

Imagining New Identities and Communities for Feminisms in the Americas

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Wi wi wi . . .
Küpay mayga
Küpay maygagülü kürüf may
Küpay may wiji kürüf may
Küpay mayga küpay waywen . . .
Kurüf tayül
(*Sacred Song of the Wind*)¹

El feminismo latinoamericano debe entenderse como proyecto político de las mujeres y como movimiento social, a la vez que como teoría capaz de encontrar el sesgo sexista en toda teorización . . .

-*Francesca Gargallo*

As an Argentine (*Cordobesa, de Alta Gracia*) born and raised, who has lived in the U.S. for twenty-five years, the audience I had in mind for this paper was those in *el Norte* interested in transnational feminisms—one of the topics of the conference I was invited to as a keynote speaker. I firmly believe that the possibility of transnational Latin American feminisms hinges on Rosi Braidotti's "glocalization"—that is, on the need to historicize, and particularly to trace back the unique feature of Latin American Feminisms—responsibility toward the Other. Adhering to the engagé tradition of the Latin American intelligentsia, which probably arises from the huge economic differentials, is particularly important at present given both the buoyancy of women's movements and the catastrophic impact of neoliberal policies and globalization. As a committed postmodernist I offer the following pages bearing in mind T. S. Eliot's and Jorge Luis Borges's caveat about the choice of our intellectual forbearers. The text also includes references to literary representations since certain aspects of feminism's epistemic revolution appear in the utopic or dystopic

communities of dissensus portrayed by Postmodern Latin American women writers. Finally, as will be borne out in the following pages, I conclude that the continued development of Latin American feminisms and the possibility of transnational feminisms depends on a number of interrelated factors, namely: grassroots movements must be aware of gender concerns; ONGs must be attuned to the needs of the women they serve; pro-women governmental measures must be supported by the people (think about Fujimori's pro-gender policies); women must participate in all levels of politics; and theorization is instrumental to ensure the deconstruction of the current political discourse that ignores women's private concerns (such as daycare) even when the need is being brought about by the (inherent) nature of globalization.

Despite the divergences in their respective trajectories, Latin American women's movements and feminist organizations share a historical commitment to eliminate the socio-economic gap resulting from the intersection of race/ethnicity and class, and more recently, from the devastating effects of neoliberalism.² Before proceeding, however, another caveat is due. As Borges' "El aleph" illustrates, though we may perceive multiple objects/events simultaneously, the fact that we depend on language to articulate/describe them imposes a chronological order. Thus, despite the apparent causality suggested by the linear arrangement, the following sections are intended to offer different vantage points. Indeed, as suggested by the lack of transitions and following the model of Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*, the sections are intended both to stand alone and to be read haphazardly. Lastly, since the issues discussed are interrelated, each unit offers a unique view, but as in a kaleidoscope each unit is also part of a complex set of ever changing structures. To conclude, Section I: the historical overview of women's struggles in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, México and Perú, allows for comparisons regarding the development of feminism and women's movements, the effect of military dictatorships, the transition to democracy, and the impact of neoliberalism and globalization. Special consideration is given to successful political strategies, since data suggests that increased political participation has not improved women's lot. These issues are further developed in Section II: Neoliberalism and Globalization, which also focuses on the role of NGOs.³ Section III: National and International Conferences traces international cross-fertilization back to the beginning of the century; however, while it sheds light on the increasing NGOization of the movement, it opens the possibility of international leverage for women's rights. The following four sections (IV: Literary Representations; V: Communities of Dissensus; VI: Splintered Subjectivities in Fiction; and VII: Splintered Subjectivities and Negotiation) examine the representation of ethics as responsibility toward the Other, and communities of dissensus in the fiction of postmodern Latin American women writers. While the fictional representation of splintered subjectivities

is counterpointed with their interpretation in the (so-called) real world, the negotiation strategies mentioned foreshadow political approaches developed in many of the following sections. Section VIII: Latin American feminisms, traces the interrelation between Latin American feminisms and women's movements, focusing on daily struggles for survival despite the institutionalization of women's issues. In Section IX the analysis of ethics includes contemporary misinterpretations of the worldview of native women. Politics takes center stage in Section X. Yet, the increased incorporation of women into politics is dampened by the realization that demands focused on the private sphere are largely ignored. Section XI showcases paradigms of Transnational Feminisms. Finally, Section XII discusses Latin American women's insurgencies as struggles for human rights and concludes with a call to action. Much in the same way that "the New Gender Politics' [that emerged from] a combination of movements concerned with transgender, transsexuality, intersex, and their complex relations to feminist and queer theory [led Judith Butler to] undoing gender, [understood as] restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life" (*Undoing 1*), the notion of a homogeneous Latin American feminism needs to be unraveled.

I. Historical Background⁴

Argentina

While the first wave of feminism is usually associated with suffrage, the agenda of Latin American women's movements and Latin American feminisms has historically included the struggle for women's (socio-economic) rights.⁵ For instance, in 1900 Cecilia Grierson, the first Argentine physician, founded the NWC [Nation Council of Women] as an affiliate of the [ICW] International Council of Women—a suffragist organization. In 1900 however, Grierson was interested in social issues such as the "humane treatment of women and children, progressive education, and gender equality between the sexes," which is understandable, since universal (male) suffrage was only granted in 1912 (Carlson 92). Conflicts arising from social class and/or the intersection of race/ethnicity have constantly undermined the struggle for social justice. For example, despite the NWC's support in proposing bills requiring maternity leave (1906) and outlawing the white slave trade (1908)—both of which were rejected by Congress, when Grierson asked coalition members to agitate for social and moral reform, "they pointed out that they were philanthropists, not social workers" (Carlson 99–101). Similarly, the struggle for women's rights involved a number of social actors. In Argentina anarchists such as Virginia Bolten and Juana Rouco Buela (1889–?), who were instrumental in organizing labor, as

well as in their advocacy of female militancy in politics, were not interested in suffrage and viewed feminism as a palliative.⁶ Conversely, socialists such as Carolina Muzzilli (1880–?), Gabriela de Laperrière de Coni (1866–1906), Fenia Chertoff (1869–1928), Sara Justo (1870–1940) and Alicia Moreau de Justo (1885–1986), sought suffrage and legal divorce. However, anarchists and socialists coincided in the struggle for social reform, understood as the abolition of legalized prostitution and the white slave trade, ending the exploitation of women in the home as well as in the factory, limiting the workday to eight hours, and expanding access to primary education (Carlson 125; 128–31).⁷

After World War II, most Latin American women were granted the right to suffrage. In Argentina, the creation of the Women's Party led to Juan Perón's re-election in 1951, but the coup d'état that proscribed Peronism in 1955 was a major political setback.⁸ Despite the shift to the right, which allowed for a series of military interventions, some feminist organizations arose in the 1960s and 1970s. María Luisa Bemberg's comments about her script for *Crónica de una señora* proved to be the catalyst for U.F.A. [*Unión Feminista Argentina*], which was aligned with U.S. feminism, since its members not only read Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone and radical feminists, but also followed the consciousness-raising method (Calvera 31–37).⁹ While political unrest contributed to the organization's limited life (1970–1973) its members met with hostility, “la derecha nos acusaba de extremistas y contestatarias, y la izquierda de elitistas y burguesas” (Calvera 47).¹⁰ As in other countries in the region, women active in leftist parties came to feminism after they became aware of discrimination. Thus, in 1974 a group of women from the FIP (*Frente de Izquierda Popular*) created MOFEP (*Movimiento Feminista Popular*). Yet, as is typical in Latin America, feminists converged around the social sciences, so in 1975 the MOFEP became CESMA (*Centro de Estudios Sociales de la Mujer Argentina*) (Calvera 80).

