

Critical Horizons for the Reading/Rewriting/Transformation of the Contemporary World from a Gender/Feminist/Queer/Cuir point of view^{1,2}

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Abstract

In the contemporary world, very diverse voices and narratives have punctured the cultural canon of universal Western rationality (an enlightened, modern, racist, classist and patriarchal rationality), as well as question the androcentric and sexist norms of language. Through the emergence of new political subjects and languages that embody practices of resistance, otherness and freedom, singular memories of oppression and struggle have manifested on the global cultural scene.

Taking this context into account, we will attempt to reflect on the contributions that gender and feminist perspectives, along with queer/cuir pedagogies, have made to the elaboration of a horizon of cultural reading/translation/critical rewriting from other oppressed heritages/scars/ways of life, factoring in notions and practices of justice, equality, freedom and happiness.

In particular, in this text we will investigate the function of feminist critique as a social antagonism that confronts hegemonic identity matrices and their systematic structural violence, by way of crossing geopolitical, economic, epistemic, linguistic, social, cultural, and sexual borders.

We are specifically interested in assessing the contributions these spaces make – as a horizon of social transformation – to the broad transdisciplinary field of education and cultural criticism.

Keywords: *Gender Studies, Feminisms, Cultural Translation, Educational Space, Critical Pedagogy, Queer/ cuir Pedagogies*

Introduction

As the so-called critical and border pedagogies have conceptualised for decades, in dialogue with Freirean pedagogical practices, and with the field of Latin American pedagogical alternatives to the "Third World" challenges (see Puiggrós, 1998)³, the educational space is permeated by a multiplicity of diverse cultural elements, which in turn serve to transform the hegemonic logics sedimented through long historical processes of struggle and oppression⁴.

In this context, Gender Studies and Feminisms (in particular, the paradigm of intersectionality and the so-called black and coloured feminisms), along with Cultural Studies, Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory, Critical Pedagogies, and the Studies of Subalternity and Translation (in the light of Marxism, Critical Theory, Psychoanalysis, Post-Structuralism and Deconstructive thought, which contributed to the Linguistic and the Discursive turns in the Social Sciences and Humanities throughout the 20th century), bring to light a multiplicity of processes, subjects, voices, languages, territories, communities, knowledge, struggles, and identities, while making an effort to avoid being completely inscribed (or inscribed without conflicts) within the hegemonic cultural matrices that prevail in the social space in an attempt to reduce or eliminate the otherness and the difference that permeates “other” identities⁵.

The theoretical and epistemological critique produced by these critical frameworks and their political praxis, confronts the ontological, linguistic, pedagogical, economic, ecological, racial, cultural, subjective, sexual, and generic principles that have universalising effects, seeking to eliminate all identitarian difference and/or preclude the features of differentiability, given that said differences are disruptive to the stability of the “whole” as the only global horizon within the paradigm of Western capitalist rationality. By questioning that the mere democratic "inclusion" of differences (under the umbrella of universal state policies, for instance) does not imply harmonious coexistence, but rather the possible re-institution or performative reiteration of frameworks of marginalisation, inequality, discrimination, and violence (in the face of practices of exclusion or segregating inclusion -which highlight "different differences", as Avtar Brah analyses), the idea is to rethink the extent to which rights can actually crystallise on the practical level of concrete material life, improving conditions of existence and social coexistence.

Contrary to reinforcing stigmas (such as conditions of skin colour, gender, class, sexuality, and migratory and geopolitical status that defy the white androcentric, colonial, racist, capitalist, and cisheterosexist "inclusive" matrix), these critical spaces seek to manifest the constitutive differentiability and multiplicity of identities (on the ontological plane of identity constitution, from the perspective of negative thinking) in singular contexts, full of ineradicable antagonisms. The translation of those political frameworks into new concrete inequalities, sufferings and expulsions, need to be dealt with in the irreducibility of community life.

These antagonistic drives strive for the living impulse of political identities in a constant struggle to exist within their oppressive cultural, social, and historical frameworks. This is why we are interested in thinking, through Derrida's (1978,

2009) notions of *différance* and *trace*, about the limiting effects and the affection provoked by discourses (acting as traditions and affirmative heritages) on the identities and experiences of contemporary subjects, "subjected" to the hegemonic logics of existence and meaning of the neoliberal paradigm.

Confronted with the deadliness and the fateful quality of such discourses, critical political discourses and identities intervene the epistemological and epistemic logics of the lifeworld, crossing the identity boundaries of colonial, capitalist, racist and patriarchal matrices (also with a disruptive incidence in academic and social spaces, from north to south and south to north), raising other voices and experiences that defend their right to the dignity of existence and their territoriality.

Identity politics, critical pedagogies, feminisms, and cultural differentiation

Let us recall that in the 1990s, while analyzing the curriculum as "cultural politics", Giroux and McLaren (1998) questioned the historical ways in which domination and subordination are introduced into language through texts and social practices that permeate traditional curriculum theory, bringing forth "exclusions" that the educational space must question and transform -from a democratic and emancipatory pedagogical horizon that can address the "fundamental antagonisms" that constitute social relations of inequality and power, crossed by conditioning factors of race, class, gender. Consequently, the educational space is traditionally the place where "culture is often reduced to an artefact that embodies the values of dominant groups" (Giroux in Giroux and McLaren, 1998, p. 80), and where the dominant ideology in education "rarely questions the relationship between knowledge and power, or between culture and politics".⁶⁷

Within this same framework of cultural critique, queer theory (born in the heat of the LGTTBIQ+ interventions and movements that have been growing since the previous decades) takes a closer look at the relationship between language, power, and identity through the cultural and philosophical critique of the heterosexist sex-gender system. Such theorising permeates different fields of knowledge, giving rise to the cross-border feminist *cuir* intervention "from the South" (Valencia, 2010; flores, 2016, 2018, 2019), and to "queer-cuir pedagogies and methodologies" (Britzman, López Louro, hooks, flores, 2016, 2018) that are inscribed in the intersectional tradition of Third World American black feminism, as well as the Freirean pedagogy of freedom.

