

# Self-narration from the Body-territory: New Notes for Situated Thinking and Methodologies in Context\*

[English Version]

Narrar(nos) desde el cuerpo-territorio. Nuevos apuntes para un pensamiento situado y metodologías en contexto

Narrar(nos) a partir do território do corpo. Novas notas sobre o pensamento situado e metodologias em contexto

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This collective writing is based on locating a collective place of enunciation, as Latin American political philosophy, in dialogue with the diverse contributions of the Social Sciences. The authors consider that it is central to revisit the construction of political subjectivities from epistemes critical of colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy. In rethinking the articulation of a political philosophy in and from Latin America, this research is deeply connected to the question of democracy in the South and how to dismantle the modern representative imaginary of the nation-state and colonial civil society. These pages nourish the challenge to continue advocating for a situated thought that takes note of its geopolitical conditions and the possibility of developing new methodologies for the collective socio-historical and socio-territorial contexts.

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## Abstract

**Objective:** this article proposes two central questions: on the one hand, the thread woven by the gambles on the construction of critical epistemologies is picked up and a course provided to renew the epistemic-political critique of colonial modernity in and from the bodies-territories of the global south; on the other, researchers throw themselves into new challenges to co-construct alternative research methodologies in order to look and speak to collective selves in the present and its socio-historical and socio-territorial context. **Methodology:** the place of enunciation and discussion is political philosophy in and from Latin America, which implies putting those topics on the agenda that are addressed and focused on the dialogue with other social and human sciences as the principle of construction of this proposal. Thus, this paper addresses the notions of body-territory, living theory —understood as the close relationship between narration, testimony and experience —and political intersubjectivity to define a situated thought with theoretical-methodological tools that distance themselves from modern logics in pursuit of decolonizing, feminist and community research. **Conclusions:** the intention is to continue gambling on the construction of critical epistemes and methodologies in context for situated thinking. We believe that for this one must resort to collective and intersubjective political action that is transformative in and with the struggle. Here a response to the question about what happens to bodies-territories is rehearsed, and with it, a response to the questions about what is done, said, and thought as urgent militant investigations. We strengthen the proposal of a contextualized thought, at a distance from an individual colonial and patriarchal rationality, to approach a thought as a place of *enunciation* and as a place of *being*, a thought as a territory, as a habitat.

**Keywords:** Latin American political philosophy; Body-territory; Living theory; Situated thinking; Methodologies in context.

## Resumen

**Objetivo:** el presente artículo propone dos cuestiones centrales: por un lado, recogemos el hilo tejido por las apuestas a la construcción de epistemologías críticas y damos curso a renovar la crítica epistémico-política a la modernidad colonial en y desde nuestros cuerpos-territorios del sur global; por el otro, nos arrojamamos a nuevos desafíos para co-construir metodologías de investigación alternativas de cara a mirarnos y hablarnos en un presente y su contexto socio-histórico y socio-territorial.

**Metodología:** nuestro lugar de enunciación y de discusión es la filosofía política en y desde Latinoamérica, lo que implica para nosotras poner en agenda aquellas temáticas que se abordan y se focalizan en el diálogo con otras ciencias sociales y humanas como el principio de construcción de esta propuesta. Así pues, este escrito aborda las nociones de cuerpo-territorio, teoría viva —entendida como la estrecha relación entre narración, testimonio y experiencia— e intersubjetividad política para definir un pensamiento situado con herramientas teóricas-metodológicas que se desmarcan de las lógicas modernas en pos de una investigación descolonizadora, feminista y comunitaria. **Conclusiones:** nuestra intención es continuar apostando a la construcción de epistemes críticas y metodologías en contexto para nuestro pensamiento situado. Creemos que para esto debemos echar mano a un hacer político colectivo e intersubjetivo que sea transformador en y con la lucha. Aquí ensayamos una respuesta a la pregunta por lo que pasa con nuestros cuerpos-territorios, y con ello, a los interrogantes por lo que hacemos, decimos y pensamos en tanto investigaciones militantes urgentes. Afianzamos la propuesta de un pensamiento contextualizado, a distancia de una racionalidad individual colonial y patriarcal, para acercarnos a un pensamiento como lugar de *enunciación* y como lugar de *estar*, un pensamiento como territorio, como hábitat.