The socio-economic process that the military Junta enforced in 1976 was “directed against the popular sectors, which suffered a sharp decline in their net income. Social services [...] were drastically curtailed, free health services were terminated, and educational opportunities were reduced” (Feijóo 74–75). Paradoxically, the conservative roles that the military envisioned for women led to the emergence of a movement of women—the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, who “produced a transformation of the traditional feminine conscience and its political role” (Feijóo 77).¹¹ As in other countries of the region, democracy led to consensus building. The 1984 *Multisectorial* coalition posed several challenges, not the least being “how to move from unified confrontation against a single opponent to the much more complex process of recognizing different opponents with alternative projects” (Feijóo 84).¹²

Brazil

In Brazil suffrage was obtained through “the effective lobbying of a group of middle-class, mainly university-educated women” in 1932; however, it did not increase women’s participation in government (Pitanguy 98). Military intervention began in 1964, about a decade earlier than in the Southern Cone. “The regressive economic policies [...] thrust millions of women into the workforce. Repressive social and political policies sparked widespread opposition to the regime [including] women of all social classes” (Alvarez, *Women’s* 60). Consequently, “in the 1970s and 1980s, Brazilians witnessed the emergence and development of perhaps the largest [...] and most successful women’s movement in Latin America [...]. By the mid-1980s core items of the feminist agenda had made their way into the [...] programs of all major political parties and [...] public policies” (Alvarez, *Women’s* 18).¹³ Between 1975 and 1979 the debate about the condition of women in Brazil included issues such as “discrimination in the labor market, the lack of support structures for women [working] outside of the home, domestic violence, and sex stereotyping in the educational system” (Pitanguy 100).¹⁴ Among positive political measures, the National Council of Women’s Rights (NCWR) created in 1985 was successful in working with legislators to ensure that the new constitution upheld women’s rights (Pitanguy 104).¹⁵

Chile

Although Chilean women obtained the vote in 1949, “life options for women continue to be curtailed by domestic and family responsibilities, [and] female sexuality [is still] exclusively linked to marriage and procreation” (Molina 128).¹⁶ In other words, despite the increasing integration of women into public life, the gender gap has yet to narrow regarding issues such as employment opportunities, wages, and promotions. In the 1970s right-wing women mobilized to protest the rationing during Salvador Allende’s government. After 1973, women’s protests focused on the whereabouts of the disappeared and the abuse of human rights (Sánchez Korrol 99).¹⁷ In the 1980s, “poverty, massive unemployment, and a greatly diminished industrial sector [...] forced women, especially the growing urban working-class poor, to join the ranks of street vendors, beggars, and prostitutes.” Thus, women devised popular economic organizations (*organizaciones económicas populares*), in which they would “knit together, make [*arpilleras*], collect and sell old clothing, tend collective gardens, and operate the hundreds of *ollas comunes*” (Chuchryk 154).¹⁸ As in other countries, women’s chances to influence decision-making processes are minimal unless affiliated to a political party, so the current rearticulation of gender equality as democratization has not only allowed for the incorporation of gender issues into political and institutional life but also influenced policy-making (Molina 137). Finally, and very much like in neighboring countries, at present “women from diverse ideological backgrounds and located in different

positions (government, political parties, institutions, social and labor organizations, entrepreneurs and artists), adopt progressive views and share ideas on equality whilst *not defining themselves as feminists*” (Molina 136, italics mine).¹⁹

México

In the early 1970s, “Mexican feminism focused on women’s rights, borrowing much from the Euro-American feminist’s demands” (Marcos, *Borders* 82). As their Latin American peers, Mexican feminists were disenchanted Marxists. However, feminists soon discovered that working-class women often reproduced hegemonic ideology insofar as they considered the double shift and sexual harassment private concerns and they resisted the complicity of male workers and/or trade union leaders in their oppression. According to Marta Lamas, social class and the extended family undermined the feminist struggle in México, because middle-class women usually have a maid, and lower-middle class women tend to count on other family members to assist them with household chores and/or childcare (114–15). Other factors include, “the lack of a tradition of political mobilization, [...] the widespread influence of the Catholic Church, political and cultural *machismo*, and the paucity of independent [...] trade unions” (113–14). In 1976 the *Coalición de mujeres feministas* presented the first law project on voluntary maternity, which allowed the feminist movement to be defined as a social force (Marcos, *Borders* 83). The “first assistance center from women victims of rape and sexual violence was created” in 1977. In 1979 FINALDIM [*Frente nacional por la liberación y los derechos de las mujeres*] formed a coalition with *Unión nacional de mujeres* [...], activists from Left[ist] parties, elite women from the PRI [...], members of lesbian groups, mothers of the disappeared and political prisoners [...], trade unionists and factory workers, organized urban poor, and peasants.” Despite the difficult negotiations, “since then, the main issue within the Mexican feminist movement has been how to coordinate the rights of the dispossessed with specific women’s rights” (Marcos, *Borders* 83–84).²⁰

Perú

The transition between the 1970s and 1980s was hard for most Latin American countries. While the Southern Cone was hard hit by military coup d’états and the neoliberal policies they instituted, Perú was experiencing a different type of military rule because it was influenced by the non-aligned movement of the period, which emphasized equality for peasants, urban marginals, and workers in the formal and informal sectors. Ironically, not only did the military grant women suffrage, they also passed the Educational Reform Act of 1972, which called for the revaluation of women’s dignity and roles in the school system. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education established a Technical Committee for the Advancement of Women (*Comité*

técnico para la revaloración de la mujer-COTREM), which in conjunction with the UN Decade for Women led to “an increased commitment to changing the status of women, expressed in the creation of the National Commission for Peruvian Women (*Comisión nacional de la mujer Peruana*—COMAMUP), which in turn was to promote women’s development projects and to [...] present recommendations in the fields of health, education, and agriculture, so as to ensure that the respective ministries would incorporate women’s interests into their programs (Anderson 81). However, these strategies failed due to the multiple agendas of administrators, the lack of women’s grassroots organizations, “the limited scope of their projects, and the low level of gender awareness in their demands” (Anderson 82). Other than this gesture from above women’s organizations were scarce. The few feminist groups in Lima “tended to focus on consciousness raising and promoting ideological change [but] they had very little policy vision” (Anderson 82). Finally, as in the previous cases, disenchantment with discriminatory attitudes in Leftist parties led “educated middle class [and] committed political militants, [to feminism] with a heavy burden of guilt for having seemingly abandoned the poor masses to their fate and for having weakened and divided the leftist movement” (Anderson 82–83). Ironically, during Alberto Fujimori’s decade in power (1990–2000), women witnessed the creation of a “Ministry of Women and a Public Defender for Women. [In addition,] Congress passed a law against domestic violence and a quota law that obliged political parties to present women candidates [...] in races for local and Congressional office.” Loyal women were not only visible in his administration, but they made up his last “Governing Council of Congress” (Barrig 47). The fact that “an authoritarian regime, which steadily chipped away at democratic rights” was so sensitive to gender led to a coalition of “feminists, allied with human rights activists, leaders of grassroots organizations, housewives, political party militants and students [to denounce] government measures that seemed to fulfill feminist objectives.” Indeed, they argued, “for feminism, the boundary between ethics and negotiations is marked by respect for democratic values” (Barrig 47–48).²¹

II. Neoliberalism and Globalization

“Neoliberal policies of stabilization, liberalization, and privatization” have significantly increased the feminization of poverty (Chinchilla, *Protesta* 254–55).²² Indeed, in the Andean region thousands of “indigenous, shantytown and peasant women [are being relegated] to daily-life conditions typical of the end of the Nineteenth Century” (Barrig 50). The impact of neoliberalism may be explained in terms of the tension between progressive

views of political development, which focus on “social justice, political equality [...], environmental justice” and the goal of economic development, which is to strengthen the global capitalist market, since “neoliberalism requires and thrives on inequality” (Schutte, *Feminism* 185). In Latin America, Neoliberal policies led to the spiraling of the national debt. While the IMF eroded state sovereignty by imposing structural adjustments, the forced lifting of tariffs dealt a fatal blow to domestic manufacture and agriculture, since Latin American countries could neither compete against more developed technologies nor against U.S. heavily subsidized agricultural products. Unemployment soared. In 2001 capital flight turned a high percentage of the Argentine middle-class into “nuevos pobres” (Minujin and Kessler).²³ Finally, the privatization of infrastructure (hospitals, highways, gas refineries, water treatment plants, transportation), which ultimately did not ensure adequate maintenance, contributed to the general deterioration of the standard of living (Trigo, Stiglitz, Sáenz). In sum, globalization comes to Latin America as an after-effect of neoliberal policies, arrived at by trade agreements or imposed by force, as in the case of the military dictatorships of the Southern Cone (Feijóo 74). While the “disposable women” of México’s *maquiladoras* embody its aftereffect (Wright), the widespread “feminization of poverty” made feminists take more of an activist role (Gargallo 153; Lavrin, *Women* 523).

