forward that Fornazzari calls for. Nor might it suffice for purposes of demystification as a literary device, given its succession by the commodity form that Fornazzari points to. However, I argue that this does not therefore negate allegory’s critical potential as a rhetorical mechanism in the context of critical pedagogy and neoliberal subjectivities.

I start then from Avelar's implicit rhetorical consideration of allegory, but I push it to more explicitly rhetorical concerns, and I examine other rhetorical dimensions of allegory, in order to more fully consider its critical rhetorical potential in this context. I argue that the critical potential in these aesthetic strategies of refractory poetics have great value for intervening in and disrupting neoliberal subjectivity formations in critical teaching practices. Further, I argue that the question of mourning/melancholy and demystification does not represent the extent of allegory's rhetorical potential, nor do I think it is the only dimension of allegory's significance in relation to the neoliberal transition that is worth examining. In fact, what I seek to demonstrate through rhetorical analysis in this chapter is how dictatorship and postdictatorship cultural production in Southern Cone countries—specifically, Chile and Argentina—have used allegory for other purposes in ways that are particularly useful to critical pedagogues. I examine works that use allegory in engaging issues of memory politics and mourning and melancholy, and I address some of the issues raised in how these works deal with memory politics. However, as with my study in Chapter Six of science fiction authors understood as sophistic pedagogues who teach through their aesthetic-rhetoric, I apply rhetoric methodology to push the conversation beyond these terms, and the terms of literary analysis, to a discussion of more general dimensions of neoliberal subjectivity, performance, and pedagogy, and of allegory as a potentially disruptive rhetorical force in relation to them. My argument is that the examples under consideration in this chapter demonstrate that perhaps another reason allegory has figured so prominently in dictatorial and postdictatorial cultural production may be because it functions not just in terms of

mourning and melancholy, or in terms of literary representation, but in aesthetic-rhetorical modes of being and perceiving that may be effective at disrupting and reconfiguring neoliberal subjectivity formations. In other words, these works present examples of allegory modes being used to disrupt the habituation processes of subjectivity formations in the specific context of implementations of neoliberal governance during the dictatorship and postdictatorship periods of these countries. Furthermore, I argue that through these examples (as with the science fiction works in Chapter Six), these works function to *teach* these disruptive modes, not just represent them. As such, they present vital potential sources to be drawn from in the development of critical pedagogy aimed at intervening in neoliberal subjectivity formations through aesthetic-rhetorical teaching practices.

To return to Avelar's analysis of Ricardo Piglia's use of allegory in *The Absent City*, as an example of how I am seeking to re-center the discussion on rhetorical concerns: I am interested more in how the novel self-reflexively operates through and demonstrates an allegory *mode* not just to allegorize dictatorial and postdictatorial conditions, but as a way of describing and inculcating in readers particular ways of perceiving and being that I see as based in the kind of allegory-mode poetics described by Fornazzari as refractory strategies. Here, I draw on Craig Owens in articulating an allegory "mode," as opposed to allegory reductively understood as an aesthetics of extended narrative metaphor and one-to-one equivalencies. As Owens argues in "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," "allegory is an attitude as well as a technique, a perception as well as a procedure" (69). As my analysis details

later, allegory *rhetorically* understood as such a “technique” and “attitude” is an “otherly” mode of indirect, refractory, elusive communication, but it also is a perception, a procedure, that operates through obliqueness, fragments, excess, and hyperbole, both to point beyond its surface appearance and, most significantly in terms of rhetorical concerns, to generate disruptive cognitive-affective effects. These disruptive effects are what I am most invested in when I examine allegory-mode as an aesthetic-rhetorical strategy. I will return to Owens and further elaborate on this notion of allegory mode from a rhetoric methodology perspective later. My intent for now is to allow the concept, and how I am employing it, to more fully emerge through discussion of works like Piglia’s.

For example, in *The Absent City*, Piglia self-reflexively describes an allegory mode with the figure of a creative narrative-generating machine that produces fragmentary allegories. The “machine” is a kind of “re-creation” or “replication” of Elena Obieta, the deceased wife of renegade Argentine author Macedonio Fernandez (1874–1952). Reconfigured in the form of a perpetual narrative-textual generator that Fernandez has built out of a melancholic attempt to keep her alive, Elena-as-narrative-machine represents Macedonio’s state of unresolved mourning after her death. Original, fragmentary narratives are fed into the machine, and deviations are introduced which then produce and reproduce new (fragmentary) narrative structures through an aesthetics of repetition-with-difference. Avelar exhaustively analyzes how Fernandez’s melancholic narrative machine is itself an allegory. He examines how the machine allegorizes not only Fernandez’s own unresolved melancholy, but the contemporary postdictatorship state of

an untimely present. This is a present moment of stasis caught between unresolved past trauma and a future foreclosed on by neoliberalism's hyper-speculative late capitalism. In this condition of temporal paralysis, attempts to move beyond melancholy are repeatedly thwarted by an official culture of erasure, denial, and pre-emptive closure generated through totalizing narratives. These official narratives seek to efface the past violence that effected the transitions to neoliberal free market economies and to mystify the contemporary market relations of the neoliberal regimes that have resulted.

As noted, the narrative structures that Piglia's allegorical machine generates *also* are allegories themselves. The machine produces strange, elusive allegories. Both the allegorical content and the form of these generated allegory-mode narratives seem to represent attempts to do the work of demystifying contemporary conditions and recovering and mourning past trauma specifically through a strategic rhetorical deployment of allegory-mode aesthetics. They refract, further fragment, and elusively proliferate and dissolve into one another through narrative bleeds with the novel's overarching plot. As they do so, these stories spread in the public sphere via the machine's narrative technology and various mechanisms of dissemination. "Errors" generate further deviations and refractions in the narrative fabric of the stories and in the narrative fabrics of the city and the novel itself. The machine thus becomes a kind of rhetorical technology whose aesthetic mechanisms effect perpetual, elusive, and intertwined narrative and spatial (re)generation and reconfiguration on inter-nested levels. Significantly, the plot is driven by the machine's gradual shutting down and by the efforts of Junior, the protagonist, to locate the machine and the mysterious reasons for its

entropy in a novelistic plot that similarly fragments, intertwines, and dissolves into and through itself. In a cyberpunk, noir detective mode, Piglia weaves a dizzying mash-up of genres and narrative levels that metafictionally represents what the machine itself does with stories within the text.

This last point about the novel's metafictional self-reflexivity is important for understanding my argument about allegory mode in Piglia's novel, and my more general argument about allegory mode as a rhetorical technology in relation to neoliberal subjectivity and rationality. My argument is that Piglia uses allegory not simply to allegorize, but to self-reflexively articulate other ways of thinking, perceiving, and being, that are based in such an allegory mode of perception, in such an "attitude," "technique," and "procedure." This point is key to understanding how works like Piglia's represent sources of disruptive critical teaching strategies for my project. As previously noted, it is Avelar's (implicitly) rhetorical analysis of Piglia's use of allegory that is of greater interest to me. This analysis helps focus rhetorical attention on the novel in terms of a more general allegory mode operating on multiple levels that extend beyond the question of mourning and melancholy, and beyond issues of literary representation and demystification. Through the allegorical figure of the narrative-generating machine, and through Junior's efforts to cognitively and affectively operate within its allegory-mode narrative, I argue that Piglia allegorizes and demonstrates how operating in an allegory mode can generate effects to disrupt dominant governing rationalities and subjectivity formations, and to open interpretation outward beyond any fixed meaning. As with the Sophist's aesthetic-rhetorical practices, these rhetorical effects work to evade closure of

narrative possibilities. Furthermore, and most significantly, through this self-reflexive use of allegory mode, Piglia actually engages readers in it. In this sense, the potential teaching effect of the text occurs on multiple levels of content and form. Piglia uses allegory-mode to generate a difficult, dizzying reading experience steeped in a co-creative process of meaning-making/meaning-generation and perception based in allegory mode. Piglia does this both by demonstrating such modes at work with the machine and its generated narratives (content), and by effecting allegory-mode experiences of subjectivity and consciousness for readers (form). These reader experiences parallel the experiences of characters who are subjected to a similar general state of allegory-mode perception in relation to the machine and the novel in which it operates. As characters like Junior struggle to navigate ontologically unstable, refractory, elusive narrative and linguistic realities and possibilities generated by the machine, the reader similarly navigates a narrative that self-reflexively parallels the machine's inter-nested allegories and parables with the novel's structure and plot themselves. Narrative levels cross and bleed over and through one another so that it becomes unclear whether the machine is within the novel or the novel is within the machine, and whether the generated allegories "exist" within the machine, within the museum that seems to house or possibly comprise the machine, within the novel itself, within Junior's imagination as he reads/experiences them, within the reader's imagination while reading, or within all of these possibilities simultaneously. Thus positioned on unstable narrative-ontological terrain by the text, the reader is left to grapple with multiple possible fragmentary interpretations of not only the novel's meanings, but of what literally is happening in it,

and on what narrative level(s) it is happening. Like *Junior*, readers must quickly develop and practice an allegory-mode literacy, perception, and fluency, with an allegory-mode aesthetics of fragmentary, indirect, unstable narrativity. Parallels to Sophist aesthetic-rhetorical techniques of antilogic and eristic modes, and the intertwined use of antithesis and parataxis, should be clear. In the novel's perceptual mode of allegory, multiple, contradictory realities and interpretations are simultaneously at play and in constant flux—as with the Sophist conception of reality and their aesthetic-rhetorical response to it. By engaging the reader in this kind of allegory-mode perception, the novel's metafictional intertwining of content and form can be seen, then, as both representing general allegory-mode ways of operating and, at the same time, as potentially *teaching* those ways of operating. These works do this through content that demonstrates the development and practice of such modes, and form that engages audiences in them as a way of entraining through aesthetic rhetoric.

The Absent City is an exemplary model of how I am looking at Southern Cone narratives as sources for developing sophistic critical teaching that can intervene in neoliberal rationalities and subjectivity performances. While I am focused on developing pedagogy in the context of U.S. neoliberalism, I am interested in connections between particularities of neoliberal iteration across the Americas. As noted in my introductory chapter and in my periodization of neoliberal development in Chapter Two, this focus has drawn my attention not only to the intertwined development of neoliberal governance in the United States and Latin America, but to parallel aesthetic responses to the impacts of this development. As with Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s Chicano work in the previous chapter, in

this chapter, I turn a similar lens on Southern Cone cultural production as a related hemispheric aesthetic-rhetorical response to the implementation of neoliberal governance, and the formation of neoliberal subjectivities, that can be rhetorically analyzed for effective arts-based teaching strategies. Placed in conversation around a nexus of allegory-mode language art and performance, such particular iterations of aesthetic approaches yield points of intersection and commonality that mirror the intertwined nature of neoliberalism's own unique yet interconnected iterations across the Americas. Specifically, I look at Chilean and Argentine narratives produced both during the dictatorships and under postdictatorship regimes of neoliberal governance.

The distinction here between dictatorship and postdictatorship requires clarification through more specific periodization, particularly in reference to the specific countries of Argentina and Chile and their relationships to neoliberal governance. In line with thinkers like Avelar, Fornazzari, Willy Thayer, Nelly Richard, Brett Levinson, Gareth Williams, and other Latin American cultural theorists (Fornazzari 119), I understand these distinct historical moments as in fact parts of a larger, singular "epochal" transition from state economies to neoliberal free market governance. As Avelar outlines, the theory of authoritarianism forwarded by sociologists like José Joaquín Brunner and Fernando Henrique Cardoso explain the "bureaucratic-authoritarian" dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, as results of general development and modernization. However, on closer examination, connections between the violence of the dictatorships and the implementation of neoliberal governance become clearer and point to a more intimate, causal relationship between the periods

before, during, and after the dictatorships. These connections underlie a more complex understanding how the entire period from the early 1970s to the present constitutes a larger transitional movement to neoliberal modes of accumulation and governance. For example, Avelar points to Brunner's analysis of Chile's "imbrication between the doctrine of national security and the transnational market, between armed forces and internationalized bourgeoisie, between...political authoritarianism and capitalist class interest" (55). As Avelar and others have demonstrated, however, despite the kinds of connections that Brunner highlights here, official narratives and theorizations (including Brunner's) have positioned postdictatorship liberal democracy in countries such as Chile as a "remedy" to the dictatorships. The result is that the postdictatorship period then can "not...be imagined as anything other than a transition to democracy" (56). For example, Brunner makes what Avelar characterizes as a "questionable claim" that the postdictatorship democracy ultimately "curbs class domination" in transitioning from the dictatorship, despite Brunner's own argument that "the capitalist refoundation of Chile could not be accomplished under a democratic regime" (56). As theorists like Avelar and others point out, accounts like Brunner's premise their analyses on this notion of transitions from dictatorships to post-dictatorial representative democracies occurring after and in remedial response to the dictatorships. In reality, however, as Avelar puts it drawing on Willy Thayer, "*the real transitions are the dictatorships themselves*" (58; orig. emphasis). Avelar quotes Thayer's argument that, in fact, "[i]t was the dictatorship that made the transit from State to Market, a transit euphemistically designated as 'modernization'" (Thayer qtd. in Avelar 59).

Fornazzari specifically identifies this transition of Thayer's "passage from the sovereignty of the state to the sovereignty of the market" (2) as a neoliberal one. Establishing the framework for his analysis of Chilean cultural production, he periodizes the Chilean neoliberal transition across the period of the dictatorship and postdictatorship up to the present, beginning with the coup in 1973 (2), and calling it "an epochal turning point in Chile: the transition from one regime of accumulation [based on an agrarian and industrial model of Keynesian state-form import-substitution industrialization] to another [of neoliberal consumerist capitalism] and the transformation of Chile into one of the modern laboratories of neoliberal economic experimentation" (20). Fornazzari's focus is on dictatorship and postdictatorship Chilean cultural production in addressing his central inquiries aimed at understanding radical reconfiguration of social and economic spheres under neoliberal rationalities, and at "map[ping] the effects of this financialization and reorganization of society around consumption and communication" (2). Through analysis of Chilean cultural production, Fornazzari seeks to push "beyond melancholic angst...toward a fuller understanding of the profound transformations produced by the coup and the transition" (4). Tracing what Foucault articulates as neoliberalism's "redefinition of the relation between the state and the economy, where the market becomes the organizing and regulative principle" (89), Fornazzari is most interested in examining across the Chilean transitional period, and through Chilean cultural production, the impacts and effects of neoliberalism's "expansion of the economic form to the point that it covers the totality of the social sphere, hence eliding any difference between economics and culture" (2). His analysis considers "what the Chilean neoliberal

experience reveals about the inner logic and profound effects of the global neoliberal condition,” and, “what... the Chilean experience offer[s] the world regarding our understanding of the transformations that have occurred and the kinds of antagonistic logics that are now possible” (4). Avelar articulates a similar connection between the (transitional) dictatorship and the postdictatorship when he describes how “[t]he Chilean dictatorial state imposed a thorough privatization of public life, an obsession with individual success, and a horror for politics and collective initiative, as well as a passion for consumerism, all grounded on sheer fear” (Avelar 46).

In choosing to focus specifically on Chilean and Argentine cultural production during the dictatorships and post dictatorships, I echo and am indebted to Fornazzari’s analytical approach and framework here in two important ways that further clarify the periodization of my own framework. First, while I recognize the distinct historical periods and national iterations involved here and in no way seek to conflate them, I nevertheless look at works produced both during and after the dictatorships less as responses to their specific historical moments, and more as constituting aesthetic responses to this larger shift to neoliberal governance, with an underlying understanding of how the dictatorships themselves functioned as transitional mechanisms in a much longer period of neoliberal ascendancy. As in Fornazzari’s analysis, I am interested in tracing questions of neoliberal governance and subjectivities through and across these periods over a longer transition. My work traces these questions in the specific context of two countries, Chile and Argentina, whose dictatorships particularly reveal this underlying relationship between dictatorial violence and implementation of neoliberal

regimes. This is especially the case with the exemplary “neoliberal laboratory” of Chile (Fornazzari 20) and how it became, as Karin Fischer puts it, “a showcase for the alleged merits of neoliberal reform agendas promoted elsewhere” (306), as detailed, for example, in Chapter Two’s discussion of the connections between the neoliberal “Chicago Boys” and the Pinochet regime. But as with Fornazzari’s analysis, I trace these questions over this longer transition through a matrix of other concerns that touch more directly on issues of neoliberal subjectivity—on issues of the formation and performance of the *habitus of homo economicus*. When Avelar considers Fernando Reati’s analysis of how “a mass of narratives written during the [Argentine] dictatorship” reveal that “the need to represent what appears unrepresentable, coupled with the subsequent imperative to mourn the dead,” results in, “a deep crisis in the very structure of mimesis” (Avelar 52), he is framing these points in a discussion of dictatorial authoritarian violence and questions of mourning and melancholy and the mimesis of literary representation. However, if the context is not just dictatorial violence and the period of dictatorship, but a larger context of transition to neoliberal governance, then the crisis Avelar identifies potentially takes on other kinds of complex dimensions of neoliberal governance and subjectivity, such as those Fornazzari examines in Chilean cultural production. This includes, for example, consideration of how these narratives might also reflect aesthetic responses to the ways the groundwork was laid for the formation of neoliberal subjectivities by this violence. Such consideration takes on other dimensions of mimesis that extend beyond literary *representation* of real life and into issues of the mimetic *performance* of everyday life.

And here, I note the second important way that my framework's periodization and approach echoes and is indebted to Fornazzari's. One of the key connections Fornazzari makes in his analysis—one made possible by this periodization of a larger epochal neoliberal transition—arises in his examination of the links between neoliberal biopolitics and fascist biopolitics. Through Agambian and Foucauldian analyses of works like Hernan Valdéz's *Tejas verdes: Diario de un campo de concentración de Chile*, Fornazzari addresses the question he poses around the "intimate relation" between "[postdictatorship] Chilean neoliberal biopolitics and the [dictatorship] fascist biopolitics advanced after the coup" (91). He asks, "what kind of groundwork or previous biopolitical work needs to be in place for this notion of economic totality to take such a firm hold in the modern imaginary," and, "what are the necessary preconditions for the development of Chilean neoliberal biopolitics?" (91). The connection Fornazzari makes here centers on subjectivity in the sense that he is interested in how the intimate relation between these forms of biopolitics laid the groundwork for and shaped the neoliberal subjectivity of "*homo economicus*" (9). As Fornazzari argues, this groundwork was laid through the hollowing out of the subject effected by dictatorial violence and the subsequent imposition of market logic on all spheres of human activity and identity that this hollowing out made possible. Where Avelar is concerned with a crisis of mimesis around questions of mourning and literary representation, then, the crisis I am more concerned with in examining these works is not in the structure of mimesis vis-à-vis literary and cultural expression, but rather, and more in line with Fornazzari's framework, in the structure of neoliberal subjectivity understood as a conditioned, habituated mimetic

performance. Thus, in the sense that my concern is with dimensions of performance, habituation, and conditioning, this also could be articulated as a crisis of mimesis, but in the context of my focus and periodization, this is a mimesis involving the formation, habituation, and performance of neoliberal subjectivities.

When I examine how works like *The Absent City* both demonstrate, and effect in readers, an allegory-mode of perception and operating, my underlying concern then is with the mimesis involved in the performance of neoliberal subjectivity. How does *homo economicus* comprise a set of conditioned performances of everyday life? How does this mimetic performance intersect with Pierre Bourdieu's theorization of a neoliberal *habitus*? How has this *habitus* been structured and implemented through the intertwined violence of dictatorships, on one hand, and postdictatorship neoliberal governance, on the other? What aesthetic-rhetorical responses have been developed in response to this longer transitional process of neoliberal subjectivity formation? And finally, how might the kinds of allegory-mode aesthetic-rhetorical strategies found in works like *The Absent City* function to disrupt these conditioned everyday performances of *homo economicus*'s neoliberal *habitus*? As demonstrated in my introductory notes on *The Absent City*, the specific rhetorical emphasis is on disruptive aesthetic-rhetorical strategies that use allegory modes both to articulate and to self-reflexively model such allegory modes. Working from Nelly Richard's notion of "refractory" expression and from Idelber Avelar's contextualization of this concept within a Benjaminian reading of allegory, I provide case study analysis of the allegorical dictatorship novel *The Flight of the Tiger*, by Daniel Moyano (Argentina). I then look at Patricio Guzmán's recent postdictatorship

documentary films, *Chile: La memoria obstinada*, and *Nostalgia de la luz* (Chile) in conversation with Pedro Alejandro Matta's *testimonio* tours of Villa Grimaldi and Diamela Eltit's *El padre mío* (Chile). This analysis demonstrates that, as with Piglia's novel, there are (at least) two levels of allegory at work in most of these texts. Like *The Absent City*, these works are not just allegorical in terms of their content; through a showing-by-doing, these works both demonstrate and potentially teach how these modes function. They self-reflexively demonstrate some kind of mechanism at work within the text that engages, stimulates, generates, an allegory mode in readers, that goes beyond simplistic one-to-one equivalency interpretation. As in Piglia's novel, various mechanisms of counterhegemonic communication, performance, and creative production are figured as aesthetic-rhetorical technology (for example, the various allegory-mode linguistic technologies and performance practices of resistance developed by Old Aballay in *The Flight of the Tiger*, as examined later).

As this last example suggests, these works demonstrate how such allegory modes of perception and expression potentially can be the basis of subversive, disruptive, elusive language-art *poïesis*. In line with my previous chapter's analysis of Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s work, this *poïesis* functions through *pharmakon* poetics by turning dominant forms against themselves in poetic practices of performance. My argument is that engaging the audience in these allegory modes potentially inculcates in the audience this artful rhetorical *technê* of a kind of skillfully acquired, developed, and performed bodily language-art, against the dominant grain of market rationality conditioning and habituation. I examine how specific Argentine and Chilean works explore allegory mode

as the basis of such a language-art *poiēsis* technology in the dictatorship and postdictatorship contexts of violence in order to understand how such a technology might function in resistant response to a larger process of neoliberal subjectivity formation. Resonating with and expanding on Gamboa's approaches detailed in the previous chapter, what these works suggest, particularly through connections between allegory modes and performance, is that the potential for language-art resistance in allegory modes lies in their ability to *pharmacologically* disrupt and counter subjectivity habituations and performances bodily inculcated by dominant regimes and rationalities. Through aesthetic-rhetorical deployment of allegory-mode poetics and performance, performed subjectivity habituations potentially can be disrupted, subverted, and countered. From a sophistic rhetoric methodology, I am most concerned with how these works use various dissensual, refractory allegory-mode language-art techniques of *aturdimiento* (disturbance) focused on bodily experience, to generate such disruptive effects. This disruption occurs through the aesthetic-rhetorical practice of imagining, articulating, and manifesting other subjectivity performances precisely through those very inculcated performances. In Moyano's novel, I focus on Old Aballay and his sophistic *pharmakon* development and performance of various allegory-mode strategies pieced together from the very materials provided by the fascist "Percussionists" and one of their chief representatives, Nabu. I examine how Old Aballay's *pharmakon* rhetorical strategies are aimed at developing aesthetics-oriented, allegory-mode counter-performances of subjectivity capable of resisting the biopolitical fascist presence and violence that has invaded Hualacato, the Aballays' city, through the very performances

imposed on the citizens of Hualacato. I then turn to Chilean cultural production to consider similar questions around the recent documentary film work of Patricio Guzmán, who explores counter-memory politics in terms of habituated bodily performance through a hybrid documentary poetics of allegory mode. I put Guzmán's focus on performance and his use of allegory mode in conversation with Pedro Alejandro Matta's performed *testimonio* tours of Villa Grimaldi, and with fellow Chilean artist, Diamela Eltit. Placed in conversation, these works reveal similar connections between *pharmakon* performance and allegory modes.

In what follows, I provide a more detailed articulation and contextualization of this chapter's rhetorical analytical approach. I parse out exactly how I am deploying notions of allegory mode in relation to Southern Cone narratives, and how I see these modes as part of a larger body of refractory, dissensual, disruptive aesthetic strategies of *aturdimiento*. I then apply this rhetorical approach to Moyano's *The Flight of the Tiger* and to Guzmán's *Chile: La memoria obstinada* and *Nostalgia de la luz*.

* * *

In Chapter Three, I discussed neoliberalism's fictionalized reality of "capitalist realism." One of the central issues of postdictatorship aesthetic production and practice in Southern Cone countries involves addressing the fictionalizing half-truths, falsehoods, and lacunae deliberately produced by dominant historical narratives in the "post-democracy" aftermath of free-market neoliberalism made possible by the military juntas of the 1970s and 80s. These corporatist, state-sanctioned official narratives have actively worked to efface dictatorship violence and trauma with smooth, non-striated historical accounts intended to further pave the ideological ground for free-market governance and policy. Dominant historical accounts, even those aimed at reconciliation and "truth-finding," have consistently forwarded and maintained narrative strategies that function to erase both the fascist military mechanisms and violence through which the ground for neoliberal rationality and subjectivity was laid initially, and popular social movement challenges to them.

As some of the most incisive Latin Americanist work over the past few decades has explored,⁹¹ vital postdictatorial tasks of challenging the memory politics of this historical erasure at the level of narrative construction has been carried out through alternative counter-memory politics in fictional narratives of novels and films, non-fictional narratives of documentary films and *testimonios*, and experimental narratives that blur boundaries between these forms. This chapter's goal in examining such works and their various narrative approaches to memory politics is to push the conversation beyond issues of mourning and melancholy in order to better understand how their

aesthetic-rhetorical strategies and other investments counter dominant historical narratives of neoliberalism while critically reflecting and responding to emergent neoliberal governing rationalities and subjectivities

Aesthetic production by Southern Cone writers and other artists during the dictatorship periods reflected a wide array of innovative artistic strategies and practices that have continued to impact postdictatorship aesthetic response. This innovation resulted from artists often working together across disciplines and forms, for example, as in Chile's 1970s/80s avant-garde art group CADA and the country's neo-avant garde *avanzada* movement more generally. I argue that such work paralleled Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s early work in the 1970s and 80s developing aesthetic strategies with the East Los Angeles avant-garde Chicano art group, *Asco*—strategies which continue to be relevant and effective in Gamboa's contemporary practice, as analyzed in Chapter Four. The parallels here are both in terms of historical periods, but more significantly, in terms of responding to unique interactions of emerging neoliberal governance. As previously touched on, in Chile, strategic aesthetic development included the practice of what theorist Nelly Richard has identified through a Benjaminian lens as “refractory” modes of indirect, fragmentary (allegory-mode) expression that functioned rhetorically to disrupt and to deconstruct dominant systems of signification. At the same time, these modes functioned rhetorically to generate new modes of expression and being by evading closure. Often developed under threat of dictatorship violence and censorship and in conversation with prior avant-garde movement strategies developed in other historical and geopolitical contexts, these refractory strategies have continued to prove effective for

responding to the postdictatorship neoliberal regimes. In these uses of refractory strategies and their application toward similar aims, I see further direct parallels between the avant-garde Chicano work of artists like Gamboa and Asco, on one hand, and the Chilean *avanzada*, on the other.

To reiterate my argument, these aesthetic-rhetorical strategies' refusal of closure holds great potential for intervening in dominant neoliberal modes of expression, governance, and subjectivity, thus, vital interest for developing arts-based critical pedagogy aimed at invention into neoliberal rationalities. As touched on in previous chapters, neoliberal rhetorical and pedagogical mechanisms operate to instill a pervasive and naturalized free-market *nomos* and a neoliberal consensus of market fundamentalism. By shutting down language and resistant potential, this neoliberal consensus generates the previously discussed linguistic-ontological crisis that Brett Levinson and other Latin Americanists theorize as the effects of an unquestioned and unquestionable "goes without saying" logic. This logic functions through totalizing closure and pre-emptive exclusion of any other possible conclusion or meaning outside its naturalized underlying market ethos *nomos*. In such a context, refractory aesthetics developed under totalitarian regimes are particularly timely and useful, given their explicit aim at evasion of closure and meaning. In approaching the texts under analysis here with my specific pedagogical questions and aims around allegory in mind, I want to explore how this evasion of closure and meaning in refractory forms arises specifically from an underlying rhetorical strategy of allegory-mode aesthetics. It is an allegory mode, I argue, that is the primary basis for

the refractory effects that these strategies generate and that continue to be relevant from a rhetoric-oriented perspective.

Citing Benjamin, Nelly Richard states that refractory modes deploy insurgent vocabularies to generate “‘concepts which...[would be] completely useless for the purposes of Fascism’” through aesthetic strategies that are refractory “in both senses of the word: as a ‘tenacious negation’ and as a ‘deviation from a route that preceded it’ (Benjamin cited in Richard, *Insubordination* 4). Paralleling the Sophists’ poetic attention to antilogic and the “non-rational” of pre-verbal somatic experience, refractory aesthetics operate rhetorically on and beyond the margins of what official discourse designates as “irrational,” “illogical,” and even “mad.” If neoliberalism rhetorically structures the terrain of legibility, refractory modes destabilize and deterritorialize this terrain precisely through their sophistic illegibility within its linguistic structures. Functioning through “irrational” modes, they generate their disturbance and rupture through indirect, fragmentary, elusive expression that is “‘unassimilable by any ‘official’ cultural system’...something that a totalitarian logic would find impossible to take advantage of or appropriate, something useless for fitting ‘in the system of exchange, in the economy, [or] in circulation within that system, not even as an explicit sign of dissidence’” (Váldez qtd. in Richard, *Insubordination* 4). In their subaltern articulation of “blind spots” in the dialectic between dominant official discourses and a vanquished position, these strategies employ “an aesthetic of diffuse lighting, so that their forms acquire the indirect meaning of what is shown obliquely...filtered by barely discernible fissures of consciousness” (20-21). Quoting from *E. Luminata* by Diamela Eltit, a

member of Chile's *avanzada* movement and one of the key practitioners of these refractory aesthetics, Richard emphasizes the fragmentariness of these indirect approaches by noting that "[o]nly a precarious narrative of the residual was capable of staging the decomposition of general perspectives, centered visions, and finished portraits: a narrative that only 'lets scraps of language be heard, remnants of signs'" (Richard *Insubordination* 14).

As demonstrated in my introductory notes on *The Absent City*, readings like Idelber Avelar's theorize the resistant effects and counter-memory politics that allegory can generate. Avelar's analysis is important for my own in its exploration of how it is the fragmentary, the residual, the elusive, in allegory, that achieves such resistant, refractory effects. In contrast to *testimonio* and other narrative forms that make claims to authenticity and veridical representation of factual events, allegory self-consciously employs an aesthetic of indirect expression removed from realist representation with purposefully refractive and substitutive modes. These modes run counter to dubious official narrative claims to authenticity not with their own claims to authenticity based on dominant narrative logics and strategies, but with a complete rejection of those very logics and their terrains of legibility. When examined rhetorically as a *technê* of allegory *mode* rather than simply as a form, this aesthetic approach is in conversation with emergent forms of literary production that push toward new, effective approaches in efforts to move beyond the "untimely present" of a "goes without saying" neoliberal consensus.

This point is made clearer through more direct connections between allegory modes and memory politics and history. Paralleling Avelar's work, Kate Jenckes examines allegory's potential for disrupting dominant historical narratives. In "Allegory, Ideology, Infamy: Borges and the Allegorical Writing of History," she argues that Borges' use of allegory to write an-other, "alo-graphic" history—of what is excluded, of what lies beneath the surface—intersects with Benjaminian and Jamesonian readings of allegory's relation to historicity in a way that makes allegory appear to be inherent to any subaltern alternative historicity. Jenckes sees Borges' use of allegory in history writing as carrying the disruptive potential of what she identifies as "*aturdimiento*" (disturbance) in its cuts into dominant historical narratives through an allegorical "otherly" form of expression.

Jenckes' argument for allegory as such an "otherly" form of expression draws on Derrida's definition of allegory, in which "allegory comes from *allos-agorein*, speaking other than publicly, other than in the *agora* (Derrida cited in Jenckes *Reading Borges* 141). Her argument helps me further emphasize the distinction between allegory as form, and allegory mode as aesthetic-rhetorical technique and practice. Further, in tying this allegorical otherly writing to Jameson's theorization of allegory, Jenckes makes an important connection to subaltern expression and experience of history. While infamously problematic, Jameson's analysis of Third World national allegory nevertheless provides an important insight into how allegory can function "as a way of locating—and perhaps thereby dislocating—the individual with respect to his or her political and social circumstances" (Jenckes "Infamy" 50). As Jenckes notes, "Jameson's

belief in the liberatory potential of mapping is well known, and...he considers allegory to be a 'new' kind of mapping process based on 'breaks and heterogeneities' which permits its readers to 'grasp their positioning' within the confusing and contradictory landscapes of multinational capitalism" (50). Jenckes makes a Gramscian connection of this mapping, via Alberto Moreiras and Edouard Glissant, to resistant demystifying and deconstructive subaltern functions of "desacrilizing" identification. Her argument is that Borges' book, *Historia universal de la infamia*, functions "as a literary kind of ideological critique" in which "he stages the telling of universal history—and its national or regionalist counterparts—in order to reveal the historicity that they exclude" (53). While *Historia* typically has been read as national allegory "in the traditional sense of the word," Jenckes makes the cogent point that its stories are in fact self-reflexively (and, I add, rhetorically) concerned with "the telling of history itself, and above all, history that cannot be reduced to its telling" (53).

The specific history involved here, and the particular form of allegory that Borges uses to tell it, are suggested in the "*infamia*" of the book's title. Jenckes argues that Borges uses "two kinds of allegory...two forms of telling history: on the one hand a parodying of something that could be called national allegory, and on the other hand an allegorization of that kind of allegory, an allegory that tells a history which by its very nature is *infame*" (53). The salient point is that,

This second kind of allegory is related to what the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty describes as the project of a subaltern history: namely, 'a history that will attempt the impossible: to look towards its own death by

tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems' (1997, p. 290). Allegory, as a form of subaltern history, is a *mode* of writing history that shows the ruins, the *naufragios*, of the translations it proposes. (53; emphasis added)

In this allegorical *mode* of writing history, the *infame* is “that which cannot be told as such, which can only *aturdir* (rattle, disturb, quiver),” and that thus “reveals the undersides of the histories that are told, and thereby the nature of exclusion on which the *historias universales* are constructed” (54). The “*aturde*” of these “nothings” on the undersides of official “Universal history” disturb and disrupt because they make known their own exclusion. Paralleling the Sophists’ rhetorical practices through critical dissensual poetics, they function rhetorically as critical deconstruction. Most importantly, they make *felt* this exclusion, and they do so by operating on affective, somatic registers through allegory modes of indirect, refractory expression. Like all allegory, this expression points beyond what it says to something else. As Jenckes notes, the

Universal histories, or histories that purport to define a certain universe, be it national, regional or truly cosmic...are based on the exclusion of things that, were they to ‘speak’, would dissolve the history’s pretension to represent a whole. Yet these things never go away completely, but remain there unspeaking, *infame*, potentially disruptive to the history that does not give them space. The *infamia*, or nothing, that runs beneath the *historiar* of the book represents the possibility of another kind of history. (55)

Jenckes demonstrates this “otherly” subaltern writing of history with examples including Borges’ narrative about slavery, “El espantoso redentor Lazarus Morell.” In this story, Jenckes writes, “the *infamia* of the slaves lies beneath the surface of history as it is told—unspoken, but speaking its silence... As the beginning of the story tells us, the silenced secrets of the slaves had distant and ‘*dispar*’ historical influences, largely...in musical form” (61). Significantly, it is music’s capability to “rattle” and “disturb” through (dissonant) resonance that makes it effective in disrupting the exclusion and absence of this silencing through a resonant, perpetual presencing. “Music is a form of expression that allows the unsaid to ‘*aturdir*’ (bang, rattle, or disturb) what is said or sung in the form of rhythm and beat” (61), Jenckes writes.

Central to this allographic practice’s critical potential are resonance, generated effects, and perpetual disturbance, acting beneath the surface of history—a subaltern language-art of aesthetic rhetoric that can disturb through an allegory mode. I will return to this point in my analysis of *The Flight of the Tiger* when I discuss Old Aballay’s development of a resistant, musical subaltern language based on percussion, facial expression, and bodily gestures. For now, the important point is that such a language-art is both allegorical and rhetorical in its generated effects of disruptive and evasive “otherly expression,” in the paradoxical absent presence of its silence. It is through this paradoxical aesthetic rhetoric that disruptions are effected and incisions are made into the smooth surface of dominant linguistic structures and the claims to truth that they naturalize.

Understood as such, then, allegory mode should be seen less as form than as a *rhetorical practice* and a *rhetorical mode*. To reiterate this point from my introductory notes above, as Craig Owens puts it, “allegory is an attitude as well as a technique, a perception as well as a procedure” (69). Allegory mode is better understood as a rhetorical technique and procedure working to generate elusive, oblique, refractory expression that is impossible to decipher. And it is best understood as a sophisticated rhetorical technique because it is as an attitude and perception receptive to and deliberately generative of multiple, contradictory, unresolvable interpretations and understandings. Citing Benjamin, Owens notes that, “it is the ‘common practice’ of allegory ‘to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal’” (72). Here it helps my case for allegory mode as a *rhetorical mode* to make a subtle but important distinction between allegory and a parable proper that I draw from Darko Suvin’s theorization of parable and allegory in science fiction. Traditional allegories tend to strive simply to illustrate and teach a point or moral through an extended metaphor. A parable proper, on the other hand, seeks not so much to illustrate a point, but rather, to generate effects in listeners through its particular allegory-mode production. It may make some point in doing so. However, its primary focus is on creating *effects*, and its “points,” if there are any, are often—by design—difficult if not impossible to interpret.

It is this intentional interpretive elusiveness that makes the allegory mode threatening, and that underlies Jencke’s reading of Borges. Similarly, while not focused explicitly on allegory, Nelly Richard’s reading of refractory, fragmentary practices as subversive and disruptive draws parallel points. Owens argues that Romanticist dismissal

of allegory derives from allegory's *disruption* of the symbol's claim to an "essential" unity and internal "harmony" of signifier and signified, which Coleridge argued as the "very emblem of artistic intuition" (83). The issue is one of hyperbole, excess, and the grotesque. Allegory's (sophistic, antilogical) "[encoding] of two contents within one form" (84) results in a threatening "monstrosity" that "challenges the... foundations upon which aesthetics is erected" (84). In fact, I argue that it is the intentional production of an impossibility of interpretation through excess and hyperbole that generates the effects of disturbance, or *aturdimiento*, that Kate Jenckes analyzes. It is through an aesthetic, refractory resistance to interpretation that the allegory mode can disrupt cognitive-affective processes and circumvent their attempts to make sense of and to interpret. And I argue that in works like Piglia's, Moyano's, Eltit's, and Guzmán's, this is what the use of allegory-mode is seeking both to effect and to teach: Evasion, through a language-art aesthetic-rhetorical technology of allegory mode. This is evasion of not only external sociocultural regulatory mechanisms, but one's own internal(ized) interpretative frameworks shaped by those mechanisms, which seek to contain and make sense of, and thus to shut down possibilities.