**Palabras claves:** Filosofía política latinoamericana; Cuerpo-territorio; Teoría viva; Pensamiento situado; Metodologías en contexto.

## Resumo

**Objetivo:** o presente artigo propõe duas questões centrais: por um lado, pegamos o fio tecido pelas apostas na construção de epistemologias críticas e damos curso para renovar a crítica epistêmico-política da modernidade colonial em e de nossos corpos-territórios do sul global; por outro lado, nos lançamos em novos desafios para co-construir metodologias de pesquisa alternativas a fim de olharmos para nós mesmos e falarmos a nós mesmos em um contexto atual e sócio-histórico e sócio-territorial. **Metodologia:** nosso lugar de enunciação e discussão é a filosofia política na e da América Latina, o que implica para nós colocarmos na agenda aqueles temas que são abordados e enfocados em diálogo com outras ciências sociais e humanas como o princípio de construção desta proposta. Assim, este trabalho aborda as noções de corpo-território, teoria viva—entendida como a estreita relação entre narrativa, testemunho e experiência—e intersubjetividade política para definir um pensamento situado com ferramentas teórico-metodológicas que se dissociam da lógica moderna na busca de uma descolonização, pesquisa feminista e comunitária.

**Conclusões:** Nossa intenção é continuar apostando na construção de epistemes e metodologias críticas no contexto de nosso pensamento situado. Acreditamos que para isso devemos contar com uma elaboração política coletiva e intersubjetiva que seja transformadora na e com a luta. Aqui nós tentamos dar uma resposta à questão do que acontece com nossos territórios corporais, e com ela, às questões do que fazemos, dizemos e pensamos como pesquisa militante urgente. Reforçamos a proposta de um pensamento contextualizado, à distância de uma racionalidade individual colonial e patriarcal, para abordar um pensamento como um lugar de *enunciação* e como um lugar de *ser*, um pensamento como território, como habitat.

**Palavras-chave:** Filosofia política latino-americana; Corpo-território; Teoria viva; Pensamento situado; Metodologias no contexto.



“In my house, there was always an extra set plate at the table for whoever in need”  
*Ramona Orellano de Buscamante, 2021<sup>1</sup>.*

Photography: Ezequiel Luque. La Tinta digital newspaper

## Introduction

### With and Beyond Critical Epistemes

In recent years, different approaches have emerged which, hand in hand with transdisciplinarity, seek to remedy those classical perspectives, which, based on modern/colonial epistemes, fail to account for certain nodal problems in the South, particularly those related to the reproduction of life. However, in line with the special issue on pending and emerging methodologies facing new epistemologies of the Global South that summons one, we consider that the development of these epistemological approaches has not yet generated a significant methodological renewal. It is possible to affirm that these reading perspectives, most of the times emerged from the heat of the struggles, from joint work or participant observation, still do not make a dent in spaces that

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1. In homage to Ramona Orellano de Bustamante, woman, fighter of the land, who with her departure in June of this year 2021 has left us a legacy of (re) existence (Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades, 2021, Luque, 2021; Urouro, 2021a).

gamble on critical epistemologies. They are little known and barely circulate in academic circles, where the same modes of connecting with knowledge are systematically reproduced, generating analytical tensions in research that could be challenging.

For these reasons, this paper intends to address some conceptions that epistemically and politically underpin current practices and that should be rethought to critically build a situated thinking. Body-territory, narrative/testimony and political intersubjectivity are concepts that fertilize this positioning, giving meaning to what we consider a "methodology in context" (Alvarado, Fischetti, 2017).

