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Nº 8

**PEDAGOGÍAS
FEMINISTAS**

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INTRODUCTION WE(FEM) / YO COLECTIVO: FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Editorial Collective

Feminism is insurgent across the Americas and the Caribbean. In the last decade, a tidal wave of love and rage has again given voice to long-stifled cries against femicide, sexual violence, forced reproduction, and economic marginalization. A chorus of feminist collectives and movements has emerged across regions, energizing old and proposing new strategies against racial capitalism, misogyny, ecoterrorist extractivism, and the alibis of heteropatriarchal states. This undercurrent led by feminists and queers within Latin American and Caribbean social movements—a “revolution within the revolution”—challenges the reproduction of racism, heterosexism, and transphobia. The reflexive double-consciousness of feminist, queer, and trans radicals—especially those of African and Indigenous descent—advocates revolutionary struggle while also castigating its shortcomings.

These movements recognize how these interlocking systems of oppression subjugate women in Indigenous and Afro-descended working class communities, among others. This salutary turn has birthed massive mobilizations. They go by different names—Ni Una Menos, el mayo feminista, even #MeToo. A new counter-militancy is blossoming to center the most aggrieved across the Western Hemisphere: direct actions against sexual assaults in Chile and Mexico, feminist assemblies in Argentina, land recuperations and popular education in Brazil, mutual aid centers and radical cultural production in Puerto Rico, and a *marea verde* [green wave] of abortion access victories across Latin America.

These advances from the South are developing a hemispheric rhythm of solidarity with the North. Canada’s Black and Indigenous coalitions, and the United States’ interwoven strands of abolitionism, anti-fascism, reproductive justice campaigns, queer and trans community defense, and labor unionization are fostering an ecosystem that fuses internal critique with social action. Instead of taking for granted a strategy of party-building, electoral campaigns, or negotiations with the state, these movements emphasize directly meeting communities’ social needs—care, food, safety, shelter—beyond and even (at times) against the state.

These Latin American and Caribbean movements build on, queer,

dismantle, and redeploy earlier movements, theories, and everyday struggles, including the suffrage, women's liberation, Third World and Women of Colors, Gay Liberation and LGBTQ+ movements. What distinguishes them from their forebears is the speed and intensity of their networking and the practice of the feminist strike. Both forms of social relation—the network and the strike—lend these recent feminist movements the transversality that Verónica Gago has characterized as a *feminist international*.

Members of the Latin American Philosophy of Education Society (LAPES) sought to contribute to this feminist international by creating a space of encounter and reflection on the practices that can aid these movements. Founded in 2012, LAPES is a collective experiment run by an international group of activists, educators, and scholars. We promote the dissemination of Latin American and Caribbean education philosophies and practices by facilitating South-South and North-South dialogues. Our 2022 *encuentro* aimed to uplift the insurgent pedagogies of feminist movements across the Americas and the Caribbean in order to bring about urgently needed social transformations.

Inspired by these feminist movements and their *sentipensante* (thinking-feeling) modes of being in the world, LAPES gathered activists, educators, scholars, and community organizers to share their work and offer provocations for understanding entangled struggles for decolonization and co-liberation. These included Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso and Ochy Curiel, scholar-activists who organize with GLEFAS, based in the Dominican Republic; Lucí Cavallero, Verónica Gago, and Liz Mason-Deese, scholar-activists who organize with Ni Una Menos in Argentina and abroad; Silvia González, household worker and organizer with Mujeres Sin Frontera and Casa Latina in Seattle; Larissa Gus and Melissa Bonilla, representatives of the Mexican ecofeminist art collective Nahuala Indómita; and Layla Zami, Tito Mitjans Alayón, Violeta Orozco Barrera and Conor Tomás Reed, co-editors of the anthology-in-formation *Black Feminist Studies in the Americas and the Caribbean* with Diarenis Calderón Tartabull and Makeba Lavan.

While the symposium focused broadly on Latin American and

Caribbean feminisms, we sought to draw out the *pedagogías feministas* that emerge from these distinct but connected contexts, as part of nurturing South-North / North-South solidarities. At the same time, the *encuentro* shared feminist pedagogies and practices within and beyond educational institutions and social movement spaces. Among the questions that guided our gathering were: How do feminist movements exercise pedagogical agency? How do *pedagogías feministas* stimulate feminist modes of disobedience in and outside educational institutions? How do *pedagogías feministas* differ, or build upon and advance, other forms of critical pedagogy? What lessons do feminist activists and scholars offer about challenging state power, racial capitalism, neoliberal ideology and practice? How do recent Latin American and Caribbean feminisms complement and differ from U.S. Women of Colors and other strains of feminism within and beyond the region? How do *pedagogías feministas* respond to local and global manifestations of environmental system collapse? What new worlds do we envision through feminist pedagogies?

We harnessed the power of online collaboration and organizing during the COVID-19 pandemic to create a temporary educational platform for the feminist international. Our fully bilingual, hybrid conference blended in-person and online environments. For two days, over 500 people attended from across the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe while speakers joined in from the University of Washington, North Carolina, Illinois, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Guatemala, and Germany. The complementarity of these two spaces was particularly clear to one LAPES member from their location in Buenos Aires, because the first day of the symposium coincided with a massive feminist rally in the city—Lucí Cavallero and Verónica Gago spoke to us from a crowded café just steps from the mobilization. LAPES 2022 was free and open to the public just as this issue of *LÁPIZ* is open access, for as a collective we affirm that knowledge is no one's property. For the same reason, membership in LAPES cannot be bought—it is given freely.

We see in Latin American and Caribbean feminist movements a

welcome challenge to the domination of feminized and racialized bodies, one that places educational practices at the center of political struggle. Heightened precarity due to the COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored the importance of furthering these movements and their feminist philosophies of the commons. Anti-colonial, feminist, queer, and trans routes to liberation promise no overarching panacea. However, their perspectives and methods offer a framework for mass struggle that refuses to consign anyone to being the bridge upon which another's freedom is charted. By fostering dialogue among heterogeneous Latin American and Caribbean thinkers, artists, activists, and education practitioners in the United States, LAPES collaborates with nascent feminist, antiracist, and decolonial pedagogies in the North. We hope to spark generative dis/orientations of our current pedagogical models in order to midwife new, more egalitarian worlds.

ELOISA AGUIRRE AND CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ-MARTÍN ON NAHUALA INDÓMITA

It wasn't by chance that we met at the LAPES 2022 Symposium on "PEDAGOGÍAS FEMINISTAS: Movements, Solidarity, and Disobedience for New Worlds." This took place at the University of Washington, Seattle, at the end of Cristina's first year as a new assistant professor in the UW English department and Eloisa's beginning of their journey into graduate school. In a sense, our previous work had led us to meet there, a space where we could convene with other folks committed to feminist and liberatory pedagogy.

Soon after, we both took on the task of reviewing and then translating "Manifiesto on Feminist Pedagogies," one of the papers that was presented at the symposium by the Mexican feminist group Nahuala Indómita. Much of the antiracist and feminist work we had been shaped by—since the uprisings after George Floyd's murder, for example—required that academics / scholars practice what they preach, and thus, bring about actual change in their academic worlds.

With this in mind, we approached the translation of an article about feminism as such: as feminist collaborative and horizontal practice. What does it mean when both authors are speakers of different (more or less privileged) Spanishes and occupy different positions in the predominantly white-centric anglophone US academic world? Translating involved reflecting on our embodied, individual, and collective experiences within and across the language boundaries of two colonial languages: English and Spanish. It meant unlearning and transgressing the prescriptivist language ideologies that assume gender binaries and “neat” monolingual expressions.

The example “we(fem)” illustrates it best. As we aimed to keep the inclusive (non-binary) language the authors had chosen to implement in Spanish and at the same time committed to preserve the femininity behind the author’s writings, we realized that “*nosotras*” in this manifesto meant more than “we.” *Nosotras* made reference to the meaning of “*compañera*” and the author’s struggles as femme writers. Refusing to translate the pronoun *nosotras* to a simple “we” allowed us to take on the role of translators as a tool for liberation.

MIGUEL ÁNGEL BLANCO MARTÍNEZ ON OCHY CURIEL AND YUDERKYS ESPINOSA MIÑOSO

LAPES 2022 understood from its germination the transversal desire to critique modern / colonial paradigms of both “feminism” and “pedagogy.” When it comes to “feminism,” we sought to challenge “gender” and “the woman subject” as the only axis of difference and as a homogeneous political subject. In regards to “pedagogy,” we sought to contest academic disciplines and practices lacking an interlocking analysis of race and social class within the Eurocentric narrative of progress and civilization that is characteristic of formal education.

Having joined LAPES around the drafting of the LAPES 2022 Symposium, when asked about potential collaborators, I could not help but to suggest Ochy Curiel and Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso as essential participants in any conversation about feminist pedagogies.

As a queer feminist myself coming from the Spanish State—or the first ‘modern Nation-State,’ as Enrique Dussel would put it, given its unacknowledged imperial foundation and current colonial implications—Ochy’s and Yuderkys’ intellectual and militant work, jointly and/or separately, has had a tremendous impact across Spanish and Southern European feminisms, in addition to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thanks to Latin American feminists and friends in European feminist circuits, I had the chance of becoming familiar with their work and felt that LAPES would undoubtedly become a friendly-as-political space to share references on feminist pedagogical discussions that are neglected or outright invisibilized by Global North / Global South (academic) imperialism. Such is the case of the United States, where Ochy’s and Yuderkys’ work, among many other feminist thinkers from Latin America and the Caribbean, are largely absent from the curricula of women’s and gender studies, sociology, or philosophy, or marginally present in departments with a focus on Latin America, the Caribbean, or the Iberian Peninsula. Aside from English-Spanish translation, inequalities at a publishing level underline an asymmetry of power/knowledge circulation indebted to the coloniality of power and knowledge, as Aníbal Quijano would frame it, that is simultaneously traversed by the coloniality of gender, as María Lugones described. Given the dominance of individualism and corporate academia in the United States, communal critical spaces for tackling such asymmetries are rare. Amidst this conflictual landscape, LAPES 2022 attempted to become such a space thanks in part to the interventions by Ochy and Yuderkys.

In this light, Ochy and Yuderkys’ presentations provided LAPES 2022 with a feminist decolonial genealogy, theory, and practice to understand feminist pedagogies as making room for the coexistence of new worlds. It is inspiring to undertake decolonial feminism as “*campo de conflicto y tensión*,” as Yuderkys suggested in her talk, to keep interrogating in feminist pedagogies the limits and / as possibilities in the imbrication of education and world-making.

Departing from this premise, Ochy Curiel enlightened us with a

critical genealogy of decolonial feminist pedagogies, ranging from the militant and popular education-based pedagogies of Paulo Freire and Catherine Walsh to the memory and communal knowledges of villages and indigenous communities in Abya Yala. By merging the emancipatory promises of popular education philosophies with the knowledge traditions particular to each village or community, Curiel invites us to conceive feminist decolonial pedagogies as attentive to orality, embodiment, and ontological relationalities. Reversing the extractive knowledge-logics of academic practitioners who question ‘the other’ as an object rather than a subject of research, Ochy highlights a “*cimarronaje*” style of intellectual engagement, thus surpassing the methods of formal education. To better grasp this *cimarronaje*, Ochy presented us the GLEFAS-led *Escuelas Feministas Descoloniales Cimarronas* held from 2016 where a *cimarrona* (maroon) feminist decolonial pedagogy is enhanced with participants from the Dominican Republic and Haiti, becoming a remarkable experience to nurture decolonial feminist activism in the region.

Continuing with such a *cimarrona* positionality, Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso deepened into the critical and militant genealogy of decolonial feminisms in Latin America and the Caribbean by tracing its history from personal and collective standpoints. In this light, Yuderkys introduced us to her activist journey, ranging from a politicized upbringing and a university militancy to participation in Argentinian feminisms before her return to the Dominican Republic. In addition to the legacy and inspiration received by black feminisms and autonomous feminisms in Latin America, these personal and collective experiences have nurtured Yuderkys’ contributions to decolonial feminisms. As a pioneer in the field, and in the company of many accomplice thinkers and activists, Yuderkys’ work has helped to problematize the Eurocentric neglect of gender, race, and social class by expanding the critical tools provided by “modernity/coloniality” scholars. Among other pedagogical principles, Yuderkys stresses the importance of a “*genealogía de la experiencia* (genealogy of experience)” that is able to implement, as decolonial feminist pedagogical methodologies, the historization,

systematization, and unlearning of communal knowledges; in sum, to practice “*un Yo colectivo* (a collective I)” that is at the heart of pedagogical exchanges and discussions amidst a culture of hatred and cancellation.

Enjoying Ochy’s participation online via Zoom from her office at Universidad de Bogotá, and Yuderkys’ in-person participation at the University of Washington, the experience of moderating both discussions represented an enormous un / learning in online and in-person collectivity. The large number of online participants connecting from around the world with a significant number from territories in Abya Yala, as well as the physical presence of the educational and militant participants reunited in this volume, made their contributions not only intellectually and politically relevant, but also a generative bridging for every participation at LAPES 2022. The small public who gathered at the University of Washington despite LAPES’s efforts to promote the event compared to the large online attendance played a role in moderating their talks, as well as in my afterthoughts.

These circle back to the coloniality of gender, power, and knowledge, and the corporatization of academia in the US when trying to provoke its political nature. A similar event at an educational forum in Latin America, the Caribbean, or Spain would have greatly surpassed the symposium’s in-person attendance. These contradictions speak for themselves. I would like to end by noting the feminist pedagogical significance of their contributions at LAPES 2022, and now, with their publication in Spanish, Portuguese, and English so that English-speaking educational spaces may also benefit from such important intellectual and militant pedagogies.

COLETTE JUNG ON THE *BLACK FEMINIST STUDIES IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN ANTHOLOGY*

Presentations at LAPES 2022 offered direct challenges to the oppression of variously feminized, racialized folks while situating education beyond the academy at the core of socio-political struggle.

Thinking through struggles of Afro-descended feminisms in developing a collective feminist pedagogy of liberation, Layla Zami, A. Tito Mitjans Alayón, Violeta Orozco Barrera, and Conor Tomás Reed present their timely co-editorial work. This anthology-in-formation strengthens solidarities among Black and Indigenous feminist activists, radicals, and scholars, and highlights political, social, and generational knowledge that is not often represented by mainstream institutional publications.

As with many nation-state institutions, the academy—historically, a tool of linguistic, epistemic, and cultural erasure—typically legitimizes knowledge aligned with locations of privilege in the system of coloniality. *Black Feminist Studies in the Americas and the Caribbean* offers readers interpretations and epistemologies that are not part of the circulated knowledge systems of nation-states. It counters political structures that value Black and Indigenous feminisms of the United States and the global North over those from the global South. Taking inspiration from the current circulated works of Black feminism, the co-editors present a fine emerging collection that, as Conor Tomás Reed said, “aims to translate and circulate non-Anglophone Black feminist voices that are silenced by the market flows of publishing that operate within the grooves of colonialism laid long ago.”

Included is a myriad of epistemic productions across a variety of disciplines and art forms. Recognizing the academy is the near exclusive world of cisgender heterosexual *mestizo* white elites, its carefully selected materials move the conversation of many radical feminisms beyond the question of universalization of ‘woman’ tied up with modern and contemporary binary understandings of gender circulated in the coloniality of power. In doing so, it offers space for more horizontal connections with Black women, cis, trans, and non-binary folk across the Americas and Caribbean.

In the global system of coloniality—circulators of knowledge often universalize Black and Indigenous experiences as heteronormative ones of the global North. The successes of Black and women of color feminisms from the North, including USA and Canada, often result in

Black and women of color, trans and non-binary, and feminists from the global South being left out of conversation—missing from the table. The dominance of Black and Indigenous feminists from the Anglophone world, the co-editors suggest, over-values mainstream English. This is, as A. Tito Mitjans Alayón said, “a deterritorialization strategy to erase regional Black feminist production and thus maintain white and heteronormative hegemony in academic and intellectual spaces.” Other forms and languages of knowledge have minimal resources to publish and circulate their academic and literary work.

With this as a starting point, the forthcoming anthology speaks to the ways in which women, feminists, queer, transgender, intersexed, and non-binary folks racialized in the colonial, modern gender system—even whilst practicing decoloniality and anti-racism—might also produce what Yuderlys calls a “*campo de conflicto y tensión*” or enact what María Lugones calls “horizontal hostilities/*hostilidades horizontals*.” As our multiple relations are a dialectic of oppressed / oppressing phenomena, not having access to one another, and perceptions built from within familiar knowledge systems, are a hindrance to community building. Rather than assimilating each other into familiar structures of understanding and perception, this work archives and brings together in one book multiple voices that wouldn’t otherwise be encountered. To engage, as Violeta Orozco Barrera said, “a radical praxis of knowledge production we must closely read, critically analyze, and intentionally cite Black women who are writing outside of the United States and in multiple languages.” *Black Feminist Studies in the Americas and the Caribbean* speaks to a comparative, interdisciplinary, and transnational approach. It invites readers to encounter difference with an emphasis on interconnections as beings under the feet of, and otherwise than, the coloniality of being; to come to know not from familiar categories and dominant epistemologies, but from new connections in the learning/unlearning of one another.

A major force of the anthology lies in its method—transgressing and provoking oppressive limitations by bringing together four

languages that, while colonial, taken together become an act of radical and decolonial pedagogy. When our differences are accessible to each other, we encounter multiplicity of thoughts, ideas, and cosmologies, as well as practices of resistance to the violence of racism, misogyny, and transmisogyny in the coloniality of power—even where they are enacted from within solidarity projects. The anthology therefore centers Black women, queer, and trans folk in Latin America and the Caribbean and offers space for new encounters to benefit all readers—not only in English, but Spanish, Kreyol / French, and Portuguese.

Lastly, I was excited to listen to the co-editors discuss how *Black Feminist Studies in the Americas and the Caribbean* engages the work of Black feminist translation studies as crucial and complex engagements. Understanding gendered, racial politics in the lived experiences of people by comparing and recovering cultural histories, and taking interpretations themselves as translation, the anthology is an epistemic and linguistic “transculturation” (a term described by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz). This engages gendered, racial identity from multiple colonial contexts and intersectional interpretations across generations—between friends and mentors—beyond the official limits of language and linguistics. As part of a collection of presentations at LAPES 2022 over a variety of technologies and lingualities, this is, to echo Layla Zami, “twenty-first-century feminism.”

CONOR TOMÁS REED ON LUCÍ CAVALLERO AND VERÓNICA GAGO, AND SILVIA GONZÁLEZ

When our compas invoke the power of the *feminist international*, catapulting lessons around the hemisphere, we can develop a shared timing and lexicon of feminist pedagogies in action. The contribution by Lucí Cavallero and Verónica Gago in Buenos Aires, Argentina, alongside that of Silvia González in Seattle, Washington, suggests that the circuits of debt abolition and dignified household work are being hotwired into a new force that could recompose anti-capitalist

labor power more broadly.

Lucí and Vero report from within the campaign of Ni Una Menos and friends that demands, “We want to stay alive, free, and debt free!” Analyzing the aphoristic power of slogans on the streets (“debt is a time bomb”), they forge clear everyday connections with debt in order to de-abstract it, to go “from finance to bodies.” This *counter-pedagogy* maps out debt’s pervasiveness, while pointing out methods and locations to interrupt it, such as actions outside the Argentina Central Bank and Black Rock investment group. Interrupting the relationship between debt, threats to bodily autonomy, and sexist violence, they reflect closely on the feminist manifestos that are written to be shared at these mass protests. These vivid examples enjoin us to study our crowd-circulated compositions as rigorously as other forms of political writing.

