

ESSAY | PEER REVIEWED

# Milestones in Conversation: Between Music Therapy and the Decolonial Perspective

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## Abstract

The article proposes a dialogue between music therapy and the decolonial perspective based on three “milestones” that guide critical and situated reflection. The first milestone addresses the contributions of Aníbal Quijano and his notion of the coloniality of power to rethink the categories of health, subject, and society from Latin America. The second milestone develops the idea of “landscape as texture,” inspired by Rodolfo Kusch’s American aesthetics, as an analytical tool for music therapy clinics, highlighting the sensitive and cultural dimension of the territory. The third milestone presents experiences in Argentine Patagonia, where the figure of the “paisano” and the “bread-shaped city” reveal tensions between roots, identity, and the effects of the coloniality of power. The text concludes by inviting the music therapy community and health workers to build a critical, sensitive practice situated in Latin American contexts.

**Keywords:** music therapy; decolonial perspective; American aesthetics; landscape as texture; community mental health; Patagonia

## Editorial Comment

What are the landscapes we inhabit like? In what ways are they part of our professional practices? How do the spaces in which we are born and raised shape us as individuals? What happens to us, in our most intimate selves, when we are forced to migrate? Guillermo Castelo’s essay leaves us with these questions and allows us to recognize the power of music to express the experiences of the inhabitants of some communities in the northwestern region of Argentine Patagonia in relation to their ancestral knowledge.

## Introduction

The invitation to write an article for the Voices journal prompted me, personally, to reflect on the different decolonial perspectives that exist in Latin America. As a 2021 graduate of the Inter-American Open University in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, I have been analyzing the different contributions, scope, and links that Aníbal Quijano's decolonial perspective has with our disciplinary knowledge and practice.

In this invitation from Voices, I find the possibility of writing an essay, which I structure with three milestones, that is, characteristic or habitual orientation signs on Argentine roads, signs that mark different stages. I do this with the purpose of being able to establish a conversation of thought between music therapy and Quijano's decolonial perspective, with the intention of thinking about possible directions.

In this sense, the first milestone stops us at two initial questions: Why is it interesting for music therapy to have a dialogue with the decolonial perspective? And what are we talking about when we talk about decoloniality? Starting from these concerns, I develop a brief outline of who Aníbal Quijano was, a reference point for a perspective that is within the four vocabularies of critical thinking that have managed to go beyond the limits of the continent to think about the global world from different fields of knowledge and disciplines. Based on the outline of the theoretical body of work left by the Peruvian sociologist, this essay invites us to reflect on what society, what subject, and what health we think about when we set up our clinic.

The second milestone starts from the premise that, in reviewing the historical processes and projects of the peoples of the continent prior to the coloniality of power, it understands that the forms chosen by them to narrate their stories are made up of aesthetic, symbolic, and sensitive compositions found in expressive acts such as dances, sounds, weaving, and pottery, among many others, which allow them to share the unfolding of life and moments of health in community. These chosen forms differ from written text, which serves as a means of systematization and logical-rational dissemination of information derived from colonial processes. In this sense, the invitation is to think about how music therapy can accompany health-illness-care processes from other narratives that coexist with the hegemonic medical practice in health. Pausing at this milestone enables the construction of a category of analysis that I call "the landscape as texture," which aims to contribute to clinical analysis in music therapy. It is a tool for observation and listening situated in our profession, which allows us to respond to the felt needs of the subject, those that occur in a landscape traversed by a multiplicity of historical and cultural dimensions.

The third milestone marks a specific experience in my training process at the Interdisciplinary Community Mental Health Residence in the province of Chubut, Esquel headquarters, Argentina. Here I put into practice what has been constructed in the previous milestones as an epistemic vocabulary for thinking about music therapy practice. I propose the construction of the "Paisano" as a historical subject of Patagonia, and I do so based on the contributions that Aníbal Quijano brings in his reinterpretation of the notion of race. This milestone brings us to a halt in front of the narrative of the migratory processes forced by the evictions from the villages and rural localities of the northwest of the province of Chubut during the period of the construction of the Argentine State, analyzed from the category of "landscape as texture." This category was born from a process of participatory action research and intervention project within the framework of the first year of the aforementioned Residency.