Consequently, one's place of enunciation and discussion is political philosophy in and from Latin America. This statement implies putting on the agenda those issues that are approached from a transdisciplinary perspective. We believe that building knowledge from a transdisciplinary perspective not only enriches the view held of the socio-historical and socio-territorial processes of the Global South, but also aims to dismantle the watertight pigeonholes, those where Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, History, Geography, Political Science, being the list even longer, and all considered in the singular. Transdisciplinarity is the gamble on a dialogic, open, and plural method to weave one's places of enunciation. In turn, it is the beginning of the construction of an alternative research methodology that allows addressing diverse issues in the Global South.

Thus, we are committed to a reactivation of critical epistemologies so that static and binary forms lacking utility do not crystallize, which only end up making complex processes of societies invisible. We believe that it is necessary to build theoretical and methodological tools that challenge modern colonial logics in pursuit of decolonizing, feminist and communitarian practices.

However, this will be possible as long as relations with the social and political processes of Latin American contemporaneity and heterogeneity are interwoven. Likewise, it will be possible as long as a critical attitude of the perspectives installed with colonization, imposed through devices of modern governmentality in the diverse logics of coloniality (macro) (Quijano, 2000) and internal (micro) colonialism<sup>2</sup> is maintained. Only in this way will producing

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2. The first thing to note is that the notion of internal colonialism, which emerges in multiple ways, questions the continuity of colonial conditions in the organization of social life and in the relationship between societies. This first definition of the concept refers to the Mexican sociologist González Casanova (2009[1969]). However, in this paper the authors find it enriching to think about certain theoretical shifts made by authors such as the Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui when she argues that internal colonialism is "a set of diachronic contradictions of varying depth that emerge on the surface of contemporaneity and cross, therefore, the contemporary spheres of modes of production, state political systems, ideologies anchored in cultural homogeneity" (2010, p. 36). Another contribution is provided by the political philosopher Luis Tapia when he argues that internal colonialism operates in the relationship

a new paradigm of intellectual sovereignty that confronts the fragmentation of the epistemic community, commodification, enclosure, demassification, and educational privatization be possible (Britos-Castro, Zurbriggen, 2020).

From this place, the authors reaffirm the close relationship between theories and practices, and define the space of reflection as *living theory*, that is, as a political action that in the broad gesture of narration brings one's own voices closer to the possibility of mapping resistances and weaving ways of understanding them. This interweaving proposed in the following pages speaks of a knowledge that links the more theoretical deliberations with the knowledge born of the struggles<sup>3</sup>.

With this challenge we seek to stop reproducing old patterns in order to advance toward the recognition of worlds, perspectives and experiences that constitute other ways of understanding Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>4</sup>.

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between and within societies, producing asymmetries and hierarchies of power. In turn, it contains discrimination and exploitation based on racist practices, ignoring the different multisocial groups as part of the social (Tapia, 2014). In this line recovered by Rivera Cusicanqui and Tapia, the authors bring as a reference a work done by one of them in 2015 "We consider that, an alternative to rethinking internal colonialism is to be able to reconstruct the multiple historicities through methods, concepts, descriptions and local narratives" (Britos-Castro, 2016, p. 123).

Likewise, the authors also recognize the trajectory of debates on colonialism and internal colonialism that many Katarist and Indianist-Katarist thinkers or specialized readers of the indigenous uprisings have had, such as Portugal Mollinedo and Macusaya Cruz (2014), Mamani Ramírez and Cruz (2011), Escárzaga (2012), Choque Canqui (2014), among others.

3. The richness found in the significance of the interweaving of theoretical perspectives and the knowledge born in the heat of the struggles in the territories, leads one to maintain that the distinction between "theory" and "practice," typical of modern enlightened reason, is sterile from one's place of enunciation and for the construction of alternative methodologies. Rather, the authors have opted for the expression of a *living theory* that is understood as a "task" and from the legacy of Latin American philosophy this task makes possible a situated thought (Roig, 2009[1981]). However, in this paper the notion of living theory points to dismantling the established hierarchy that places "theory" above "practice," and in that gesture, properly colonial, legitimizes its pretended superiority.

