

The 6th International Critical Management Conference
13 – 15 July 2009, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, UK

Stream 11: CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT: A PERSPECTIVE
FROM LATIN AMERICA

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**Critical Management Studies from Latin America? A Liberation
genealogy.**

Setting the Scene

The main challenges of the present paper point out the need of new approaches for what has been regarded as a critical position within management studies. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Critical Management Studies has been playing an increasing role within the field of academic management in European and North American Universities. CMS questions and challenges what they have called mainstream management contesting its self-declared neutrality and detachment from social and political affairs. Although CMS has carried out respectable efforts in order to denounce and enhance the dark sides of the practice and education of mainstream management their considerations and theoretical inspirations are still mainly based on Eurocentric and North American points of view. In that scenario, the cultural, political and historical context of Latin America cries out for a specific consideration.

Latin America as a subcontinent could be studied from various standpoints. It is not easy to summarize our intellectual traditions in a few lines, particularly because very different historical, cultural, religious and political issues have informed them. The history of Latin American critical thinking is wide and long, its route is riddled with permanent questions, contradictions and challenges, starting from the very question of its own identity. Emancipation” has been a crucial aspiration for Northern critical philosophies, but our own criticality is closer to “liberation”. It is that understanding that will be unraveled in this present reflection.

Liberation is a term widely present among our radical tradition. Apart from its particular articulation within some well identified theoretical and activist-type developments, namely the work of the Brazilian Paulo Freire in his Pedagogy of Liberation and the Argentinean Enrique Dussel with his Philosophy of Liberation, its origins can be traced back to the preliminary questions about the (im)possibilities for a Latin American Thinking.

My aim is to use the theoretical frame of Discourse Theory to explore the antagonisms built around the liberation concept, as well as, its radical possibilities in a current context in Latin America. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe work has set lucid contributions on discourse articulation and the constitutive role of social and political logics which have inspired a significant amount of political research. These fruitful theoretical and methodological achievements have been recently incorporated to organizational studies by no more than a dozen of scholars (see Contu 2004; Bridgman, 2004; Böhm, 2003). Although its contributions appear to be promising in terms of theoretical enrichment, its methodological novelty is still challenging its practitioners. This present work attempts to be a new contribution to this emergent field. In particular, I would like to articulate liberation as a resistance response facing a new form of oppression within current Latin American affairs; or in other words a new form of colonization: the colonization through managerial discourses.

Critical Management Studies

Critical Management Studies as a name was formalized with the publication of a book with the same title in 1992. Its authors, Mats Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, presented to the academic audience a series of articles which summarized almost a decade of endeavors oriented to developing a critical understanding of Management Studies as a field. Critical Management Studies, as an academic stream, is committed to critically reflecting about the practice and education of management as a field. This criticality is aimed at developing an emancipatory social agenda via the role that management plays within peoples lives. Far from accepting management as a technical tool oriented to achieving practical goals within an organization's performance, CMS is concerned with revealing its social and political implications and hence its power inequalities and oppressive representations. Moreover, CMS is not a cohesive body of knowledge; its inherent diversity comes from its different theoretical backgrounds. Even though Critical Theory has been quoted as its main theoretical animus (Alvesson & Willmott 1992, Grey & Willmott, 2005), other voices within the field have fallen back on Marxism, Foucauldian, feminist and post feminist approaches, post modernism and post -structuralist standpoints.

Critical Management Studies has developed interesting academic work denouncing the narrowness of traditional management as well as the negative and oppressive consequences of its practice. Notwithstanding, it is possible to say that the mentioned work has reached a deadlock in its desired political project which has faced difficulties in going beyond selective academic debates and thus achieving a significant influence upon management study and

practice. Theoretical constraining expressed through contested and contradictory ways of defining what 'critical' actually is, keeps the debate locked in a high, exclusive and closed conversation between privileged Eurocentric academic positions within critical and radical philosophical traditions.