Lucí and Vero also discuss how they created transversal links for all unions to lift up these feminist anti-debt campaigns and slogans in a larger cohesive ecosystem, which ensures that the state and capital can’t easily divide “feminist militancy” from “union power” and vice versa. The feminist international interweaves our sites of mobilization—Argentina, Puerto Rico, Spain, Chile—and, for example, highlights how *compas* in Puerto Rico have synthesized debt abolition with anti-colonial struggles. Flipping the responsibility of debt—refusing to beg for debt “forgiveness,” instead demanding that “debt is owed to us” for millennia of unpaid and underpaid feminized labors—these movements offer an array of hard-earned strategies that could be activated by *LÁPIZ* readers everywhere. One new question emerges in the present: how will our *compas* navigate the recent change in state power from Macri to Milei?

Almost seven thousand miles away in Seattle’s Casa Latina, Silvia González describes gains in the transnational feminist movement at the site of the home. In a similar *counter-pedagogy* that alters our terminology from “domestic workers” to “household workers,” Silvia refuses the domestication and domination implicit in these forms and sites of labor. She recounts the long sexist, colonial, and enslavement origins of household work, as well as the ways that 20th century

struggles of migrant feminist laborers ushered in the 2007 creation of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, forged by over a dozen different US organizations. Affirming this grassroots power in conjunction with representative politics, Silvia recognizes her values in politicians like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Pramila Jayapal, while also honoring the power of her own matrilineal lineage across generations.

Adapting her analysis in real-time to address the recent mobilizations and crisis rhythms of #MeToo, the Women’s March, and the COVID pandemic, Silvia also foregrounds the Global South dimensions of this movement that draws from feminist legacies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Even so, she measures how deeply the United States must be restructured to dignify this labor. Only ten states and two cities have a bill of rights for household workers. In addition, a gendered contradiction must also be overcome within their ranks: men who do gardening and landscaping labor often don’t want to be classified as “household workers,” so they’re not yet protected by these bills. Silvia’s energetic clarity shows how homes, workers’ centers, and cities are an overlapping base of operations from which people can transform the conditions of our lives.

CONTINUATIONS

In strategic kinship from Bogota to Mexico City, Berlin to Havana, Brooklyn to San Juan, Buenos Aires to Seattle, and beyond, these *LÁPIZ N°8* contributors sing of *potencia*, not *poder*—“power with, not power over”—to anchor us in feminist ideas and actions as we navigate overlapping crises that have altered the already turbulent world since our summer 2022 symposium. In a testament to their lasting lucidity, these pieces remain a reference point to navigate a new series of entwined upheavals. The coalitional spirit of these *compas’* pedagogical lessons—their *We (fem)* and *Yo colectivo* protagonism—is as much about our beloved communities as our locations of study and movement. The intricate archipelago of

schools and social centers, workplaces and homes, soil and streets are all indispensable to the practice of militant feminist pedagogies.

As this issue goes to press, a genocidal war in Gaza is polarizing a generation and recomposing the world. After October 7, 2023, the Israeli state, with unwavering US government support, began raining bombs upon homes, hospitals, schools, shelters, food access sites, and escape routes everywhere in Gaza. State-sanctioned vengeance has spread across the West Bank and elsewhere in the region. The growing global movement against Israeli settler-colonial apartheid and its most recent military aggression includes demands that go far beyond a ceasefire. They include an end to the siege of Gaza, the release of all Palestinian prisoners, an end to the Israeli/US occupation of Palestine, and an end to Western complicity in Zionism. As we lift up revolutionary feminist struggles in the Americas and the Caribbean, may we also study and co-conspire with Palestinian feminists like Rabab Abdulhadi, Nada Elia, Noura Erakat, Nadine Naber, and the Palestinian Feminist Collective.¹

We invite *LÁPIZ* readers to conspire and act purposefully, with both patience and urgency, in these pivotal times. Our next symposium and journal issue theme are yet unwritten. We invite readers to contact us with proposals for collaboration at LAPESwebsite@gmail.com. Onwards with heart and focus, compas!■

1→ See, for examples: Rabab Abdulhadi, "Israeli settler colonialism in context: Celebrating (Palestinian) death and normalizing gender and sexual violence." *Feminist Studies* 45, no. 2 (2019): 541-573. Nada Elia, *Greater than the Sum of Our Parts: Feminism, Inter/Nationalism, and Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2023). Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019). Nadine Naber, "When Abolitionists Say 'Free Them All,' We Mean Palestine Too," *Truthout*, December 29, 2023, <https://truthout.org/articles/when-abolitionists-say-free-them-all-we-mean-palestine-too/>. Palestinian Feminist Collective, *All Out for Palestine: Palestine Digital Action Toolkit* (October 2023), <https://bit.ly/PFCToolkit/>.

BUILDING DECOLONIAL FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES

Ochy Curiel Pichardo¹

Translated by Miguel Ángel Blanco Martínez

1→ Ochy Curiel is Afro-Caribbean, born in the Dominican Republic and resident in Colombia. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, and Master's and Doctorate's Degrees in Social Anthropology at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. She is a specialist in Higher Education with a major in Social Sciences. She is a professor and scholar at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia. She is the co-founder of the Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios, Formación y Acción Feminista (GLEFAS). She is also a singer-songwriter.

I thank the invitation to this space. I thank those who made it possible.

I was born and raised in the Caribbean, more specifically in the Dominican Republic, a country that shares the island with Haiti as its neighboring country. This island was the first laboratory of colonization and, at the same time, where the biggest resistances and decolonization processes were carried out.

I come from a feminist genealogy. Firstly, from that which universalized women according to their gender without considering a complex matrix of oppression identifying “race,” class, sexuality, and geo-politics in many experiences. Later, from my Afro-Caribbean condition, as such a White and hegemonic feminism became insufficient. For this reason, along with fellow *compañeras* we built in the region an Afro-descendant feminism where we placed a politics and theorization imbricating all oppressions. I considered myself as a lesbian feminist challenging the heterosexual regime. I was also part of a Latin American autonomous branch that contested the institutionalization of feminism through the rise of NGOs, the dependence on international cooperation, and the State. I then encountered the decolonial turn, which delineates that colonialism configured a matrix of power, defined as coloniality,² that has continued to the present strengthening racial, gender-based social, and epistemic hierarchies.

All the above was key for me to position myself as a decolonial, anti-racist, and *cimarrona* feminist.³ This has led me to a revision process, the redefinition of the former political places, and re-interpretation of narratives displayed by hegemonic history to account—instead—for the effects of colonialism in the social and racial structures not only of the continent, but in my own life.

The decolonial feminism where I position myself questions

2 → Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina,” in *La colonialidad del saber: Eurocentrismo y Ciencias Sociales*, ed. Edgardo Lander (Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales), 1-14.

3 → Translator’s note. *Cimarronaje* addresses the actions of the enslaved and colonized to escape from slavery and build free spaces with their own currencies in different territories across Abya Yala. Some of these were known as *Palenques*, *Quilombos*, or *Cumbres*, among others. For more information, see: Ochy Curiel and María Galindo, *Descolonización y despatriarcalización de y desde los feminismos de Abya Yala* (ACSUR-Las Segovias, 2015), 13.

hegemonic feminism in its theories and political practices for being racist and classist by reproducing the universalization of the woman-subject that keeps conceiving of Black and Indigenous women as lacking agency, hence perceiving and assuming them only as victims of patriarchy. Decolonial feminism approaches race, gender, class, (hetero)sexuality, and geo-politics as a systemic and structural matrix of oppression that can only be understood from the critical consideration of modernity / coloniality axis of power.

This approach stands as a political positioning imbricating collective political thinking and praxis from autonomy and self-management. It also articulates a *cimarrón* liberation project not only for women but for the wretched of the earth more generally, and is influenced by other ontological relationalities—like those fostered by a manifold of Indigenous and Afro-communities in the region developing other forms of doing that are not recognized within colonial institutions.

After having clarified this, I proceed now to address the central topic of this manuscript: decolonial feminist pedagogies.

The simplest and most widespread Euro-centered definition of pedagogy is the science whose object of study renders education as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Nevertheless, pedagogy, just like that, has implied the reproduction of the coloniality of knowledge. This rests upon a Euro-centric consideration that legitimizes the assumption of a neutral, objective, and a de-contextualized type of knowledge reproducing the domination logics to keep the status quo sustaining inequalities and social hierarchies.

Against this vision, critical pedagogies emerged in many parts of the world to reverse this dominant model, challenging the knowledge pattern it produces by situating education in the interest of social transformation. We could cite the Frankfurt School of Social Sciences, the Budapest School, and—more fundamentally—the pedagogy of the oppressed developed by Paulo Freire in Brazil.⁴

Freire encouraged awareness-raising pedagogies enacting a critical reading of economic, social, and political orders. Via literacy

4 → Paulo Freire, (1921-1997) & Ramos, M.B. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press. 1970).

processes, he aspired to the liberation of all the oppressed, thus conceiving popular education as a method, praxis, theory, and modes of doing enhancing dialogical approaches to facilitate their humanization.⁵ In this light, Freire's pedagogical proposal focused on several keys: the oppressed would become aware of their oppressed condition and consequently seek for their emancipation from oppressors; a shift to be undertaken from autonomy and the articulation of hope as a leading utopia.⁶ This kind of education would be liberating for the oppressed and would craft their freedom.

For these reasons, Paulo Freire's pedagogical contribution was and continues to be an important reference for critical pedagogies not only for Abya Yala but for the world. His was a revolutionary proposal that challenged and broke with traditional educational forms and the manners in which knowledge was conceived, and ingrained a liberation project. However, Freire's articulation displayed important limits.

One of these limits, as Catherine Walsh has noted,⁷ is the disregarding of modernity/coloniality in his elucidation of domination. Paulo Freire did not consider the particularity of those "oppressed" as defined from what Walter Mignolo has called the colonial difference.⁸ That is, Black and Indigenous people since the very moment of colonization were deemed inferior, dehumanized, and obviously oppressed. In addition, Walsh highlights two further issues: Freire neither referred to the historical resistances these groups have deployed in many spaces and times under decolonization process, nor challenged anthropocentrism by not relating to non-human beings. However, and as Walsh herself notices, Paulo Freire's

5 → Paulo Freire, *Pedagogía del oprimido*, trans. Jorge Mellado (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1970).

6 → Paulo Freire, *Pedagogía de la esperanza*, trans. Stella Mastrangelo (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002).

7 → Catherine Walsh, "Introducción. Lo pedagógico y lo decolonial: Entretejiendo caminos," in *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir. TOMO I*, ed. Catherine Walsh (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2013), 23-68.

8 → "By introducing the notion of colonial difference, I will be able to expand on Dussel's notion of transmodernity and Quijano's coloniality of power." (p. 58) Walter Mignolo. "The Geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 101:1, Winter (2002). Duke University Press.

pedagogical model becomes a relevant antecedent for decolonial pedagogies.

On its part, feminist pedagogy can also be stated as a critical pedagogy striving for disrupting the androcentric pedagogical rationality by offering a critique of patriarchy and the sexism causing inequality for “women.” From different methodologies and contents, this pedagogical alternative has generally analyzed social and patriarchal structures as well as provided action proposals to break with such cultural and socialization processes; achieving, in turn, transformation and emancipation—especially for women.

Nevertheless, feminist pedagogies have neither considered the power matrix exerted by modernity / coloniality. As Iris Hernández has analyzed:

Even though feminism provides a relevant critique against the hegemonic order, it still operates within a modern / colonial power matrix and, because of this, keeps affecting the same subjects and knowledges devastated by the conquest.⁹

Hernández points out that feminism, through different pedagogical forms, has unveiled power relations among men and women, even the one produced within the heterosexual regime. However, because of its strict focus on gender, feminism disregarded the European colonial imposition of gender,¹⁰ which subordinates to what it addresses as other axes of equality. Hernández accounts that, although some feminist pedagogies consider intersectionality by implementing race and class, they do so in an additive, accumulative, and descriptive fashion without realizing how colonial and neocolonial hierarchies operate within the power matrix.

This is evident in several feminist proposals. Their genealogy is

9 → Iris Hernández Morales, “Hacia un currículum feminista decolonial,” *Nomadías* 28 (2019): 45. Personal translation. Original quote: “*Si bien el feminismo representa una crítica relevante al orden hegemónico, aún opera vinculado a la matriz de poder moderno/colonial y por lo mismo afecta a lxs mismxs sujetxs y saberes devastados por la conquista.*”

10 → María Lugones, “Colonialidad y Género: Hacia un feminismo descolonial,” in *Género y Descolonialidad*, ed. Walter Dignolo (Buenos Aires: Del Signo, 2008), 13-25.

Euro-North-centric. Such concepts like patriarchy, gender, and sexual division of labor are defined without a full historicity according only to the experiences of White women from the Global North, reproducing in consequence the modern / colonial order.

TOWARD DECOLONIAL FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES

I understand as decolonial feminist pedagogies those knowledge-production practices challenging the modernity / coloniality relationship.

This means to realize that Western modernity has been possible due to colonialism resulting in racial, class, sex / sexuality, and epistemic hierarchies leading to the dehumanization of those beings excluded from the modern paradigm—that is, the White, heterosexual, catholic, liberal citizen. Historically, people with colonial difference have been placed at the bottom of social hierarchies and as victims of plunder, extractivism of their lands, eradication of their social fabric, and war. It is about comprehending, and hence questioning, the anthropocentric logics subordinating every being to the human. It is about contesting the Euro-North-centered knowledge that legitimizes some knowledges over others through official and hegemonic narratives that have silenced other narratives.

Decolonial feminist pedagogies are not about schooled knowledges. They emerge from the memories of villages and communities, social struggles, and mobilizations in dialogical relationships that engage the unlearning of colonial knowledges through collective thinking and action.

Decolonial pedagogies are based in an intellectual *cimarronaje* questioning the categories produced by the coloniality of power that even feminism and the left have supported,¹¹ and that have placed colonized subjects in exclusion and invisibility. It is about:

11 → Ochy Curiel, "Hacia la construcción de un feminismo decolonizado," in *Aproximaciones críticas a las prácticas teórico-políticas del feminismo latinoamericano*, ed. Yuderkys Espinosa (Buenos Aires: En la frontera, 2010), 69-78.

Identifying concepts, categories, theories that emerge from subalternized experiences generally produced in collectivity that hold the possibility to generalize without universalize, to explain different realities to disrupt the imaginary that such knowledges are local, individual, with no alternative to be communicated (Curiel 2014, 13).¹²

At the same time, it is about retrieving, legitimizing, and acknowledging other knowledges produced by subjects from their everyday and communitarian practices that create and recreate livable worlds to strengthen their social fabric from relational ontologies and question anthropocentrism.

Decolonial feminist pedagogies do not stay on women, although also approach the violences exerted onto them, but rather on all the wretched of the earth affected by coloniality,¹³ acknowledging them as the actors of decolonization, now and then. Decolonial feminist pedagogies approach the matrix of oppression that entails to understand how racism, heterosexuality, classism, anthropocentrism, and geo-politics are imbricated in the life of subalternized people while building a liberation project. It supposes that subalternized subjects themselves undertake research processes opposed to a research perspective rendering them as raw material for academic merits of generally White or White *Mestizo* people in academic or State institutions.

Decolonial feminist pedagogies prioritize doing, generating forms of knowledge-doing that are not solely written-based. Orality, cultural creation, music, dancing, painting, cooking, emotions, and spirituality

12 → Ochy Curiel, "Construyendo metodologías feministas desde el feminismo decolonial," in *Otras formas de (re)conocer*, ed. Irantzu Mendia Azkue, Marta Luxán, Matxalen Legarreta, Gloria Guzmán, Iker Zirion, and Iokin Azpiazu Carballo (Donosti: Universidad del País Vasco-Hegoa, 2014), 45-60. Personal translation. Original quote: "*Identificar conceptos, categorías, teorías, que surgen desde las experiencias subalternizadas, que son generalmente producidas colectivamente, que tienen la posibilidad de generalizar sin universalizar, de explicar distintas realidades para romper el imaginario de que estos conocimientos son locales, individuales, sin posibilidad ser comunicados.*"

13 → Frantz Fanon, *Los condenados de la Tierra*, trans. Julieta Campos (México, D.F: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1963).

are key forms of decolonial doing challenging the hegemonic schooled knowledge. These forms of doing, which belong to what is known as subjugated knowledges, are quotidian productions that configure social and human relationships, challenge the modern/colonial order, and are responsible for an alternative memory against the memories built by hegemonic narratives—all of which constitutes a dignity restorative process to heal the pain and the violence derived from coloniality.

CIMARRONAS DECOLONIAL FEMINIST SCHOOLS

Since decolonial feminist practices are collective actions, I would like to introduce an experience carried out by *Grupo Latinoamericano de Formación y Acción Feminista* (GLEFAS)—a fabric of activists and thinkers from many places in Abya Yala that we built from a decolonial feminist thinking and doing.

The Decolonial Feminist School has been in development since 2016 and it aims to motivate Afro-descendant children, adolescents, young people, and activists from impoverished communities to strengthen their Afro-Caribbean identity and to analyze the racist, sexist, and classist violences they are subjected to so that they can understand and confront them. These schools encourage such communities to identify and acknowledge different forms of communitarian doing and resistance that have enabled, over the centuries, the continuity of life and forms characteristic of *buen vivir*.¹⁴ The first schools were addressed to children and adolescents through *Kalalu Danza*, a socio-cultural process merging dance with creation. Later, we focused on young activists so that they become the reproducers of the knowledges generated in their collectives and communities. Every year the school welcomes approximately twenty-five participants.

The school applies, among others, popular education, music,

¹⁴ → Translator's note. *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir* refers to the Indigenous-led decolonizing philosophies implemented by some Latin American socialist States during the later decades. For more information, see: Ochy Curiel and María Galindo, *Descolonización y despatriarcalización de y desde los feminismos de Abya Yala* (ACSUR-Las Segovias, 2015), 14.

video, and team-work methodologies from participants' individual and collective experiences as the center. In this manner, we approach topics such as the coloniality of power, being, knowledge, gender, modernity, systemic racism and racism in the island, Nation-States, democracy, coloniality, and development logics. We also engage—among many other things—going through resistances like those of Caribbean thinkers, *buen vivir*, *cimarronaje*, and decolonial pedagogies and research.

These schools have facilitated two important things: the rise of collectives from a decolonial *cimarrona* feminist perspective and a closer approximation to Haiti given the fragmentation of the island—firstly on account of the colonizers, then of the *criollos*. Participation is shared by both Dominican and Haitian activists.