4. The notion of variegation or "variegated social formation" comes from the theory of local thought of René Zavaleta Mercado (2013[1983]), who argues that it is the way through which it was possible to name and explain various types of historical-political and sociocultural superimpositions that are plotted from the colonial logic. The variegated makes it possible to think about the coexistence and "overlapping" (Zavaleta, 2013[1983]) of various elements that make up the social: historical time, modes of production, different worldviews, different languages, cultures and authority structures.

Considering the reappropriations, especially that of Luis Tapia, that have been made of the Zavaletian concept, the variegated implies a multiplicity of stories and narratives that occur in different juxtaposed temporalities, in and between different cultures, in diverse languages and modes of communication, and especially in and from communal plots of material reproduction of collective life.

As long as some variegated social margin persists, that is, juxtaposed and socially superimposed, the colonial condition will not disappear from that sphere of social and political relations. Retaking the idea of social variegation enables one to think that these coexistences and overlaps allow one to refute, on the one hand, the crystallization of a homogeneous civil society as the only possible social order in the face of

## Methodological Considerations

### **When Territory Becomes Flesh and the Body Becomes a Trench: Some Contributions to Complexify the Body-Territory Category**

For some time now, the body-territory category has been used by different actors as a tool of struggle and a key to understanding the advance of extractivist projects. However, this concept is also a way of making visible the cosmovision of many communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. As an idea-force, the body-territory has been developing in the last decades from the diverse *sentipensares*<sup>5</sup> arising in contexts of resistance. For a long time in the West, the histories of collective struggles were associated with the organizational structures of the working class, considered the privileged actor of historical change. Social movements appeared as the central subject and the privileged expression of a societal alternative to the current capitalist model. However, the multiplication of conflict spheres since 1960 prompted the need to broaden definitions and analytical categories in order to make these processes more complex. It was thus that environmental and feminist movements – "the new social movements" – began to express a new politicization of society and, with it, new ways of conceptualizing conflicts and resistances (Svampa, 2016). Undoubtedly, the common point was the critique of extractivism, from which the idea of an expanded *extractivism*, in that it encompasses more than the activities traditionally considered as extractive, has emerged today.

In this context of neo-extractivism<sup>6</sup>, it has been the indigenous and community feminisms that, when speaking of body-territory, demand decolonization

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Latin American heterogeneity, and, on the other, that capitalism flatly modified the non-modern modes of production (Britos-Castro, 2021a).

It is worth noting that understanding the social in some Latin American experiences as variegated implies posing a critical perspective to the modern colonial order and, at the same time, thinking of it as a philosophical-political problematic that must be valued.

For further readings around the variegated see Tapia, 2016[2002a], 2002b; Britos-Castro, 2017, 2021(Doctoral Thesis); Chavéz and Chavéz, 2017; Giller and Ouviaña, 2016, among others.

5. The concept of *sentipensamiento* was popularized by Orlando Fals Borda (1986) who learned the popular riverside conceptions of the Atlantic Coast while conducting his research. The sociologist Arturo Escobar, using Fals Borda, also develops the notion and maintains that "Feeling and thinking with the territory implies thinking from the heart and from the mind, or co-reasoning, as well stated by colleagues from Chiapas inspired by the Zapatista experience. It is the way in which territorialized communities have learned the art of living" (Escobar, 2014, p. 16).

6. Verónica Gago maintains that theorizing neoextractivism as a logic of valorization and as a political regime (not only economic) from the point of view of the struggles for the body-territory, provides the



as a practical dimension that is inseparable from depatriarchalization (Gago, 2019). For this reason, in this section we want to share the perspective of Delmy Tania Cruz-Hernández (2016). This feminist, indigenous Mexican woman with a Chiapas heart, has accompanied different social processes with indigenous women in vulnerable territories and, based on conversations with them, the question of the body-territory has positioned itself as the central axis of the academic and militant exercise. In consideration of this experience, we believe that contributions to this category allow for understanding humanity as a body-territory from which humans feel-think-with, as well as act in harmony and thus nurture situated practices.

