

Chapter 25 / Capítulo 25



*Time, Power, and Resistances in Latin America:
Narratives, Democracy, and Global Reconfigurations
(English Version)*

ISBN: 978-9915-704-40-1

DOI: 10.62486/978-9915-704-40-1.Ch25

Pages: 227-235

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Situated thinking and feminist resignifications in Mexico: from differences to common ground as an educational horizon for global justice

Pensamiento situado y resignificaciones feministas en México: de las diferencias al sitio común como horizonte educativo para la justicia global

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a theoretical-political reflection on the resignification of the feminist political subject in Mexico, starting from the diversity of bodies, histories, and territorialities that shape women and dissident identities. Drawing on feminist and intersectional epistemologies and on situated critiques from Abya Yala, it questions both the universalism of Western feminism and radical strands that exclude trans women and reduce difference to genitality, thereby reproducing biological determinism and the epistemic superiority of the West. In dialogue with authors such as Marina Garcés, Francesca Gargallo, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Wendy Brown, and Silvia López Gil, the analysis situates the twenty-first century as a “posthumous” context marked by precarity, the normalization of violence, and the hierarchy of grievable and ungrievable lives, as well as by the emergence of new feminist mobilizations and intersectional alliances. The paper argues that collective anger and shared affect constitute political forces that enable the articulation of resistance, the contestation of dominant meanings, and the reinvention of ways of inhabiting public space. On this basis, it outlines the proposal of a pedagogy of the common, understood as an educational horizon for global justice that acknowledges situated differences without homogenizing them, while seeking to weave a non-unitary “we” capable of generating viable political projects. It concludes that there is no universal female subject, but rather a collective subject in constant resignification, whose strength lies in constructing the common from within differences and in struggling for conditions that make dignified and livable lives possible for all humanity.

Keywords: Situated Feminisms; Feminist Political Subject; Pedagogy of the Common; Global Justice; Abya Yala.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo propone una reflexión teórico-política sobre la resignificación del sujeto político feminista en México a partir de la diversidad de cuerpos, historias y territorialidades que atraviesan a las mujeres y disidencias. Desde las epistemologías feministas e interseccionales y las críticas situadas de Abya Yala, se cuestionan tanto los universalismos del feminismo occidental como las corrientes radicales que excluyen a las mujeres trans y reducen la diferencia a la genitalidad, reproduciendo el determinismo biológico y la superioridad epistémica de Occidente. En diálogo con autoras como Marina Garcés, Francesca Gargallo, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Wendy Brown y

Silvia López Gil, se examina el siglo XXI como contexto “póstumo”, marcado por la precariedad, la normalización de la violencia y la jerarquización de las vidas llorables y no llorables, así como por la emergencia de nuevas movilizaciones feministas y alianzas interseccionales. Se argumenta que la rabia colectiva y la afectividad compartida constituyen fuerzas políticas que permiten articular resistencias, disputar sentidos y reinventar modos de habitar el espacio público. A partir de ello, se esboza la propuesta de una pedagogía desde lo común, entendida como horizonte educativo para la justicia global que reconoce las diferencias situadas sin homogeneizarlas, pero que busca tejer un “nosotras” no unitario capaz de producir proyectos políticos posibles. La conclusión sostiene que no existe un sujeto femenino universal, sino un sujeto colectivo en constante resignificación, cuya potencia radica en construir lo común desde las diferencias y en disputar condiciones para vidas dignas y vivibles para toda la humanidad.

Palabras clave: Feminismos Situados; Sujeto Político Feminista; Pedagogía de lo Común; Justicia Global; Abya Yala.

INTRODUCTION

How can we learn to navigate the diversity and heterogeneity of women through the resignification of the feminist political subject in Mexico? What have been the driving forces behind feminist epistemology and the dissidence of Abya Yala in transforming the understanding of women’s agency and agenda? How can we inhabit a different pedagogy—from the common—where the diversity of our bodies, histories, and struggles is not blurred? These questions seek to summon today the possibility of situating ourselves in a theoretical-political thought and proposal that, without fear of tension, recognizes affectivity and dissent as forces that resignify and, at the same time, seek a common horizon for different dialogues and pedagogies.

From the critical perspectives of women such as Marina Garcés, Francesca Gargallo, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Wendy Brown, and Silvia López Gil, we pause to consider the questions that matter. It is not a question of theorizing from a unitary perspective, from the self, but from the collective will: to open a space where dialogue, where that process of identification with the other, which implies a de facto affective dimension, enables us, on fertile ground, to construct and situate new political possibilities in which the project of thinking from the common is consummated, from the scenario where justice is not stated as a distant utopia, but as a practice that emerges from contact between bodies, from conflict... yes, but at the same time, from the obstinacy to remain here... arguing, despite the disagreements.