The globalization of feminism is evident in the hegemonic reproduction of knowledge (*transculturación*) and the proliferation of “expertas en asuntos políticos de las mujeres” (Gargallo 47).²⁴ In terms of the creation of “global experts,” Sylvia Marcos states:

In the late 1980s, some “North” feminists [felt] they could get funded by agencies if they had an office or a correspondent [...] in México and South America [...]. I was invited [...] to try to build this international organization where I was for several years a board member and a representative [...]. Around 1993 when it started to develop into an institutional organization [...] the spirit of the movement [...] change[d]. [...] I was becoming a native instrument [...] they wanted [...] me [...] to operate like an American with a Mexican face and Mexican language. (*Conversation*, 144–45)²⁵

As in the rest of Latin America, the standard of living fell drastically in Perú, leaving about half of its population living in poverty or abject poverty. With the deterioration of its economy Perú “became one the [main] targets of international cooperation. Its NGO sector grew from some 30 or 40 groups in 1976 to some 700 in 1990;” however, only about one fifth of them specialized in projects with women (Anderson 80; 83). Yet, the NGO experience in Perú would prove paradigmatic. As in many other instances in Latin America, the “model of action was small-scale, short-term, directed at

immediate needs, implemented in poor neighborhoods or, less frequently, rural communities, heavily weighed towards training (*capacitación*), and funded by international cooperation agencies” (Anderson 84). Many projects collapsed because little effort was devoted to secure the commitment of local or government resources. Setbacks also arose from the lack of understanding between promoters and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the intervention of NGOs slowed up policy making not only because, “the long-impact effect of these interventions could not be demonstrated [but more importantly because] national policies were relegated until the results were in” (Anderson 84).²⁶ Since international funding dried up, the situation was more critical in the 1990s. Attitudes also changed. In Women’s NGOs involved in large-scale projects funded by the Interamerican Bank and USAID the solidarity effort to build a cross-class political and cultural movement has been superseded by the arrival of technical advisors. Moreover, gender equity is “increasingly invisible as an objective, both at the level of official discourse and action” (Anderson 93).²⁷

In sum, while governments incorporated items of the agenda feminists had been working on:

the very creation of governmental and intergovernmental institutions dealing with ‘women’s issues,’ the proliferation of legislation targeting women, and other forms of institutionalization of the feminist transformational agenda during the 1980s generated increased demand for extragovernmental institutions that could produce specialized information about women’s status to be more readily and effectively ‘fed into’ the policy process—something that the autonomous feminist groups [...] guided by the more informal, anti hierarchal, functionally undifferentiated ‘feminist culture’ [...] would have been hard pressed to accomplish. (Alvarez, *Latin* 306)²⁸

However, Alvarez concludes that, “the NGOization and transnationalization of the Latin American feminist field appear[s] to have led increasing numbers of feminists to privilege some spaces of feminist politics; such as the state and the international policy arenas, over efforts to transform prevailing representations of gender, emphasize changes in consciousness, and promote cultural transformation through local grassroots-oriented organizing and mobilizing activities” (*Latin* 315). Therefore, the victory would be in fact Pyrrhic, since “the cultural-ethical dimension of the foundational feminist transformational project might [not only] be increasingly neglected by growing numbers of feminists [but also] ignored (and ultimately silenced) by dominant political, cultural, and economic institutions” (Alvarez, *Latin* 315).

III. National and International Conferences

Whereas Latin American feminists participated in and organized international conferences as early as the 1910 First International Feminine Congress in Buenos Aires (Lavrin, *International* 520),²⁹ the global scope of feminism may be traced back to the second wave (1970s–80s), and particularly to the effect of national and international conferences. Among national events, the twenty-second *Encuentro nacional de mujeres* (note, not *feminista*), held in Córdoba, Argentina, October 13–15, 2007, was inaugurated with the traditional slogan, “Revolución en las camas, en las casas y en las plazas.” Thirty thousand women met to discuss historical demands such as sexual freedom, legal and safe abortion, violence against women, and damaging stereotypes. Their green kerchiefs symbolized the demand for contraceptives (Dillon).³⁰ The periodic Latin American and Caribbean feminist encuentros held in Bogotá, Colombia (1981); Lima, Perú (1983); Bertioga, Brazil (1985); Taxco, México (1987); San Bernardo, Argentina (1990); Costa del Sol, El Salvador (1993); Cartagena, Chile (1996)³¹; Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic (1990); Playa Tambor, Costa Rica (2002); and Serra Negra, Brazil (2005), provided an “arena for collectively re-imagining feminism and its relationship to a wide range of struggles for human dignity and social justice” (Alvarez et al 537). However, as Norma Chinchilla adds, they also “were an opportunity to negotiate region wide policy agendas and mobilizing strategies [since] the tight web of networks that developed among feminists and other women activists [made] cross-national and regional responses to economic and political changes increasingly viable” (*Protestas* 269).³²

Finally, the United Nations International Women’s Decade (1975–85), as well as the World conferences on Women in México (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995), fostered “Latin American feminists’ transnational ties” (Chinchilla, *Protestas* 269).³³ However, the rift between NGOs and the Latin American women’s movement was deepened at Beijing, because:

feminist NGOs [...] were called in as consultants by ECLAC and many national governments to provide ‘expert’ input into official preparatory documents. [Moreover, they] received (often sizable) grants from bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and private national and international agencies to organize Beijing-related activities, produce reports and publications. (Alvarez, *Latin* 308)

Consequently, this development led to a redrawing of boundaries between, “‘the bureaucratic-institutional movement’ versus ‘independent feminists;’ ‘the specialists’ versus ‘*las metafóricas*,’ ‘the *movimiento de mujeres*’ versus

'the movimiento de proyectos de mujeres' [...] 'las ongistas' [...] versus 'el movimiento'" (Alvarez, *Latin* 312).

IV. Literary Representations³⁴

One of the most recent developments of postmodernism is the focus on ethics. According to Zygmunt Bauman, moral phenomena are inherently nonrational insofar as they precede consideration of purpose. Moreover, given the postmodern ban on metanarratives, morality is *nonuniversalizable*. So, ambivalence defines human beings, and by extension, morality. Paradoxically, Bauman argues that being *for* the Other is the first reality of a self constituted on the basis of moral responsibility. Therefore, postmodern morality becomes "an ethics of self-limitation [based on] visualizing the consequences of action or inaction [in a context in which] uncertainty is neither dismissed nor suppressed, but consciously embraced" (Bauman 320–21). Like Bauman, Ewa Plonowska Ziarek endorses Emmanuel Levinas's notion of "anarchic obligation," that is, "a nonappropriative relation to the Other" (2), which defines freedom as an engagement in a transformative practice motivated by an obligation for the Other.