### **The Sharing of a Collective Process. Unraveling the Importance of the Body-Territory Argument with Delmy Tania Cruz-Hernández**

Cruz-Hernández and Jiménez (2019) affirm that in recent decades, many studies have been written on how the defense of the territory is experienced in our region. However, they relate that few have pointed out what the organization of women is in its defense and what these women defend. The mechanisms adopted by the dispossession of the territories and the natural, social and cultural resources that are in them, marked various scenarios which made the women show their struggles, previously hidden. The resurgence of extractive industries, supported by Latin American governments, returned to the spaces previously considered of life, hostile places to inhabit, leaving women alone in defense of the territory. Faced with the "patriarchalization of the territories" (Cruz-Hernández, 2016) and the increase in violence, women linked to the community experience of the original peoples have reinforced their commitment. Thus, as Rogério Haesbaert (2020) says, paraphrasing Cruz-Hernández, the articulation between body-territory, more than a concept, became a methodology for life that implies thinking about how bodies are linked to the territories they inhabit.

The body seen as a territory is itself a space, a territory/place, which is in the world and can experience all the emotions, sensations and physical reactions, to find in it a place of "resistance" and redefinition. This understanding puts the community as a way of life at the center and enables a view that starts from the body as the first territory of struggle and also as the embodiment of many other experienced oppressions. The link between the body and other

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possibility of understanding the extractive logic as a new colonial form of dispossession and exploitation at the same time. This displacement *expands* the notion of extractivism beyond raw materials and peasant and indigenous territories toward urban and suburban territories (Gago, 2019).

conceptions generates a powerful dialectic between existence and the relationships that bind it to the territories inhabited. In turn, this argument is a form of sororal and political accompaniment; it is a dialogue between feminists and diverse women who, organized, come together in interest in other possible worlds. Cruz-Hernández considers that this invitation proposes:

Looking at bodies as living and historical territories that allude to a cosmogonic and political interpretation, where wounds, memories, knowledge, desires, individual and common dreams live; and in turn, invites looking at the territories as social bodies that are integrated into the web of life and therefore, one's relationship with them must be conceived as an "ethical event" understood as an irruption in the face of the "other" where the possibility of contract, domination and power have no place. Where there is reception understood as co-responsibility and the only viable proposal to look at the territory and then to look at oneself. (Hernández-Cruz, 2016, p. 44)

Similarly, this conceptual and methodological articulation made a dent in decolonial feminism. In line with Yuderkis Espinosa Miñoso (2014) and Dorotea Gómez Grijalva (2012) –Guatemalan Mayan K'iché feminist– the body is assumed as political territory insofar as it is understood as historical and not as biological. It is a social space that is affected by what happens in its environment, generating physical and emotional repercussions that become more complex in relation to subjectivities.

In turn, community and decolonial feminist Lorena Cabnal proposes the term *body-land* to delve into the damage that has been done to the territories from the colonial invasion that has gone from the expropriation of their lands, territories, resources and knowledge, using women's bodies as a vehicle. The invasion generates a colonial penetration that is configured "as a condition for the perpetuity of the multiple disadvantages of indigenous women" (Cabnal, 2010, p. 15). The author affirms that, to understand the defense of territories by women, the historical process of patriarchy must be understood. "Underlying the body-land concept is a political demand that emanates from a collective reflection of indigenous women in order to show their vision in defense of their territories" (Cruz-Hernández, 2016, p. 42).

Transversely to these processes, feminist thought in the social sciences also began to rethink the concepts of territory and body. Cruz-Hernández relates that one of the thinkers who is beginning to question the space-body relationship is Doreen Massey (2005). The British geographer maintains that to study space is to recognize how it has been built, under what political structures and through what power/knowledge relationships. Searching for these answers

can provide clues to understanding the social inequalities that are experienced in these contexts (Cruz-Hernández, 2016).

Another theorist that Delmy Cruz-Hernández considers is Linda McDowell (2000). For her, it has been essential to review the spatial divisions: public vs. private; inside vs. outside; considering that the latter influence the social construction of gender divisions. In addition, McDowell tries to unravel the idea provided by Simone de Beauvoir regarding the restriction of the feminine to the scale of the body, defining male bodies as incorporeal, placing them in the area of the mind, prioritizing it above the female body.