Currently, in a different century, such as the 21st century, contemporary analysis to find and define the histories and epistemes that have resignified the feminist political subject is situated in a disorganized context. That is, in a context traversed by a disjointed political logic dominated and managed by the instability of economic capital itself.

Located in a condition that, according to the Spanish philosopher Marina Garcés, can be defined as posthumous, the 21st century is a period marked by abstraction and suffocation. In the context of various extinct ecosystems, the very viability of an economic system based on growth and speculation is being questioned.

It is a period in which, through the irreversibility of catastrophe, unsustainability, and the very decline of a dignified and livable life, the 21st century is marked by constant political denunciation of how social inequality and political alienation have gradually led to indifference

towards the lives and crises of others. The fact is that the fight against our own demise—as a civilization—starts with recognizing our own mistakes which, according to philosophers like Judith Butler, operate from a logic that, by always attributing a differential scheme of values to each living creature—based on their class, race, or gender—influences our reasoning about why some of our lives are considered mournable and others are not.

“What are those lives that, if lost, will not be considered a loss at all?” Butler asks in her essay *Fearless: Forms of Resistance to Today’s Violence*. This reasoning stems from opposition to violent death and questions why, if we have long agreed that every person should aspire to a livable life free of violence, all modern death is accepted and normalized. Let us take a moment to think about the genocide taking place in Palestine today.

Denouncing our complicity in the face of the brutal deaths of women, trans communities, migrant populations, and refugees, we must insist that accepting violence in the world as something natural is tantamount to succumbing to a climate of terror and defeat. This context intensifies poverty, economic instability, and widespread anxiety, ultimately leading to the implicit suggestion of stronger authority in both the traditional family and the modern state.

However... even in a posthumous Western condition, where extractivism, exploitation, and the accumulation of capital have accelerated contemporary crises, the emergence and continuous birth of various protest movements also continues. Political movements that embrace the possibility of self-organization of life, global justice, and, finally, the emergence of new feminisms committed to intersectional alliances.

To distinguish the emergence of current political mobilizations by women, it is necessary to understand that, although they are established and develop as acts of resistance, their collective bond does not necessarily arise from love but rather from political necessity. Collectives, and therefore feminist demonstrations, can be a means of articulating and recognizing this necessity. In other words, feminist political practice asserts that the collectivity that emerges from criticism of precariousness and femicidal violence contextualizes and re-signifies not only the feminist political subject itself, but also the political initiative that aims to seize the possibility of building a livable future for the entire community.

DEVELOPMENT

In constant development and defined as a tradition and political movement, contemporary feminisms encompass various currents, including liberal, anarchist, decolonial, Marxist, Latin, environmentalist, reformist, black, and radical. Socially situated, these currents have their own worldviews—both conceptual and material—regarding their purposes and motives for struggle. Although the possibility of an emancipatory and radical ethos has always been debated since the origins of feminism in the West, the 21st century has once again highlighted its simultaneous difficulties. Whereas previously only differences in class, race, or ideology were considered, today, through postmodern and intersectional discourse, controversies and differences between women are outlined that even cut across the body and its ontology.

The contemporary debate on the ontology of the body and the social and political contexts that surround it is both diverse and alarming. That is why it is necessary to discuss and confront it. Today, we find some radical feminist currents that have generated significant tensions by denying, for example, trans women their place in the feminist struggle itself. These currents advocate for the abolition of gender as a system of subordination, while at the same time

affirming that sex is a concrete and verifiable fact in bodies, which establishes a direct conflict with the recognition of trans, non-binary, or queer gender identities. This essentialist position ultimately limits the understanding of the diversity of experiences.

However, the emphasis on genitalia as the exclusive criterion for defining the feminist political subject not only ignores the historicity and social construction of sexual difference but also reinforces discourses of surveillance and control over bodies, legitimizing rigid sexual roles and stereotypes. This debate concerns, first, the recognition of the political-theoretical discussion and practice that has explained and demystified biological determinism and, second, the evidence regarding how the production and dissemination of the discourse of biological determinism and, therefore, of science, has been dominated since the construction of its episteme by the gaze of the cis, white, heterosexual, Western male.

From this logic, the struggle to abolish biological determinism refers to the consideration that there is a process of subjectivation which, even within the normative framework we inhabit, is traversed by certain historical conditions, which are in turn situated by particular psychic processes and sexuation. This means that, although there is a material biological reality with which we are born, it is due to the trajectories, singularities, and subjectivities of each human being that bodies are inhabited from different places and contexts.