Finally, the paper presents a section of final considerations, in which the music therapy collective is invited to reflect on the contributions that can be integrated into the field of music therapy when working from a decolonial perspective and from the aesthetics of the American.

## **Milestone I: Contributions to Thinking about Music Therapy Practice from the Decolonial Perspective of Aníbal Quijano**

We are at the first milestone. This signpost on our journey leads us to two initial questions. On the one hand, why is it necessary for music therapy to engage with the decolonial perspective? On the other hand, what are we talking about when we talk about decoloniality?

It is important to begin with the second question and turn to a school of thought that has emerged from sociology and made significant contributions to various disciplines such as anthropology, semiotics, aesthetics, and many others. We are referring to the coloniality of power and knowledge (Quijano, 2000, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014).

The coloniality of power and knowledge has the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano as its main reference point, and his writings are one of the four vocabularies that, together with the pedagogy of the oppressed, liberation theology, and dependency theory, managed to cross the borders of the continent to rethink the global world and, specifically, the understanding of the whole of America (Segato, 2018). By saying that this perspective is a vocabulary, we aim to position it as an epistemic line that has revised and conceptualized notions such as race, coloniality/modernity, and decoloniality, among many others.

The proposal to bring music therapy into conversation with Quijano stems from recognizing him as someone who constructed an organic way of thinking that contrasted with the systematic. As Quijano himself said, his interest was in ensuring that his thinking was not a theory but a perspective, thus postulating a way of looking at society and history, inviting us to see the world anew, inviting us to a “decolonial turn,” an epistemic shift in the way we see reality. His theoretical perspective proposes a reorientation of our view toward social movements and political struggle, as well as toward the construction of critical academic thought.

We recognize the significant contributions made by Aníbal Quijano, but the important thing in this milestone is to focus on two of them in order to bring them into dialogue with our disciplinary knowledge. First, we will focus on the one that places not social class but the notion of race at the center of coloniality. Second, we will examine the contribution that posits that the coloniality of power is the underlying structure of Western/modern civilization. In Assis Clímaco’s (2014) compilation of Quijano’s work, we find his text “Coloniality of Power and Social Classification,” in which the author invites us to revisit the idea of race. This notion has determined the course of Western history, forming a category of analysis that proposes to “re-originalize” the world and invites us to rethink the plurality of historical subjects in which our disciplinary practice is situated. In this sense, race no longer becomes a category of ethnic classification and an instrument of social domination, but rather a way of reading living bodies, as a people and as a collective; a possibility of giving a name to the large number of people who recognize themselves as *non-white* and who have been suppressed by the classificatory patterns of the coloniality of power, which has wiped out memories and knowledge. In the text “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” Quijano (1993, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014) tells us that the coloniality of power is the underlying structure of Western/modern civilization. This statement leads him to believe that without coloniality, the historical project of modernity would not exist and, as a consequence, neither would the nation states and material relations we have today.

Based on what has been said so far, I propose reviewing three concepts that I consider important when thinking about our professional practice in the field of music therapy: health, the subject, and society. Coloniality underlies our practice because it operates hidden from power, secretly. A clear example of this are the broad models and manuals that train us to think about health in healthcare systems and their public policies around surveillance and education for prevention and health promotion, which often result in a

lack of real participation by populations in their health processes and which, just as often, leave out the multiplicity of popular and ancestral knowledge that requires other contexts and materials.