As suggested by the distinction between allegory and parable proper noted above, such a mode operates on a cognitive level but, significantly, at an affective level as well. It is trained at the audience's body through a content-focus on bodily experience as well as a rhetorical effort to affect the audience's bodily experience. Recall Gumbrecht's points about the oscillation between meaning and presence in Chapter Four's analysis of Gamboa's work. In a very important sense, my argument there was for Gamboa's

practice as operating in precisely such an allegory mode to produce its oscillatory effects. In fact, the affective parable insists not on the kind of divorcing of mind and body that we find in illustrative allegories that aim only at intellectual interpretation, but rather, on the mind-body as one integrated unit of physical experience, consciousness, and material action, in which both “rational” (*logos*) and “non-rational” (somatic; pre-cognitive) are at equal play in one larger process of cognition-perception. What the affective parable disrupts is that Platonic divorcing of mind and body. Through its aesthetics, it functions rhetorically to re-integrate them, to potentially disorient listeners away from mind-body split dualities and the unconscious bodily conditioning performances that such dualities underlie. It then potentially re-orientes listeners toward a more somatically oriented awareness of those performances with a re-integrated mind-body experience of thinking through the body, of the soma, or sentient body.

From a rhetoric studies perspective aimed at developing a critical interventional pedagogy, the poetics and linguistic strategies and effects of allegory modes thus represent an aesthetic-rhetorical approach that can be incorporated into critical teaching practice not simply as content, nor as just reducible to a form of indirect teaching practice, but as part of the *object* of teaching those particular skills and intelligences of aesthetic rhetoric laid out in previous chapters. Here, my emphasis is on teaching allegory as a practical tactical mode of disruptive, refractory linguistic/somatic response and performance that draws particular power from its ability to creatively employ *pharmakon* tactics that use dominant systems against themselves. In the context of rhetoric studies, I argue that this kind of language-art performance can be seen as resonant with the *technê*

psychagôgia that Jeffrey Walker analyzes as part of the intertwining of poetics and rhetoric in early sophistic aesthetic rhetoric. Drawing on the Sophist, Gorgias, Walker describes it as a “verbal ‘witchcraft’...that ‘merges with opinion in the soul’ and ‘beguiles and persuades’ it with druglike power” (Walker 5). Gorgias calls this witchcraft a “*technê psychagôgia*, a ‘psychogogic art’ of entralling and leading a listener’s mind” (5). My rhetorical focus on allegory mode from various angles, including the Southern Cone narratives in this chapter, explores the interventional and disruptive force of allegory mode understood as a key aesthetic rhetorical element of a bodily centered *technê psychagôgia poïesis* language-art. What would it mean to incorporate into critical pedagogy this kind of *technê psychagôgia* language-art with interventional powers? This question is especially relevant given how the “*technê psychagôgia*” of the neoliberal project functions to capture perception and attention and to condition habituated performance with its own brand of mesmerizing, hypnotizing “witchcraft” and “druglike power” and with its own metaphorical and allegorical construction of life-as-market. How do the various works under analysis here both demonstrate, and potentially entrain readers in, the allegory mode at work in such a language-art *poïesis* performance, thus providing models for critical pedagogues seeking to generate similar effects in students? It is with these questions and their above analytical foundation in mind that I turn now to Daniel Moyano’s allegorical novel, *The Flight of the Tiger*, and Patricio Guzmán’s documentary films, *Chile: La memoria obstinada* and *Nostalgia de la luz*.

**Old Aballay and the Aesthetic-Rhetorical Performance of *Mētis*, *Kairos*, and
Phronesis: Allegory-Mode *Pharmakon* Practice in Daniel Moyano's
*The Flight of the Tiger***

Daniel Moyano's 1981 novel, *The Flight of the Tiger*, typically is read as a straight one-to-one equivalency allegory about dictatorship in Argentina. Through the traumatic experiences of the Aballay family and their town of Hualacato living under the repression of an invading force of "Percussionists," the novel indeed works on this level. It allegorizes not only Moyano's contemporary dictatorial Argentina, but centuries of colonization as well. However, beyond this more obvious level, my analysis focuses on how the novel involves learning to use the fascist forces' materials against them in a creative allegory mode of *pharmakon poiesis*. This element of learning is central to the novel, and is part of what makes it particularly useful for developing critical pedagogy. The plot traces processes of learning to think, perceive, and be, in new ways, around this allegory mode. Learning is figured allegorically as a general process of developing tactical resistance strategies in response to the occupation. But it also self-reflexively involves learning how to operate rhetorically in allegory modes that use performance and *poiesis* to resistantly open alternative possibilities for ways of being and perceiving. The novel does not just allegorize resistance; it allegorizes the allegorical *as* resistance—as aesthetic-rhetorical resistance.

In *The Flight of the Tiger*, the "Percussionists" arrive riding tigers into Hualacato, a musical town. In initial resistance, "to hang on to joy people tune their instruments to a different pitch" because "music is infinite. So when any given pitch is prohibited, the

townspeople transpose to a lower or higher key. This way at least they can live in a world that parallels the real one” (2). This notion of living in “a world that parallels the real one,” maintained through creative, poetic expression figured here by musical skill finely attuned to contingency and flux, conveys a creative ontology of allegory mode. Various forms and uses of language and performance, both to oppress and to resist oppression, are figured allegorically like this in the novel. This includes music, tapping, bodily gestures, facial expressions, and origami paper bird cut-outs, as I detail below. This creative ontology of allegory mode is most visible in the figure of Old Aballay, the eldest of the Aballay family at the center of the plot. When the percussionists arrive, they deform the landscape of Hualacato as they “proceed to take possession of everything...switching everything around and calling the north south, suspicious of everything...their percussion, their racket, mingling with the sounds of life” (2-3). The percussionists call themselves “saviours” who are “here to organise things, to teach you how to live in the real world, and to cure you of your foolish notions” (7). In response, Old Aballay demonstrates from the first page the resistant potential of allegory modes through what I see as a sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric:

[A]t a time when so much was changing in Hualacato and new things were afoot that did not figure in Belinda’s [the cat’s] memories...they figured in old Aballay’s, and he recounted them after his own fashion, embroidering tales while sticking to the basic facts, mixing animals and people—partly to get at the truth, partly to soften images that might have a detrimental effect on his memory. (1)

As with his strategic use of parable aesthetics here, “mixing animals and people,” “embroidering tales while sticking to the basic facts...partly to get at the truth, partly to soften images,” Old Aballay’s aesthetic rhetoric uses an allegory mode to invent various forms of resistant and subversive communication throughout the novel. One early example includes a surreptitious tapping language that evades the notice of the percussionist Nabu, who has invaded and moved into the Aballay family home in an occupying “house arrest.” As Old Aballay’s interior monologue notes in a description of the metaphorical and allegorical bases of language, “Languages are born on their own, out of extreme necessity. When a thing has to be named, the first sound uttered fits it, and there you have your word. Things become real in the search for a word for them” (41). Old Aballay’s interior monologue here resonates with the Sophists’ relativist understanding of the contingency of language, reality, and the relationship between them. By using this newly invented language, which they further develop and refine through collaborative practice and use, the family is able to exchange complex messages with just “a few taps on the wall,” and “talk in [Nabu’s] presence without his being aware” (41). Moyano makes it clear that this *poïesis* is not just evasive; it is resistant and liberatory: “With each invented word they will have something new, with the right word they may someday even manage to drive Nabu out of the house” (42).

Significantly, Old Aballay’s invented language—“born...out of extreme necessity”—is *percussive*. It uses the repetition and deviation of the percussionists’ own language modes against themselves to communicate “otherly.” Thus, it is a *pharmakon* form of subaltern, otherly allegory-mode expression that resonates with Kate Jenckes’

analysis of the *aturdimiento* of music in the allographic historicity of Borges' writing. The connection between this language art and somatic performance is made more explicit in its expansion to include additional bodily dimensions: Through repetition and deviation, the language then takes on "alphabetic" form in the "signs" of bodily gestures and facial expressions, subtle actions and fleeting gestures like blinking eyes and lowering eyebrows, through which "little words...form themselves" (47). In this way, the family develops Old Aballay's initial tapping language into a complex system of *bodily* communication. This embodied system of language-art *poiësis* comprises a "beautiful alphabet of signs that are taps, winks, finger figures, coughs, and throat clearings, as well as little songs" (47-48). The family is even able to insult Nabu to his face, without his awareness, with the sound of a quick spoon movement (51).

Another example of Old Aballay's use of allegory mode amidst Nabu's increasing repression is his allegorical-parable storytelling. Through the performance of storytelling, Old Aballay conveys survival lessons to the other Aballays (also right in front of Nabu). Significantly, the lesson is (again, self-reflexively) in the importance and value of learning to operate in the kind of allegory mode that makes this subversive storytelling/teaching possible in the first place. On one level, Old Aballay's use of parable storytelling imparts knowledge through the familiar allegorical tale he tells about a lion and a mule. At the same time, his teaching-through-practice also *demonstrates* to the family how the creative *poiësis* of an ontology of allegory-mode aesthetics can generate subversive rhetorical effects. Here, the effects are of structuring parallel worlds that can be maintained for survival and survivance in the face of oppression and violence.

Outside the house, when the family has finally been allowed a short break from months of indoor sequestration, Old Aballay's son Cholo is ordered to dance by Nabu. In a demonstration of how repression functions through a violent intertwining of bodily performance and negative affect, Cholo provides Nabu with his "entertainment" by performing the humiliating, tragic act for his own survival and the survival of his family. Here, Nabu's entertainment is revealed as a rhetorical mechanism for generating subjectivity conditioning and habituation through compulsive bodily performance intertwined with affective responses of dread, anxiety, and humiliation. Afterward, Nabu orders Old Aballay to tell a story in a similar attempt to humiliate. After thinking carefully for a few moments, the old man recounts an allegorical tale about a lion who is eventually caught because he is slave to his own habits.

The story is familiar to the family. But as a skilled (sophistic) rhetor, Old Aballay employs a trickster aesthetic of playing with repetition and difference/deviance that demonstrates further levels of rhetorical complexity and savvy. These rhetorical dimensions are highlighted as he employs a keen awareness of *kairos* in his storyteller/rhetor deployment of wily, cunning *mētis* intelligence. He improvises and changes the tale on the spot in order to better suit the situation and more effectively address both audiences—Nabu and the Aballay family—on different levels, through an indirect attack that is cunningly crafted to evade detection even as it is deployed. Old Aballay's storytelling is more than mere recounting; it is an inventive display of trickster *poiēsis* storytelling tactics. And it is one that employs an allegory mode in order to accomplish its politico-aesthetic aims through a form of spell-binding, *technē*

psychagôgia rhetoric that pharmacologically uses Nabu’s repressive strategies of humiliation against themselves. Ordered to tell the story, Old Aballay at first,

gazed at Nabu in a pause, in suspended silence, and his quiet look was one of an animal practising mimicry. More than a look, it was purposeful, a desire hidden in playful eyes, an act arrested in a glow that still lay in the future. Used to a *different sort of perception*, the percussionist’s eyes were *unable to understand* or bear the sweetness of the flock and they turned away towards the flames of the fire. (83-84; emphasis added)

Old Aballay begins to tell the story with great concentration and focus, but at one point, he abruptly stops, because Nabu has fallen asleep. Saddened and dismayed that the old man’s resistant story is falling on deaf ears—deaf both because Nabu literally does not hear the story as he sleeps, but more importantly, because is “used to a different sort of perception” that does not allow him to understand even if he were awake—Cholo observes how the elder’s storytelling *technê psychagôgia* has failed: He “could not bear the pity he felt for the old man, who was changing a familiar old story, choosing his words and charging them with meaning so as to create a spell,” because “it was a pointless game, and his words were as useless as needles stuck into photographs” (85). Nevertheless, after his abrupt pause, Old Aballay continues with his story, and even when Cholo signs to him in their new language, “You can stop now, it looks like he’s fallen asleep,” Old Aballay signs back “not to interrupt” (86). This is because the story and Old Aballay’s language-art function on multiple registers and serve different purposes simultaneously. This multivalence is made possible by Old Aballay’s quick rhetorical

mētis and *kairos* intelligences. He tactically assesses and re-assesses a dangerous situation in constant flux in order to continually identify and take advantage of possibilities for resistance through language and bodily performance. Even with Nabu asleep, Old Aballay continues the story, re-shifting his rhetorical attention more directly to the rest of his audience: The Aballay family.

Old Aballay continues the story because his practical wisdom of *phronesis* allows him to recognize that its parable offers something of practical teaching value for the oppressed family themselves. Multiple useful interpretations of the parable are possible: In one sense, the trapped “lion” figures as Nabu, who is similarly enslaved by his habits of perception and orderly “rational” thinking, and thus vulnerable to resistance by the Aballays. At the same time, the lion emerges as a sympathetic figure in the story precisely because of its slavishness to habits, and the mule in the story is paralyzed by his own habituated fear each time he merely smells the lion, suggesting other levels of possible interpretation. “I had to cover [the mule’s] head with a rag so he couldn’t see or smell anything, and only that way could I lead him to where the lion lay, his habits at rest,” Old Aballay recounts (87). The story thus opens to other interpretations in which Old Aballay is using *kairos* to draw on the particular moment’s situation of Nabu’s slumber to self-reflexively teach a more general lesson about the dangers of being enslaved by performances of conditioned, habituated fear. These performances include the performance they are being subjected to at the moment he tells the story, and the performances involved in being enslaved by conditioned perceptual, sensorial, and emotional experience more generally. At the same time, Old Aballay also imparts a

lesson about the opportunity for resistance, given a keen (micro)perception and attention primed for other(ly) responses than what Brian Massumi might characterize as the preemptively conditioned perceptual response of militarized ontopower control, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Old Aballay is not just telling an allegorical tale that teaches about these things, a parable about habits and performance. He indeed is improvising in this allegory mode in order to tell the tale and teach this lesson. However, self-reflexively, it is the performance of *telling* the story that is itself the most important lesson Old Aballay imparts. He teaches by *doing*, and it is the *doing* that is the critical self-reflexive lesson. Through development and practice of the rhetorical *technê* of a cunning, inventive allegory mode of language-art *poiësis*, one might evade and undermine the habits of the oppressor. At the same time and through the same development and practice, one might succeed at undermining and re-orienting one's *own* habituations toward more inventive, creative modes of thinking, acting, performing, and perceiving—becoming “used to a different sort of perception.” Keep inventing, keep telling the story, even when the oppressor is asleep, because the allegory-mode rhetorical technology of performed invention and telling is a basis of liberatory resistance. And if the oppressor happens to wake up or tune in, be prepared to swiftly alter the performance by remaining always rhetorically alert on multiple levels to multiple layers of perception and expression. All of this is imparted to the family not just through the allegory of the lion and the fearful mule, but through the participatory, experiential pedagogy of Old Aballay's practical demonstration of *mētis*, *kairos*, and general rhetorical savvy of allegory-mode *poiësis* in his storytelling itself.

However, perhaps the most important demonstration of the allegory mode in the novel, and of its connections to pedagogy, emerges in Nabu's training of the family in the science of making origami-like paper bird cut-outs. This teaching practice is designed to inculcate in the family specific "rational" and "logical" habits of mind, perception, and behavior suitable to the "civilized" life of the percussionists. But once again, through an allegory mode, Old Aballay turns this entraining and conditioning against Nabu with a tactical *pharmakon* approach that ultimately drives him and the percussionists out of Hualacato. Forcing the family to engage in the repetitious drudgery of making the origami bird cut-outs, Nabu claims the skill they are learning is a "science really," and explains that this "science" has been "introduced into this town as therapy for impatience" (51). As Nabu condescendingly puts it to the Aballays, "When you're impatient all sorts of nonsense goes through your heads, and these are the cause of all your misfortune...Open your eyes and clear your minds. Especially you children. The rest are hopeless. It's you children who have to take this in for the future" (51). Here, Nabu's explicitly expressed rhetorical and pedagogical aims resonate with Bernard Stiegler's analysis of how consumer capitalism conditions and entrains youth through technomediation that channels thinking, affect, and libidinal energy, toward market imperatives, as discussed in Chapter Four.

On one level, the training in making origami paper bird cut-outs allegorically figures the colonizing conditioning of scientific rationality, ideological indoctrination of fascist regimes through institutional education and other channels, and labor entrainment for exploitative purposes. On a broader level, it represents a general fascist, totalitarian

assault on subjectivity formation and imaginative capability and thinking figured by the threat of “impatience”: “It’s not a question of learning the technique parrot-fashion,” Nabu disingenuously tells them; “All this...has a clear, exact meaning, which is to teach you patience” (52). Further on, though, he clarifies that what really underlies this notion of “patience” is an effort to “cleanse you of nonsense so that you can look at life as it really is and drop all this idiocy, which only leads to ruin” (52). Just as the paper birds are cut and folded into shape according to precise diagrams and instructions, so the Aballays—especially their children—are expected to re-shape their own thinking and perception (and thus, their being) in order to “open [their] eyes” and see “life as it really is”: “[Y]ou must regard each new bird you cut out as one more weird notion cut out of your head” (52-53), Nabu tells them.

Later, Old Aballay is banished outside the house and left to die after being brutally interrogated and tortured by Nabu. The situation has become intolerable and hopeless at this point, particularly after Nabu murders Cholo. But it is in banishment after Cholo’s murder, and in fact “[t]o take his mind off Cholo’s death,” that Old Aballay “concentrated on a series of new cut-outs that he had thought up” (134). These “cut-outs” involve using the origami skills to fashion, from the skins of cats Nabu has killed (and whose corpses he’s left littering the yard), devices that will eventually carry Nabu off in the eponymous “flight of the tiger.” This is another example of a *pharmakon* approach of using the oppressor’s own technologies, modes, and materials, against himself. But key here is how Old Aballay begins developing his technology and devising his strategy by combining the newly acquired origami technology with close attention to the rhythms and

patterns of nature. Specifically, he pays close attention to birds—*real* birds, in a complex, multi-nested process of metaphorization and literalization: The origami birds are literalized and the literal birds are then metaphorized as they function allegorically. Allegory mode thus is shown as a complex operation of interwoven ontological levels. As with Piglia's *The Absent City*, it is presented as the basis for a kind of ontological overlap and bleed that generates the instability and openness necessary for creative, critical-imaginative response. Old Aballay's strategic approach here is significant also because it demonstrates the centrality of an allegory mode in effecting such *pharmakon* development and strategy. It is Cholo's death that,

provided the old man with a direct connection to the mystery, forcing him to look at each thing as he tried to decipher it. He found that in the whole world there was no object or physical motion that was not at the same time a meaningful sign, like the ones they had invented. The problem was not knowing what they meant...signs in the air, naked words that hid nothing...he delved deeply into the question. Perceptions suddenly came to him in the midst of bewilderment. (134)

What Moyano describes here is how Old Aballay comes to see the world as structured allegorically. It is this allegory-mode perception and attitude in his reading and deciphering migration patterns and spatial relations all around him that eventually allows him to harness the flight of birds with his "origami" devices to rid the Aballays of Nabu. What this passage reveals, however, is not just that Old Aballay comes to see that the world is structured allegorically. Rather, I argue, it is his own already-operating ontology

of an imaginative allegory-mode perception (his sophistic technical ability to hold parallel worlds in place at once through an attitude of allegory-mode) that permits him to approach the world with this procedural practice in the first place. This aesthetic-rhetorical practice is, in fact, exactly what allows him to decipher the world and its rhythms always in flux in a critical-creative mode.

On one level, the allegory here involves Old Aballay pharmacologically applying skills of analysis and fashioning learned through Nabu's origami training. But on another level, Old Aballay's deciphering and planning reflects a deeper, self-reflexively allegorical lesson about subaltern language-art as a resistant rhetorical technology based in allegory modes. The lesson is about operating in and performing a poetic, allegorical mode of imaginative resistance, in an ontology of indirect allegory-mode perception and attitude. As he makes clear, analysis of the signs all around him in a rational analytical mode (like Nabu's) is not the point, nor would it yield precise knowledge gleaned from "knowing what they meant." Such an analysis is, in fact, counterproductive. It flattens out the contradictory particularities and diversities made visible through a relativist lens focused on sensorial perception of the experiential. Instead, what makes Old Aballay's approach here so effective for resistance is his point that,

like everything else in the world birds have their particular truths... These truths seem not to exist, which is why there's no thought about them.

Perhaps such truths are not meant to be thought about but only approached. Analyse them and they die stillborn...we weren't meant to be dissected and analysed—at least not that way. Birds...[have] known the

world since time began; they dwell in it, look at it, and, without violating it, they let it happen. All they want is to hitch themselves to the world's rhythm and allow it to go about its business, which is to continue within its existing pattern so that all of us can live in that pattern. The problem is that we don't yet know what that pattern is. The more we think about it the less we understand. This is the same thing as killing it. (164)

Moyano's poetic passage here rehearses the inherent, underlying conflict between Platonic foundationalist and totalizing notions of Truth and the Sophists' relativist approach to reality and language. Old Aballay contrasts a sophistic indirect observational approach to Nabu's own rationalist, analytical (Platonic) framework. Like the ancient Sophists, he arrives at a relativist position of (allegory-mode) perceptual observation. This position parallels the birds' own "truths" of simply experiencing the ongoing flux of the world. Avoiding "thinking" about "such truths," he instead only "approaches" them, indirectly and with a careful but non-analytical, oblique observation based in an understanding of the birds' having "their particular truths" rather than existing as objects of study to fit into a positivist scientific framework. Nabu, on the other hand, as Platonic "saviour" whose totalizing claims to Truth have divorced him from the world, "was at the limits of his papers and of his own faculties, and he got mired down in them. Neither had anything to do with the world any longer; instead, they were the illusions of madness. People like him have a deep fear of the world and of life, and they can't see what is real" (164).

Through Old Aballay, Moyano self-reflexively and allegorically demonstrates how to create and practice different modes of expression, communication, performance, and decipherment, as forms of *poiësis* subversion with a *pharmakon* aesthetics of allegory-mode ontology. In so doing, Moyano not only teaches the reader through demonstration, he also *engages* the reader in those same aesthetic-rhetorical modes, in the same way Old Aballay teaches his family how to practice an allegory mode in storytelling through the act of *doing* that storytelling with them. In this way, the learning and teaching processes demonstrated throughout the novel around this allegory mode—learning to perform the percussive language, learning to perform storytelling as a politico-aesthetic rhetorical art of *technê psychagôgia*, learning to perform the “science” of making origami paper bird cut-outs, learning from the “truths” performed by birds engaged with/in the rhythms of the world’s flux—are paralleled by a learning and teaching process made possible by the book’s own aesthetic rhetoric and enacted through the reader’s engagement with it. In a meta-fictional move, the novel self-reflexively demonstrates how allegory mode can be the poetic basis of subversive, subaltern language-art forms. These forms of *poiësis* hold the potential to push at and beyond the limits of “rational” analytical discourse, like that of Nabu, with alternative ontologies, alternative modes of perception, and alternative modes of performance and engagement with/in the world.

Neoliberal Subjectivity and Chilean Postdictatorship Performance-Documentation: *Pharmakon* Performance in Patricio Guzmán's Documentary Films

In this next case study, I shift more explicit attention to the rhetorical element of performance to develop a fuller understanding of the significant aesthetic rhetorical role it plays in allegory modes. This shift helps expand on some of the implicit issues raised in Moyano's novel, in order to explore other dimensions of *pharmakon* allegory-mode practice in terms of subjectivity performance and conditioned *habitus*. The shift in lens and focus here reflects my own investments in exploring the significance of attention to performance in developing critical pedagogy, as demonstrated in my case study analyses of Harry Gamboa, Jr.'s Chicano art in Chapter Four. It also reflects the performance poetics and the explicit focus on performance at work in the texts under consideration here: Patricio Guzmán's postdictatorial documentary films, *Chile: La memoria obstinada* (1999) and *Nostalgia de la luz* (2011).

This chapter's second case study begins from Michael J. Lazzara's and Diana Taylor's performance-oriented analyses of Pedro Alejandro Matta's scripted, guided tours at the former Villa Grimaldi detention center. Matta was held and tortured at Villa Grimaldi under Pinochet's regime. Placing Matta's performance memory work in dialogue with Diamela Eltit's *El padre mío* and with analysis of Eltit's work by Nelly Richard and others, I use this dialogue as a starting point to lay the groundwork for examining the performance poetics of the memory politics in Patricio Guzmán's films. While Matta cleaves to a strictly documentarian *testimonio* approach that explicitly rejects fictive representation in his guided tours,⁹² his use of performance nevertheless

believes his disavowal of aesthetics. It draws connections to Eltit's and Guzmán's works, in which performance and other aesthetic strategies blur lines between documentation and fiction. My argument for these connections centers on the loops of repetitive performance demonstrated in Matta's tours, in El Padre Mío's obsessively repetitive rant, and in the memory recovery work documented and performed in Guzmán's films. I argue that in all cases, what is articulated is a performance poetics of allegory mode that functions precariously as *pharmakon*—as both remedy and illness—in its expression of repetitive performance as a site of both pathological “stuckness” and as a potential site for critical intervention and transformation. Through *pharmakon* performance poetics, these repetition-based practices struggle to counter historical erasure and address past traumas and their impacts on subjectivity. At the same time, by focusing attention on the relationship between memory and performance through refractory, allegory-mode aesthetics that mine the terrain of affect and “non-rational” expression, these practices foreground the precarious, malleable nature of reality, memory, and subjectivity, understood as performance-based generated effects. In so doing, they open a space for disruptive *aturdimiento* shifts in subjectivity formation and *habitus* by targeting the performance processes through which these formations and habituations are effected. Beyond the work that such aesthetic practices potentially do in terms of memory politics, I argue that the disruptive force of such *pharmakon* performance poetics also can intervene in the *habitus* structures of contemporary neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. In the context of neoliberal consensus and the performances of subjectivity inculcated under free-market regimes of neoliberal rationality, these practices thus

represent valuable sources for developing aesthetics-based strategies for critical pedagogy.

In his analysis of the scripted, guided tours of the Peace Park that Pedro Alejandro Matta gives as a torture survivor of the detention center that the park memorializes, Michael J. Lazzara draws on Diana Taylor's work. Lazzara cites Taylor's notion of performance as "vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity" and also as "the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events *as performance*" (Taylor qtd. in Lazzara 180). Lazzara argues that Matta uses the Peace Park that now occupies the former site of the Villa as, "a metaphorical stage upon which to carry out a *performance of memory*" (144). In this performance, Matta "[u]ses a minimalist backdrop dotted with ruins and absences...[to establish] an intimate relationship with physical space as a trigger for narrating the tortures he and others suffered at Villa Grimaldi" (144). As Lazzara notes, and as Taylor describes in her own reading of the tours, Matta apparently performs these tours exactly the same way every time from a memorized script verbatim that parallels the *testimonio* account he has written. Lazzara is more interested in getting at the intersections of subjectivity, narrative, and site, around traumatic memory and ruins, than he is in teasing out analysis around performance (Taylor does this more fully in her reading of Matta). Lazzara later (gently) expresses a bit more criticism toward Matta's outright rejection of Germán Marín's pseudo-*testimonio* fictional account of Villa Grimaldi (and of any fictitious attempt to depict this kind of history). He suggests that perhaps, in some ways, it is the fragmentary,

closure-resistant literary form that is most productive in approaching issues of memory politics when dealing with trauma.⁹³

My own bias toward allegory modes, and refractory approaches more generally, makes me partial to Lazzara's suggestion that fragmentary and closure-resistant forms are perhaps more productive in certain ways. However, I also agree with his validation of Matta's *testimonio* work as a survivor and of its constraints around ambiguity and malleability. Most importantly, I find in Lazzara's analysis a productive suggestion that the line between these approaches and forms is not so clear-cut. Taylor likewise points to larger questions that the scripted, repeated performance raises while refraining from directly issuing a critique. Thus, she similarly suggests other aesthetic dimensions to Matta's work. In her reading of Matta's tour, she asks "What does it [Matta's repeated performance] mean about witnessing and the quality of *being in place*?... Every move follows the outline of the book he has written. But is he also a professional survivor? Is he acting? Am I his witness? His audience? A voyeur of trauma tourism?" (19). She concludes that as "part of his scenario now," as a participant "not in events but in his recounting of events" (19), she helps fulfill Matta's pedagogical need for "others...to complete the task of witnessing, to keep those memory paths fresh, and create more human rights activists" (20). Ultimately, for Taylor, Matta's tour incorporates performance to carry out this important form of memory politics pedagogical work that implicitly reflects a somatically based *aesthetic* approach centered on affect and the kinesthetics of movement through the space of the tour, as "Matta's pain activates mine, which is different in many ways, but not in one essential way; in our everyday lives, we

have no way of dealing with violent acts that shatter the limits of our understanding” (20).

The dichotomy between scriptedness and performance versus openness and refusal of closure, then, is not so clear-cut. In addition to raising a significant point about the performance of everyday life (a point to which I will return), Taylor’s analysis also intersects with important implications around affect in Lazzara’s analysis. Like Taylor, Lazzara focuses on the *affective* dimension of Matta’s performance. It is this focus on performance and its affective dimensions that suggests possibilities for more nuanced understandings of the commonalities between Matta’s work and more explicitly literary aesthetics, particularly around the notion of *aturdimiento*. Where Taylor speaks of an activation of her pain by Matta’s pain, Lazzara focuses on the “shock” that Matta (rhetorically) generates.⁹⁴ Both Lazzara and Taylor are pointing to the rhetorical effectiveness of Matta’s memory politics *testimonio* work of truth-telling in the face of reconciliatory aesthetics as an approach that both generates shock and (re)activates pain. However, while Lazzara references examples of “fragmentary” and “non-closure” disruptive narrative strategies and refractory poetics, such as Diamela Eltit’s work, as alternative aesthetic forms to Matta’s approach, in fact, this rhetorical point about generated effects of shock and pain actually helps foreground similarities and intersections between the two approaches. What interests me most about Matta’s performance, understood *as* performance and through a rhetorical lens, then, is not how it differs from, but rather, how it intersects with approaches like Marín’s and Eltit’s.

These intersections are perhaps clearest in relation to Eltit's *El padre mío*, which Lazzara analyzes elsewhere in the same monograph. As Lazzara, Nelly Richard, and others have argued, Eltit's transcription of an indigent torture survivor's schizophrenic ramblings on the margins of Santiago in the early to mid-1980s raises important questions around the ambiguities between the "truth" of *testimonio* and the more oblique, indirect "truth" that emerges in refractory literary approaches through a blurring between *testimonio* and refractory poetics. Along similar lines, I want to suggest that the boundary between Matta's *testimonio* and the poetics of El Padre Mío's *testimonio* is blurred not just at the point of generated effects of shock and pain through aesthetic strategies of performance, but also at another important point of intersection; specifically, at the common point of compulsively performed repetition. Each of the three sections of Eltit's book gives the impression of an ongoing, endless stream of "crazy talk," with repetitions of key tropes, images, phrases, and "irrational" rhetorical modes. Although the sections were recorded at discrete points over three years, as Lazzara points out, it is as if El Padre Mío has been talking in the same stream, repeating the same monologue, the whole time. With each encounter, the recordings seem to capture isolated moments of a continuously performed stream of repetitive, neverending monologue. El Padre Mío is caught in a series of loops that he seems to perform repeatedly, compulsively, uncontrollably, obsessively. Yet through this obsessive-compulsive repetition, El Padre Mío provides a disclosure of "truth" of another kind through what Lazzara calls a "lens of *locura*."

In fact, it is the repetitive, fragmentary rambling and ranting of his discourse that has been seen by Lazzara, Richard, and other analysts, as demonstrating precisely the

kind of Benjaminian refractory aesthetics “useless to fascism” that became so central to critical Chilean aesthetic responses to the dictatorship, particularly with *avanzada* artists like Eltit, Zurita, and others. As both Lazzara and Richard note, El Padre Mío’s non-articulate, “non rational” articulation of survival *testimonio* is an expression of the crisis of language and representation during the dictatorship that works to allegorize this crisis. Fornazzari makes a similar point in noting the estranging effect produced by “Eltit’s national allegorizing of Chile through the figure of the schizophrenic and homeless Padre Mío” (76). Through what I argue is an allegory-mode form of refractory expression (albeit one that is not necessarily consciously employed), El Padre Mío performs a form of indirect truth-telling that disrupts the smooth surfaces of dictatorship narratives and, ultimately, postdictatorial narratives of reconciliation and “truth” finding.

The primary point of interest for my rhetorical analysis is the repetition in this speech-act performance. I see this element as key to how El Padre Mío generates these aesthetic effects of truth-telling *aturdimiento* through a kind of deliriously hypnotic and disturbing *technê psychagôgia* that is disruptive of dominant narratives. In a similar way, I want to suggest that Matta also is caught up in a kind of compulsive loop of post-trauma subjectivity. He is performing his own unique iteration of post-traumatic expression. But as with the productive disruption in the repetition of El Padre Mío’s fractured speech acts, there is something about the repetition in Matta’s performance that I want to suggest is also productive, as Lazzara and Taylor similarly suggest, though perhaps along somewhat different vectors from their focus.⁹⁵ Of course, I am not suggesting that Matta is a victim of schizophrenia, or of mental illness more generally. Matta clearly is not

performing speech acts that are seemingly out of his control, as El Padre Mío seems to be. In fact, the agency with which he makes conscious use of performance and repetition—an agency El Padre Mío apparently lacks—is what makes Matta’s work of particular interest for my argument, as detailed below. However, it is the difference in how each responds to the common element of performed repetition that foregrounds why this connection between them at the common point of compulsive repetition is so important to my larger argument here.

On one hand, like El Padre Mío, and like all survivors of trauma to one degree or another, Matta appears caught in an embodied, repetitively performed loop of memory and trauma. It can be argued that this is evidence that he is unable to work through melancholy and move on. But at the same time, there is an agentic way in which he is *embracing* his traumatized condition by *embracing* his repetitive performance. If he is to be caught up in an embodied performance loop like this that he cannot escape and for which he obviously did not ask, then what is he to do? There is an honesty and an agency in openly and explicitly embracing this performance and its compulsive repetition and then using them against themselves for political resistance. This agency contrasts with the unacknowledged—yet no less compulsively repetitive—unconscious performances of everyday life *habitus* by others caught in similar post-traumatic loops of conditioned repetition. How Matta channels this loop performance deliberately, how he is playing with it, suggests some agency even as he might be caught up in and “stuck” in a bodily script deeply conditioned by trauma. It does something for memory politics work in a public way, as Lazzara and Taylor argue (especially in terms of its mobilization of

audience affect through performance). But it is important to think also about what the performance does for him and for his affective experience as a survivor. Paradoxically, on one hand, it functions as part of the general matrix of conditioned behavior that keeps him caught up in a repetition of trauma; on the other hand, it provides him a sense of meaning and political purpose as he asserts some control over the unavoidable repetition of trauma, over compulsive performance and embodied *habitus* shaped by trauma. As such, it becomes a way of potentially working through that trauma through that very embodied post-trauma *habitus* and performance. This is why I argue that Matta's tours understood as performance seem to function as a kind of *pharmakon*. Furthermore, Matta's way of handling loops of inescapable scripted performance seems to reflect an allegory-mode strategy of performance-poetics layering. This aesthetic-rhetorical strategy is based in repetition, as he repetitively mounts his "metaphorical stage" on the former site of Villa Grimaldi. Through his allegory-mode performance, the Peace Park becomes one thing and something else at the same time. It is through an allegory-mode performance of repetition at/above the original site of Villa Grimaldi ruins that Matta points beyond, activating pain and shock and excavating those ruins in order to provide his own form of truth-telling.

Matta thus suggests different—pharmacological—ways of asserting some form of agency even within the loops of compulsive, imposed, inescapable performances, precisely *through* those performances. Aside from the indirect, refractory expression in El Padre Mío's fractured speech acts, this element of repeated performance is perhaps another important reason why an artist like Eltit would gravitate to El Padre Mío and

validate his speech act as a sort of literary performance whose aesthetics are clearly reflected in her own work's emphasis on repetition, performance, and ritual (e.g., the ritual performance gatherings in *E. Luminata*). As with Matta, this mode of articulation, filtered through Eltit in her transcription and in her own subsequent works, used a rhetorical strategy of repetition to achieve a memory politics of disruption.

* * *

A similar dynamic of exploring agency within repetition, compulsive performance, allegory mode, and *pharmakon* practice, is at work in Patricio Guzmán's postdictatorial documentaries, *Chile, la memoria obstinada* (1999), and *Nostalgia de la luz* (2011). I begin with *Chile, la memoria obstinada*, by noting the explicit connections Guzmán makes between his original, germinal documentary *The Battle of Chile*, and this later film as a kind of coda and return to *Battle*. In *Speculative Fictions: Chilean Culture, Economics, and the Neoliberal Transition*, Alessandro Fornazzari examines the connection between these two films in terms of Guzmán's attempts to "establish a unique experience with the past" (73) in *Memoria obstinada* and to culturally re-position *The Battle of Chile* in its postdictatorial moment of memory politics. Building on Fornazzari's analysis of the film's "choreographed performances" (73), I want to focus attention on how these self-reflexive connections stage and frame the two films within a performance poetics of repetition. In examining these connections, I draw parallels between Matta and El Padre Mío on one hand, and on the other, Professor Ernesto Malbrán, a key figure in the Popular Unity Movement who appears in *Memoria obstinada* with other figures who appeared in *The Battle of Chile* and/or were intimately involved in the movement.

The explicitly staged performances of *Memoria* include Guzmán having his uncle, a survivor of both the holocaust and Pinochet’s dictatorship, play the piano for the camera. In another example, Guzmán stages a re-enactment in which a marching band plays the Popular Unity anthem, “Venceremos” (the first time the tune has been played in Santiago in 23 years, the film notes), while marching through an outdoor marketplace.⁹⁶ This moment when the marching band parades through a busy outdoor marketplace is paralleled by another re-enactment, this time of an Allende motorcade, when original members of his entourage follow a car along a route they followed with the original motorcade. This motorcade performance is intercut with original footage of the celebratory Allende parade they are re-enacting. Similarly, the marching band re-enactment is intercut with original footage of Popular Unity supporters marching in the street to the same anthem. Like the silent motorcade re-enactment along a deserted, quiet street, this intercutting creates a jarring juxtaposition—the “uncanny” effect of “a sense of estrangement” that Fornazzari analyzes as “one of the most compelling aspects of Guzmán’s documentary” (76). In what I argue is a sophistic use of juxtaposition, scenes of jubilant singing and marching clash with a contemporary marketplace in which people quietly mill about their daily performance of shopping.