CMS publicly challenges orthodoxy advocating for something different. This 'something different' is not just one voice against the enemy (Grey, 2005), differently it should be a type of action that has as a goal, namely the transformation of a social relation which constructs a subject in a subordination-type relation (Laclau & Mouffe 1985). In terms of Laclau and Mouffe, a relation of subordination is questioned only when this subordination is constituted as a relation based on oppression and thus it becomes the site for antagonism, in other words the site for a hegemonic struggle. It is only in terms of a different discursive formation that the differential positivity between subordinated categories could be subverted and then subordination constructed as oppression. This means that is not possible to have an oppressive relationship without the presence of a discursive 'exterior' which interrupts the subordination. As has been said, CMS has failed so far in constituting itself as an 'exterior' for mainstream management; rather it insists on two contradictory definitions of management, namely critical versus non-critical. This paper seeks to foreground the negativity that these relations have been constituted around, which in turn could subvert 'that' management as the only one we have available to us and finally allow us through the re-activation of its political character to re-think its themes.

For Laclau (1990: 39) the structure of social relations is constitutively incomplete or lacking, or, more pointedly, “every identity is dislocated”. Any identity lacks an essence and its meaning depends on its relationships with those identities from which are differentiated. Therefore, the concept of *constitutive outside* is defined as the externality that is a condition of existence of all objectivity. The notion of a dislocated identity is stressing its precarious fullness and radical incompleteness, thus mainstream management is an impossible object, which deserves being subverted or dislocated and not merely opposed or contradicted. A dislocated structure (management) cannot have just one centre. Dislocation implies a constitutive de-centering, which is a result of the presence of antagonistic forces. Social dislocation finally means the construction of new power centers. The response to dislocation is the reconstruction of the structure (management) by the antagonistic forces (plurality within CMS) through the articulation around new nodal points. Plurality within CMS means here the possibility to go beyond emancipatory Eurocentric philosophical approaches, new nodal points would imply to consider different forms of oppressions.

CMS as an academic stream has deployed its attempts in denouncing the normative, bureaucratic, and technological character of current management theory and practice. Through its copious theoretical writings, it has invited its colleagues as well as its students to challenge the norms governing management practices. Differently, I would like to propose that subjects should be invited to mobilize with reference to particular signifiers, signifiers that promise a fullness that is lacking in the subject and its practices. In that way, it

is possible to say that certain signifiers or linguistic expressions like reflexivity, denaturalization, anti-performativity, and even critical management, would function as names that stand in for the absent fullness of a dislocated community or life rather than positive entities representing just particular emancipator needs. Differently, they are metaphors with no corresponding facts – they are moments of naming in a radical sense – they strive to represent the failure of a signifying system or language. Ernesto Laclau calls these kinds of signifiers ‘empty signifiers’. In other words, CMS, far from being regarded as an already oppositional stance against orthodoxy in management, should be conceived as an *empty signifier*.

CMS as an empty signifier should be the place for a plurality of antagonisms that could go beyond sedimented and orthodoxal accounts of critiques and resistance. CMS as an empty signifier could embrace a large varieties of struggles which better represents a wide range of subjectivities and their own demands. The very terms of ‘critical’ and ‘resistance’ should be revisited with the understanding that there is no foundational knowledge, theoretical, cultural or political tradition that exhausts its themes. Critique and resistance have been constituted as a universal (anglosaxon) emancipatory needs, but what is critical and what is resistance beyond this northern/western articulation of CMS is still in silence.

Latin America's affairs

The history of Latin American thinking started as a question, namely, does a Latin American philosophy exist? This is not a whimsical question; it is inspired by a real concern about the authenticity and originality of our thinking. Philosophy started among us from zero, without any support from a vernacular intellectual tradition and also due to native thinking being left out of the Hispanic philosophic processes. Philosophy was carried by the Spanish, they came to us in order to conquer and dominate our lands, and they imported the intellectual tools of domination as well (Salazar Bondy, 1988). Thus, Latin-American thinking has had an exogenous and fluctuant character strongly dependant on European and North American influences. In this way it is possible to say that the so called Western thinking has permeated our thinking, in other words, its changes coincide with Western philosophy fluctuations due to its permanent influence over us. Asking about our own thinking is, first of all, to state our diversity (Zea 1989). This question starts from our own perception as being different. Latin America has kept its unity as a historical phenomenon, but why has it been so difficult to show our difference through a philosophical system of our own? Asking about our own thinking is finally asking about its conditions of (im)possibility.