Similarly, a number of Latin American writers stress the fundamental need for responsibility to the Other. Albalucía Ángel's *Las andariegas* (1984) is perhaps the most radical in its creation of a social imaginary peopled by women, seeking to redress the wrongs brought about by the patriarchy. On the other hand, Julieta Campos's encyclopedic *La fuerza del destino* (2004) expands the initial critique of Batista's Cuba to the postrevolutionary Cuban social order. In *Como en la guerra* (1977), Luisa Valenzuela stresses the need to transcend the traditional divide between Buenos Aires and the rest of the country, striving for equality for all Argentines. Her *Cola de lagartija* (1983), *Novela negra con argentinos* (1990), and *La travesía* (2001) also emphasize the need for personal and collective accountability as part of our responsibility for the Other. Focusing on the immigrant experience, Alicia Steimberg's *Cuando digo Magdalena* (1992) insists on accountability as she suggests that political engagement requires casting narcissism aside. Alicia Borinsky calls for responsibility to the Other by tackling the obstacles of populism and demagoguery in *Mina Cruel* (1989), and the corruption of neoliberal Peronism (Menem's administration) in *Sueños del seductor abandonado* (1995). The message of Brianda Domecq's *La insólita historia de la Santa de Cabora* (1990), Ana Teresa Torres' *Doña Inés contra el olvido* (1992) as well as Diamela Eltit's *Lumpérica* (1983), *Por la patria* (1984), and *Mano de obra* (2002) is similar. Responsibility for the Other involves acknowledging the rights of African and indigenous—Mayo, Mapuche—populations marginalized by

race and ethnicity as well as class. While Carmen Boullosa's *Son vacas, somos puercos: filibusteros del mar Caribe* factors gender in, we ought to note that these populations are alienated by liberal notions of justice and economics that ultimately do not redress social wrongs but rather deepen the chasm between the rich and the wretched of the earth. By striving for responsibility to the Other all of these writers coincide in positing variations of a postmodern ethics of dissensus.

V. Communities of Dissensus

According to Ziarek, *dissensio* refers to “the irreducible dimension of antagonism and power in discourse, embodiment, and democratic politics, [as well as] the carnal implications of *sensus* in its double significance: meaning and sensibility” (1). Ziarek also emphasizes an “ethos of becoming,” which involves “the task of resistance to power and, second, the transformation of the negative thought of resistance into a creation of the new modes of being” (15). Superseding the modernist notion of continuous progress, Ziarek construes becoming as discontinuous, thus shifting, “the concern with the universal norms of ethical behavior to the task of transforming the subjective and social forms of life beyond their present limitations” (15). Along these lines, rather than being seen as an attribute of the subject, “freedom is conceptualized as an engagement in praxis” (15). Furthermore, “since subjective and social transformation occurs on the level of bodies, materiality, and power, the ethos of becoming contests the disembodied subjectivity of traditional ethics” (15). To define our terms, a community of dissensus is non-foundational insofar as it: “presupposes nothing in common, would not be dedicated either to the project of a full self-understanding or to a communicational consensus” but would rather seek to stress its differences (Readings 190). Campos's ethics of dissensus arises in the veiled critique of the dominant social order in her native Cuba. As the return of the repressed, hers is a postmodern ethics that abstains from offering a salvational metanarrative. Furthermore, as proven by her *¿Qué hacemos con los pobres?* (1996) she is the only one of the aforementioned authors to address the lot of the subaltern in practical terms. Finally, the self-sustaining projects launched by her husband's (governor González-Pedrero) administration (1982–87), which Campos recorded in *Tabasco: Un Jaguar despertado: Alternativas para la pobreza* (1996), were postmodern in terms of positing non-foundational micropolitics. In other words, the social critique implicit in *Muerte por agua* (1965) becomes an ethics of dissensus aligned with the poor that circles back to her essays on marginality in *Tabasco*. Valenzuela's ethics of dissensus is marked by a quest for freedom, and the role of sexuality as a path to transcendence. Domecq's novel

portrays organic communities of dissensus inclusive of subjects marginalized by race and ethnicity, social class, and gender. While Eltit focuses on the poor, the homeless, and those marginalized by dominant society, hers is an ethics of dissensus based on resistance. By placing Africans, aborigines, and women at the center of the narrative, Boullosa's ethics of dissensus undercuts the egalitarian nature of the filibuster's brotherhood, suggesting that their liberating communal ideology replicated the imperialistic position of the Spaniards, given their racist attitudes on the extermination of the natives and their endorsement of African slavery. But it was sexism that finally did them in. Women are barred from Tortuga so as to avoid unleashing the inherent selfishness of private property.

VI. Splintered Subjectivities in Fiction

The "de-centering" of the unified subject is perhaps the fundamental paradigm shift ushered in by Postmodernism (Hutcheon 159). From a post-structuralist perspective, subjectivity is "precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon 33; Flax 108).³⁵ However, Butler notes:

It is clearly not the case that "I" preside over the positions that have constituted me, shuffling through them instrumentally, casting some aside, incorporating others [...] The "I" who would select between them is always already [...] *constituted* by [...] these "positions" [which] are not merely theoretical products, but fully embedded organizing principles of material practices and institutional arrangements, those matrices of power and discourse that produce me as a viable "subject." (*Contingent* 9)

Along these lines, Tuija Pulkkinen argues that envisioning, "a community [...] without the linkage of knowledge and a program; [...] without the national or global dream of total self-command; the full reflectivity of the communal subject, complete knowledge of the ego" and so on, paradoxically depends on instituting an anti-essentialist identity discourse (114). In other words, it hinges on the possibility afforded by the postmodern construction of subjectivity. Thus, the awareness of the social constitution of identity is complemented by "an awareness of the constant shifting and changing of this nonhomogenous identity and its inner fractions, to the extent to which it becomes, as an identity, completely contingent" (137).

In *Tiene los cabellos rojizos y se llama Sabina*, Campos constructs a shimmering hall of mirrors by reflecting Emile Benveniste's split between the subject who enunciates and the subject of the utterance on the diegesis.

Indeterminacy increases as we try to sort out the identity of the protagonist, given that the subject positions are interwoven. Similarly, in Steimberg's *Cuando digo Magdalena*, the interchangeability of roles loosens anthropocentric moorings, allowing us to think of the text as both counterpoint and chorale—an articulation of different subject positions whose anthropomorphic traits result from the difference and deferral inherent in the game. The slippage between subject positions reappears in Boullosa's novel (“Oexmelin,” “Esquemelin,” “Alejandro Oliverio Esquemelin,” “Jean Smeeks” and “El Trepanador” 13). But perhaps Boullosa's main accomplishment is the deployment of aporias—unresolvable paradoxes—arising from the creation of a fantasmatic narrator slipping between different subject positions, coupled with an emphasis on the body as a measure of all things, in turn put under erasure by being subjected to unimaginable torment: torture, rape, cannibalization. In Borinsky's novels the protagonist's avatars are manifestations of a nomadic subject in constant metamorphosis. As in Valenzuela's *Como en la guerra*, the construction of subjectivity is anchored on the notion of performance. In other words, these texts share the traits of performative writing insofar as Pollock defines “the subject-self in/ as the effect of a contingent, corporeal, shifting, situated relation [...] between the writer and his/her subject(s), subject-selves, and/or reader(s)” (86). Or, according to Homi Bhabha, “As a result of its own splitting in the time-lag of signification, the moment of the subject's individuation emerges as an effect of the intersubjective” (185). Coinciding with Wittig, Ángel deploys a feminine plural pronoun to create a sense of a plural subject, purportedly inclusive of all female figures mentioned in the text. Similarly, in *Lumpérica*, the marginal people are presented as a collective subject, “Muestran sus cuerpos que no plantean diferencia entre unos y otros” (8). Yet, the canonical collective subject is that of *testimonios*. Doris Sommer notes, “en lugar de ser una persona inimitable, Rigoberta es una representante, no diferente de su comunidad sino diferente [de] nosotros.” Therefore, the “plural” or “collective subjectivity” of *testimonios*, “es la traducción de una pose autobiográfica hegemónica a un lenguaje colonizado que no iguala identidad con individualidad” (*Sin* 141–42). However, Ziarek stresses the ethical and political significance of sexuality and embodiment and wonders “whether obligation based on respect for alterity and accountability for the Other's oppression can motivate resistance and the invention of new modes of life” (2), especially given the internal conflicts within the subject. Thus, in Eltit's *Lumpérica* collective social transgression coupled with references to sexuality and the protagonist's masochistic cutting and burning reinforce the embodied nature of subjectivity, as well as the intrinsic allegory of the social body. Like Borinsky and Eltit, Ángel not only succeeds in reminding us of the embodied nature of subjectivity but also explores fluid women-centered sexual relationships (129).

