A Manifesto in Four Themes*

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Theme One: The Centrality of the Question of Gender

Throughout the Americas, an emphasis on the ideal of the family, defined as the subject of rights to be defended at all costs, has galvanized efforts to demonize and punish what is called "the ideology of gender." The spokesmen of the historical project of capital thus offer proof that, far from being residual, minor, or marginal, the *question of gender*—the patriarchal order—is the cornerstone and center of gravity of all forms of power.

If the benign decade of "multicultural democracy" did not alter the workings of the capitalist machine,[1] but rather produced new elites and new consumers, then why was it necessary to abolish this democracy and decree a new era of Christian, familialist moralism, dubiously aligned with the militarisms imposed by fundamentalist monotheisms in other parts of the world? Probably because our antagonists discovered, even before many of us did, that the pillar, cement, and pedagogy of *all power* is patriarchy.

Masculinity rules by means of a primal and persistent pedagogy. It teaches the expropriation of value and consequent domination. The patriarchal, misogynist, homophobic, and transphobic violence of our late modernity—our era of human rights and of the UN—is thus precisely a symptom of patriarchy's unfettered expansion, even despite the significant victories that we have won in the field of discourse. This violence perfectly expresses the ascendancy of a world of ownership or indeed lordship, a new form of domination resulting from the acceleration of the concentration and expansion of a para-state sphere of control over life. In these crimes, capital in its contemporary form expresses the existence of an order ruled by arbitrary patriarchal impulse and exhibits the spectacle of inevitable institutional failure in the face of unprecedented levels of concentration of wealth and purchasing power.

The promulgation and social reinstatement of a militaristic patriarchal fanaticism—one that seemed to be gone forever—are now again indispensible to the historical project of the property

* This text is an edited and abridged version of the introduction to my 2016 book, *La guerra contra las mujeres*. The title "Manifesto" refers to the aphoristic character of the text, which gathers the conclusions of arguments elaborated during the course of two decades.

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owners. In Latin America, the "the ideology of gender" has recently appeared, a category in the service of accusations. In Brazil, there have even been several legislative proposals put forward by a movement called the Programa Escola sem Partido, or Program for a Non-Partisan School. One of these proposed laws would prohibit "the application of the postulates of the theory or ideology of gender" in education, as well as "any practice that could compromise, hasten, or misguide the maturation and development of gender in harmony with the student's biological sexual identity."[2] The extraordinary engagement with the field of "gender" on the part of the new right, represented by the most conservative factions of all churches—factions that are themselves representative of the recalcitrant interests of extractivist agribusiness and mining—is, at the very least, enigmatic. The truculent style and spirit of their arguments come close to something that we already know, because, with respect to women, they recall the patrolling and persecutory avidity of Islamic fundamentalism—that is, precisely the most westernized version of Islam, which emulates the West in its identitarian and racializing essentialism.[3] Are we not then witnessing the intent to impose and spread a religious war like the one that has been destroying the Middle East, exactly at a time when the political and economic decadence of empire makes war its only terrain of uncontestable superiority?

Theme Two: Patriarchal Pedagogy, Cruelty, and War Today

The phrase "sexual violence" is misleading, because although aggression is exercised *by sexual means*, the ends of this kind of violence are not of a sexual nature but rather are related to power. These are not, then, acts of aggression that originate in a desire for sexual satisfaction, which is always derived from a reciprocal exchange or *relation*. Here instead the libido seeks to obey a form of *masculine mandate* that demands constant proof that one belongs to the class of men.[4] The libido is used to secure belonging in the masculine brotherhood. The *three patriarchal abominations* leading to these crimes—*homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny*—originate in an interpretation of homosexuality, transgender, and overt, self-confident femininity that sees in them only contempt for the rule of masculinity, or for what I call the *masculine mandate*. Confirmation that one belongs to the class of men takes the form of a tribute that, through extortion, is transferred from the feminine to the masculine position, constructing the latter. Obedience to masculine rule, subservience to *the masculine mandate*, is thus, for both men and women, the first pedagogy of power. This hierarchical formation, marked by its lethality as the supreme value, is analogous to the order of gangs. The *violence of gender* is expressive and not instrumental: power is expressed, that is, exhibited and consolidated, as virile potency in a brutal form.[5]

Patriarchy, or relations of gender based on inequality, is the most archaic and persistent of humanity's political structures. This structure models the functioning of all inequalities of prestige and power in all spheres of life; we could even say that the structure is transposed into these spheres. Economic, political, colonial, and racial forms of supremacy are thus effectively replicas of the patriarchal order. It is for this reason that we are still in the stationary time of the *patriarchal prehistory of humanity*.[6] This is a historical and not a biological epoch, because it needs mythical narratives and moral precepts to be sustained.