The question about whether or not a proper Latin American philosophy exists has been the nodal point of L.A. philosophy. That old debate has been constructed around the question of whether Latin America is developing its own productions or if they are just adapting foreign frameworks to make sense of its

social and historical processes. The Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea (1989) contributed to that polemic asserting that “*we live in a world that already exists*”. In this paper, I assume this assertion as an inspirational starting point, which gives to my articulation a particular shape that constitutes its main concepts and relationships. Maybe the most important aspect is that an assumption as such implies a consideration of the very identity of Latin America, and its inhabitants, as a result of an external designation. As presented above, Latin America as a subcontinent and as a culture acquired its existence since its ‘incorporation’ to the western world after the Spanish conquest. Following Mignolo (2007), it is possible to say that America was never a continent to discover, it was an *invention* forged during the process of European colonial history and the expansion of western ideas and institutions. The invention of America implied the appropriation of the continent as well as its integration into the Euro-Christian paradigm. Discovery and invention are not just two different interpretations of the same phenomenon, they are two different paradigms.

Before that *invention* the cultural production of our original people lacked an evident relationship that could be regarded as unity; quite the contrary, its features appear so different and so dispersed that it is not possible to talk about cultural and historical proper developments. Even worse, original people’s trace almost disappeared after the Spanish invasion and thus renders its study and re-visitation difficult where there are still relevant gaps within its recuperation. It is crucial to bear in mind that Latin America was invented, which implies that before that issue its very existence as such is questioned. If not questioned, our existence was invalidated, discarding all our construction through the

process of a planned indoctrination and enculturation in foreign influences. To date, our original developments remain as isolated examples of stubborn pride. Latin America, as a name and as an identity, entails subordination as an ontological element of constitution, namely the 'colonial injury' (Mignolo 2007). The 'colonial injury', physical or psychological, is a consequence of a hegemonic discourse which weakens the subjectivity of the other, regarding them as objects supported by the self-designated privilege of classification (Mignolo, 2007).

Subordination, passivity and dependence, are nouns that can characterize the way in which Latin American thinking has built its tradition. Our sub continental affairs have been approached from de-colonialist stances (Mignolo, 2007), have been explained by the Theory of Dependence (Cardoso & Faletto 1969), and have been raised by the 'liberation' utopia embedded in the Theology of Liberation (Gutierrez 1971), Psychology of Liberation (Martín Baró 1998), Pedagogy of Liberation (Freire, 2000) and the Philosophy of Liberation (Dussel, 1980). It is this term, liberation, which concerns this reflection.

Liberation: genealogy of a concept

Liberation, as a concept and as an emancipatory ideal has risen within a particular articulation of questions and problems that reveal the contextual issues which inform its own emergence. Its conditions of possibility should be re-visited and re-articulated before integrating its meanings with a different contextual problem as the questions presented in this paper. Special caution is

necessary in order to avoid a simple 'importation' of a concept which could evidence an essentialist problematic or reductionist assumptions that are not compatible with this reflection's ontological presuppositions. Within the theoretical and methodological framework of this paper, namely a strategy which has drawn the writings of Laclau and Mouffe and its methodological implications mainly developed by Glynos and Howarth (2007), the use of concepts that have emerged in different traditions of thought should be brought within the fold of our framework through a particular form of exploration. This process will involve the closely inter-related moments of reactivation, deconstruction, commensuration and articulation (ibid). In other words, this is an ontological inquiry journey.