This discussion, as well as exemplifying how the contemporary re-signification of the political subject of feminisms continually debates whether to include the diversity of women's identities, highlights the crucial work of recognizing and differentiating agendas, which, although they coincide in current struggles such as the decriminalization of abortion and sexual violence, the incorporation of their geopolitical factors also reconfigures the strategy and object of each one's political struggle.

A similar debate, regarding the differences within Western feminist currents, is the contemporary insurgency to differentiate other life stories and mechanisms of oppression. These uprisings have occurred in territories and states outside the Western sphere, where women seek to continue their struggle while taking into account the history and legacy of their own territories. They are forging a collective reinterpretation of the feminist political subject and even questioning whether their political struggle should be labeled as feminist. Hence, the collective power and affectivity with which the current political struggles of women and the new feminist currents in Mexico are constructed are not only a symptom of the temporality that the world is currently experiencing, but also a reflection of a rebellious rage that challenges and denounces the epistemic indifference of the West.

Let us consider, then, that although there are ongoing and coinciding struggles between feminisms and the various political mobilizations of women, some contemporary currents reject the homogenizing practices and narratives of states and, of course, of the West itself. This is because some women remain interested in recognizing and differentiating their struggles and political epistemologies, which, as Francesca Gargallo commented at the time, point precisely to the construction of an alternative where Latin American and Caribbean feminisms are unaware of their affiliation with Western colonialism.

In other words, in the very genesis and construction of the female political subject and feminism(s), it is imperative to recognize that there is a difference when trying to bring them together, for example, with the cosmology of those indigenous peoples who were subjugated

by Europe during the 16th century, because in principle feminism not only has its origins in the West, but also, the attempt to universalize the agendas and life stories of millions of women around the world, once again highlights Western epistemic superiority.

It is from Latin America and the Caribbean that some women, from a perspective situated in and conscious of the colonial process and the historical process of patriarchy itself, embrace the possibilities of articulating other practices that, while denouncing the epistemic violence that renders the knowledge of Abya Yala itself invisible, refer to the damage that has been done to them since the colonial invasion expropriated their territories, resources, and even their knowledge, using women's bodies as a vehicle.

However, this has also given rise to a niche of diverse women who have a complex relationship and question whether they should name themselves as feminists or not, mainly because they denounce how Western feminisms sometimes only seem to account for patriarchy and not its connection to other systems and devices of domination, such as colonization. Secondly, they set themselves the task of documenting the ignorance and lack of recognition of the differences in the political practices of each woman. Finally, in order to document their own particularities and political priorities, there is the immense task of assessing the consequences of rendering invisible the particular interests of women in dissent and on the periphery.

In this regard, I would like to point out that, given the importance of differentiating between the systems of oppression that affect women differently, it is worth mentioning that I am not referring to the condescending thesis that essentializes and instrumentalizes women, for example, in community settings, due to their economic and educational conditions. On the contrary, I denounce how the very egalitarian project of some Western women ends up exercising ethnic-racial discrimination that does not take into account the agency, autonomy, and community worldview of others.

For these reasons, the enunciation of all women as epistemic subjects, as well as the ongoing resignification of the feminist political subject, claims that this resignification must also take into account the resistance of communities that attempt to create and sustain alternative systems of enunciation and validation.

As a final dimension to analyze, about differences, the much-discussed conflict regarding the epistemic productivity of anger within women's political demonstrations has shown how the indifferent proposal to victims of oppression to manage their anger with prudence—due to its distorting and counterproductive nature— immediately constitutes a form of unrecognized injustice, known as affective injustice, which thus seeks to deny the very injustices and inequalities of the world.

The reflective shift around the epistemics of anger highlights the emerging need to demystify the misogynistic claim that anger in women is contrary to the codes of femininity, with the obvious and continuous rhetoric around the harmonious spirit and lack of conflict often attributed to the female spectrum.

However, how effective is all this collective anger? In Mexico, since 2018, the possible political costs of the graffiti painted by various feminist groups during marches have been questioned. There has even been discussion of whether it is possible to contain female anger and channel it into politics. This explains why the above discussion, however pragmatic and reformist it may

seem, ultimately seeks to coerce young feminists' emotional experiences. It denies not only the violence they experience, but also the coincidence of some women recognizing themselves in the stories of violence of others, thus giving rise to an emotional collectivity that has currently massified the union and political mobilization of women.