VII. Splintered Subjectivities and Negotiation

The previous literary examples assume a splintered subjectivity, interpellated and constructed by different cultural discourses; however, in real life, a politics of location subtends rapprochement. Adrienne Rich's coinage refers to "a way to examine the implications of one's standpoint in shaping political perspectives and knowledge, and to explore alternatives to the homogenizing tendencies of global feminism" (Amireh 9). Yet, in order to avoid appropriation, theorists such as Lata Mani, Mohanty, and Spivak advocate for redefining location as "a question of both 'where we speak from and which voices are sanctioned' [to] acknowledge boundaries, [...] as the sites of historical struggles" (Amireh 12). Consequently, "a transnational feminist politics of location [...] identifies the grounds for historically specific differences and similarities between women in diverse and asymmetrical relations, creating alternative histories, identities, and possibilities for alliances" (Kaplan 139).³⁶ Conversely, Seyla Benhabib's strategy for negotiation is based on a model of communicative rationality defined as "a post-Enlightenment defense of universalism, [which] would be interactive [...] cognizant of gender difference [...] and contextually sensitive" (4). Furthermore, it would be aware of "those contingent processes of socialization through which an infant becomes a person, acquires language and reason, develops a sense of justice and autonomy, and becomes capable of projecting a narrative into the world of which she is not only the author but the actor as well" (5). Finally, Rita Felski notes that, "anchoring truth claims in the practices of discursive communities makes it clear that such communities rely on specific norms, values, and background assumptions that will shape the way they think" (201). Yet Felski adds two provisos:

the feminist public sphere is not unified but rather differentiated and fractured by the locations and specific contexts within which feminist activity takes place [and] it does not exist alongside other forms of language and knowledge, but shapes and is shaped by them [hybridity]. [Therefore] rather than a radical incommensurability of paradigms, of 'male' and 'female' discourses that can only speak past each other, we can more accurately speak of degrees of family resemblance between sets of norms and assumptions that both overlap and diverge. (201)

However, as proven by the FARC's assassination of Menominee Native American Ingrid Washinawotak El Issa, "Flying Eagle Woman" (1957–1999), and its kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt, even for savvy political

figures negotiation between First and Third World realities is fraught with danger. Washinawotak seems to have been severely ill as a consequence of a spider bite, so her assassination precluded investigation into the denial of medical attention to a woman. As a Native American and an activist engaged in the Pan/Native American issues, Washinawotak was providing educational assistance to the U'wa, and thus contributing to their cultural resilience. Finally, as an environmentalist Washinawotak was encouraging U'wa resistance, given the fact that they were being harassed for defending their land, rich in oil wells, from international petroleum explorations, and especially for preventing Occidental from drilling. So, despite her multiple positionalities, the FARC appear to have interpreted Washinawotak's presence as confirmation of her involvement with the CIA. Thus, her assassination was to be read as a statement against North American interference (Wollock 11–31). Similarly, Colombian Senator, anti-corruption activist, and Presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt's (1961–) misreading of the FARC resulted in her kidnapping on February 23, 2002.³⁷

VIII. Latin American Feminisms

While feminism may be defined as, “la erradicación del sexismo en los niveles ideológico y práctico de la experiencia con el concomitante acceso e incremento del poder de la mujer” (Castro-Klarén 28), or as “a countercultural proposal for a new democratic political culture that is inclusive, with ever expanding boundaries” (Vargas, *Women's* 50), Latin American feminism is a heterogeneous phenomenon. Its hallmark may be women's willingness to take part in the armed struggle—the independence wars, the Mexican Revolution, Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador.³⁸ They also joined the insurgency in the Southern Cone and Brazil, and more recently in Perú.³⁹ Their involvement in the Chiapas uprising demonstrates their continued commitment, for approximately thirty percent of the Zapatistas are women (Marcos, *Border* 93). In addition to the impact of the Left, including Liberation theology, Latin American women's movements have also benefited from the ethical imperative of the ideology of motherhood. The violation of human rights led to the emergence of a number of organizations similar to the Argentine *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in Chile, Guatemala, México and El Salvador.⁴⁰ In sum, despite ideological differences about the means and ends of each insurrection, and at the risk of alienating some readers, these uprisings could be broadly defined in terms of struggles for basic human rights.

From a Latin American standpoint, the term “feminism” carries negative connotations. Thus, at the turn of the century, Alvina Van Praet de Salas recommended that, “the use of the alarming word ‘feminism’ [...] be

avoided in Argentina [given the coalition members's unanimous rejection of] what seemed to them the anti-religious nature of the feminist movements in the United States and Britain" (Carlson 93).⁴¹ For socialist Alicia Moreau de Justo, "feminism [...] is a particular form of the struggle against capitalism and social injustice," therefore women liberate themselves alongside men and not against them (Sánchez Korrol 84). Similarly, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, ideas on women's liberation in the Southern Cone, included "the reaffirmation of the need to obtain women's legal, social and economic equality; the extolment of [women's] intellectual abilities; support for their association to act on behalf of the needs of their own sex, respect for motherhood and the family, and a concern with female sexuality" (Lavrin, *Ideology* 25). Finally, during the 1970s, "'feminismo' [was defined as *la*] 'doctrina social que tiende a aumentar los derechos sociales y políticos de la mujer'" (Calvera 111). Though the plurality of women's experiences precludes generalizations, at present, very few Latin American women would define themselves as feminists, unless they have institutional ties to Gender Studies, to women-centered collectives (such as *Brujas* in Argentina), or to North American based NGOs, given the stigma that arises from its "Lesbian" and "American" connotation.⁴²

In contradistinction with Anglo-American or French feminism, the main feature of Latin American feminism is that women "become the organic intellectuals of the emergent movements [and succeed in] aligning gender politics with other forms of struggle without subordinating gender issues [nor] sacrificing politics" (Franco xxiii).⁴³ Similarly, Amy Kaminsky, who stresses Latin American feminism's "revolutionary edge" and "belief in the efficacy of political intervention," compares it to "black and Latina feminism in its political and economic urgency, its multiple allegiances, and questioning the effects of the hegemonic universalizing of the notion of woman" (26).⁴⁴ Thus, foreshadowing Butler's "efforts to relate the problematics of gender and sexuality to the tasks of persistence and survival" (*Undoing* 4), Latin American women's activism "emerges from daily life situations [...] characterized by exploitation, pain, suffering, struggle, and marginality" (Stephen 6). Consequently, "in most Latin American countries, feminists initially gave higher priority to working with poor and working-class women active in the larger movement, helping women organize community survival struggles while fostering consciousness on how gender roles shaped their political activism" (Sternbach et al 402). However, their success in obtaining governmental positions in the 1980s and 1990s has resulted in divisiveness. While "políticas" or "institucionalizadas," believe that insertion into the political system leads to improve women's predicament, "autónomas" fear co-optation.