Reactivating Liberation

Drawing on Husserl, reactivation involves a return to the 'original' sorts of questions and problems that were addressed in the development of a theoretical concept. First and foremost I will borrow from the work of Roberto Rivera (2004) the notion of Liberation Discourses to label the endeavours of Freire and Gutierrez, adding the work of Martín Baró and Dussel under the same umbrella. These four, from different sides of Latin American social practices, aimed to challenge dominant discourses and the policies of institutions which are associated with them (ibid). More concretely, they seek to launch alternative frameworks and methodologies to advance political, social and economic emancipations considering the contextual reality of Latin America as their foundation and values. Any single theoretical development is an

experience in itself, all of them broad and deep, each of them capturing relevant issues of our historical and cultural context; thus, any attempt to expose all of them within the boundaries of just one paper, would be an enormous effort. Being pushed by focus and, time I decided to focus on Freireian pedagogical work and Dussel theorization which offers a wide umbrella to posit liberation as general practice able to inform any social attempt.

Deconstructing Liberation

Deconstruction is not a 'method', it is not something that can be easily positioned, reproduced and examined. Instead, it is a movement that always escapes definition. This movement implies questioning any truth by showing its limits as a fixed position. The aim of deconstruction in this section is to lay bare any ambiguity or exclusion presented by liberation concepts as they have been developed by my chosen authors. Just by weakening any essentializing projections into the concept and/or exploring repressed possibilities foreclosed by reductionist tendencies is it possible to avoid the temptation to merge any inconsistent assumptions.

Freire and Dussel's liberation attempts coincide in stating the need for a response to the Latin America colonization from a counter point of view. Reflecting over the Latin American situation they both attempt to build a local response to the wide and intrusive influence exerted over our culture by foreign colonizers. This influence, in their terms, is evident along historical, cultural, philosophical, political, economic and educational affairs which render a

conception of Latin American people as oppressed and marginalized. The colonization process started with America 'being discovered' in the fifteenth century strongly led by Spain and the Catholic Church. This Iberian power was replaced by other European colonizers such as England, France and Germany, which exerted their influence mainly through philosophy and economy. Nowadays, and due to worldwide historical developments, the power has shifted to the USA which strongly determines the way in which our subcontinent articulates its (lack of) presence and (secondary) participation within global affairs. Although the said power has passed through different hands, the Latin American situation has always been the same, namely that of a marginalized follower.

Both authors share the emphasis on re-visiting historical processes in order to identify the conditions of possibility for our current position as oppressed beings and, as a consequence, state that liberation is our best way of articulating Latin American resistance. Their proposition can legitimately be understood as a response to the colonization problem for Latin American people. However, the initial formulation of a theoretical response to that issue may in certain aspects be problematic. My intention here is to disclose their essentialist form of reasoning as well as their ensnarement in a reductionist framework.

Freire and Dussel focus their endeavours on enhancing the identities of Latin American people as oppressed. This subjectivity, constructed in opposition to the foreign colonizer, makes oppression essential as the main feature of Latin Americans where oppression is an attribute of the poor.

Among his writings, Paulo Freire was elaborating his understanding of the oppressed. He always mentions them as synonymous with popular class, peasants, proletarians, the people, poor and finally an oppressed class. Grouping them within a social class, Freire opposes their identity against privileged or dominant classes. Marxist theoretical influences were widely recognized by Freire, sharing with Marx a class reductionism as the main historical core.

On the other hand, Enrique Dussel (1980) clearly states that *“liberation means....liberation of peripheral nations and power seizing from popular classes”*. Dussel also mentions oppressed as popular masses, the poor, the people; he adds:

“it is necessary to specify the people notion within a social formation.....people, within peripheral nations, really are oppressed classes, peasant classes, emergent working classes in industries and the marginal groups. Oppressed or marginal classes are those who embodied the maximum exteriority within their culture; just as they can represent a real and new alternative to humanity due to their meta-physical alterity”. (Dussel 1980)

Also, Dussel incorporates new identities within his description of the oppressed. Maybe one of his main contributions is to explicitly address women's marginalization (attention paid to his Erotic moment of alterity practice) as well as ethnicity issues within Latin American affairs, but they are equated into the poor classes when he raises their claims.