Foundational texts of "black" and "coloured" feminists that pierced the hegemonic academic and cultural canon (in the likes of Gloria Anzaldúa's cross-border Chicana/o writing *Borderlands / La frontera: the new mestiza* [1987]) are the anthologies *This Bridge Called My Back*, and later *Otrasinapropiables: Feminismos desde las fronteras* [*Inappropriable Others: Feminisms from the Borders*]. Permeated by Marxist cultural studies, postcolonial criticism, and the pedagogy of the oppressed, these interventions and discussions opened up an analytical perspective towards a feminist critique of colonial, capitalist, heterosexist, and patriarchal identity matrices (and even of those matrices involved in the predominantly "male" and "white" academic world of the global north); a space in which women's studies, translation studies, studies of the borders, cultural studies and areas of critical pedagogy are articulated. *This bridge called my back...* [1981], whose first Spanish translation in 1988 was published under the title "*Etapuente mi espalda: voces de mujeres estercer mundistas en los Estados Unidos*", is edited by Cherríe Moraga and Ana Castillo, and contains texts by Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Audre Lorde; among other authors. This anthology opens with Kate Rushin's "The Bridge Poem" (marking a lucid disruption that involves semantic, grammatical,

textual, and translational facets, all at the same time), and brings together essays, theory, narratives, illustrations, and poems written by women of Chicana, Latina, indigenous, Asian and Afro-American descent. Those women who are called "mestizo", "black", "lesbian", "chicana", and who live in North America under the sign of the "other" of the West, are invisibilised, oppressed, and subalternised by the global colonial-patriarchal-capitalist order, and also by the hegemonic cultural and academic order that confines them to cultural, linguistic, economic, social and sexual or gender difference and inequality. That's why they break the chains of language and oppression: so that they are no longer the slaves or servants of the rich and white people of the North, subjected to all kinds of constant violence. This type of text produces an evident linguistic and cultural differentiation by situating itself in the enunciation of the *inbetween* (Bhabha, 1994), the junction between cultures and languages, showing the experience and insurgence of "other" knowledge from a discourse of borders, that generates a special operation of differential enunciation, exchange, translation, miscegenation, hybridisation, and resignification of knowledge and cultural practices, with important effects on the dominant matrices of identity and power.

Sonia Saldívar Hull highlights Anzaldúa's operation of historical critique and linguistic and cultural translation in the "new epistemology" represented by *Borderlands*, written almost entirely in English, with Spanish and Nahuatl phrases and words that serve as precise incisions. The text constitutes "a socio-politically specific elaboration of a late-twentieth-century Chicana feminist epistemology", which "marks a movement towards coalitions with other women on both sides of the US-Mexico geopolitical border", concerning a "new pedagogy", which is cross-border and feminist: "The book focuses on a defined geographical space, the US-Mexico border, and presents a concrete history, that of Mexican-American Chicana women. But as a treatise that is first and

foremost 'a feminist struggle', it opens up a radical way of restructuring the way we study history" (Saldívar Hull in Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 142). Using a new discursive genre that Anzaldúa calls *autohistoria*, it "presents history as a serpentine cycle, rather than as a linear narrative" (p. 13); feminist self-narratives, in this framework, take the stage for a radical critique of the academic canon and the cultural hegemonies.

Otras inapropiables: Feminismos desde las fronteras ([*Inappropriate Others: Feminisms from the Borders*] an anthology of texts by bell hooks, Avtar Brah, Chela Sandoval, Gloria Anzaldúa, among other authors), also shows this cross-border discursive operation that, against the reality of a multiple and systematic oppression, deploys a "methodology of the oppressed and the oppressed" in Sandoval's words (2004, p. 81); or, as Anzaldúa puts it, a "mestizo consciousness" (Anzaldúa, 1999), which seeks to raise awareness of the "diasporic" and constantly shifting gesture towards "oppositional or antagonistic forms of praxis". An awareness, we may add, that leads to the denunciation of historical conditions of oppression and violence, and that argues for the journey that pulls through the tradition of silence towards the denunciation and collective struggle for the transformation of historical conditions of oppression and violence. In other words, from a demand of "survival" that is intimate and suffering, to a more comprehensive dignity of public and private life (Enrico, 2020).

In this same historical framework, it is worth highlighting the operation that María Lugones (2008) denounces as the invisibilised "coloniality of gender". Lugones thinks of long-term processes of subalternity and oppression in the light of the intersectional conditions of race, gender, class, sexuality, but she especially positions herself from the reality of racialised women "of colour", victims of the modern white Western world, even when living within the global

North.⁸ Prompted from the existential experience of these intense confrontations and plots, postcolonial and decolonial feminists attempt to deconstruct historical conditions of oppression made invisible by hegemonic cultures and narratives, deepening the critique of the coloniality in its three aspects (power, knowing, and being), as theorised by Quijano (2000).

The cultural interaction of post-decolonial critique and popular and communal feminist practices in the face of these historical experiences of oppression, as an "organic coalition" between women (black, indigenous, mestizo, other), resist domination and the multiple oppressions, by way of creating a critical consciousness and a counter-cultural space. This space articulates as epistemic and epistemological alterity the logics of popular economies, community knowledges, political activism, and academic, educational and artistic practices, dislocating the fatality of what we must be and reproduce in order to "belong" to an unjust, unequal and violent society.