This is how from GLEFAS we conceive of decolonial feminist pedagogies: as practices decentering colonial knowledges and methodologies as well as proposing horizons for dignity by retrieving the knowledges and practices of the communities to build a political project that faces the effects of modernity / coloniality while acknowledging the resistances communities themselves carry out to confront them. ■

FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES AGAINST DEBT

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The feminist movement in Argentina has made confronting debt—both public and private—a central axis of its agenda. In doing so, it has renewed the slogans of that antagonism and how it is publicly presented. Those mass feminist mobilizations, which started in 2015, have taken place in the context of a brutal impoverishment of the broad majority of the population. A key moment in that impoverishment was the 44 billion dollar International Monetary Fund loan taken out by Mauricio Macri’s government. Ever since, austerity measures have been applied in the country that have led to increased poverty, which now affects nearly 40%³ of the population, and an inflation rate of nearly 100%.⁴

The process of politicizing debt has fundamental antecedents in the organization of the international feminist strikes in 2017, 2018, and 2019. In those moments, the feminist movement produced precise diagnoses about the relationship between sexist violence and economic violence. These diagnoses were generated in assemblies, translated into slogans, and used to compose political alliances.

As part of that process, the Ni Una Menos Collective, along with other organizations, called an action in May 2017 at the doors of the Central Bank of the Republic of Argentina under the banner “We want to stay alive, free, and debt free!” (“Vivas, libres y desendeudas nos queremos!”).⁵ The objective was, first of all, to trace the relation between financial violence and sexist violence, and, in that same act, to denounce the process of mass indebtedness of household economies that was taking place in parallel to the State taking out debt. This moved the conflict onto the terrain of finance and identified finance’s invasive logic over increasingly broad areas of the reproduction of life.

The slogan “We want to stay alive, free, and debt free!” has been developed over successive years in the heat of the mass movement and has been successfully interwoven with diverse problematics that

3 → According to data from the National Statistics and Census Institute (INDEC) last September, at the end of the first semester of 2022, the poverty rate was 36.5%.

4 → In January 2023, the annual variation rate of the CPI in Argentina was 98.9%.

5 → The manifesto for that action can be found here: Ni Una Menos, “We Want To Be Debt Free!” trans. Liz Mason-Deese, *Critical Times* 1, no. 11 (April 2018). <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article/1/1/158/139308/Critical-Times-The-Earth-Trembles>

map, in practice, that *invasive logic* of finance. But, going even further, it is worth emphasizing why it is that the feminist reading of debt had allowed for proposing financial disobedience in new terms in relation to what the production of subjectivity and exploitation of reproductive labor implied by the financial obligation. In that way, finance's abstract dynamic began to be problematized in terms of its relation with everyday life, connecting it to forms of violence in households and the current modalities of labor exploitation. Thus, it put the violence caused by debt in the center of the discussion about the economy.

THE MANIFESTO AGAINST DEBT

The action "We Want Ourselves Alive and Debt Free" on June 2, 2017, a few months after the massive international feminist strike in 2017, whose legacy it draws on, opened other terrains based on collective debates and practices in relation to the financial dimension and its connection to violence. The action's organization was directly interconnected with the terrain opened up by the meaning of the 2017 feminist strike and unfolds during the most violence process of public indebtedness in the history of the Argentine Republic, which reached its climax in 2018.

To account for the connection between private indebtedness and autonomy, between debt and household economies, slogans were produced such as: "I keep accounts all day," "Debt is violence", "Debt is a time bomb." We want to highlight the pedagogy synthesized by those slogans: *they place concrete images on the financial operation that seems abstract and produce operative definitions that explain its everyday impact.*



Image: A member of the Ni Una Menos Collective making posters with the slogan for the action in front of the Central Bank.

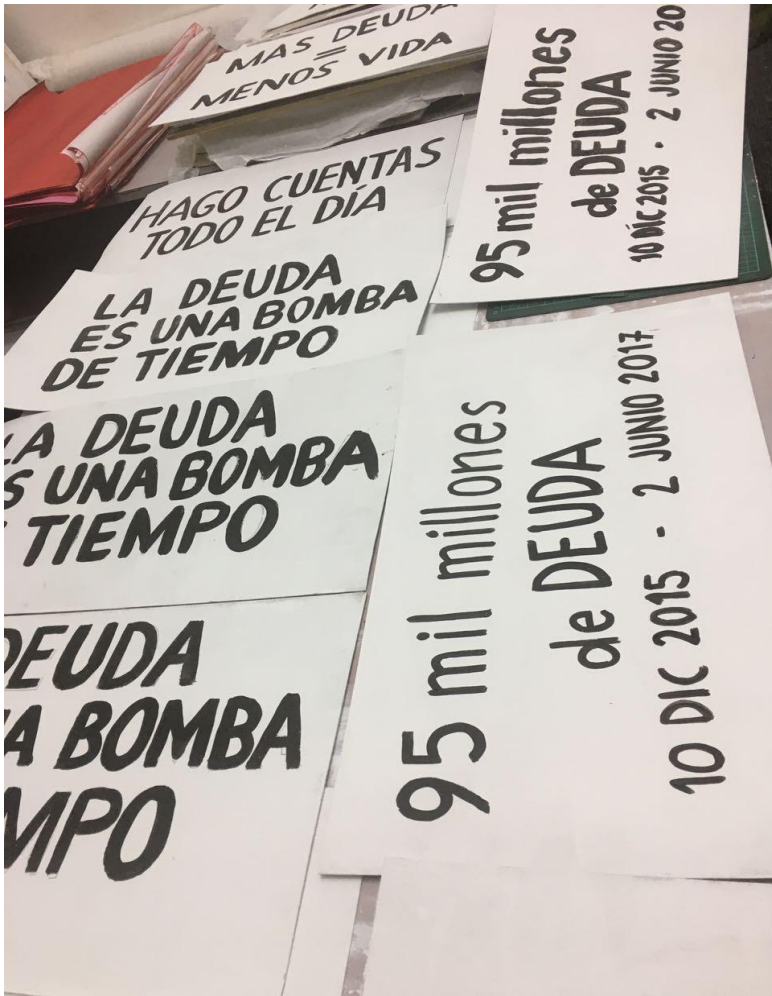


Image: Posters used for the action at the doors of the Central Bank, reading “More debt = less life,” “debt is a time bomb,” “95 billion in debt between Dec. 10 2015 – June 2, 2017.”

The slogan “We want to stay alive, free, and debt free!” also synthesizes a method for carrying out practical research in everyday life about to whom the debt is owed, how debts exploit and take away autonomy from women, lesbians, travestis, and trans people. It also shows how the debate about femicides and travesticides must be deepened by looking at the economic causes that function as gears of gender-based violence.



Image of the doors of the Central Bank of the Argentine Republic.

We could say that the relationship between private debt, autonomy, and sexist violence had not previously been taken into account by resistance practices in this way. The closest antecedents were the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, who were the ones who started speaking of “financial terrorism,” connecting indebtedness with the violence of state terrorism and including debt

as a cause in the human rights movement, redefining the antagonism in terms of finance versus life.

Therefore, that feminist action was fundamental in identifying the Central Bank as a place to go and put one's body on the line. The organization of the feminist strike had taken on the challenge of updating questions such as: How are we exploited today? What does debt have to do with reproducing the sexual order? And, the most difficult question: How can we go on strike against financial exploitation?

Thus the feminist movement was able to insert the matter of the relationship between debt and loss of autonomy into public debate and raise the issue of women's differential role in ensuring social reproduction and household economies. This is made explicit in part of the manifesto⁶ that we wrote for the action, entitled "We Want To Be Debt Free!":

As women, we know, we have learned in our everyday lives, what it means to be in debt. We know that with debt we can't say no when we want to say no. And that the state's debt always spills over to subjugate us. And our children. And our grandchildren. It exposes us to higher levels of precarity and to new forms of violence. To take out this debt, the state promises programs to make labor flexible and reduce public spending that disproportionately affect women.

But additionally, we are users, whether voluntarily or not, of the financial system: in recent years, we were forced into the banking system, to the point that benefits from the state have become inputs for the financial system. As female heads of household, we occupy a central role in the organization and self-management of networks of cooperation. Financial corporations exploit these community economies by charging commissions on

6 → Ni Una Menos, "We Want To Be Debt Free!"

benefits and wages and applying exorbitant interest rates on loans, credit cards, and microcredit.

However, it is with a credit card that we celebrate a birthday, with a loan that we build an addition to our house, with a microcredit loan that we seek to start the business that would enable us to survive. And thus we spend our nights poring over accounts, separating out the lion's share. That day-to-day accounting is what becomes abstract in financial policies, but as women we put our bodies in the places where we are struggling to make ends meet. How will we be able to stop male violence when we are subjected to paying debts under the threat of losing everything, and when any imbalance in the fragile economic structure in which we live leaves us out in the open and exposed? If we go to a shelter so that we can survive this violence, how will we pay the bills the following day?

We can see how the type of narratives of everyday life that are made audible by the feminist movement create the conditions so that that subjection of everyday life can be shared and taken on collectively.

In this sense, one of the privileged operations of private indebtedness is dismantled: making people privately address that which should be discussed collectively. Here, again, feminist pedagogy becomes essential: it consists of shifting what appears as a private, secret, embarrassing, and individual problem into a collective and political issue that can be problematized through street actions. Perhaps this happens in the feminist movement due to its capacity to politicize the domestic sphere. Thus it shows us how finance is increasingly taking over the terrain of social reproduction, making that space into a privileged battlefield.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY “ALIVE, FREE, AND DEBT FREE”?

Debt and wages, debt and state benefits, debt and pensions, debt and housing: we could say that an innovative gesture was activated that renders visible how “financial exploitation” inserts itself in houses, attacks economic autonomy, and becomes intertwined with sexist violence. That action in the doors of the Central Bank had multiple resonances. At the same time, one of the most accelerated processes of public indebtedness in Argentine history was getting underway, which culminated in negotiations with the IMF, a brutal devaluation of wages, and cuts to the public budget that included the elimination of three ministries. Then, saying “we want to be debt free” in slums and in unions, on the streets and in universities, is part of a feminist political pedagogy that consists of *going from finance to bodies* and demonstrating the concrete operations of debt in each territory. It also means denouncing the financial abstraction that devalues and negates the bodies that produce value.

In October 2018, the Women20 (the group of women who are part of the G-20) meeting in Buenos was also contested by the feminist movement, challenging the attempt at neoliberal appropriation of feminist demands in the register of financial “inclusion” for micro-entrepreneurs. Let’s look at how it produced innovations in the public agenda:

Radicalization of how sexist violence is understood in relation to economic forms of violence.

The action at the Central Bank provoked intense reactions in social media and the media. Feminism was accused of “mixing everything up,” precisely for having gone beyond the place of victimization, beyond only speaking of sexist violence as a phenomena isolated from the conditions in which one works or as a cultural problem. With the international women’s strike in 2017, and before with the national strike in 2016, the enunciation of demands shifted from placing ourselves in a place of victims to one of value producers in historically

devalued spatialities.

It pushed transversal union action against debt.

Another one of its novel elements was how unions transversally took up the demand against debt. For the Ni Una Menos march on June 4, 2018, different unions appropriated that slogan for their calls, creating a displacement in how the union conflict was defined in at least two senses: the demand for debt relief included household debts and was linked to the lack of autonomy, as a machine of obedience that puts women, lesbians, travestis, and trans persons in conditions of greater vulnerability to sexist violence.

In turn, the union confluence, along with the feminist movement, had two important moments of intervention after the international strikes: the “Parity” Law and the pension moratoriums, two reforms proposed by the IMF using a neoliberal gender discourse.

The first of those, in 2018, confronted a government project that, under the guise of a proposed “Law of Equity in Unions,” launched a “hidden labor reform.” That was how women unionists denounced it, also warning that the bill sought to grant the government the authority to intervene in unions.⁷

That initiative was an attempt to translate the demands of the feminist movement into a neoliberal register. In response, women unionists presented an alternative bill, agreed upon by all the union centrals, and in alliance with the feminist movement, that was even part of the exposition in Congress. As a result of this articulation, the president was forced to withdraw the bill. The slogan used was “Not in our name.” It was not a coincidence that the president’s bill was sent to Congress one day after March 8, 2018.

There is also a very important clue here: the synergy between the feminist movement and unions functions as an antidote against the attempt by neoliberal governments, corporations, and international credit agencies to remove the class content from the feminist agenda and translate feminism into laws that attack union autonomy and the organizational tools of male and female workers.

7→ “Las mujeres sindicalistas contra la reforma laboral encubierta,” *LatFem*, August 24, 2018. <http://latfem.org/las-mujeres-sindicalistas-contra-la-reforma-laboral/>

Thus, this debate was rekindled when they attempted to “pinkwash” the International Monetary Fund’s agenda with the gender agenda. The agendas deployed by the feminist movement in Argentina include, thanks to the alliance between unions and feminism, a denunciation of labor precarization and against austerity policies that include cuts to social security and labor flexibilization.

A second moment of this confluence occurred in 2019, with the confrontation against an initiative by Mauricio Macri’s government to cancel pension moratoriums that enabled retirement for women who, having worked in their homes or informally, did not have access to retirement benefits. The government proposed increasing the retirement age to 65 and canceling the benefit of the moratoriums in order to comply with a requirement of the International Monetary Fund.

On the occasion of that measure, a confluence was assembled of all the union centrals and the feminist movement.⁸ For those activities, the Ni Una Menos Collective coined the slogan “The patriarchy has the contributions that we are missing,” pointing to the structural origin of that lack of contributions for certain women workers.

Thus, we were able to show the cuts to retirement rights, which especially targeted women, those who, for those whole lives, had carried out unpaid or badly paid work and/or work in which their employers did not take responsibility for those contributions, as a punishment-cut: an attempt at disciplining along with an economic adjustment.

It is that unity of feminist-union action, defended by the field of forces opened by the collective mobilization woven in the heat of the political process of the strikes, that rendered visible and placed value on reproductive, care, and attention labor, at the same time as it denounced the wage gap maintained by the sexual division of labor.

Therefore, the alliance between unionism and feminism made it possible for the union movement to propose, under the slogan

8 → “Mujeres sindicalistas e integrantes de movimientos sociales se suman a la marcha para que no termine la moratoria jubilatoria” *ElIDigital*, June 3, 2019. <http://www.elidigital.com.ar/articulo/view/83108/mujeres-sindicalistas-e-integrantes-de-movimientos-sociales-se-suman-a-la-marcha-para-que-no-termine-la-moratoria-jubilatoria>

#NotOneRetiredWomanLess, the recognition of “non-recognized” work as a priority in the labor agenda in a retroactive way. We could say that this slogan is another declination of the slogan #AllWomenAreWorkers⁹ that was so successful in broadening what was understood by labor and had the capacity to dispute remuneration and recognition of the historically unpaid or badly paid feminized labor in the demand for retirement benefits for all women.

In conclusion, women unionists in alliance with the feminist movement, have built an opposition to the reforms that the IMF has attempted to impose on Argentina since 2018. This included the aforementioned “parity” law and cuts to the retirement moratorium, but also, in more general terms, different austerity measures that forced women to have to go into debt in order to live.

PLURINATIONAL TERRITORIALIZATION: AGAINST GLOBAL FINANCIAL PLUNDERING, THE PLURINATIONALITY OF STRUGGLES

Lastly, the feminist movement in its confrontation with finance has also developed an internationalist strategy starting from each individual home. From there, it is able to reconstruct global financial circuits and connect the moments of finance’s deterritorialization with its violent landings in concrete territories and bodies. Starting from each specific space, the supposed “invisibility” of financial capital is mapped and a battle is waged against its abstract power of command. Also, the production of a debtor morality is questioned in each place by challenging its relation with gender mandates (the figure of the exemplary “good payer” who sacrifices herself for her family).

Thus, indebtedness has appeared on the agenda of the transnational feminist movement in diverse ways as part of the dynamic of the strike. In Argentina we said “We want to live debt free!” while in Puerto Rico they said “Us [women] against the debt!” In Chile, it was “They owe us a life!”, and in Spain: “We don’t owe, we won’t pay!” This is new: the feminist movement is politicizing, at the mass scale,

9 → Ni Una Menos. “Daughters of the Strike” May 8, 2018. <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/3792-daughters-of-the-strike-a-may-day-statement>

the financial issue. Furthermore, it does so denouncing its colonial dimension.¹⁰ We can see this in an article by members of the Colectiva Feminista en Construcción from Puerto Rico:

We position ourselves from a we as political, precarious, and impoverished feminine subjects, we position ourselves in a frontal and confrontational way against that which violates us. Naming ourselves from that register is not a mere symbolic exercise, reproduction in itself democratizes power. Standing up against debt based on the position of that we implies being part of a collective identity [...]. On March 8, 2019, upon the call for the Women's Strike, the Collective launched a call to embargo the banks, which were responsible for evicting thousands of families, and had also actively participated in the governmental debt scheme. [...] We, Black and racialized women, the exiled, the indebted, the nobodies. They have the numbers in dollars and bonuses, we have the numbers in people and strength. They have the legal and financial structures, we have the communitarian structures and support networks.¹¹

At the regional scale, the feminist strike has enabled women, lesbians, travestis, and trans people to position themselves as value producers and not only as victims of sexist violence.¹² Thus, the gesture of confronting debt is carried out from the position of creditors: "They are the debt, but that which they have owed us for centuries, due to the entrapment and capture of possibilities."¹³

Thus, the feminist movement raised the issue of the historical

10 → Rocío Zambrana, *Colonial Debts: The Case of Puerto Rico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

11 → S. Nuñez Ferrer and Z. Dávila Roldán, "Nosotras contra la deuda," in *¿Quién le debe a quién? Ensayos Transnacionales de desobediencia financiera*, ed. Silvia Federici, Verónica Gago, and Lucí Cavallero (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2021).

12 → Verónica Gago, *Feminist International: How to Change Everything*, trans. Liz Mason-Deese (New York: Verso Books, 2020).

13 → Nuñez and Dávila Roldán, "Nosotras contra la deuda."

debts that the State and financial corporations hold with women, lesbians, travestis, and trans people. It did so by demonstrating in workplaces and in homes, that women, lesbians, travestis, and trans people are creditors because they do reproductive and communitarian work that is fundamental for social reproduction that is not paid or recognized.

As we mentioned above, debt is a historical capitalist mechanism for looting, exploiting, and privatizing the commons.¹⁴ It has also been used to increase labor exploitation in moments of crisis. How public debt conditions states is already well-recognized. It is a cyclical scene in Latin American countries, as well as more broadly as a global colonial circuit. It is only more recently, however, that the circuits that connect public debt with its effects on everyday life have been traced politically. This has been made possible because women, lesbians, travestis, trans and non-binary people have, in their actions on the streets, put into words what it means to be simultaneously over-exploited as workers in the labor market, as domestic workers, as consumers, and now as debtors as well. Connecting debt, violence, and labor has been achieved by the feminist strikes. In the fourth call for the international strike in Argentina, the conversation about debt was expressed in the main slogan: “The debt is owed to us [women, lesbians, travestis, trans and non-binary people], not to the IMF or the churches,”¹⁵ indicating a precise diagnosis both of the conjuncture and of the movement’s broad horizon. But debating debt does not only mean to talk about debt. Debt is directly connected with budget cuts to public services, wage cuts, the recognition of domestic work, and the need to take out debt in order to access abortion. We only go into debt because other resources have already been taken from us.

Debt only comes to “save us” after we have been forcefully

14 → Silvia Federici, “Mujeres, dinero y deuda. Notas para un Movimiento Feminista de Reapropiación,” in *¿Quién le debe a quién? Ensayos transnacionales de desobediencia financiera*, ed. Silvia Federici, Verónica Gago, and Lucí Cavallero (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2021).