IX. Ethics

From an ethical perspective, feminists in the Americas should attempt to understand the Weltanschauung of the first to be “Othered”—its native peoples—because hegemonic society continues to misunderstand them. In her address to the Mexican congress on March 29, 2001, Comandanta Esther articulated the Mesoamerican belief in the sacredness of the earth: “*Queremos que sea reconocida nuestra forma de respetar la tierra y de entender la vida, que es la naturaleza que somos parte de ella*” (Marcos, *Border* 88). However, their veneration is usually “reduced to the right to own land or the right to inherit it [so that] land becomes a commodity” (Marcos, *Border* 89). Moreover, Marcos cites Klor de Alva on the interconnectedness that results in a form “of human collectivity with hardly any individuation” (55), only to add that as the world “is within them and even ‘through’ them [...] the ‘I’ cannot be abstracted from its surroundings. [And] the permeability of the entire ‘material’ world defines an order of existence characterized by the continuous transit between the material and the immaterial, the inside and the outside” (Marcos, *Border* 89). Similarly, since the Mesoamerican worldview is based on the balance of different elements, “*caminar parejo, la paridad*” means “working toward a just relationship with their men” rather than the Western notion of equality (Marcos, *Border* 90). Finally, the Zapatista, “Leading we obey” [“*mandar obedeciendo*”], a saying of the Chiapas Tojolabal Mayan Indians which means “our authorities receive orders” from the collective communal “we,” is misunderstood by Mexican dominant society, because they assume that the spokespersons are the leaders (Marcos, *Border* 91).

X. Politics

According to Butler, “if, following Foucault, we understand power as forming the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are” (*Psychic* 2). However, to the extent those women are interpellated “on the basis of an identity [...] which restricts their rights and confines their engagement to traditional roles [...] their incorporation into paid labor [will] not [generate] changes” (Molina 138).⁴⁵ Ironically, since “[f]eminist theory has insisted that the recognition of women as social actors should not be matched by access to power” (Molina 135), “women are faced with a dilemma from the start: they must work to improve the position of women within the existing social and

political order whilst at the same time aspiring to destroy this order and build a new one” (Lamas 124).

Yet, as Mabel Piccini forcefully argues, access to employment and participation in the public realm has not increased women’s awareness of discrimination (273). Instead, (and I would add, in addition) women need to focus on ways of conceptualizing social reality, and particularly, on articulating those theories in the realm of the political.⁴⁶ In this spirit, the following survey offers a number of possible approaches. According to Jutta Marx, “sólo la aceptación de la diversidad de los individuos hace posible reconocernos como pares, condición indispensable para la participación en igualdad” (22). Along these lines, Chantal Mouffe contends, “esta tensión entre la lógica de la identidad y la lógica de la diferencia hace que la democracia pluralista sea un régimen particularmente apropiado para la indeterminación de la política moderna” (11). However, she concludes, “la verdadera democracia pluralista debe verse como un ‘bien imposible,’ es decir, como algo que sólo existe mientras no se pueda lograr perfectamente. La existencia del pluralismo implica la permanencia del conflicto y del antagonismo; éstos no deberían considerarse como obstáculos empíricos que imposibiliten la realización perfecta de un ideal que existe en una armonía que no podemos alcanzar, porque nunca seremos capaces de coincidir perfectamente con nuestro ser racional” (12).

From a Latin American perspective, Cecilia Lipszyc suggests legitimizing women as social and political subjects through novel means such as the quota system, which allowed for greater political participation in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Despite acknowledging individual factors such as women’s subjection, and the impact of the unconscious, Lipszyc contends that women need to replace “la ideología autoritaria, la competencia destructiva, cupular, antidemocrática de nuestra sociedad y de nuestros partidos políticos” with solidarity and respect for difference. In addition to calling for horizontal practices that ensure that each individual meet collective responsibilities, Lipszyc concludes, “el objetivo sigue siendo la construcción de un gran movimiento social de mujeres que pueda, junto con los demás actores sociales colectivos del espacio popular, conformar un bloque alternativo de poder para construir un nuevo humanismo sin jerarquías ni desigualdades para las mujeres y para todas las personas” (14). Along these lines María Luisa Femenías argues that “women who wish to contribute to social change [...] must [...] generate new norms on the political level and produce substantive changes in practice” (134). In order to achieve this end, Femenías suggests counterpointing Amartya Sen’s and Alicia Gianella’s approaches to build a “network and [a] basis for gender negotiation” (134). For, while Sen’s “positional objectivity [assumes] a tacit appeal to the idea of equality [...] that is universal in a certain way, in[sofar as] the idea of ‘equivalence’ presses us to pay as much attention to irreducible particularity as to the normative level, [Gianella’s] reflexive

equilibrium permits connection of the normative aspects with concrete situations and experiences” (134). To conclude, Virginia Vargas invites feminists to engage with the World Social Forum, since it provides a utopian vision, and “alternative globalization project” (*Local* 40).

XI. Transnational Feminisms

“Transnational activism is based on the belief that many of the problems that women face today cannot be solved on the national level alone and that a globalized world calls for a globalized approach to women’s rights” (Chinchilla, *Protestas* 269). According to François Lionnet and Shu-Mei Shih, in methodological terms “the transnational [...] can be conceived as a space for exchange and participation wherever processes of hybridization occur and where it is still possible for cultures to be produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center” (5). However, these cultural critics posit a minor transnationalism, which “includes minor cultural articulations in productive relationship with the major [...] as well as minor-to-minor networks that circumvent the major altogether” (Lionnet and Shih 8). More importantly, and going against the grain regarding theories on multiple temporalities, they argue that as “new requirements of ethics become urgent, [...] the copresence of colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial spaces fundamentally blur the[ir] temporal sequence” (Lionnet and Shih 8). From my perspective, effective transnational feminist articulations/interventions hinge on an awareness of the struggles of the different social agents.⁴⁷ In other words, since “third-wave or locational feminism is characterized by a spatial rhetoric of multipositionality (attention to relational subjectivities), the politics of location, and the grammar of the geopolitical or transnational (Hesford and Kozol 15), [which emphasizes] effects of national identity in relation to international conditions” (Friedman 24), transnational feminists should follow a globalized model, based on the awareness of the socio-historical inscription of all interlocutors.⁴⁸ Therefore, insofar as, “el interés por la ética ha sido central para la teoría feminista latinoamericana [ya que] la idea de justicia social ha recorrido tanto la hermenéutica del derecho como la afirmación de un modo de pensar y de pensarse desde la denuncia de la doble moral sexo-social” (Gargallo 49), North American feminists would do well in pondering the political ramifications of the struggle for survival. For instance, in El Salvador, the *Dignas* “attempt to [...] draw women who do not necessarily share the[ir] feminist perspective is based on the recognition that women’s struggles for day-to-day survival, particularly those of *campesinas* and poor urban women, are also gendered, and must be part of the[ir—*Digna*’s] feminist agenda” (Ready 83).