The intention to control this anger, on the part of the state and even other women, fails to understand the legitimate demand for justice. A demand where the vulnerability with which hundreds of women live confirms that the state and local administrations are the main entities that sustain and institutionalize violence itself. Therefore, by focusing on the visibility of anger, we can see why so many women are uniting, while also documenting the achievements of many in reinventing ways of occupying public space through it. For example, we can recall the various graphic interventions on monuments by feminists who, through graffiti, create a continuous political critique and denunciation not only of the state but also of the very systems of cultural representation.

Currently, the political practice and fury of millions of women in Mexico is a consequence of a logic and structure that has normalized gang rapes, harassment, and femicides, where, although there are calls for state intervention, women are also organizing within and outside the political spectrum. Women organized from top to bottom, from indigenous community activists, mothers, and grandmothers who coordinate their time and energy to ensure the safety of their daughters and granddaughters, to, surprisingly for biologists, transgender women. Women who certainly do not call themselves feminists but who, in their work, contend and, therefore, resist for the same reasons.

Finally, after these brief insights that testify to some of the epistemic and agenda differences in women's political mobilizations in Mexico, I propose to share a proposal, the product of the fissures that seek to name and reinvent political practice from the trenches of the classroom, from the space of the common space... where education, as an unquestionable source of emancipation and, at the same time, an institution that articulates power relations, will contribute to the possibility of betting on a sensitive but fair horizon.

This force is the product of testimony about how women and dissidents, from their respective positions, continue to disrupt the logic of domination, allowing us to think about pedagogy from a common perspective, which means striving to build educational projects capable of opening the crack and imagining the common. Risking epistemological certainties with technique, method, but also affection, in order to generate teaching practices that recognize the power and condition of creating together.

Now, the possibility of constructing a pedagogy from the common, in principle, takes up the contemporary crisis in which systemic inequalities and the differential scheme of values among populations have accentuated not only the precariousness of livable living conditions, but also the indifference and abandonment of certain populations whose bodies and lives are considered disposable by the West. Pedagogy based on the politics of the common stems from the idea of understanding the epistemic role of the common, which establishes that everything common to all things, and equally in the part and in the whole, does not constitute the essence of any singular thing.

Common notions also develop the proposition by articulating and resignifying the body of each subject, both internal and external, suggesting that, from a universal point of view,

humanity learns to move forward through similarity and articulation with one another. Proposing that the political dimension of common notions underpins the possibility of recognizing that the elements shared by all subjects generate and nurture a community that can act based on the potentiality of the common.

Moreover, it is by always understanding the political as the production of the community—whose composition operates by virtue of common passions or affections—that we end up empowering even an emancipatory politics and pedagogy. Therefore, in a contemporary feminist context such as the current one, pedagogy for the politics of the common empowers a demand to promote and politicize a collective project that, according to philosophers such as Silvia López Gil, constructs a “we” from the non-unitary articulation of differences.

It is possible to conclude that, with the ethical political commitment to give timely continuity to the various feminist and/or women’s demands, it is necessary to redefine the feminist political subject so that, on the one hand, it contemplates the situated difference of diverse women and, on the other, it conceives the possibility of weaving together simultaneous dialogues and pedagogies that promote possible political projects.

The possibility that feminism can sustain a pedagogy that deploys specific objectives such as global justice is a fundamental proposal that, although it arouses skepticism among many, stems from the idea of building common agreements that empower diverse forms of action and political articulation that effectively intervene in the individual, collective, social, and political existence of humanity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is about proposing a pedagogy that recognizes there is no universal female political subject, but rather a collective subject that, under historical and contextual conditions, is constantly being redefined. Thus, the feminist struggle imagines a future that recognizes the right of all humanity to aspire to a dignified and livable life.

This approach does not attempt to argue that we are incompatible, much less that systemic differences and inequalities are largely a consequence of gender differences. Rather, it suggests the importance of reconceptualizing the political subject of feminism and, therefore, its political practice, from the commonality of differences and the collective.

These same differences, when contemplated and situated, open the way to a political articulation that finds common ground between women’s mobilizations and feminist currents in Mexico. It is necessary to insist on the work of giving space to differences and commonalities, not with the aim of once again dividing the mobilization into sectors, but rather to contemplate them in order to build diverse strategies and articulations that allow for a dissident feminist collectivity that knows how to successfully intervene in obtaining its rights.

The starting point for arguing in favor of difference is that the aim is not to define through sexual difference, but rather to build a radical feminist epistemological power that, overcoming the male/female opposition, constructs and resignifies its political subject, which, in addition to not being determined by genitality, is articulated from the common ground.

FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Daniela Armenta Hernández.

Data curation: Daniela Armenta Hernández.

Formal analysis: Daniela Armenta Hernández.

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