15 → Collective Document of the 4th International Feminist Strike in Argentina: “La deuda es con nosotras y con nosotros, ni con el FMI ni con las iglesias” (March 8, 2020). <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/252141-la-deuda-es-con-nosotras-y-con-nosotros-ni-con-el-fmi-ni-con>

impoverished, pushed into an induced precarity. Debt becomes unpayable because first there was plundering. Speaking of debt from a feminist perspective shows what the global flows of financial capital feed off, as they seek to hold on to pensions, wages, and a whole mass of free and precaritized labor that is what moves the world today, that which drives extractivist looting, which enables multinational corporations to have extraordinary profits, and that which has been identified and denounced for its direct relation to the increase in labor, institutional, racist, and sexist violence.

We can add a practical example of a financial geography that is rendered visible with the feminist strikes: the BlackRock investment fund,¹⁶ one of the largest holders of Argentine debt with foreign legislation, is the same fund that has enormous investments in Mexican pension funds and is demanding adjustments in its pension system. The premise that connects financial speculation, the increase to the retirement age, and the lack of recognition of the work of women, lesbians, travestis, and trans people needs to be demonstrated: the investment fund's profits are guaranteed by extending the years of over-exploitation of that work. Additionally, the assets of these investment funds (the money that it captures from retirees who pay more over a longer time) serve to buy public companies and privatize them.¹⁷ In this way, in a single movement, those workers are obligated to work more for longer, dispossessed of public services, and therefore, their incomes are also devalued (they have to pay for services that used to be public and free).

Perhaps the reason why the strike call in Mexico caught on more powerfully in 2020 than in earlier years can be connected to this dynamic of dispossession. In that country, there has been a record of ten femicides per day according to official agencies. That same investment fund that lands in Argentina and Mexico aspiring to social wealth is that which was denounced by the yellow vests in France for being complicit in the reform of the pension system there.

16 → Néstor Restivo, "El fondo BlackRock, dueño de casi todo," *Página/12* (April 12, 2020) <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/258436-el-fondo-black-rock-dueno-de-casi-todo?>

17 → Horacio Rovelli, "La jugada de ajedrez," *El cohete a la luna* (May 23, 2021) <https://www.elcoheteealaluna.com/la-jugada-de-ajedrez/>

Therefore, the functioning of investment funds (key players in the debt renegotiation) cannot be explained within national borders: they feed off of retirement funds from one country that they use to buy public debt in another with financing needs, at the same time as they can invest in other places by buying mortgage debts or investments in the energy sector. This has also been shown by the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH),¹⁸ which has been denouncing evictions caused by financial bubbles across Spain. In 2018, the PAH took the vulture fund Blackstone to court for causing inflation in housing prices. Since then, this denunciation has been part of feminist and migrant mobilizations and, in particular, it has allowed for connecting the 8M feminist strike with actions against evictions and for the right to housing. The unionization of renters shakes things up with the slogan “stop evictions,” putting individual names to the evictions (#GiselliSeQueda, #GiselliStays), and defending renters house by house. Thus, the feminist strikes trace the geography of dispossessions and expropriations that the so-called “investment windfalls” take advantage of. Demands for housing, wage recognition, and pensions are part of the same program of financial disobedience.

Experimentation with forms of social unionism that combine housing and labor issues, pensions and the popular economy, the denunciation of sexual abuse and workplace violence, is based on feminism. By inverting the hierarchy of recognition of non-paid work, the debt burden is also reversed. The debt is owed by the state, employers, and patriarchs due to having benefited from that historically forced and free labor.

The forms of evasion, of denunciation of the feminization of poverty, and of generalized dispossession, of the precarization of labor and existence, weave together questions. Asking *how can we go on strike from and against finance?* is to also ask what our debts are made of and who has rights over our existence?

18 → “La PAH lleva al fondo buitre Blackstone ante la Audiencia Nacional por fomentar la burbuja del alquiler” *Público* (December 18, 2018) <https://www.publico.es/politica/fondos-buitre-pah-lleva-fondo-buitre-audiencia-nacional-fomentar-burbuja-inmobiliaria.html>



Image: Feminist Strike Mobilization in 2020, Banner of the Ni Una Menos Collective



Image of the Feminist Strike Mobilization in 2022

CONCLUSIONS

Today the feminist movement confronts the most abstract image of capital: financial capital, precisely the form of domination that seems to make antagonism impossible. By confronting the financialization of life, which occurs when the very act of living “produces” debt, the feminist movement instigates a dispute with the new forms of exploitation and value extraction.

Debt shows an “inverted” image of the very productivity of our

labor power, our vital power and the politicization (valorization) of reproductive tasks. The feminist strike that shouts “we want to live debt free!” renders finance visible in terms of conflict and, therefore, of the self-defense of our autonomies. We must understand the mass indebtedness that has landed in feminized popular economies and household economies as an everyday “counter-revolution,” as an operation on the same terrain on which feminisms have shaken everything up. The feminist movement, taking finance as a terrain of struggle against generalized impoverishment, is a practice of counter-pedagogy in respect to the violence of finance and its abstract formulas for exploiting bodies and territories.

Adding the financial dimension to our struggles allows us to map the flows of debt and complete a cartography of exploitation in its most dynamic, versatile, and apparently “invisible” forms. Understanding how debt extracts value from household economies, non-waged economies, and economies historically considered non-productive, allows for recognizing financial apparatuses as true mechanisms of the colonization of the reproduction of life. And, we can add a final point: those financial apparatuses must also be understood as the privileged mechanisms for whitewashing illicit flows, in connection with legal and illegal economies, as a way of increasing direct violence against territories. What is sought with these apparatuses is precisely “an economy of obedience” that serves the most concentrated sectors of capital, while charity is used to depoliticize access to resources.

All of this makes possible a broader and more complex understanding of what we have diagnosed as the multiple forms of violence that take feminized bodies as new territories of conquest. Therefore, a feminist gesture against the debt machinery is needed because it is also a gesture against the machinery of guilt, maintained by heteropatriarchal morals and the exploitation of our vital forces.

FURTHER READING

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MANIFESTO ON FEMINIST PEDAGOGIES

Nahuala Indómita

Translated by Eloisa Aguirre and Cristina Sánchez-Martín

INTRODUCTION¹

In Nahuala Indómita, we question pedagogical practice from an ecofeminist perspective as our point of departure. First, we reflect on how our knowledge has been constructed. To that end, we start from the concept of “*sentipensares*,” which allows us to understand how embodiment and our contexts are involved in generating knowledge.² Next, we reflect on our own individual and collective experiences: lived situations that became the seed of new perspectives from which transformative knowledge emerged. Lastly, we share how, based on our experience, we have implemented “*desaprendizaje*” that has involved transforming our knowledge construction. With a heart full of gratitude, we share our manifesto—the result of our participation in the conference LAPES 2022. Such a manifesto became enriched after space was opened to listen to collective minds and knowledges during the conference, creating an atmosphere where we allowed ourselves to feel ourselves, listen to ourselves, and look at ourselves. We share a manifesto that accompanies us as we engage in

- 1→ Translators’ note: As translators, we have aimed for discursive practices that matched, to the extent possible, the authors’ voices and intentions. We acknowledge the unequal power dynamics that come with translating an article written by Mexican authors in their Spanish, which moves away from normative linguistic practices in the intentional use of non-binary gender forms and Nahual expressions. Language is a conduit for knowledge, and as such, it must be carefully practiced.

In seeking to maintain consistently the decolonial and feminist values inherent in the content of the article and the non-normative language practices used by the authors, we (translators) made similar choices in relation to colonial monolingual English by intentionally selecting some language forms over others. First, we sought to create a decolonial English translation by maintaining the identity of the text through language choices like “*compañeras*” or “*calle*” and showcase moments of resistance against the dominant English, just like the authors did when introducing Nahual expressions.

Additionally, we aimed to convey multiple forms of gender expression evident in the Spanish text by making a distinction between: 1) the authors’ own gender expressions as “*nosotras*” to which we added the descriptor “*we (fem)*”; and 2) the non-binary and non-conforming gender expressions in Spanish (i.e., “*otrxs*”), to which we did not add gender descriptors and left unmarked (i.e., “*others*”).

It is our hope that these small discursive elements will give readers an opportunity to engage with the text “with the respect it deserves” (in the authors’ words) and embody, as they read it, the knowledges called for in the piece.

- 2→ According to Cepeda (2017), “*Sentipensar* is a verb composed of the verbs “*feel*” (*sentir*) and “*think*” (*pensar*). It is both to think with feeling and feel with thinking.” (Translators’ note). Cepeda, Juan, “The problem of being in Latin America: Approaching the Latin American ontological *sentipensar*.” *Journal of World Philosophies* 2, no. 1 (2017).

actionable practices to transform pedagogies from perspectives outside of hegemonic lenses—perspectives that resonate in our hearts today more attentively than ever.

MANIFESTO CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE PART I

Here, we(fem) share time to make a pause to express gratitude for the space created at the conference, knowledges, and our collective presence; a pause to also let us just breathe.

We(fem) begin citing Marisa Belausteguigoitia and Araceli Mingo because this is how knowledge construction works: recognizing where we are taking ingredients from, *algo por aquí, otro de este lado y un poco de esto también* / something over here, some more from other there, and a little bit from here too.

In their words, “*Una de las encrucijadas que han capturado al pensamiento educativo y sus relaciones con el feminismo y los estudios de género es la tensión existente entre la concepción de la educación como liberadora y la educación justamente como lo contrario, como la reproductora de la opresión y de todo aquello que lo libera*” / “One of the crossroads that have captured educational thought and its relations with feminism and gender studies is the existing tension between the conception of education as liberating and education as precisely the contrary, as reinforcing oppression and everything that liberates” (Belausteguigoitia & Mingo 1999).³

And we(fem) ask ourselves, how do we construct our knowledges? Who gives value to what we learn?

Within the society where we live, the learning that is most valued is the one obtained within the academy. The education that is inexcusable for us(fem) to not have is that from an institution. And here the question is, what is it that makes us elevate this type of knowledge?

Exactly. It is called the patriarchy.

That very same system of beliefs is one that calls collective

3 → Belausteguigoitia, Marisa, y Araceli Mingo. 1999. “Fuga a dos voces”, en *Géneros prófugos. Feminismo y educación*. Ciudad de México: Paidós.

knowledge “*usos y costumbres* / usage and traditions” while calling institutional knowledge “*ciencia* / science.” And that is how knowledge becomes hierarchical, which is reflected in the management of health, food, care, and *quehaceres* / duties. For example, the Reggio Emilia pedagogy that emerged after World War II in Italy, is based on wonder, on the innate ability to discover and to be curious. It is a pedagogy that invites us to constantly ask ourselves, what is important for me to learn at this moment in my life? It invites us to do the exercise of going back to our inner girls and ask them, what is important for you to learn? It can be hard at first to realize that many of the questions and the skills that we wished for as children are still in that wish box. And they are still there because, unfortunately, in many spaces, contexts, or environments, we realize that what we want to learn does not go with the school books or the lessons of our caregivers and we downplay the importance of what we aspire to learn.

Today, we(fem) say: “we want to be part of spaces where the importance of honoring our diverse needs and diverse contexts prevails, where knowledge construction responds to corazones-curiosidades and the real needs of each one of us(fem).”

CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE PART II

During these years of sharing, in the company of many *compañeras*, we have recognized that the most important process for us is unlearning. We began to question ourselves about absolutely everything, and the most tangible thing we saw was the care for our surroundings. Each one of us with our own processes, but with a very common line, we began focusing our life projects with a radical thought that is hyper-anticapitalist. It was hard to realize that we are immersed in this patriarchal, hetero-capitalist world, but that also gave us the strength to resist from within. Now with our feet on the ground, literally and metaphorically, we are in the process of constructing new knowledge.

In line with what the Abya Yala⁴ communal feminist *compañeras* name, we seek to live autonomously, and although it may sound contradictory to some, we also seek to live collectively. And it happened: what is personal is political. What is political is collective, as well. And from there, we have built our collective knowledge.

We are faithful believers that listening is one of the most powerful tools we have, and together we have built collective spaces where we sit down to lend our ears to listen, unlearn ourselves ... and of course, learn ourselves as well.

TRANSFORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE PART I

And it has been like that, learning to listen to ourselves is also a part of it. Once again, as our community feminist *compañeras* say: seeing things differently isn't a conflict, but an opportunity to look for wealth and harmony in everyone's eyes to strengthen the robustness of the community.

Nahuala is born thereby, after striving for the collectivization of knowledges that we are obtaining. Unlearning daily practices that have damaged so much and adding practices that align with our search for the dignified coexistence of interspecies.

We (fem) have learned that the oppressions against us caused by heteropatriarchal capitalism are also against nature; with this in mind, we actively decide to be part of the fight where both struggles come together. And at that moment in which we are able to understand how problems can be disrupted, we realized that we were transforming our knowledge. From that manner we were learning about "who am I listening to?" and the way we are sharing our learning "how do I get this message across?"

Getting the message across has been quite a challenge as well.

4 → Abya Yala is the term that designates the territory that includes the American continent. It was used by the Kuna, a native community that lives in Colombia and Panama, and means Mature Land, Living Land or Flowering Land (Carrera and Ruiz 2016). Today we use it as an action that seeks the decolonization of the name of the territory we inhabit. Carrera Maldonado, Beatriz, y Zara Ruiz Romero, eds. 2016. "Prólogo." *Abya Yala Wawgeykun: Artes, Saberes y Vivencias de Indígenas Americanos*. Vol. 1. Acer-VOS. Patrimonio Cultural Iberoamericano.

And it is that not all spaces receive messages in the same way, and sometimes it is also learning to understand that there are spaces in which our voices are not going to resonate in the way we would like. But we continue in constant search of it, learning by which trail we must follow this path of daily resistance.

And so we ask ourselves, are feminist pedagogies necessary to address racial, patriarchal, extractivist, and colonial capitalism around the world? We think so. We have learned that if we don't fight for our home and for the species that inhabit it, fighting for everything else will be half done. The oppressions are interconnected and as many of our *compañeras* from Abya Yala who defend the land and territory say, "*no estamos defendiendo a la vida, somos la vida defendiéndose / we are not defending life, we are life defending itself.*"

Feminist pedagogies are, in general, contextualized to moments, places, and oppressions. Because we believe that those pedagogies make us transform our daily actions, and as part of them, transform those of others, we are making a big difference. We know that it is not easy in all contexts, but we invite us not to remain silent anymore, let us tell why we do things. Even if our voice trembles when doing it.

Even being perceived as nature, from a very essentialist perspective, patriarchy has clouded our *sentires* (feelings and senses) and has led us to the point that if we want to stand out we need to rationalize everything, feel less. However, we are learning that feeling is also a fundamental part of this knowledge transformation process. Our proposal is that we learn by feeling, empathizing, and listening. So when we are about to start a learning process, we recognize what our feelings, both emotional and physical, are at that moment. Because it will also shape what we are left with from each learning experience.

TRANSFORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE PART II

We propose on ourselves to honor all the learning-knowledge that shapes us. From our morning awakening, we can learn about how the sun rose, the shapes of the clouds, what the air smells like, how the

body feels. We always ask this of ourselves and it is very complex: to hold ourselves up. “*Sin prisa pero sin pausa / slowly but surely*,” one of our moms always says.

“*Sentir y entender que en la escuela no somos solo producción de conocimientos, sino personas con cuerpo y sexuadas, no divisibles entre mente y cuerpo somos un todo dinámico, y que no somos sujetos con una ‘materialización abstracta’ / To feel and understand that at school we are not just the production of knowledge, but embodied individuals, not divisible between mind and body, we are a dynamic whole, and that we are not subjects with an ‘abstract materialization’*” (Acaso 2011).⁵

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE PART I

One of the most tangible examples for us is the permaculture, which invites us to understand ourselves as part of a whole. Learning to listen-observe our body—as the first territory we inhabit, in the words of Lorena Cabnal—and learn to listen-observe the environment-territory beyond our own bodies as inhabitants. In this way, also learning about the individual and collective needs, to start from there to build, cultivate, act, create. We have also learned that at the same time communal and indigenous feminism is positioned with the intention of not confronting or drafting from individual rights, but collective ones; from the community as a place of common identity and ancestral memory.

Aligning with our transformation of knowledge together with ancestral knowledge, we have learned differently from the *cosmogonía* Maya and with the respect that it deserves, we bring up three concepts that resonate our *sentipensares*.

5 → Acaso, Maria, Elizabeth Ellsworth y Carla Padró. 2011. *El aprendizaje de lo inesperado*. Madrid: Catarata.

K'AT es un día del calendario maya, tiene que ver con el tejer o entretejer de la vida, la unidad de la comunidad, la red. El valor de la colectividad dentro de la comunidad y tejer la unidad dentro de la cultura Maya reconoce la diversidad, que se conoce como el kulaj—tz aqat (dualidad y la complementariedad); así mismo la cuatridad; el q'uch (reciprocidad solidaridad, apoyo mutuo); son elementos que permiten convivir en el equilibrio y la armonía / K'AT is a day of the Mayan calendar, it has to do with the weaving or interweaving of life, the unity of the community, the network. The value of collectivity within the community and weaving unity within the Mayan culture recognizes diversity, which is known as the kulaj—tz aqat (duality and complementarity); likewise the quadriness; the q'uch (reciprocity, solidarity, mutual support); They are elements that allow us to live in balance and harmony. (Sanic y Paz, 2013).⁶

We learn from what surrounds us, and with these three concepts, the Mayan cosmogony invites us to recognize the diversity that inhabits us and with which we live. These are concepts that many communities, from the territories we(fem) inhabit (Guatemala and Mexico), come along with in the structure of community and knowledge, weaving between generations from the concepts of collectivity and respect.

There lies the challenge and the beauty: to bring the learning to daily life and to appreciate the same learnings from daily life. To ask ourselves, how do we relate to each other?, in all the ways possible, with our bodies, our persons, our spaces, the life that occupies those spaces, with the lives that only cross us momentarily, amongst other lives. In this way, within our relations comes the way we speak, what we eat. A myriad of whats and hows.

6 → Sanic, Y. y Juan José Hurtado Paz y Paz. 2013. *Aportes desde la cosmovisión y mujeres mayas para la prevención de la violencia de género*. Guatemala: Asociación Pop N'oj.

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE PART II

We believe that one of the most important lessons in the long and ongoing feminist fight in Latin American and the Caribbean is to collectivize the work we do at the individual level. Acting local and thinking global also applies to our everyday life with people. Communicate, empathize, try to understand where the other person is acting from. This also frees us.

Leaving the whitewashed and westernized academy resonates with us, since we need more *calle* to listen more to ourselves and to learn other daily lives. We believe that relearning can also be intergenerational. There are things that we have unlearned that we could reintegrate into our daily lives, synergizing with our new visions. For us(fem), it is a daily decision to be part of this collective change and to recognize the oppressions and privileges that frame us. We believe that acting in this way allows us to have more clarity of where and where to act.

CLOSINGS

We(fem) have decided everyday to reflect about our interspecies relationship. We choose to question how we can align with ourselves and also with our surroundings. We think about our bodies, about our nutrition, where what we consume comes from, what had to happen for us to be able to nourish ourselves from it, who was involved in that process. We also question our own ways of relating ourselves to the affective and sexual-affective level. We have witnessed great growth in understanding ourselves from there, what role our bodies play, our experiences as girls, as teens.