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This structure is radically aggravated and transformed in a colonial-modern order that is lethal for women, an order that has its beginnings in the process of conquest and colonization. The simple hierarchy of a *low-intensity* or *low-impact patriarchy* in community life is interrupted by the colonial process, managed first by the overseas metropolis and later by the creole-governed republican states. During this process and transition, the explicit and low-intensity asymmetry of pre-colonial communities is transformed into a *high-intensity patriarchy*, in which women are extremely vulnerable.[7] The phrase "patriarchal-colonial modernity" adequately describes the priority of patriarchy as an appropriator of women's bodies and can thus serve as a name for this first colonial condition. The conquest itself would have been an impossible undertaking without the prior existence of this low-intensity patriarchy, which makes men docile before the example of triumphant, imperial masculinity. The men of the conquered communities would thus come to function as hinges between two worlds, divided in their loyalties: loyal to their people, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the rule of masculinity, modeled on the masculinity of the conquerors. Thus the indigenous man learns the white victors' predatory sexuality.

In this analysis, gender is the basic historical form or configuration of all power and, therefore, of all violence, since power is the result of an inevitably violent expropriation. Dismantling this structure very gradually will thus be the condition of possibility for any and every process capable of reorienting history and putting an end to the *patriarchal prehistory of humanity*. My claim for the precedence and universality of patriarchy is supported by the existence of myths, dispersed throughout the planet, that narrate a moment—certainly a historical moment, since if it were not historical it would not appear today in the form of a narrative—in which women are conquered, dominated, and disciplined, placed in a subordinate, obedient position. Not only the biblical story of Genesis but also countless indigenous origin myths recount the same recognizable story. In the case of Adam and Eve, the act of eating the apple led to their removal from the Edenic playground of unrestricted and incestuous pleasures, condemning them both to conjugality. Myths found on all continents, among the Xerente, Ona, Baruya, Masai, and others—including the Lacanian claim that woman "is" the phallus that man "has," read here as a history compressed into myth—speak to us of an event that is foundational, primal, common to numerous peoples. This may mark the transition to humanity, a moment in the phase when humanity as such is still emerging and still one, a moment prior to the dispersal of lineages and the proliferation of peoples. This would have been a moment during the era when the muscular prominence of males was transformed into political prominence: a moment during the long transition from the natural to the cultural—that is, the historical. Deep time has distilled what might be a historical account into a mythical synthesis.[8]

This primitive patriarchy founds all inequalities and expropriations of value, or of *the universal surplus that sustains the sexual capital of men* and supports the edifice of all powers, given that *potency* in some form—sexual, military, economic, political, intellectual, or moral—is the precondition for qualifying as virile. As long as we do not cause a definitive break in the hard rock-crystal structure that has stabilized the *patriarchal prehistory of humanity*, no significant change in the structure of society will be possible, precisely because it has proven not to be possible despite all the efforts we have made in the modern, juridico-institutional field. It has not been possible, in any historical instance, for us to accede to the state and then reorient history in order to guide it toward well-being

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of most people. This is because the politics of the state and the struggles over its control are indelibly patriarchal. The structure of gender asymmetry today remains the patriarchy instituted in the beginning of history. This patriarchy finds in the state its ultimate, concrete realization, and the state's persistence shows us the urgency of finding other forms of struggle.

With the process of conquest and colonization, a change exacerbated the originary hierarchical pattern. Man in the lower case, with his particular role and space in the tribal world, became Man in the upper case, the synonym for and paradigm of Humanity, subject of the colonial-modern public sphere. In keeping with the decolonial turn made by Aníbal Quijano's interventions in history and sociology,[9] I use the term "colonial-modern" to underscore the necessity of the "discovery" of America as the condition of possibility of modernity, as well as of capitalism. With this historical change in the structure of gender, the masculine subject became the model of the human and paradigmatic subject of enunciation in the public sphere—that is, of anyone and anything endowed with political capacity, general interest, and universal value. At the same time, the space of women, everything related to the domestic sphere, was emptied of politics, deprived of bonds of solidarity, alliance, and cooperation that characterized communal life, remade as marginal and the remainder of the political. The domestic sphere thus became associated with intimacy and privacy in a way that it had not been previously and still is not in communal spaces. It is with this change, that women's lives acquire the fragility that we know today. The vulnerability and lethality of these lives has only increased in the time leading up to the present.