Based on the authors, the community feminist asks:

If we assume that not all bodies are equal, nor do they have the same standard and that they also depend on the roles of gender, class, ethnicity, age, and race that the collective imaginary "imposes" on you, what place do women's bodies occupy in the territories? (...) everything we do is spatially located and embodied in differentiated and hierarchical bodies. In that sense, the body is assigned not only by the physical determinations of the geographical context; but by the cultural constructions that underlie the idea of space, place, territory, community, and context. (Cruz-Hernández, 2016, p. 41)

In consideration of these postulates, Cruz-Hernández presents the way in which bodies and territories have been analyzed, including the way in which they have become political and struggle statements. However, she recognizes that although this is essential to rethink the territories that are threatened today, it is also necessary to create theoretical bridges between territories and female bodies<sup>7</sup>.

### **Expanding Body-Territory: The Power to Nurture Many Struggles**

The contributions made by Cruz-Hernández allow making multiple displacements that make other ontologies possible and, therefore, alternative methodologies. From these cartographies, reflection on the ways in which one knows and what one does with that knowledge is inevitable. Setting the body-territory as a starting point moves one from the Cartesian solipsism to a place of crossed enunciation and influenced by context. Ideas are embodied and the territory is incorporated. Thus, the impacts of extractivism have repercussions in another

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7. In pursuit of building these bridges, Cruz-Hernández has participated in the Critical Views of the Territory from Feminism Collective since 2012. This promotes meetings among organized women to put into practice social and corporal mapping tools with links between bodies and territories.

way, forcing one to think about the situation or, as the authors maintain, building a situated thought.

In turn, the articulation between body-territory allows understanding other struggles that happen simultaneously and are experienced. From a militant research perspective, Verónica Gago (2019) provides keys to continue thinking. She maintains that this practical concept shows how the exploitation of common, community territories (urban, suburban, peasant and indigenous) violates the body of each person and the collective body through dispossession. By de-liberalizing the notion of the body as individual private property, the body-territory specifies a political, productive, and epistemic continuity of the body as territory. In this way, as a "composition of affections, resources, and possibilities that are not 'individual' is revealed, as well as are singled out because they pass through each person's body to the extent that each body is never just 'one', but always with others, and with other non-human forces" (Gago, 2019, p. 91).

There is no confinement in individuality, in the limits of the body itself, but rather there is an extensive surface of feelings, trajectories and memories that exceed and spill out of the body, enabling the invention of other ways of life. For this reason, body-territory "is an idea-force that arises from certain struggles but has the power to migrate, resonate and compose other territories and other struggles" (Gago, 2019, p. 93). It is precisely this premise that challenges: the connection capacity of certain languages and images of struggle that permeate realities that are very different from those where they arose.

In this context, Gago's proposal to think from the body-territory of the radical nature and density that the debate on the legalization of abortion in Argentina took on, provided tools for research and feelings to inhabit the experience. Gago's analysis exceeds this section, however, we would like to highlight some of the folds that she gives to this problematization when she states that:

The body that is fought for when talking about the legalization of abortion, exceeds then the conquest of private individual rights, and the massive mobilization that has driven its demand goes beyond the request for legislative recognition at the same time that it demands it. And this is because it reveals the dispute over the sovereignty of a body-territory that allows connecting the anti-extractive struggles with the struggles for abortion. In those days, in conversation with the members of the Peasant Movement of Santiago del Estero (MOCASE), they recounted that for the first time what had been a taboo subject until then was being discussed in the communities and that the connection with the enslavement of the lands and the impossibility of autonomy that this implies arose in the assemblies. (Gago, 2019, p. 107)

The deepening of the debates through this articulation also makes it possible to think of a spatiality opposed to that of domestic confinement. Thus, one takes the street and make it a feminist home, reorganizing the political space in order to avoid the reproduction of oppositions such as public vs. private. This shows that knowledge can be built differently, as well that politics can be done from other spaces than the traditional ones. It is no longer about staying in the private sphere and from there producing theory. The body-territory forces leaving the cloisters to inhabit those areas that are an extension of human corporeality. Feeling this spatiality connects one with ways of thinking and reflecting that do not turn back on one's self as an individual, but as territory, land, mountain, river, mountain.