Lugones, as a philosopher, feminist, activist, and popular educator, rightly emphasises the notion of intersectionality (which she adopts from the conceptualisations of Spelman, 1988; Brown, 1991; Crenshaw, 1995 [Lugones, 2008: 76]), this "inseparability" of theoretical categories that, even if analytically differentiated, are indivisible to the extent that they are plotted and intensified violently and fatally on the plane of existence. Therefore, their concealment reveals violent exercises of domination, and not only epistemological and representational biases in the analyses of the world. In other words: these types of violence are not only representations or interpretations, but also literal forms of power, inequality, and oppression on the part of the "modern-colonial gender system", a system that configures a historical matrix of differentiation, identity abjection, and social exclusion. Confronted with these matrices of oppression, the voices and narratives of the

others historically invisibilised take on body and place. In this regard, Lugones states: "Popular education can be a collective method to critically explore this gender system in its broad outlines but, more importantly, also in its detailed spatio-temporal concreteness, in order of moving towards a transformation of communal relations" (Lugones, 2008:77).

Critical pedagogies, as "counter-hegemonic practices" that conceive the cultural field as an "arena of contention and resistance" (McLaren, 1988; Giroux, 1998), have been working based on the territories, opening up a whole spectrum of epistemological, epistemic, and pedagogical alternatives. This kind of popular, socialist, feminist, transgressive, queer, cuir alternatives (stemming from the oppressed, the border, the margins, the dissidents, the refugees), have been disseminated and thematised with great specificity throughout Latin America and all the global South in recent decades. They've worked, and continue to work, biographing and de-biographing the histories and experiences of communities, peoples and subjects, not only by studying and investigating their narratives but also by opening up the discursive-social space to the enunciation and exertion of diverse "self-narratives" (Anzaldúa, 1999) and "other knowledges", emanated from the voices of the social actors themselves, and their singular subjective locus.

This scene introduced a field of new subjectivities and subjects who carry on the task of naming themselves (for example, the political communities we call "feminist languages"), or of trying to enunciate their changing "selfhood" and difference with their own voices, sharing their knowledge and experiences while claiming epistemic and political equality in the face of universalising power structures and systems that repress all nuance. Without necessarily responding to any absolute or oppressive heritage, they assume the position of subjects of enunciation (capable of their own, inappropriate narratives), rather

than the place of objects of study for the social and human sciences (presented to the world through representations, biases, and interpretations that do not belong to them).

From the standpoint of post-critical theories and pedagogies of education and curriculum, it is precisely when Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (1999; 2001) interrogates the complex institution of "identity spaces" (by questioning the power criteria both present and latent in the incorporation of certain contents into the curriculum, and in the non-incorporation of other types of knowledge), that he touches the knot of the relationship between power, knowledge, and identity in the configuration of the systems of meaning and life. That's why he deems it necessary to recover the contributions of feminism, critical theory, post-structuralism, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies for a complex approach to social theory and the educational space, in contexts of growing change and crisis for the subjects.

If we consider, then, the importance of "cultural politics" (Giroux and McLaren, 1994, 1998) in the context of macro and micro-political actions that emerge from different spaces of power, institutions, subjects, experiences, and voices which cross the multiplicity of social space, the idea is therefore to question what archives and narratives we should produce / record / establish / treasure (in educational, cultural and memorial terms) against the totalising empire of global hegemonic culture, so we can open up history and the present to new and better worlds. That is to say: to question what subjects of tomorrow we need to be, we must think from the perspective of an ontology of the historical present.

We are rightfully compelled by the urgency of asserting our politics, voices and antagonistic frictions as democratic communities struggling for more livable, just, and egalitarian living conditions (while facing constant realities of

precariousness, fragility, hunger, wars, diasporas, and violence), from our position as "los sures" or "los de abajo" (the south" or "those from below") of the contemporary world. We claim, therefore, not only to have dignified lives or to simply be able to survive within an increasingly predatory, ecocidal, militarised, policed, trans-feminicidal, hungry, sick, virtualised, hostile capitalist world (a world in which a large part of the population is in constant agony); but to universally guarantee all human rights and common goods, and the rights of the earth, nature and children as supreme treasures, elaborating dignified and happy spaces as political communities in frameworks of coexistence that sustain real access to better material, spiritual and affective conditions of existence for every life and every people, throughout the world.

In 2021 in Argentina, the Indigenous Women's Movement for Good Living (Movimiento de Mujeres Indígenas por el Buen Vivir) undertook a 1,900 kilometres walk across several provinces of the national territory, with the purpose of reaching the Argentinean National Congress in Buenos Aires to demand the declaration of "terricide" as a legal notion. Said notion would recognise it as a crime against nature and humanity (which involves the figures of ecocide, genocide, feminicide, and epistemicide), in the face of the growing and irreversible destruction of our bodies-territories (Cabnal, 2010, 2019; Millán, 2019)⁹. All these strong political actions need an organic cross-border coalition (Anzaldúa, 1989; Sandoval, 2004) that is necessary to sustain through multiple feminisms and social struggles, all over the planet, because we have no more time left -a reality that the pandemic has made specially visible in the last two years, but that the earth and its agonising voices have been expressing and showing for a long time.¹⁰

Critical epistemic horizons: crossing the boundaries between linguistic translation, cultural translation, and the reading/rewriting of new possible worlds

It is central for us to consider as an initial background the critique of Western rationality (Benhabib, 1994), its system of closure (Barthes, 1989), and the cruelty of capitalist rationality, including the cultural model of the subject of neoliberalism (flores, 2017, 2019) or late capitalism (Jameson, 1981); considering the developments of the feminist critique that expands the legacies, cartographies and genealogies of their struggles (through claims, movements, approaches, imprints, waves, which is necessary to establish and analyse in all their historical differences and specificities), as a specific theoretical field of gender studies.

As Patrizia Calefato (2008) analyses, the "repetition" in the metropolitan heartland of what postcolonial theory defines as "cultural translation" (i.e., the antagonistic and violent confrontation in the field of language between dominators and excluded or subalterns) has made visible the complex relations between linguistic, cultural and material power, as well as their effects on the order of discourse, in the great scene of the academic and social world during the past decades (*cf.* Calefato, 2008: 135).