Again, following the work of Ernesto Laclau (2005) it is possible to sustain that these conceptions of poor/oppressed are rooted in the limitation of the ontological tools currently available to those political analyses. As I have stated before, our two authors group under the name of 'oppressed' all Latin America's poor people which they equated with marginal, peasant and low classes viewed as synonymous. The oppressed are constituted against the 'oppressor' label which embodies the same foreign colonizers, rich people and local oligarchies. Liberation discourses, so far, are strongly embedded within a dichotomy such as people versus oligarchy or oppressed versus oppressor. Laclau (2005) states that there is in these dichotomies a simplification of the political space, all social singularities tend to group themselves around one or the other of the poles of the dichotomy. These sorts of dichotomies are rooted in an ontology that overlaps the ontic, assuming that labelled groups have a positive existence per se, a priori to any discursive formation. These given groups lay on the assumption that they are the expression (the epiphenomenon) of a social reality different from itself (Laclau 2005). For example, Dussel's definition of his meta-physics of alterity implies the *epiphany* of the Other, this other being the oppressed one. This epiphany means the *manifestation* of the Other, an other that has always been there. 'Always' not in terms of their existence as such, 'always' in terms of their constitution as oppressed. Thus, liberation texts make it possible to regard the historical conditions of possibility of Latin American oppressed, as a 'natural' consequence of a colonizing determinist process which shapes the very identity of the poor. This poor's given subjectivity which constitute them as oppressed

colonizes all oppression meanings cancelling out any other possible articulation.

As well as that assumed closed identity, liberation's current conceptualization of the oppressed implies a teleological definition of their aims, considering it as the fulfilment of the 'real humanization'. Freire (2000: 32), states:

“Humanization and de-humanization, within history, within a real, concrete and objective context, are the possibilities for man (sic). Moreover, if both are possibilities, from our point of view, just the first one answered what we call ‘men’s (sic) vocation’.....That is the humanist and historical oppressed task: liberate themselves and liberate their oppressors”.

Within Dussel's (1980) work, this ideal of 'real man vocation' is presented as 'the new man' aspiration: *“the liberation project.....it is already in the people's conscience; it is the meta-physics a-priori of the process, it is what a long struggle tends to”.* If the oppressed already had a defined identity, their objectives were established also in advance. It is this essentialized conception of the oppressed identity and mission which I attempt to subvert in order to mobilize Latin American liberation as a geopolitical place for enunciation (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Furthermore, what differentiates Dussel's teleology with Freire's development is the assertion of the former about the never-ending feature of history: *“just*

affirming that what is divine is Other than any system possible, it is possible to avoid system's fetishism, neither present nor future, because it does not exist any state that could be the end of history" (Ibid). In that way Dussel's articulation of a contingent and open history process represents a key point of closeness with Discourse Theory assumptions. Moreover, Dussel fails in noticing that his Other should not embody the same subjectivity among different systems. In other words, speaking from Discursive Theory's point of view, the other as an impossible subject would lack of a priori determinations founding her conditions of possibility in every single articulation.

At this stage, oppressed liberation movements have been relegated to a mere epiphenomenal level. The only things we could talk about are the social *contents*, in our case class and the poor, which these oppressions express. Questions about the *form* of these 'liberations' became redundant; other possible political alternatives or aims have been excluded. Confronted with aprioristic and positive identities and aims for the oppressed, all of them constituted as necessary consequences of a particular historical process silence any question about why that form of expression is necessary. My statement is that not only poor people could be regarded as oppressed within current Latin America affairs, and particularly within the relevance of managerial discourses among our current social practices. Liberation attempts are still meaningful for our cultures, but a widening subversion of their contents and forms appear necessary today. In other words, its particular embodiment may be over determined by other forms of struggle.