On the surface, these kinds of re-enactments suggest that Guzmán may be stuck in a particular memory politics of nostalgia and melancholy that feeds into official discourse, particularly through a focus on the individual over the collective. As Fornazzari notes, this is something for which the film indeed has been critiqued by the left (75). However, in line with Fornazzari’s analysis of other productive dimensions of

memory politics at work in the film, I want to foreground the film's use of staged performance and an allegory mode of layering to look beyond the more explicitly framed performances and examine how *all* of the film's scenes comprise staged performances. I see Guzmán's deliberate foregrounding of performance *as* performance, through these explicit stagings, as part of a general attempt to push *against* such a nostalgic memory politics—pharmacologically—at the specific site of performance, even as he appears also to be stuck in them in some ways. Guzmán's foregrounding of performance, I argue, signals self-awareness about how memory politics fundamentally involves and must address performance—specifically, compulsive, repetitive performance.

This is why, as overbearing as he can be, Professor Malbrán is a very productive figure to look at in the film around this dimension of performance and in conversation with Matta. This is not only because of the affective dimensions he helps foreground, but because he is so obviously performing throughout with a staging of his own melodramatic persona. The obviousness of this performance arises in part from how it occurs at extreme odds with what is happening around him, as Fornazzari points out with regard to the film's last scene (72). As Fornazzari notes, Malbrán's speech at the end of the film, which comes after a viewing of *The Battle of Chile* by mostly young Chilean students, suggests that he is unable to step out of a particular nostalgic, triumphalist leftist performance. This performance seeks to effect a nostalgic totalizing narrative even when the fractured, fragmentary affective atmosphere of the scenario around him so obviously calls for another performance and response. Here, the students are crying and having difficulty articulating coherent responses to the film. The complexity created by this

layering includes the underlying recognition that it was the coup itself documented in the film that not only destroyed the Popular Unity movement, but that in doing so, catastrophically generated this contemporary sociocultural, socioeconomic neoliberal topography. Yet Malbrán takes center stage, occupying nearly the entire frame of the shot, and delivers a triumphalist speech. As Fornazzari puts it, Malbrán thus “clashes with the students’ tentative, collaborative, and piecemeal reconstructions of the past” (72).

With other figures in the film, it may be easier to overlook that there is any kind of performance happening, outside those moments when Guzmán has them explicitly perform within framed scenarios. But along with the film’s deliberate staging of re-enactments and other performances, Professor Malbrán’s “performance” as “himself” in his overly dramatic but “unstaged” persona performances helps foreground how in reality, *everyone* is performing throughout the film.⁹⁷ My point here is not to denigrate Malbrán. Rather, it is that Guzmán seems to be foregrounding, through a visual exploration of performance poetics, how these figures in *Memoria obstinada* are not just performing for the camera and film; they are (repeatedly, compulsively) performing memory politics in their everyday lives. These performances are compelled at the level of embodied *habitus*. There are multiple layers of performance at work in such a memory politics of everyday life. This, I argue, is a central idea that Guzmán’s film raises. It is a point that bears not only on the issues of performed subjectivity that arise in memory politics, but on issues of how contemporary neoliberal subjectivity is also a subjectivity

shaped according to compulsory, obsessive performance—the obsessive-compulsive performance of market-logic rationality.⁹⁸

This point is made by the superimposition of the marching band on the space of contemporary everyday life performance in the marketplace, for example. But even more emphatically, Guzmán demonstrates this multilayered textuality in the juxtaposition of the contemporary performances of fans, soccer players, and (highly militarized) security riot guards at the *estadio* intercut with grainy footage of political prisoners filling the stands and junta soldiers taking over the *estadio* to use it as a detention and torture center immediately following the coup. Guzmán's visual layerings highlight the superimposition of performance layers. The scene at the *estadio*, for example, demonstrates how affect has been mobilized around specific performance rituals of neoliberal spectacle and consumption. This performance is, in fact, not just a neoliberal performance of consumerist ritual, but the kind of ritualization of ritual that underlies fascism. The specific site of the stadium and the intercut footage of prisoners and contemporary fans, military junta officers and contemporary riot guards, makes the direct connection between the state's violent performance of detainment, torture, and terror, and the subsequent contemporary performance of neoliberal subjectivity. Here, the potential for re-activation, demonstrated in the affective frenzy and cheering of the fans, is effectively contained and channeled toward rituals of spectacle consumerism; but as Guzmán's visual layering and its implicit focus on performance foreground, it is there nevertheless, so close to the surface that the presence of riot squads (and other less visible, but no less ubiquitous, mechanisms of control and surveillance) is required.

On one level, the visual and performance layerings effected by the film's performance scenarios generate a sad, nostalgic effect. On another level, as Fornazzari points out, this layered superimposition generates uncanny and estranging effects (76). But what this layering points to as well, especially through inclusion of intercut layerings like the *estadio* scene and the marketplace scene, is how participants' everyday performances of *habitus* in this new neoliberal context are *already* layered in compulsory everyday life performance. This everyday life *habitus* may be caught up in loops, trauma, and nostalgia, on one hand, but at the same time, it potentially may be disrupted by a productive, agentively engaged *aturdimiento* dynamic of layered performance—*through* this performance. And it is through an allegory-mode layering that Guzmán achieves his effects and makes this point. As Diana Taylor puts it in her analysis of Matta's Villa tour performance, "The emotional charge comes from the friction of place and practice, inseparable from one another, even if disavowed.... [W]e might recognize the layers and layers of material and corporeal practices that created these places and that get triggered as we walk through them in our own ways" (21). Especially relevant to the point I raise about layers and about Guzmán's foregrounding of performance through stagings and re-enactments, however, is Taylor's theorization of the scenario. She sees the scenario as a site at which live and scripted elements are layered, and this layering is one of the key productive forces in the performance scenario. She writes: "By considering scenarios as well as narratives, we expand our ability to rigorously analyze the live and the scripted, the citational practices that characterize both. The scenario places spectators within its frame, implicating us in its ethics and politics" (32-33). I want to argue that in putting

into play a similar dynamic of layered performance, Guzmán's film suggests an attempt to self-reflexively explore and push through his nostalgic "stuckness" of repetition and scriptedness by both demonstrating and effecting such practices as aesthetic sites of pharmacological intervention.

Often tentatively and with mixed results, this is the suggestion that *Chile: La memoria obstinada* seems to make and push toward in Guzmán's initial effort at exploring these issues of performance poetics through his aesthetic rhetoric in 1999. However, it is not until his later 2011 film, *Nostalgia de la luz*, that Guzmán articulates his concerns with performance poetics and their potential as *pharmakon* in a way that more clearly and effectively demonstrates the political and aesthetic-rhetorical potential of such *pharmakon* performance poetics. He accomplishes this by not just focusing on performance poetics in the survival tactics of others, but by mirroring them in his own aesthetic rhetoric, which explicitly employs a poetic allegory-mode approach that builds on his previous allegory-mode layering.

In *Nostalgia de la luz*, Guzmán conducts interviews of survivors at the locations of their detainment in the Atacama desert. As well, he interviews the Mujeres de Calama as they go about their daily task of digging and sifting for human remains of their loved ones in the desert. Aside from the minimal staging involved in framing these interviews, Guzmán does not stage re-enactments or explicit performances. Yet compulsive (layered) performance, ritual, and repetition, emerge even more emphatically as *Nostalgia's* primary concerns. Guzmán places archeological emphasis on layers and performance that

highlights how the body enacts, and performs subjectivity through, multiple strata of habituated performance and embodied memory. Here, the archeological digging through time is enacted and depicted not through intercut footage and staged re-enactments, but by poetically paralleling and interweaving rituals of searching for remains of *desaparecidos* in the vast Atacama desert, archeological rituals of digging for ancient *indígena* ruins and artifacts in the desert, and astronomical rituals of examining the ancient light traces of distant stars in the night sky through telescopes situated in the desert. What Guzmán digs for with these parallel structures are not just survivors' memories of what happened to them, but aesthetic-rhetorical strategies of survival that they developed both during and after the dictatorship that make explicit use of performance, repetition, and bodily habit.

Significantly, this emergence is effected in large part through Guzmán's own embracing of a more poetic approach that parallels the film's content with its form in a kind of metatextual demonstration-through-doing. Key to his exploration of performance poetics is how Guzmán plays with visuals, performance, and site, to set up metaphorical stages. As with *Memoria obstinada*'s re-enactments, *Nostalgia* also sets up layerings by staging interviews at original sites of trauma in concentration camp ruins and at digs for human remains. However, by juxtaposing these sites in the desert with the site of astronomical exploration at the desert's telescopes and archeological digs for ancient ruins and artifacts, Guzmán sets up a multivalent, more emphatically "metaphorical stage" that operates on an explicitly metaphorical register. With this multilayering and juxtaposition that points toward another meaning, that allegorically "speaks other,"

Guzmán stages a multilayered performance of memory and performatively stages a poetics of memory. By operating on a more poetic register, I argue, *Nostalgia* pushes beyond *Memoria obstinada* as Guzmán works to disrupt performance of memory politics by staging them through other systems of articulation—“nonrational,” metaphoric—that are not so easily recuperable, through attention to performance and repetition. As with the previous film, the staging here is centered on (compulsive) repetition. This thematic focus of repetition is punctuated at the film’s end, for example, with poetic lines about the night sky’s impassive gaze over Santiago, repeated “each night” on a vast time scale of cosmic repetition. But this thematic focus carries throughout the film in specific iterations of *pharmakon* performance poetics as well that are worth noting.

For example, there is the tour of the abandoned Chacabuco mining/concentration camp with Luis Henriquez, who turned to astronomy while imprisoned in the camp as a way of maintaining a sense of hope before guards stopped the nightly astronomy lessons and practices for fear that prisoners would be able to guide themselves by the stars if they escaped. Here, the stars serve as a “script” on multiple levels as potential escape routes, in terms of offering both a sense of hope and a literal script that could guide bodily movement. Another kind of script and performance that more clearly emphasizes repetition is highlighted in Miguel Lawner. As a prisoner, the architect memorized his daily performance of movements throughout the camp in order to later draw meticulously detailed renderings of it from memory. Significantly, part of how he was able to accomplish his chillingly accurate drawings even much later was through a rehearsal process of compulsive repetition. Each night, he would draw the spaces of the camp,

which he had mapped in his memory through internal counting of his steps and careful attention to his body's movements through space as he performed his daily routine as a prisoner. After drawing, he would tear the sheets into tiny pieces and then dispose of them. Then he would repeat this performance again, over and over. Lawner thus used the compulsive repetition of his daily life performance of prisoner *habitus* against itself with aesthetic practices of performance, drawing, and meticulous, focused, perhaps even obsessive observation, self-awareness, and attention to sensorial/kinesthetic experience and embodiment more generally. This repetitive practice was the basis of his *pharmakon* performance poetics of survival.⁹⁹

Another moment that demonstrates Guzmán's focus on repetition and/in performance poetics involves software engineer Victor González and his mother. González's mother is shown performing physical therapy body-healing work with torture survivors. Shots of her working on patients' bodies cut back and forth with shots of her in the kitchen speaking with her son, who grew up in exile in Germany to escape the dictatorship. In the kitchen, she prepares a meal while she talks about how torture victims and family members of the disappeared and tortured come across those who participated in torturing, who are now walking freely on the streets of their villages every day. She makes the point that this kind of (repeated) encounter between victims and victimizers profoundly re-traumatizes victims. What stands out here is her focus on the performance of everyday life, on repetition, and on re-activation of trauma through the disruptive presence of victimizers in these everyday performances of repeated encounters on the street. The performance of everyday life for survivors and the families of *desparecidos* is

traumatically disrupted by the staging of re-traumatizing scenarios. Victimiziers are allowed to participate in the performance of everyday life along with everyone else. In so doing, they insert another layer of performance that re-activates underlying layers of embodied trauma. However, as noted above, Guzmán juxtaposes these points with González's mother's performance of daily tasks and with her performance of healing work on patients' bodies. The juxtaposition results in a multi-layering of everyday life scenarios: the daily life scenario of a conversation in the kitchen while preparing a meal; the scenario of the healing work; and, the scenario of the traumatizing street encounter. As with some of the effects generated by scenes like the stadium shots and the marketplace marching band in *Memoria obstinada*, these scenarios in *Nostalgia* take account of how embodied memory and multi-layered performances of everyday life *habitus* intersect. They point to the performance-poetic aesthetics of survival strategies that involve both quotidian rituals like preparing and sharing a family meal, and performing ritual physical healing work.

Finally, perhaps the most obvious example of repeated (compulsive) performance in the film is seen in the work of the Mujeres de Calama. These women searched the desert for minute remains of victim relatives (often nothing more than tiny shards of bones in vast stretches of the Atacama desert) for twenty-eight years, until 2002. Guzmán films and interviews Vicky Saavedra and Violeta Berríos, who still continue to search. Their daily *habitus* performs archeologist Lautaro Núñez' assertion in the film that, "Hay que vivir en estado de búsqueda" ["One must live in a state of searching"]. Through this seemingly hopeless, obsessive performance, they maintain this "estado de búsqueda,"

against all odds, and it would seem that they embody another kind of stuck loop.

However, as with Matta's Peace Park tours, it is important to look at this performance not just in terms of what it accomplishes in a public, political sense, but in terms of what it does for them. In terms of both aesthetics and memory politics, what does it mean to purposefully structure one's everyday life performance as a state not just of searching, but of critical searching? What productive, positive effects are potentially generated for one's *habitus* by maintaining such a state of *búsqueda* in one's everyday life performance of subjectivity? What positive effects are generated in one's bodily *habitus* through a daily practice of meditative ritual that functions through careful engagement of a precisely focused perceptual and attention apparatus centered on critical memory politics?

These pharmacological questions suggest that the women of Calama embody not only a powerfully resistant counter-memory politics practice, but a *pharmakon* performance poetics of refractory, allegory-mode aesthetics based in repetition and ritual that holds critical potential for intervening in normative subjectivity formations and practices. As with Matta, on one hand, it appears that these women are caught up in loops of repeated performance. They move their bodies slowly and meticulously over vast stretches of desert, guided by a script of shards and fragments scattered over the desert. This is a script whose elements, even when (if) found, will never add up to any coherent wholeness or piece together a full, totalizing picture. In this sense, as they parallel the work of nearby astronomers mining the impossibly vast expanse of space for fragmentary, incomplete understandings of the universe, they also echo the always

incomplete allegory-mode aesthetics of refractory expression. On the other hand, as with Matta, the work that the women of Calama do provides them with a sense of overtly political purpose and meaning on one level. Remains have been found (Saavedra describes with horrifying, heartbreaking detail how she found her brother's foot), and the work keeps memory alive while making a powerful political statement. But as the questions above suggest, on another level that is perhaps less overt but no less political, this work also potentially generates productive effects in terms of how the women develop their abilities to practice resistant strategies for structuring their everyday post-trauma performance of subjectivity against the grain of postdictatorship neoliberal subjectivity and rationality. There is an allegory-mode layering at work in the work that they do with their bodies, and this work functions pharmacologically toward both resistance and healing.

The Mujeres de Calama may be stuck in their performed loops, but I suggest that like Pedro Alejandro Matta, they have found a way to try to work through that stuckness by embracing it and performing it with some self-consciousness about its nature as performance. As they sift through layers of sediment, history, memory, embodiment, performance, and ruins, this self-conscious embracing of the performance reflects a certain degree of agency within the loop of stuckness. Guzmán's juxtaposition of this impossibly daunting task of *búsqueda* with the task of astronomers gazing at a vast sky of stars foregrounds the poignant poetry at the heart of this performance, and the performance at the heart of this poetry. In staging this and other juxtapositions, Guzmán's aesthetic rhetoric articulates a partial response to the questions raised in *Memoria*

obstinada by that film's re-enactments and performances. Through a refractory, allegory-mode *poiesis*, he completes the poetic-narrative arc begun in that film by more precisely honing in on the productive and critical potential in the aesthetic rhetoric of *pharmakon* performance poetics. Both content and form thus potentially teach audiences allegory-mode aesthetic rhetorical critical approaches to subjectivity conditioning and habituation.

CHAPTER SIX:
SCIENCE-FICTIONAL TEACHING: SF AUTHORS, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY,
AND THE AESTHETIC RHETORIC OF THE ANCIENT SOPHISTS

Introduction

This chapter places science fiction in conversation with the aesthetic rhetoric of the Sophists, with the pedagogical art practices of Harry Gamboa, Jr., and with the Southern Cone artists, discussed in previous chapters. Here I similarly focus rhetorical attention on sf as a source of pedagogical strategies and approaches for developing arts-based critical teaching. I seek to demonstrate how sf authors defamiliarize reality and re-orient habituated perception and cognition through aesthetic production, enhancing connections to sophistic aesthetic rhetoric and critical pedagogy. Premising these sf authors as practicing what I argue is a sophistic form of aesthetic rhetoric and arts-based critical pedagogy, I examine how their works engage audiences in re-oriented perceptual and imaginative modes with narratives that self-reflexively address rhetoric and transformative pedagogy in and through science fiction. I ask:

-How do critical sf works accomplish radically transformative results in audiences, and what are the wider implications of this transformative potential for critical political practices that seek to challenge and disrupt dominant rationalities and subjectivities toward social justice and more equitable socio-relations?

-How does understanding these kinds of results as generated effects help us to see science fiction as a rhetorical and pedagogical aesthetic endeavor whose strategies make use of particular rhetorical devices and practices to generate effects and affects?

-How does such a rhetorical approach to sf help us better parse out the critical transformational and pedagogical potential in these aesthetic forms, both as content and as formal demonstrations of pedagogical practice?

-And in parsing this out through a rhetoric methodology, how can we begin to see sf as an important source for developing critical pedagogy—specifically, one that seeks to address the neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities of our contemporary technoscience empire's technocultural milieu?

In this chapter's case studies, I apply rhetoric methodology to excavating the pedagogical potential in *Up the Walls of the World* by James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), and China Miéville's *Embassytown*. These works narrate transformative interventions into habituated response. Their plots self-reflexively center on radical transformation catalyzed by rhetorically and pedagogically generated effects of disruption and reorientation of habituated modes of perception, language, self-other socio-relations, and being. These transformative effects are generated through pedagogical manipulations of aesthetic and bodily experience that target sensorial perception, language, and affect, all understood as intertwined elements of a nexus of somatic knowledge and understanding. The self-reflexivity of these works involves the use of aesthetics and somatically oriented mediational objects as rhetorical and pedagogical devices within the novels' plots. It also involves the aesthetic productions of the sf works themselves. In line with my project's focus on the use of *pharmakon* elements in critical teaching, these disruptions and reorientations occur through *pharmakon* figures that occupy ambivalent positions as transformational catalysts. In the novels, characters' subjective experiences are disrupted on intertwined somatic and cognitive levels, and habituated self-other boundaries are destabilized and dissolved. They experience what I argue are forms of other-oriented,

sophistic allegory modes¹⁰⁰ of perception and being in their “otherly” shuttling between unresolvable contradictions and multiple realities, possibilities, and perceptual-cognitive orientations. In their processes of engaging these modes, characters are radically transformed toward positive growth and change. Here, “otherly” refers on one level to the allegory mode of science-fiction’s analogical structures in science-fictional thinking. In terms of pedagogy, it also refers both to other-oriented, communal self-other relations, and to otherly becoming—the self engaged in a perpetual process of becoming other, through engagement with others.

These transformational learning processes and their somatic dimensions are self-reflexively foregrounded and made central to the plots of Tiptree’s and Miéville’s texts. They tether language and meaning to the body as the basis of possibilities for alternative futures and ways of being. Both authors thus raise significant points about the central necessity for attention to aesthetics and the body in critically transformative pedagogy. In outlining various teaching/learning processes that effect radical transformation, Tiptree and Miéville provide pedagogical models. As aesthetic works that potentially engage audiences in the same kind of transformative pedagogy that drives their plots, these texts self-reflexively demonstrate their own arts-based teaching practices in themselves. Additionally, in their emphases on reconfiguration of self-other relations toward other-oriented socioethical structures, they are particularly relevant to critical pedagogical aims at countering the individualist market-oriented ethos of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities with alternative, other-oriented economies of care and contribution. Furthermore, both novels link radical transformation to a sense of radically open future

possibilities at their critical-dystopian/utopian endings. Thus, they potentially inculcate in readers such an imaginative future-oriented mode of radically open possibilities. As such, these works present aesthetic-rhetorical pedagogical strategies relevant to developing critical pedagogy that can counter neoliberalism's instrumentalization of future toward market imperatives with its disingenuous utopian discourse and its financialization and technocultural apparatuses of hyper-speculative "casino capitalism" and consumerism.

Before providing in-depth case study analyses, I first contextualize science fiction in relation to neoliberalism, rhetoric, and pedagogy, with emphasis on my argument for its specific relation to Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy. This includes periodizing science fiction's relationship with pedagogy and neoliberalism. I then detail specific connections I am making between sf and Sophist rhetoric, and sf and critical pedagogy. Having laid the groundwork for how I am excavating science fiction's pedagogical potential, I then apply rhetoric methodology to Tiptree's *Up the Walls of the World* and Miéville's *Embassytown*.

Pulp Pedagogy: Science Fiction, Neoliberalism, and Learning to Inhabit Other Worlds through Mass Market Rhetoric

In positing sf as an aesthetic source of pedagogical strategy and practice, I am in conversation with other sf theorists and authors who have focused attention on sf's pedagogical dimensions. The Patrick Parrinder-edited *Learning from Other Worlds* explores how science fiction has not just been a source of incidental learning for readers, but how its authors have been charged explicitly with a task of teaching through their

aesthetic production. Beginning in the 1920s and 30s, early sf writers like Hugo Gernsback and John W. Campbell argued sf's potential (and obligation) to familiarize masses with technoscience discourse through mass pulp forms and to operate in a feedback loop with real-world scientific research and development. Both Gernsback and Campbell were instrumental in arguing and facilitating this pedagogical dimension of sf through their writing, and more importantly, through their germinal editorial and publication work. In *Amazing Stories* and *Astounding Science Fiction*, respectively, Gernsback and Campbell helped create open, democratically oriented forums in which sf authors, readers, and scientists (sometimes all three at once), hashed out important early questions about the nature and purpose of sf as an aesthetic form, its pedagogical dimensions and obligations, its non-aesthetic dimensions (e.g., its grounding in and dialogue with scientific discourse and rationality), and what the roles of authors, readers, and scientists, should be in this definitional and creative process. These rhetorical exchanges took place through editorials and essays, as well as through fan letters and the sf stories themselves, all of which were in heavy dialogue with one another.

This process was, in other words, a collaborative one of public pedagogy. While it was problematic in some of its exclusionary dimensions, and thus not fully democratic, all parties involved learned from and taught one another as they engaged in and performed the creative pedagogical work of science-fictional "becoming" of this developing field. Moreover, it was a rhetorical process. In a discursive arena often filled with strife and dissent, the pedagogical process of sf's early development and dissemination unfolded through a vibrant, collective rhetorical exchange of ideas and

positions that included not just the letters and essays published in these and other pulp magazines, but that, significantly, included the *aesthetic* works of sf authors themselves. From the beginning, this trans-disciplinary inclusivity thus crossed and blurred boundaries between generic modes of discourse such as aesthetic production, hard science, and popular mass media. From a rhetoric studies perspective, this rhetorical and pedagogical process reflects an example of the object of what Ronald Walter Greene identifies as a “constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity.” This conceptualization of rhetoric has developed as a key strand of the Nietzschean, Burkean, and Sophist-oriented aesthetic turn in rhetoric over the past forty years alongside and intertwined with neosophist theorization. Greene explores how this theory of rhetorical effectivity centered on the notion of rhetoric as performance, as opposed to rhetoric as epistemic or persuasive (20). According to this model, which echoes the Sophists’ relativist emphasis on negotiating subjective experience through collaborative exchange, analytical focus in determining rhetorical effectivity is “on the role of public discourse in a collective process of world disclosure” and meaning-making (19). It seeks to understand “how subjects, personas, situations and problems emerge as effects of rhetorical practices” (19). By drawing attention to the performative nature of aesthetic rhetoric, a constitutive model helps us understand how “rhetorical practices generate ‘fictions’ or worlds that subjects might inhabit” (19), and thus, subjects themselves.

I dwell on this point for several reasons. First, it is particularly relevant to my analysis of the sf works I examine in this chapter, to which I apply a constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity. I apply this model in order to understand how these works

demonstrate the emergence of “subjects, personas, situations and problems” as collaboratively performed “effects of rhetorical practices.” This emergence is seen in the radical reconfigurations of subjectivities, modes of perception and expression, and self-other socio-relations, that take place in the novels. Second, highlighting some of the key foundational pedagogical and rhetorical dimensions of sf as a field through the lens of a constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity helps lay the groundwork for my rhetorical approach to sf as a pedagogical and rhetorical project in itself. This clarifies some of my reasons for drawing on sf authors in development of critical pedagogy, beyond simply identifying and analyzing particular pedagogically oriented aesthetic-rhetorical strategies in sf works. As the 20th century development of science fiction outlined above demonstrates, from its beginnings, it has involved a process of performative collaboration as its authors, working in heavy dialogue with one another, with scientists, and with audiences, have applied “rhetorical practices [that] generate ‘fictions’ or worlds that subjects might inhabit” in their texts. This “real-world” collaborative project has generated a world of science-fictional thinking for audiences to inhabit.¹⁰¹ Alongside and intertwined with fictional worlds of sf, the “real world” of science fiction has operated in tandem and intertwined with the world of science itself. But this world of science (or “fiction”) *also* is generated through rhetorical practices of its own. And because the “real-world” science-fictional process has been infused with aesthetic practice, and because it has unfolded intertwined with the rhetorical practices of a parallel process of world-making through hard science, I argue that in some ways, it counters the underlying fictiveness of the technoscience empire generated for Western subjects to inhabit by the

rhetorical practices of technoscientific discourse's Cartesian, empiricist logic. This discourse presents itself as demonstrating objective scientific "truth," but at the same time, it naturalizes this truth and its underlying processes of contingent meaning-making through an effacement of its own collective, rhetorical process of world disclosure and meaning-making. Applying a constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity to sf and to its relationship with "hard science" thus helps illuminate how sf can function critically in relation to scientific discourse. Science fiction uses in aesthetic production the technoscientific language and rationality that undergird this discourse's claims to objective truth. Furthermore, it operates in a relatively inclusive collaborative process of public discourse in contrast to that of technoscientific discourse's elitism and exclusivity. Thus, science fiction—understood as generating rhetorical effects—potentially destabilizes both the naturalization and exclusivity that have been central to the elevation of technoscience as a dominant discourse through its own rhetorical practices.

Finally, as this last point suggests, I dwell on the collaborative rhetoric and pedagogy involved in the foundational development of sf because the kind of trans-disciplinary establishment and public dissemination of sf on mass scales should resonate with my previous chapter's discussion of the early development of neoliberalism. As demonstrated in that chapter, through a carefully orchestrated construction and dissemination of neoliberal ideology across disciplinary boundaries and media forms, neoliberals' savvy rhetorical and pedagogical approach involved precisely such a collaborative, performative generation of mass-scale "'fictions' or worlds that subjects might inhabit." Recall neoliberalist Gary Becker's acknowledgment of his model of

human capital as a “great fiction”—one designed for his “model of man” to inhabit. This resonance further helps make the case for sf not just as a general source of critical teaching practices, then, but critical teaching practices specifically aimed at responding to and countering neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities, particularly in terms of how neoliberalism is interwoven with technocultural apparatuses and technoscience discourse.

In fact, the developments of science fiction and neoliberalism mirror each other not just in terms of the rhetorical and public pedagogical exchanges that have taken place, and the mass scales on which they have done so. They mirror each other historically as well, with timelines that parallel each other in illuminating ways. At the same time Gernsback was publishing the first issues of *Amazing Stories* in 1926, for example, early neoliberals were writing and publishing their own germinal works (including Ludwig Von Mises’ foundational *Liberalism* in 1927). Like Gernsback, they too sought the means by which they might exchange ideas with like thinkers in order to hash out their “mish-mash of experiences,” and disseminate those ideas through a variety of media forms. As previously discussed, for the neoliberals, this meant publication of easily accessible texts in forums that mirrored the sf pulps, such as *Reader’s Digest*, and later, dissemination of their ideas via radio and television.¹⁰² This common interest in mass appeal is significant also because it bears on direct intersections between science fiction and neoliberalism during this period of early development. In the mid- to late-1940s, for example, as the atomic age dawned, neoliberals recognized the growing power and popularity of science in the cultural imagination—fostered in large part by sf. As a result, there was a concerted effort by neoliberals to embrace science and scientific discourse as a way both

to legitimize their theories and appeal to wider audiences, where previously, many key neoliberal figures had eschewed science as part of their project.

Of course, this interaction and influence could and did go both ways. Much sf has reflected value systems that, at best, do not challenge the corporatist, anti-democratic underpinnings of neoliberalism, and at worst, work to support them. But the common goal of mass appeal also points to an additional, significant parallel and mutual influence that directly bears on another thread of my argument for sf as a source for developing critical teaching in response to neoliberalism. Combined with the kind of generic “bleed” between fiction and “scientific” neoliberal economic discourse discussed in my previous chapter and noted above, the conscious use of utopian discourse in foundational neoliberal texts such as Von Mises’ *Liberalism* reflects another important *aesthetic* parallel and realm of mutual influence. This parallel resonates with sf’s *pharmakon* ability to lay bare and challenge the (effaced) fictiveness of technoscientific discourse through the very terms and structures of that discourse and its rationality. Neoliberalist future-oriented utopian discourse around freedom and development of human potential actually has functioned primarily to mask the underlying *anti*-utopian nihilism of its instrumentalization of future. This market-driven instrumentalization works to shut down possibilities and foreclose on any future outside its market imperatives. In contrast, the inherent hope and push for positive communal change and alternative futures on mass collective levels (local, global, and even cosmic) in sf’s critical utopian/dystopian discourse, can be seen as an important counterforce to this anti-utopian, nihilistic instrumentalization of desire and future. This critical utopian/dystopian impulse in sf

challenges neoliberalism's own rhetorically savvy use of utopian tropes and the inculcation of nihilism that results from this cynical instrumentalization of utopian discourse to construct an anti-utopian reality. Placed in conversation with each other, these uses of utopian discourse thus exemplify *pharmakon* practice, demonstrating how such discourse can be both illness and remedy at once.

Beyond early theorizations of sf's general public pedagogical value, this last parallel between sf and neoliberalism highlights sf's specifically critical pedagogical potential. As the field matured, subsequent theorization shifted to focus on sf's potential for critical epistemological demystification in relation to dominant systems of discourse and governance. Key in this theoretical shift were Darko Suvin's notions of cognitive estrangement and the *novum*. As Istvan Csicsery-Ronay puts it, this is the radically new "narrative kernel" from which the sf artist constructs a detailed imaginary alternative reality" (50). It is "the central imaginary novelty in an sf text," and includes "radically new inventions, discoveries, or social relations around which otherwise familiar fictional elements are reorganized in a cogent, historically plausible way" (47). Suvin drew on Marxist-utopian Ernst Bloch's messianist *Novum*, a "moment of newness in lived history that refreshes human collective consciousness" (47). He theorized the sf *novum* as instrumental in generating what he identified as cognitive estrangement. Through this estrangement, readers are able to gain a distance on their own reality that allows for critical analysis of that reality.¹⁰³ Suvin saw critical potential for demystification in sf's use of narrative structures that functioned in allegory modes as parable analogs for contemporary reality. He developed his notion of cognitive estrangement not only from

Bloch, but from theorizations of “defamiliarization” by Russian formalists like Viktor Shklovsky, and from Russian formalist-influenced artists like Bertolt Brecht, who incorporated an “alienation” or “distancing” effect into his theater works.¹⁰⁴ In connecting sf’s pedagogical (and rhetorical) potential to such critical theorization and aesthetic production, Suvin helped articulate sf’s potential to engender critical awareness in audiences through the uncanny, defamiliarizing, estranging dialectic of familiar and unfamiliar. Through aesthetic rhetoric that echoes the Sophists’ use of antithesis and anitlogic juxtaposition, this dialectic is created by juxtapositions of analogical structures between the future/speculative world of the text and the audience’s own contemporary world.

What interests me most as a rhetorician and critical pedagogue, however, is how these critical elements like the *novum*, cognitive estrangement, utopian discourse, and analogical structures, form the basis of what Patrick Parrinder describes as sf’s “science-fictional” “mode of thinking” induced by a “science fiction *effect*,” which he describes as the cognitive estrangement of “a dialectic of analogy and difference” (6). Suvin’s theorization of critical potential in sf is an implicitly rhetorical one, as it focuses on how particular aesthetic practices can generate particular effects. As with the Russian formalists and artists like Brecht, sf’s aesthetic-rhetorical device of estrangement is one centered on an explicit effort at generating specific kinds of *effects* in audiences—effects of estrangement, defamiliarization, and critical analysis made possible by analogical distancing from reality. It makes sense, then, that Parrinder’s edited volume on the pedagogical dimensions of sf, *Learning from Other Worlds*, is framed explicitly as a

conversation with Suvin's theories of science fiction's critical pedagogical potential. This conversation centers specifically on this "science fiction *effect*" and its role in teaching a "science-fictional mode of thinking." As my project makes clear, pedagogy and rhetoric are inherently bound up in each other, and critical pedagogy is bound up more specifically in understanding how subjectivities and ways of thinking and being are generated effects of rhetorical practices. I argue that this premise underlying my project is in fact the same implicit premise in Parrinder's volume and in Suvin's theorizations of the *novum* and cognitive estrangement. At the heart of *Learning from Other World's* discussion of sf and pedagogy is the implicitly rhetorical notion of this sf *effect*. I see it as the most significant pedagogical and rhetorical dimension of sf in the context of critical pedagogy. Underlying this chapter's analysis, then, is consideration of what it would mean to use such an "sf effect" in teaching as an aesthetic-rhetorical device aimed at facilitating critical analysis and transformation. A "science-fictional mode of thinking" thus becomes both the object of such teaching, and the approach to it.

Science Fiction/Sophist Friction: Science-Fictional Thinking and the Dissensual Poetics of Sophist Aesthetic Rhetoric

But what exactly is this science-fictional mode of thinking? And what is its value for my project's aims specifically in relation to Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy as foundational to my development of critical pedagogy?

As Suvin and others explore, sf authors use critical-imaginative aesthetic techniques and strategies of estrangement that can disrupt and reorient entrenched habits

of thinking and perception and help readers gain a critical distance on reality. This critical distance on reality is akin to the previously discussed kind of deconstructive analysis of *nomos* (sociocultural convention and law) made possible by the Sophists' critical dissensual poetics. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Sophists employed a variety of aesthetic and rhetorical strategies and devices aimed at demystifying the contingency and constructedness of a given sociocultural milieu's *nomos*. These strategies and devices sought to foster a critical, self-reflexive stance toward that *nomos* and toward the processes of effacement through which it often is naturalized as *physis* (the law of nature). Csicsery-Ronay describes a similar process of critical distancing from normative sociocultural specificity that helps clarify sf aesthetics intersect with Sophist approaches to developing critical self-reflexivity toward *nomos*:

The *novum* establishes a distance from which reality can be seen with fresh eyes, a distance that the regime enforcing the reader's consensus reality strives to repress. The sf reader shuttles back and forth over this gap, comparing the imaginary model with the ideological one, the process of feedback oscillation that Suvin calls cognitive estrangement. (Csicsery-Ronay 50)

Here, the notion of "consensus reality" resonates strongly with *nomos* in relation to my previous analysis of the "regime" of neoliberal *nomos* and the mechanisms through which it has naturalized itself and its "neoliberal consensus." Audiences immerse themselves in and find themselves enthralled by sf's paradoxically alien yet analogical, scientific yet fantastical, parable-oriented storytelling mythos of elaborately constructed worlds and

cosmos. As they do so, their normalized perceptual and cognitive habits are disrupted, often in parallel with characters experiencing similar disorientation. In a similar fashion, the enthrallment of sophistic aesthetic rhetoric's "muse-given eloquence" that the Sophist Gorgias in *Encomium of Helen* calls "verbal 'witchcraft'... 'merges with opinion in the soul' and 'beguiles and persuades' it with druglike power" (Walker 5). To reiterate an earlier point, as Jeffrey Walker notes, Gorgias calls this witchcraft a "*technê psychagôgia*, a 'psychogogic art' of enthralling and leading a listener's mind" (5). The disorientation of sf's particular form of future-oriented and fantasy-driven "muse-given eloquence" forces audiences to quickly make sense of strange, alternate realities and possibilities. These alternate realities form contradictions with readers' own realities that are both strange and familiar at once, conveying a sophistic, antilogic sense of reality as always contradictory and in flux. They thus disorient on spatial, temporal, and subjective registers, yet nevertheless parallel and reflect audiences' own realities and the terministic screens through which they experience them. The interplay of normalization and disruption of habituated response in the "dialectic of analogy and difference" that Parrinder describes then becomes the site of *pharmakon* aesthetics as transformative agent. In repeatedly experiencing and practicing the disruption in such cognitive-affective estrangement, audiences' own entrenched habituations of thinking, perceiving, and being take on ambivalent status as *pharmaka* through which disruption of that very habituation is made possible. In the process of learning to embrace and be comfortable with such self-reflexive disruption, I argue that audiences develop sophistic skills of critically analyzing their reality while/through navigating, negotiating, and holding in mind

multiple, often contradictory simultaneous realities and possibilities that are contingent and always in flux. In other terms, they learn to think and perceive like Sophists, to embrace a sophistic critical self-reflexive stance toward their consensus reality's *nomos*. This critical stance potentially makes possible engagement with an ongoing process of transformative becoming, growth, and self-realization. At the same time, sf's inherent future-orientation and utopian impulse helps teach audiences the imaginative and creative skills necessary for envisioning and manifesting alternative future possibilities for themselves and for the world. These skills are especially important for audiences who come from traditionally marginalized populations in terms of race, class, sex, gender, sexuality, and histories of colonization and oppression. For these populations specifically, and for populations more generally who are increasingly impacted by the oppressive, nihilistic structures of neoliberal rationality, such skills are essential to basic survival within unstable, precarious, contradictory realities. But more than this, they are vital to the creative, imaginative *survivance* necessary for resistant, utopian struggles toward change against such oppressive regimes.