In this sense, the effect of repetition in difference marks differentiation as a specific and antagonistic discursivity; and this practice is revealed as an alteration (limit or threat) of the hegemonic identities sedimented in the social body. Thus, the bias or insistence of the singular, particular and oppressed (local) self in the rupture, displacement, and disruption of universal identity dynamics is the starting point for analysing the social antagonisms that confront the death drive of Eurocentric (capitalist, androcentric, colonial, patriarchal,

extractivist, white) power in what Derrida calls “Western phallogocentrism” (Derrida, 2009).

Both contemporary political theory and the analysis of social discourses, crossed by post-structuralism (the philosophical thought of deconstruction and cultural critique), insist on the function of antagonisms as a limit of the social order¹¹ (given that difference as an ontological principle of identity translates into concrete practices of inequality, and cannot be reabsorbed or simply expelled by universalising logics of identity). Against this background, feminist praxis seeks to insist on the frontier of its possible disempowerment, by way of facing the violence historically sedimented in the organisational systems of life that traverse the global hegemonic discursive order - rendered invisible and silenced by the very logic of bio-tanatopolitics (Biset, 2017), or necropolitics (Mbembe, 2011; Valencia, 2010; flores, 2010).

Keeping up the approach of difference as a theoretical notion that allows us to think about the radical negativity of antagonisms, by affirming the condition of *différance* of every act of language (Derrida, 1978; Spivak, 1999), and the conflictivity of all signifying inscription and alteration in its own existence (as a discursive trace and limit), we will focus on the particular discursivity of queer/cuir feminisms¹² in the South¹³, through the "interlanguage" experience of life (Anzaldúa, 1987; Molloy, 2016; flores, 2010, 2019), and the feminist writing of "de-languaged" memoirs (flores, 2010).

valeriaflores¹⁴, citing Larrosa, says that reading constitutes a "fierce task of being stripped" while "it darkens inside the mouth [of our mouths]". By showing through writing the damage traced in the scars of memory and the body, flores attempts to break with the colonial grammars that have formed and traversed us, proposing "interruptions" that allow us to gain awareness of the

dimension of the damage caused by the violent law of language, as well as the modern, racist and patriarchal literate canon. This gesture of interruption arouses new texts, sexes, and possible worlds.

From this dislocatory drive, the bastard and barbaric language emerges trembling, opening the gesture of speech, announcing a rupture between voices and languages of ancestral and close communities that speak through our mouths. "Minimal parties of language interrupt the literate impulse" and become (other) "writing skin" (*cf.* flores, 2017:55).

The gesture of *interruption* as a political-poetics of language constitutes an "affective procedure of disconnecting the circuit of infinite suffering" through the "indiscipline of a knowledge that bursts into the coordinates of the hegemonic corpus of knowledge", perforating the great language of power. "Inversion of the gaze, twist of speech, interval..." (*cf.* flores, 2017: 4), this gesture announces the expression of a wounded, badly wounded experience of (from) the other, interpellating and performing other sexes and voices that struggle not to adapt to the prevailing panicked normality (which extracts desire and difference from us to the last drop). It looks for a dimension of happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment as a condition of life, opposed to the disastrous effects of the violence that seeks to make the suffering continuous, no longer allowing us to speak, feel or finally live.¹⁵

The theoretical turn of feminist political languages and the force of antagonisms in the global discursive order

In assuming the central value of languages in the constitution of contemporary knowledge, Adriana Boria (2016) argues for the importance of feminist theories as a "theoretical turn" (infrequently recognised as such in the field of social and human sciences, despite its important contributions to social theory and analysis

[cf. Boria, 2016: 23]), because they introduce the operation of interlinguistic and cultural translation as a situated critical epistemological feature that overcomes the universalist obstacle in the access to knowledge and the experience of the world. ¹⁶

Similarly, Nelly Richard highlights the relevance of the feminist point of view in the theorisation of the gender division (as a marking of sexual difference in terms of power and subordination), for a critique of the epistemologies of the social and human sciences. From the perspective of cultural critique, she draws attention to the central values of feminist theory and epistemology:

- The questioning of the "system of academic institutionalisation that canonises disciplines" (by postulating a trans-disciplinary and trans-border view of diverse scenarios, territories, and realities);
- The importance of its situationism in the elaboration of a discursively historicised and "embodied" knowledge, as opposed to the universalist scientific pretension of the knowledge-power system of the cultural hegemonies; and
- The critique of the "symbolic of thought" (cf. Richard, 2012: 34-35) which organises cultural and identity representations, dividing the social space hierarchically and reductively by regulating relations between the same and the different (with the power to break and produce hierarchies, inequality, and violence in the framework of sedimented social formations).

Within this frame of reference, queer / cuir theorisation and operation (Valencia, 2014; flores, 2017) opens wounds in Euro-north-centred and phallogocentric thinking, assuming the drifts of communities and subjectivities

that are decentred, dystopic, diasporic, dissident, and disruptive of the cultural canon; that canon with all its colonial, heteropatriarchal, capitalist and racist intricacies, which have restricted "universal human rights" to a privileged few worldwide.