We also question the ways we want to live, what we consume, with whom we want to collectivize, what we want to do in our day to day. We continue to build ourselves while recognizing that this is a constant journey, that perhaps it will never stop. And we know that there is always an opportunity to learn new ways of (re)construction, transformation, and to apply (on ourselves as well) new knowledge.

And definitely to rest. There is so so so much to question, but resting is also fundamental. To guard ourselves, to disconnect and listen to ourselves, and in this way to acquire tools and strength to continue. Let's build pedagogies that value rest and in this way let's abandon the capitalist need to produce knowledge without an end in sight. ■

EVERYTHING I DO IS FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Silvia González (Casa Latina / Mujeres Sin Fronteras)

Translated by Juan Heiremans

I want to say thank you for the invitation to be part of LAPES 2022. In case you didn't hear, my name is Silvia González. I have been a household worker for more than fifteen years. I'm part of the staff of Casa Latina, a non-profit organization that advances the power and well-being of Latino immigrants. Casa Latina has a program called Mujeres Sin Fronteras that promotes leadership development for household workers. This program arose from the need to create a space where household workers could organize themselves to fight for dignifying this work sector and create better working conditions without putting aside their own challenges as women and mothers. This is a space by and for social justice where they share information relevant to the Latina woman. They make community and work collectively. I am the result of this leadership group called Mujeres Sin Fronteras. I have been part of this group since 2011.

When I received the invitation to participate in this feminist pedagogies event, I asked myself "Why are they inviting me? What does all my work have to do with this?" I thought they had the wrong person but I took it upon myself to look up what feminist pedagogies meant and discovered to my surprise that it's all the work I do. The movement for the fight for household workers' rights are feminist pedagogies of household workers.

THE HISTORY OF HOUSEHOLD WORKERS

A moment ago, I was talking about the word "household workers" because a lot of people use the word domestic workers. And it's a movement that has been taking place along with the National Domestic Workers Alliance since years ago. The word domestic in Spanish has a very strong meaning. It comes from domesticating, from controlling, from dominating. Part of our work that falls under feminist pedagogies is to change that context. We want to educate people little by little. Although we are still in a modern world of slavery, we can start changing phrases, educating people. We know that by saying "Not now!" maybe we are going to stop doing something or change phrases that we have been using since long ago. Maybe it is

not the intention of this space, but hopefully after this session maybe you will remember Silvia and you can help us in this movement to make this shift and call “household workers” instead of “domestic workers.”

I want to mention some historical moments of household workers. Household work has its roots in the history of slavery. European colonizers used violence to create an enslaved servant class of Indigenous, African and poor white workers. This allowed them to maximize their profits and establish power through slavery and abolition. Colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism shaped the domestic labor that is performed primarily by whom? By women of color.

The United States expanded westward and then abroad in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, occupying lands transformed by previous generations of colonial violence. American colonialism and imperialism brought new forms of racial violence to all these borderlands. This included an increased dependence on Black and indigenous servitude. The servant class also grew to include laborers, Mexican, Chinese and Irish immigrants among others. African Americans migrated from the South to northern cities fleeing violence and poverty during the 1910s and 1920s. This was called the Great Migration. Caribbean immigrants also arrived in the northern cities of the United States. In this period, they were also largely forced to do household work.

During this time together they formed alliances and unions to defend their rights. The African American freedom movement gave birth to new forms of organizing among household workers. In the 1950s and 60s they led victorious movements to end racial segregation, like the Montgomery Bus Boycott between 1955 and 1956. At that time, more household workers than ever joined the movement. As a result of the triumph of civil rights, African American women left domestic work in large numbers in the 1970s and 80s and employers began to hire Latin American, Caribbean, and Asian immigrant women in greater numbers. Immigration and United States foreign policies created this new group of workers vulnerable to

exploitation.

While I was going over what I was going to talk about today, it came to mind one of the phrases mentioned yesterday that said, “it is the past that allows us to walk well into the future.” That is why, because of all this struggle and history of the past, using feminist pedagogies that maybe back then we didn’t know those words, the National Domestic Workers Alliance was created.

THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE

I will give a little bit of history and then close with what we are working on locally. Because all these movements are intertwined and that is what makes us stronger. At the founding of the National Workers Alliance in June 2007, over fifty household workers, representing thirteen local organizations from across the country, gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, for a National Meeting of Household Workers as part of the first United States Social Forum, by its acronym in English USSF. Each of these organizations was working in their own cities to win rights and dignity for household workers. They knew they had to go beyond their communities in search of models, strategies, and a greater sense of solidarity in the organizing projects for household workers. In previous generations of household workers’ organizations there had been national networks, but at this point there was no such national coordinating body. Over the course of the meeting over these four days, they shared organizing models, they learned about the history of household work, they talked about campaign victories and challenges, and they presented their struggles to thousands of participants of this Social Forum. Despite language barriers and cultural divides, workers shared organizing experiences, laughed, cried together, and developed lasting relationships. On the last day of the meeting, these three organizations decided to form the National Domestic Workers Alliance, known by its English acronym NDWA, to build their own collective power and elevate their local work to a national stage.

The founding organizations—worth mentioning because they are

such powerful organizations that still exist—included: the Women’s Collective of Centro Legal “La Raza,” active women and individuals organized to gain labor rights in the North Bay area of California; the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, known as CHIRLA; the Filipino Workers Center in Southern California; the women workers project, known by its English acronym, CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities; The Damayan Migrant Workers Association; Domestic Workers United; Haitian Women, for Haitian refugees; Housecleaners Cooperative of the Workplace Project in Hempstead; Las Señoras de Santa María in New York; Casa de Maryland; and obviously Casa Latina.

Why do I mention all of these organizations? Because they played such an important role in bringing about this National Domestic Workers Alliance. Many of these organizations are still fighting locally for benefits for household workers. Today, the National Domestic Workers Alliance is the nation’s leading voice for dignity, justice, and respect for millions of household workers in the United States. As of 2021, the Alliance comprises more than seventy-five affiliate organizations and local chapters, as well as a growing base of individual memberships across the country. In 2019, a national bill of rights was introduced for the first time in the U.S. Congress, where the champions of this bill of rights were current Vice President Kamala Harris and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal.

I remember this movement was so impressive. We were hundreds of workers at a press conference outside Congress. At that moment the #MeToo movement joined that press conference and we visited several politicians inside the Congress. The movement that is created is incredible, the momentum that is created. Most of the politicians have a connection with household workers because when I say household workers it includes several things: nannies, house cleaners, people who take care of the most precious thing, their parents. I remember we were in a room where Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was one of the politicians, also a champion among so many other politicians, and she said that her mother cleaned houses and that she went with her mother and that while her mother cleaned, she

sat down to do her homework. We all connect at some point with that. I still clean houses, but I remember when I would go clean houses and I would take my daughter with me. And when I listened to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tell her story, you identify and you feel like you're on the right path. Right? It's not that [my daughter] is going to become a politician, but you can do something in this movement to change the laws and be able to leave a path with better working conditions for the new generations that are coming, because household work is never going to stop.

How many people are coming across the border to get to this country? I was talking to the colleague [in the audience] saying how many people were struggling from Mexico? We came to this country looking for a better education, a better way of life. We were talking saying that we don't want to leave our land, our parents, our customs to come here and suffer discrimination. But here we are. We have to keep moving forward. So, I went back to that space in the Congress, when I heard Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. That empowers. That gives strength to keep fighting.

In 2019, the National Bill of Rights was introduced. It didn't pass. But that doesn't mean we have thrown in the towel. In 2022, approximately less than a month ago, we went to the United States Congress again. The pandemic stopped us a little bit, but we just caught our breath and came back. It's still undecided. The papers are still on the table. But we had more acceptance, more politicians listened to us, more politicians know that there are thousands, millions of household workers in the unprotected shadows. I remember hearing now Nancy Pelosi near us saying she supports and that she's with us, and obviously Jayapal, who is still one of the champions of the Bill of Rights.

This whole movement has many faces. Because being in the United States Congress, these are many challenges and not just economic challenges, because these are women who have no legal status and they get inside Congress. Can you imagine the fear for those women when you walk through a detector and you see a bunch of people there with guns and the whole thing? It is a tremendous fear,

but the need for a change is stronger. If we don't remove the finger of fear, if they reject it [the Bill of Rights], we will go back there, because the first time we introduced it, when there were two or three people, is fine. Now, this time there was more awareness. Next time maybe it will be the final one, if it can be done.

The National Domestic Workers Alliance works to achieve three main strategic objectives.

- 1) Raise standards for the national workforce by obtaining new legal protections.
- 2) Change business practices in the private sector.
- 3) Help build a powerful movement to earn an economy and democracy that works for all of us, channeling the transformation, the civic power of household workers, women, and people of color. Its multiple identities and experiences impact household workers.

That's why the National Domestic Workers Alliance applies its strategic objectives on many levels, not just in the workplace.

The Alliance has won bills of rights for household workers at the state and municipal levels. But it also led initiatives that changed immigration policy and fought anti-Black racism. The efforts for cultural change by the National Domestic Workers Alliance have increased public awareness of the importance of household work, the humanity and contribution of all immigrants, the power of history, Black leadership, and the need for dignified care for both workers and care recipients.

The vision and strategy of the National Alliance would not be possible without the leadership of the hundreds of household workers. Each year, hundreds of household workers participate in intensive leadership development programs, which we can also call feminist pedagogies.

This includes a program called "Unity, Dignity and Power" and "We Dream in Black." These programs position household workers to lead successful campaigns, to amplify the household workers' perspective in culture change work and mass media, to build sustainable

organizations, and to engage in practices that promote healing and resilience. This is speaking of the National Alliance, of a national movement.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS

I am now going to talk a little bit about an international movement. On June 16 we are going to celebrate big time the International Household Workers' Day. This is all due to the building of an international movement. In 2009, the first transnational household workers' organization, the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), was launched at the International Trade Union Confederation in Geneva, Switzerland.

Unions and organizations of household workers came together to meet. They came from all over the world, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Many of these groups had been organizing for decades. Their main objective was to mobilize household workers' organizations and their allies around the globe to establish international standards for paid household work. They also sought to share resources and better organizational practices to achieve labor standards in their respective countries.

One of the main objectives of the International Domestic Workers' Network was to address Convention 189 on decent work for household workers. The International Domestic Workers' Network pushed for international labor standards at the United Nations' International Labor Organization (ILO), which is the world's largest global labor governance body. The Convention recognized that household workers have the same basic labor rights and protections as other workers. It also included clauses that agreed to the specific needs of that sector. In 2013, the International Domestic Workers' Network became a formal federation of household workers' organizations. It became the International Domestic Workers' Federation with over 200 household workers participating in this new federation.

The Federation is the only women-led labor federation in the world.

Its main focus is to help national groups implement local standards and protections. As of May 2020, the Federation has seventy-four affiliates from fifty-seven countries. It represents more than 560,000 household workers in unions, worker cooperatives, and other organizations. The National Domestic Workers Alliance is represented in this International Domestic Workers Federation.

Myrtle Witbooi is President of the Federation and a former household worker from South Africa. She linked her personal history with the movement. “My mother was a cook. My father was a gardener. That’s why I’m a unionist, unionist, unionist.” Myrtle continued, “The new federation will have a big task ahead, but with the right leadership we will conquer the world by storm. We are no longer slaves, we are workers with the same rights as other workers.” Listening to or reading Myrtle, it reminds me sometimes why I have this passion for this movement.¹

In the 1970s, my mother was a laundress. I remember she tells of going to rich people’s homes to knock on the door to ask if they had clothes to wash for them. In our poor countries where there are no washing machines, she had to go to the river where most of the time her knees were in the water. Now my mother cannot walk well without the support of a walker because of the rheumatic pains in her knees. Having to iron with those heavy irons that were put on the coals without electricity, without anything and for a miserable salary that was not even enough to put food on the table, maybe because of that, this movement is in my veins. Not so much because I am a household worker, but also in honor of my mother and not only her. How many women in our countries have been doing that and without being able to raise their voices, without being able to say anything, because of male chauvinism, because of capitalism, because of so many things?

1→ Editors’ note: Myrtle Witbooi passed away on January 16, 2023, after dedicating her lifetime to co-create a household laborers movement. The International Domestic Workers Foundation compiled a series of video and written tributes in her honor. See <https://idw-fed.org/remembering-myrtle/> and <https://idwfed.org/biography-and-life/>.

THE WORK OF CASA LATINA

Although the Federation recognizes that we household workers should have the same basic labor rights, we do not. In many parts of the country we are not protected under labor laws. Currently, only ten states in the U.S. have bills of rights for household workers. Ten states and two cities have bills of rights. Among these cities is the city of Seattle and here my colleague [Jason Wozniak] is telling me that the other one is Philadelphia.

In 2018, Seattle was the first city nationwide to win a bill of rights protecting 33,000 household workers followed by Philadelphia. This Bill of Rights for the city has basic rights such as minimum wage, breaks, time to eat, protection from sexual harassment and the right to not have your documents withheld by your employer or boss. We also earned the right to have a Labor Standards Board, a unique model nationwide. The Labor Standards Board provides a venue for household workers, private household employers, workers' organizations, and the public to consider and suggest ways to improve working conditions for household workers. All of this would not have been possible without Casa Latina.

Casa Latina has a base of approximately 300 household workers, most of them, arguably 90% of them are house cleaners, although the Seattle Bill of Rights covers house cleaners, nannies, care givers, gardeners, housekeepers, and cooks or women cooks.

We also have a large base of gardeners. But we have a big challenge in reaching out to gardeners so that they feel included in this Bill of Rights. Why do you think they don't feel included or don't feel they belong in this Bill of Rights? Because they are men, because they don't feel like they are part of household work.

There is a lot of education we have to do yet. One of the big challenges we have with the Bill that was already won, and I think it is in most of the places that have won Bills of Rights, is to be able to bring the information, is to be able to reach out to the community, both worker and employer or homeowner. We have had a Bill of Rights for three years in the city and today we still cannot reach 50% of the

household workers. We are still in the struggle. We have gotten more funding from the city so that we can continue to look for ways and strategies to reach both employers and workers. Casa Latina is working on a representative-based model, because we know that most of the workers may not feel comfortable coming to the organizations. They don't feel identified. These representatives are going out to the bus stops, to the supermarkets, taking the information. They don't have to get to Casa Latina to know the information, but it is important that they know the rights they have at home.

And another very important point is that we have to do education and believe, us household workers, that the work we do is as worthy as that of a teacher, as that of a dentist, as that of an educator. If I don't believe it myself, how am I going to project that? It's easy to say, but when it comes to action, it's not there. Always when I am asked, "what do you do?," before I put Casa Latina, I say that I am a household worker.

I remember yesterday we were also talking in relation to debt. I was asked how debt fits in with household workers. I am going to take my daughter, who is here, as an example. It is hard. Household workers get into debt and a lot of it because they earn a low salary. Now with the pandemic, if you are sick, you have to pay bills.² We don't have health insurance. We don't have paid sick days, not one. So what do we do? We borrow from the bank and it accumulates and the debts increase.

I remember when my daughter went to college. We went to drop her off at the university. I had my job and I told her, "I don't know. But you with the numbers in school and I'll take care of putting numbers on this side here." A week after she left, they closed the place where I was working and that's when the world came crashing down on me. Good thing she didn't have loans, right, but no scholarship support, no support at all. That's where my career in the household workers' movement began. I won't forget because my daughter left in 2011 to go to school and I met Casa Latina in 2011 and that's where my

2 → In English in the original.

feminist pedagogies began.

They told me “This Casa Latina connects household workers with homeowners.” And I said, here I go. I worked up to two houses in one day and in the afternoons I went to work in a fast food restaurant. And so I went every semester. I would start every semester and I had to see how much money I was short to pay. I would ask my friends not for a loan, I would say “a help.” I would ask everywhere. Back then there were no such things like GoFundMe or something like that. If I had known about that from before, I would have applied to those things. I remember my daughter saying to me, “Mom, how do you pay for it?” I remember I wouldn’t even buy myself a coffee. Every penny³, every cent I had to save. I would get to the fast food restaurant and my coworkers knew me: when I would arrive and they already had my food ready for me. “Eat before you come in,” they would tell me, because they knew I came from working cleaning houses and without eating.

And my daughter still tells me, “My friends ask me, ‘What do you do for work? How do you pay for school?’” And I would say to them, “Tell them with great honor that your mother works cleaning houses.” Because it’s true that I don’t earn much, but it all depends on how you organize your finances to get ahead. She graduated and now she knows the value of being a mother and fighting to support her children to fulfill their dreams.

Going back to Casa Latina, Casa Latina works a lot with “power with” not “power over.” It also works a lot with the power of narrative. Without the power of narrative, the Bill of Rights they announced would not have been so quick. Household workers were getting in front of politicians, in front of councilors, being vulnerable and saying why it was necessary to have a minimum wage and break times and meal times.

That’s it, the power of the narrative. The “power with” is what makes the household workers in Casa Latina feel empowered, that they feel at home.

Sometimes I am asked if I like my work, if what I do brings me

3 → In English in the original.

enough money. Maybe not, but the feeling it gives me to be able to help people, to be with them, to educate people, to make a change in the lives of the people, of household workers, to raise their voices. That makes me feel good and fills me with pride. I receive, but I also give. And now I know that everything I do is feminist pedagogy. ■

BLACK FEMINIST STUDIES IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN: AN ANTHOLOGY PROJECT

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Translated by Miguel Ángel Blanco Martínez

[This essay contains the transcript for a June 4, 2022 LAPES symposium presentation on the emerging anthology *Black Feminist Studies in the Americas and the Caribbean*, as well as supplemental context. Comments were shared by A. Tito Mitjans Alayón, Violeta Orozco Barrera, Conor Tomás Reed, and Layla Zami on behalf of the entire editorial team. For a symposium on Feminist Pedagogies, we were elated to highlight our coalitional work of assembling and reactivating these vast records of Black feminist pedagogies across the Western Hemisphere—Ed.]

A. Tito Mitjans Alayón (in Spanish):¹ There are numerous efforts to anthologize feminist thought and some works on Black Feminist thought. For example, one of the most famous and powerful anthologies is *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, published in 1982.² This book paved the way for other compilations on feminists of color thought in the United States. *This Bridge Called My Back* is one.³ More recently, the 2009 publication of *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women Studies*.⁴ The power of these texts lies in the fact that they have sustained the artistic, intellectual, and academic production of Black women over time despite the constant violence of epistemicide to which this field of knowledge is subjected. I must say from my speaking position that these books opened the door for me to other readings and to the recognition of other epistemologies that transcend written and academic formats.⁵

However, in Spanish I can only recall one anthology published by the Spanish publisher Traficantes de Sueños, *Feminismos Negros*:

- 1→ The authors of this text presented in English and Spanish. The language of presentation has been indicated in the translation to underscore the orality of the original. —Trans.
- 2→ Akasha (Gloria T.) Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York, NY: Feminist Press, 1982).
- 3→ Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press: 1983).
- 4→ Stanlie M. James, Frances Smith Foster and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, eds., *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women's Studies* (New York: Feminist Press, 2009).
- 5→ Djamilia Ribeiro, *Lugar de enunciación*, translated by Aline Pereira da Encarnação (Madrid: Ediciones Ambulantes, 2020).