These ideas are related to the first concern: why is it interesting for music therapy to engage with the decolonial perspective? As professionals in the field of health and mental health, it is interesting to ask questions about how we configure our clinical practice and what subject we think about. And while these questions may seem obvious, these central notions are often shaped by rhythms and perceptions permeated by the coloniality of power, which underlies Eurocentric theoretical frameworks and health care proposals that are divorced from the felt needs of the community. Our practices are situated in a context, a soil, that often invites us to position ourselves in order to be consistent with the plurality of historical-cultural planes that shape it. Specifically, Latin America places in that soil the depth of knowledge and thought that differs from what is proposed to us by health institutions and our academic institutions.

From a decolonial perspective, in “The ‘indigenous movement’ and pending issues in Latin America” (Quijano, 2006, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014), the author proposes to investigate the notion of the historical subject constructed by the nation-state and recovers the knowledge and historical positions that peasant, indigenous, and Afro-descendant subjects offer for an understanding of America. These contributions invite music therapists to broaden the dimensions we take into account when considering the question of for which subject we are constructing a space for health. Questioning the notion of the historical subject constructed by the nation-state, which renders peasants, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants invisible, leads us to think about how society is articulated from the perspective of these historical subjects. Here we find the plurality of indigenous languages and worldviews that we know as Abya Yala, Lof, or Diasporas, to mention just a few of the terms with which different peoples and communities name their territory and themselves. Visualizing these pluralities of expression enables us to make the decolonial shift, in the manner of a historical review of our disciplinary knowledge and practice, when thinking about intervention strategies.

In the same vein, Quijano explores the subject and society and proposes “Good living?: between ‘development’ and the Des/Coloniality of power” (2011, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014), to explore the notion of Health that, from *Sumak Kawsay* (living well), is expressed in some indigenous peoples as an alternative to the social life proposed by coloniality/modernity. Taking this notion as a contribution can be seen reflected in the constitutional reforms of the Plurinational States of Bolivia and Ecuador. Integrating the contributions of the decolonial perspective into the notion of health requires us to make a perceptual shift in our interventions, questioning constructed objectives and strategies, and to listen to the subjects’ own historical projects and processes before making use of the health system.

Pausing at this first milestone is an invitation to approach Aníbal Quijano’s decolonial perspective as a music therapy collective and to find in his thinking the contributions that allow us to rethink the configuration of our clinic and disciplinary knowledge.

## **Milestone II: Contributions from the Aesthetics of the American. The Landscape as the Texture of a Clinical Analysis in Music Therapy**

We have reached the second milestone of this journey, where we will pause to reflect on the different ways in which the peoples of America carry out their historical processes and projects. The proposal here is to observe these ways from an American aesthetic, thinking of this category as a contribution to our music therapy toolbox in accompanying the health processes of communities.

In agreement with Altamiranda (2015), it is important to understand that there are many ways to construct a line of thought in music therapy. In the history of the profession in Argentina, each educational institution has favored a different line of thought from which to approach the discipline's practice. In my case, I choose to construct a personal position based on the perceived needs of the spaces I inhabit as a professional, and I do so from the theory of complexity (Morin, 1990). From there, I conceive of music therapy as proposed by my colleague Maeyaert (2017), "as a construction of thought that supports a health approach and a methodology conceived from art" (p. 96), taking art as a territory of free expression, to be constructed and given meaning; art that enables the inquiry and production of the sensitive world of those with whom we work. It is from this position that I observe the configurations of those unique forms that show how each person inhabits the world. Considering the singularities that locate the subject in their quality of being and existing, with the possibility that these forms may change or continue in what happens, leads us to contemplate the actions that locate them as a subject of rights in relation to the care of their health.