Commensurating Liberation

My third step within this liberation genealogy is devoted to commensuration liberation. Strictly speaking, commensuration is oriented to reworking the current liberation concepts so as to render them compatible with the ontological presuppositions of my present proposition. My commensuration passage is informed by Laclau's work on populism (2005), where the author deploys his position before the emergence of 'people' within any articulatory hegemony attempting to establish a new political frontier.

Laclau's first theoretical standpoint is to shift the focus of the political analysis, from the *group* (as the social agent) to the *demand* (the socio-political claim). This shift allows our analysis to overcome the assumption that liberation is the sort of mobilization of an *already* constituted group, that is, as the expression (epiphenomenon) of a social reality different from itself (Laclau 2005). The aim here is to regard the 'oppressed' as a relation between social agents, where this very relationship constitutes them as a group; differently to what has been happening, an 'oppressed' identity as an ideological expression of the a priori Latin American identity. Thus, 'oppressed' becomes a political category, it is not just a datum of the social structure any more, which coincides with the objective of my genealogy of liberation, namely the proposition of a new agency out of a plurality of heterogeneous elements.

The smallest unit, from which Laclau recommends to begin, is the category of 'social demand'. Any social demand starts from a request which later turns

into a claim. The process by which a social demand constitutes a new social agent could be presented as follows: requests were turned into claims through the formation of an internal frontier, a widening chasm separating the system from the people. In Laclau's terms a demand which remains isolated is a *democratic demand*; on the contrary, a plurality of demands which through their equivalential articulation constitute a broader social subjectivity is a *popular demand*. The latter starts, at very incipient level and constitutes the 'people' as a potential historical actor.

Thus, regarding 'people', or in our case 'oppressed' as the constitutive result of social demands allows subverting the traditional meaning of that *group* within Latin American affairs offering the possibility of a new articulatory inscription. Thus, oppression as the locus for the liberation claims would exceed the frontier between peripheral poor marginalized and the foreign colonizer/oppressor as such involving new political frontiers, which re-embrace oppression, constituting it as a different sort of relationship between new social agents. That proposition is the main focus of the following step of this genealogy, namely a re-articulation of liberation.

Re- Articulating Liberation

Let me start this stage with a Laclau's quotation, quite long but necessary to sustain the following developments in this section:

“The passage from one hegemonic formation to another will always involve a radical break, a creation ex nihilo. It is not that all elements of an emerging configuration have to be entirely new, but rather that the articulating point, the partial object around which the hegemonic formation is reconstituted as a new totality, does not derive its central role from any logic already operating within the preceding situation.....the genuine ethical act, is always subversive, it is never simply the result of an ‘improvement’ or a ‘reform’.what is crucial for the emergence of the people as a new historical actor is that the unification of a plurality of demands in a new configuration is constitutive and not derivative.” (Laclau, 2005: 228)

By re-articulating liberation I am not meaning an individual proposition of a new historical actor within our liberation tradition; for sure this is an enormous discursive task far from my own personal reach through paper writing. Furthermore, what I intend to develop is a new reading of these philosophical insights, drawing them in order to address current managerial discourses. In that way, I would like to articulate liberation as a resistance response facing a new form of oppression within current Latin American affairs; or in other words a new form of colonization: the colonization through managerial discourses. As we have seen, liberation, as a horizon, has been constructed as the aspiration (or demand) of a wide group of people labelled as the Latin American oppressed. Radicalizing the meaning of oppression, originally essentialized as the feature of the poor, I attempted to inscribe its very experience beyond the particularities of that social agent. Oppression, meaning the relationship that

constitutes a colonized Latin American dominated by a foreign (northern-western) colonizer, is not exhausted by the poor identity claim. Radicalized, oppression is now an open room which allows other Latin American identifications as well.