Una Antología, compiled by Mercedes Jabardo.⁶ Besides this work, I can recall only beautiful anthologies of poetry by Black women such as *Identidades: Poesía Negra de América Antología (Identities: Black Poetry of America Anthology)*, published in Cuba by the state publishing house Arte y Literatura,⁷ and *Antología De Mujeres Poetas Afrocolombianas (Anthology of Afro-Colombian Women Poets)*, edited by Alfredo Ocampo Zamorano and Guiomar Cuesta Escobar.⁸ That is to say, the editorial efforts to compile the different forms of Black feminist thought in the Americas in Spanish is still a far-off academic and intellectual project.

For this reason, we wanted to carry out a Black feminist project that would archive in one book numerous voices, works, poetry, essays, academic, and intellectual production of Black women, and cis, trans, and non-binary people from the Americas and the Caribbean.

I want to start by naming some of the obstacles in Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean to carrying out this work. Unlike in the United States, Canada, and England—where Black feminists have made their way into academic spaces, creating fields such as Intersectionality Studies and independent publishers such as Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press—in this hemisphere’s South and starting with the success of *mestizaje*, the politics of racial democracy have diminished and effectively erased the epistemic need for Black feminist thought in contemporary scholarship. Since the academy is the almost exclusive domain of cisgender and heterosexual *mestizo* white elites, we see it as necessary to highlight what has been the speaking position of other forms of circulating knowledge.

For whom is local Black feminism fundamental? Who has the resources to publish, edit, translate, and circulate literary works and academic books? The same white-*mestizo* elite that I mentioned

6 → Hazel Carby, Angela Yvonne Davis, and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Feminismos Negros: Una Antología*. (Madrid, Spain: Traficantes de Sueños, 2012).

7 → Mónica Manssur, ed., *Identidades: Poesía Negra de América. Antología*. (La Habana, Cuba: Arte y Literatura, 2011).

8 → Alfredo Ocampo Zamorano and Guiomar Cuesta Escobar, eds., *Antología De Mujeres Poetas Afrocolombianas* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010).

earlier. For this reason, Black feminism in Latin American academies was for many years specifically presented as something produced and embodied in the Global North. This was a strategy of deterritorialization to erase regional Black feminist production and thus maintain white and heteronormative hegemony in academic and intellectual editorial spaces.

The anthology we are proposing is not a new idea, but it is a pioneering effort to recover the work of Black feminists in *América Latina*, to use Lélia Gonzalez's term. It is also an effort towards understanding Latin America and the Caribbean as co-constitutive regions formed through colonialism, the plantation system, African enslavement, forms of resistance by Black and Native peoples, and the permanence of white supremacy disguised as *mestizaje*. These regions converse deeply and mirror each other, but not from the geophagic gaze of Latin America consuming the Caribbean and only thinking and talking about it as the exception and in terms of extreme poverty.

Along with this, our editorial project does not seek to systematize and collect the works under the headings of nation-states. We know that Black experiences on this side of the Atlantic cannot be understood by extractivist, nationalist identities built on the dehumanization, monstrosity, and criminalization of Black people in order to keep racial hierarchies intact.

On the other hand, the work seeks to recover the value of the Black feminist thought tradition, not only to value the work of our ancestors but to tow an epistemic line that centers our queer ancestors in the process of constructing Black feminist knowledge in the Americas and the Caribbean. In doing so, we recuperate and anthologize contemporary thought from places where it was believed we would never survive, recalling the words of Audre Lorde, such as Mexico with its anti-Black deterritorializing politics. Turning the map upside down and seeing the South as the new destination, we are blackening the land through the work of Black Brazilian intellectuals like Lélia Gonzalez. It is also necessary to highlight in this work-in-progress now in full bloom those struggles for land and mother earth

raised by voices like those of Francia Márquez.

We seek to continue undoing the Western binary gender system and its rational logics. We do this through a daily Afrofuturist practice that centers the production of Black trans women, non-binary Black people, and Black transvestites in the anthology. They are the future and for this very reason they are being murdered.

With this collection, we hope to contribute, as much as possible, to healing the consequences of colonial epistemicide with its strategies of erasure and invisibility many kinds of intellectual and political creations—academic, poetic, essay, literary, testimonial, artistic—by Black women and trans and non-binary people. We are, therefore, interested in highlighting the different forms of knowledge production that transcend or are alternatives to the academy and that are presented in artistic and / or essay formats, hence the diversity of forms of presentation of the aforementioned works.

Conor Tomás Reed (in English): Black feminist studies in the Americas and the Caribbean are vast yet too little contextualized in their specific geo-historical situations, and are rarely translated across English, Kreyol / French, Spanish, and Portuguese and published together. If Black feminist liberation (and therefore anti-Blackness, misogyny, heterosexism, transphobia, and fatphobia) is a hemispheric and global phenomenon, how is it being translated across these different contexts? As part of current decolonial initiatives, how can U.S. and Canadian scholars and cultural workers foreground the writings of Black feminists in the Caribbean and Latin America? These studies are not monolithic and encompass a variety of disciplines (such as anthropology, geography, literature, philosophy, prison abolition) as well as forms (such as essays, fiction, poetry, songs, testimonies) that the anthology's selections highlight.

This anthology particularly aims to translate and circulate non-Anglophone Black feminist voices that are silenced by the market flows of publishing that operate in the grooves of colonialism laid long ago. Although the work of Angela Davis, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde is translated and published in the Caribbean and Latin America, rarely

are non-Anglophone, Afro-Caribbean, or Afro-Latina writers translated and published in the United States and Canada. Meanwhile, the poetry of M. NourbeSe Philip and Dionne Brand, both born in Trinidad and Tobago, has circulated more broadly in part because of the authors' present residence in Canada. While their writing addresses the role of poetry as exhumation and fostering transnational feminist undergrounds, respectively, only Anglophone readers have benefited from these interventions.

The anti-colonial, feminist, internationalist, and Third Worldist movements of the last sixty years have worked to reverse the flow of words by publishing works in English by Afro-descended writers like Nancy Morejón (Cuba), Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua), Edwidge Danticat (Haiti), and Denise Ferreira da Silva (Brazil). Curiously, a canonical writer like Lélia Gonzalez (Brazil) has only a few short works that have been translated into English, but was honored by a Google Doodle in February 2020 and cited by Angela Davis as foundational to her work. Davis noted in a 2019 speech in São Paulo, "I feel strange when I am being chosen to represent Black feminism. And why here in Brazil do you need to look for this reference in the United States? I think I learned more from Lélia Gonzalez than you could learn from me."⁹ Our anthology works through these tensions of (non)familiarity which are necessary for intellectual exchange and Black feminist transnational theory / movement building.

Our decision to publish a quadrilingual anthology addresses linguistic barriers that still abound, even on the same island. For example, English-language Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat's work has been translated into French and Italian, but not into Spanish—inhibiting Afro-Dominican feminists from absorbing her wisdom. Martinican writer Suzanne Césaire holds a similar position. Her work is now being embraced by English readers, but not Portuguese or Spanish, while her writings on anti-fascism, folklore, and surrealism would be invaluable for the entire hemisphere to receive. Similarly, the writing of Brazilian human rights worker Marielle Franco,

9 → "Em São Paulo, Angela Davis pede valorização de feministas negras brasileiras," *Brasil de Fato*, October 20, 2019, www.brasildefato.com.br/2019/10/20/em-sp-angela-davis-pede-valorizacao-de-feministas-negras-brasileiras/.

assassinated in 2018, has been selectively translated into English and Spanish, but not into French, despite the fact that Francophone Caribbean countries like Haiti have recently experienced similar targeted political attacks.

This need for textual exchange is also indicated by a dearth of contextual information even when works are translated. For example, Audre Lorde's writings are currently in a circulation boom across the Caribbean and Latin America in multiple feminist, indigenous, and anti-imperialist groups. Lorde's analyses on intersectionality, rigorous self-reflection, and learning across differences are being claimed by a generation of Black women and gender-nonbinary people in these regions. However, few know of her experiences as a teacher at the City University of New York that directly shaped her essays and poetry, and her Spanish-translated biomythographical work *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* only covers the first two decades of her life.¹⁰ Furthermore, the work of Lorde's co-teachers—such as Toni Cade Bambara, Barbara Christian, and June Jordan—who also contributed to the rise of Black Women's Studies, is virtually unknown by French, Portuguese, and Spanish readers.

By situating these writers in a concrete historical context, Black feminist teachers, organizers, and their non-Black accomplices can learn about the predecessors of Black Women's Studies architects like Barbara Smith and Beverly Guy Sheftall, while applying their pedagogical lessons in new arenas of hemispheric struggle and healing. We take inspiration from canonical and recent Black feminist anthologies such as *The Black Woman, But Some of Us Are Brave*, *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Homegirls*, *Black Futures*, *Daughters of the Diaspora*, *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*, *¡Negras Somos!: Women Warriors of the Afro-Latina Diaspora*, and beyond. This anthology revitalizes freedom complicities long-practiced between African and indigenous people in the Americas and the Caribbean.

The inspiration for this project coincided between the editors' participation in the rise of the #BlackLivesMatter, #SayHerName, and

10 → Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1982). See also Conor Tomás Reed, *New York Liberation School: Study and Movement for the People's University* (Brooklyn: Common Notions, 2023).

#NiUnaMenos (Not One More) movements, and our respective scholarship on the early formations of Black Women’s Studies, Afro-queer and trans cultural organizing in the Caribbean, Afro-futurism, performance and / as cultural memories, and Latina *testimonios* and anthologies. We build upon these organic collaborations.

This anthology is also deeply significant to current feminist struggles and coalitional projects because it links Afro-descended and Indigenous feminisms, which are often siloed across the humanities and social sciences. Black feminist scholars in the Caribbean and Latin America, such as Ochy Curiel and Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso (Dominican Republic, now based in Colombia), are developing analyses of “decolonial feminism” (*feminismo decolonial*) alongside a concurrent—but infrequently intersecting—trajectory of analyses on indigenous community feminism (*feminism comunitario*) through such writers as Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (Bolivia) and María Lugones (Argentina). These links between Afro-descended and Indigenous feminists are still nascent, but can benefit from dialogues and struggles around knowledge paradigms, locations and methods of care, confronting anti-Black and Indigenous femicide and transphobic attacks, pushing for police and prison abolition, while nourishing land reclamation and repatriation, and beyond.

This anthology also contributes to a growing demand for the specific role of Black feminist translation studies in the broader (decolonizing) interdisciplinary field of translation. From the 1970 PEN “World of Translation” conference to the 2020 PEN “Translating the Future” conference, participation by Global South writers and translators has dramatically increased.¹¹ Centering the work of African diasporic women and gender non-binary cultural workers, however, remains insufficient. As Christen Smith argues, due to a “tendency to over-emphasize the experiences of English-speaking Black women within this global project . . . Black women in Latin America have been muted . . . who have made significant theoretical and philosophical interventions that could potentially change the way that we think

11 → The World of Translation Papers Delivered at the Conference on Literary Translation Held in New York City in May 1970, (New York: P.E.N. American Center, 1971).

about gendered racial politics transnationally.”¹²

Nevertheless, contemporary work on Black feminist translation studies in the Americas and the Caribbean is presently emerging within a variety of forums. This includes: a 2016 *Meridians* journal,¹³ several comparative anthologies,¹⁴ recoveries of Afro-descended women’s cultural histories,¹⁵ interpretations of Black feminisms as translation,¹⁶ assessments of how African languages are translated into European discourses,¹⁷ and critiques of how European colonial paradigms of gender are challenged by African feminist frameworks.¹⁸

This project is taking root from the shared soil of many years of collaboration between us. It has been a thrilling and also intricate endeavor, working across positionalities of ethnicity, gender, institutional affiliation, and precarity in the US, Caribbean, and Latin America. This has been with full awareness of the contradictions that Tito laid out earlier. Our online meetings are (at least) trilingual, across languages, time zones, access to funding, employment, and internet. Now Layla and Violeta will share more in-depth about how we’re doing this research and selecting materials for the anthology.

- 12 → Christen Anne Smith, “Towards a Black Feminist Model of Black Atlantic Liberation: Remembering Beatriz Nascimento,” *Meridians* 14, no. 2, (2016): 71-87, <https://doi.org/10.2979/meridians.14.2.06>.
- 13 → Sonia E. Alvarez, et. al., “Translations across Black Feminist Diasporas,” *Meridians* 14, no. 2 (2016): v-ix.
- 14 → Sonia E. Alvarez, et al. *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Américas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Gladys Mitchell-Walthour and Elizabeth Hodge-Freeman, *Race and the Politics of Knowledge Production: Diaspora and Black Transnational Scholarship in the United States and Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
- 15 → Rosario Méndez-Panedas, *Historias de mujeres puertorriqueñas negras* (San Juan, PR: Editorial EDP University Press, 2020).
- 16 → Kirsten T. Edwards, “Stories of Migration: Passing Through, Crossing Over, and Decolonial Transgressing in Academyland,” in *Black Women’s Liberatory Pedagogies: Resistance, Transformation, and Healing Within and Beyond the Academy*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 85-100.
- 17 → Tomi Adeaga, *Translating and Publishing African Language(s) and Literature(s): Examples from Nigeria, Ghana, and Germany* (Frankfurt / London: IKO – Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2006).
- 18 → Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997)

Layla Zami (in English): I start by sharing both about the possibilities this work is bringing us and some of the challenges we encountered. We are working in a really wide scope—in terms of space and time—and the way we're all spread out connecting through Zoom can be a big chance. This is twenty-first-century feminism. I appreciate that we're connecting across the continent. As my friend AnouchK reminds me, we should be mindful of what we call the USA and what we call America. Especially in French and other languages, people tend to say America when they mean the US. With the island of Martinique where my mother is from—one of the last colonies still belonging to France—I have witnessed a constant focus on the former metropole of France. There are still structural obstacles to making connections between Martinique and the surrounding Caribbean islands. So I'm grateful that as part of this project we can create these connections.

In terms of the anthology's time, we're focused on valuing the legacy of Black Feminism. Some of the authors are already well-known historical figures. Others are authors and activists who are still alive. We found it meaningful to include a variety in the collection and to not only publish people who are on the other side of the rainbow (which is why we commissioned authors such as AnouchK Ibacka Valiente and Widad Amra to contribute).

Now, regarding some of the challenges we encountered. First of all, we had many discussions about structuring: we could do it thematically or through languages, and, as you can see, the scope is very wide. We have four languages and all texts will be published in each of the four languages. Even though we all tried to be aware, it was still difficult to navigate the colonial bias that is part of our socialization, especially those of us socialized in the West. In the case of the Francophone selections, you have to make extra efforts to get out of this colonial bias. To take an example, when you do research on Black feminist studies in Martinique, you see that the color line is still very real. Suzanne Césaire comes up more and light-skinned authors will be more known; there's more material on them. Then, since we're in the time of a pandemic, the research started mostly on the internet,

and quickly I felt frustrated—I don't know if I can speak for all. I was grateful that I could then travel to Martinique and do some research for the Francophone selections. Going to the archive in Martinique was such an important part of this work, which I reported to my comrades. It was very enriching compared to doing research only on the internet.

While we don't want to share the entirety of the collection, but rather give you an impression, let's now spotlight one example from the French selections and one from the English (we have many more authors in the table of contents, but we want to keep you excited and we are concerned with intellectual property).

The person to spotlight for the Francophone selections is Paulette Nardal. You can see her here, and this sign that is dedicated to the Nardal sisters was recently put up in Paris. How many people here in the room and online have heard of her? [How many in the room have heard of her? There are a lot of no's in the chat, and just a few in the room, although a few "not yet."] This is very typical of our studies. You may not be familiar with her work. Whereas if I say Aimé Césaire, I am sure that many of you know of him through the movement Négritude. What is interesting is that the Nardal sisters hosted salons in Paris where people would gather, and this was where the Négritude movement actually originated. Nardal and other women inspired people such as Aimé Césaire. In Martinique, Paulette Nardal is quite well-known, but not so much outside. There is so much that can be told about her.

Having the chance to research in the archive that has her materials in Martinique, the challenge was to select what we were going to eventually print in the anthology. We had a lot of discussions. In the archive you can expect to find, for example, letter exchanges with Leopold Senghor—who was a President of Senegal and known co-founder of the Négritude movement. You will also find a letter to the French governor of Martinique, in which she is asking for disability compensation, which was not common at that time at all. During World War II, Paulette Nardal traveled on a boat from Martinique to France that was bombed by Nazi Germany. This caused her a lifelong

disability. I also want to spotlight the fact that she was one of seven sisters, and the only one who was not married and who said that marriage was not for her. I read queerness in her biography, but she is usually not presented this way.

The spotlight for the English selection is the correspondence between Pat Parker and Audre Lorde. There are beautiful excerpts from a letter exchange between them. In this picture you can see Audre Lorde (with the hat) and her partner Gloria Joseph, and on the right you see two very important Afro-German feminists—Ika Hügel Marshall and May Ayim. I like this picture because it shows feminist solidarities across the world between the USA, Germany, and other countries. May Ayim left us very early, she died quite early. Oxana Chi created a performance dedicated to her, in which I am involved. And Ika lived until her eightieth birthday, she recently danced at her birthday party—she was a very dear friend and mentor of mine, and she left us recently in Berlin. With this letter as an example, we hope to encourage us all to think: What will be in the archive from our generation? Now we have emails and it's beautiful, but are we archiving our exchanges? And, how are our exchanges different now because we don't write letters to each other anymore?

Violeta Orozco Barrera (in Spanish): For me as a writer, translator, and editor, Black feminist decolonial anthologies from the Americas and the Caribbean have given us a language and a practice of liberation to urgently disseminate, translate, and circulate in the Americas. This type of knowledge is complex, advanced, and requires the gathering of a new audience, the capacities of new readers. (Spoken in English:) Collaborating with Layla and the rest of the editors was an inspiring process of discovery where we selected texts that articulate the intersectional consciousness and radical epistemologies of Afro-descendant feminists in the Americas. These include not only texts but also, as Layla mentioned, artistic and performative projects that work toward dismantling colonized images of black, female, trans, and non-binary subjects. This involves coming to terms with racial identity in different colonial contexts, for example,

as Tito mentioned, the assimilationist narrative of *mestizaje* that erases Afro-descendant identity in Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean; the anticolonial movement of Négritude in the Francophone world; and Afro-Latinidad as conceptualized by Miriam Jiménez Román in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader*.¹⁹

Curating this anthology involved seeking texts that in each literary tradition innovated and drew upon genres in print cultures that provided a container for these radical emancipatory forms in each language, including poetry, testimonial texts, manifestos, philosophical essays, etc. The multilingual and transnational nature of this anthology is one of the central values that we have emphasized in this project. Bridging across four different literary traditions involves collaborations among the editors, some of us who are also translators trying to make texts from one literary or cultural tradition more accessible in another.

In the case of the Afro-Hispanic tradition, we have tried to include writers and thinkers from the Caribbean and trans-Caribbean region who are less represented in canonical anthologies published by large transnational publishers. (In Spanish:) Our bravest thinkers are not only found in literary anthologies or scholarly articles, but in artistic and performative communities that seek to form anti-hegemonic and anti-heterosexist communities.