Sayak Valencia argues that if queer is not an identity (citing *Parolede queer's* notion, as thought and enunciated by Paul Preciado in the context of the theorisation of the queer movement and its multitudes by key figures such as Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis, and Eve Sedgwick), it can, at any rate, be defined as "a process of radical self-critique and critique of society and its absolute categories, such as masculine and feminine" (Valencia, 2018: 6). Let us not forget that in the face of the universal "woman", and the "white" predominance in feminism, black feminisms, feminisms of colour from the American third world, and queer theory, are precisely concerned with dislocating heterosexist normative frameworks, through a radical critique of identity (including its multiple oppressions). In the same spirit, flores "grafts heteroglossia" onto her readings of Anzaldúa, Lugones, Butler, Preciado, De Lauretis, Wittig, affirming her writing as a "non-female" lesbian, far from the lights of the great central metropolis and all feminine or feminist substantialisation / essentialisation in speech and writing. That is to say: from the sexed body. As crossborder, foul-mouthed, and misspoken as Lugones, she assumes herself to be sudaca and "cuir", calling into a constant state of convulsion of the politics and poetics of the body and sexuality that traverse other languages, territories, epistemes, and coexisting eroticisms.

Deploying a bastard text that deflects the interdictions of hegemonic language, flores thinks about "how the cuir operates", and what effects it performs in a regime of writing against the binary law of language and gender. This re-writing produces difference in repetition, fantasising and realising other materialities of

the letter, of the signifier, and of cuir bodies, as territories and manifestos of disputes in a permanent explosion.

By opening and dislocating the "regime of (hetero)communicational transparency", (that is, the semantics, political syntax, binary grammar, social doxa), the queer/cuir attitude of the friction between banished languages asserts "a bastardised writing as a dialogic palimpsest that does not conceal moments of ambiguity" (*cf.* flores: 2017: 56), reading the world in full tremor to signify and rehearse, always with others, other possible worlds and existences amid contexts of enormous geopolitical, economic and cultural inequality.

Arguing further for the decolonisation of the "cuir canon" (once it is instrumentally reabsorbed by the semiotic market, and by social and academic fashions), flores quotes Massiello in Richard, bringing about the resonances of that question about "who can speak" (Spivak, 1998) from the very margins (territorial, symbolic and political) of the "cuir" itself, thinking for example of the slum communities and the brown identities *to the south* of the south of the world. The so-called poor "slums" (i.e. marginalised) that are outside the social map: the "nobodies", as portrayed in our cinema (and in his tireless and luminous political struggle) by Pino Solanas:

The opposition between representation (abstraction, theory, discursivity) and experience (concreteness, practice, experientiality) affirms the inequality of power drawn between those who present the codes of theoretical figuration that will endow their objects of study with academic legitimacy and the subjects represented by those codes - spoken by their theorisation of otherness - without much access to the institutional benefits of metropolitan theory, or the right to be consulted on the validity of the categories that describe or interpret them. Subverting this dichotomy of power requires producing local theory, situated knowledge, situational discourse, and consciousness, which generate an imbalance of functions within the so far divided

partition between the Latin American proliferation of difference (as surplus irrationality) and the function of those charged with producing “the narrative of the restitution of order” that the Latin American will use to give each difference a classifiable and interpretable place (Masiello in Richard, 1996: 751; in flores, 2017: 56-57).

The cuir of our south, as a "complex, unassimilable and heterogeneous territory of readings and writings of critical feminisms and sexual dissidence" (flores, 2017: 57) resists the politics of naming and the representation of others that place us in the full and binary categories of language, or outside the order of social discourse (supposedly transparent, white and clean); showing what is missing, what is unnamed, the wounds and scars committed on our bodies and identities. The cuir, therefore, in its differential affirmation, makes community (a form of cultural healing) between languages and from the underworld (as Foucault would say), to try to "understand the complexity of the relations of power and production of life", so as to be able to "critically intervene in them, through the dismantling of the gender and sexuality devices that regulate neoliberal capitalism" (flores, 2017: 59); radically questioning racial, social, gender, sexual, bodily distinctions and inequalities in the modes of production of subjectivities stemming from neoliberal civilisation.

A type of writing that does not suture identity or meaning, the cuir gesture of transcultural translation interrupts the power of hegemonic definitions and politics, and places itself in the very gap of nameless speech from which new affections and passions are to emerge, in the wefts of communities that are less hostile, more egalitarian, more inclusive, less unjust; in short, more democratic. Valencia conceives “this South”, against the background of the dehumanising, extractive, and violent consequences of the exploitative frameworks of contemporary *gore* capitalism (2010), as “a critical positioning and not just a

geopolitical location, where, because of the imposing logics of voracious capitalism, the world and its populations are increasingly becoming South” (Valencia, 2018: 41). She consequently stresses the need for an urgent insurrection, across all borders, in this context of "extreme vulnerability" of our lives.

And here also makes its appearance the operation of "cuirisation of knowledge" proposed by valflores (2018). Along these lines, flores proposes the importance of thinking not so much about "what is" queer or "lo cuir", but "how it operates" in terms of a radical critique and cultural politics, arising from the occupied, violated, and historically besieged territories of the South. She therefore thinks of "the south" and "lo cuir" ("sudaca" and precarious) as a "tactical fold", quoting this notion from Nelly Richard. This operation, which appears initially in the metropolitan contexts of the North, in the case of mestizo Latin America translates into queer/"cuir" (hooks, flores), as well as the "brown feminisms", the "peripheral" and intersectional anti-racist "villeros" that transform their condition of "non-existence" into re-existence (see Colectivo de Identidad Marrón [Collective of Brown Identity], La Garganta Poderosa [The Powerful Throat])¹⁷, and in the southern, community and popular feminisms that raise their collective clamour.

Closing remarks

Ramona Medina had no water for 12 days and died from Covid 19 in Villa 31, at the beginning of the pandemic - in May 2020 - denouncing the government of the City of Buenos Aires for not guaranteeing the human right to water (a common, public and social good), particularly in the most vulnerable communities and social sectors of the Federal Capital (the political centre of Argentina), while in the middle of this serious health situation and the preventive social isolation. She denounced the city government through

desperate videos on social media, together with her comrades from La Garganta Poderosa; and without water or a river to wait for her in her sleep (as Cherríe Moraga said in her poem), she died like so many others from "south of the quarantine", who were/are abandoned to die in total inequality of rights with their "equals". Here/there, where the "tragic transparency of the virus" is much more piercing in a context of poverty and total vulnerability -to quote Boaventura's crude¹⁸ expressions about the enormous inequalities between the countries of the first world and the peripheral and poor countries, a condition that the pandemic has made visible and deepened on a global scale.