The state and the public sphere result from the transformation of a particular space for men and their specific role—*politics* in the communal and inter-communal context, and later at the colonial front and in the national state—into a sphere that encompasses all of reality and highjacks everything that claims to be political. The genealogy of this all-encompassing "universal and public" sphere begins in a particular and specific space that belonged to men. This space was transformed through the imposition and expansion of colonial modernity into a sphere with a monopoly on the political. It is for this reason that we say that the state has patriarchy in its DNA. The *dual matrix* ruled by mutual reciprocity changes into the *binary modern matrix*, in which all alterity is a function of the One, and every Other has to be assimilated into a framework of universal reference. After this moment, every "other" will be an "other" with respect to the universal "one" of colonial modernity: black and Indian will be the "other of white"; woman will be "the other of man"; sexual practices considered non-normative will be "the other of heteronormativity"; and non-human species will come to be defined precisely by their "lack of humanity."

This change in hierarchical relations between masculine and feminine is accompanied by a transformation in the field and meaning of sexuality. Sexual access enters the universe of damage and cruelty and is contaminated;[10] it becomes not just the *appropriation* of bodies and their annexation *as territories*, but also their *damnation*, *their moral and physical destruction to secure the expropriator's triumph*. Conquest, pillage, and rape are associated not just as forms of appropriation, but as forms of damnation, and their association persists. Their correlation continued after the founding of the republics, and it continues in the present, when the assault on women's bodies in contexts of war has ceased to be a matter of collateral damage—as it was in conflicts ranging from tribal wars to wars between states, all of which encouraged the annexation and forced insemination of women treated as

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territories—and has instead become a strategic objective of "the new forms of war."[11] The pedagogy of masculinity and the masculine mandate proper to virile subjectivation exacerbate strategies of desensitization and lead to an overt *pedagogy of cruelty*, a practice of *expropriating jouissance* made to serve *appropriative greed.* The repetition of violence and cruelty produces an effect of normalization and thus leads to the low levels of empathy that are indispensable for predatory enterprises. Habitual cruelty is directly proportional to the isolation of citizens that results from their desensitization to the suffering of others and to narcissistic and consumerist forms of enjoyment. A historical project guided by the aim of forging bonds that might sustain mutual happiness turns into a historical project guided by the aim of acquiring things, by acquisition as a dominant form of satisfaction. While bonds produce community, things produce individuals, who are in turn transformed into things.

The current, apocalyptic phase of capital, characterized by a great acceleration in the concentration of wealth, leads to the downfall of the institutional fictions that previously offered a stable grammar for social life. No longer an era marked by the *inequality* that we used to discuss in the 1970s, ours is an era of ownership or *lordship*, a time of the *re-feudalization* of immense territories, including the last common spaces left on the planet, most of them inhabited by indigenous communities. It is precisely the association of sexuality with damnation that provides a language for the lucrative pacts signed and sealed in what, in an essay on Ciudad Juárez, I initially called a *second state*, and later, in an essay on new forms of war, a *second reality*. Because the masculine mandate, if it does not legitimate, definitely safeguards and conceals all the other forms of domination and abuse that proliferate in its breeding grounds. What I have said about Ciudad Juárez is thus also applicable to the logic of sexual trafficking and the reduction of women to the status of sexual slaves elsewhere: in this bleak, asphyxiating atmosphere, the corporate state seals pacts of complicity with corporate organized crime, and keeps all the secrets that sustain accumulation today.

Trafficking and sexual slavery in our time—different in several ways from the traffic of women to countries with large male immigrant populations during the first decades of the twentieth century—illustrate this idea, because their efficacy does not follow from the rate of material profit that is derived from them, but rather from what they obscure, from the pacts of silence and complicity that are sealed in their shadow. These are at once material and symbolic economies, in which women's bodies are a bridge between profit and the capacity to exercise jurisdictional domination. Sexual access secures the collusion of the owners and safeguards their right to injure with impunity. In trafficking and in femicides—and *femigenocides*—perpetrated by organized crime and in the para-state sphere that is expanding throughout the Americas, it is not just the materiality of women's bodies that is dominated and sold, but also their functional role in sustaining the agreements of those in power. It is for this reason that the trade in women, material and symbolic, is so difficult to abolish.

Undoubtedly, this plays a role in today's informal wars, in their "feminization" and the use of profanation, identified by various authors as a method for waging new forms of war. As part of my work as an anthropologist expert witness in the case of Sepur Zarco, Guatemala, where a group of Q'eqchi' Maya women had been subjected to sexual and domestic slavery, I showed how such a "method" for the destruction of the social through the profanation of the female body played an

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important role in the genocidal war waged by the authoritarian state in the 1980s. This strategy was indeed derived from the instructions in a war manual, a strategy that therefore had nothing to do with the hierarchical order of the low-intensity patriarchy proper to indigenous and peasant homes. The expressive power of this morally lethal war—which targeted women's bodies in a deliberate program, planned by strategists in their laboratories and surgically carried out through a series of orders—was evident. It sheds light on the role of women in gang wars and repressive wars, which expand the para-state's sphere of control over populations.