I also start from the premise of visualizing the different ways that the peoples of the South American continent chose to narrate and remain in the face of the colonality of power and knowledge. There are multiple archives and works that, through written text, audiovisual material, or recordings, enable us to take this historical journey. Some examples can be found in popular songs from the continent compiled and performed by singers such as Violeta Parra, Atahualpa Yupanqui, and Leda Valladares; documentation of sound expressions and studies of the organology of materials and symbols systematized by ethnomusicologists such as Isabel Aretz (1977) at INIDEF (Center for Sociocultural Research of Venezuela), and Pérez Bugallo's Illustrated Catalog of Argentine Musical Instruments (2008), among others. The expressive choices that peoples make invite us to think about other ways of completing and understanding the history of our continent. The forms we refer to can be found in the materialization and construction of images, carriers of multiple aesthetics, with the aim of narrating and interpreting social and communal organization. One of the works that brings us closer to visualizing these materializations is that of Guaman Poma de Ayala, analyzed by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui from the perspective of the Sociology of Image (2015). Other productions can be recognized in the construction of textiles and pottery, or in the movement of dances; and all of them carry an aesthetic that is a unique symbolic power and tool of the continent. We observe these choices and wonder why the expressive act endures and continues to be chosen when telling the story.

To answer this question, it is important to pause and think: what are we talking about when we talk about aesthetics? And, consequently, is there such a thing as an American aesthetic? Analyzing the ways in which the history of the continent is narrated from the perspective of its peoples invites us to go beyond the question, inquiring into its unique character and thinking about an American aesthetic, positioning ourselves as music therapists to accompany these other narratives that take place in the territories where we practice. To discuss the notion of aesthetics in music therapy, I draw on the words of Rodríguez Espada (2020), who posits that "aesthetics derives from a Greek adjective, *aisthetos*, which means to perceive through the senses" (p. 234). Understanding this notion from this etymological approach suggests that we make an epistemological shift, one that moves away from a value-based appreciation in the field of art constructed in modernity/coloniality, which assumes some truth to the expressions that occur in the clinical phenomenon of music therapy. The shift proposed by the author states that "An aesthetic IS. There is no origin, no reason, it is not true, it is not false, it is not beautiful, it is not ugly, it has no yesterday or tomorrow, it feeds itself and engenders itself. (...) An aesthetic is a path to meaning" (Rodríguez Espada, 2020, p. 241). This shift challenges us to observe and listen to the expressive act that takes place in our disciplinary practice,

giving it a paradoxical reading of what is produced; one that allows us, as health workers, to ask questions about whether that aesthetic brings a sense of relief or suffering to the subjects or communities we serve.

Investigating, from an aesthetic perspective, the paths toward the construction of meanings chosen by the peoples of the continent, which are materialized in expressive acts, invites us to ask ourselves whether they carry something unique, specific to their situated character. In search of answers, we will draw on the contributions of Argentine philosopher Rodolfo Kusch. In his work "Planteo de un arte americano" (2007), this thinker explores the functionality of art on the continent, concluding that it is used as a form of confession: "that first cry that bursts forth when the ancient biological unity of a man mutilated by excess consciousness is reestablished. It is the cry that tries to cover up technique, intelligence, and civic pomp" (p. 777). Vindicating this confessional nature leads us to think of art as a clinical territory for approaches to health. When listening to the confession, we will be interested in inquiring about the beginning of the expressions and choices that people make in order to materialize their actions, asking them about the meanings they perceive in that expressive construction, as a preliminary step to analyzing the final product: "The disinherited who have nothing, the amorphous mass that vegetates, may confess, because only they 'are' in America, and in that 'being' they know the path to health, that is, to an art such as confession" (p. 778).

Following this construction of meaning about postulating American art, the question arises: What, in this confession, is the aesthetic character conceived from America? Kusch (2007) warns us: "The American excludes form and pleasure and assumes the amorphous and the sinister" (p. 782). Here, the Argentine philosopher argues that the observation of expressive acts has an aesthetic of an "amorphous" and "dark" nature, these being two characteristics of the first level of American aesthetics that we must take into account for our analysis as music therapists: the aesthetics of the monstrous. At this level, the vital is posed against what later takes shape as the social body in its interactions with otherness, whether in its communal organization or in the symbolic understanding of life in society. The aesthetic is characterized by being "amorphous"; the perception of the senses seeks to articulate itself in order to then construct some semantic norm as a confession: What is sinister about the aesthetic when analyzing this confession from America? For Kusch (2007), "indigenous art arises from human terror in the face of inhuman space, as a bloody and tremendous crystallization of that constant state of being on the brink of death and annihilation" (p. 793). In America, this tension between the vital and the social is a construction of meaning in terms of perception and survival in the face of the inhuman.