However, giving coordinates, "sharing the location" is advocating for the place of enunciation which, as Cruz-Hernández (2016) says, implies undressing, re-thinking and defining subjectivity. In this game it is worth asking if knowledge has enriched humans as subjects to corroborate the power of the methods. If the ways in which one knows do not place one in new locations, it may not be the right route.

### **Narrate (tell us), Give Birth to a Living Theory. Urgent Militant Investigations**

“Immerse the matter in the life of the rapporteur, to be able to retrieve it later from there. Thus, the imprint of the narrator is attached to the narration, like the imprint of the potter's hand on the surface of his clay pot”  
(Benjamin W, 2008, p.71).

The inquiry from a situated thought, as a methodology in context, implies throwing oneself into some questions and their possible answers to continue nurturing future dialogues. Thus, the authors open this game to reflect on urgent militant investigations. This leads to a central question from the previous section: what place do women's bodies occupy in the territories?

We consider that one of the ways to interrupt the capitalist and colonial order of expropriation, exploitation and domination – which is increasingly violent against the body-territories – is the act of witnessing as a gesture of being alive. That act builds a living theory that – recovered from one's own voice in and from one's own narrative – recreates new ways of being in common. For this reason, one asks oneself: what possibility of making our concerns visible does the act of narrating convey? What can a narrative do? What does it say? What is the plot? What does it silence? (Ripamonti, 2017).

As Francesca Gargallo supported in her book *Feminisms from Abya Yala*, women's ideas and proposals of 607 towns in Our America:

Narrating is one of the ways to make known. It is present at all times, in all places, in all societies and sometimes allows, as Roland Barthes already said, communion between human beings from different cultures. Narrating, then, is the way to transmit, learn and give meaning to stories. (Gargallo, 2013, p.33)<sup>8</sup>

By giving answers to the questions and reconsidering the proposal to organize certain alternative methodologies, humans problematize one's places of enunciation in the possibility of going beyond the "permission to narrate" (Edward Said cited by Bidaseca, 2017). Speaking and speaking (to oneself) opens the political gesture of being women in the contemporary patriarchal, colonial and racist world. There is a letting oneself be affected as a starting point, where what takes value is what can be built as common and collective knowledge, together with what one feels, what one has, what is needed. Letting oneself be affected and the body-territories flow implies understanding, following Cabnal (2010), that the damage and expropriation was consolidated through the body of women. This means that the life/death relationship is permanently linked to extractivism.

Thus, the way living theory is made is the relationship between narrative, testimony and experience. Following Ripamonti (2017), who narrates takes risks, and risks what exceeds him. Narrating is far from informing, defining, establishing, and much more distant from postulating statements that later become irrefutable truths or epistemic generalizations with long-term guarantees.

When there are socio-historical and socio-territorial experiences, there are knots, space-time landslides between present/past and future. Those knots in the fabric must attend to the contingent, to the alternate, to the possible. With this, the experiences are those that are nested from the testimony (oral or written) constituting themselves as differences. Following the postcolonial

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8. For further development on this point see Francesca G. (2003).

perspective of Mario Rufer (2018), what enunciates the multitemporality of the present enunciates the past not as oblivion and loss as an index that no longer exists, but as a "trace of the past," that is, as something testimonial, something alive.

The narration combines the testimonial with a particular cartography of the experience, not its representation. Ripamonti (2017) suggests thinking of narration as writing rooted in singularity that does not aspire to the universalization of the experience that nourishes it.

[Narrating] is a thrown writing. Its meaning is dependent on those others whom it invites to inhabit it. It is an expression of a difference. Difference that I imagine as that "irreducible rebellious background" that can express itself (and act) even in the "apparent balance of an organic representation" (Deleuze, 2006, p. 71). Difference as the possibility of overflow, of a threshold that crosses its own limit. (Ripamonti, 2017, p. 84)

For this reason, one can affirm that it is a particular way of inhabiting the experience with a critical eye, with that problematic knot that stresses, pulls and finally crosses the discourses and the subjective ways of living, thinking and recounting what has been lived (Sardi, 2013). To narrate (oneself) is to inhabit the singularity of the experience by creating a space of resonance which affects (oneself) to articulate the voices and listeners.