In times of functional and pedagogical cruelty, it is the woman's—or the child's—body that cruelty inscribes, because in the archaic imagination women and children are not the armed adversaries in war, but rather war's "innocent" bystanders. Since the elimination of these bystanders serves no utilitarian purpose, their bodies can be used as sites of inscription, to send a message. They serve as sacrificial victims, over whose bodies pacts of complicity are finalized, and power's control over bodies and territories is spectacularized. I have used the term *femigenocide* to name this kind of femicidal violence, which has a public character and is not a matter of personal relations. In order to acknowledge the intersections of various existing forms of oppression, discrimination, and lethal aggression—and in view of the statistics, reliable like *the evil queen's magic mirror*—we could honor the work of the great, prematurely deceased Black Brazilian thinker, Lélia Gonzalez, by creating a compound using her category *Amefricanity*,[12] and speaking of *Amefricafemigenocide.* We could also draw on the category *juvenicide*, used by Rossana Reguillo and other Mexican authors,[13] which would then give us *Amefricajuvenifemigenocide*, a term with which to designate a cruel and sacrificial form of execution, not utilitarian but rather expressive, in which power exhibits its arbitrariness and its jurisdictional sovereignty.

To summarize, then, the crimes of patriarchy express contemporary forms of power, the property owners' power over life, as well as the power of a persistent, violating, and expropriating *conquestiality*. This term is more accurate than *coloniality,* given that examples ranging from the repressive war in Guatemala, the situation on the Pacific coast of Colombia, or the killing of the Kaiowa Guaraní people in Mato Grosso, Brazil, among other places on the continent, prove that it is wrong to assume that the Conquest simply ended one day.

To the question of how to stop war, in the context of the contemporary informal military scenario that is spreading in Latin America, I have responded: by dismantling, with the collaboration of men and for their benefit, too, the masculine mandate. This means dismantling the patriarchy, because it is the pedagogy of masculinity that makes war possible and that offers to those who wage war the manpower, the *cannon fodder*, for military undertakings. Masculinity is structured like a corporation, and organized crime replicates this structure: a structure that values loyalty to the group and its members above all else, and that is internally hierarchical, so that obedience to superiors becomes imperative. Training in masculinity—where male socialization takes the form of an initiation into the male corporation—prepares men to enter other corporate organizations, including prestigious professions, the army, and organized crime.

Thus men's collaboration in women's politics would not be a matter of mere cooperation in women's struggles; still less would it be an offer of male "protection." Instead, such collaboration would be in men's interest, since it would let men free themselves from the "masculine corporation,"

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from the masculine mandate. Many men have begun to realize that our movement will in fact be capable of defending *them* against the morbid and decadent mandate to which they have been trained to submit. The masculine mandate, which is a form of rule by rape, has men as its first victims, since gendered violence is also intra-gender violence, among men.

Theme Three: What Hides the Centrality of Patriarchy as the Pillar that Sustains All Powers

What hides the centrality of relations of gender in history is precisely the binary character of the structure in which the *public sphere encompasses*, totalizes, and engulfs its *residual other*: *the domain of the private, the personal*. I am referring, in other words, to the binarism that separates the political and the extra-political in colonial modernity. This binarism leads to the existence of a universe whose truths are endowed with universal value and general interest, and whose discourse is imagined to emanate from a masculine figure, whereas this figure's *others* are endowed with only particular, marginal, and minor significance. The immeasurable gap between the *universal and central*, on the one hand, and the residual and *minoritized*, on the other, creates a binary structure that is oppressive and inherently violent in a way that other hierarchical orders are not. It is precisely because of this *mechanics of minoritization* in the binary structure of modernity that crimes against women and the feminine position in the patriarchal, colonial-modern imaginary have not been addressed by the law and have never been fully recognized as public.

In this sense, we could even venture the idea that the burning of witches in medieval Europe is not equivalent to contemporary femicides, but rather has a genealogical relation to these killings: the earlier executions represented a *public form of gendered punishment*, while contemporary femicides, although they take place in the midst of the uproar, spectacle, and settling of scores that characterize para-state wars, never manage to emerge from the private realm in which they are confined in the imaginary of judges, prosecutors, the media, and public opinion in general.

Modernity is a great machine for producing minoritizing anomalies of every kind, anomalies that then have to be filtered in the sense of being processed through the grid of universal reference and, in the language of multiculturalism, reduced, typified, and classified in terms of *iconized political identities*, in order to be reintroduced into the public sphere in this form—and only in this form. Everything that cannot be adapted to this exercise or charade, that cannot be made to fit into the matrix of the existent—which works like a great digestive process—becomes a placeless anomaly and is subject to expulsion, banished from politics. It is in this way that modernity, with its state born from a patriarchal genealogy, offers a remedy for the evils that it has itself introduced: it gives back with one hand, and in a degraded form, what it has taken with the other, and at the same time it revokes what it seems to offer. In this context, radical difference, which can neither be typified nor be made to serve the colonial-modern-capitalist pact, cannot be negotiated with, whereas it is, in fact, constantly negotiated with in the communitarian worlds of the Amefrican peoples of the Americas.