This ability to operate effectively within contingent, unstable realities, to juggle multiple possibilities and subjective experiences, and to think in imaginative, critical-creative modes oriented toward future possibilities of open horizons and utopia that engender communal hope and just socioethical action, is what I understand as the most important aspect of a "science-fictional mode of thinking." It is what makes this mode particularly important to a critical pedagogy oriented toward ontological transformation, beyond Suvin's points about epistemological demystification in science fiction. It is an

imaginative and *rhetorical* ability—a *technê* or set of aesthetic-rhetorical skills—that reflects the ancient Sophists in several ways.

For example, as suggested above, I see sf’s future- and allegory-oriented techniques of generating critical cognitive-affective estrangement as resonant with some of the Sophists’ strategies of aesthetic rhetoric outlined in Chapter Three. These strategies include: an emphasis on critical deconstructive literary analysis; an immersive poetics of enthrallment in their *technê psychagôgia*; the practice of antilogic and eristic modes of language in critical dissensual poetics that put in play a generative friction of multiple, contradictory possibilities and concepts; and, the intertwining of antithesis and parataxis in negotiating subjective perceptual experiences. As noted in previous chapters, for the Sophists, this negotiation through dissensus worked toward both collaborative understanding of contingent reality and toward right, effective future action based in equitable, other-oriented socioethical relations. Recall that through an aesthetic, imaginative, playful approach, in the face of what they saw as a contradictory reality that was always contingent, contradictory, and in flux, they worked against the grain of normative *nomos* construction and naturalization. Their critical-creative approach to reality and language stood in contrast to naturalized *nomos*’ ever-present danger of embedding hierarchical power structures in regimes of consensus reality that, like technoscientific and neoliberal discourse and rationality, made spurious *physis*- and *logos*-warranted claims to “Truth” while denying their own rhetorical and pedagogical contingency and constructedness.

The task of developing critical pedagogy that can respond to neoliberalism from the aesthetic and rhetorical practices of sf authors therefore is served by attention to the Sophists. This is not only because of the critical analysis that their deconstructive rhetoric and pedagogy made possible, but also because of this complementary aesthetic orientation toward possibility, future action, and imagination. As discussed in Chapter Three, and as Susan Jarratt notes, the Sophists' ludic, poetic, "eristic" approach to language was reflected in their use of antithesis (the poetic device that involved "a playful pairing of opposites"), antilogic (the similar pairing of opposites, but on the level of concepts instead of words), and parataxis ("a loose association of clauses without hierarchical connective or embedding"). Before returning to these specific elements of the eristic in relation to sf, it is worth explaining the specific nature and effects of the eristic mode itself. Such an understanding helps to clarify further how I am reading sf authors as sophistic practitioners of aesthetic rhetoric.

In a critique of Nietzschean neosophistic scholars Whitson and Poulakos and their theorization of aesthetic rhetoric around Nietzsche's arguments for the Sophists, this eristic approach to language and argumentation is described by James W. Hikins as "an imaginative art, driven by strife and discord and characterized by play" (357). Hikins echoes Whitson and Poulakos' point that, "[u]nderstood aesthetically, rhetoric allows people to suspend willingly their disbelief and be exposed to a world other or seemingly better than the one with which they are...all too familiar" (138). He acknowledges that in addition to the dissensual disruptiveness of strife and discord, this art of the eristic also is "[c]onstructive in its efforts to explore facets of imaginable, alternative worlds, fictive

domains erected by means of the Eristic” (357). Here, Hikins inadvertently provides what could pass for a fairly accurate description of science fiction that supports my argument connecting sf authors to the Sophists as operating within a similar eristic mode. For sf’s aesthetic rhetoric also “allows people to suspend willingly their disbelief” as it “exposes” them to “a world other or seemingly better” than their familiar world, and that “explore[s] facets of imaginable, alternative worlds.” As Hikins puts it, “[T]he point of Eristic is to display for consideration before an audience...alternative ways of thinking and acting, ways radically divergent from accepted traditions. These ways of thinking need only be conceivable, that is, possible” (358). Hikins’ critique helps clarify Whitson and Poulakos’ point about the imaginative ontology at work in aesthetic rhetoric. He recognizes that Nietzsche’s (and the Sophists’) playful eristic mode is a rhetoric of *possibility* that uses performative aesthetics more ambivalently to “[cultivate] predispositions for choice” (358) by “[s]eek[ing] to capture, if even momentarily, the sense of a world other than that described by a given culture at any point” (357).

As detailed in Chapter Three, Sophist facilitation of self-reflexive awareness and critique of a given culture’s *nomos* involved language arts that estranged and demystified the contingency and naturalization of that *nomos*’ particular consensus reality. At the same time, their aesthetic-rhetorical *poiësis* exposed people to alternative possibilities, worlds, and ways of thinking and being, beyond and outside that normative *nomos* and its consensus reality. This eristic approach to language—particularly in the Sophists’ use of antilogic—reflected an understanding of “existence [as] an arena of insane strife, where two opposing *logoi*, or possible accounts of reality, exist in every experience” (Crowley

327). They employed a playful, imaginative, dissensual approach to language because, as Sharon Crowley puts it, they understood that “by means of discourse, people could articulate their perceptions in such a way as to bring these opposing *logoi* to light” (327). This “antilogic” approach to language reflected an effort at creating and using language in a way that could exhibit and reflect the antilogical nature of the world that Crowley notes here. Crowley further expresses the value and effectiveness in such an aesthetic-rhetorical approach to negotiating reality when she highlights the paradoxical facilitation of consensus around future action through dissensual poetics of contradiction: “Because of its tolerance for contradiction, [antilogic] discourse could balance alternatives against one another; further, it could make one alternative seem more probable or acceptable than the other, and hence could point to an appropriate course of action” (327).

As with Hikins, Crowley’s descriptions of how the Sophists used language to express the play of “two opposing...possible accounts of reality” in order to “balance alternatives against one another,” could apply to the general analogical structures of science fiction as well as numerous specific sf texts in which multiple, often contradictory and unstable realities in flux figure prominently.¹⁰⁵ Parrinder’s “dialectic of analogy and difference” and Suvin’s cognitive estrangement and sf *novums* can be seen in this context as aesthetic-rhetorical devices aimed at generating precisely such disruptive sophistic dissensual poetic effects. At the heart of the aesthetics of science fiction and other speculative fictions that have developed in part from science fiction is a sophistic, ludic embracing of multitudes of “opposing...possible accounts of reality.” In fact, it can be argued that this playful embracing of reality understood as contingent,

contradictory, malleable, and in flux, is definitional to science fiction and a key element that sets the genre apart from other forms. It is the driving force that generates Suvin's *novum* and its disruptive effects of estrangement. This is true of specific plots that play with ontology through multiple simultaneous realities, but it is also true in terms of the foundational premise of the genre: The creation of radically alternative yet uncannily familiar realities that parallel and mirror readers' own contemporary reality while being displaced from that reality by the narrative distancing of the *novum* and the temporal distancing of future.

As suggested by Crowley, and as stated explicitly by Hikins and Whitson and Poulakos, like sf authors, the Sophists were above all future-oriented. Paradoxically, their eristic creativity with words and concepts was future-oriented toward *practical* decision-making and social *action*. In fact, for theorists of aesthetic rhetoric such as Steven Schwarze, it is precisely this attention to aesthetics and their connection to perception and desire that forms the basis of an effective practical wisdom (*phronesis*) capable of making sound decisions and taking ethical action.¹⁰⁶ In this imaginative orientation toward (right) future action, and in this balancing of contradictory alternatives against one another through creative *poiesis* that opens possibilities, the Sophists can be seen then, perhaps, as proto-sf authors. Conversely, and also paradoxically, the futurism of sf authors thus can be seen as reflecting, albeit inadvertently, a long Western sophistic tradition of critical-creative ludic aesthetic rhetoric.

Within this tradition, antilogic, antithesis, and parataxis, were central to the Sophists' eristic approach. As previously noted, where antilogic was more of an

argumentative technique focused on pairing conceptual contradictions, antithesis was a specific verbal device of playfully pairing opposites, and parataxis was a verbal device of laying out clauses without hierarchical connectives.¹⁰⁷ However, all three verbal devices functioned not just on the level of wordplay, but on argumentative and narrative levels as well. I need to reiterate this point from my previous discussion, because it is important for the connections I am making here between sf authors and the Sophists. As noted in Chapter Three, Susan Jarratt articulates how this wordplay functioned on the level of argumentation toward future action: “Antithesis allows for laying out options...parataxis provides for their loose coordination in a narrative with a social rather than epistemological purpose” (Jarratt 27). And recall Kenneth J. Lindblom’s description of the sophistic paratactical approach as “a series of positive, practical steps toward [future] action,” in which “no thesis is ever completely eliminated; it may be brought back should it become opportune under new circumstances” (97). Where the Hegelian dialectic posits a hypotactic model of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, “[i]n the Sophists’ relativistic model of epistemology, knowledge is produced according to the following model: The past (thesis) is used as present (antithesis) to construct a possible (parataxis)” (96-97). These points are important for understanding how sf authors narratively employ what I see as a paratactical and antilogical approach in a kind of future-oriented aesthetic argument. Furthermore, even if sf authors do not do so on the level of poetics and wordplay (e.g., through antithesis), the essential role of neologisms in sf to designate new technologies and *novums* does resonate with antithesis and with eristic wordplay more generally. Coining technoscientific neologisms (and sometimes even developing entire fictive

language systems) involves a similar kind of playful combining of familiar and unfamiliar terms, phonemes, and names. This kind of wordplay is so central to sf aesthetics, in fact, that Csicsery-Ronay identifies the practice as a key component of one of his “seven beauties” of science fiction.

In setting up analogical structures through the allegory-mode parable storytelling of science fiction, sf authors seem to employ an approach to narrative that could be characterized along the lines of sophistic antilogic and parataxis. Most significantly, this approach functions, as Lindblom outlines above in relation to the Sophists, to structure a paratactical *argument* toward *future* action by placing past, present, and future in play side by side. In *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*, Csicsery-Ronay resonates with neosophist readings of the Sophists like Lindblom’s. He describes how the *novum*’s potential for effecting estrangement in sf rests on a play of past, present, and future, teleologically oriented toward possibility. He writes:

[T]he *novum*—in fact, the very concept of newness—necessarily implies some teleology. To recognize something as being new (as opposed, say, to a miracle or a religious epiphany) already requires a full-scale model of historical time, involving pasts, presents, and futures. The concept depends on the seeming paradox that recognizing the new involves placing it in the past, after it has been recast in a new containing paradigm. The new is a disjunctive analogy, not only to the “old,” but to a past that has experienced its share of now-obsolete newness. (55)

In addition to this intersection around parataxis, Csicsery-Ronay's analysis also provides an important basis for connecting Sophist aesthetics to science fiction aesthetics around his theorization of a "vertigo effect" and the grotesque in sf. Where Suvin and Marxian sf theorists like Carl Freedman generally cleave to a technorational model of cognition in their understanding of the *novum* and cognitive estrangement, Csicsery-Ronay develops a more ludic- and affect-oriented understanding of the *novum* and estrangement that helps specify how sf exhibits sophistic use of antilogic. This understanding resonates with the Sophists' use of the eristic, with the bodily emphasis of their rhetoric and pedagogy, and with the notion of their aesthetic rhetoric as a *technê psychagôgia* that "beguiles and persuades'...with druglike power." Csicsery-Ronay argues that, "the underlying satisfaction of the *novum* is not primarily critical analysis or utopian longing, but a vertiginous pleasure, more ludic than cognitive, more ecstatic than disciplinary" (55). For Csicsery-Ronay, "a precondition for ['viewing ideological embeddedness with fresh eyes'] is the ecstatic sense of being freed from predetermined relations...out from the authoritarianism of the current version of technoscientifically defined reality" (55). Fleshing out this more bodily based, ludic model of estrangement, he devotes an entire chapter to the grotesque as one of sf's most powerful and effective aesthetic elements in generating this vertiginous effect. For Csicsery-Ronay, the grotesque is so vital to sf aesthetics that he identifies the grotesque as another of his seven beauties of science fiction. "When something does not conduct itself as scientific rationality asserts/predicts it must," Csicsery-Ronay writes, "it creates a clash between the concept of an ordered world and concrete, experiential evidence to the

contrary. When its disorienting anomalousness also disorients the routines of human lives and institutions, the *novum* is grotesque” (182). Csicsery-Ronay explains the (implicitly rhetorical) potential of the grotesque to generate vertiginous effects as reflecting “the struggle to accommodate mutable, unstable objects and beings in the world” in “protagonists’ and audiences’ encounters with concrete phenomena that disrupt their sense of familiar existence” (182). The grotesque disorients and disrupts routines with radically contradictory forms—in other words, with *antilogical* forms whose grotesqueness arises from how they contain within themselves simultaneous contradictory states and realities. Csicsery-Ronay articulates this antilogic as “oxymoron” in a way that resonates with Jarratt’s and Crowley’s descriptions of how antilogic and antithesis functioned for the Sophists. He writes:

[T]he impetus for grotesque imagery and language is not only its entertainment value. The grotesque brings the sublime to earth, making it material and on our level, forcing attention back to the body. It traps the sublime in the body, partly to subvert it, but also because sf’s fictive ontology requires this *duality*, manifest as *oxymoron at the level of ideas*, metamorphosis at the level of bodies, and *surprising incongruities* in storytelling. (182; emphases added)

*Cultivating (Cosmic) Conscientização and (Galactic) Zones of Proximal Development:
Science Fiction and Critical Pedagogy*

Key to tying this argument about sf's rhetorical and pedagogical potential to contemporary critical pedagogy is how Csicsery-Ronay draws on Harpham's treatment of the grotesque as "a gap shared by the object and the perceiver...between the past forms of a thing and what it is becoming" (186). As with the antilogic of the Sophists' dissensual poetics, this mediational gap interrupts rational modes, suspending consciousness as "[t]he grotesque obstructs the mind from completing its effort to quick understanding, arresting it when it wishes to get on with its routine of knowing, and forces it to learn something it is not sure it wants to know" (186). One way of understanding how we can draw on analyses like Csicsery-Ronay's and Darko Suvin's in developing pedagogy is to put these sf aesthetics in conversation with the work of critical pedagogues like L.S. Vygotsky and Paulo Freire. As a number of contemporary rhetoricians point out, the critical potential of Sophist skepticism and relativism in approaching language through a critical ethos of the eristic and antilogic parallels strategies of contemporary critical pedagogues. In fact, this resonance is the basis of explicit connections that rhetoricians like Susan Jarratt make between critical pedagogy and Sophist rhetoric and pedagogy. While I have previously developed these connections in Chapter Three, I want to reiterate several key points in this new context of sf. As Jarratt puts it in linking the Sophists to critical pedagogues like Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, and Stanley Aronowitz,

One of the primary means by which critical pedagogues move students toward critical consciousness is the exposure of contradiction. Like the sophistic practice of antilogic, contradictions emerging out of cultural discourses are brought to a level of consciousness so that they can come under analysis. The aim is not resolution, but rather an awareness of the way culture, structuring thought and action, contains contradictory messages... (110)

For Jarratt, these aims of critical pedagogues make the practice of antilogic particularly important in its potential for demystification and facilitation of critical analysis.

Paralleling Csiscery-Ronay's Suvinian point about sf's critical potential in the contradictions foregrounded by shuttling over "gaps" of cognitive estrangement, Jarratt writes:

What makes the practice of "antilogic" especially significant for an evaluation of sophistic education for democracy is its critical potential. The Protagorean account of the educational process emphasized the power of custom/law [*nomos*]...to dominate the student through all levels of education and to reproduce itself. By bringing the very process of acculturation to consciousness, "Protagoras" implies the possibility of a critical relation to that process—an ability to stand outside of and perhaps control aspects of it. But the technique of antilogic goes further, demonstrating how the Sophist and his students actually engaged in a critical analysis of popular belief. (104)

To apply this critical pedagogy lens to science fiction as sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric, we might then explore connections between the critical potential in sf's cognitive estrangement and the "*conscientização*" decolonial consciousness transformation of Paulo Freire's "cognitive dissonance." For example, the way the contradictory and paradoxical antilogic of sf's grotesque *novum* functions as a mediating gap or device to induce "cognitive estrangement" is similar to how Paulo Freire's "cognitive dissonance" is induced by the student's coming into contact with "mediating objects," as discussed in Chapter Four. Recall that these are creatively produced objects that codify the "complex of contradictions" of the student's reality in decolonial pedagogy.

The connection is not coincidental: Freire's notion of "cognitive dissonance" has roots in the same previously noted Russian formalist concepts of defamiliarization as Suvin's *novum* and cognitive estrangement. As with the *novum*'s rhetorical and pedagogical potential for disrupting and demystifying consensus reality, and as with the dissensual critical analysis of *nomos* facilitated by Sophist rhetoric, the intended result of Freire's cognitive dissonance is a disruptive "constant unveiling of reality." In this "unveiling," knowing and knowledge arise from a self-constructing process of reading one's world, an "*emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality*" (68; orig. emphasis). Like sf's analogy structures and *novums*, the mediating objects in Freirean decolonial pedagogy function to estrange familiar situations enough to create critical distance and make possible critical analysis, and thus change. As with the critical analysis that arises from shuttling over the gap between the sf reader's reality and the imaginary reality of the sf text, Freire's mediating codifications help participants "externalize their

thematics...and begin to see how they themselves [have] acted while actually experiencing the situation they are now analyzing” (108). As Jarratt points out in connecting Sophists and critical pedagogues, it is an underlying sophistic antilogic approach that organizes this pedagogical strategy of estrangement and dissonance.

In a similar way, I see the gap between the *sf novum*'s reality and the reader's reality, particularly heightened through the grotesque *novum*, as paralleling some of the work of Soviet pedagogue, L.S. Vygotsky. Vygotsky's psychological and pedagogical models were concerned with understanding psychological development as processural and social. Focusing on child and adolescent development and education in the 1920s and 1930s post-revolution Soviet Union during a moment of great social upheaval, Vygotsky synthesized an interdisciplinary theory centered on “the social formation of mind” (Daniels *Introduction* 7). In a trans-disciplinary mode similar to that taking place in science fiction around the same time, he drew experimentally and eclectically across fields like literary studies, psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and pedagogy. Vygotsky was working from a Marxist position to address the specific needs of a large population of orphaned, homeless, and disabled children (Daniels *Vygotsky* 2). Echoing the Sophists' focus on *nomos* as a contingent set of sociocultural conventions, Vygotsky sought to develop an analytical understanding of how learners develop and progress through social interaction and communal collaboration within their particular socio-cultural context. And as with the Sophists, this understanding was the basis for a self-reflexively critical pedagogical approach.

The result of Vygotsky's pedagogical inquiry and research has been the development of collaborative models of critical learning. These models see the teacher's role as one of a facilitation of mediating "tools" for subjects understood as always situated in and shaped by their social context. From a critical and pharmacological perspective that later would inform Freire's approach, Vygotsky conceptualized mediating tools as potentially instrumental in how "humans master themselves through exterior, symbolic cultural systems rather than being subjugated by and in them" (Daniels *Vygotsky* 15). In theorizing mediating tools, one of the most important pedagogical concepts Vygotsky developed was the model of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD articulates developmental distance as mediational "gaps" that are instrumental in transformative processes of becoming through social interaction and collaborative learning through stages of student learning processes and collaborative social transformation. Effectively identified and facilitated in learning situations, these distances between stages potentially are the zones of proximal development. They are inherently unique to each student based on her/his sociocultural and historical educational context and experience.

As with the *conscientização* process of critical transformation, the "gap" of the ZPD and its function in mediating similar pedagogical processes can be seen as functioning in a sophistic antilogic. As noted, this kind of sophistic antilogic also resonates with Csicsery-Ronay's understanding of the grotesque, via Harpham, as "a gap shared by the object and the perceiver...between the past forms of a thing and what it is becoming" (186). Connecting these theorists to the pedagogico-aesthetics of sf

tropes like the *novum* and cognitive estrangement thus suggests parallel pedagogical functions that tie both to what I argue is a sophistic rhetorical and pedagogical strategy. SF's mediational aesthetic tools of analogy and *novum* work as sites of oscillation (Parrinder's "dialectic of analogy and difference") to induce estrangement and thus a kind of Freiran "critical intervention in reality." And like the mediating gap of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, sf's oscillation of simultaneously familiar and radically alien in the grotesque suspends consciousness as "[t]he grotesque obstructs the mind from completing its effort to quick understanding, arresting it when it wishes to get on with its routine of knowing, and forces it to learn something it is not sure it wants to know" (186). Similarly, sf's future-oriented critical utopian/dystopian mode of collective hope and action parallels decolonial abilities to imagine and manifest other possibilities for oneself and one's socio-cultural matrix. In decolonial pedagogy, such imagining and manifestation occurs through one's own Freiran "complex of contradictions," or through the ZPD's engagement of processural becoming facilitated by pedagogical manipulation of gaps between stages of development that pushes students forward in a future-oriented process of becoming through collective social interaction. In all three, a sophistic paratactical argument based on the student's past, present, and future, and oriented toward future action, change, and flux, can be seen at work.

* * *

In what follows, I apply the rhetoric methodology I have developed here in close reading analyses of *Up the Walls of the World* by James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), and China Miéville's *Embassytown*. These rhetorical analyses argue for the texts as sources

for developing critical pedagogy. These novels are particularly illuminating examples of sf's sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric and critical pedagogical potential, as both self-reflexively center on radical transformation catalyzed by rhetorically and pedagogically generated effects of disruption and reorientation of habituated modes of perception, language, self-other socio-relations, and being. My analyses examine how pedagogical processes unfold as protagonists navigate the cognitive-affective estrangement and dissonance of swapping bodies, perceptual apparatuses, language modes, and modes of being and meaning-making. In what I argue are sophisticated modes of antilogic and forms of other-oriented, dissensual poetic allegory modes of perception and being, characters experience "otherly" shuttling between unresolvable contradictions and multiple realities, possibilities, and perceptual-cognitive orientations. These experiences occur through engagement with *pharmakon* figures. In their processes of engaging these allegory modes and *pharmaka*, characters are radically transformed toward positive growth and change as they oscillate over "gaps" between forms of becoming in developing sophisticated other-oriented skills and abilities necessary to navigate within this shuttling, contingency, and instability. In the case of Tiptree, this involves learning to operate within radically other somatic-linguistic-affective apparatuses as characters swap bodies, lifeworld environments, and modes of perception and communication. In Miéville's case, it involves learning to operate within *poïesis* language as characters radically shift from a non-referential, somatic-based language incapable of discerning language as such, to a critical distance that makes it possible to grasp and manipulate semiotic systems through metaphor. These learning processes, self-reflexively foregrounded and made central to

the plots, explicitly mark engagement with otherly, allegory modes of perception and being as a transformative site of bodily based pedagogy. In outlining these teaching/learning processes and approaches toward effecting radical transformation, Tiptree and Miéville provide pedagogical models both in the content and the form of the texts, as they potentially engage readers in a parallel learning process. I turn now to these texts to see what we, as critical rhetoricians and pedagogues, can learn from these other worlds of learning.

“*BECOMING MYSTERY*”: Transformational Pedagogy in *Up the Walls of the World*

At one point in James Tiptree, Jr.’s (Alice Sheldon’s) 1978 novel, *Up the Walls of the World*, Giadoc, a Tyrenni “Hearer” from the advanced world of Tyree, is horrified by the Earthlings with whom he has come into contact after swapping bodies with one of them. Suddenly in the midst of secret U.S. military psionic experiments led by renegade psychologist, Noah Catledge, on Earth, he thinks, “What wild people! . . . these people are savages!” as his highly attuned physical-affective sensory apparatus picks up on and evades “flash[es] of jealousy,” “pocket[s] of [repellant] emotion,” “repulsive malice” (176), and “wail[s] of fear-thoughts” (179) from the Earthlings. “What a ferocious world!” Giadoc concludes, perceiving his occupied body of “the amiable Doctordan” (Dr. Dann) as the target of murderous hostility (175). While the Earthlings lack the cognitive-sensorimotor skills to control their own “life-field” emanations and to perceive them in one another, Giadoc registers them clearly and precisely. From the perspective of humans’ limited modes of communication and perception, the Tyrennis’ integrated

somatic-affective-cognitive perceptual matrix reflects a kind of telepathy. Although Giadoc has swapped his “life-field” with the body of Dr. Daniel Dann (the physician on duty for Catledge’s experiments), he integrates his own perceptual apparatus with Dann’s in navigating the radically alien earth environment in which he finds himself. Quickly orienting himself to Dann’s thinking-body soma, Giadoc adjusts from the air-bound life of his own wind-world¹⁰⁸ to the disruption and disorientation of Dann’s “unsettling, profoundly alien” soma and earthbound existence (175).

Like other Tyrenni-Earthling body swaps in the novel, this exchange is effected via the Tyrenni’s skillful use of an interstellar telepathic-somatic link they call the “Beam.” This Beam allows them to tap in to alien life-forces and somatic experiences. The Tyrenni put the Beam to use here in response to the impending destruction of their world by a mysterious, solar system-sized “Vast Spacebourne Being” that they call the “Destroyer.” Giadoc’s mission is to explore the socio-ethical implications of possibly committing the “life-crime” of swapping bodies with humans (against their will or knowledge) and thus saving the Tyrenni. Because he is the Tyrenni equivalent of a “scientist,” Giadoc’s repulsion at the Earthlings’ hostility is tempered by objective fascination. His detached scientific curiosity parallels the cool “rationality” of earthly, Western scientific inquiry, but stands in contrast to that science’s cold empiricism in his integration of empathic/affective attunement and intelligence. In fact, this integrated bodily skill allows Giadoc to navigate the Earthlings’ chaotic, violent affective bursts with a holistic objectivity impossible for the human scientists. Thus, Giadoc evinces the critical rhetorical potential in science fiction’s integration of “hard science” with

aesthetics, and in science-fictional thinking's ability to juggle multiple realities.

Furthermore, these bodily based aesthetic-rhetorical skills allow him to achieve one of the novel's central insights about human socio-relations. Rather than responding with reactionary fear,

His Father's soul is moved by the trouble of these wretched aliens, but as a Hearer he is fascinated by their chaotic, extraordinary individuality.

Nowhere does he find the communal engrams, the shared world-views like those any Tyrenni Father transmits to his young. These beings seem to have had no Fathering; even these mind-experimenters have no real communication. Each is utterly alone. They are aliens *to each other*...

Giadoc...samples the wildly disparate minds... Each alone in its different structure and quality. What an extraordinary experiment of nature! (179)

This scene's premise and concerns are the focus of my argument for the book as a source for developing critical pedagogy. Giadoc's fascination arises not simply from the confusion and isolation of the humans, but from their source: A lack of education. They lack the "communal engrams" and "shared world-views" transmitted to Tyrenni young in the learning and acculturation process of "Fathering."¹⁰⁹ This scene articulates Tiptree's central concern with the need not just for transformation, but for *learning* that can make possible transformation of such an atomized, violent subjectivity. The aim of this transformational learning is a communally oriented subjectivity, like Giadoc's, that has been "Fathered" through sophisticated pedagogy toward inter-connectedness, development of a skillful somatic intelligence, and development of "otherly" orientations.

As Csicsery-Ronay notes, the novel's central "drama...of penetrations" is one of "learning to inhabit different mind-bodies" (180). Various bodily, empathic, and telepathic "swaps" like Giadoc's and Dann's occur. As he notes, this transformational learning involves "an empathic 'lateral' intermixing of voices, bodies, perceptions, and projects that dissolve the pain of isolated, disrespected, and physically suffering lives" (181). Ultimately, it is a learning process that creatively works in a future-orientation toward "a vision of shared love and need made nearly impossible by the pain of individual bodies and the stupidity of convention, of a desire so strong it constructs...a world that will reconstruct all to be what they need to be" (181).

Thus fundamentally other-oriented, the subjectivity and sociality this transformational learning aims for operate in what I argue is a sophistic otherly mode of science-fictional thinking. This science-fictional mode is sophistic in its ability to juggle multiple contingent, unstable realities in flux, as exemplified in Giadoc's simultaneous occupation of his own and Dr. Dann's perceptions as he shuttles over the gap between Dann's lifeworld and his own. Furthermore, the literalization of swapping bodies allegorizes the sophistic practice of intersubjective negotiation of experience that Sophist rhetoric developed through rhetorical engagement of antilogic contradiction and dissensual poetics. Finally, as suggested by Csicsery-Ronay, it is a mode that resonates with the Sophists' future-oriented, creative paratactical approach to open possibility, as exemplified in the novel's final transformative fusion. In the last chapters, most of the characters merge into the ark-like, seemingly omnipotent and immortal "Vast Spacebourne Being." By the novel's end, this Being that the Tyrennis call the

“Destroyer” has been “hacked” by Margaret Omali, the computer scientist initially working with Dann on the experiment team, and “re-programmed” toward exploring, saving, and creating worlds. The radical utopian openness of the new project at the novel’s end is articulated by the suggestion of Tivonel, Giadoc’s partner, that the merged being/s evade settling on any one specific mission and purpose. Instead, she argues for them to just “try it all!” (312).

However, Tiptree does not just articulate the need for transformation toward such existence and for pedagogical approaches to it. Tiptree demonstrates specific pedagogical *means* by which such transformation can occur in various learning processes. These learning processes are not singular and monolithic, but they nevertheless follow a fairly stable pattern:

1. Initial desire for contact and connection with others—an otherly desire for something else, some other way of being, through others;

2. Initial extreme disorientation and vertigo when contact is made and habituated perceptions are disrupted as radical fusions and mergings occur between beings;

3. Reorientation of oneself, and learning to operate in an otherly mode as a skillful sensorimotor act of rhetorical exchange by engaging other modes of perception, communication, lifeworld environments, and socio-ethical systems;

4. An accumulative deepening and honing of these otherly skills through repeated disruption, fusion, and reorientation, suggesting the necessity of repetition and ritual;

5. Application of these skills of sophistic, otherly science-fictional thinking to an imaginative, creative, future-oriented and communal utopian opening and exploring of possibilities in ongoing processes of becoming.

The novel is filled with repetitions of this learning pattern. In line with Vygotsky's notions of learning as a sociocultural phenomenon, the individual learning processes are intertwined. However, to provide just one key example, I briefly will trace the most clearly articulated and detailed process that unfolds: Dr. Daniel Dann's transformation.

At first, Dann epitomizes Giadoc's observation of the lonely, suffering humans. In a perpetual numbed state fulfilling menial tasks for Catledge's experiments, Dann's self-medicating "opiate cocoon" (129) of "chemical supplement" (49) creates a cynical buffer with others while helping him avoid memories of the loss of his wife and baby in a fire. But when he goes to Margaret Omali's home to administer pain medication for her migraines, he experiences his first in a series of disruptive moments that are catalysts for transformation. Attracted to Omali, Dann recognizes that they both have unspeakable, controlled emotional pain. Trying to connect with her, Dann is suddenly jarred by an event of uncanny disruption when he sees a glass of water move six inches on its own. Shocked and disoriented by the "uncanny thing" (24), Dann scrambles to make sense of the cognitive estrangement in what Csicsery-Ronay might identify as this grotesque event's "shock to the system," effected by its "deviation from...laws [of scientific materialism]" (185). Initially rebuffing his attempt to confirm with Omali that they have shared the same perception, Omali then trusts Dann enough to confirm the event even as she expresses her fear that he will reveal her telekinesis. Dann reassures that she can trust him, and in this tenuous moment of "trembling friendship," the two form an alliance. Paradoxically, and in *pharmakon* fashion, it is the isolation and detachment they share that forms the basis of connection, sparked by cognitive dissonance and disorientation

that sets in motion a transformational process and learning toward otherly becoming. This framework of transformational learning is then repeated. In this process, Dann progresses, oscillating within and moving across the “gap” between himself and Giadoc, with whom he swaps bodies, to higher levels of perceptual and empathic attunement, deepening connection with Omali and others, and deepening social integration.

For example, the initial fragile bond between Omali and Dann later is deepened by a much more jarring experience of otherly connection when the two inadvertently “swap” traumatic memories through a psionic exchange in which each relives the traumatic bodily memories of the other. Attempting to further bond over the initial connecting point of stargazing, Dann has taken Omali onto a roof to look at the night sky. But this naive effort at connection is violently disrupted by the unexpected intrusion of a radically deeper and jarring exchange. Suddenly and unknowingly caught in the power of the Tyrennis’ Beam, Dann is plunged into the radical disorientation of “a surging, inflooding feeling so strong that he flinches and peers at Margaret under the delusion that she must be feeling it too,” as “[a] frightening thrum is pouring through him, collapsing his world—a silent tumult that whirls him out of his senses” (99). Caught up in another disruption that is this time much more encompassing and shocking than the glass of water, as Dann find *himself* the grotesque “uncanny object,” he describes how the “spark” of this shocking dissonance and disorientation “blossoms into a vision so horrifying that he tries to cry out” as “he is swamped by dreadfulness” (100). With horror, he realizes that he is reliving Omali’s traumatic experience of a forced clitoridectomy at the hands of her father and other religious zealots.

The psionic empathic exchange is not just a kind of internal vision of Omali's memory; when he finds himself in the midst of the scene of trauma, Dann *feels* the pain of the mutilation as "he clamps into a knot around his mutilated sex, rolls and falls hard to the floor in a gale of male voices" (100). At first, he attributes the pain to "Father's" "knife rip[ping] in, slic[ing] agonizingly...cutting into the root of his penis" (100). But the disorientation and its specifically otherly nature are heightened even further when his self-oriented attempts at interpreting the pain are disrupted by the realization that it is the pain of a *female* body—a black female body: "[A]s he clasps his gushing crotch he feels alien structure, understands that he is *female*. His childish body has breasts, his knees are dark-sinned" (100). At the same time, in reliving Dann's own traumatic experience, Omali comes to understand through shared bodily experience that Dann's loss of his wife and baby to a house fire is unbearable for him not just because of the loss itself, but because of his shame at having had the opportunity to save them and choosing not to, out of fear. When the psionic connection is broken, and Dann realizes Omali has experienced the darkest, deepest shame of his own trauma as concretely as he has hers, "[a] hideous puzzle...[tries] to solve itself in his brain" (101). "Filthy comprehension breaks on him, too filthy to be borne," when he understands what has happened, and he stops her from leaving in her own horror at the realization of her revealed secrets by saying, "Please, my dear. You know mine now, my shame" (101). Once again, it is a *pharmakon*—this time, the "complex of contradictions" that arises in the interplay of their traumatic memories and the unhealthy mechanisms they have developed to cope with the experiences—that functions against itself, as the basis of both connection and transformation, to undo the

isolation the trauma has caused and instead connect the two in an uneasy, ambiguous, difficult alliance of otherly orientation. Through empathic exchange of bodily memory, they share “some empathy of the maimed, or something more that floats between them” (101).

When this bond later is disrupted by Omali’s leaving her body behind and “leaping” her life-force “away meteorlike into a dark abyss of non-space” (138) that turns out to be the Vast Spacebourne Being “Destroyer,” Dann once again is left at a kind of zero-point of nihilism. His efforts to follow after her “through dimensions of unbeing” (139) fail in the face of her refusal as she flees the violence of the military brass, who threaten both her and her son when they grow suspicious of her psionic abilities after observing her in the midst of a body-swap with a Tyrenni. Leaping his own life-force after her into the “abyss,” Dann chases Omali and tries to convince her to “turn away” and come back with him. But he realizes that “she has chosen. Too much pain, too much; she is fleeing from life forever, she wants only to cease” (141). When he finds himself telescoped back into his own body, Dann is horrified at the prospect of having to go on living “and face the emptiness, the grief and wretchedness of his days...trapped here, to suffer the grey years. No way out” (142).

However, despite the sense of hopelessness to which Dann once again succumbs in this moment, transformation has already been set in motion through his experiences with Omali. This change in Dann proves not merely a singular, passing shift, but the basis of an ongoing learning process that only deepens even as it paradoxically regresses and contracts at points like this. In terms of critical pedagogy, his regressive oscillation here,

in fact, reflects an important and necessary spiraling movement in the cyclical and recursive progression that occurs through repetition in transformational learning. In a pedagogical sense, his extreme oscillation between sublime desire and grotesque despair demonstrates a shuttling back and forth over the difficult gaps of zones of proximal development. In terms of rhetorical effectivity, this shuttling generates the force of a painful push toward growth and attainment of a higher level of learning and skill. We see the nature of this spiraling motion in action when Dann is immediately “scooped out” of his body once again before he can wallow for too long in this despairing state. Suddenly finding himself occupying Giadoc’s body with its expanded perceptual capabilities on Tyree and at first radically disoriented again, Dann eventually “understands finally that the senses he is activating, or focussing, are no organs ever owned or imagined by Doctor Daniel Dann,” as “he seems to be ‘seeing’ or perceiving in all directions at once...at the center of a perceptual glob in which he has only to focus” (149). Thinking himself dead at first (again, his mind striving immediately toward interpretation of its cognitive dissonance), “he tries to attend inward, and ‘sees,’ in the midst of a queer streaming energy, a huge mass of enigmatic surfaces or membranes, flickering here and there with vague lights” (149). In this sublime moment of estrangement-induced critical distance on the self that parallels Giadoc’s multi-layered estrangement in Dann’s body, what Dann “sees” is the grotesque figure of “himself”—both the Tyrenni body of Giadoc that he now inhabits, and his own strangely familiar life-force, made fully visible to himself now through Giadoc’s perceptual apparatus. Guided by Giadoc’s partner, Tivonel, Dann is gently “Fathered” in a reorientation around the basics of this radically new soma and its

environment. Growing more and more comfortable operating in a perpetual state of disorientation and reorientation around an unstable sense of reality, Dann continues to develop both his perceptual/affective attunement and his empathic connection and social integration through Giadoc's body. When he encounters other Earthlings who have swapped with Tyrenni, for example, he finds himself connecting with Valerie, one of Catledge's psionic subjects. The deep empathic exchange that unfolds between them is made possible both by increasingly skillful manipulation of the Tyrenni soma he now inhabits, and by building on his previous gender- and sex-oriented otherly empathic exchange with Omali. When Dann's life-force and Tyrenni body come into contact with Valerie's life-force through the Tyrenni body she inhabits, "without warning, [he] literally falls through her mind" (217). As with his previous moments of dissonance and disorientation, at first, "[h]e has no idea what is happening," but

afterwards he thinks it must have been like two galaxies colliding, two briefly interpenetrating webs of force. Now he knows only that he is suddenly in another world—a world named Val, a strange vivid landscape in space and time...all centered around his Val-self. His self incarnated in a familiar/unfamiliar five-foot-three body...the only, the normal way to be. And all these are aligned in a flash upon dimensions of emotion—hope, pride, anxiety, joy, humor, aversion, a force-field of varied feeling-tones, among which one stands out for which his mind has no equivalent: fear, vulnerability everywhere. This world is dangerous, pervaded by some intrusive permanent menace... A host of crude male bodies ring

it...oblivious power monopolizes all free space, alien concepts rule the very air.... All this reality unrolls through him instantly, he is *in* it... (217)

From this exchange, Dann and Valerie form of a bond based on radical otherly orientation. Ashamed of his previous emotionally ignorant disdain for Valerie and the other psionic subjects, Dann is especially discomfited by the realization of his “irreparable blunder” in “hav[ing] mistaken [Valerie’s] charged worldscape for a seductive little belly in a yellow bathing suit” (218). But the lesson here is not simply one of shame and guilt, nor is it implicit. Tiptree foregrounds the pedagogy of this experience by explicitly identifying the experience as a “lesson.” As the two disconnect from the exchange and Dann “comes back to himself,” he realizes that “he is not himself; not as we was nor ever will be again. For the first time he has really grasped life’s most eerie lesson: ... *The Other Exists*” (218).