It is from these analyses that we are interested in reflecting on the very subject of the relationship between languages, writing, power, politics, translation, transmission, and cultural contact in terms of a feminist critique of economic, phallogocentric, ecocidal, racist, sexist and colonial power/knowledge structures. The same constructs that shape increasingly extractivist and privatising hegemonic cultural and historical formations, repressing any experience and identity from the frontiers; a difference, margin, and otherness that cries out for its fundamental rights to community, freedom, justice, equality, and happiness.

From an activist coalition focused on the "fever of a gesture" and the "desire for fierce words that are rooted in tenderness", arising from an ancestral fury, flores invokes the political task in words, as "miniatures carved in the healing properties of shared silence and the expanded cry, where resounds the antiquity of the yell of invisible slavery that runs through our books and our streets" (*cfr.* flores, 2019: 59). This leads us further, to articulate the "polymorphous event of small sensitive, poetic and political conspiracies from the south" (flores, 2019: 12), uniting the activist space of politics in a territorial key (a conflict as ancient as it is contemporary), with intimate, promiscuous and precious landscapes, of

such intimacy that they vibrate all over our skin as if in a trance, between silenced voices and souls in pain conjured in and through the thirsty language of the deserts.

... to bring together flowers, kisses, desires, skins, silences, whispers, losses, to bring together whores with insects, dykes with rivers, queers with mountains, peasants with porn actresses, indigenous women with dominatrices, transvestites with minerals, the poor with the forests, intersex people with the sun... and thus to bring us together to breathe a multi-species beauty in this fateful and lethal season. (flores, 2019: 62)

From the coming into action of this crossing between languages, the aim is to "abdicate" the systems and the "grammars of damage", positioning ourselves from the margins of pain between brown colours, from bastard and even dead languages, in an immoderation that manages to open a portal in our cosmos of life, "making the gathering a cosmic goldsmith's shop", as flores proposes.

This manifesto, from the collective juxtaposition and trembling of the unlanguageed languages, shows an inextricable, inappropriate and untranslatable fire: urgent matter, place and territory for everything that today has managed to speak and make room for itself and to compel new worlds, breaking the tradition of silence (body to body and in the flesh, achieving an immense cross-border collective resonance throughout the earth), by confronting the destructive and deadly power of cultural hegemonies.

Notes

¹ A first version of this paper was presented at the opening panel of the International Colloquium "Reading practices in an intersectional and postcolonial key: for the right to difference and the reinvention of cultural citizenship" organised by the Latin American Centre for Inclusive Education (CELEI, Chile); Ibero-American University (México); Pontifical Xavierian University of Bogotá (Colombia); National University of Córdoba (Argentina); University of Antioquia (Colombia) and Silva Henríquez University (Chile), in June 2021. Its closing conference was given by Dr. Seyla Benhabib, who also received an Honorary Doctorate from CELEI during this event. This panel (which was shared with Dr. Judith Kalman [DIE Cinvestav, Mexico - Honorary Doctorate from the UNC],

commented by Dr. Aldo Ocampo González [CELEI] and coordinated by Dr. Marieta Lorenzatti [ECE FFyH UNC]), was called "The power of writing in a literate world", and focused on the subject "Gender, reading, critical feminisms and queer pedagogies", one of the thematic proposals of the colloquium.

² I would like to thank Camila Roqué López for their collaboration in the translation of this work.

³ We follow the historiographical and conceptual contributions of Adriana Puiggrós and researchers of the *Programa Alternativas Pedagógicas y Prospectiva Educativa en América Latina* [Pedagogical Alternatives and Educational Foresight in Latin America Programme] (APPeAL). This program (which has headquarters in Mexico and Argentina, but also comprises several Latin American countries), has been dedicated since the 1980s to the research of pedagogical alternatives (alternatives that are popular, community based, peasant, indigenous, insurgent, women's, feminist, workers', and even institutional) in the face of, or in articulation and tension with, modern state public education systems configured since the mid-19th century throughout the continent in a decentralised way, on the basis of the Enlightenment model and normalist pedagogy. Substantiated through Freirean popular education and the so-called *pedagogías de frontera* or border pedagogies (Giroux and McLaren, 1994, 1998; Puiggrós, 1998), and founded on the philosophy and praxis of liberation pedagogy, this epistemological framework criticises social reproduction and the imposition of hegemonic cultural and social models, focusing on the colonial and imperialist logics of the Euro-north-centred global capitalist system (which includes the North American pedagogical model).

Consequently, this approach deconstructs historical sources, discourses and records of experience, not only to analyse the oppressive genealogies embedded in the relations of dependence and cultural domination since the "conquest" of America, but also to scrutinize (among other subjects) the histories of colonisation; the processes of revolution and independence; the frameworks of genocidal colonial territorial occupation; the study of the history of colonisation; the processes of revolutions and independence; and the extractivist and epistemicidal territorial occupation of the native peoples. Understanding that all of these dispossessions were further enforced by the foundational and expansionist processes of the liberal nation-states, the modern school system is to be conceived as the quintessential practical field of training and indoctrination of the popular masses for the configuration of literate citizenship and national identities. Thus, one of the main concerns of this perspective is also to draw attention to the antagonisms and alternative experiences of education, resistance, from other voices and subjects; and to translations and cultural contacts that are not registered, or that are expelled or made invisible by official histories and narratives.