With its colonial preconditions and its patriarchal public sphere, modernity is a machine for producing anomalies and organizing purges: it stabilizes norms, quantifies punishments, catalogs pain, privatizes culture, archives experience, monumentalizes memory, essentializes identities, commodifies life, mercantilizes the earth, and levels temporalities.

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We must therefore unmask, in order to undo, the binarism that separates the public sphere from the private, minoritized space (the cell, home, or ghetto) in the colonial-modern matrix. This binarism replicates and is replicated in so many others, with the gender binary being the most often cited. We must make the public-private binary collapse, and we must give up our faith in a state that cannot be expected to break with its foundational constitution—that is, with its tendency to separate politics from the plurality of worlds and styles. This is especially true in Latin America, where the republican states founded by *criollo* elites represented not a break with the period of colonial administration, as the mythic historical narrative has made us believe, but rather a continuity in which the government, now geographically proximate, set itself up to inherit the territories, goods, and people that had previously belonged to overseas administrative powers. After the defeat of revolutionary fighters struggling for independence—those I call *rupturists*—by the *criollo* elites—whom I call *continuists*—so-called independence was thus nothing but the passing of these goods from there to here, while a fundamental aspect of the colonial state remained: the attitude or sentiment of the administrators was still external to what it administered. This exteriority, so typical of the colonial relation, persisted and led to an increase in the public sphere's distance from the people. The governed became inexorably marginal and remote, separated by a gap from an administration thus rendered fragile. Our states were designed so that the riches reclaimed from colonial powers could be appropriated by elite founders. Still today, this susceptibility to appropriation remains the state's most characteristic feature, so that when someone who does not belong to the elites enters into the orbit of the state, he becomes a member of the elite, and this is an inexorable effect of being part of an administrative apparatus that is always exterior to and imposed on populations. The crisis of civic faith thus becomes inevitable. In fact, the founding subject of our republics—that is, the *criollo*—is not the champion of democracy and sovereignty that history advertises, but rather a subject with five characteristics that secure his separation from the people and from life: he is racist, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, and speciesist.

It will be necessary to shake the *fantasy of the state*, *the fantasy of law*, the safe harbor and *terra firma* sustaining the patriarchal and state certainties that impede our advancement. It will be necessary, for example, to reexamine the unachievable, inclusive formula of human rights, "different but equal," which papers over the persistent, unassailable binary asymmetry in which a masculine subject who pretends to be universal prevails. It will be necessary to suggest instead "unequal but different," a formula based in the explicitly hierarchical structure of communitarian worlds, but radically pluralist. Such a formula would undoubtedly open a better path to a style adequate to women's politics. It will also be necessary to invert the feminist slogan of the 1970s, according to which "the personal is political." The paradoxical result of this slogan was a pious *faith in the state*, an investment in the achievement of victories in the state realm, in the achievement of more laws and public policies that could limit gendered violence in intimate contexts. The approach that I propose is not a translation of the domestic into public terms, or an insistence on rendering the intimate in the language of the public in order to achieve a measure of recognition by the politics of the state. I propose instead the opposite approach: *domesticating politics*, de-bureaucratizing it, humanizing it by transposing it into a domestic key, but where the "domestic" is re-politicized. The constant failures of the strategy of taking state power, whether by force or elections, in order to redirect history

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show that this cannot be the answer. We have never managed to reach our destination through the seizure of the state, because state power has ultimately imposed its reason on those who wield it. It has remained the site of an administrative elite that retains its colonial lineage. We should instead recognize and reclaim the plurality of spaces and the politics of different styles offered by communal life—in the village, between villages, and at the colonial front—remaining mindful of their differences from patriarchal politics. In the meantime, the way forward is amphibious, involving work inside and outside the state realm, work in both intra- and extra-state politics, reconstructing communities that are under attack and that have been dismembered by the colonial and state interventions called modernization.

While dismantling the public-private binary, we must also recover the domestic politics, *oikonomies,* and styles of negotiation, representation, and management developed and accumulated in women's experiences throughout history, given our status as a differentiated group within the species, beginning with the social division of labor. There were defeats in this history, undoubtedly. But our contemporary defeat by the owners is greater, and we are on our way toward the catastrophe that their hostility to life is precipitating. This is not a matter of essentialism, but rather an idea of histories in the plural, or what I have elsewhere called *historical pluralism*: an understanding that societies of different kinds have organized projects in which goals for happiness and wellbeing and forms of action in the feminine have been differentiated. Women can recover this politics in a feminine key, and men can join us and learn to think and practice politics in a different way. This could be the beginning of a new era, one that, in reality, is already showing signs of appearing: the start of a new paradigm for politics, perhaps the beginning of the end of the *patriarchal pre-history of humanity*.