These otherly skills of empathic and affective attunement increasingly develop as Dann learns to operate more skillfully as a Tyrenni. But at the same time, his learning process builds on his own inherent qualities. In fact, he realizes at one point that the development of his empathic abilities reflects an integration of his newly acquired Tyrenni soma with his own unacknowledged “gifts” of empathy. When Dann “drains” Chris of scorching pain after Chris burns the Tyrenni body he inhabits by flying too high, the Tyrenni Heagran tells him, “Our Healers today can do nothing like this... To drain another’s pain so that the damage is undone...Your gift will be of great value to your people at the end” (224). At first, Dann is surprised and dubious at the Tyrenni’s proclamation, as the draining of Chris’ pain has involved absorbing it into himself. “My

gift?” he asks, “inspect[ing] his still burning side. It appears perfectly intact. Only the pain is real. What the hell kind of ‘gift’ is this?” (224). Gradually, Dann develops an important critical self-awareness of how this *pharmakon* “gift” is not something newly acquired; rather, as the original basis of his natural orientation toward the medical profession, it is something inherent to his own life-force that now has been magnified and harnessed by its integration with new Tyrenni abilities. “Suddenly his old years of useless empathy flash before him. His weird troubles with other people’s pain... His joke about being a receiver; apparently true. Specialized to pain... I’m a doctor—and the sole *materia media* here is myself” (225).

This growing critical, pharmacological awareness of himself and his gifts reflects how critical transformational learning necessarily involves a kind of re-discovery of one’s own inherent, often socially repressed, qualities, as those qualities are finally allowed to flourish through integration with newly acquired skills. It reflects how the “sole *materia media*” of transformational critical learning is, in fact, oneself. It thus refracts the inherent *pharmakon* element of critical transformation from another angle by literalizing Dann’s “gift” and Dann *himself* as both poison and remedy. The paradox in this *pharmakon* aspect of critical learning also lies in how it accesses and operates through one’s own self even as it requires a kind of abandonment of oneself to social integration in otherly orientation.

Dann’s transformation eventually leads to an extraordinary scene in which he is fully “Fathered” once everyone has “merged” into the Vast Spacebourne Being as seemingly body-less beings. Again disoriented and confused in “the rustling void” of this

new state, Dann calls out for help, and suddenly finds himself at the center of a mysterious “calming pressure” that he eventually understands as the skillful pedagogical mechanism of the Tyrenni Fathering process (258-59). At first, “[h]uman resentment erupts in him” at being treated like “an angry child.” Eventually, however,

He feels his protest dissipate... He is... At peace... What an extraordinary art... But what to do? ... if this is mind-speech, how will he ever learn?... In answer, his surface thought is suddenly invaded by a point that unfolds into a picture or diagram, an abstract multidimensional web-work...in his mind...he is being shown a field-organization, a teaching picture of how to shape himself to function here.... The Tyrenni train themselves from childhood in all this.... Here before him are precise instructions on how to organize his mind-self—and he doesn’t know how.... Next second he has an experience so astounding he forgets to be terrified....some part of his inmost being is grasped and shifted. He feels moods being seized and compressed, memories manipulated; his...focus of attention suddenly seems to dissolve, to flow in unknown directions and recover itself on some unexperienced dimension... (259-61)

This scene is the core pedagogical moment of the novel. What its “teaching picture” describes with language that explicitly invokes pedagogy is the kind of radical transformational teaching and learning that should be the object of any truly critical pedagogy. But the learning process for Dann has not completed its cycle until he applies these new abilities and abandons himself to the communal effort of helping Omali

redirect the Vast Spacebourne Being. Unable to help her at first because “his dream-fingers have no force” (272-73), Dann focuses his entire being on helping Omali. “He would give her all his life, but how?” (273) he thinks. In this new otherly orientation of selflessness, Dann’s transformational process culminates in his realization of what he must do in applying his empathic healing “gift” of absorbing others’ pain: “[H]e knows he can exert his own small gift, can take to himself her pain and fear and send her out his strength” (273). From their initial tenuous trust, Dann and Omali have achieved a radically otherly oriented connection. But when he finds that he lacks enough energy himself, Dann understands the final piece of the puzzle in the need for social integration. “*Help! Help us!* he shouts back through his whole being,” attempting to draw the energy of the other merged beings. In response, “help comes; surging up through him like a violent sharp wave washing through to the nexus where he holds her, to the crucial point where she holds the unknowable. It is intoxicating, a renewal of life mingled of human and Tyrenni essence intertwined” (273).

Ultimately, this abandonment of himself in social application of new skills succeeds in channeling energy so Omali “can...move and break the will of the Destroyer.” While this climax reflects a culmination of Dann’s (and the others’) transformational learning process, this is just a beginning. As previously noted, Tivonel’s suggestion that they should aim simply at the imperative just to “try it all!” (312) articulates the utopian sense of possibility to which the novel’s transformational learning leads. But it is the book’s final page that most eloquently demonstrates this processural becoming, and that does so through an emphasis on the relationship between subjectivity

formation and language that reminds us of the rhetorical dimensions underlying Tiptree's pedagogy. Reflecting on its newly reconfigured self and its new purpose, the Vast Spacebourne Being thinks, "*IT IS A PROTO-PRONOUN, AN IT BECOMING SHE BECOMING THEY, A WE BECOMING I WHICH IS BECOMING MYSTERY*" (313).

Pharmakon Learning and Metaphor's "Truthing/Lie" in Embassytown

China Miéville's 2011 sf novel, *Embassytown*, also explores the connections between rhetoric and transformation toward otherly becoming. Like Tiptree's novel, it similarly focuses on the body as the locus of learning and radical subjectivity transformation, and on *pharmakon* figures as central to such learning and transformation. However, in *Embassytown*, rhetoric is foregrounded and its connection to transformative learning is made explicit. Significantly, these pedagogical and rhetorical connections are tied to poetics. Where the transformative learning in *Up the Walls of the World* involves an estranging plunge into other worlds and bodies, here, it involves an estrangement of "plunging" the body into language through the poetic-rhetorical device of metaphor. Like Tiptree's novel, *Embassytown*'s dense and complex narrative is rich with various intertwined strands of exemplary transformative learning processes that can be excavated for sophistic pedagogical strategies and approaches, but my analysis centers on the Ariekei and their sophistic "plunge" into the antilogic poetics of metaphor and bodily performed signification. Central to this transformation is the novel's protagonist, Avice Benner Cho (Avvy), a Terre colonist of the eponymous Bremen outpost on the planet Arieika. The Ariekei are "Hosts" to the colonists, and trade between the two is made

possible by genetically twinned human “Doppel Ambassadors” who translate between the humans and the Hosts’ strange, polyvocal “Language.” Host “Language” lacks signification, and therefore, the ability to lie and utter metaphor. Ambassadors have been raised to “speak with a kind of empathic unity” simultaneous dual utterances with one telepathically “enmeshed” mind (169). The Hosts are able to perceive and understand these paradoxically dual/singular utterances because they seem to emanate as the direct channel of a single sentience’s embodied experience. The plot traces the impact on the Ariekei when Bremen officials install a new kind of Doppel at the colony. Designed to undercut the need for mediating Ambassadors, the new Doppel inadvertently brings Ariekei society to the brink of destruction when its use of “Language” overwhelms the Hosts’ conceptual and somatic systems with an addictive force. It is the need to combat this force that drives the transformative push toward metaphor and pointing signification. In both cases, it is the sophistic grasp of antilogic contradiction that makes the shift possible, and Avvy figures as a sophistic facilitator of this pedagogical process.

At the start of the novel, for the Ariekei, similes are not figurative devices that mediate concepts within semiotic systems. This is because the Ariekeis’ Language only expresses what they can experience in the world, through a direct, one-to-one equivalency between perception, thought, and word. Avvy describes the Hosts’ Language:

Their language is organized noise...but for them each word is a funnel.

Where to us each word *means* something, to the Hosts, each is an opening.

A door, through which the thought of that referent, the thought itself that

reached for that word, can be seen... Hosts' minds were inextricable from their doubled tongue. They couldn't learn other languages, couldn't conceive of their existence, or that the noises we made to each other were words at all. A Host could understand nothing not spoken in Language, by a speaker, with intent, with a mind behind the words. (55)

Thus operating outside signification, metaphor is impossible for the Ariekei. They do grasp simile and its referentiality, but only in a rudimentary way. The Ariekei must stage scenarios of performed similes with the assistance of the Ambassadors "to make [the similes] speakable" (24). They first must literalize similes and observe them to be able to think them, before they can speak them.

Avvy "is" one of these similes the Hosts have had staged and organized into a kind of archive. But this is not just a conceptual-linguistic archive. It is an archive of living bodies, as it must be, given the linguistic limitations of Ariekei Language. Some of the Ariekei in particular are fascinated by these living similes and survey them up close with clinical observation. For these proto-linguist Hosts, similes like Avvy are parts of Language. But as special kinds of Language elements with embodied existence, these "similified" humans function as mediating objects to estrange these particular Hosts' embeddedness within Language. By having Hosts circle the "similes" gathered in an Embassytown bar, Miéville allegorizes a sophistic critical distance on language through his literalization of the act of stepping back from language and critically assessing it. The human similes also can be said to function as *novums* for the Ariekei, as this allegorization focuses attention on how enthrallment to the rhetorically structured *nomos*

of Csicsery-Ronay's "regimes of consensus reality" can be disrupted through the estrangement of mediating objects. For Avvy, being observed heightens her already confusing sense of what she "is" for the Ariekei. After performing at a young age in "the least comprehensible event that had or has ever happened to [her]," in order to express a simile that roughly translates as, "There was a human girl who in pain ate what was given her in an old room built for eating in which eating had not happened for a time" (26), Avvy becomes for the Hosts the shortened simile, "The girl who ate what was given her." This simile then is used by the Hosts to communicate something like "an expression intended to invoke surprise and irony, a kind of resentful fatalism" (26).

I will return to this specific simile and its centrality to the novel's developments around radical transformation. But first, I want to parse out the rhetorical and aesthetic significance of Miéville's complex, remarkable allegorization here of the fundamental rhetorical connection between bodily experience, thought, and language. Doing so lays the groundwork for understanding how and why metaphor later plays such a central role in the transformational learning that unfolds for the Hosts from this initial point of non-Symbolic, literalized simile and rudimentary referentiality. With the Hosts and their Language, Miéville allegorizes the origins of language and consciousness in the body, both through their own bodily relationship to Language, and through the embodiment of language figured in the human similes. In resonance with Lakoff and Johnson's counter-Cartesian argument for the body as the source of language and consciousness in works like *Philosophy in the Flesh* and *Metaphors We Live By*, Miéville's allegorization here performs what I see as a sophistic critical deconstruction of consensus reality *nomos* at its

point of origin: The body and rhetoric. Through a sophistic approach, the allegory-mode conceit of the Ariekeis' non-Symbolic literalization of simile serves, in fact, to estrange and make visible both the contingent rhetoric and performance that generate our own (effaced) processes of meaning-making and "Truth" construction, and the fundamentally body-based origins of these processes. By placing emphasis on the specific roles of simile and metaphor as rhetorical technologies vital to mediating this nexus of body, language, and consciousness in subjectivity formation and transformation, Miéville articulates a sophistic recognition of the fundamental importance of aesthetic-rhetoric to subjectivity formation and transformation. This recognition resonates with Lakoff and Johnson's argument for the centrality of metaphor to this mediation in *Metaphors We Live By*.

For Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor is the primary aesthetic-rhetorical device through which we make sense of the world, structure language use, and structure subjectivity. More than simply a figurative poetic device that generates and makes possible comparison, metaphor is, according to their argument, fundamental to our conceptual systems. In fact, it is the basis of conceptualization itself. Metaphor does not arise from language use; metaphor is part of the fundamental poetic-rhetorical technology of rudimentary referentiality that gives rise to signification and language in the first place. In an analysis of Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theories that focuses attention on these originary aspects of metaphor, Greg Henderson notes that for rhetorician, I. A. Richards (whom Miéville thanks in *Embassytown's* Acknowledgements), "[metaphor] is in fact language's constitutive form" (20). As Richards puts it, "metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language...Fundamentally it is a borrowing between the intercourse of

thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom” (Richards qtd. in Henderson 20). Implicit in this argument, and explicit in Lakoff and Johnson’s, is an understanding of how metaphor derives its force from bodily experience as the source of referential comparison. The comparative force of this rhetorical device is bodily based in that it reflects comparisons of and to the body’s experiences. Basic examples like, “Looking forward to a better time,” “Reaching for a better life,” or “Grasping a concept,” reveal how the human body’s particular spatial orientations, vertical architecture, and primary contact mechanisms of sight and touch, serve as underlying structures for even the most abstract conceptualizations through the mediation of metaphor’s analogical structuring. But metaphor’s comparative force also is bodily based in that it derives from pre- and proto-linguistic bodily attempts to compare, organize, and make sense of, those bodily experiences. It is the body’s pre-linguistic need to characterize and compare disparate experiences (this item is edible; that plant is deadly; this tastes like that deadly plant) that gives rise to metaphor and signification via the kind of rudimentary referentiality that the Hosts’ literalization of similes makes explicit.

Metaphor, then, is a bodily function. It is a bodily based rhetorical technology of comparative referentiality that both mediates and transforms the body’s relationship to the world by shaping thought and thus giving rise to language. Because all metaphors ultimately find their origin in bodily experience, metaphor both arises from and forms the basis of our everyday thoughts, actions, and behaviors in a feedback loop of embodied rhetoric. Lakoff and Johnson argue that systematic metaphorical concepts therefore “are

‘alive’ in the most fundamental sense: they are metaphors we live by” (55). As the key mediating aesthetic-rhetorical device that binds bodily experience, language, consciousness, and being, “[M]etaphor is a matter of imaginative rationality,” they write. “It permits an understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another, creating coherences by virtue of imposing gestalts that are structured by natural dimensions of experience. New metaphors are capable of creating new understandings and, therefore, new realities” (235).¹¹⁰ Like Henderson’s analysis of Burke and Richards, Lakoff and Johnson’s argument draws on a Nietzschean (and sophistic) understanding of the contingent nature of truth that bears directly on the key role of metaphor in the Hosts’ transformative learning process, particularly in the way Miéville centers on metaphor’s fundamental relationship to lies and truth. Their analysis helps focus sophistic attention on metaphor’s vital role in organizing our subjective perceptual experiences of a contingent reality in flux into the illusory “truths” of *nomos* sociocultural convention (Csicsery-Ronay’s “regimes of consensus reality”) that Nietzsche famously called the mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, a sum, in short, of human relationships which, rhetorically and poetically intensified, ornamented, and transformed, come to be thought of, after long usage by people, as fixed, binding, and canonical. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions, worn-out metaphors now impotent to stir the senses, coins which have lost their faces and are considered now as metal rather than currency. (qtd. in Henderson 84)

As Nietzsche's point suggests, the "imaginative rationality" of metaphor's particular analogical structure functions not just through comparison, but through lying. In this sense, it is unlike simile, which maintains some warrant on truth through the qualitative distancing of "like." Instead, metaphor itself fundamentally is a lie. It is a fiction. The allegory-mode act of saying "this" is "that" rests on the ability to lie, to fictionalize—to say something is not what it is, to say something is something else. However, like Lakoff and Johnson, Nietzsche is not disparaging this aspect of metaphor or metaphor itself. In fact, in a sophistic, relativist mode, he embraces its poetics, and aesthetics more generally, as the rhetorical basis of contingent ontology, rejecting a Platonic approach to being and secured "Truth" in favor of aesthetics' generative, creative rhetorical force. But this force does not simply generate concepts. As Henderson points out via Richards, this force first emanates *from* thought, and as Lakoff and Johnson argue, thought emanates from bodily experience. The generative force here, then, seems to *precede* and *shape* thought. Its ultimate source is the body. In other words, the ability to say "this" is "that" develops from a generative rhetorical force of signification that initially emanates from the body's experience, pushes basic referential comparison to the more sophisticated comparison technology of "this word" equaling "that object," and thus forms the fictionalizing basis of language, meaning, ontology, and subjectivity.

This shift from simile to metaphor, from rudimentary truth-warranted referential comparison to sophisticated non-truthful signifying comparison, is the central drama of *Embassytown*. Its specifically pedagogical and rhetorical dimensions are made explicit, as the Hosts radically transform themselves by learning to harness this generative rhetorical

force of lying in order to make this shift. In the novel, this generative rhetorical force is demonstrated by Miéville's focus on similes/metaphors as radical points of origin for signification, and on their own radical points of origin *as* metaphors and similes. Not only do we see similes in referential action before they become metaphors and then over-used metaphors that have become "impotent to stir the senses," but we see them at their embodied point of creation through the literalization of similification with characters like Avvy. Far from having "lost their faces" and "currency," the "coins" here instead *literally* have faces—human faces. Miéville's radical excavation of the roots of signification in metaphor and lying helps clarify that for Nietzsche, as for Lakoff and Johnson, the issue is not with the element of lying itself or with the fictional nature of what we take for "reality"; rather, it is with this "loss of currency" in the sedimentation of *nomos* around metaphors that have ossified into "truths." The danger for Nietzsche (and for Lakoff and Johnson) is that these "illusions which we have forgotten are illusions" come to represent *physis* ("natural" order or law), as their fictive contingency and constructedness through metaphor and other figurative language devices, such as simile, are effaced and forgotten.

Metaphor, then, is a *pharmakon*. On one hand, it is a lie whose aesthetic-rhetorical force creatively generates new meaning and paradoxically accesses and expresses contingent truths through the "imaginative rationality" of a poetics of illusion. This poetics "permits an understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another, creating coherences...new understandings and, therefore, new realities." On the other hand, however, as both Nietzsche and Lakoff and Johnson point out, when these rhetorical processes have been sedimented and effaced through repetition, a metaphor can

become a “truth” that lies—an “illusion” we take for truth. But as Henderson argues with regard to Burke’s definition of metaphor as “perspective by incongruity,” metaphor *also* generates a valuable deconstructive force capable of undoing these same “illusions” that it is the source of in the first place. According to Burke’s notion, perspective by incongruity “would liquidate belief in the absolute truth of concepts by reminding us that the mixed dead metaphors of abstract thought are metaphors nonetheless” (Burke qtd. in Henderson 20). Significantly for the notions of cognitive-affective estrangement and sophistic critical distance that I have been exploring in critical pedagogical techniques like “cognitive dissonance” and in the *sf* effect and its *novum*, this is because, for Burke,

Perspective by incongruity is a defamiliarizing strategy akin to Brecht’s alienation effect. Its political genius resides in its ability to co-opt the hegemonic vocabulary of the dominant class—the ideology of the status quo that converts the historical into the natural—and to transform it into a counter statement, a rhetoric of social change. By allowing us to translate back and forth between conceptual schemes that are traditionally kept apart, perspective by incongruity is both a methodological device for giving us a handle on the bewildering diversity of interpretations with which we are bombarded and a rhetorical technique for subverting given hegemonic discourse from within by transvaluating its symbols of authority. (21)

As a *pharmakon* par excellence, metaphor’s paradoxical and analogical nature as *pharmakon* thus also makes it a supremely effective rhetorical-aesthetic object for

poetically mediating cognitive estrangement and effecting critical distance, and it is the rhetorical operation of lying that makes it so.

And this is why Miéville homes in, then, not just on metaphor as key to the Hosts' transformative learning process, but on *lying*. At the novel's start, the Hosts stage what they call the "Festival of Lies," a rhetoric gathering in which they struggle to perform utterances at odds with what they perceive. In the context of both Sophist rhetoric and science-fictional thinking, their inability to "lie" reflects an incapability of holding in mind contradiction. They lack antilogic abilities that would allow the contradictory understanding of something as other than what it appears. In a kind of sophistic competition of rhetorical *technê*, the Hosts therefore strain themselves to "lie" with verbal tricks that mimic antilogic contradiction. In this "extreme sport," it is a success of "lying" to describe, with great effort, a yellow object as "yellow-beige" (85). However, the Ambassadors *are* able to lie, because they are human. For the Hosts, the novelty of this lying generates "unending delight. These eisteddfods of mendacity had not existed—how could they?—before we Terre came" (83). As the Ambassadors lie one by one with simple untrue statements about basic qualities of objects, Avvy observes the Hosts' cognitive estrangement as they revel in enthrallment to what can be described in sophistic terms as the "verbal witchcraft" and "druglike power" of this kind of *technê psychagôgia novum* of lying: "The Hosts grew boisterous in a fashion I'd never seen, then to my alarm seemed intoxicated, literally lie-drunk" (84).

The Hosts' efforts at harnessing the rhetorical force of lying intensify as they intuitively struggle to push from simile to metaphor through learning how to lie. In fact,

the earlier clinical observation of the human similes reflects the first linguistic experiments to teach themselves how to lie, under the leadership of an Ariekei named Surl Tesh-echer. When Avvy's partner, Scile, a Terre linguist, investigates the group and observes them "practicing," he is alarmed to realize that they are training themselves to lie when he records the strange new grammatical structures Surl Tesh-echer performs at the festivals. "It's not like most competitors, trying to force out a lie," he tells Avvy. "It's more systematic. It's *training* itself into untruth. It's using these weird constructions so it can say something true, then interrupt itself, to lie... It's been practicing" (140). Scile then gives Avvy an example and provides a rhetorical analysis that is worth quoting at length for its direct connection to Nietzsche's and Lakoff and Johnson's points about metaphor and lying, and for the way it makes Miéville's rhetorical concerns explicit:

They need similes to say certain things, right? To think them.... "I'm like the rock that was broken"...then "not not it." It can't quite do it, but it's trying to go from "I'm like the rock" to "I am the rock." ... Not a comparison anymore... A simile...is true because you say so. It's a persuasion: this is like that. That's not enough...anymore. Similes aren't enough... It wants to make you a kind of lie. To change everything.... Simile spells an argument out: it's ongoing, explicit, truth-making. You don't need...logos, they used to call it... You don't need to link incommensurables. Unlike if you claim: "This is that." When it patently is not. That's what we do. That's what we call "reason," that exchange,

metaphor. That lying. The world becomes a lie. That's what Surl Tesh-echer wants. To bring in a lie. (141)

For Scile, this is not a good thing. In fact, he sees Surl Tesh-echer's efforts "to bring in a lie" as a desire "to usher in evil" (141). After all, one of the commonplaces of the Terre colonists is the imperative to, "Say it like a Host," when attempting to secure truth from one another, a version of "Swear to God" that reflects the Hosts' inability to lie. Scile's moral judgment here later becomes the basis of a reactionary theology he develops and leads that is centered on protecting the Ariekei from this shift in their language which he feels will undermine this basis of radical trust. At the same time, its counter-action to the Hosts' desire for change in their intuition of the link between simile and metaphor, and their intuition of metaphor's rhetorical force, foregrounds how this ability to lie is a *pharmakon* that potentially can—and does—bring both positive and negative change for the Ariekei. But Scile's alarm and ethos-based response does not just reflect a fear of what will happen to the Hosts' Language as they shift from rudimentary referentiality to signification and enter the Symbolic order with the ability to conceptualize and express contradiction. As Scile succinctly puts it, this effort at lying aims "[t]o change everything." His alarm thus reflects recognition that the radical change Surl Tesh-echer and his small coterie strive for is not just one of language, but one of subjectivity. In this sense, Scile's reaction reflects an understanding of how subjectivity formation and transformation is bound up in language—and not simply in language, but specifically, in rhetoric, and even more specifically, in metaphor and lying.

Miéville most clearly demonstrates this transformational learning process in the Host Avvy nicknames “Spanish Dancer,” one of the original group of proto-linguists. As in *Up the Walls of the World*, this individual transformation necessarily is bound up in wider sociocultural transformation. Brought to an apocalyptic brink by the newly arrived, oddly mismatched Bremen Doppel, EzRa, Hosts become “addicted oratees” as they fall into a mesmerized intoxication at the sound of EzRa’s *technê psychagôgia* utterances. This new intoxication is completely debilitating, as addicted Hosts abandon all other activities in pursuit of another “fix.” Faced with collapse, some of the Hosts cut off their own fanwings, through which they hear, to inoculate themselves. Conglomerating into a negative community that apparently exists outside any communicative exchange, they become what Avvy calls an “Army of the Absurd” as they march in a silent, deaf-mute rampage that organizes itself around a clear imperative: To murder both humans and addicted Hosts, and to mutilate other Hosts not yet addicted to the EzRa “god-drug” and pull them into the army. Watching footage of their murderous march, Avvy is perplexed by this ability to coordinate movement and action, until she understands not only that the army have been communicating with pointing, but how this newly invented language reflects a radical shift in these Ariekei facilitated by the *pharmakon* act of self-mutilation. This is because “[w]ith the point they’d conceived a *that*” and “[f]rom it had followed other soundless words.... Each word of Language meant just what it meant. Polysemy or ambiguity were impossible... But *thatness* faces every way: it’s flexible because it’s empty, a universal equivalent” (295). As a primal structure of signification, “*That* always

means *and not that other*, too... And from that tiny and primal vocabulary, the motor of that antithesis spun out other concepts: me, you, others” (295).

Significantly, this “semiotic revolution” is based on the sophistic skill of antithesis—on grasping contradiction, contingency, and ambiguity, as represented by the “flexibility” and “emptiness” of “that/not-that.” Avvy’s epiphany triggers an idea: Having gathered several non-addicted and addicted Hosts to find a solution, including Spanish Dancer (who is not addicted) and others who have continued struggling to learn how to lie, Avvy describes the rhetorical reasoning in the plan she develops from this epiphany: “The Absurd have learned to speak like us. The Ariekei in this room want to lie. That means thinking of the world differently. Not referring: signifying.... That’s what they’ve done. Every time they point, they signify” (296). From this premise, and drawing on her readings of Scile’s linguistics books, Avvy then explicitly links metaphor and lying and identifies them as the basis for the radical change that needs to happen in the Ariekei like Spanish Dancer:

Similes start...transgressions. Because we can refer to anything. Even though in Language, everything’s literal. Everyone is what it is, but still, I can be *like* the dead and the living and the stars and...anything. Surl Tesh-echer knew that was Language straining to...bust out of itself. To signify.... I had t be hurt and fed to be speakable [as a simile], because it had to be true. But what they *say* with me... That’s true because they *make* it.... Similes are a way out. A route from reference to signifying. Just a route, though. But we can push them down it, even that last step, all

the way... To where the literal becomes...Something else. If similes do their job well enough, they turn into something else. We tell the truth best by becoming lies.... I don't want to be a simile anymore... I want to be a metaphor. (296).

And this is precisely what Avvy does, as she guides Spanish Dancer and the others through a process of critical pedagogy that aims through rhetorical practice at pushing them from simile to metaphor. With the translating aid of the Doppel YISib, Avvy stages a kind of Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development, making them practice their rudimentary lying skills with a focus on her own simile. She “[wills] them to strive for poetry” by “asserting similarities” through her simile as “the girl who ate what was given her” (293), “trying for...a break, a rupture, a move from before to after” (292). From these initial rhetorical exercises, Spanish Dancer eventually evinces contradiction in the utterance: “We’re trying to change things and it’s been a long time and through our patience knowing it’ll end we’re like the girl who ate what was given to her... Those [addicted] who aren’t trying to change anything are like the girl, eating not what she wanted but what was given to her” (293). Stunned by both the rhetorical operation and the otherly desire for critical, liberatory transformation that it conveys, Avvy realizes that “it knows... What I’m trying to do... It made me two different, contradictory things. Compared them to me” (293).

This sophistic antilogic and grasp of contradiction eventually allows Spanish Dancer and the others to utter metaphor in the novel’s climactic scene, as Avvy’s pedagogy leads them to a “rupture.” As with the first breakthrough, when Spanish Dancer

finally does break through to metaphor, the specific simile device of “transgression” that Avvy uses as the “route from reference to signifying” (296) is her own simile, the simile of herself. “I’m like you, and you’re like me, and I’m like you. I *am* you” (308), she says. Avvy foregrounds this significance herself when she says to YISib at the beginning of this pivotal scene, “Do they know what a girl is? They know I’m a simile, but do they know that the *girl is me?*... I need them to understand that you’re two people because I need them to understand that I’m one. That these bloody squawks I make are *language*. That I’m *talking to them*” (307). When the Ariekei finally understand SyBil’s explanation that, “*She is speaking...The girl who ate what was given to her. Like I speak to you*” (307), Avvy’s narration describes the otherly importance for both the Ariekei language and Ariekei subjectivity in this intertwined recognition of other languages and *others* facilitated by using their Language against itself and its own limitations: “Language was the unit of Ariekei thought and truth: asserting my sentience in it YISib made a powerful claim. [YISib] told them that I was speaking, and Language insisted then that there must be other kinds of language than Language” (308). Avvy continues using herself to push this recognition further: “I’m like you, and you’re like me, and I’m like you. I *am* you” (308). At this statement, one of the Ariekei shouts, Spanish Dancer stares at Avvy, and realizing that, “[s]omething was happening,” she presses YISib even harder to continue translating. “Tell it. I waited for things to be better, Spanish, so I’m like you. I am you. I took what was given to me, so I’m like the others. I am them... I glow in the night, I’m like the moon. I am the moon... Everything you said like’s me *is* me. You’ve already done it. It’s all just things in terms of other things” (308). When Avvy explains to

the Hosts the nickname she has given to Spanish Dancer, thus providing the Ariekei with a sense of themselves and their identity as formed through others' perceptions and linguistic systems, the estranging effect makes them all shout and then fall silent. As they sway in perplexed silence grappling with this cognitive dissonance created by Avvy's linguistic mirroring, YISib is afraid that she's "driven them mad," but Avvy only says, "Good.... We're insane, to them: we tell the truth with lies" (308). At last, after starting and stopping with gibberish and great strain at this dissonance, Spanish Dancer finally says, to the astonishment and gasps of the humans present, "*You are the girl who ate. I'm spanish/dancer. I'm like you and I am you... I'm like you, waiting for change. The Spanish dancer is the girl who was hurt in darkness*" (309). With this radical shift, rhetorical floodgates suddenly burst open, as the humans and Ariekei stumble over one another in rapidly articulated similes and metaphors and Avvy presses YISib to tell all the Hosts the "names" she has given them. "With the boisterous astonishment of revelation they pressed the similes by which I'd named them on until they were lies, telling a truth they'd never been able to before. They spoke metaphors" (309).

In this complex and multilayered self-reflexivity, by using herself both as simile and as who she literally is as a human being, Avvy facilitates a pedagogical process of radical subjectivity transformation. Spanish Dancer and the others not only gain the ability to use metaphor, but to use it to articulate self-reflexively a critical desire for otherly becoming based on a new, critical, other-oriented understanding of themselves. This specific critical effect is generated in part by Avvy's complex use of herself in the teaching process, as it facilitates the Ariekeis' sudden otherly awareness of her *as a*

human being at the same time they understand her as a simile. Avvy is not just turned into a metaphor in the Ariekeis' Language; she literally *is* a metaphor, an embodied metaphor. At the same time and through the same rhetorical process, the Hosts break through to metaphor while comprehending that the being standing before them is one thing and is something else at once. It is a simile of their Language but it also is a being speaking its own language. In using herself thus as an estranging mediating object to facilitate the Hosts' sophistic grasping of contradiction and their critical distance on Language and themselves, Avvy catalyzes both awareness that the Other exists and awareness of the self in the Other. In a transformative process triggered by the estrangement that metaphor generates, radical transformation in and through language is intertwined with radical transformation of subjectivity in and through others. In the process of helping Spanish Dancer learn how to change her from a simile to a metaphor, Avvy teaches it not just how to use metaphor, but awareness of others and thus an other-oriented sense of itself.

Afterward, when the Ariekei who have grasped this skill do not respond with addictive intoxication to the sound of EzRa's voice from a datchip recording, YISib and Avvy realize the radical transformation they've facilitated is even deeper than they thought. "Something's happened to them," YISib says, and Avvy thinks, "Yes. Something in the new language. New thinking. They were signifying now—there, elision, slippage between word and referent, with which they could play. They had room to think knew conceptions" (310). As she tries to explain to YISib how the change

they've effected has been "sudden...it couldn't undo," she says, "We changed Language... There's nothing to...intoxicate them," and realizes this is because [t]here only ever had been [intoxication] because it was impossible, a single split thinkingness of the world: embedded contradiction. If language, thought, and word were separated, as they just had been, there was no succulence, no titillating impossible. No mystery. Where Language had been there was only language: signifying sound, to do things with and to. (310)

Armed with their new signifying abilities and the inoculation they provide against EzRa's voice, Spanish Dancer and the other newly trained Hosts accompany Avvy and others to meet the Army of the Absurd before they reach Embassytown. In another remarkable moment of epiphany, the army suddenly is stopped at the cognitive dissonance generated by the encounter that Avvy stages between the two groups of Ariekei. As with the radical shift to metaphor for Spanish Dancer, Avvy specifically employs a sophistic mirroring tactic of contradiction in this use of performance, body, and staging, as she juxtaposes an addicted Ariekei with the non-addicted and immune, while EzRa's voice plays in the background. "The army of hopeless and enraged had been driven to murder by their memories of addiction," Avvy explains, "and [by] the sight of their compatriots made craven to the words of an interloper species. That degradation was the horizon of their despair" (323). But with the juxtaposition she stages, she "made them see the motions of their ex-selves hearing their god-drug...but that other Ariekei had fanwings unfurled, could hear, but [was] unaffected" (323). Initially, the members of the army who are

confronted by this cognitive estrangement are stopped short by Spanish Dancer's intact fanwings and non-addictive response, which jars with the response of the addicted Ariekei swaying nearby, because "[t]here wasn't supposed to be such a thing as uncertainty in the minds of the Absurd. Its sudden arrival arrested them" (323). But this dissonance is magnified when they realize not just that Spanish Dancer can hear and is not addicted, nor simply that its frantic fanwing gesture means, "Stop!" but that they have understood the gesture at all. This realization that they understand the gesture as communication triggers a sudden self-reflexive awareness of their own bodily based signifying abilities. As with the shift to metaphor, the estrangement here facilitates the Absurds' critical distance on Language as well as on themselves. As such, this critical distance enables radical transformational learning toward otherly becoming on the intertwined levels of language and subjectivity. In each case, it is a *pharmakon* figure that triggers the initial disruption and reorientation toward signification and other-oriented socio-relations, and that makes possible ongoing transformation toward a sophistic "imaginative rationality" based in a skillful, creative rhetorical practice of antilogic and contradiction. For the "lying" Ariekei, the *pharmakon* is metaphor; for the Absurd, it is the self-mutilation that results in the rudimentary "base" signification of their "tiny and primal vocabulary" of pointing. For both, it is the body that proves the locus of this transformational learning and radical shift through *pharmakon* technologies.

In the end, both groups of Ariekei unify around a concerted effort to save their society. This effort is made possible by their development of more complex ways of communicating with each other around their newfound common ability to signify,

including a collaboratively developed writing system that codifies the bodily language of the Absurd by tracing and recording gesture. At the same time, those Ariekei who can still hear and are addicted are “cured” by learning metaphor, which dissolves the hypnotizing force of contradiction in EzRa’s utterances. However, as Avvy points out, in reality “[t]here is no cure. Spanish and the others...they might not be addicted anymore but they’re not *cured*: they’re changed... They can’t speak Language anymore” (329-30). Scile indeed was correct that metaphor permanently would “change everything,” and Avvy confirms this with her observation that “Everything’s different, forever” (330). Ultimately, this is the nature of the *pharmakon*’s ambiguity and paradox, particularly as a technology of transformational learning: Both remedy and illness, it is neither good nor bad, and at the same time both good and bad. It is in the end simply change, one that reflects the sophistic understanding of reality as flux and contingency, and one that can be harnessed in positive and negative directions, sometimes—usually—both at once. When Avvy asks Spanish Dancer “if it regretted learning to lie,” it responds with newly acquired “Anglo-Ubiq” language, but it does so in its Ariekei dual, simultaneous vocalization: “I regret nothing/I regret” (343). And when they discuss metaphor, “it doesn’t say metaphor/metaphor, but lie that truths/lie that truths, or truthing/lie,” and Avvy is pleased not just by this, but because “I think it knows that pleases me. A present for me” (337). On one level, these exchanges address the paradox of the changes that have occurred because of contact with the humans, who thus represent in themselves another *pharmakon*. At the same time, the dual vocalizations and hybrid linguistic expression that convey Spanish Dancer’s thoughts also bring attention to the reality that it

was not just contact with a radically new element that made change possible in the Ariekei, but their own inherent capabilities for contradiction as well. In this sense, their transformative learning has involved externally integrating aesthetic-rhetorical skills of contradiction. At the same time, it also has involved internally accessing and bringing out similar kinds of skills from within their own unique bodily-rhetorical matrix of experience and expression.