XII. Inconclusive Conclusions

During the 1970s and 1980s Latin American feminists struggled for equal rights for women and economic redistribution. Despite regional differences, they challenged the system to institute “legal frameworks that put women’s rights on the same footing as universal human rights” (Barrig 50–51). Their relative success was reinforced by the UN World Conference of Women in Vienna, which recognized, “the full and equal participation of women in political, civic, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex [as] priority objectives of the international community” (Article 18). As we have seen, Latin American feminists have also been adamant about improving, “the miserable living conditions of women,” which include an increase in illiteracy and abject poverty, as well as in the number of single mothers and maternal deaths (Barrig 50–51). Poignantly, at the 22nd *Encuentro Nacional*, in Córdoba, Argentina, 2007, Marta González, a *Toba* single mother stated: “Con una sola olla comemos diez personas [...] Que nos devuelvan la tierra de nuestros abuelos, que los animales puedan ir a buscar agua y no se mueran en el alambre, que dejen de quitarnos todo” (Dillon).⁴⁹ In other words, González demands, “the right to self-determination [and to] pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Article 2), as well as the need to alleviate and eliminate “widespread extreme poverty” (Article 14).⁵⁰ Thus, much of the struggle of the Latin American women’s movement, including its feminist component, may be conceived as struggle for basic human rights.⁵¹

In terms of negotiating legal reform, Lourdes Arzipe contends that despite becoming “active subjects of social change” (xvi), mobilized Bolivian peasants, Chilean trade-unionists, mothers of the *Plaza de Mayo*, Aymara peasants in Bolivia and “leaders of poor neighborhoods and shanty towns in São Paulo, Lima, and other Latin American cities [...] traditional political organizations [...] continue to resist incorporating women’s multidimensional problems into their ideological schema [because] in the [Latin American] hegemonic political philosophies [...] the demands relating to the private sphere are almost by definition excluded from general political demands” (xvi–xvii). This exclusion is all the more paradoxical given that the current market’s progressive encroachment on private life undermines traditional social organization (Arzipe xvii). For instance, if the husband’s wages plummet due to the the market, and women are forced to seek employment while still complying with their role as mothers, they “will demand better social services, better urban infrastructure, better wages and more child-care facilities” (Arzipe xvii). Thus, Arzipe concludes that the

buoyancy of these movements should alert them to the appearance of a new “conception of what is political” (xviii).⁵²

Latin American women are currently involved in a variety of struggles against different forms of ethnic, political and economic discrimination.⁵³ For instance, in México the most prevalent issues appear to be those centered around EZLN, the teacher’s struggle in Oaxaca, and femicide in Ciudad Juárez. In Argentina, activism continues regarding state terrorism (*Madres, Abuelas, HIJOS*), the recent economic upheaval (*cartoneros, piqueteros, fábricas tomadas, subastas de tierras hipotecadas*) and the global networks of human trafficking (*trata de blancas*).⁵⁴ To conclude, and yet not to, we offer mirror images. On the one hand, “las feministas latinoamericanas han tendido al análisis de clases y al análisis antropológico para verse en una desgarrada identidad de mujeres en conflicto con y por la pertenencia de clases, etnias y distintos sistemas de valores” (Gargallo 49). On the other hand, “in this age of global, transnational, and diasporic ventures [Western feminism must adopt a postcolonial stance] to start experiencing the reality of its subaltern environment and the cultures of the peoples it has disenfranchised and continues to disenfranchise” (Schutte, *Cultural* 69). Therefore, whether evoking feelings of identification or solidarity, negotiating successful transnational feminisms depends on our responsibility toward the Other. From my perspective, this responsibility hinges on Braidotti’s notion of “glocalization.” Yet, in addition to calling for historical awareness, I believe that transnational feminisms depend on the simultaneous deployment of a number of strategies in order to ensure: gender awareness in grassroots movements, increased participation of women in policy making decisions, as well as the rearticulation of current political systems and practices, and last but not least, the continuity of the feminist epistemological revolution.

Notes

1. Translation of the Mapuche Sacred Song of the Wind: “es hermoso cuando viene / el viento de la tierra cordillerana / viene el viento del oeste / el viento del sur...” Beatriz Pichi Malen, Plata: *Canciones de origen mapuche*. Acqua Records: Argentina, nd.
2. This article arose from a generous invitation extended by Ana Forcinito and Joanna O’Connell to be a keynote speaker in a workshop on *New Directions in Latin American Feminism / Nuevas direcciones del feminismo latinoamericano* on April 21, 2007, at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
3. Marta Fontenla and Magui Bellotti cite the Bolivian collective Mujeres creando’s negative characterization of NGOs as “para-gubernamentales [...] intermediarias del movimiento de mujeres frente al estado” (81).
4. For a feminist genealogy encompassing both Europe and America, see Guerra-Cunningham.

5. Though progressive women considered that gender equality, referred to as “liberation” or “emancipation,” was “the logical evolution of the relationship between the sexes [...] significant numbers of women, as well as men, opposed such views, fearing that equality spelled the initial breakdown of home and family” (Sánchez Korrol 82).
6. On Bolten and Rouco Buela see Guzzo. For a summary of Argentine Feminism and the connection with plastic surgery, see Tompkins, *Maitena*.
7. Though in Puerto Rico women struggled through labor unions as early as 1901, between 1911 and 1916, union organizer and socialist Luisa Capetillo agitated for women’s emancipation and improvement of working-class conditions in her *Ensayos literarios, Mi opinión sobre las libertades, dereches de la mujer como compañera, madre y ser independiente* (Sánchez Korrol 90).
8. “The Women’s Party had an electric effect on the election [...]. Perón’s vote grew from 1.4 million or fifty-four percent in 1946 to 4.6 million or sixty-four percent in 1951” (Carlson 193).
9. U.F.A. members would discuss a topic from a personal standpoint and proceed deductively to arrive at generalizations about the state of their subjection (Calvera 37). U.F.A. members were labeled “guerrilleras,” “amargadas,” “lesbianas” (Calvera 47). For other feminist groups, see Calvera (45; 80–84).
10. U.F.A former members organized around the struggle for equal legal rights. On child custody see Calvera (74).
11. *The Madres* was “an organization based on nonviolence and on ethical principles [...] which called for a new social consensus on themes that united women of different political sectors and social classes” (Feijóo 74–76).
12. To compare figures regarding economics, demography, work, education, health, legislation and sociopolitical participation and advancement of women in Latin America, see Valdes and Gomariz. I am grateful to Zulema Moret for sharing the data as well as *Escombros*—her book on cultural social agents.
13. In Brazil as in Chile, “the political transformation of the Catholic Church [and] the rearticulation of the Left [were of paramount importance, as was the] regime’s perception of women’s movements as ‘apolitical’” (Alvarez, *Women’s* 60–61). On the condition of women in Brazil prior to the 1970s, and specifically on women’s participation in the armed struggle 1969–1974, see Teles.
14. Yet, the feminist critique of the 1970s, which “exposed the reality of gender inequality, domestic violence and racial prejudice” was productive because other political actors such as “the black movement, neighborhood associations, human rights groups, the gay movement, the movement of the landless [and] ecological groups, [would make similar claims based on] the concepts of equality and participation” (Pitanguy 100).
15. The NCWR withstood the Ministry of Justice’s campaign of intimidation and interference, which showed “the possibility and necessity of using power to transform the position of women [and the need to] resist the state when its agencies turn against the redefinition and extension of democracy” (Pitanguy 107–08).
16. Molina argues that the impact of conservative gender socialization is reflected on the demands of women’s from “social and popular organizations (income, health care, housing, social services, safety, etc.) as well as from some labor organizations (education, health)” (137).
17. On the role of the Catholic Church in Chile, the vicariate of Solidarity and *arpilleras*, see Sánchez Korrol (99).
18. For daily survival strategies as oppositional discourse, Chuchryk, 155.