Feminists have sought, throughout the history of our movement, to recreate sororities that could provide protective shields for our spaces, forgetting or perhaps not recognizing that these shields always existed in the communal world, until they were dislodged when association, representation, and the work of management were captured by a public sphere that totalized politics. They were thus remade "in the image and likeness" of the institutions of the world of men. Men's history can be heard, but women's histories—their ways of practicing politics, of thinking collectively—were erased, censored, and lost in the transition from the village-world to colonial modernity.

The *totalitarianism of the public sphere* thus leads to the fatal mistake of *faith in the state*, and to the resulting crisis of that very faith, a crisis that is now undeniable. Conceptions of a perfect future society installed an *authoritarianism of utopia* that led us to suppose that an effective appropriation of the state by progressive sectors could lead us triumphantly to social perfection. Because no utopia can do without a degree of authoritarianism, the better alternative is to look away from abstract utopias, or *societies of arrival*, which are unavoidably evolutionist and Eurocentric, projected into a future whose real indeterminacy and uncertainty is presumed to be controllable. We should instead look toward the concrete experiences of those peoples who are still today communally and collectively organized. We should put into practice among ourselves their inter-communal ways of limiting accumulation and preventing the formation of gaps of inequality. The only inspiration possible is not to be found in the illusion of a future designed *a priori* by the neurosis of control that characterizes

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European civilization. It is instead the concrete experience of those who, after five hundred years of constant genocide, deliberated and enigmatically decided to persist in their historical effort to continue to be *a people*, despite living in a continent of deserters, like ours—a continent claimed by those who have deserted their non-white ancestry and their belonging to an Amefrican, human, and historical landscape. Even in the middle of the largest Latin American metropolises, we can learn the lessons of those who persist in weaving communities. In this communal life, in the *village-world*, ethnographic evidence shows that women are the *subjects of rootedness*, guardians of the environment who practice a politics of another kind.

Theme Four: Toward a Politics in a Feminine Key

The search for inspiration in communitarian experience seeks to avoid the frequently repeated strategic error of thinking of history as a project to be realized by the state. This search represents an alternative to all of the experiments that have failed throughout history. To reconstitute community starting with the existing fragments would therefore be our slogan. This also means recovering a type of politics that was erased when political speech was captured by the public sphere. This capture resulted in the minoritization and marginalization of those groups whose members did not conform to the image and likeness of the "manly" subject of the public sphere, the transformation of these groups into the remainders or the residues of politics. This style of politics is not part of the history of bureaucratic administration or modern rationalism. Instead it starts from *domestic reason*, which has its own technologies of sociability and management. It is therefore not deluded by the aspiration of fitting into an all-encompassing state and public sphere, in the sense implied in the idea of radical democracy.

Masculine historical experience is marked by the distant routes required for hunting, for deliberations governed by protocol, for ritual parliaments, and for military enterprises and negotiations, first between villages and later at the colonial front. Women's history instead lays stress on roots and relations of nearness. We must recuperate this way of practicing politics in intimate spaces, places of close bodily contact and few formal protocols. We must recover a political style that was cornered and abandoned when the empire of the state and public sphere was imposed. This is an altogether different way of practicing politics, a politics of bonds, a management of intimacy, of nearnesses and not of the distances of protocol and bureaucratic abstraction. We need not only to restore the ties of memory—by looking in the mirror at our racialized image, an image inescapably anchored in our native landscape—but also to recover the value and reconnect to the memory of women's proscribed and devalued ways of practicing politics, which were blocked in the domestic space's abrupt loss of prestige and autonomy in the transition to modernity.

But we must do this without lapsing into voluntarism, since not every small-scale collective that privileges face-to-face relations is a community. This is the mistake made by exercises in economic solidarity and restorative justice, since when a collective is organized to an instrumental end—for example, to the end of fulfilling needs in moments of scarcity or resolving conflicts—it dissolves as soon as the problem that was to be addressed is settled. We saw this in the case of Argentina after the crisis of 2001. In order for there to be a community, two conditions must be fulfilled: there must be symbolic density, which is generally provided by a particular cosmos and

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religious system; and there must be a perception on the part of its members that they are headed toward a common future and come from a common history. This history, however, need not be one without internal conflicts. On the contrary. A community is a community, then, because it shares a history. In effect, it is not a patrimony of fixed customs that constitutes a community or a people, but rather the project of giving continuity, through consensus and dispute, to a common existence, as a collective subject. Women have defended and continue to defend this communitarian and local rootedness in the landscape. The politics of rootedness has thus been their politics. And there is nothing that the politics of capital perceives as a greater obstacle in its expansionist path than this communitarian and local rootedness.