(Spoken in English:) Some of the challenges, as Layla articulated, are establishing clear and homogeneous selection criteria across different literary and cultural traditions. The availability of Afro-descendant Latin American and Caribbean texts is constrained by the uneven publication and circulation networks of these countries, as well as varying degrees of linguistic prestige / hegemony held by the four colonial languages we are working with. Hence, several of the Afro-Hispanic anthologies were available in translation, such as *Daughters of the Diaspora* compiled by Miriam de Costa Willis, but not in the original language.²⁰ Or, many of the anthologies consulted,

19 → Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, eds., *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

20 → Miriam de Costa-Willis, ed., *Daughters of the Diaspora: Afro-Hispanic Writers* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003).

like *Negras Somos! Antología de 21 mujeres poetas afrocolombianas de la región pacífica*, were oftentimes a single-edition publication and not very extensively distributed outside their country of origin.²¹

This anthology spans a wide selection of contemporary Black feminist writers, including trailblazing philosophers like Sylvia Wynter and iconic scholars like Saidiya Hartman and M. Jacqui Alexander in the Anglophone tradition(s). For the Spanish selections, we focused on the Caribbean and trans-Caribbean region with multi-genre writers like Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro, poets like Mary Grueso Romero, and scholars like Esther Pineda.

The inclusion of writers with different levels of readership like Maryse Conde and Suzanne Césaire, as well as contemporary activists and diasporic writers like AnouchK Ibacka Valiente in Francophone writing shows the range of a selection that seeks to honor the diverse legacies of cultural and consciousness-raising work. This shows the cutting edge of Black feminist epistemologies, worldviews, pedagogies, and methodologies for global liberation, and their urgent injunction to rewrite the history of the Americas with Black women, femmes, queer, and trans peoples at the center of discursive production and cultural transformation.

Mary Grueso Romero is one of the pioneers of Afro-Colombian poetry. Her work as an activist writer has been recognized nationally and internationally, and several of her translations have been circulating in academic and literary journals across the Americas. As with many other Afro-descendant Latin American female, queer, and trans writers, however, rarely recognized is her deep community involvement and organizing around Afrocolombian feminist issues. This is also the case for many Afro-Latin American poets who use poetry as a vehicle for community-building. Shirley Campbell's exploration of ancestry, gender, reproductive health, and the dissemination of her poetry in women's organizations, public libraries, and performances is an example of her outreach as an activist of the Afro-descendant movement in Central America.

21 → Guiomar Cuesta Escobar and Alfredo Ocampo Zamorano, eds., *Negras Somos! Antología de 21 mujeres poetas afrocolombianas de la región pacífica* (Cali: Programa Editorial Universidad del Valle, 2008).

Many of these writers are also active in struggles for linguistic and epistemic justice. For instance, we include AfroBrazilian feminist Lélia Gonzalez, who teaches us how the translation of Latin American Black feminists is central to the dissemination of knowledge production in the global south and the circulation of Black women's intellectual and political genealogies written in other languages and outside the United States. Gonzalez teaches us that radical citational practices involve reading, analyzing, and citing Black women, femmes, and trans people who publish outside mainstream academic and scholarly networks. That is why the Spanish and Portuguese sections include so many poets because poetry has been a medium of knowledge production and coalition-building outside the elitist halls of academia. Poets like Lubi Prates can open up a discursive space to speak about Black bodies beyond restrictive languages, nations, or borders.

To engage a radical praxis of knowledge production, we must closely read, critically analyze, and intentionally cite Black women who are writing outside of the United States and in multiple languages.

[As this anthology project continues, we invite friends and *compis* to offer us feedback at Black.Feminist.Studies@gmail.com on what you suggest should be included from Black feminists writing in English, Kreyol / French, Portuguese, and Spanish across the Americas and the Caribbean. We want this resource to be pedagogically useful—as well as beautiful—in both the classroom and living room, in collective and solo study. We celebrate the expansiveness of Black feminist studies, and by traversing barriers of nation and language, and reversing the focus from the North to the South, we anticipate that they will be a beacon and compass for our collective liberatory directions ahead. —Eds.] ■

RETHINKING FEMINIST PEDAGOGY: AN ENGAGED REFLECTION FROM A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso

Translated by Anna Brotman-Krass

I would like to start by thanking LAPES for making possible this space of conversation and for their kind invitation to participate in it. I subscribe to the importance of the creation of networks of knowledge situated and committed to part of politics for a “world where many worlds fit.” I would also like to give thanks to the ancestors that have made it possible for me to be here, especially to the Great Mother Yemayá. Lastly, I would like to once again thank those who shape the shared universe of meaning from which I articulate my feeling-thinking about the world.

I will divide this presentation into three parts. In the first part I will bring here a text that I wrote during the time of the pandemic. It is a reflection about antiracist politics as a liberatory pedagogy and an act of love. Then I will introduce how I conceive, together with other siblings with whom I have been walking and building, what we have called decolonial feminism. Between them is my teacher María Lugones, with whom I always will be indebted to for her teachings. Lastly, I will introduce various elements of the pedagogical practice and how we have been thinking about it and practicing it in our work. That is, as we have gone through different moments of carrying out popular education and more academic education and how this has become a sustained attempt to decolonize educational processes.

ANTI-RACIST POLITICS AS PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS

I begin my reflections by bringing here the words of the character Manduca in the film, the *Embrace of the Serpent*,¹ when he tells Karamakate, the main character: “If the whites don’t learn, it’ll be the end of us.” In a time of political radicalization, it is necessary that we stop thinking about what politics as transformative action could mean and instead think of it as pedagogy. As an educator, I have always noted an inseparability between politics and education. Once the colonial wound is produced that crosses the world in its multiple temporalities and westernizing processes, once the damage is done, the reparation process consists of a politics that centers on the

1 → *Embrace of the Serpent*, directed by Ciro Guerra (Diaphana Films, 2015).

possibility of the creation of consciousness. If there are certainly worlds that prevent *a world where many worlds fit*—as the Zapatista saying goes—then education for transformation is a governing principle and politics is one the spaces through which it is produced.

Contrary to certain positions of the antiracist movement and of contemporary Black feminism that propose the abandonment of the formation of the White privileged subject, I reaffirm the political space as a space of permanent collective growth, where we teach and learn from each other, and where we send messages to the dominant groups that serve to re-educate them. I firmly believe that the discourses Black, Indigenous, and anti-racist activists launch can be messages that help to form new subjects conscious of their place of greater or lesser privilege, and make us aware that we are part of what we confront.

But, of course, anti-racist politics can also be something else, it can refuse to accompany transformation processes. In my experience, I have been a witness to those who in doing anti-racist politics have preferred to take another path: that of which to expel *a priori* all that prevents us from being, all that prevents our world from becoming. The risk is always becoming that which denies us. I recognize that in certain occasions hunting, cutting off heads, may be a necessary act, but I believe that it must be reserved for those extreme occasions where by the first instance other avenues have already been attempted.

This does not mean to think we can avoid the violence of the process of decolonization. This is not possible, as Fanon warned us: “decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.”² The confrontation between the world of the colonist and of the colonized, in whatever form we choose, always involves some violence for the one whose privilege is questioned. If the order of things change, there is no way that the produced dis-order cannot be lived as a violence for the colonist; the decolonial action destabilizes and shakes the power that upholds the colonist. In this sense, it is an attack against the colonist and their status. Knowing this; however, this should not lead us to the

2 → Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.

false conclusion that everything is the same and that, in politics, anything goes. Contrary to the well-known saying, I believe that the ends do not justify the means. The process carries a message in itself. It is a time in itself that prefigures what we will become: and furthermore, that shows who we are being continuously in the present.

For this reason, in my political practice there is a commitment to the creation of processes, there is a formative intention that is encouraged by the hope that we (un)learn. As part of this duty I have proposed in this frank and open debate, the necessary confrontation with those ideas, ideologies, agendas, and attitudes that maintain a commitment to the global modern colonial system—that which the territorial movements in Latin America have named, “the death model.” This civilizational model permanently updates domination and ethno-terricide³ and in its installation at a global level teaches various ways of being and acting in accordance with what the model needs and expects. These ways are deeply rooted and permeate political practice, as well as the life we make possible in its entirety. Of course, there are those who systematically benefit more than others and it is necessary to unmask those who historically have benefited as a group.

Feminism forms part of a social movement that, for example, has helped ensure that the most privileged group in society is the one that benefits most from the policies it promotes. Like antiracist politics, feminist politics sends particular messages and, in this case, has helped to form a contemporary consciousness whereby women—generally speaking—are the “oppressed,” and men—generally speaking—are “the oppressors.” I myself was indoctrinated into this

3 → The concept of terricide (*terricidio*) has been coined and proposed by the Movimiento Mujeres for Good Living (Movimiento Mujeres por el buen vivir) from Argentina, which unites women from Native communities. They have defined terricide as the “murder of Mother Earth” (“asesinato de la Madre Tierra”). This is “consequence of the dominant model civilizational model. It is framed within the general crisis of capitalism that brings this system to the indiscriminate pillaging of nature’s elements to continue accumulating wealth at the cost of the people, communities, life, ecosystems and spiritual forces [...] Terricide is the violence done to Mother Earth and the dispossession of our communities and of our life on the earth.” Therefore, they propose that terricide be considered a crime against nature and a crime against humanity (“Campamento climático “Pueblos contra el Terricidio”” (2020), available in Spanish at <https://desde-elmargen.net/campamento-climatico-pueblos-contra-el-terricidio/>)

and only lived experience brought me to know the falsity of this statement and its consequences on the lives of the majority of those identified or self-identified as “women.”

Almost two decades ago, with a handful of racialized feminists and others who were not racialized but declare themselves allies, we founded the Latin American Group of Feminist Studies, Training, and Action [El Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios, Formación, y Acción Feminista (GLEFAS)] and we articulated a critical discourse around this space that searched for, showed, and identified the origin of the problem that we faced within feminist politics. From this space and others that it helped to form, we declared ourselves against all forms of domination and, given the many violent acts received, it proved necessary to declare war on feminism, which, shaped by Black feminism in the 1970s in the US, was called White feminism. The expansion of this analysis showed us the commitment of this feminism to modern civilization’s matrix. I am part, then, of a generation that made an incision in the feminist conceptual and programmatic framework because of its commitment to modernity,⁴ and, therefore, to the continuity of coloniality and racism.

Despite this, I believe declaring war is not waging war, it is merely an act of warning. In the anti-racist politics I develop, the declaration of war, beyond hatred, contains the profound hope for change and reparation. Before waging war, before the expulsion, before the rupture, is the declaration, the respectful and argued denunciation, the rage that turns the message of the wound into a message of reparation. And, needless to say, long before the declaration and denunciation there is a long, long process of intermediation and persistence in the illusion of brotherhood. Only the profound disillusionment with the continuous failure brings you to the denunciation and declaration of war before the court of the collective conscience. Only in the face of the failure of the declaration is the exercise of war itself justified.

4 → Yuderkys Espinosa, *De por qué es necesario un feminismo descolonial* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2021). Edited by Yuderkys Espinosa, Diana Gómez Correal, and Karina Ochoa Muñoz. *Tejiendo de otro modo: Feminismo, epistemología y apuestas descoloniales en Abya Yala* (Popayán: Universidad del Cauca, 2014).

The declaration, then, is the act of warning that reclaims an answer that recognizes the dignity of the assaulted subject. The declaration of war and its denunciation should be directed to open up a debate rather than close one. If what is sought is cancellation, it leaves a glimmer of hope for the possibility of understanding and of transforming. The declaration of war is the war itself, annulling the time and space that should separate them. Big mistake, because in some way we all lose something in war, even when we are victors we have lost something. Violence unleashed in its extreme form, even when justified because there is no other way out, leaves both the victors and the vanquished wounded.

Therefore, I propose that what prevails in a complaint is not the cancellation of the subject, which is more a form of revenge and of an eye-for-an-eye ethic than a principle of justice. In my experience, a declaration of war aims to avoid war, its purpose is to harness the necessary attention to show the wound inflicted in order to learn from it and avoid its repetition. If interpersonal mediation has failed to bring about an acceptance of the harm caused, it is made necessary to turn to the community, to the public forum. As difficult and painful as it may be for both parties, the debate that opens with the warning or the responsible denunciation is part of the formative role played by transformative politics. The debate and the exchange, as difficult as it may be, is pedagogical; is taught and learned on a two-way street. Those of us who participate are all involved in a process of teaching and of learning. We all learn from this debate.

In anti-racist politics, as in any politics, from the get-go we owe a shared responsibility that is never to be forgotten. We share spaces and we do things together. From this coexistence arises the same conflicts that come up in daily life in any community. Sometimes, given the intensity of the moments we share, the lived conflicts become magnified. The speed and the whirlwind of the political moment does not allow the time to clarify misunderstandings, resentments accumulate, and there is little space to reflect and heal the wounds that we inflict on one another.

I have seen many wonderful spaces disappear, brave people

doing harm to themselves due to conflicts or misunderstandings that could have been solved without falling into disqualification and mutual, or one-sided, cancellation. I am very aware of this in my own practice. In what way have I contributed to the reported situation? What is it that actually causes me discomfort? Is the violence that I feel and that has harmed me a reaction to the violence that I have exercised, or is this unfair? Is my response disproportionate to what has hurt me, and have I caused greater harm than what has been done unto me? Is my ego playing a trick on me and not admitting the mistake or limits of the other? Is this repetitive or sporadic behavior? Is it just me, or many others? Do I seek revenge or collective healing? These are questions I usually ask myself and that have helped me to know when I should ask for forgiveness or when I should expect apologies from others; when I should join the learning process of the person who has hurt me, or when I should simply move on to a more confrontational and aggressive stage to stop the harm done to me or to others.

We live in a time where I witness how resources and political discourses are used in irresponsible and abusive ways to legitimize hidden intentions of revenge, spite, or annulment of the other. It is sad but it must be said and we must understand that when denunciation covers up the real reason for discomfort and it feels necessary to lie or accuse others on the basis of general arguments, the possibility for collective healing is hindered. It hinders it because it generally does not search for it. To heal is to learn, and all parties must be willing to self-reflect. Reparative anti-racist politics are politics that look at themselves as spaces of learning. I firmly believe that in any problem or conflict, it must be remembered that we all have our dark sides, that we all have our limits and flaws. It is necessary to know oneself as faulty before deciding what is not tolerable, what does not deserve or is not worth expecting anything, and what should be expelled or destroyed before it destroys me / us.

But before we reach war or expulsion, we must debate, confront, train, and accompany. We must give the other the same opportunity to learn and to grow that has been granted to us and that we expect to

be granted. For this reason, I claim that it is an impulse of love to search for the world's transformation in order to create something better from. Let us not fool ourselves, the feminist anti-racist politics—that from which I speak, that which I know and that is important to me—is a formative policy.

Before anything else, we are educators in a continuous process of development. Those of us that put our dark bodies, our experiences, and our words in front of an auditorium full of White feminists, or retrograde nationalists, or left- or right-wing misogynists, are educating others at the same time that we are educating ourselves. When we declare war, when we shout out our hate, when we say *enough!*, we are educating. We educate to make the world a better place, thinking of our actions as educational or pedagogical gestures that liberate us from the temptation to make our efforts a simple act of destruction. We seek to transform power relations. And if power relations constitute us, then the transformation to which we contribute and to which we submit ourselves occurs at all levels. We are transformed in this coming and going in the eagerness to change hierarchical structures and subjugation.

The activist is a teacher that can do her task of accompanying others in their transformation processes either well or poorly. The activist-teacher herself is continuously learning, stumbling all of the time. Her best weapon is her humility to accept this condition of knowing very little. Thus, the activist-teacher turns into an apprentice and becomes, just like the world she intends to change, something better than what she was before entering politics.

Politics, then, is always a formative process. We enter politics in one way and finish in another. We cannot fall into the trap of denying the intermediation process as part of the politics that seeks to make the world something better. Things change in the exchange. Many teachers remind us that no one learns alone, nor does anyone educate alone. The man does not disappear when we do not look him in the face, and neither does the racist. It is for this reason that we are suspicious of expulsion. The banishment of the canceled subject is not the disappearance of the problem. The canceled subject is simply

the proof that something is rotten, that something must be addressed, that something is not working right in the community. Of course, there will be moments when we are left with no other option, but before then, there is much to do.

There is an ethical task to be done to actively involve ourselves in order to change what is hurt and repair it. This task must involve all of us. There is the task of the activist and there is a responsibility of those who are denounced. To assume politics is a pedagogical task is to believe that if we do not educate the evil subject, it will end up exterminating us. Even when we expel or assassinate this subject, its disease will propagate like a plague and devour us. Anti-racist politics should always be an act of love, a love for ourselves and for our community, a love for the communities that are not my own, and a love for the relationships between all that exists. We must remember that if the White subject does not learn, it will be the end of us, as quoted in [*Embrace of the Serpent*].⁵ We must also remember that it will be the end of us if we do not see how the White master lives within us, and thus politics is about transformative self-formation.

DECOLONIAL FEMINISM AS A PLACE OF EXPRESSION

Now, from where am I speaking? All that I have just said, from where am I saying it? I effectively come from a long lineage of Latin American and Caribbean feminism. I entered feminism starting in my early twenties while in college. I come from a working class and impoverished family, and I am one of the first of my family to go to college. This was one of the dreams of my Black father, who was very determined that his daughter and sons go to college in the hopes of improving the family situation.

My father was one of my first teachers. It was he who taught me to think about the world, articulate myself in the first person, and responsibly create my own destiny. That is what I do. In spite of this, it was a long way before I came to recognize myself and my father as racialized people. My father never recognized himself as a Black man,

5 → Guerra, *Embrace of the Serpent*.

and it was never mentioned nor spoken about in the family. I come from a family of revolutionaries, from folks who believe in social justice, but there was no race consciousness. In discourse and in concerns, only class took precedence.

So, when I arrived at college, I was already educated with an anti-classist and anti-capitalist consciousness. Beyond that, I already had strong training in assuming myself as a historical subject responsible for my actions before my society and before my life. I had a deep awareness of the fundamental ethical principles of honesty, transparency, and constant self-criticism that have accompanied me my whole life. I was trained in a permanent task with myself. So, when I encountered feminism, it was a turning point. I was already prepared for politics, and I have assumed it with passion as I do with everything in my life. To encounter feminism was to let myself be educated by it. To let myself be educated by feminism was to develop a gender consciousness. In my personal history, this will mean about ten to fifteen more years of denying a fundamental part of my background. It was actively engaging in politics that diminished my experience and diminished my gaze because it was Dominican. It was staying tucked in a silence and denying an important part of myself. There was something that escaped all the theories I had at my disposal.

When I went to live in Argentina in 2001, I arrived full of illusions of getting integrated in a radical, autonomous, and international feminist movement. Argentina was the country in the spotlight illuminating the feminist movement in Latin America. It is there where I crashed, fell flat on my face, and all expectations fell. No one had to tell me when I reached the stage where the disillusionment finally arrived because I lived it all.

There I discovered feminism as an absolutely Eurocentric, racist space where a person like me, a Dominican woman, was never going to be someone who thought or who wrote about the world, but rather a body of a whore. And it is not that it is a problem to be a whore. The problem was the condemnation and prejudice that accompanies that supposition, where your body is no longer good for anything. And so I began to try to find something that would put a word to the wound that

was constantly being re-actualized time and time again. That is how I came to Black and of color feminism in the United States, and very quickly I was able to get into this thing which was emerging in Latin America, which was the decolonial shift.