For Avvy and the Ariekei, this *pharmakon* intermixing and liminality opens unpredictable possibilities, as Embassytown and Ariekei are reconfigured around a new imperative of exploration. Bremen's failed attempts to preemptively control the colony with EzRa reflected Ariekei's importance as an outpost at the edge of the explored space of the "immer." This is a kind of liminal space within/between space through which "immersers" like Avvy use special skills of "immersion" to conduct interstellar travel across vast distances much more rapidly than otherwise would be possible. At the edge of the known "immer," Embassytown thus represents a key site of exploration and open possibility. Working together, the Terre colonists and the Ariekei set out to "establish...credentials as an explorocracy" so as to maintain some agency while developing something of value for when the Bremen return. In this new liminal reconfiguration, made possible by the radical changes that have occurred in the sophisticated embracing of contradiction, flux, and open possibility, a similar future-oriented opening onto unknown, unpredictable realities unfolds as in *Up the Walls of the World*. Avvy acknowledges that "[i]mmersion's never safe. This far out, at this edge, we're back to the dangerous glory days of *homo diaspora*," and that "[w]e don't know how the passage

will affect such crew,” (345). However, she nevertheless has “no hesitation” and embraces the uncertainty with the same sense of open possibility that Tivonel’s “let’s try it all!” expresses. “It would be foolish to pretend we know what’ll happen,” Avvy acknowledges, “We’ll have to see how Embassytown gets shaped” (345). But she is excited to imagine herself leading an exploratory crew on an immer ship, “set[ting] the helm beyond *void cognita*” (345).

Conclusion

In excavating the pedagogical potential within *Up the Walls of the World* and *Embassytown*, I have sought to demonstrate how sf authors employ sophistic aesthetic rhetoric that functions pedagogically. In their explicit and self-reflexive treatment of pedagogy and rhetoric, these works provide rich sources for pedagogues seeking to develop critical teaching practices aimed at transformative learning. Both works use sf aesthetics to provide the reader not just with narrative accounts of radical transformation, but also with clearly articulated pedagogical models of how such transformation can be effected through bodily based teaching practices centered on disruption and reorientation of habituated modes of perception, language, socio-relations, and being. Further, as both Tiptree and Miéville demonstrate through their focus on the necessity to shift toward otherly modes of being to open future possibilities for critical-creative utopian thinking, this inculcation of science-fictional thinking in readers holds particular value for contemporary teachers seeking to develop pedagogy that can counter neoliberalism’s individualist ethos and its instrumentalization of future toward market imperatives.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSION

I have chosen to close my dissertation with several examples of how I apply the rhetoric methodology developed in this dissertation toward critical pedagogy in the classroom. However, as noted in my Introduction, the point throughout this dissertation has never been to directly systematize a prescriptive critical pedagogy. Rather, it has been to demonstrate why rhetoric methodology and collaborative learning are key to any construction and development of critical pedagogy, particularly pedagogy aimed at intervening in and countering neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. My dissertation's case study analyses have sought to demonstrate how such a rhetoric methodology—in this case, a sophistic one—can be applied toward excavating aesthetics-based, bodily oriented sophistic critical teaching strategies from a wide variety of relevant aesthetic works and practices. In the process and through an allegory mode, I have indirectly outlined and pointed toward such a pedagogy, in part by interweaving rhetoric- and pedagogy-based connections throughout my case studies. The examples I provide here thus are not meant to prescribe specific critical pedagogy curriculum. Rather, they demonstrate just a few ways I have applied what I have excavated from these case studies toward development of my own critical teaching.

For example, regardless of the subject, all of the college and university classes I teach begin with a very specific ice-breaker. With a set of questions I provide, students interview one another as they fill in the squares of a “bingo” card with each student they meet. As part of the interview, students are required to leave their chairs and offer a

unique interesting aspect of themselves for each student they meet. Once the exercise is complete, I then go through the roster, “meeting” each student as I have them introduce themselves to the class, and then ask their classmates to tell us what interesting things they learned about the student. This exercise is a standard ice-breaker. At the same time, though, the way I conduct it also reflects the underlying ethos of arts-based collaborative learning and embodied knowledge at the core of my teaching. As students respond, I pay careful attention, taking notes and engaging each student with an improvisatory, *kairotic* performance that involves humor and a conscious effort to make connections with and between students. This collaborative serious-play challenges traditional assumptions of single control, unidirectional banking models and disperses agency while not eliding the fact that instructor authority is important. From the first day, students are engaged in a collaborative process of reciprocal learning and discourse community building through creative practice. The requirement to get out of their seats and move around foregrounds the fact that this collaboration takes place in a classroom space activated by their engaged bodily participation, somatic experience, and communication with one another.

This exercise reflects how my teaching practice seeks to incorporate sophisticated aesthetic-rhetorical pedagogical approaches. Along with my use of allegory-mode in storytelling and in “decoy” assignments that nest indirect aims within, and point beyond, overtly framed assignments, it is one example of how I value and work to implement arts-based collaborative learning that emphasizes the body as the key site of learning. Approaching my critical pedagogy through a sophisticated rhetorical methodology provides me effective tools with which to help students develop critical awareness of *nomos*

generally and discourse communities more specifically. Beyond challenging the pedagogical boundaries of Freire's "banking model" of instrumentalized education, I use this collaborative learning model to focus critical, self-reflexive attention on the discourse communities of academic learning. The aim is to facilitate development of familiarity and rigorous fluency with these discourse communities. But this is a fluency that takes seriously students' own sociocultural discourse communities as valid sites of expression, knowledge, and learning, as well.

However, this engagement with students' own discourse communities is much more than inclusion-for-inclusion's-sake, more than an apolitical multiculturalism or sentimental gesture toward diversity or what has been theorized as "Culturally Responsive Teaching." As this dissertation's initial chapters examine in the context of the ancient Sophists, learning is fundamentally connected to persuasion. And persuasion is the domain of rhetoric. Engaging students' own discourse communities as a key element of developing fluency with academic discourse is part of a more complex pedagogical effort at persuasion toward transformation and processural becoming. Further, as described in James Garvey's 2016 *The Persuaders: The Hidden Industry That Wants to Change Your Mind*, experts in contemporary rhetoric and persuasion, both in and out of the university, understand that, "Contemporary persuasion is now rarely done through argumentation. It now seems to operate mostly outside of reason" (8). Pausing here to return to Chapter Three would be useful. Recall that Hayek rightly informed Fisher that, "[s]ociety's course will be changed only by a change in ideas" and that "you must reach the intellectuals, the teachers and writers, with reasoned argument." Yet, his wording here

places far too much emphasis on reasoned argument, as James Garvey and others make clear. As neoliberals' own subsequent success at reaching and persuading their audiences on other registers involving affect and emotion demonstrate, reasoned argument was only one component of a broader pedagogical program involving not just intellectuals and teachers, but televisual media and other popular media outlets. To reiterate previous points made throughout this dissertation, then, focusing on the somatic and on affect, as does an aesthetic-pedagogical approach, is central to the inculcating or changing of ideas. Neuroscience and its relationship to the somatic may require those invested in pedagogy as an intellectual practice to rethink the very terrain of reason and the reasonable. My arts-based, collaborative ice-breaker involves bodies, movement, affect, ethos, pathos, and culture: All are sites of persuasion. All are sites of learning. Sophistic rhetoric inherently takes this into account.

In rhetorical terms, I apply a sophistic aesthetic rhetoric toward validating the rhetorical *technê* of *kairos*, *mētis*, and *phronesis* intelligences students already have developed in the public pedagogy *nomos* of their own sociocultural discourse communities. At the same time, I work to facilitate channeling and further refinement of those skills and intelligences within the context of academic discourse communities. The ice-breaker then is much more than merely a cute or fun strategy of introduction. As rhetorical method imagined through visceral theory and aesthetics, it encounters students as embodied subjects with personal and communal agency. Students are more than what David and Clegg describe as, “individualized, decontextualized, competitive neoliberal subjects” without bodies, without culture, without accents—just minds (8). The ice-

breaker avoids a neoliberal diversity that elides the burdens of actual diversity. This is especially important given that many underprivileged students, like the majority of those I teach in community college, lack not just such fluency, but basic familiarity with the rhetorical structures and the expectations of academic literacy and discourse. Regardless of the subject, rigorous work in developing familiarity and fluency with academic discourse is always intertwined with development of a sophistic meta-critical stance toward the *nomos* of academic discourse and culture. This meta-critical stance takes into account how these communities function in relation to neoliberalism's public pedagogy project of inculcating neoliberal subjectivities and (re)generating market-based neoliberal governing rationalities and social relations. In an allegory mode of multiple layering and indirectly pointing beyond with assignments that operate on multiple levels, development of this meta-critical stance involves, for example, leading students through directed readings that center attention on issues of neoliberalism while focusing critical attention on the texts' discourse communities. Beyond teaching students how to read and respond to scholarly and literary texts that contextualize and demystify neoliberalism, I foreground and draw student attention to the fact that these modes represent rhetorical genres of particular discourse communities. Further, in a move of critical self-reflexivity, I make it explicit that I am seeking to facilitate their familiarization with and mastery of the rhetorical devices, tropes, and *technê*, of these discourses. Students thus receive meta-critical instruction in the specific rhetorical moves that authors make along with training in interpretive methods shaped by rhetorical hermeneutics. At the same time, various

writings and genres, including literary ones, are used to point indirectly to issues of neoliberal governance and subjectivity.

As suggested here, and as my dissertation demonstrates, my interdisciplinary approach through rhetoric studies has resulted in a diverse archive of readings, films, and online digital resources. It includes texts in a wide variety of genres and literatures that particularly resonate with students. In drawing from this interdisciplinary, transmodal archive, I apply a sophistic antilogic approach in juxtaposing texts that reflect radically different discourse communities (later in this chapter, I detail some specific examples of how I do this). Students thus learn to rhetorically decipher a wide array of textual modes, genres, and rhetorical practices, while developing a meta-critical stance toward the various discourses involved. At the same time, they develop knowledge and understanding about neoliberalism and how it impacts their lives and subjectivities. The goal is to foster the rhetorical abilities necessary for critical awareness and democratic *aretē* engagement that can challenge systemic oppression by helping students develop the academic skills they need while facilitating a critical engagement with those skills that values and builds on their own experience. When I engage students in a fun “ice-breaker” in which they must performatively move around the space of the classroom, talk to one another, and be creative in describing themselves, I am not just facilitating subsequent dialogue that will be necessary for group work and class discussions. I am laying the sophistic groundwork for a lively, energetic, creative classroom space in which new possibilities for critical self-awareness, critical subjectivity transformation, and critical

democratic engagement, are opened through creative, performative participation in a recursive, collaborative social process of critical learning and becoming.

Vygotsky, Freire, and Boal in the Chican@ Literature Classroom: Cultivating a Decolonial Zone of Proximal Development Space through Collaborative Imagination and Embodied Aesthetic Practices

The ice-breaker above is one example of my teaching practices that allows me to raise some of the general connections to Sophist aesthetic rhetoric in my critical teaching. However, while it helps in providing an overview of those connections, it does not flesh out the specific mechanisms and assignments through which I facilitate student development of rhetorical skill and fluency. I therefore provide here a more in-depth discussion of how I apply sophistic aesthetic rhetoric in my teaching in several specific contexts. The first is my Chican@ Literature community college course at East Los Angeles College.

This course is shaped around Vygotskian models of sociocultural pedagogy and psychological development, and Freiran and Boalian decolonial practices. The example here makes connections to, and expands on, my discussions of Vygotsky, Freire, Boal, and other relevant pedagogues and theorists, in my case study analyses of science fiction and my work with Harry Gamboa, Jr. The curriculum of this Chican@ Literature course connects students' everyday experience to engagement with literary forms and critical literary analysis modes. This connection is facilitated through a collaborative process that incorporates aesthetic practices like performance and general creative production. It also

incorporates a spatial analysis and focus in order to connect the space in and of Chicana@ literature to the space of students' everyday experience and embodied knowledges. Through this approach, students learn to navigate dominant institutional structures of literary analysis in a decolonial mode. They learn to do so in a way that also includes and connects to their own lived experiences as Chicana@s rather than devaluing and excluding those experiences, as has historically been the case through educational exclusion and disenfranchisement. Thus, students develop critical awareness and aesthetically oriented approaches in which they learn through and against dominant discursive analytical modes (in a *pharmakon* mode) by drawing on and including their own life experiences and the potential for social transformative praxis.

In *Aesthetics and Ideology*, George Levine grapples with the nature of aesthetics—specifically literature—as a site for regulatory reinforcement of dominant cultural values and ideologies. In sophistic terms, he is concerned with the role aesthetics plays in shaping, reinforcing, and reproducing, *nomos* through subjectivity formation. He attempts to reclaim aesthetics in the context of literary study from formalist depoliticization, on one hand, and Cultural Studies' rejection of a focus on aesthetic form in response to that depoliticization, on the other. This leads him to articulate the need for a kind of balance between formalist aesthetic concerns and content-based political analysis. He argues that literature, for example, “is one means to some larger sense of community, to an awareness of the necessity of personal compromise and social accommodation” and that “[p]art of the value of the aesthetic is in the way it can provide spaces and strategies for exploring the possibility of conciliations between the

idiosyncratic and the communal” (19-20). However, he points out that this understanding of the communal nature of aesthetics does not necessarily translate into a Foucauldian view of literature and aesthetics as regulatory subjectivity mechanisms devoted to the formation and maintenance of dominant modes and notions of culture and community.¹¹¹ From this position, Levine instead argues for rethinking aesthetic mechanisms around different forms of subjectivity that are geared toward critical communitarian existence. He states that, “[t]he location of authority in subjectivity is not necessarily a hidden agenda of authority, but often a quite overt effort to create a subjectivity that is committed to the collective” and asks, “Can one imagine a good society in which internal regulation is not a condition for adequate functioning? Is the project of developing a considered subjectivity (alert to the abuses of power) always to be considered a bad thing?” (20). Citing Raymond Williams’ concern with aesthetic production and its relationship to “knowable communities,” Levine draws on Williams’ argument that “creative acts...compose, within a historical period, a specific community: a community visible in the structure of feeling and demonstrable, above all, in fundamental choices of form” (Williams qtd. in Levine 20–21). As Levine notes, his “emphasis...is on the imaginative and the liberatory” (21).

The issue, then, is not in aesthetics’ reflection and construction of community, but in what *kind* of community is fostered and developed. In the specific context of Chican@ Literature and community, Juan Bruce-Novoa provides an example of the kind of liberatory, transformative potential in connecting aesthetics to community that Levine points to here. Bruce-Novoa theorizes Chican@ Literature as a kind of aesthetic literary

space that can “transform [readers], sending them back to the social world with a new vision and a capacity to change the world” (124). Here, Levine’s liberatory communal potential through aesthetics is articulated specifically in the sociocultural context of the kind of violence and oppression (what Bruce-Novoa calls the “chaos”)¹¹² that Chican@ face in the communities of their everyday lives. Through engagement with the space of literature that aesthetically speaks to their own experiences, “[r]eaders extend the reach of that space and expand its influence when they fulfill themselves as the products of their reading of literature” (124). Bruce-Novoa thus connects the aesthetics of Chican@ literary space to the space of Chican@ community in a discourse of intertwined, reciprocal subjectivity and communal/social transformation centered on the potential “social praxis” that can be shaped by readers’ aesthetic experience of literature. Here, Chican@ Literature does not just reflect an aesthetic response to Chican@ experience and life; it plays a key transformative role in shaping the agentive ability of Chican@ readers to respond to their own lives. This is social praxis, informed by imaginative engagement with the aesthetics of literary space, that results in readers’ ability to shape and understand their communities imaginatively and aesthetically. In this sense, Bruce-Novoa points to the kind of sociocultural model of intertwined, reciprocally informing systematic knowledge on one hand, and everyday knowledge on the other, that L.S. Vygotsky articulates in his pedagogical intertwining of “scientific” knowledge and “practical” or “everyday” knowledge according to his model of the Zone of Proximal Development.

As noted in my connections between science fiction and Vygotskian critical pedagogy in Chapter Six, the result of Vygotsky's pedagogical inquiry and research has been the development of this notion of the ZPD around collaborative modes of learning in which the teacher performs a role of facilitation through manipulation of "mediational" tools. I will not fully rehearse those points here, but I need to expand on several of the concepts developed in that chapter and in Chapter Four's case studies on Harry Gamboa, Jr., in order to make connections to the critical pedagogy examples here. This includes Vygotsky's conceptualization of mediating tools as instrumental in how "humans master themselves through exterior, symbolic cultural systems rather than being subjugated by and in them" (Daniels *Vygotsky* 15). While humans do develop in relation to the *nomos* of their cultural systems, what is involved is not necessarily an overdetermining shaping by external forces, but an agentive process of self-mastery within and through those systems. This process parallels and resonates with Bernard Stiegler's analysis of healthy transindividuation processes through *pharmaka* mediation. In sociocultural and activity theory pedagogical models of Vygotsky's work that resonate with Sophist emphasis on contingency, activity with mediating tools occurs through attention to the importance of the "contextual effects" of tools available to the individual "at a particular time in a particular place" (Daniels *Vygotsky* 15).¹¹³ The role of the educator shifts, then, to one of facilitating social mediation processes. Part of this focus on the social dimension involves an understanding of knowledge and cognition as collaborative in nature. In an echo of the previously discussed constitutive model of rhetorical effectivity, in Vygotskian terms, knowledge is not located in any one person, but rather, is "distributed among

individuals,...is socially constructed through collaborative efforts to achieve shared objectives in cultural surroundings, and is processed between individuals and tools and artefacts provided by the culture” (Salomon qtd. in Daniels *Vygotsky* 70).

Recall that the ZPD is a key dimension of transformative process and progress. As Daniels outlines, the three interpretive models that have emerged around Vygotsky’s ZPD are “scaffolding,” “cultural,” and “collectivist” or “societal” (*Introduction* 6). In the “scaffolding” interpretation of the ZPD, probably the most widely applied, lessons build on each other in a scaffolding process of increasing difficulty. Here, the teacher determines what a student can achieve on their own and what they can achieve only with the assistance of an expert. The space between these stages represents the area or ZPD “zone” in which the educator must facilitate effective mediation for the student to progress.¹¹⁴ As several of my lessons outline below, modeling is key in constructing tasks that can help students draw on previously mastered tasks while mimicking approaches to more difficult tasks in order to move on to mastery of new tasks and the ability to perform those tasks alone.

The “cultural” interpretation of the ZPD focuses on the space between what Vygotsky calls “scientific” and “everyday” concepts. As Daniels puts it, “a mature concept is achieved when the scientific and everyday versions have merged” (*Introduction* 6). Here, the focus is on understanding the distance between students’ grasps of formal, systematic knowledge (e.g., critical literary analysis, academic discourse), and the everyday, practical (*phronesis*) knowledge they have acquired through lived experience with/in cultural systems. The aim is to facilitate a bridging of these

conceptual and rhetorical realms, through the student's own activity and thinking, in which each can inform and shape the other. Similarly, my efforts to connect students' everyday practices and classroom learning experience to a sense of possibility for social transformation reflects the "collectivist" or "societal" interpretation of the ZPD. This interpretation uses the concept of the ZPD to focus attention on how the learning process connects to social change. According to Engeström, the emphasis is on the "distance between the everyday actions of individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated" (qtd. in Daniels *Introduction* 6). The teacher's role is one of facilitating a productive bridging between actions and transformation on various orders and scales. Student processes of pedagogical transformation are linked to processes of social transformation in their collaborative work and in their ability to connect their own transformation to potential social transformation outside the classroom.¹¹⁵

Such a communal, collaborative approach is at odds with Western traditions of Freire's "banking" model of education. As a Marxist working in the Soviet Union, Vygotsky's work was grounded in an effort to counter capitalist modes of social relations and the educational institutions through which they were (and are still) transmitted. He envisioned not just other modes of production and social relations, but specifically focused on developing alternative critical pedagogies toward these modes. These pedagogical approaches aimed at social transformation by cultivating those other modes through educational systems attuned to a sociocultural, historical, and materialist analysis of psychological development. Vygotsky developed a pedagogy and psychology

specifically oriented to the needs of disadvantaged children from a Marxist concern with the ways that capitalist exploitation results in what he describes as “the impossibility of a free and full development of full human potential,” and “the corruption and distortion of the human personality and its subjection to unsuitable, one-sided development” (*Reader* 176). Drawing on Engels, and paralleling Stiegler’s concern over the impact of psycho-technological apparatuses on subjectivity formation, Vygotsky notes how the “crippling of human beings” and the “distorted development of...various capabilities...is growing at an enormous rate due to the influence of the technological division of labour” (*Reader* 177).

Addressing similar issues in the context of colonialism and imperialism, Paolo Freire critiques the Western banking model of education as a colonizing force that objectifies students by “depositing” alien material into them in order to mold them into a compliant, exploitable, and unquestioning citizenry. Freire’s model directly centers the educational process on the student’s reality. As previously noted in other chapters, his model is pharmacological in that it sees that reality as a problem to be posed (and worked through) by the student, in co-equal relationship with the educator and other students, in a process of self-construction and emergence.¹¹⁶ Here, Freire parallels Vygotsky’s emphasis on understanding subjectivity as a socioculturally mediated and mediating reciprocal pedagogical construct. He outlines the decolonial process as a praxical one that fuses reflection and action in a dialectic similar to Vygotsky’s theorization of the need to reciprocally fuse “scientific knowledge” and everyday, practical knowledge. Freire argues that, “men [sic] will tend to reflect on their own ‘situationality’ to the extent

that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Men *are* because they *are in* a situation. And they *will be more* the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it” (100). As previously demonstrated, Freire’s experientialist pedagogy thus seeks to instigate defamiliarization, estrangement, and cognitive dissonance, through facilitating this kind of praxical dialectic between analysis or theory and practice/action. As Freire notes, “[L]iberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information. It is a learning situation in which the cognizable object (far from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates the cognitive actors” (67).

Similarly, and as detailed in Chapter Four, Augusto Boal describes how the first “unmasking” stages of his Theater of the Oppressed technologies “are designed to ‘undo’ the muscular structure of the participants. That is, to take them apart, to study and analyze them. Not to weaken or destroy them, but to raise them to the level of consciousness” (128). Boal’s focus on performance reflects a pedagogical concern with aesthetics, creative practice, and imagination, as integral to transformation and developmental processes. This concern echoes Vygotsky’s own interdisciplinary exploration of the role of imagination in childhood and adolescent development. Vygotsky was particularly concerned with disruptions to development that resulted in pathologies, like aphasia, that create difficulties in accessing imaginative modes. While he was addressing the specific pathology of aphasia, his description of its effects on cognitive impairment involving imaginative conceptualization inform a more general discussion of imagination, fantasy, and creativity in adolescent development. These descriptions of the impairment of imaginative conceptualization in aphasics provide insight into the effects of colonization

in the context of imagination and creativity. They resonate with my Introduction's discussion of Mark Fisher's model of "reflexive impotence" and Bernard Stiegler's notion of "performative nihilism" in the neoliberal subjectivity of contemporary youth. In Vygotsky's particular example of aphasia, the patient's "zero point of imagination and creativity" (*Reader* 267) helps to demonstrate the connection between creativity and freedom, how "thinking in concepts is connected with freedom and purposeful action" (*Ibid.* 268). This is because the aphasic "is firmly and solidly tethered to the situation which he perceives in a concrete manner and he cannot step outside its confines" (*Ibid.* 269). Vygotsky provides the example of how an aphasic cannot make the simple statement, "Snow is black," because they simply cannot *imagine* or make up a scenario in which this might be the case (*Reader* 268).¹¹⁷ For Vygotsky, this particular pathology provides insight into how impairment of imaginative ability affects the subject's capacity for freedom and agentive action because,

our ability to do something absolutely useless and which is elicited neither by external or internal circumstances, has usually been regarded as the clearest indication of the willfulness of resolve and freedom.... It is for this reason that the aphasic's inability to perform a senseless action at the same time amounts to an inability to perform a free action. (*Ibid.* 269)

By drawing Vygotsky, Freire, and Boal together here, I hope to refine the connections I previously have made in my case studies between colonization and impairment of imaginative conceptualization on one hand, and the decolonial potential in engaging imagination and creativity on the other. This connection is fundamental to my own

sophistic use of aesthetic rhetoric and creative practices in teaching. As demonstrated below, the sociocultural and decolonial pedagogical aims of my sophisticated rhetoric and pedagogy intersect at this point of creativity, imagination, and aesthetics.

In general, the curriculum for my community college Chicana@ Literature course focuses on works that are more contemporary, experimental, genre-challenging, queer- and feminist-oriented, and that are either non-canonical or traditionally peripheral to the canon of Chicana@ Literature.¹¹⁸ Threaded throughout is a thematic focus on how these works engage issues of urban space/place and geospatial history and experience for Chicana@s. The aim is to facilitate meta-critical engagement with the aesthetic discourse of the literary text and with the institutional discourse of literary analysis in a way that uses the connective tissue of space and place to tie these rhetorical realms to students' embodied practices and knowledges. A Vygotskian reciprocal dynamic emerges. Chicana@ Literature that deals with space and place and geopolitical history, and critical analysis of that work, informs and is informed by students' own embodied knowledge and experience of space and place. To trace this dynamic and my facilitation of it, I provide detail on several lesson plans and assignment structures, along with analysis that connects these structures to the theorization and methods outlined above.

Through a scaffolding process in which modeling plays a central role, I lead students early on toward an understanding of how literary analysts discursively structure their critiques in the rhetorical genre of literary analysis. This understanding is grounded in a geospatial connection that I build on throughout the course, beginning with an understanding of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, nationalist Chicano Movement

rhetoric around the mythic Chicano homeland of Aztlan, and more general geohistorical events that are central to Chican@ history and experience. Students are presented with the first few chapters of *Barrio-Logos*, Raúl Homero Villa's analysis of space and place in Chican@ history and literature. They are instructed to pay particular attention not just to what Villa says, but to *how* he approaches literature—the vocabulary he uses and the rhetorical moves he makes in discursively framing his analysis. Student attention thus is directed meta-cognitively to both the content and the form of Villa's analysis. The explicitly expressed aim is to help them develop an understanding of how literary analysis functions in dominant academic discourse.¹¹⁹ In his text, Villa analyzes space and place in works by poets Gloria Álvarez and Lorna Dee Cervantes and in the short fiction of Helena María Viramontes, among others. Using some of the same works that Villa analyzes, I assign students the following:

How do the pieces “Vende futuro,” by Gloria Enedina Álvarez, “Freeway 280,” by Lorna Dee Cervantes, and “Neighbors” by Helena María Viramontes, use literature to analyze, express, and document the Chican@ experience of urban space and place? What do they say about it, and how exactly? How do these pieces and these concepts of urban space connect to your own experience of urban/city space and place?

Villa looks at “Freeway 280” and “Neighbors,” and although he does not examine “Vende futuro,” he does provide a spatial analysis of Álvarez' poem, “Contrast/contrastes,” which I also assign. Part of the goal here is to facilitate students' development of fluency with dominant analytical modes by using modeling and mimicry in attention to a scaffolding interpretation of Vygotsky's ZPD.¹²⁰ While students are able to draw on Villa's analysis of Cervantes and Viramontes directly, they must construct their own analysis indirectly from his examination of Álvarez' work (putting her poems

in dialogue through his analysis). At the same time, they must make connections among all three juxtaposed works that Villa himself makes only indirectly, if at all, and must do so by drawing on Villa's more general spatial analysis of Chican@ history and other works.

For many of the students in this particular population, literary analysis discourse is an unknown rhetorical terrain in which their experience has often inculcated a self-image as incompetent and lacking fluency. Through modeling and scaffolding, and through facilitation based on Vygotsky's ZPD, the exercise functions meta-cognitively and through a focus on rhetorical analysis and skill. Students develop a sense of familiarity and facility in engaging the discourse of literary analysis with texts that speak to and reflect their own experiences as Chican@s. My scaffolding exercises provides modeling in the specific context of both Chican@ literature and work by Chican@ literary analysts. At the same time, they also are connected to students' own embodied experience of community space and place in a way that reflects both cultural and societal interpretations of the ZPD. This assignment also reflects the Freiran notion that knowledge and education are constructed in co-equal partnership, as everyone brings to the classroom valid knowledge from a multitude of experiential sources. Later, students are provided the opportunity to further develop this sense of facility and mastery through the more explicitly processural work of revision. Rather than assigning another major essay in the course, I shift the focus to process by evaluating a first, second, and final draft of the essay. Drafts are developed and revised both individually and in peer revision work groups. Again, the lesson works meta-cognitively, and it reflects a sophistic

orientation toward processural becoming. Students gain writing facility through repeated practice. They learn to see their writing and analysis (and their development of skills around them) as *processural*, as part of an active, agentic engagement on their part, by working through a process of multiple stages of revision that includes interaction with peers and myself.

As this peer review dimension suggests, in addition to processural work, I build exercises into assignments that heavily involve students in collaborative learning as well. Collaborative learning takes more of a central role in the next major assignment in the course: A group presentation of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. For this assignment, students are divided into groups, and each group is assigned one chapter of the first part of Anzaldúa's book. Working together, students must design and present a lecture on their assigned chapter to the class, with the requirement of full participation from everyone in both the production and presentation phases. These lectures must lead other students through chapters they potentially have not read.¹²¹ This exercise is clearly one in collaborative learning and knowledge production. It emphasizes Vygotsky's reciprocal nature of teaching/learning on multiple levels of group definition and structure. As small groups, students must collectively establish an understanding of the material in order to present and teach it to other student groups. As a classroom of groups, students collectively piece together their knowledge and understanding of the larger work of the text through interaction.

In a Vygotskian study of creativity and collaboration in literacy development, John-Steiner and Meehan provide insight into the transformative potential of

collaborative, creative pedagogical practices. As John-Steiner and Meehan note, “Knowledge...is both reconstructed and co-constructed in the course of dialogic interaction. It involves agentive individuals who...actively restructure their knowledge both with each other and within themselves” (35).¹²² Students are not just positioned as sources of knowledge in group exercises like the *Borderlands* presentation; their participation and presence are *necessary* and *vital*. Without their collaborative participation, the entire group learns less. Students thus do not just learn their own material and the material of other groups, but meta-cognitively see themselves as *integral* to the production of knowledge and to everyone’s learning process (and everyone else as integral to their own).

But as noted, John-Steiner and Meehan specifically are interested in how this kind of collaborative work can involve creativity and a creative synthesis. Drawing on Vygotsky, they note that his conceptualization of the “construction of the new” involved a multilayered synthesis that occurred “as the result of interpersonal interaction but also of intrapersonal interaction,” the latter of which he saw as “the interlacing of different psychological functions such as thought and imagination” (44). Quoting Vygotsky, they echo the Sophists’ aesthetic orientation in drawing attention to this notion of imaginative synthesis in the work of the artist:

“A true understanding of reality is not possible without a certain element of imagination, without a departure from reality, from those immediate concrete holistic impressions by means of which reality is presented in the elementary acts of our consciousness.... [T]he solution of a problem

demands the participation of realistic thinking in the process of
imagination...they act in unity.” (44)

Here, the focus on the intersection of reality and imagination through creative processes, and the ability to more accurately perceive reality through them, helps me reiterate my dissertation’s central focus on aesthetics—both as source for critical pedagogy, and as the basis of my sophistic rhetoric methodology. As my case studies demonstrate through discussion of Freire and Boal, among others, the imagination emerges as a key site of transformative potential when activated through bodily practice.

The last few major exercises in this course therefore are centered on this kind of aesthetic-rhetorical engagement with imaginative reflection and creative practice, with an emphasis on connecting such reflection and practice to somatic experience. The third and fourth exercises are primarily preparatory for the course’s final exercise, a creative group project. They are less labor-intensive, but they involve what some students find to be a more difficult conceptual engagement. They aim to facilitate shifts in thinking away from the analytical focus of the first half of the course toward imaginative modes that engage the unconscious—the pre-cognitive, somatic, and affective experiences of presence that I explore in Chapter Four and elsewhere. To start, I first present material on Surrealism. This material highlights the Surrealist aesthetic of disrupting routine, everyday habits through creative practices by accessing the unconscious, the absurd, and nonverbal registers, through sophistic practices of antilogic like juxtaposition and collage. On a more explicit level, this material on Surrealism provides context for understanding the aesthetics of the next reading assignment, Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s book of avant-garde

Chicano short fiction, *Rider*. The work I do here is not simply intellectual, however, because I am preparing students for a subsequent engagement in creative practices themselves that involve Theater of the Oppressed performance exercises and their final project. Furthermore, I am working from a sophisticated experientialist approach to aesthetic-rhetorical practice. Therefore, a key part of the assignment in reading Gamboa's book is the requirement that students ride the bus/train while reading *Rider*. *Rider* comprises a series of absurdist, Surrealist-inflected stories about riding public transportation in Los Angeles. As they read the book while riding public transportation in Los Angeles themselves, students are asked to pay careful attention to all the sensory information on the bus and in the city. This includes spatial observation, but more importantly, it involves the directive to pay keen attention on a *sensory* and *perceptual* level and to make notes of these perceptions for a journal entry that connects them with their readings. As they read and make notes, students are to notice the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes, they experience.

In a Jungian analysis of "transformative learning" pedagogical practices that incorporate creativity, Darrell Dobson outlines several approaches of using "experiential activities" that are similar to this particular *Rider* assignment and that help in articulating its aims. According to Dobson, these activities "promote integration, the third phase of transformative learning, the emergence of a new conscious attitude" (152). Dobson's specific focus on how creativity plays a role in the development of a holistic consciousness speaks to the kind of bodily centered sophisticated shift to more imaginative engagement that I seek to facilitate. He notes that, "[t]he new attitude is more

comprehensive... more integrated, in that aspects of the personality that have been left or left behind are brought in,” and that, “[t]his is not merely a change in an intellectual stance, though it likely includes such an adjustment. It is holistic in nature, and so also involves the emotions, intuition, body, ethics, aesthetics and spirit” (152). Vygotsky, Freire, Boal, and others, describe a similar kind of holistic, integrative transformational process, and my case studies throughout have sought to demonstrate similar pedagogical processes effected through aesthetic rhetoric. My activities here with Gamboa’s text, and with the performance and creative work that follow it, demonstrate a similar focus on creative action. As Dobson notes,

[E]xperiential activities...also provide an opportunity for the fourth phase of transformative learning, the taking of action based on a new perspective. This is...particularly true of summative or final projects.... Here the students have an opportunity to enact their new perspectives experientially in a performance or through writing in a more traditional assignment or evaluation. (152)

In the case of Gamboa’s text, the intellectual activity of reading his absurdist stories about riding the buses and trains of Los Angeles oscillates with students’ attention to their embodied sensory and perceptual experience of themselves, their immediate surroundings, and the general surroundings through which they traverse, as they themselves ride L.A. buses and trains. As Dobson argues, experiential activities are particularly valuable toward holistic learning in their engagement of experience on multiple levels. Similarly, the sophisticated incorporation of perceptual experience plays a

vital role in imaginative practice and development of holistic, integrated modes of consciousness. Dobson writes: “[T]ransformative learning can not be merely intellectual in nature and...experiential activities are used to appeal to, and draw out, more of each student’s active and latent potential” (153). They “are planned so as to provide a flow of experience through each of the functions and attitudes, asking students to draw on intuition, sensation, feeling, thinking, extraversion and introversion” (153).

After the *Rider* assignment, journal entries are used to stimulate discussion around the text and students’ experiences riding public transportation, with an emphasis on connecting the two. This is followed by my facilitation of a Theater of the Oppressed workshop in which I play the role of Boal’s “Joker” in leading students through a series of performance “games” designed to further heighten kinesthetic awareness, sensory perception, and connection to general embodied experience.¹²³ Some of the more basic games I use for warm up, for example, include “Circle and Cross,” “No Empty Space,” “Slow-Motion Race,” “Columbian Hypnosis,” and “Mirror Faces.” In “Circle and Cross,” students must make a circle with one hand and a cross with the other simultaneously. “Slow-Motion Race” and “No Empty Space” are more direct and complex bodily engagements with the performance space of the classroom. Following these warm-up exercises, I engage students in two exercises that are more conceptually substantive. In the first, “Machine of Rhythms,” students are to imagine that they are making a “Conformity Machine” together. In this scenario, one student first goes into the middle of the room and imagines they are a moving part of a machine made up of paired, repeated motions and sounds that the student must perform in a rhythmic fashion. Students can

perform a motion/sound that reflects a social role, a repetitive action, or a ritual they perform every day, drawing attention to their conditioned embodied *habitus*. Other students then enter the Conformity Machine by making their single unique mechanical, rhythmic motion with their body, along with a vocalized sound to go with the motion. Each repeats their own action and sound as students continue to enter into the machine. As the machine builds and students enter into it and position themselves in relation to other students already in it, they must observe the motions and gestures of others and listen carefully to the rhythm in order to fit their own repeated motion and sound into what is already taking place. Here, my aim in drawing on my performance and media work with Harry Gamboa, Jr., is to heighten a sense of sociocultural awareness along two axes that intersect at the point of embodied performance. On one hand, in a Vygotskian mode, I am highlighting students' subjectivity, identity, and learning as conditioned, relational, and connected to one another and to their sociocultural context. Students engage in a collaborative, creative game of constructing a "machine" through performance that provides them insight into the fundamentally social and embodied nature of their subjectivity. At the same time, in a Freiran/Boalian mode, I am facilitating an awareness of how that self-construction and performance are shaped according to externally imposed mandates by drawing attention to the machine as one of *conformity*. In playing with this conformity and their participation in it, they engage it in a manner that interrogates and destabilizes *habitus* conditioning, a point that culminates with my gradually speeding up the "rhythm" of the machine to an unsustainable, delirious pace that ultimately breaks and falls into chaotic disarray amidst much laughter. By playfully

engaging this conformity and their participation in it, students gain critical deconstructive insight into how this conformity is not immutable, but rather, is a site of malleability, contestation, fluidity, and potential transformation. In sophistic terms, they practice at ludic engagement with their subjectivities and the *nomos* from which they are formed as part of a contingent reality that is always contradictory, contestable, and in flux.

Finally, in “Child’s Dream,” I switch to a more direct engagement with creativity, fantasy, and imagination. This game allows me to extend the sense of mutability and potential transformation along imaginative vectors. The point is to foster a sense of open possibilities in how students could creatively and collaboratively re-imagine and reshape their subjectivities, their social relations, and their communities and societies. In this exercise, the class is divided into two groups and everyone is given a small slip of paper. Students in one group write down the name and description of a person, hero, or mythical figure they wanted to be as child and then hand the slips of paper to me. This group must then move around the room using only their bodies—gestures, facial expressions, movements—to demonstrate the main characteristics of their character. They must reveal what fascinated them about the character and try to convey the identity of the character through their movements alone. At this point, they are not allowed to interact or verbalize. While this is occurring, the other group observes and tries to determine who the characters might be. Students in the performing group then partner with other performers in their group and are instructed to start dialogues in character. They must not directly reveal who they are, but through allegory-mode conversation and performance, must demonstrate *how* they are with the things they say and the way they say them, and

with their bodily actions. At some point, I read their names, and observers and participants attempt to describe the characteristics of that person's character without trying to guess who they are. At the end, I have the person reveal their character and why they wanted to be that person or hero as a child. This exercise is then extended through a variation called "Opposite of Myself," which allows the other half of the class to perform while the first group now observes. Here, students write down on their slips of paper their name and a personality characteristic they would like to possess, with the caveat that it must be completely different from their normal behavior. The same activities as in the previous exercise are performed, with students attempting to convey their desired characteristic by performing it in their movements and facial expressions as well as through improvised dialogue with others, who are also attempting to demonstrate their own desired characteristics. In the follow-up, students once again attempt to determine from observation what the desired characteristics are. I then instruct students to collect their slips of paper and to keep them as reminders.