It is the desire to be in conjunction, in communication, that makes a community, as well as the permanent obligation of reciprocity that makes different types of resources circulate among its members. Neo-Pentecostal and literalist Evangelical churches, whose leaders influence growing numbers of Latin American populations, have arguably been able to recreate precisely these kinds of communitarian technologies of sociability and thus to replace the old and exhausted collectives with new ones, now emptied of their sense of rootedness and history.

Reconstituting community means being enlisted in a historical project that diverges from the historical project of capital. Here religion, spirituality, or what I have called the "particular cosmos," plays an important role. I realized this while teaching on a ship called the SS *Universe*, administered by the University of Pittsburgh. Here North American university students from rich families, many of them destined to occupy roles in public life in the future, enrolled in a "semester at sea," during which they obtained credit in different subjects while touring the world. In 1991, due to the dangers presented by the Gulf War, the ship was obligated to change course, and I was hired to teach between the ports of Caracas and Salvador, Bahía. My role was to teach young people who were to land in Salvador on the very first day of Carnaval about what had been the subject of my doctoral thesis in the 1980s: Afro-Brazilian religions. During one of my classes, an older man in attendance asked to speak. I called on him, and, turning his back to me, he claimed for himself the authority of the teacher. Addressing the students, he said: "It's because of these religions that I say that these countries will not be able to progress, because these religions are *dysfunctional for development*." I was deeply disturbed when I heard him say this. But what an invaluable lesson I learned from him—although, of course, I immediately took from what he said the opposite of what the respectable old man had intended: in the spiritual and communal life of *candomblé* were the seeds of resistance to the historical project of capitalism! I left the class wondering who this enigmatic person could be, this man who so zealously cared about the students' education. I found out that he was a politician who had been elected governor of Colorado three times, and who served as director of the Institute for Public Policy Studies at the University of Denver: left up North, right down South. Ever since hearing his comment in that day's class, I have understood that certain cosmologies and spiritualities, far from being "the opium of the people," constitute barriers to market intervention, because they are *dysfunctional for capital*.

It is possible to describe, somewhat schematically, what is functional and dysfunctional for capital in today's world using divergent designations for two types of historical projects: *the historical project of things* and *the historical project of bonds*. Each seeks a different type of satisfaction; the two

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projects are in tension and, in the last instance, incompatible. In order to make this idea more vivid, I will refer to documentary accounts that circulate in the public domain, accounts of the travels of Latin American migrants to the US, crossing through Mexico on the train La Bestia. These testimonies are striking. They have a recurring structure: the migrants board the train; some of them fall and are severely injured. Countless migrants are captured, enslaved, and forced to work on farms one or another side of the Great Border. Women are inevitably raped: as much a fulfillment of fate as if it were written in stone. At the end of this odyssey, after these extreme ordeals—which also involve the payment of exorbitant sums to *coyotes*—migrants are frequently captured or returned to their countries of origin. From here, most of them begin the journey all over again. The habitual approach is to explain their decision to leave home as a consequence of material scarcity or of expulsion by gang warfare. Although this explanation is partly true, I would emphasize attraction over expulsion, and I would seek to revise familiar understandings of abundance, lack, and libidinal investment. These are the constructions of a historical epoch and apocalyptic phase of capital with particular characteristics already noted by Gilles Deleuze in his Spinozist critique of Freudianism.

Because it is abundance that produces lack, installs and imposes it, demolishing what had previously been satisfying and fulfilling. At home, relations of trust and reciprocity are being worn down, discredited, and broken by the effects of interventionist modernization and under the pressure of the supra-regional market. When bonds are broken, a scarcity appears that is not merely material, but rather a whole social climate, in which the drives are redirected toward what I call the world of things," the region "where things are." A new type of *cargo cult* is thus imposed: a mysticism that seeks an exuberant paradise of aestheticized commodities. It is the *fetish of the North*, or rather the *fetishism of the North as the kingdom of commodities*, that forcibly enters and intervenes in the plurality of the world's cosmologies. What captures the populations of the Americas, drawing them toward the North, is thus the magnetism of a *fantasy of abundance*, of a *fetishism of the region of abundance*, brought to bear on psyches that vacillate in a void of being, in a space now divested of its own magnetism, poor in the pleasures and obligations of reciprocity. Desire, which is always mimetic, is thus produced by a fetishistic excess, mystified and potent. Psyches are sucked into the *world of things* when the old ties of rootedness fail to retain them.