We began to construct decolonial feminism in Latin America with Ochy Curiel. With her, we arrived at autonomous Latin American feminism. Autonomous feminism was a movement in the 1990s that produced one of the most powerful critiques of the process of the institutionalization of feminism in Latin America and the Caribbean. This movement was strongly influenced by Italian, French, and Spanish feminisms. This practice was very much linked to autonomous and original thinking about the world. “Bring the world to the world,” said feminists from the philosophical group Diotima, committed to finding “one’s own voice.” While this voice was determined by what they signaled as given fact—sexual difference—their methodology of looking for and engaging with one’s own thinking about the world reminded me a lot of what I had learned from my father at an early age. It was a continuation, let’s say, of this way of thinking.

From the autonomous feminist standpoint, we strongly criticized the technocratization and the institutionalization of regional feminism, the co-optation of feminist leadership, influence-peddling, and the hegemonic feminist agenda defined and promoted at the international level by the mechanisms of the United Nations and the multilateral instances of so-called “development aid.” From our stance amidst a moment of an onslaught of neoliberalism and of a new globalization where we observe its consequences for our countries, and in particular for women in the public sectors, we are committed to creating our own form of thought and denouncing imperialist dependence of Latin American and Caribbean feminism on feminism of the Global North and on discourses emanating from central loci of power. It was definitely a first great school where many of us learned to produce a critical gaze towards the world.

However, at a certain point, this autonomous feminism revealed its limits. In a previous work, using my well-known method of

“genealogy of experience,” I revisit my memories and the archives of this moment to find the sources of what ended up separating us:

For the end of the decade in the 1990s of the last century and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, autonomous feminism found itself worn out due to, among other things, the discredit to which institutionalized hegemonic feminism had condemned us, the lack of resources (thanks to our critical stance towards cooperative funding agendas), and, lastly, the internal disputes regarding leadership and the political project. Although the critique of the institutionalization and the NGO-ization of feminism had brought us together, important differences between us began to appear after a decade. Autonomous feminists who had paved the way and started the movement in the late 1980s found it challenging to recognize the contributions and leadership of those of us who would join just a few years later. The difficulty of getting to know each other was marked by differences with respect to political alliances and the way in which we positioned ourselves in the social fabric.

In the background, these different politics were marked by class difference, race, and origin. These differences that separated us so deeply functioned in a hidden way without becoming part of political reflection and struggle. Thus, while autonomist feminists who were racialized and / or came from the working class were convinced of the necessity to accompany collective struggles of the people and organized communities, in a time when social and territorial movements were making a strong reappearance amidst the profound crisis of the 1990s due to the structural adjustment measures and the readjustment of world economic policy that required neoliberalism, old-fashioned autonomous feminism situated in politics of sexual difference. These old-fashioned autonomous feminists indicated the need to keep away from the social outburst, proclaiming a “feminism from the outside” in the voice from one of its most important representatives, the Chilean feminist Margarita Pisano.⁶

It is worth noting that this difference was not minor if we take into account the origin of a good part of the movement that made it

6 → Margarita Pisano, “El Afuera” <https://www.mpisano.cl/el-afuera/>

impossible for us to stay outside broad struggles for social justice in our communities.

In this way, by the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, autonomists found ourselves walking paths that internally separated us. In 2009, the group which had agreed on the need to broaden the autonomist feminist struggle assuming a commitment with women from grassroots and mixed movements where they found themselves immersed, decided to organize an autonomist feminist assembly in Mexico City, taking advantage of the fact that some of them would participate in the XI Feminist Assembly of Latin America [XI Encuentro Feminista de América Latina y El Caribe (EFLAC)] to be held in that city. The meeting in Mexico united many of us who had participated in the autonomist workshop that occurred during the 7th EFLAC in Chile in 1996. This was a space where trends were set and where new generations of activists from the work sector from different countries came together, and, despite the fragmentation and the generalized discredit by hegemonic feminism, several of us who were there and are now in leadership roles, continued to do. Given the character of this intermediate generation, its political composition and vision, the meeting in Mexico showed some broadened areas of concern and problematization towards the social fabric as a whole, which categorically marked some differences with feminist autonomy in the 1990s led by white-*Mestiza* middle class women from the previous generation. This indicated a definitive rupture with the old-school autonomous feminism that would lead, not long after, to the surge of two of the most relevant feminist movements in the last decades: community feminism and decolonial feminism. In the closing statement of the meeting, “Make Community in the Home of Difference” (“Hacer Comunidad en la Casa de las Diferencias”⁷), they showed the foundations of the political agenda underway and were leading us down new paths. The decolonial anti-racist feminist that I am today was about to enter the world.

The shift that would bring us to decolonial feminism would be

7 → Feministas Autónomas, “Una declaración feminista autónoma: El desafío de hacer comunidad en la casa de las diferencias,” *Debate Feminista* 41 (Spring 2010): 202-207. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42625144>

complete once Black and of color feminist thought in the United States would enter the scene, as would the project of modernity and colonial critique. Black and of color feminist theory in the United States would introduce words to the wound produced by the racism intrinsic to feminist theory and the feminist movement threaded into the social fabric. This is a wound that every generation of racialized feminists in *América Ladina*⁸ have silently suppressed and that, thanks to the pioneering work we have done since the 1990s—but especially in the most recent developments of anti-racist feminism in the last decade—is now less painful today. Black and of color feminist theory would allow us to problematize the fragmented understanding of the domination present in social theory and in our social movements, specifically in feminism and in sex-gender liberation movements. The so-called decolonial shift would provide us with a new discourse to name the colonial wound and its emergence in the social order, looking at race as an idea that organizes the globalized world.

For us,⁹ decolonial feminism is a growing movement that forms part of a larger critical trajectory which I have coined as Eurocentric feminist reason (*razón feminista eurocentrada*) in my analysis.¹⁰ Our contribution has been centered on defining and showing feminism's commitment to coloniality, Euro-modernity, and racial capitalism, as well as observing and making visible the many modes of resistance to domination by racialized women and their communities. Making visible the many modes of resistance that Afro-descendant and Native women allows us to reinstate our agency as historical subjects

8 → The term *América Ladina*, coined by the Afro-Brazilian intellectual Lélia Gonzalez, seeks to make explicitly visible the presence of [Afro-descendants and Indigenous folks] and *mestizo* populations in Nuestra América's social project, and claim this plural ancestry from which we were dispossessed." (Translated from Spanish <https://lasaweb.org/es/lasa2020/>)

9 → When I say "us" in this text, I am fundamentally referring to my comrades who are part of the Latin American Group for Feminist Studies, Training, and Action (GLEFAS), with whom I develop my ideas and with whom I have walked and grown. Current members of GLEFAS include Ochy Curiel, Carmen Cariño, Celenis Rodríguez, Iris Hernández, Aymara Llanque, Evelin Martínez, Mar Daza, Evelyn Carrasco, and Bienvenida Mendoza. Former GLEFAS members include María Lugones, Breny Mendoza, and Aura Cumes, among others.

10 → Espinosa-Miñoso, 2021.

and dismantle the operation that intends to show us as objects of feminist action, an action aimed at fulfilling promises of the individual liberation of the modern project. Being coherent with these aims, we do not adjudicate ourselves as a substantive originality, but rather, we recognize ourselves in a larger trajectory of struggle and resistance of racialized women and those worlds from which we come, worlds that have been denied within feminist and modern European history.

There is an important thing that I want to leave on the table on the subject of the debates and reflections generated in this symposium. From the outside, we often fail to see the differences within the movements. Decolonial feminism is a field of dispute and it would be a mistake to see it as homogenous. In reality, I see decolonial feminism as a field of tension and conflict from which emanates the possibility of its permanent revision. It would be a grave mis-reading to homogenize and overlook internal conflicts, tensions, positions, and debates that are situated at the heart of the basic tenets underlying decolonial feminism and that illuminate the projects of the society we desire.

As a researcher and thinker, one of my commitments has been in helping to construct a subaltern memory of feminism in Latin America and this means being able to explain how hegemony is produced within social movements and protest movements. To have experienced and been involved in social and feminist movements for several decades has shown and warned us of the production of hierarchies and power from inside and outside our spaces of activism. Recognizing the ways in which hegemony forms from within a movement helps us on the journey to refrain from repeating the abuse, injustice, and errors that we denounce out there on the ground. This means that, for us, to think of the feminist and decolonial feminist fields requires fine-tuning. It is imperative to evaluate the ways in which practices, ideas, projects, tactics, discourses, and problematizations are defined in such a way that they emerge from horizontal debate and dialogue, from the search for consensus, and from the responsible commitment to action. The method I have developed and named “genealogy of experience” (“genealogía de la

experiencia")¹¹ has allowed me to draw on the experience of activism and of the political struggle to interrogate it by promoting what we do when we do feminist politics. What political model, feminist or otherwise, decolonial or otherwise, reactivates modernity's program of liberation? And, in what way does it disobey its assumptions, putting restitution programs of fragmented bonds of life into action, an indispensable condition to assure good living no longer only for women or of neglected subjects, but of all that exists? These are key questions that we ask ourselves in a time when decolonial feminism is being enunciated in many places, to the point that we can risk forgetting the subaltern history that has produced this movement.

POLITICAL TRAINING AS A TOOL FOR DECOLONIAL FEMINISM

Returning to the question on pedagogical labor of anti-racist and decolonial politics, I refer to the work group from which I come, GLEFAS. In GLEFAS, we recently were thinking about how to produce a feminist movement from the ground up. In fact, this was one of the main objectives that led to GLEFAS's foundation. We sought to support critical reflective processes on political practice, asking ourselves: how can we strengthen and improve our movements so that their actions are directed towards the ends of justice and good living that we claim to procure? This question is closely linked to knowledge production, to epistemic justice and to foundations of the world we dream of. What knowledge for what world? Which methodologies for what knowledge? In what ways do truths produced by a handful of women with privilege, thanks to their class of origin and race, sustain and orient our feminist practices? How are the truths that sustain our liberation practices and projects committed to the principles of European modernity's model citizen? How do these principles counteract principles of good living in relationship that underlie other social orders and thereby condemn the majority of women and neglected subjects and communities of life from which they proceed to a regime of systematic oppression, violence, and

11 → Espinosa-Yuderkeys, 2019

disappearance? In what way, ultimately, do our practices contribute to or challenge the growth of this model of death?

For us, this meant we had to assume the need for political education as the only way to strip the web of hegemonic meanings and dismantle predefined agendas and strategies imposed from above by modern Occidental reasoning. From the start, we have been committed to popular education and education that decolonizes at different levels of the social fabric. We were convinced of the need to place in the hands of activists and folks in communities under worse conditions of privilege the conceptual-theoretical tools that usually are not at their / our disposal. This way, we can approach the views our communities produce, track the approaches that permeate our analyses, produce our own perspectives, and refine social analysis and evaluate our political practices. We began to formulate and offer online and in-person training programs directed by activists and actors committed during a time when no one was talking about neither decolonial feminism nor anti-racist politics. We designed and organized courses about racism, gender and sexuality, anti-racist movements and thought, the coloniality of gender, decolonial feminism, etc. GLEFAS saw this as part of a strategy to strengthen and transform our politics. Without a doubt, our contributions took part in shaping new generations of feminists with anti-racist and decolonial perspectives. One very important element for us is that anti-racist and decolonial education and training is not only a training centered on defining a political subject, but rather on defining a political project. Therefore, the political and educational politics we give is an involved politic that does not pretend to be neutral, which effectively makes different perspectives known, but takes a side.

That means to combat the idea that Black feminism can be done by any Black woman or Black subject. The political formation we offer and the perspectives that we want to contribute to are aware of the dangers of essentialism. For us, it is always about thinking about political projects that contribute to make practices more effective. Although we cannot forget the materiality of bodies and the conditions of possibilities of the lives of those who carry these bodies,

we are convinced that what unites us are the principles that define society to that which we aspire and the way in which they guide our practices and are solidified into today's actions. In this way, our training shows its participants the limits and the contradictions of our Black anti-racist, sex-gender, and queer feminist movements, as well as the projects of contemporary leftists.

There are some concepts we handle and that become fundamental for this critique. Some of these are the modern colonial world-system, the idea of race, coloniality of being, epistemic coloniality, capitalism, Eurocentrism, coloniality of Eurocentric feminist reasoning, the modern colonial system of gender, the matrix of domination, relational and entangled ontologies, colonial gender technologies, the anthropology of domination, ancestralism, community, communality and reproduction of the commons, and feel-think, among others. This vocabulary has been made throughout the years thanks to our own contributions, meetings among decolonial feminists and other committed theories and with community-driven knowledge, and above all, our capacity for openness and permeability to experience and knowledge. The training we provide introduces participants to this common vocabulary and to the meanings it enables for other politics.

To conclude, I want to offer some methodological reflections on the political education we propose.

TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST EDUCATION FOR THE PEOPLE

The feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s of the last century in Latin America and in the Caribbean was, in general, a movement committed to popular struggles and against dictatorships. Many of those who formed its ranks came from or were dually militant with the leftists of the era. At the same time, it is worth saying that in large part, it was composed of *White* and *White-Mestiza* women that came from a political and / or economic literate elite. Committed as they were to class struggle and struggles for democratization, they saw in

education for liberation, as it would be named by their mentor, Paulo Freire, a methodology that could serve the purpose of making the common woman (workers, housewives, farmers, etc.) conscientize about class and gender-based oppression. They announced this as their objective.

However, what is true is that much of what they did those years was around educating women in popular and subaltern sectors on the fundamental truths elaborated by feminist theory, a feminist theory produced and led by literate, middle class, and upper middle class women in the US and in Europe. Let it be said that their class consciousness led them to believe in the need to work with those with less privilege, and their gender consciousness led them to claim that all women were equally oppressed by the patriarchy and (given their class consciousness) that they should have been educated since they were marginalized by the patriarchy. This situation would worsen as their interests and the interests of those funding them changed towards the end of the decade in the 1990s, when class consciousness faded and the majority of our feminists became development aid and gender policy technicians in the new neoliberal stage of capitalism. Concretely, the use they made of popular education was limited and narrow. In fact, the popular feminist educators were trained in the use of participatory techniques, but along the way, we left behind what was fundamental: validating the knowledge of the common woman and betting on its reconstruction. It was a matter of bringing to her, through their techniques, that which feminism had produced about what was the problem women faced. It has to do with what some of us postcolonial and decolonial feminists have called the salvationist zeal of feminism.¹² We went to the communities and neighborhoods to tell the impoverished, Afro-descendant, and Indigenous women there how they needed to interpret their domination. This interpretation was centered on gender and patriarchy as the origin of our domination and we spoke of a “we, the women.”

In some of my works I point to how this feminist task of educating

12 → Sirín Adlbi Sibai, *La cárcel del feminismo. Hacia un pensamiento islámico decolonial*, (Madrid: Aka, 2016).

through the lens of gender contributes to the expansion of modernity as a civilizing paradigm. This popular feminist education, not questioning the ontoepistemic bases of its truths, helped install and naturalize the idea of the free and sovereign subject that modern capitalism produces, as an emancipatory ideal for women:

These participatory and liberation methodologies helped expand the idea of gender as the fundamental category to explain the domination of women and have contributed to installing the idea of a liberated woman as one who emulates the standard and model of life of a white European woman, middle class, educated, professional, urban, and integrated into the consumption model.¹³

In an interview, I had been asked about a point I made about this known and globally expanded feminism where a housewife, a domestic worker, an agricultural worker, or a countrywoman is not a liberated woman.¹⁴ This is something that should be abandoned, it is something that we need to leave behind, because it is shameful.

What attempts do decolonial feminists make to transform this feminist pedagogy? How do we intend to decolonize it? For us, a decolonial feminist pedagogy implies a process of starting by questioning domination by racist, colonial, capitalist and by modern colonial system of gender. This means to put into question the basic principles of modernity: the ideas that progress and linear construction of history; the human-non-human, nature-culture, modern-not modern, civilization-barbarian, and man-woman dichotomies. What do I want to say with this? What feminism teaches

13 → Espinosa-Miñoso, Yuderkys, "De por qué es necesario un feminismo descolonial: diferenciación, dominación coconstitutiva de la modernidad occidental y el fin de la política de identidad," *Revista Solar. Revista de Filosofía Iberoamericana* 12, no. 1 (2017): 141.

14 → Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso, "El ideal de mujer del feminismo implica la explotación de la mayoría de mujeres y varones extraeuropeos" Interview by Amanda Andrades. *Revista CTXT: Contexto y Acción*, August 28, 2020, Web, <https://ctxt.es/es/20200801/Politica/33177/yuderkys-espinosa-feminismo-colonialismo-amanda-andrades.htm#:~:text=En%20pocas%20palabras%2C%20para%20el,no%20es%20una%20mujer%20liberada.>

us is that here, all of us women are oppressed and all men are oppressors, and that women have to come together against our greatest threat, which is men. Popular decolonial feminist education should be able to help dismantle this type of simultaneously universalist and fragmented analysis. Take a man who is a street sweeper, who cleans the street, who cleans your house, or the migrant from the Caribbean in the North who does not dare to call himself a domestic worker but is doing that kind of work there. What is his place in the world in relation to the woman who employs him? Thus, we seek to overcome the categorical gaze to produce a complex historical gaze of the present. We rely on the critiques and inputs of theories and thinking produced by intellectuals who are generally hidden by feminist theorization. We are also interested in collective knowledge. How do our communities produce knowledge? How do we give value to this knowledge? What does the ninety year-old grandmother or the Black butch lesbian of a peripheral neighborhood of Santo Domingo have to say?

While we pay attention to a methodology that begins with knowledge that the masses bring and takes them seriously in order to facilitate in the processes of becoming aware of the discourses that we repeat and the truths we believe in, we appeal to reconstruct the community knowledge that supports good living and that we support its deepening and systematization by putting thought produced by intellectuals from the subaltern into the hands of the masses. We help to rearticulate views and understandings of domination, starting from institutions and experiences. Then, we see how they serve a co-constitutive critique and analysis of the matrix of domination. Critique of European modernity as a globally-imposed civilizing matrix endangering epistemic multiplicity is fundamental as a starting point.

For us, this popular transformational decolonial education makes fundamental:

- the revaluation of collective, popular, and ancestral knowledge,
- to systematize in order to recuperate,
- to historicize in order to understand the present, and to

construct another history that is critical of power and oppression,

- to unlearn truths produced by the ruling classes,
- to update and provide feedback starting from knowledge and experiences from other communities that have also suffered domination,
- the reconstruction of the history of resistance

Resistance becomes the center of our formation. In what ways have we always resisted domination and attempts to annihilate us? It is ultimately about returning the condemned to their place in the world as historical agents. These histories of resistance are always veiled because we have been led to believe that we need the modern enlightenment agenda to liberate us and to evolve.

The last point becomes fundamental for the pedagogy we are developing. It has to do with the objective that we are aiming for, the political agenda that we are betting on, an agenda that we have learned from the struggles of the organized communities themselves. The end goal of politics and resistance is to maintain, where its removal has not been achieved, and to restore, where it is agonizing, the communal ties besieged and when not, broken or wounded due to the advancement of the processes of westernization, which includes the processes of westernization brought by feminism. To strengthen, not the individual self, but rather the collective self as a guarantee of good living for all that exists and; therefore, for the women with the least privilege. ■

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