The second level of American aesthetics is that of "horror." If we analyze the aesthetics of the macabre, we see that the confession of the indigenous people in America produces an amorphous expressive act, without a pre-established form or space, due to human horror in the face of an inhuman otherness. The inhuman here is thought of as everything that exceeds the limits of control and power, displacing the idea of an anthropocentric world to propose a more complex, non-human idea, in which "the human" is only a mere part of the whole. This second level of aesthetics brings us to a crucial point, to the immensity and uncertainty of not being able to have a pre-established form, or at least to the tension of existing forms in the face of uncertainty and chance.

So far, we have an aesthetic of the dark, amorphous, born of the horror that the human feels in the face of the inhuman. We will now approach the third level of American aesthetics: that of "space-thing." If we think that aesthetics is perceiving through the senses, we can investigate what those perceptions are that the subject has about the space and context in which they are immersed. Kusch (2007) conceives of the inhuman as space-thing, inviting us to think about the aesthetic features contained in everything that presents itself as outside the human when analyzing a confession as an expressive act. Thinking from a Latin American perspective, we could say that space-thing resembles the

notion of landscape, if we understand the latter as the soil where our lives take root or are uprooted. This notion can serve as a starting point for discussing everything inhuman, such as mountains, rivers, fauna, etc. Space-thing and landscape establish the tension between the vital and the social, between the inhuman and the human, and broaden our perception as a human species of the elements and materials that surround us and the multiplicity of senses in which we are immersed.

The landscape is subjectivizing; it is in its roots in the soil that cultural subjectivity is produced, carrying identity and aesthetic traits. Its immensity is frightening, uncontrollable, and immerses us in something unspeakable. It is in the face of this fear that the expressive act in America takes place, formalized in a language that symbolically represents it, responding to the sensations it produces. Inhabiting it determines the existing modes of being of our clinical subject, a subject that arises from the terror of that landscape that culturally subjectivizes it. To paraphrase Cullen (2017), the main reference point of a culture is the soil and, consequently, the roots in it and the way of inhabiting it. The author proposes that the existence of peoples is no longer produced “for” but “from.” This “from” is proposed as topos/place, and is also the starting point for admitting, via cultural analysis, that the soil/landscape—the space-thing—is what aestheticizes the productions of the subject in our clinic.

Pausing to think about the notion of aesthetics from America is intended to contribute to the construction of the “landscape as texture,” with the aim of analyzing expressive acts in music therapy practice. At the same time, the notion provides a strategic position from which to observe and listen to the process of putting these acts together. The power of this construction lies in the impacts and effects that arise when the choices and materializations produced by people are brought into conversation with the aesthetic features that each space-thing/landscape has.

### **Milestone III: Experiences Read from a Decolonial Perspective**

We have reached the third milestone of this journey with the intention of presenting two accounts of experiences built on the decolonial perspective shared in the previous milestones.

In 2023, I completed my first year of postgraduate training at the Esquel Regional Hospital, in the Interdisciplinary Residency in Community Mental Health (hereinafter RISMC) in the province of Chubut, Argentina. The objective of that first year was to survey the perceived needs of the area of responsibility of a Primary Health Care Center (hereinafter CAPS) in the Ceferino Namuncurá neighborhood of the city of Esquel. I worked in an interdisciplinary manner with my residency partner, Abril Neculman, who has a degree in social work. The survey was conducted using participatory action research methodology (Fals Borda, 2008) and grounded theory (Soneira, 2013). Using different data collection tools, we constructed and validated, together with a population of adults and older adults, different categories that reflected their perceived needs.