Both exercises clearly center on self-perception and self-awareness through ludic performance. Students re-engage the fantasy role-playing and imagination of childhood. Exercises focus attention on how their own sense of self was constructed through fantasy, imagination, and performance, in dialogue with sociocultural forces and convention. In his work on adolescent creativity and imagination, Vygotsky traces the shifts that occur from childhood play to adolescent fantasy and imagination along a trajectory of increasing engagement with abstract thinking that relies less and less on the need for "the support which [childhood play] was able to find in tangible and concrete objects in real

life” (*Psychology of Art* 275). According to this model, childhood play with concrete reality is replaced by a more abstract, internalized form of imagination and fantasy. In this process, as the “adolescent’s imagination forms a close link with thinking in concepts...it...becomes intellectualized...and begins to perform a completely new function in a new structure of the personality” (*Ibid.* 270). But Vygotsky also points to research that indicates that “it is precisely gifted children who remain for longer on the level of concrete conceptions than non-gifted ones” (*Ibid.* 277). Thus, even though development does seem to involve some kind of shift from play to a more intellectualized, abstract engagement with imagination, Vygotsky suggests the value of retaining activated traces of childhood play.

This notion of remaining traces informs how I approach my ludic Boalian engagement with imagination and fantasy through performative games with concrete, spatial elements and bodies. One of Boal’s most valuable concepts is that games and play are not just for children—that, in fact, the ability to play and to engage in fantasy and imagination is not only latent in adolescents and adults, it is a vital site for liberatory transformation and growth. In fact, the shifts that Vygotsky describes in abandoning concrete fantasy play may demonstrate not a “normal” course of development, but instead, one of his pathological “disruptions” in development. Thus, my connection of students’ performance games to their own childhood fantasy and play in these exercises demonstrates a valuation of fantasy play as an important liberatory and processural activity for *all* humans at any stage. This understanding of development is of course informed by my own experiential learning in Harry Gamboa, Jr.’s ludic aesthetic-

rhetorical practices. The point is to connect latent, dormant childhood abilities to play, to a performative and creative sense of potential transformation of subjectivity, through a collaborative production of presence in the classroom.

The effectiveness of these teaching practices arises not just from their connection to social dynamics, but to embodiment. In an analysis that helps expand on my discussion of my work with Harry Gamboa, Jr., Susan Congram discusses similar Gestalt- and Jungian-oriented, arts-informed approaches to learning that occur in practices of “embodying,” or “taking in and living what we learn and believe...listening to the messages of the body—the gut feel, intuition, a deep sense—and being informed by those messages” (174). As Congram argues, this kind of Gestalt-oriented learning “involves the body and engages learning through experience” (174). It “is...about students not only discovering how to be interested in the physical reactions of others, their emotional and physiological processes...but also learning how to listen to their own emotional and physiological inner world in response to the outer world” (174). Part of the aim of facilitating carnivalesque “gut” connections to embodiment through exercises that heighten perception, sensory experience, intuition, and kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and haptic bodily experience, then, involves facilitating a ludic, collaborative manipulation and transformation of the space of the classroom through a production of presence. The result is that throughout the Theater of the Oppressed workshop, the classroom is generally lively, fun, and filled with laughter and a sense of silliness and playfulness. The room typically becomes charged with energy as students more fully abandon themselves to play.¹²⁴ When students leave, there is a sense of them “spilling” out into the world with

a kind of carnivalesque excess and festivity. Through this embodied pedagogy and the focus on active perception, observation, and analysis in this and the preceding *Rider* exercise, students engage in a collaborative learning that feeds directly into their final group creative project and the social engagement with imagination and embodied creativity it requires.

For this final group creative project, students must work together to produce an aesthetic product and then present it at the end of the course. This project must take creative form, including fotonovelas, zines, videos, performance, or other media. It must reflect an aesthetic synthesis of the theory, literature, and concepts we have covered over the course. Working in groups, student must connect the work in some way to their own lives, experiences, communities, and spaces. Finally, in addition to the group project, each student must complete an analytical essay discussing the creative production process as well as what specific concepts and works their group project reflects and an analysis of how it reflects them. Beyond these requirements, students are given free reign to develop something in a creative aesthetic-rhetorical mode. The assignment provides students the opportunity to build on creative exercises and knowledge they have developed together as they synthesize information and sources from throughout the course. Through a collaborative, creative mode, students serve as the facilitators of epistemological synthesis in aesthetically connecting literary texts, literary analysis, and everyday, lived experience.

Using sophisticated aesthetic rhetoric to connect systematic knowledge with everyday, practical knowledge through praxical fusion can help students develop a facility with

literature and dominant modes of literary analysis. This facility can inform everyday practices, while at the same time bringing to bear the experiences and knowledge bases of their everyday lives on their understanding and experience of literature in more meaningful ways. Fostering a reciprocal and creative interaction between the two through a sophisticated aesthetic-rhetorical application of Boalian and Freiran practices can result in the kind of decolonial, action-oriented experientialist teaching mode I argue for here. In such a mode, the learning experience of bridging the two juxtaposed realms serves, pharmacologically, as the potential site for decolonial transformation of realms of student experience and of the students themselves. I use rhetoric methodology to interweave multilayered systems of interaction and community through creative collaboration across various realms and spaces including the arts and artistic engagement and production, literature and literary analysis, the academic world, and the world of everyday life and its sociocultural historical context for Chican@ students. In doing so, my approach puts into practice a sophisticated rhetorical and pedagogical model that pharmacologically poaches on and interweaves the resources and potentials of these various sites at the intersecting, agentive point of the students themselves.

**Disrupting the Reflexive Impotence and Performative Nihilism of Neoliberalism's
Absent Future: *Aturdimiento* and Science Fictional Teaching in the Neoliberal
Classroom**

But how does this kind of practice address issues specific to neoliberal rationalities and neoliberal subjectivities? Aside from course content that puts indirect

attention on issues of neoliberalism (e.g., urban spatial development), drawing connections between the above examples and my dissertation's case studies should hopefully make clear the general critical pedagogical potential in such practices in the context of neoliberal rationalities and their conditioning of neoliberal subjectivity *habitus*. But to expand on this general value in helping students develop sophisticated aesthetic-rhetorical *techné* and critical distance, I want to end by looking at some examples of how I use particular content to directly address issues of neoliberalism in different pedagogical contexts. As with the above discussion of my Chican@ Literature course, part of what I attempt here is to demonstrate some specific applications of the concepts and materials developed in my dissertation's case studies, with an emphasis on those applications that facilitate more direct learning about neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities. However, it is important to note that while these last examples are more content-oriented, they function within a similarly sophisticated critical teaching approach as developed above. As content, these examples help demonstrate how I address issues around neoliberalism, but they should not be seen as separate from a more general sophisticated aesthetic-rhetorical approach to critical teaching.

In one Chican@ History course, for example, I have used Sesshu Foster's dystopian alt-history Chicano novel, *Atomik Aztex*, and Alex Rivera's dystopian film, *Sleep Dealer*. These texts stage Kate Jenckes' "*aturdimiento*" disruptions, detailed in Chapter Five. Foster and Rivera both use allegory-mode aesthetics that disrupt dominant historical narratives with "otherly" alternative histories that have been submerged, excluded, and suppressed by universalizing claims of dominant historicity. On one level,

these texts present useful critical content for the history classroom that allows me to raise issues around neoliberalism and its biopolitical regimes. On this level, use of these speculative texts in critical teaching disrupts dominant historical narratives of colonialism with the *aturdimiento* disturbance of an allegory-mode, otherly historicity, and with the allegory-mode aesthetics of a “science-fiction effect” of Suvinian cognitive estrangement. In these texts, these effects cut into dominant historiographies in order to reimagine other pasts, presents, and futures. On another level, student engagement with these effects helps foster a more general mode of “otherly,” critical-creative “science-fictional thinking” toward Chican@ history and identity. This mode comprises the sophistic abilities of juggling multiple, contradictory realities and possibilities, critically and self-reflexively addressing contemporary reality and history, and imagining “otherly” histories and therefore “otherly” futures than those laid out by dominant discourses of colonialism, globalization, and neoliberalism.

The particular course in which I use Sesshu Foster’s *Atomik Aztex* as a community college Chican@ Studies instructor is the Chican@ Studies 7 history course, which covers from pre-Columbian periods up to the U.S./Mexico War. This class focuses on pre-Columbian Mesoamerican and North American cultures and societies, and on the catastrophic impacts of European colonization. In this context, the sophistic aesthetic rhetoric of Foster’s wry critique of both historical colonization and contemporary neoliberalism weaves in nicely with my own decolonial approach to this history. In its alt-history allegory-mode inversion, the Aztecs beat the Spanish and subsequently assume the position of an imperial world power over the next five centuries. In the

meantime, Europe further devolves into a troubled region wracked by the kind of widespread disease, economic stagnation, and violence that characterized it in the centuries just prior to colonization. Foster's use of allegory-mode speculative fiction to mount this alt-history disrupts Eurocentric historical narratives of colonialism by foregrounding the fictiveness underlying them, thus undermining the claims to truth and objectivity that this fictiveness undergirds. This is the fictiveness of what Walter Mignolo has discussed as an invented "idea of Latin America" projected onto the non-European "other" in the process of colonization. The speculative allegory mode in *Atomik Aztex* thus disrupts and disturbs dominant history not just by presenting a counter-history, but by constructing a counter-*fiction* to the unacknowledged fiction of dominant histories of colonization. Furthermore, by placing this alt-history parallel to our contemporary reality through protagonist Zenzontli, who seems to flicker and oscillate back and forth between realities in a schizophrenic kind of hallucinatory, telepathic split, Foster allegorizes the cognitive estrangement and dissonance of the science-fiction effect while demonstrating how such an effect can generate critical, sophistic perspective on one's regime of consensus reality. In sophistic terms, Zenzontli demonstrates the ludic ability to operate in multiple, contradictory, contingent realities always in flux. Where one reality reflects contemporary neoliberal conditions through Zenzontli's nightmarish life as an exploited worker in the East L.A. Farmer John meatpacking plant, the other reality reflects the utopic (albeit imperfect) world of an Aztek Socialist Imperium in which Zenzontli occupies a high rank in the 20th century Aztek military. Functioning as the oscillatory split-character intersecting point between these contradictory realities and histories,

Zenzontli self-reflexively demonstrates the sophistic critical perspectives on reality made possible by both the *aturdimiento* of otherly history and the cognitive estrangement of the science-fiction effect.

In assigning students a final essay on Foster's novel, I engage them both in an analysis of these critical aspects of the novel and in an application of them. In this course, I begin the semester with a discussion of the contemporary Zapatista movement to frame the history in terms of contemporary conditions and issues of neoliberalism and ongoing neocolonialism. Along with this introductory material, I have students read the first chapter of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. I place lecture and discussion emphasis on Zinn's analysis of historiography and of the ideological distortions that have characterized dominant narratives of colonization, particularly through exclusion of indigenous histories and perspectives. At semester's end, students then are asked to apply the semester's material in a two-part assignment centered on Foster's novel. The first part asks them to draw on the course materials in explaining: 1. How the critical history of European colonization of the Americas that we've covered helps us understand the "truths" that Foster's fiction reveals; and, 2. How Foster's fiction challenges the fictional "truths" of dominant history and its ideological distortions, with a consideration of how fiction can work to tell truth, while what we take for historical truth is often little more than fiction.¹²⁵ The second part of the assignment then asks students to engage in their own aesthetic rhetoric. As groups, they must draw on course materials and pick one portion of the history we've studied, imagine an alternative outcome for it, and extrapolate this outcome to contemporary reality and the future.

My Chican@ Studies 8 history course begins with the U.S./Mexico War, with emphasis on related issues of the border, immigration, and U.S./Mexico relations, as originary to Chican@ culture and identity. In this class, I use Alex Rivera's 2008 film *Sleep Dealer* to extend the timeline into the future and to extrapolate the course's Cultural Studies focus on Chican@ identity as a continual process of becoming rather than a static state of being. Paralleling Foster's meatpacking plant Zenzontli, Rivera's speculative fiction critiques contemporary neoliberalism through Memo as the figure of the "cyber-bracero" worker who remotely provides labor in the United States from cyber-maquiladoras on the Mexican side of the border. These cyber-maquiladoras plug workers' bodies into a digital network that links the workers' movements to remote robotic devices in the U.S. The film helps students to consider the history of U.S./Mexico relations and Chican@ identity we cover during the semester in the context of contemporary neoliberalism, and to extrapolate into the future. It thus works along with other course materials to disrupt dominant racist historical and contemporary narratives of immigration, U.S./Mexico relations, the border, and Chican@ identity and culture. Additionally, its focus on biopolitics and the body also presents opportunity to develop understanding of neoliberalism specifically as a regime of biopower. Furthermore, the film's subplot involving the selling of memories by "uploading" them online fosters discussion of history in terms of individual and cultural memory. In these discussions, I once again place emphasis on developing critical understanding of how historical narratives are shaped through ideologically distorting rhetorical processes of fictionalization in which some memories are legitimated and disseminated, while others

are erased and ignored. In discussion, we look at how this ideological distortion also involves commodification of memory, history, culture, and identity, in the context of neoliberalism. What I seek to foster is an understanding of how the social process of becoming that shapes Chican@ identity involves both an ontological struggle over what it means to be Chican@ and American, and an epistemological struggle over history. At the end of the semester, the class views Rivera's film and is then assigned the task of drawing on course materials to write an essay focused on the border that addresses the following: 1. How does the fictional film *Sleep Dealer* help us to address the historical truths of the border from a critical perspective? and, 2. How do the historical truths we've looked at help us understand the fictional film *Sleep Dealer* in a critical way? With both Foster's and Rivera's texts, I draw on the critical potential of allegory-mode aesthetics in the *aturdimiento* of otherly history and in sf's science-fiction effect to disrupt dominant narratives of colonialism and neocolonialism. The goal is to help inculcate in students an otherly critical stance toward Chican@ identity and Chican@ history, contemporary life, and the future, in the context of neoliberal rationalities and subjectivities.

Another example in which I draw specifically on my work in sf is my use of speculative fiction in the university English Composition classroom: J.G. Ballard's dystopian novel *High-Rise*, and George Saunders' dystopian slipstream parable, *Pastoralia*. Here, I use *High-Rise* and *Pastoralia* to stage a conversation about neoliberalism. Key works that I put in dialogue with them include *The Communist Manifesto*, excerpts from Freud, Jung, and Wilhelm Reich, and several texts on neoliberalism. *High-Rise* portrays a self-contained residential building's fracturing

descent into explicit primal expression of the violent hierarchies underlying capitalism. Through the figure of the class-stratified building, the novel allegorizes capitalist hierarchy and violence. As social structures and building services in the high-rise gradually break down, residents revert to a ruthlessly competitive state of clan bonding, violence, and cannibalism. Using *High-Rise* with the other readings, I stage a larger conversation about alienation and how neoliberalism and biopower channel and instrumentalize affect and libidinal energies. Central to the building's descent into primal violence and lust, for example, is the alienation, loneliness, and repression that permeate and maintain its social structures beneath veneers of civility prior to a breaking point that erupts into explicit class warfare.¹²⁶

George Saunders' more recent slipstream novella *Pastoralia* similarly helps make connections to contemporary conditions under neoliberalism. Saunders' satirical parables ground the lived realities of neoliberalism in the body's experience under consumerist biopower with dark, grotesque humor. In *Pastoralia*, Saunders satirizes class exploitation through the "historical" themepark of Pastoralia and the protagonist's dreary job performing as a caveman in a life-sized diorama of "caveman life." Through darkly humorous portrayals of the protagonist and his "cavewoman" partner, Saunders critiques how market rationality shapes bodily habituation. The "actors'" job is to "live" in the display twenty-four hours a day. They are prohibited from breaking character, including speaking recognizable language. Their grunting mimicry of "caveman talk" allegorizes the destruction of language by neoliberalism's naturalization of a "goes without saying" consensus. Food is delivered to the actors through slots, a biopolitical arrangement

further exploited through precariousness. Some days, food is left intermittently; other days, no food arrives at all. At the same time, management requires actors to collect their human waste and deliver it to a disposal site, and begins to charge a waste-processing fee. Throughout, these policy changes are faxed in condescending letters—biting, satirical examples of how market rationality is verbally framed through the rhetoric of an anti-discourse that shuts down any challenge to its logic with a sense of unquestionable consensus. As the prohibition against speaking language reveals, it is language itself that is shut down.

All of these examples demonstrate how I have used speculative fiction as teaching material content. But I wish to end on some final examples of my application of their aesthetic rhetoric's use of allegory mode, grotesque *novums*, and the estrangement effected by their analogical structures. This includes, for example, my use of parable storytelling in teaching. Initially exposed to this kind of allegory-mode storytelling in my work with Harry Gamboa, Jr., I draw these parables from an archive of personal experience and esoteric teaching-stories. Sometimes I explicitly frame teaching-stories as such; other times, I mix them with, and present them as, real experiences. I also give assignments like an in-class group exercise where student groups work together to collaboratively construct parables that convey their argued definition for a concept. Students then perform their stories as groups, and as a class, we interpret each story. In the end, the board is covered by accumulated definitional fragments and multiple interpretations pieced together through collaborative performance and storytelling. Another example includes the final exam for the composition course outlined above.

Prior to the exam, I structure lessons around imagining future alternatives. This includes Theater of the Oppressed exercises like those previously discussed. In addition, I assign future-oriented readings on imaginative thinking and creativity. For their final exam, students then read the critical dystopian manifesto, “Communiqué from An Absent Future,” a student-authored critique of institutional education and neoliberalism. Students must draw on course readings to answer a prompt based on the manifesto. The prompt asks them to imagine their future and explain what actions they will take using imagination and creativity to meet the manifesto’s call to “live on [their] own time, [their] own possibilities,” in order to address the various problems we face as a global society.

* * *

As demonstrated here, my critical pedagogy seeks to help students learn, through *pharmakon* figures and practices, the critical distance and the *mētis*, *kairos*, and *phronesis* intelligences necessary for operating in an imaginative, ludic, sophistic mode oriented toward future action. This rhetorical *technê* and mode is the basis for understanding and “learning from other worlds” and learning to envision, explore, and manifest other possibilities. This is a mode that, rather than immediately falling back into comfortable interpretive containment of the world and its regimes of consensus reality, instead actively opens onto multiple, contradictory possibilities in an ontological strategy of antilogic poetics and oscillatory movement between Gumbrecht’s “meaning” and “presence.” In Chapter Two, I posed a set of dire, timely questions confronting contemporary critical teachers: How do we intervene in neoliberal subjectivities in order

both to teach them critically and to teach *as* them critically? How do we confront Giroux's "deep sense of hopelessness and cynicism," Fisher's self-fulfilling "reflexive impotence," and Stiegler's technomediated "performative nihilism," not just in our students, but in *ourselves* as subject to the same forces of neoliberal rationality and subjectivity production? As I hope I have made clear through my analysis and case studies throughout this dissertation, and through my examples in this conclusion, an ability to operate in a sophistic, future-oriented imaginative mode capable of engaging paradox, contradiction, and multiple utopian possibilities, in the face of the anti-utopian project of neoliberalism and its narrowing of future, holds great potential for developing other forms of critical teaching, other ways of perceiving and being, and other realities, that can work toward effectively addressing these questions.

End Notes

¹ Here I draw on Antonio Hardt's notion of immaterial labor as one of three types of service-sector "labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, knowledge, or communication" (Hardt 94). What the comparison here to Google and similar work environments points to is the suggestion of a pedagogical entraining in two specific forms of this immaterial labor: The "symbolic-analytical services" and, most importantly, the "*affective labor* of human contact and interaction...embedded in the moments of human interaction and communication" (Hardt 95). The salient point for critical pedagogy is that institutional education is a site that both entrains in immaterial labor production, and that functions through immaterial labor production models. The broader point is to argue for specific attention to the affective dimensions of pedagogy and how they intersect with affective dimensions of immaterial labor.

² I should note also that the East San José area of "Silicon Valley" is where I was raised in a Mexican-American immigrant family during the period when the area was radically transforming from an agricultural and cannery industrial economy to the high-tech service economy of Steve Jobs's Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and IBM, and eventually, to the current speculative techno-entrepreneurial atmosphere of quick start-up innovation that dominates the area today with immense concentrations of wealth. Growing up in this region during this period of rapid transformation and transition during the 1980s neoliberalist expansionist period of the Reagan presidency was pivotal to my subsequent commitment to critical pedagogy and to my attention to neoliberalism, given my firsthand experience of the negative impacts it had on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. This particular student leadership program thus resonated with personal investments and experiences beyond theoretical concerns.

³ Here I draw on neoliberal theorist Gary Becker and on Foucault's critique of Becker and other neoliberal theorizations of human capital as education, job training, acquirement of skills, specialized knowledge, health, and so forth. According to neoliberal theory, human capital is a form of accumulated capital unlike other capital in that it resides in the human body. Investment in one's own human capital therefore raises unique bodily centered issues in terms of investment and collateralization, and Becker's analysis focuses on profit-oriented strategies for externalizing these investment costs and risks onto the individual. Because human capital is uniquely situated in the body, Foucault is concerned with the biopolitical issues of how the economic valuation embedded in human capital, complete with its cost/benefit risk analysis, functions both to shape individual behavior and to shape biopolitical structures aimed at shaping behavior on a mass scale. Those seeking to reproduce will have to behave according to a market logic specifically around considerations of risk, scarcity, and investment, involved in reproducing human capital. See: Becker, "Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis;" Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

⁴ In conversations with Vorris Nunley, the need to critically distinguish between intention and material effects has emerged as a central concept that highlights the necessity of rhetoric studies and rhetoric's underlying ethos of political commitment in developing critical pedagogy, particularly in critiquing theories and practices that produce effects at odds with stated intentions. In an analysis of Barbara Christian's "The Race for Theory," for example, Nunley explains how her critique of contemporary theory is aimed not at the *intentions* of "new philosopher" theorists, but at the exclusionary *effects* of their dominant modes of discourse. The salient point here is Nunley's argument that, "Rhetoric as methodology and practice, takes effect into account and does not carry with it the taint of disinterestedness" (110).

⁵ I will not rehearse the debates over neosophism between Schiappa and Poulakos (and Consigny), but I acknowledge that my dissertation's focus on the Sophists is more aligned with what Schiappa would identify as a "rational reconstruction" as opposed to a "historical reconstruction." That is, while I draw on figures like G. B. Kerferd and James L. Jarrett in their "historical reconstruction"-oriented historical recovery of the Sophists, at the same time, I align my dissertation's larger aim with what Schiappa would call the "rational reconstruction" work of neosophists who similarly, and often through a Nietzschean "reconstruction" lens, apply Sophist principles and approaches to contemporary critical pedagogy with more interpretive flexibility.

⁶ This is at a time when, as Henry Giroux puts it, "education appears useful only to those who hold political and economic power," and, "[t]he collective struggle to widen the reach and quality of education as a basis for creating critical citizens... is rendered defunct within the corporate drive for efficiency, downsizing, [and] profits" (n.p.).

⁷ In fact, all three forms of intelligence are closely intertwined, and in linking them to Bernard Stiegler's theorization of the loss of *savior-vivre* and *savoir-faire* knowledges under capitalist technoculture, I argue that these forms of intelligence are in fact the rhetorical bases of Stiegler's lost knowledges.

⁸ I discuss this term in more detail in Chapter Five. Briefly, the Sophist Gorgias calls this "verbal witchcraft" a "*technê psychagôgia*, a 'psychogogic art' of enthralling and leading a listener's mind" (Walker 5)

⁹ Drawing on Giroux, Vorris Nunley argues through rhetoric method and hermeneutics that because "[n]eoliberalism as a political rationality functions as pedagogy that normalizes a constellation of values around market logics" (158), and because "the pedagogical and the cultural are political" (157), public pedagogy is a necessary object and method of analysis in approaching neoliberalism (157). While increasingly corporatized universities shift focus and influence to instrumental knowledge and away from "noninstrumental values and knowledges" (158), neoliberalism increasingly exploits the "pedagogical potential" of "film, music,

commercials, books, churches, newscasts, the Internet and cable” (158) to disseminate and normalize its non-instrumental “constellation of values.” For more on the pedagogical and rhetorical savvy of neoliberalists in exploiting popular channels as key sites for dissemination and normalization of their market rationalities, see Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (in particular, the Forward by Edwin J. Fuelner, Jr., and the Introduction, by John Blundell); Plehwe and Mirowski, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*.

¹⁰ Perhaps the issue here is less about denying rhetoric itself as significant to responding to neoliberal pedagogy than it is about Giroux’s suggestion of a limited and narrow Platonic/Aristotelian notion of rhetoric as merely technical and instrumentalized skills of argumentation divorced from socioethical, political engagement. Giroux does not expand on or clarify his critique of argumentation and questioning here, and as a result, a negative resonance around rhetoric emerges from what he says and does not say even as he calls—as I note further on—for a “new language” and “new vocabulary.” His aim appears quite firmly focused on arguing cultural studies as the source of this “new language” with which to “fight oppressive forms of power,” a framing which rather than productively positioning cultural studies as part of a broader interdisciplinary effort, seems instead to pit cultural studies against a field in which students might learn argumentation, questioning, rigorous dialogue, and so on—in short, the field of rhetoric.

¹¹ See: Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power*.

¹² Here and throughout my dissertation, I draw on Nunley in employing sophistic-oriented notions of ontology in terms of ways of being as related to social reality and culture, and not in terms of metaphysical questions of the nature and “essence” of Being.

¹³ In addition to other North American theorists like Giroux, Brown, and Nunley, my approach to neoliberalism is heavily indebted to conversations with Alessandro Fornazzari around the work of Latin Americanist literary and cultural critics and novelists from Southern Cone countries. As primary sites of neoliberalist experimentation, these countries, along with Central American and other Latin American countries, have generated an extensive body of work over the past four decades around neoliberalism in response to the violent transitions from state to free market economies effected by military dictatorships working in concert with neoliberalists. For example, I draw the term “neoliberal consensus” and its expression of a “goes without saying” acceptance of market governance and logic from Latin Americanist Brett Levinson, who in turn appropriates it from general Latin American discourse, and specifically, the Chilean scholarship of Tomás Moulian and Willie Thayer. According to Levinson, the *consenso neoliberal* is part of “[t]he effort to tie political, individual, and collective liberty to unfettered commerce” in countries like Chile and Argentina, where this effort and association have “developed, over a long period of time, into the spoken or unspoken mission of many states” (*Market & Thought* 5). Levinson describes how this

“association” between liberty and free market logic “has grown so powerful that it seemingly transcends both analysis and critique, even knowledge. Thus arises the *consenso neoliberal*, a name for a general agreement— ‘it goes without saying’—that the market is the only possible path to freedom” (5).

¹⁴ Through an Agambian analysis of Chilean torture centers and detention camps and literary responses to them, Fornazzari’s work in particular links the neoliberal crisis of language to issues of subjectivity. Fornazzari examines the relationship between Chilean literary and cultural production during the dictatorship and post-dictatorship periods, on one hand, and the groundwork laid for neoliberal subjectivity by the subjectivities produced through both dictatorship violence and the neoliberal de-differentiation of social, economic, and political spheres, on the other.

¹⁵ See: Levinson, *The Ends of Literature: The Latin American "Boom" in the Neoliberal Marketplace and Market and Thought: Meditations on the Political and Biopolitical*; Williams, *The Other Side of the Popular: Neoliberalism and Subalternity in Latin America*; Richard, *Cultural Residues: Chile in Transition and The Insubordination of Signs: Political Change, Cultural Transformation, and Poetics of the Crisis*; Fornazzari, *Speculative Fictions: Chilean Culture, Economics, and the Neoliberal Transition*; Santa Cruz, Galende, Oyarzún, Thayer, Collingwood-Selby, “Conversation on Willy Thayer’s *The Unmodern Crisis of the Modern University*” in *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1.1 (2000).

¹⁶ G. B. Kerferd makes the following distinction:

The term *nomos* and the whole range of terms that are cognate with it in Greek are always prescriptive and normative and never merely descriptive—they give some kind of direction or command affecting the behaviour and activities of persons and things... *nomos* as law is legally prescribed norm, and *nomos* as convention is norm prescribed by convention... So when we come eventually to the expression *nomos physeōs*, the norm of nature... this is what nature urges or requires us to do, never simply what actually happens at the level of description. (112)

¹⁷ The rhetorical move is, of course, profoundly hypocritical. For as Nunley points out, even as neoliberal thinkers (e.g., Gary Becker and Friedrich von Hayek) appeal to “human nature,” “natural orders,” and the “laws in the hearts of men” in their (natural fallacy) arguments for non-interventionist, “free market” liberal economics, in reality, “neoliberalism is interventionist: its supporters and policies encourage the government to privatize and reconfigure all human relations through a market logic or ethos” (Nunley 169). See: Becker, “Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis” and “Crime and Punishment”; Von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*; Von Mises, *Liberalism in the Classical Tradition*; Plehwe and Mirowski, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*.

¹⁸ In a recent conversation with Arthur Kroker, Wendy Brown addresses the question of despair and hope in the context of left-oriented critical attempts to respond to neoliberal nihilism. While she admits that she has “a great deal of despair about the future of the world,” she also forwards the proposition of having, “a sense of...purpose” based not any ideology, faith, or even optimism or progressivism to “fall back on,” but simply on the basic premise, “What else is there to do, other than to try to make a different order of things, other than the one we have?” See: “Wendy Brown and Arthur Kroker: A Conversation.”

¹⁹ On the Sophists and contemporary pedagogy, see: Jarratt; Crowley; Vitanza; Lindblom; Hassett; Zhao. On the Sophists and contemporary rhetoric, see: Enos, “The Epistemology of Gorgias’ Rhetoric: A Re-examination,” “Aristotle, Empedocles, and the Notion of Rhetoric”; Poulakos, “Gorgias’ Encomium to Helen and the Defense of Rhetoric,” “Towards a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric,” “Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible”; Mailloux, *Rhetoric, Sophistry, Pragmatism*.

²⁰ My discussion of the *nomos/physis* distinction draws on G.B. Kerferd’s *The Sophistic Movement*, Susan Jarratt’s *Rereading the Sophists*, and Giorgio Agamben’s analysis of biopolitical models of power in *Homo Sacer*. Key to Agamben’s argument is a discussion of the Sophist debate over the *nomos/physis* distinction and Plato’s contribution to this discussion. I do not have the space to fully develop Agamben’s analysis and a response to it here, but it is important to note for the purposes of my arguments that while Agamben’s analysis undergirds my approach to the *nomos/physis* debate specifically in relation to the neoliberal biopolitical blurring of boundaries between social, cultural, political, and economic spheres that I touch on later in this paper, Kerferd and Jarratt provide perspectives that I find helpful in developing a more complex understanding of the issue. For Agamben, the Sophist “*physis/nomos* antinomy constitutes the presupposition that legitimates the principle of sovereignty, the indistinction of law and violence (in the Sophists’ strong man or Hobbes’s sovereign)” (27). However, as Kerferd suggests in an extended discussion of the *nomos/physis* “controversy” that draws on the *Anonymus Iamblichi*, a Sophist treatise that touches on these issues, the Sophist “might makes right” argument for the “strong man” and for *physis* over *nomos* that Plato portrays through the Sophist Callicles (and that Agamben rehearses here) does not accurately reflect Sophist thinking or aims in this debate. Instead, what the Sophists seemed to be getting at was a more nuanced and complex effort to raise critical questions about the nature of the relationship between *nomos* and *physis* and, as Protagoras also does in the “Great Speech,” to argue the need for Sophist training in *aretē* because, as the *Anonymus* argues, “The natural qualities possessed from birth require to be supplemented and developed by a desire for things that are good and noble (so this is not innate in us)” (Kerferd 126). Jarratt similarly argues the Sophist stance on *nomos* and *physis* as a critical one deliberately cultivated through their rhetoric. She writes: “If the mythic world is based on an uncritical acceptance of a tradition

warranted by nature (*physis*), then a sophistic interest in *nomos* represents a challenge to that tradition...If, on the other hand, *logos* in its ultimately Platonic form signifies a...system of discourse allowing access to certain Truth, then *nomos* stands in opposition as the possibility for reformulating human ‘truths’ in historically and geographically specific contexts” (42).

²¹ Here I necessarily make a distinction between the fictional “Protagoras” of Plato’s “Great Speech” and the real Sophist. However, while this distinction is important to keep in mind, and while the speaker is of course a fictional construct and Plato’s fictional dialogue functions more to forward Plato’s ongoing critique of the Sophists and his own arguments around education and civic virtue, the speaker accurately reflects the real Protagoras specifically and a Sophist conceptualization of education more generally (see: Jarrett; Jarratt; Kerferd).

²² As Philip Mirowski notes in *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*, “Even though...there was no consensus on just what sort of animal the market ‘really’ is, the neoliberals did agree that for purposes of public understanding and sloganeering, *market society must be treated as a ‘natural’ and inexorable state of humankind*” (435).

²³ I draw this Jamesonian concept from Fornazzari’s examination of dedifferentiation in the context of postdictatorship Chilean society and literature.

²⁴ See: Becker, “On Human Capital” and “Crime and Punishment”; Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

²⁵ It is important to understand here, in gauging the success of the neoliberal project, that initial reception to their ideas during the post-WWII height of Keynesian economics was not just resistant—their free market liberalism was marginalized, ridiculed, and dismissed, both in academic circles and in the wider mainstream discourse. Neoliberalists Blundell and Edwin J. Fuelner, Jr., make this point themselves in their introduction and forward, respectively, to *The Road to Serfdom*.

²⁶ The paradox and ambiguity of this worldview reflect Sophist adherence to a long tradition of early sophistic thinkers like Zeno and, in particular, Heraclitus, in his doctrine of perpetual change (Kerferd 44) and Democritus in his logic of probability (Jarratt 47).

²⁷ Kerferd’s detailed analysis of the Sophists’ linguistic theory focuses in particular on their central questions about the unbridgeable gap between language and perceived reality in the context of their radically relativist worldview.

²⁸ Richard Enos writes of Plato's attack on Gorgias:

Plato essentially criticized Gorgias for being 'unphilosophical'; that is, for being a pragmatically immoral opportunist who taught the appearance and not the reality of knowledge. Yet, Gorgias' own writings... reveal that he did indeed have a clear-cut epistemology and a genuine philosophy of rhetoric. Gorgias would not recognize the basic tenets of Platonism (i.e., idealized ontologies); he was therefore considered to have no philosophy at all... Ultimately, of course, Plato had no choice but to denounce Gorgias, for to acknowledge his philosophical position and his view of rhetoric would mean that Plato would have had to renounce the fundamental tenets of his own philosophy. ("Epistemology" 51)

²⁹ Citing Poulakos, Michael Hassett notes that Sophist rhetoric focused on "'the contingent' rather than with 'cognitive certitude, the affirmation of logic, or the articulation of universals'" because "[i]f words cannot provide access to reality or Truth, there seems little sense in pursuing those objects as the goals of rhetoric. Instead, rhetoric becomes an investigation of how language is used and how it might be used to accomplish particular goals" (375). Key here is the point that "[t]his view of rhetoric also leads the Sophists to their emphasis on *becoming* over *being*" (375) as "this rejection of the possibility of finding Truth or universal essence [*being*] becomes a rejection of philosophy in the traditional sense" (375).

³⁰ In the *Thaetetus*, Jarrett writes, Socrates identifies Thaetetus' view that "knowledge is perception" with Heraclitus' idea that, "nothing ever is, but is always becoming" (Plato cited in Jarrett 55). Socrates further points out that according to Thaetetus' view and Heraclitus' maxim, "any perception must be the result of a relation between a constantly changing object and a subject or perceiver who is also constantly changing" (*ibid.*).

³¹ See: Von Mises, *Liberalism in the Classical Tradition*; Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*.

³² While Jarratt explains that indeed "[t]he 'subject' of sophistic education according to Protagoras is a social subject—'straightened' by indoctrination in the ways of the polis through home and school measures," she also clarifies that the aim of this education is to produce a subject who is "responsible to the community to develop a sense of civic virtue" (Jarratt 91). The Sophist commitment to democracy undergirds their pedagogy with an understanding of "the 'self' as constructed by the community" (Jarratt 96) and "both as the location of a separate mind perceiving distinctive visual and aural stimuli and as a member of a group of like-minded individuals with responsibility to participate in the democracy" (Jarratt 92).

³³ When early Sophists like Democritus and Protagoras argue for a hedonistic stance, it is a particular form of hedonism aimed at achieving a better life. Jarrett makes this distinction clear when he notes how Democritus' declaration that "Pleasure and absence of pleasure are the criteria of what is profitable and what is not," is based not on the kind of pure selfishness and self-interest that would seem to reflect neoliberal models of consumerist subjectivity. Instead, it is based on a deep ethical engagement with issues of "propriety and evil and duty and nobility" that values above all a meditative "'serenity of spirit'... simply a state of optimal pleasure, gained by a life of simplicity, featuring those intellectual and aesthetic pleasures which are unmixed with distressful consequences" (13). Similarly, Jarrett clarifies that Protagoras prized "a kind of prudential hedonism... a theory which identified all value ultimately with pleasure, but which recognized that pleasure is to be derived from the honor and respect to be earned from service to the state, from various kinds of altruistic acts, from intellectual achievement, and so on" (58).

³⁴ "The subject-matter," Plato's Protagoras explains, "is good policy, in private affairs, how to manage [one's] own household in the best possible way, and in public affairs, how to speak and act most powerfully in the affairs of the city" (Plato qtd. In Kerferd 38)

³⁵ In a recent panel conversation with François Ewald and Gary Becker at the University of Chicago, Bernard Harcourt cites this critique as part of Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism in *The Birth of Biopolitics*. See: "Becker and Foucault on 'Crime and Punishment' with Gary Becker, François Ewald, and Bernard Harcourt."