⁴ This space, and our particular analytical elaboration, also makes use of theoretical tools from Marxist Cultural and Social Critique; from the area of Critical Pedagogy of Cultural Studies; and from Postcolonial Theory and post-Marxism. In particular, we draw upon the political analysis of discourse and the theory of hegemony formulated by Laclau and Mouffe (Essex School), which includes, among others, elements of post-Marxist philosophy and political theory from Gramsci; Post-structuralist Linguistics; Lacanian Psychoanalysis; and Derridean Deconstruction, in order to think about the relationship between language, power, identities and subjects. See in particular: Puiggrós, A. (1984). *La educación popular en América Latina. Orígenes, polémicas y perspectivas*. [Popular education in Latin America. Origins, controversies and perspectives.] Mexico: Nueva Imagen; Puiggrós, A. (1980). *Imperialismo y educación en América Latina* [Imperialism and education in Latin America] (1983). Mexico: Nueva Imagen; Puiggrós, A. and Gómez Sollano, M. (1992). *Alternativas pedagógicas, sujetos y prospectiva de la educación latinoamericana*. [Pedagogical alternatives, subjects and prospects for Latin American education.] Mexico: UNAM, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras; Rodríguez, L. (Dir., 2013). *Educación popular en la historia reciente en Argentina y América Latina. Aportes para balance y prospectiva*. [Popular education in recent history in

Argentina and Latin America. Inputs for balance and foresight.] Buenos Aires: APPEAL. See also, among other articles: Enrico, J. (2013) "Aportes del análisis político del discurso y del postestructuralismo al espacio educativo: genealogías de una mirada translingüística para el estudio de la identidad" ["Contributions of political discourse analysis and post-structuralism to the educational space: genealogies of a translinguistic approach to the study of identity"], in *Revista Pampedia* N° 9, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana. (Available at: https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/bitstream/handle/11336/102255/CONICET_Digital_Nro.df6d0e7f-0668-4b36-ac55-0ed371e21c2a_A.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)

⁵ In accordance with this, we employ the contributions of the philosophy of difference (as it has been elaborated from the conceptualisations of Deleuze and Guattari and Derrida), to think contemporary political ontologies and the critique of phallogocentric Western rationality. We particularly draw upon the notion of *différance* in Derrida, and its impact on the epistemologies of difference (among others, on postcolonial feminism). At the transdisciplinary crossroads of the fields of philosophy and education, we also investigate Deleuze's notion of "minor education" (De Oliveira Gallo, 2013), and how it can delineate the production of alternatives, heterotopias and identity dissonances inside the space-time of institutions, and in the agency of subjects facing the paradigm of social domination (and its hegemonic cultural and epistemic matrix). From such contributions we follow the dialogues between Larrosa, Mélich (Spain), Skliar, Frigerio and Diker and the Centro de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Antelo, Serra, Ríos and the Centro de Estudios en Pedagogía Crítica (Rosario, Argentina); Kohan, De Oliveira Gallo, Figueiredo and the Grupo Transversal (Brazil). See in particular: Skliar, C. and Frigerio, G. (Comps., 2006) *Huellas de Derrida. Ensayos pedagógicos no solicitados. [Traces of Derrida. Unsolicited pedagogical essays.]* Buenos Aires. Del Estante Editorial; Skliar, C. (2007). *La educación (que es) del otro. Argumentos y desierto de argumentos pedagógicos. [The education (that is) of the other. Arguments and desert of pedagogical arguments.]* Buenos Aires: NovEduc. Skliar, C. and Larrosa, J. (Eds., 2009). *Experiencia y alteridad en educación. [Experience and otherness in education.]* Buenos Aires: Homo Sapiens; Grupo Transversal (De Oliveira Gallo, Figueiredo, et. al., 2013) *Educação Menor. Conceitos e experimentações.* Grupo de estudos Transversal and Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisa Diferenças e Subjetividades em Educação - FE UNICAMP. Brazil, Ed. Prismas - Appris. My participation in these researches and spaces throughout my undergraduate, doctoral and postdoctoral studies in Brazil, Spain, and Mexico (and of course in my own country, Argentina), has allowed me to sustain to this day a rich theoretical-political dialogue during my vital formation, along with friendships that do not recognise borders.

⁶ The Critical Pedagogies Area of Cultural Studies contributes, in this period, to a strong epochal critique in the midst of the expansion of neoliberal discourse and neoliberal reforms throughout the world.

⁷ See the developments of this analysis in Enrico, Juliana and Castro, Alejandra (2021). "Género, feminismos y pedagogías de frontera. Aportes críticos al espacio educativo." ["Gender, feminisms and border pedagogies. Critical contributions to the educational space".] In *Revista Pedagogía y saberes* N° 54 (January to June 2020). National Pedagogical University (UPN), Colombia. <https://revistas.pedagogica.edu.co/index.php/PYS/article/view/10636>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17227/pys.num54-10636>

⁸ See the developments of this analysis in Enrico Juliana (*in press*). "La discursividad feminista como pulso de vida, desde las lenguas del sur global contemporáneo" ["Feminist discursivity as a life drive, from the languages of the contemporary global south"], in *Revista DeSignis. Federación Latinoamericana de Semiótica (Latin American Federation of Semiotics: FELS) – UNR Press, Argentina.*

⁹ Territorial and community feminisms, with a strong indigenous component, vindicate the efforts towards the philosophy of “el *buen vivir*” or good living (in this case, revisiting the struggles of the Mapuche people).

¹⁰ In this regard, see the Deleuzian ecosophy (*The Three Ecologies* [1989]) in the framework of Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalysis (*The Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972]; *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980]); and the micro-politics and desiring counter-cartographies proposed by Guattari and Rolnik (2006). Similarly, the ecosocialist educational manifestos of Marxist critique (McLaren, 2005; McLaren and Houston, 2005; Hill, 2007; Hill and Boxley, 2007) against post-neoliberal logics (Ball, 2007) and their cosmopolitan global governance (De Sousa Santos, 2007); and environmentalisms and ecofeminisms in their different critical strands against capitalism and neo-extractivism, with special reference to the global south and southern feminisms (Mies and Shiva, 1992; Sassen, 2005; Svampa, 2012, 2015; Svampa and Antonelli, 2009; Svampa and Viale, 2014; *Feminisms of Abya Yala and Movimiento de Mujeres por el Buen Vivir*).