According to Montero (1991), “felt needs arise from the people themselves who express them explicitly or implicitly, (...) the issue is not the truth of the needs thus defined, but their condition of existence for those who will ultimately be the subjects of the intervention” (p. 104). This position led us to develop an intervention project that responded to this population group’s need for encounter, setting up an interdisciplinary support mechanism for health-illness-care processes. This experience allowed us to formulate two conceptual categories that I would like to share in this milestone, based on Aníbal Quijano’s decolonial perspective and the “landscape as texture.” The first is linked to the category of race presented in milestone I: we made a perceptual shift from its use for social classification and the configuration of power patterns in the colonial era to its use as a form of reading

of living bodies. We were able to construct the category of Paisano, through which we were able to enunciate the historical subject of Patagonia. In our practice, through the stories of this group of older adults who shared their Paisano knowledge, we were able to learn about and listen to a multiplicity of forms that brought us closer to the rhythms, languages, and aesthetic features of how they conceived the world. As mentioned above, the figure of the Paisano is in tension with the construction that the Argentine nation-state had as its horizon, given that it was characterized by the homogenization of the national subject in the figure of the criollo as the representative of the inhabitants of the nation. To paraphrase Segato (2019), the criollaje of the republic and founder of the State is positioned as an “elite” to administer the threads of the Nation. The criollo is characterized as “racist” because he wants to be white and “misogynistic” because he wants to be a man; at the same time, he is not a victorious historical subject, but rather a man of defeated territories. Finally, he is characterized as speciesist, that is, he relates to any species other than humans in a vertical, murderous, and cruel manner.

By considering race as a category of analysis, my colleague and I were able to question ourselves about the historical subject to which we directed our diagnosis in the participatory action research process and in the intervention project. Listening from this perspective invited us to shift away from the institutional academic logic expected by the healthcare system, making room for what neighborhood residents referred to as paisano knowledge and “the Mapuche.” They used paisano knowledge to talk about the Mapuche worldview, as well as their own health processes.

The peasant, as a historical and characteristic feature of the Patagonian landscape, becomes the horizon of a worldview tinged with shades of non-whiteness and its meanings, introducing us to the rich history of this population, which was able to endure colonial power. It compels us to work on those identifying features of communities in order to accompany the historical projects of the peoples themselves, disputing the current era from and against institutions that are alien to the felt needs of the population and creating, even if only in its interstices, an ethic that prioritizes the knowledge situated in professional practice.

The second conceptual category is characterized by the recognition of the contributions that the “landscape as texture” makes to the music therapy group. In our research process, we came across an idea, which we validated with the group of adults and older adults and with institutional representatives from the health center and the community, that reflects the existing housing conditions in the area. This idea was named “The city shaped like bread” and is linked to the forced migration processes that compelled many residents of communes, villages, and rural areas in the northwest of the province of Chubut to migrate to the city of Esquel in search of food and work. The neighborhood where the health center is located is one of the main places of settlement for these migrants. The city shaped like bread is a phrase that alludes to uprooting, and we took it from a song by Tito Ledesma shared by a popular musician from the city of Esquel, Ariel Manquipan. The song says: “If I lose my hope, I will not return to Mapu, I will die in such loneliness. The city with its lights and factories is a prison shaped like bread.”<sup>1</sup> The song shows the expressive act chosen by this community to narrate and understand a historical moment in which the migratory processes forced by evictions and proposals for survival strip them of their ancestral peasant knowledge and practices.

This choice as an expressive act, interpreted from the perspective of “landscape as texture,” compels us to question the power of roots in constructing a process of identity

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful for the sensitive and attentive listening of researcher Jose Luis Grosso, who, in his presentation of this category at the XII Rodolfo Kusch Conference at the UNLA, suggests that we emphasize “form,” since it is in form, and not in bread, that the historical project of colonial modernity proposed in migratory processes is concentrated.