³⁶ Richard Enos reproduces Gorgias' paradox thus:

1. Nothing actually exists
2. Even if something did actually exist, it would be incomprehensible to man [sic]
3. Even if comprehension could be attained, it could certainly not be articulated or explained

Enos counters dismissals of Gorgias' fragment as absurdity with the following note in clarifying his interpretation:

...a careful examination of the fragments clearly reveals that Gorgias is not discussing existence *vis-à-vis* the physical world, which would be both an absurdity and a contradiction of the fundamental beliefs of his teachers and of his own empirical observations on sense-perceptions. Gorgias is using the verb 'to be'...in an intransitive manner to indicate existence itself and not as a grammatical copula. (Enos "Epistemology" 46)

Similarly, Jarrett's analysis argues that what this fragment demonstrates is Gorgias' use of antithesis, balance, and ambiguous paradox, to build on Parmenides and Zeno in "pioneering in the art of dialectic" as he makes the point that "there is an unbridgeable gulf between speech and reality" (70).

³⁷ Connecting the Sophists to contemporary critical pedagogy, Jarratt parallels Crowley's emphasis on the centrality of language and dialogue in their approach and how it reflects an experiential future-orientation toward action: "The role of dialogue [in critical pedagogy] in the movement from 'critical thinking' to action differs distinctly from the aim of Platonic dialectic—reaching stable Truth. The direction of dialogue in critical pedagogy resembles the future orientation of sophistic rhetoric" (111). Along similar lines, Jarratt connects this critical approach to language and education with future-orientation and action around questions of subjectivity and public engagement.

³⁸ See Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*.

³⁹ As Kerferd notes, Plato's Protagoras is "reported as saying...that it is his opinion that the greatest part of a man's education is to be skilled in the matter of verses, that is, to be able to understand in the utterances of the poets what has been rightly and what wrongly composed, and to know how to distinguish them and to account for them when questioned" (40). Citing the same passage of the *Protagoras*, Jarratt says that "Protagoras was not content simply to require memorization and pious devotion to the literary masters, but went on to instill a genuinely critical and analytical attitude toward literature," while "Plato, who thought such literary education to be of little value, has Protagoras say that becoming an authority on poetry is the most important part of a man's education" (64).

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the eristic and of aesthetic rhetoric more broadly in the context of the Nietzschean turn, see Whitson and Poulakos; Hikins.

⁴¹ In this equation, parataxis is understood as "the loose association of clauses without hierarchical connective or embedding," and is "under traditional explanations, a language behavior typical of primitive storytelling: a less sophisticated organization than its opposite, hypotaxis" (24).

⁴² In *The Insubordination of Signs: Political Change, Cultural Transformation, and Poetics of the Crisis*, Richard develops the concept of a refractory language and art from a Benjaminian reading of Adriana Valdéz's analysis of certain resistant Chilean artistic responses during the dictatorship as operating in a "refractory" mode. In developing the language-art basis of my critical pedagogy, I put Richard's work in conversation with the work of Gareth Williams and Brett Levinson around subaltern literary and cultural production in Latin America. In particular, I draw on Levinson's analysis of Gramscian subaltern language-art as a potentially disruptive approach to the "goes without saying" logic of neoliberal consensus, as outlined in *Market and Thought: Meditations on the Political and Biopolitical*.

⁴³ See: Csicsery-Ronay; Freedman; Suvin.

⁴⁴ Here, Enos' term "non-rational" is best understood as denoting not the irrational, but rather, the way Sophist poetics used aesthetic rhetoric to operate outside and beyond *logos*-based definitions of "rationality" in order to mount critical-creative deconstruction. Enos, as well as other theorists I draw on here who employ the term, are speaking to the Sophists' primary attention on affective, pre-cognitive, perceptual somatic experience.

⁴⁵ In an analysis of Sophist Gorgias' poetics, Scott Consigny explains Richard Rorty's distinction between "epistemology" and "hermeneutics," a distinction that I similarly apply here:

In Rorty's account, epistemology is a type of "essentialist" or "foundationalist" philosophy, an attempt to provide a "ground" or "foundation" for knowledge either in an external "reality," a valid method or mode of reasoning, or a single shared vocabulary.... In contrast, "hermeneutics" involves a rejection of this notion, and instead presents "understanding" as a pragmatic project of learning to understand new discourses...beyond one's familiar discourse... [T]he hermeneutic thinker sees various discourses as viable means to articulate or generate truths, without privileging any one such discourse as providing...access to...Truth itself... (Rorty cited in Consigny "Styles" 49)

⁴⁶ As I discuss in detail later, Michel de Certeau looks at how those without power tactically deploy *mētis* and *kairos* intelligence through everyday practices in the specific sociopolitical context of late-capitalist urban space and everyday life. According to de Certeau, this deployment makes use of *mētis* and *kairos* to subvert behaviors and practices of everyday life and urban space.

⁴⁷ The key element to this subversive rhetorical playfulness is a shape-shifting, intuitive trickster aesthetic that also demonstrates sophistic leanings. As with the Sophists' emphasis on the cunning fox and shape-shifting octopus as models for rhetorical prowess (Hawhee 62; Detienne and Vernant 40), Gamboa's trickster approach relies on tactical deployment of disguise, performance, masquerade, and evasion. As Hawhee notes: "The multiple trickster-Sophist...thwarts any kind of search for a unified/identifiable object; what comes to matter in the search is not the sophist's unity or identity but the movement produced by the quest itself" (62).

⁴⁸ See *Imperfecto* (1983); *L.A. Familia* (1993); "Pedestrian" (2008).

⁴⁹ The notion of *actants*, drawn from Susan Bennett's affect-based theorizations of "vital materiality" (vii), is key to this study's focus on how Gamboa works with an assemblage of elements in his productions of presence. Bennett's theorization applies Latour's definition of the term as "a source of action...human or not, most likely a

combination of both” (9), or, as Latour puts it, “something that acts or to which activity is granted by others. It implies no special motivation of human individual actors, nor of humans in general” (Latour qtd. in Bennett 9). While Gamboa’s work does involve human subjects and their motivations, it also draws on the affective interplay—the combination—of urban spatial, and other, elements, with those subjects, in what I see as a kind of assemblage. Bennett defines assemblages as “ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts...living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within” (23–24).

⁵⁰ From another angle, Susan Bennett’s discussion of Adorno’s negative dialectics in the context of affect theory helps highlight the role of aesthetics in Gamboa’s pedagogical aims and my rhetorical strategy here. Bennett describes the importance of aesthetic attention in negative dialectics, whose goal is “to become more cognizant that conceptualization automatically obscures the inadequacy of its concepts” and to develop “practical techniques for training oneself to better detect and accept nonidentity” (14). Here, “nonidentity” denotes the kind of elusive force outside meaning that Gumbrecht articulates as presence. Similarly, Bennett calls for “a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body” (xiv). In approaching “that which escapes the concept,” however, Adorno’s negative dialectician, trained in aesthetically focused techniques, is nevertheless able to gesture toward “the matter and its concept” (15). My juxtaposition of story and analysis similarly “gestures” toward nonidentity and concept, presence and meaning, and the tension between them. Moreover, it seeks to produce and manipulate that tension through an oscillatory flicker between an aesthetically, experientially based Chican@ epistemology of storytelling rhetoric and personal narrative on one hand, and Western hermeneutics on the other.

⁵¹ Bennett points to similar aims around theorizations of vital materiality. She asks: “Are there...everyday tactics for cultivating an ability to discern the vitality of matter?” (119).

⁵² As I explore elsewhere, events like the group fotonovela shoot for *Angst in a Parking Lot* expand this focus to include, for example, self-transformation in the context of the subject’s relation to others through self-performance in group dynamics.

⁵³ This includes lack of advertising, an insular culture, and confusing arrays of intertwined global subsidiaries (e.g., Capital Group International, Inc., Capital International Inc., Capital International Limited).

⁵⁴ The company set up shop here early on South Hope Street in one of the first Los Angeles skyscrapers to herald the massive corporate gentrification and development of the area. Previously a predominantly Latino barrio that also included a large population of poor and working-class elderly retirees, this gentrification that has

transformed the Los Angeles skyline began in the mid- to late-1960s and extended through the 1970s and into the 80s. Occupying the building's top six floors and several lower level floors, the Capital Group has played a pivotal role in this buildup of the downtown financial district, in part as one of L.A.'s largest employers in the financial services industry. See: "The Capital Group Companies."

⁵⁵ Fritz Perls opens his discussion of Gestalt therapy and of the neurotic subject it is designed to address with a description that resonates deeply with my colonized state of being when I began working with Gamboa. My analysis later develops Perls' theorizations more fully in relation to decolonial practice and neoliberal subjectivity, but here he notes:

Modern man lives in a state of low-grade vitality. Though generally he does not suffer deeply, he also knows little of true creative living. Instead of it, he has become an anxious automaton...[H]e wanders around aimlessly, not really knowing what he wants and completely unable, therefore, to figure out how to get it.... He goes through a lot of motions, but the expression on his face indicates his lack of any real interest in what he is doing. He is usually either poker-faced, bored, aloof, or irritated. He seems to have lost all spontaneity, all capacity to feel and express directly and creatively. (xiii)

⁵⁶ Such strange confluences of elements, events, people, and materialities, are not at all uncommon in working with Gamboa. In fact, they appear to play key roles in heightening the experience, as his keen, kairotic attention to all actants involved in the production of presence is pivotal to his embodied rhetoric.

⁵⁷ Later, my analysis of Gamboa's disruptive use of mirroring techniques speaks more fully to how my own anxiety and paranoia in this unframed performance of a pre-interview "interview" were exacerbated and mirrored back to me by Gronk and Gamboa.

⁵⁸ As my analysis later makes clear, the inducement and manipulation of cognitive dissonance is a key element of Gamboa's practice that reflects similar techniques in the work of Perls, Freire, and Boal.

⁵⁹ This particular naturalized, hyper-corporate setting and my alienating experience of it provides a good example of how the impromptu "sets" of Gamboa's work take shape around neoliberalism's produced "abstract space."

⁶⁰ This description of the habits, patterns, and spaces of my everyday life rituals, and the role they played in the video production, bears on my later discussion of Boal's, Freire's, and Perls' focus on inducing self-awareness in order to break through the numbing experience of colonization's everyday, performed rituals, precisely through those rituals themselves.

⁶¹ My subsequent discussion of how Gamboa de-familiarizes spaces and normative behaviors with juxtaposition through insertions of “strange” behaviors into naturalized spaces has particular bearing on this specific moment in the interview.

⁶² The nature and function of this specific question and of the general questioning process as elements of an unmasking technique are analyzed at length later in relation to the therapist’s use of questioning in Gestalt therapy and to Boal’s decolonial focus on “unmasking” performed masks and roles through psychodrama.

⁶³ Again, as analyzed later, mirroring plays a key role in Gamboa’s work.

⁶⁴ What my narrative points to here is the sense of coming into a re-connected, affect-based contact with self, world, and presence, that my analysis later develops in relation to Gumbrecht and Perls.

⁶⁵ Later, I discuss at length the kind of violence and pain that necessarily accompanies decolonial transformation and aesthetic epiphany in the context of Fritz Perls’ notorious methods of provoking patients and Gumbrecht’s notion of aesthetic epiphany as inherently violent.

⁶⁶ Similarly, Diana Taylor identifies such ephemeral, unauthorized sites of knowledge transmission as the “repertoire” of Indigenous American forms in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*.

⁶⁷ On one level, my narrative speaks to this more general crisis. However, within the specific framework of decolonization and neoliberal subjectivity, my point here is to make the argument for the usefulness of Perls’ analysis and approach in constructing an understanding of colonized condition(ing) as a cause of neurotic behavior. My use of Perls’ concepts in framing Harry Gamboa’s practices rests on his conceptualization of neurotic behavior as the manifestation of unassimilated ways of thinking and being that have been forced on individuals by social conditioning and that have lodged themselves, parasitically, in one’s psyche. Furthermore, it rests on Perls’ specific use of psychodrama therapy to address neuroses, because I see similar techniques practiced by Gamboa. Developed in the 1950s and 60s amidst anti-colonial struggles and theorizations, it expresses a framework for understanding how a subject may develop neurotic behaviors in response to an invasive system of ideas and ways of being that disrupts the sense of self with a foreign set of desires and values antithetical to one’s wellbeing.

⁶⁸ The notion of allegory mode is a concept I develop at length in later chapters through my examinations of Southern Cone cultural production and science fiction.

⁶⁹ Here, Perls echoes Augusto Boal's discussion of some specific techniques in *Theater of the Oppressed*, in which "[t]he technique of breaking repression consists in asking a participant to remember a particular moment when he felt especially repressed, accepted that repression, and began to act in a manner contrary to his own desires" (150).

⁷⁰ In my second case study, I return to and develop more fully this notion of the disruptive "shock" through Brian Massumi's analysis of micropolitics and what he examines as microperceptual "micro-shocks."

⁷¹ The pain of such a change involves the cognitive dissonance of becoming aware of one's "mask" of performed subjectivity and then struggling with it. In a section of *Theater of the Oppressed* titled "The Unmasking," Boal describes how decolonial unmasking "consists in establishing all the structures of possible human relations for each [participant's] case, comparing one with another: relations of production, work, sex, family, recreation" (196). Through psychodrama techniques, "[t]he character must be unmasked in all the roles he performs, in the interdependence of each role, in the translation of a role in one structure to another role in another structure" (196). Speaking to the same phenomena of masking and performance, James C. Scott describes how "those obliged by domination to act a mask will eventually find that their faces have grown to fit that mask" (10). Scott, like Boal, explicitly ties masking to performance: "Practical mastery through repetition may make the performance virtually automatic and apparently effortless" (29). The concept of "unmasking" thus works together with the use of mirroring—"unmasking" is, in fact, mirroring's primary aim, as the subject's "mask" is thrown back at them so that they might engage the critical distance necessary to see it as a performed, and therefore changeable, malleable mask. In this way, they might separate their sense of self from it. At the same time this process dismantles colonization's deforming masquerade, it also opens a space for a more conscious manipulation of performance and masking. In other words, masking is not simply exposed and deconstructed; it is *reconfigured* as a resistant, subversive, agentic subjectivity that tactically uses this survival tool of performance against itself. As Boal makes clear, the point of unmasking is that "[t]he actor, once...freed of his daily conditioning—extending the limits of his perception and expression—restricts his possibilities to those required by the interrelations in which his character is involved" (165). Boal's aim of becoming aware of and breaking through the automatism of colonization's roles is a reconfiguration of that conditioned performance into a consciously deployed one.

⁷² In Stiegler's model, a transductive process in which technomediation, driven by consumer and speculative capitalist imperatives, dominates over individual and social individuation processes. See: *For New Critique of Political Economy*.

⁷³ I see this "self-care" as part of what Stiegler analyzes as the non-employment "leisure," "freedom" work time of "*otium*" self-care (*For a New Critique* 51-54).

⁷⁴ Here I draw on both Stiegler's notions of economies of care and contribution, and on Adriana Cavarero's feminist theorization of an "ethics of care" around the notion of an "inclination" toward caring for the other as exemplified in natality. Based on the idea that human relationality involves an asymmetrical interdependence, Cavarero's concept centers on the idea of developing a sense of responsibility toward the other as fundamental to human ontology. In Gamboa's work, as my analysis touches on later, I see a similar ethics of responsible inclination toward care through the sociality and mentorship involved. I argue that this inclination toward care works to counter the "irresponsibility" that Stiegler sees as part of the toxicity of consumer capitalism with an alternative economy of responsible care. Further, I argue that as part of this pedagogy and development of a *technê* art of living in Gamboa's work, the inclination toward care is something that must be learned and developed. This is not just in terms of developing an inclination, but of learning *how* to care for and be responsible toward others in the face of distractions, addictions, socialization and social structures, and other forces that interfere with this ability. Intention and inclination are not enough; one must also learn how to care for others through action and practice.

⁷⁵ From another angle heavily informed by Stiegler's work, Patrick Crogan traces connections between videogames and military development and research. He looks at how this development has involved deployment and implementation of a militarized anticipatory logistic of hypothetical testing through simulation modeling. This logistic is about anticipating future scenarios through simulation in order to ensure victorious outcomes (military, control, dominance) and preclude other possibilities. As with Stiegler's and Massumi's models, this anticipatory logistic is about exploiting the past and intervening in the present to channel events and control future. According to Crogan, history is appropriated as a database to serve simulation models, rather than being used as a resource to learn from in imagining and realizing possible open futures. In the process, the simulation model supersedes history. In Stieglerian terms, the "long-circuit" networks between history, present, and future, necessary to develop, accumulate, and transmit knowledge intergenerationally over long periods of time, are short-circuited in the short-circuiting of both history as resource and future as open possibility.

⁷⁶ Like Patrick Crogan's analysis of videogames and military research and development, Massumi's model of a militaristically "primed life" references Virilio's "pure war" state, in which the lines between military and civilian life are so blurred that no meaningful distinction remains.

⁷⁷ The added complexity of such a large gathering of artists and performers contributed significantly to my anxious, angst-ridden experience of the event, as I found myself contending with an even more bewildering matrix of social forces than at other events.

⁷⁸ As I develop in more detail in other studies of Gamboa's work, particularly in an analysis of the carnivalesque in his practice, making sure everyone is well fed is part of his development of an ethos of gifting and communal ritual. Here, as I develop more fully later, I see this practice as part of a Stieglerian socio-therapeutic building of an economy of care and contribution through reconfigured sociality and relations of care.

⁷⁹ This juxtaposition speaks to how Gamboa's events (re)channel libidinal energies and function through an active engagement and participation in libidinal flows, which I analyze in more detail later. Elsewhere, I develop this same kind of analysis around the carnivalesque and its attention to carnality and the lower body stratum.

⁸⁰ As my analysis later discusses, the key insight that begins to emerge from this particular sense of everyone "performing" in an unframed performance is further awareness of the performativity of my own everyday life.

⁸¹ This lack of awareness and attention on the part of passersby speaks to the over-familiarization—indeed, outright apathy and numbness—with filming, photography, performance, and other media production in public spaces, that is unique to Los Angeles. But it also suggests a more important political point about the allegory mode involved in Gamboa's work in public urban spaces. Not only does his "blending in" to the general media production milieu of Los Angeles allow him to work openly; it also, paradoxically, serves to *conceal* what is really at stake in the work as transformational and decolonial. Through a veneer of media production, these performances conceal, with allegory-mode transparency, their nature as transformative rituals. James C. Scott's analysis of the interplay between "hidden" and "public" transcripts in a colonial situation helps in understanding how Gamboa's use of public space in his work constitutes a "hidden transcript" manipulation of "a politics of disguise and anonymity" (18) in full view. In the specific context of technomediated performance, the potential for subversion in such practices can also be seen in the work of Critical Art Ensemble. CAE employs similar tactics in carving out subversive spaces in the realm of public discourse. Their engagement of a street "theatre of everyday life" and similar environments "through which participants may flow" (157) allows for the staging of subversive situations or scenarios in public space. These scenarios derive subversive potential from their fostering of unpredictable and spontaneous "performances that invent ephemeral, autonomous situations from which temporary public relationships emerge whereby the participants can engage in critical dialogue on a given issue" (157). As in Gamboa's work, through these kinds of spatial interventions, "[m]ultiple lines of desire as well as numerous forms of social interaction can find expression," and this "open field of performative practice makes possible a productive pedagogy not found in the unilateral didacticism of reactive or reactionary politicized art. In this way, a participatory process can emerge out of both rational social interactions and nonrational libidinal trafficking" (158–9).

⁸² Diana Taylor touches on a key point raised in this particular parking lot scenario. She observes that in Indigenous Latin American practices that use the scenario, “a scenario is not necessarily, or even primarily, mimetic. ... [I]t usually works through reactivation rather than duplication. Scenarios conjure up past situations, at times so profoundly internalized by a society that no one remembers the precedence” (32). In many of Gamboa’s works, I have participated in a process in which he seems to purposely call forth in participants past experiences and emotions in order to tap into the re-activated affective resonances and thus pharmacologically address these kinds of profoundly internalized situations. One example includes a video filming in Pasadena in which we were asked to speak into the camera while imagining we were addressing someone who was hurting us and making us angry.

⁸³ This projection and temporal overlap is a key concept in understanding the mirroring affective feedback loop involved in the juxtaposition of performance and media object that I explore later in my analysis.

⁸⁴ First published on Gamboa’s website, the fotonovela is no longer publicly available, as the website no longer exists. It is made up of ten black and white digital still images presented one after another in a kind of micro-cinematic mini-frame that measures approximately 300 pixels wide by 230 pixels high. In Gamboa’s digital fotonovela, each image displays for about one-and-a-half seconds before suddenly “flashing” to a negative of the image, which then dissolves into the next image after about another second. As the images transition into their own negatives and then to the next image, they are accompanied by a digital audio recording of an automobile ignition turning over until the car turns on, followed by its idling engine. Meanwhile, the words NO PARKING slowly scroll across the screen from right to left in massive purple block letters that momentarily hide the performers from view as they pass in front of them. Throughout the ten images, the ten performers strike various poses of angst and frustration, their faces twisted and pained.

⁸⁵ Recently, Gamboa had given me the virtual performance troupe alias/persona/character name of “Kwento (a.k.a., Invisible Ink)” when listing me as a performer in his fotonovelas. Initially, I had deeply appreciated its multilayered punning, but in this moment, I felt that the clever moniker was a cruel joke. It referenced my short-story writing of “cuentos,” my penchant for distributing anonymous and semi-anonymous virtual online texts, and my economic participation in the “incorporated” (Inc.) yet incorporeal financial services world where money “counted” (Spanish “contar,” or, first person singular present, “cuento”), while humans did not. Now, however, I simply felt like it was being rubbed in my face how I did not count at all, and how invisible I was.

⁸⁶ After initially working with the fotonovela form in the 1970’s—projecting slideshow photo-plays of performers onto walls in the East L.A. public spaces where the plays were initially photographed—Gamboa later utilized the traditional print form for

his fotonovelas (many of which appeared in the mid- to late-1990s on the back covers of the defunct *Frontera Magazine*). Beginning in the late 1990's, as he more fully developed his Internet presence, Gamboa digitized the fotonovela pictographs, with their surrealist dialogue bubbles and absurdist images, into online documents. However, "Angst" was an even further expansion of the conceptualization of the fotonovela, and Chican@ pictographic forms in general. Its video format incorporated digitized audio and the dynamic movement of transitioning still images, overlapping text, and digital visual effects. Occupying an unstable space between media forms, this new kind of fotonovela thus pushed the boundaries of the pictographic form while also expanding the realm of digital art through an invocation of pre-conquest Indigenous forms. In more recent years, Gamboa has continued to push these boundaries through PDF works that juxtapose a series of wordless still images with small, embedded Quicktime videos that reside within the digital document. When clicked, these videos display the performers from the still shots in motion—sometimes speaking in an improvised performance or interview, sometimes just moving with an accompanying soundtrack of unsettling, abstract, ambient digital music scored and performed by Gamboa. Some of the most effective uses of this new kind of fotonovela, like "Manda City: Issue 5" and "Manda City: Issue 6," juxtapose still shots of performers with video footage of them dancing to Gamboa's music.

⁸⁷ It perhaps becomes clearer then that, while Gamboa does indeed consciously put performers in proximity to one another to induce reactions, he does so not simply to "mess" with people's heads. His aesthetic rhetoric seeks to generate and catalyze affective exchanges and libidinal flows based on an intuitive sense of how these exchanges and interactions might result in further catalysis and in opening creative possibilities (both for the specific event and for participants themselves beyond the event). Whatever performers are feeling, whatever affective experiences result, become part of the micropolitical event and thus constitutive of its transformational catalysis. In my case in this particular event, the nature of my intensely reactionary tone is particularly suited to understanding the "micro-shock" and "socio-therapy" involved.

⁸⁸ According to my reading of Stiegler's model, pornography would seem to be a prime example of how short-circuiting technomediation channels and exploits libidinal energies and desublimates desire toward short-term drive satisfaction and addiction. While Paasonen's placement of pornography in conversation with art through notions of carnal resonance and affective intensity suggests parallels and complicates aesthetic hierarchies in productive ways, it is not clear whether she is making connections in order to argue for a quasi-equivalent status between the two, or whether she is making the kind of distinction I do via Stiegler in terms of short-term drive addiction versus long-circuit desire.

⁸⁹ She makes the point that "media studies that ignore the work that media do (mediation as particular conditions, conventions, practices, modes, and intensities) and the work that goes into the production of media are bound to fail in grasping their object

of study” (195). This is not just because such studies fail to account for media’s rhetorical dimensions (in the “work” it does), but also because such studies overlook the carnal resonances involved.

⁹⁰ Avelar reads the strategic use of allegory through Benjamin’s understandings of allegory. On one hand, Benjamin sees allegory’s originary basis in the baroque ruin as a reflection of responses to historical moments of great “untimely” instability and upheaval between epochs, in which the “old” has not yet been resolved, but the “new” has not quite yet arrived. On the other hand, Benjamin’s later theorization of allegory’s return to popularity in the 19th and 20th centuries argues that this popularity reflects a response to the commodification process of commodity fetish because of the way that process also functions allegorically, thus imbuing allegory with a critical potential for demystifying commodity fetishization.

⁹¹ This includes work that I particularly draw on by Idelber Avelar, Brett Levinson, Gareth Williams, Nelly Richard, and Alessandro Fornazzari.

⁹² As Lazzara notes, he vehemently denounces work like Germán Marín’s pseudo-*testimonio* novelized account of surviving Villa Grimaldi, *El Palacio de la Risa*.

⁹³ Lazzara’s reading of Matta’s scripted performance is generally positive and uncritical of its scriptedness and repetitiveness. As he puts it, malleability in Matta’s script is not something that he would “presume to say...should necessarily be expected,” and he defends this lack of malleability by noting that “living survivors [like Matta] do not feel at liberty to admit communicative ambiguity lest they be rendered unable to effect political or social change in the ‘real’ world” (152-53). Elsewhere, Lazzara notes that Matta’s is an example of a post-traumatic “programmatic discourse,” one which “seek[s]...to communicate clear, unambiguous pedagogical messages” (154), thus foregrounding a key element of pedagogy involved in Matta’s *testimonio* performance work.

⁹⁴ Here, Lazzara is contrasting Matta’s generation of “shock” in his audiences with the Peace Park’s apparent erasure of memory through its affectively neutralizing aesthetics. Rehearsing the terms of the debate that arose around what to do with the Villa in the 1990s, Lazzara sees the park as feeding into the official state memory politics of “consensus” and “reconciliation” through its “beautification and smoothing over” (139).

⁹⁵ With regard to the productive aesthetic value in El Padre Mío’s rhetoric, it is important to note here that *El padre mío* is not just a direct transcription; Eltit subsequently took this mode of expression and applied it in her own work. Eltit’s application of El Padre Mío’s speech act is particularly demonstrable in a comparison of *Custody of the Eyes* and *Soul’s Infarct*. In both, she adopts a stance of addressing an unseen, vague but specific audience who figures, on one level, as oppressor. She uses the

same kinds of rhythms, the disjointed refractory poetics that are at once direct and indirect, like *El Padre Mío*'s discourse. Both works focus on characters who are sequestered in a state of "lunacy" that represents life under a repressive regime. The style of her writing thus carries the residue of *El padre*'s way of speaking, pointing to how it is a poetic strategy in itself that she has adopted and developed as part of her own aesthetic response. Also significant is that both works focus attention on embodiment and performance as caught up in loops; in one, it is sequestration and parenthood under repressive patriarchal regime; in the other, it is a loop of "mad love" situated in the confines of a mental institution.

⁹⁶ Significantly, Guzmán contextualizes this march by noting that the composer has sent the musicians copies of the score—their musical *script* to follow in their embodied performance re-enactment of marching

⁹⁷ Interestingly, another filmic moment that helps punctuate the performativity of Malbrán's persona in *Memoria obstinada* arises in *Machuca* (2004). In this dramatic account of the coup, Malbrán actually performs a *fictional* role as Father McEnroe (a teacher at a Santiago all-boys Catholic school in 1973). This performance inadvertently parallels his documentary appearance in *Memoria obstinada*. In *Machuca*, the film's narrative of the coup largely structures a problematic nostalgic liberal mode. Malbrán's melodramatic performance is a key part of this structuring, particularly in moments such as his dramatic exit speech at the end of the film, which parallels his dramatic "exit" speech at the end of *Memoria obstinada*. Chastising the church directly and junta military members indirectly for collusion between the church and the dictatorship, he then makes an exit from the school's cathedral that echoes films like *Dead Poets Society* with a discourse of heroic rebellion. While the moment is supposed to generate a liberal-mode satisfaction with images of rebelling and speaking truth to power, in fact, Malbrán's performance here actually seems more to echo the same kind of tinny, awkward, hollow clash that Fornazzari notes at the end of *Memoria obstinada*. In the first instance, Malbrán is performing a fictional character in a fictional film who inspires a brief moment of (contained) rebellion when the eponymous Machuca stands to bid him farewell, prompting all of the students and teachers in the cathedral to do the same despite the presence of military personnel. In Guzmán's film, Malbrán ostensibly is just being himself. But the same affective quality and generated narrative effect by the same man, and the similarity between the fictional persona and the "real" persona, suggest that this echo is created in large part through what both amount to parallel *performances*—or more precisely, what amount to different iterations of the *same* performance.

⁹⁸ The two dimensions of this point are intertwined along shared vectors that Fornazzari theorizes in depth in his analysis of how postdictatorship Chilean literature reflects the ways traumatization of subjects under the dictatorship helped pave the way and lay the ground for postdictatorial neoliberal subjectivities

⁹⁹ This phenomenal feat of embodied memory and performance is poignantly juxtaposed by Guzmán with Lawner’s wife, who is suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Visually, this poignancy and its underlying complex dimensions of performance and embodied memory are underscored with shots of the couple (always from behind), as they walk together holding hands and sit together on a bench. With this juxtaposition, Guzmán enacts, through an allegory mode and metaphorical register, yet another (self-reflexive) layering.

¹⁰⁰ For development of this concept, see my previous chapter on Southern Cone narratives, particularly its introduction and my analysis of Daniel Moyano’s *The Flight of the Tiger*.

¹⁰¹ More contemporary examples of deeply engaged fan involvement continue and expand this tradition. Some examples highlighting the multidirectional influence, performativity, and inhabitation of science-fictional thinking include Live Action Role-Playing games (LARPs, narratively structured live-action games in which players perform as characters), Cosplay (a performance art of “costume play” in which fans dress and perform as sf and fantasy characters), and fan-generated fiction that extends and expands on popular sf narratives (e.g., the extensive and growing archive of fan-authored *Star Trek* stories).

¹⁰² Interestingly, in addition to writing and publishing mass-market pulp magazines, Hugo Gernsback also worked in radio, early television, and the electronics industry, where he helped to popularize amateur radio.

¹⁰³ Key to the critical potential of this estrangement is its Blochian utopian dimension, which ties this critical analysis to future-oriented action. As Marxian sf theorist Carl Freedman writes, “utopia cannot...be understood as simply cut off from the empirical world of actuality. For it is the transformation of actuality into utopia that constitutes the practical end of utopian critique” (79). Significantly, he notes the inextricability of utopian critique’s future-orientedness and its inherently collective nature.

¹⁰⁴ This estranging effect aimed at removing theater’s illusory fourth wall to prevent audiences from completely identifying with the work and thus to approach it in a critical way capable of analysis that could be applied to their own reality.

¹⁰⁵ Just a few examples that quickly come to mind include Philip K Dick’s *Ubik*, *Time Out of Joint*, and *A Scanner Darkly* (among many other novels and stories by Dick); Sesshu Foster’s *Atomik Aztex*; and, Ursula K. LeGuin’s *The Lathe Of Heaven*.

¹⁰⁶ Employing an aesthetic rhetoric lens, Schwarze analyzes, for example, how Sophist Isocrates’ *Helen* “takes seriously the power of aesthetic experience in decision

and action” by portraying a “performative rather than deliberative version of *phronesis*” (86). Schwarze argues that *Helen* demonstrates such a clear connection between aesthetics and practical wisdom that *phronesis* is actually shown by Isocrates to be “enabled by aesthetically appealing discourses that attempt to influence decision and action” (88).

¹⁰⁷ In modern literature, Charles Dickens’ famous opening line, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” is perhaps one of the best-known examples of parataxis.

¹⁰⁸ The title’s “walls” refer to the upper atmospheric planetary winds in which the Tyrenni live.

¹⁰⁹ In one of the novel’s many critical inversions of sociocultural convention and normativity, on Tyree, it is the males—like Giadoc—who nurture and raise children.

¹¹⁰ As such, metaphor reminds us of rhetoric’s centrality to ontology. And as a specifically poetic device of “imaginative rationality,” it reminds us of the fundamental poetics and creative force in rhetoric. This is a creative force whose poetics rhetorically structure not only ontology and subjectivity through “metaphors we live by,” then, but transformations of subjectivity as well. This is a key point to keep in mind in understanding the centrality of metaphor to the transformative learning process that Miéville outlines.

¹¹¹ As Levine notes, “The aesthetic is part of a discourse of value: it is in this respect never dissociated from the personal, the social, and the political. But it allows the exploration of possibilities in ways no other modality does...that help construct a community” (20).

¹¹² I view Bruce-Novoa’s binary construct of chaos and order as problematic, particularly in its privileging of order over chaos, and see creative, transformative potential in disruption and disorder. What is productive for me here is his theorization of spatial connections between literature and lived experience.

¹¹³ Here, Vygotsky makes a key distinction between material technical tools, and psychological tools. Material technical tools “are used to bring about changes in other objects,” while “psychological tools can be used to direct the mind and behavior” and are “devices for influencing the mind and behavior of oneself or another” and “for mastering mental processes” (Daniels *Vygotsky* 15). This connection between material and psychological tools points to the possibility for active agency in the subjectivity-construction that emerges through interdependent, reciprocal relationships between subjectivity and culture.

¹¹⁴ Students must be challenged with a task that is just within their reach (with assistance), but that is not so far beyond their reach that they cannot achieve it even with help from the teacher (and will therefore grow frustrated), or that is so far beyond their reach that they are unable to draw on previously developed abilities. At the same time, if progressive tasks are too close to previously mastered abilities, students may feel unchallenged and grow bored and unmotivated by slow or no progress.

¹¹⁵ Again, the link is reciprocal and interdependent; most importantly, it is socially based. The pedagogical process is seen as a site of individual transformation that is shaped by collective social transformation, but at the same time, individual transformation is seen as a source of social transformation through the actions of the student working collectively with others. As with other interpretive models, the teacher's role is to develop ways of facilitating this mediational relationship between areas of action (individual and social) toward reciprocal interdependence through an understanding of and focus on the zone that both separates and connects them.

¹¹⁶ Recall that this approach of co-developing what he termed “*conscientização*” addresses the specifically psychological nature of banking education's colonization of reality. Through a Vygotskian move, *conscientização* shifts epistemological focus to the student's colonized reality as lived and experienced in community. At the heart of the Freirian model is a pharmacological grounding in the particular histories, experiences, social structures, spaces, and political situations, of a group or individual. As noted in my analysis of Gamboa's work in Chapter Four, it is the student's particular reality and experience of that reality that pharmacologically inform the pedagogical process of transformation.

¹¹⁷ Similarly, when presented with a task that can be started from multiple entry points, aphasics cannot complete the task because they “cannot find a starting point and [don't] know where to begin” (*Ibid.* 268), though they are able to complete a task with a clear beginning point. The echo here with my case study analysis of the linguistic limitations of the Arikkei Language in China Miéville's *Embassytown* is intentional.

¹¹⁸ In addition to excerpts of more canonical works by writers like Tomás Rivera, Alurista, and Rudolfo Anaya, the curriculum includes, for example, work by John Rechy and Oscar Zeta Acosta, as well as the *Love & Rockets* comics literature of Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez, work by Gloria Álvarez, and the avant-garde writing of Harry Gamboa, Jr. Falling somewhere between centrally canonical and canonically peripheral in my curriculum are writers like Gloria Anzaldúa, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Cherríe Moraga, and Alfred Arteaga.

¹¹⁹ In addition, the copies of Villa's chapters that I make available to students are purposely marked with my own margin notes, underlines, and observations. In a parallel meta-cognitive move, I similarly draw students' attention to these marks as a genre form

in themselves. After providing tips on productive annotation practices, I instruct them not only to pay careful rhetorical attention to my notes (what I note, the words I use, the kinds of questions I pose), but to bring their own copies of these and future readings to class with similar annotations of their own, thus encouraging a practice of mimicry and modeling. I highly discourage highlighter markers and instead promote the practice of active reading through annotation by providing demonstrations and examples of this.

¹²⁰ Vygotsky's description of the ZPD in terms of copying provides insight here into my use of guided modeling and mimicry here. He writes:

The child is able to copy a series of actions which surpass his or her own capacities, but only within limits. By means of copying, the child is able to perform much better when together with and guided by adults than when left alone, and can do so with understandings and independently. The difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help and the level of independently solved tasks is the zone of proximal development' (qtd. in Hedegaard 227-28)

¹²¹ All students are required to read the first chapter of the book and their own chapter, with other chapters optional.

¹²² Lee and Smagorinsky similarly highlight the kind of collaborative, social dimension of learning at work in group projects like the one above. Citing Wells' Vygotskian approach, they note that, "[L]earning takes place through a process of inquiry within a social group... In a community of learners, all participants—including those designated as teachers—engage in inquiry" (8).

¹²³ Again, like the *Rider* exercise, this fourth set of exercises is more preparatory in nature toward the final group project. These games are adapted directly from Boal's work. For an extensive set of Theater of the Oppressed performance exercises and games, see Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.

¹²⁴ It is important to note here that I purposely structure my course so that the Theater of the Oppressed workshop is one of the last activities of the term. This is because I have found that a certain level of trust and comfort must be established and maintained over time in order for students to more fully engage in the exercises with abandon and thus get the most out of it. In other situations, I have also had success in conducting one-time workshops with unfamiliar student groups. But for the purposes of my own course, which include the deliberate fostering of a strong sense of community and group collaboration over time through experiential activities, I find the workshop to work most effectively when conducted toward the end of the course.

¹²⁵ Here I apply the kind of Nietzschean "truthing/lie" dynamic at the heart of China Miéville's *Embassytown*, as discussed in Chapter Six.

¹²⁶ Significantly, this point is triggered when a lower floor, working-class resident drowns an upper-class (and upper-floor) resident's pet dog in the upper floor swimming pool. This act culminates tensions over upper floor pet owners blocking access to the swimming pool for children of the lower floor families.

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