When bonds have lost their appeal and magnetism, people are driven toward this world of things. *But the desire for things produces individuals, whereas the desire for rootedness produces community*. The latter desire is dysfunctional for the historical project of capital, because investment in communal bonds that sustain happiness reinforces ties of reciprocity and communal rootedness, and makes subjects less susceptible to the magnetism of things. Only on detached, isolated, and weak subjects can the claim of the world of things impose itself:[14] the lessons of things, nature as thing, the body as thing, persons as things, and the pedagogy of cruelty that continues to impose a psychopathic structure, marked by a drive that is not relational but instrumental, as the prototypical personality of our time. I use the phrase *pedagogy of cruelty* to name all the acts and practices that teach, accustom, and program subjects to turn forms of life into things. Trafficking and sexual exploitation are the foremost examples and allegories of what I mean by the *pedagogy of cruelty*. In this sense, it is not a coincidence that every extractive enterprise set up in the fields and small towns of Latin America to produce commodities for the global market is preceded by brothels and the commodification of

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women's bodies.

The way forward in history will therefore involve affirming community and its bonds of rootedness. And politics will have to be feminine from now on. We will have to look for strategies and styles, reconstituting the thread of memory and reconnecting the fragments of communal technologies of sociability, until we can recover the time when the domestic sphere and its forms of interpersonal and inter-corporeal contact had not been displaced and foreclosed by the emergence of the public sphere and the state, with its masculine genealogy, which imposed and universalized its bureaucratic style and distanced mode of management with the advent of colonial modernity. This style of politics and its *raison d'état* is monopolistic and stands in the way of a world in the plural. It imposes on all politics the coherence of the one and assimilates all otherness through the grid of universal reference. Meanwhile, political practice in the feminine is not *utopian* but rather *topical* and everyday, guided by pragmatics rather than principles, a matter of process and not product.

A world in the plural is probably not republican, but it is more democratic. We need to recover what was left and still exists in our landscapes after the great shipwreck, in order to devise a new style of politics for the future. In the process, we will have to compose a rhetoric for this project, a set of words to name and confer value on this feminine and communitarian politics, with its histories and its technologies of sociability. Only such a rhetoric will be capable of defending us against the prevailing, patriarchal rhetoric, centered on the value of goods and commodified life.

About the Author

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Notes

1 See my critique of multiculturalism in *La nación.*

2 *Translator's Note*: See http://escolasempartido.org/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/484-anteprojeto-de-lei-estadual-e-minuta-de-justificativa.

3 I would like to emphasize here that I understand fundamentalist Islam as a false Islam, reactive to the West. Fundamentalist leaders have suppressed the internal debates that accompanied Islam for centuries. Something similar is also happening in the conservative wings of all Christian denominations. Fundamentalism is in this sense a political-religious culture that marks the present everywhere. See, for example, Abdullahi An-Na'ims work on human rights and Islam, including, among other texts, *Toward an Islamic Reformation*.

4 "Masculine rule" and "masculine mandate" are nearly interchangeable. I prefer the former phrase, however, because of its ambiguity: a "mandate" refers to an obligation on the part of men, and in this sense a "rule" by which they are bound, but it also refers to an investiture of authority—that is, an enthronement, an acceding to a position of authority. I use the phrase "masculine mandate" in this double sense, to name the subject as agent and as subjected: obligation and entitlement. This will be further clarified below, when I describe masculinity as a *corporation*.

5 For this argument, see my 2003 book, *Las estructuras elementales*, and the 2013 second edition.

6 This is an expression that I use in *Las estructuras elementales.*

7 This is according to the argument developed in my 2015 book, *La crítica de la colonialidad*.

8 The Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, a prisoner in Turkey since 1999, locates the fall of women at the end of the Neolithic period. See *Liberar la vida*.

9 For a guide to Quijano's work, see my review essay, "Aníbal Quijano y la perspectiva de la colonialidad del poder,"

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in *La crítica de la colonialidad*, 35-67. For an abridged version of this essay in French, see "La perspective de la colonialité du pouvoir."

10 See my chapter "El sexo y la Norma: Frente estatal-empresarial-mediático-cristiano," in *La crítica de la colonialidad*, 101-138.

11 For my argument on this discontinuity in the history of war and the emergence of women as strategic targets of contemporary informal wars, see "Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres," in *La guerra*, 57-90. I used this argument in my expert witness report before the Guatemalan Court on the Sepur Zarco case of maya queqchi women's subjection to sexual and domestic slavery during the authoritarian period in the '80s.

12 *Translator's Note*: On *amefricanidade*, see González, "A categoria."

13 *Translator's Note*: See, for instance, Reguillo, "Jovenes en la encrucijada," 140; and the essays by Reguillo and others collected in Valenzuela, ed., *Juvenicidio.*

14 Here I am remembering Hannah Arendt's distinction between solitude and isolation in Part Three of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

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