and belonging in the context in which one lives. On the other hand, we can analyze from the aesthetics of the monstrous that the first moment of the forced migration process can be characterized as uncertain and amorphous, putting in tension one's own vital perception as a countryman or Mapuche in the face of a new landscape, "shaped like bread," alien to one's identity constructed in the countryside. From the aesthetics of horror, in the statement "the city with its lights and factories is a prison shaped like bread," it is possible to visualize the profound sense of losing the illusion of returning to the Mapu and dying far from one's territory. This level of aesthetics allows us to recognize the historical subject, expressing a feeling of horror that arises in the face of the civilizing project, to which one's perception from the senses demands a response. Finally, the aesthetics of space-thing configures an area to situate these sensations from the expressive act that has become song. The aesthetic choices use two landscape settings in which the subject is located: "the city shaped like bread" and "the Mapu." In the first, the subject is offered the possibility of vital continuity in the form of survival, alien to the identity construction that constitutes him, destroying his vital knowledge that is in constant tension with the social aspect of the civilizing process. In the second, the Mapu, the identity trait and the desire not to lose that perceptual, aesthetic relationship occur, from where one can express oneself. Being able to observe how this subject positions himself in front of two antagonistic landscapes gave us, as health workers, an understanding of the times and rhythms of this group of older adults who find themselves facing the city shaped like bread.

Taking this as our starting point, we began to carry out interventions that promoted expressive acts, inquiring into the knowledge they had prior to their migration to the city. This inquiry led to the possibility of building a bond with this population of older adults, characterized by a revaluation of rural knowledge, in which music and dance were chosen by them as ways of telling us their story. To respond to the need for connection, we considered the creation of a device to accompany health processes from the perspective of community and interdisciplinary mental health. Taking this background into account, the use of dances such as chamamé, zamba, chacarera, and other dances and music characteristic of Patagonia, such as campera, commercial, kaanis, and loncomeo music, was considered.

## Final Considerations

I conclude this essay with an invitation to the music therapy community to consider two points. The first is to work with perspectives rather than models. A model is a closed, disciplinary structure, often constructed in academic institutions or in the planning and management of public health policies that are far removed from the real needs of the population. A perspective is a starting point from which to observe and listen, a path of organic construction that invites and is part of all the pluralities that inhabit the challenges being considered. There may be repetitions within the historical process of these paths, but they are not a nostalgic return; rather, differences can be found when responding to questions from a past era that remain unanswered. In this sense, pausing at three milestones to discuss Aníbal Quijano's decolonial perspective and Rodolfo Kusch's contributions is intended to ensure that the path continues with reflections and thoughts on the professional practices we carry out. Whether in an individual practice, in health centers, in houses of study, or in the challenges of the current era, which proposes an ethic of individual work and the commodification of life.

The second challenge consists of revisiting the contributions of American aesthetics, as they invite us to re-originalize the world from the perspective of the senses in relation to the landscape in which we are immersed. In his text "Aesthetics of Utopia," Quijano asks: "Have they not spent their history pretending to be what they never were? And is that not

exactly what created the dark labyrinth that forms our question of identity?" (Quijano, 1990, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014, p.741).

This essay arises from the tension of observing a plurality of practices and languages that operate independently and simultaneously with public policies and academic training in health and mental health. Without seeking to draw any conclusions, the utopia of this era will be a consolation for us in this uncertain and unpredictable world that has no form, but is amorphous, like America. The proposal is that we allow ourselves to be swept away by the landscape in which we are immersed, constructing an expressive act as a confession to understand the challenges of our era and our professional practice. It is in the footprint and not in the destination that the field of aesthetics offers us the possibility of imagining the world anew, giving it another historical meaning that we cannot foresee in the present.

In Latin America, the struggle against class domination, against color discrimination, against cultural domination, also involves restoring honor to everything that this culture of domination dishonors; restoring freedom to what we are forced to hide in the labyrinths of subjectivity; ceasing to be what we have never been, what we will never be, and what we do not have to be. In short, it means undertaking the process of re-originalization of culture and working with it to restore the festival to its privileged place in existence. (Quijano, 1990, as cited in Assis Clímaco, 2014)

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