¹¹ Chantal Mouffe explores how cultural and artistic practices can contribute nowadays to the transformation of the political terrain, by assuming in the very space of the social the irreducible conflict between the discourses that cross the cultural field (around irreconcilable antagonisms that found the political, and translate an agonistic political-aesthetic dimension in the order of concrete practices), challenging neoliberal hegemony (*cf.* Mouffe, 2014: 98). Along these lines, see Laclau and Mouffe (1987); Butler, Žižek, Laclau (2003).

¹² Reviewing the etymology of the notion, which can be traced back to the 16th century (being, as it is, of probable Germanic root), “queer” has historically sedimented similar meanings within the semantic universe of the “strange”, “off-centre”, and even “perverse”. Sayak Valencia (Mexican transfeminist philosopher) argues that, although it is considered an exclusively Anglophone term, it has Indo-European origins, and it was only in the twentieth century that this notion was incorporated in a derogatory way to enunciate male homosexuality, extending later to designate dissident sexualities and genders through “diverse political dimensions that articulated the queer movement, formed at first by the minority-becomings of the American Third World” (Valencia, 2018: 25).

¹³ See Bidaseca, 2014, 2016; Bidaseca and Vázquez Laba, 2010; Ciriza, 2015; Alvarado et. al., 2019. “The South” operates as a locus of enunciation that functions as a political signifier of the oppressions of the global North, taking up post-decolonial legacies in peripheral third world countries.

¹⁴ val flores writes her own name in lower case to displace the author’s name and the authorial function, just as she cuts it out to displace the sex-gender reference of the name as a civil category, inscribed in an identification space that confines to a binary (masculine or feminine). In her own words, it is a “bet on the text [and meaning or significance], rather than on the signature””; signature which has always been constituted as a place of authority and determination. Southern lesbian feminist activist and theorist, queer/cuir, “sudaca”, fugitive teacher, precarious worker, masculine, pro-sex, “scriptural practitioner”, anti-speciesist. She belonged to the artistic-political collective “Fugitivas del desierto”, lesbian feminists (2004 – 2008, Neuquén, Argentinean Patagonia, Mapuche territory) and currently lives in La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

val flores writes by grafting “heteroglossias” from a border language, “deslenguada” [“de-languaged”] that proposes to de-biograph the colonial and patriarchal wound by inscribing the trans-feminist cuir operation. Situated in this locus, her “heretical writing” appears as a development that follows her detachment from the artistic-political collective “Fugitivas del desierto”; among her most recent interventions and publications are *Deslenguada. Desbordes de una proletaria del lenguaje* [*Unlanguaged. The overflows of a proletarian of language.*] (Ají de pollo, 2010); *Interruqiones. Ensayos de poética activista. Escritura, política, pedagogía* [*Interruptions. Essays on activist poetics. Writing, politics, pedagogy.*] (Ed. Asentamiento Fernshe, 2017, 2nd ed.) and *Una lengua cosida de*

relámpagos [A tongue sewn with lightning.](Hekt, 2019). Deliberately miss-written and misspoken, "cuir", by visually and aurally disturbing the thought and language of the conquest and the colony, the semantic interruptions reveal the gesture of "de-biographing" histories of linguistic, social, subjective and sexual oppressions. We recommend exploring her productions at <http://escritoshereticos.blogspot.com/>

¹⁵ Among many of her other interventions and artistic-political performances that should be mentioned, early on in primary schools in the south of Argentina Flores deployed political-poetic-pedagogical devices and workshops on Comprehensive Sex Education for children, at a time when the National Law on Comprehensive Sex Education (Ley Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral) was passed in Congress in 2006. The law was later formalised at the national level with the acronym "ESI", which she dissidently calls "Esa Sexualidad Ingobernable" ("That Ungovernable Sexuality").

¹⁶ See this analysis in Enrico Juliana (2019). "Lenguas desgarradas desde el sur de la vida: políticas-poéticas feministas antagonistas y tránsito de fronteras queer / cuir en el *entrelenguas* de val flores" ["Torn tongues from the south of life: antagonistic feminist political-poetics and the transit of queer borders / cuir borders in val flores'en el *entrelenguas* de val flores"]. In: Alvarado, Mariana (Ed.). *Feminismos del sur: recorridos, itinerarios, junturas*. [Feminisms of the South: journeys, itineraries, junctures.] Buenos Aires, Ed. Prometeo.

¹⁷ Since the emergence of the "Ni Una Menos" movement in Argentina in 2015, under the collective cry "Stop killing us", the Colectivo de Identidad Marrón has claimed and made visible its black, brown, poor and diverse condition, excluded from the "white" discourses and images that populate our social space (radically unequal, racist and violent) with their "correct" voices and imaginaries. La Garganta Poderosa gathers assemblies throughout Argentina and Latin America, making of the "collective consciousness" a neighbourhood militancy, "villera" and popular, black, poor and hungry, that has been setting "urgent" popular demonstrations for years. See: <https://lapoderosa.org.ar/ante-todo/>

¹⁸ See De Sousa Santos, Boaventura (2020): *La cruel pedagogía del virus*. [The cruel pedagogy of the virus.] CLACSO, Buenos Aires. De Sousa Santos affirms, situating the place of enunciation and the critical perspective of the epistemologies of the South: "The South is not a geographical space, but a political, social and cultural space-time. It is a metaphor for the unjust human suffering caused by capitalist exploitation, racial and sexual discrimination." (De Sousa Santos, 2020: 45)

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