19. Kirkwood's is still the canonical text on women and politics in Chile. For more information on women's movements in the Americas see Chinchilla Stolz, *Women's*.
20. Among successful interventions, Lamas mentions a bill aimed at establishing Specialized Units for Sexual Offenses, a joint effort between the National Women's Movement (*Movimiento nacional de mujeres*) and the Federal District's office of the Procuraduría de Justicia, which led to a coalition of feminists and women representing diverse political parties in 1989–90 (121). Another initiative was the creation of coalitions offered by the 1991 National Convention of Women for Democracy (*Convención nacional de mujeres para la democracia-CNMD*), insofar as it allowed for "bringing together party militants, feminists, and rural women" (Lamas 122).
21. On feminism in Perú, see Vargas, *Como* (32–84).
22. "Furthermore, the proportion of families headed by a female alone (now a quarter to a third of all Latin American households) or where there is male present who is unemployed is increasing throughout the hemisphere" (Chinchilla, *Protesta* 255).
23. A number of movies such as Burman's *Esperando al Mesías* and Gaggero's *Cama adentro* have been interpreted as allegories of the Argentine economic debacle.
24. Gargallo argues that Lamas' *Debate Feminista* and Gender Studies (Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género—PUEG) at the UNAM allow for the reproduction of U.S. feminism in México (103). To an extent, the center for Gender Studies at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and its journal *Mora: revista del Instituto Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Género de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Buenos Aires*, as well as *Feminaria* play a similar role in Argentina. On feminist publications in Argentina see Massiolo (107–39).
25. Ofelia Shutte notes "a decentering of the feminist movement and a much more far reaching effect of feminist ideals, as women influenced by feminist ideas but not totally defined by them increasingly occupy influential roles in society" (*Feminism* 192). For Gargallo the global feminism of the 1990s is synonymous with Postfeminism (48).
26. See Anderson on successful projects, such as the *comedores* and *vaso de leche*, which were introduced by city officials, depended on women's voluntary labor, and were increasingly supported by NGOs (84–89).
27. On the role of NGOs on matters of public policy such as Domestic Violence and Reproduction see Pitanguy (108–09).
28. However, the proliferation of NGOs has led to defining them as "functionally specialized, paid, professional staff and, sometimes, a limited group of volunteers; receive funding from bilateral and multilateral agencies and (usually foreign) private foundations; and engage in pragmatic strategic planning to develop 'reports' or 'projects' aimed at influencing public policies and providing advice [...] to the *movimiento de mujeres* and varied services to low-income women" (Alvarez, *Latin* 307). Conversely, "though sometimes engaging in similar *asesoría* and policy-oriented activities, the feminist movement is commonly understood to be made up of militants [...] they have largely volunteer and often sporadic participants [...], more informal organizational structures, and significantly smaller operational budgets; their actions (rather than 'projects') are guided by more loosely defined, conjunctural goals and objectives" (Alvarez, *Latin* 307–08). For a critique of NGOs see Mendoza.
29. Sánchez Korrol, who terms it, First International Feminist Congress, stresses solidarity with groups established in Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile (86). Though I have not stressed it, travel to Europe and to Uruguay played a significant

- role in international feminism. In addition to Europe, travel to and from Uruguay was important for anarchists.
30. Women at the *Encuentro* in Córdoba, stressed “Educación sexual para decidir, anticonceptivos para no abortar, aborto legal y gratuito para no morir” (Dillon).
 31. On the 1996 Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe, see *Brujas* 16.24 (March 1997) 41–82.
 32. On a characterization of Latin American women’s movements and the first “encuentros,” see Sternbach et al and Vargas (85–126). On recurrent controversial issues, since 1981 to 1996, see Alvarez et al. For a report on poverty, economic autonomy and gender equity in Latin America (1995–2000), see Montañó et al.
 33. Katherine Dreier, who purportedly traveled from New York to Buenos Aires in 1918–1919 to see Julieta Lantieri in action, mentions the close contact between suffragists in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. On the process leading to Beijing, see Olea, Grau & Pérez, as well as Vargas, *Feminismos*.
 34. Sections titled “Literary Representations,” “Communities of Dissensus,” and “Splintered Subjectivities in Fiction” have been loosely drawn from my *Postmodern Latin American Women Writers*.
 35. Based on W. E. B. Du Bois’s seminal work on “double consciousness” (1969 [1903]: 45), and a gendered and racial and ethnic standpoint, Norma Alarcón arrives at a similar position: “[M]any of *Bridge’s* writers were aware of the displacement of their subjectivity across a multiplicity of discourses: feminist/lesbian, nationalist, racial, socioeconomic, historical, etc.; [i.e.] a multiplicity of positions from which they are driven to grasp or understand themselves and their relations with the real” (356).
 36. Amireh mentions Kaplan, who in turn refers to Lugones.
 37. Washinawotak, an activist who purportedly saved Rigoberta Menchú Tum’s life by whisking her out of Guatemala (in the 1980s), was involved with the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. She had gone to Colombia to confer and counsel the U’wa community, who had closed “the missionary school when they realized it was distancing their children from the traditional culture” (Wollock 11). Washinawotak’s companions, Terence Freitas and Lahe’ena’e Gay were also kidnapped by the FARC; though the circumstances are far from clear, they were all murdered by the FARC (Wollock 11–31).
 38. On mestizaje and the multiplicity of gender identities in Latin America see Montecino (1996). On the Nicaraguan Women’s movement, see Isbester and Molyneux.
 39. Resentment has been identified as one of the causes of *Sendero Luminoso’s* struggle, insofar as the mainly mestizo students graduating from the Universidad de Huamanga were barred from the possibility of employment in contemporary Perú’s rigid (classist and racist) social system. See Tompkins, *Representations*.
 40. On the *Madres* in México, see Ibarra. On the variety of movements see Cañizares, and Lavrin, *Women*.
 41. In 1905 Elvira Rawson de Dellepiane founded the Feminist Center for “women’s groups interested in political and social reform. [But the Center did not prosper]. The NWC had warned her that the word ‘feminist’ would keep people away, and it did” After three months she [...] changed the name to the Manuela Gorriti Center [...]. For thirteen years the Center provided essential community services to women, and a meeting place for feminists” (Carlson 103).
 42. Material conditions are not overdetermining from a poststructural ethnic perspective, since the construction of subjectivity is conceived of as the “site of multiple

- voicings, that is, discourses that traverse consciousness, with which the subject must struggle with constantly” (Alarcón 365).
43. For overview on Castro Klarén, Castillo, Kaminsky & Franco’s discussion of Latin American Feminism, & the respective theoretical underpinnings see Brooksbank.
 44. See Sampaolesi and Lipszyc for similar critiques in Argentina.
 45. Similarly, Nelly Richard stresses “la reivindicación del sujeto como posición y estrategia del discurso no tiene por qué desligarse del análisis material de cuales son las condiciones de significación y poder en las que concretamente se articulan y desarticulan las políticas de la igualdad” (87).
 46. On cultural agency see Sommer (*Cultural*) and Moret. The mantra: class, race/ethnicity, has been superseded by an emphasis on the plural, multicultural, pluriethnic character of Latin American societies and women’s movements. Thus, the “unity-in-difference” of Latin American feminisms allows for multiple political positions, including black feminism, lesbian feminism, popular feminism, Christian feminism, and ecofeminism (Alvarez, *Latin* 302; 317; 300).
 47. While Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Trip define “the intersection of the international and the local” as the transnational arena as (vii), I would define it as Glocalization. From a Postcolonial perspective Jaqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty also emphasize historicization, “central to our theorization of feminism is a comparative analysis of feminist organizing, criticism, and self-reflection; also crucial is deep contextual knowledge about the nature and contours of the present political economic crisis” (xx).
 48. Lionnet and Shih mention Hesford and Friedman. Issues mentioned by other women attending the twenty-second *Encuentro* included, “machismo en la facultad,” the struggle of migrant (Peruvian, Bolivian, Paraguayan) refugees to obtain basic rights, the need to change the legal system to ensure shared rights to ensure a decent dwelling in case the male partner leaves (Dillon).
 49. See the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. “The human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights” (Article 18).
 50. A similar point was made by Hernán Vidal in 1989.
 51. Lourdes Arzipe also concludes that rather than being “a theory on, by and for women, [feminism should be] a theory of society from the perspective of women” (xix). Sonia Alvarez concurs, the movement “see the world through the eyes of women” (*Latin* 299).
 52. Black women challenged “white middle-class feminism” in the 1980s and coalitions of women of color did so in the 1990s. On both occasions, they referred to the racial/ethnic and economic discrimination they endured, together with their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons.
 53. Gargallo retraces the conflict between “las feministas de lo posible, o institucionalizadas, y las feministas autónomas o utópicas” (47) to internal struggles between women centered on the family vis-à-vis radical feminists. On worker run factories in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, and particularly the case of the Zanon Ceramics factory, see Zibechi.
 54. On human trafficking, see *Trata*.

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