I sustain that managerial discourse has colonized almost all spheres of our current way of life constituting a precondition for an organized society, for social progress and economic growth. Its worldwide hegemonic dissemination has found in Latin America a very good 'follower' particularly supported by our political, social and economic dependence on the USA. Mainstream managerial discourses, which offer us the greatest wish of being part of the First World or developed countries, push us to pursue its ideals, intending to convince that these ideals are ours, and intending as well, that we already have the tools to succeed, through hard work, in a society that is presented as essentially meritocratic.

Mainstream management is just a new form of colonizing. As its former predecessors, mainstream management invites us to 'act out what others think' dangerously disguised as a neutral and democratic attempt which presents itself as 'the end of the history'. Within this new form of colonization, Latin Americans are still being colonized, as our two authors generally presented; but what I would like to emphasize now is a new form of oppression. This oppression is not just the poor's oppression; it is the oppression of every single Latin American which supports dominating discourses, unaware of our own participation within reproductive practices. The 'new oppressed' are not merely

the poor, on the contrary, they are 'privileged Latin Americans' that have access to managerial education as well as management positions. This is a marginalized position that 'failed' in identifying itself as 'the other', co-opting with a logic that promises a success which never arrives. We are marginal now not only because of our material poverty or our economical dependency, we are now oppressed due to our philosophical/theoretical poverty and our educational dependency. Both sorts of poverties are embedded in our reproduction and repetition of foreign contents, means and ends belonged to this managerial ideology fully presented among our management education curriculum. My 'new oppressed' is a large group of Latin Americans to which I belong. All of us are educated within a foreign understanding of doing business, which consequently, organizes our social life. All of us, embracing management as a promise of development fail to recognize our secondary position: without us, the third world, the first world is simply not possible.

I would like to explore the possibility of an oppressive relationship that is constituting a 'new other'. This new other is not the poor, is not the peasant, and is not a lower class. This new other shares among them a marginalized position within this world 'that already exists' but it is an other that has been co-opted with the system that marginalized them. My invitation is to construct this new other and from this the path towards our liberation, another nodal point for articulating critical approaches to mainstream management.

Concluding: tasks for the future

The concerns that originated this reflection make me wonder about the current logics sustaining management in Latin America and its (im)possibilities for critical standpoints. To unravel this tangled web that lies behind that question I re-visited the recent developments of critical studies. Despite that apparent lack of critical considerations for our local implementation, the sole idea of mimicking again foreign intellectuals and utopian ideals does not make sense for an attempt that intends to challenge Northern/Western influences. Drawing upon Discourse Theory as a general framework and exploring the possibilities of our own radical philosophical development, I propose radical possibilities through the rehabilitation of a rearticulated notion of liberation.

Those voices, our voices, loose and fragile yet resistant, constitute the embodiment of subversion and the condition of possibility for a new antagonism. My option to rehabilitate liberation philosophical tradition as an opportunity to articulate our Latin American radical counter-position to mainstream management is in itself an attempt to listen to the voices that have 'failed' against triumphant mainstream management. Liberation was exactly the option that has *not achieved to be*, as Laclau has suggested dealing with. Furthermore, liberation is just one more attempt to fill the ever-present emptiness of critical approaches.

That normative suggestion for a local understanding of critical management studies is just a proposition which aspires to guarantee enough consideration

from local dissident voices to give way to a wider reflective process. Much more research and debate should be raised in order to install a fruitful discussion, with the need of putting at the forefront the political constitution of business education as a social practice within Latin America. This approach also requires a continual dialogue with those who sustain traditional conceptions of business, even if disagreements prove to be difficult or hard to overcome. More relevant, our Chilean experience should collaborate and enrich the work of few Latin American critical scholars who already have started a critical and local dialogue. This is an actual (im)possibility to overcome “*siglos de colonialismo (español) que no en balde nos han hecho cobardes*”¹ in order to supersede ‘*nuestra nada de la historia universal*’².

¹ Silvio Rodríguez, cuban singer, lyrics.

² Fito Paez, argentinean singer, lyrics.

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