What is called living theory in this paper –understood as the relationship between narrative, testimony, and experience –expresses effects, marks, wounds, and scars from the body-territories that they narrate. One accompanied Ripamonti when he suggests that narratives constitute quarries for research work, provide tools to formulate problems, critical and overwhelming questions and articulate what one participates in, listens to and sees.

In this last sense, this (un)disciplined writing complaint the invisibility of knowledge and subjectivities of the heterogeneous world of the Global South as a product of epistemicide (De Sousa Santos, 2009) considers the urgency of giving birth to the possibility of inhabiting and transforming from imagination, reality.

### **Testimonies and Experiences of Quisquisacate's Body-Territory an Intersubjective Political Birth-Making**

The next few lines are committed to bringing to the narrative the subjective ways of living, thinking, and recounting what has been lived, as mentioned

before. In line with what was stated by Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso (2019), what encourages "is not merely theoretical objectives –if something like this existed –but urgently practical (...) the conviction that all action is based on interpretations of the world which at the same time are prescriptive of the world" (p. 2009). In this way this work is reaffirmed, dismantling the hierarchy of knowledge established between "theory" and "practice" to return to the living theory that builds a horizon of political meaning.

At the beginning of the year 2020, when the first cases of coronavirus arrived in Argentina, a feeling of uncertainty invaded the populace. At first, during the quarantine, different images of places began to circulate on networks and mass media that, in the absence of human intervention, recovered a wild appearance. Flora and fauna seemed to gain lost ground as people were confined to their homes. The idea that production was slowed made one believe that at least for a few days the Earth was taking a breather. A certain ingenuity and ignorance provided a kind of hope regarding the possibility of reflecting and slowing down the accelerated pace with which the capitalist system reproduces extractivism in every corner of the planet. However, it did not take long for news to appear that denied one's dreams. Particularly in Argentina: clearing in the Chaco (Diez, 2020), fires in the Paraná wetlands (Kandus, Morandeira, Minotti, 2020), the advance of mining in Chubut (El Diario, 2020), the lack of protection of the nature in Santa Cruz (Urouro, 2020), femicides throughout the country, the list goes on. And what has been worse, the situation has been hardened. The winter and the drought did not help. The fires caused intentionally spread across different territories.

The province of Córdoba, a territory from where we narrate ourselves investigating and militating, was besieged by the burning of more than 400,000 hectares of native forest between 2020 and 2021 (Britos-Castro, 2021b; Díaz-Romero, 2021). Over the months of ecocide, that burning has meant a death management tool that constitutes irreparable damage to native forests and, therefore, to the adjacent communities.

With the start of 2021 and the continuation of preventive and mandatory social distancing, neo-extractivism took on new forms. In complicity with the Camino de las Sierras company, the provincial government searched – and still continues to do so – to advance on the territory burned in the 2020 fire with a road project that is part of the IIRSA Plan (Initiative for the Integration of the South American Regional Infrastructure) and that has its beginnings in the year 2018 (Molina, 2021; Maina-Waisman, 2021).

In April 2021, the "Alternative Route No. 38: Costa Azul-La Cumbre variant section" project will restart. Faced with this situation, the convoked neighbors, the socio-environmental organizations and the indigenous communities of the province, but mainly of the Punilla Valley, organized themselves



to provide information, promote participation in the virtual Public Hearing and denounce both the non-compliance of real instances of citizen participation as the different regulations that would be violated. More than six hundred exhibitors participated in the hearing, whose central axis was to report on the serious environmental, cultural, and heritage impact of the route, as well as the opening of dialogue to intervene in the decisions that involve individuals without the rulers doing it behind their backs. The massive virtual public hearing showed that citizens' demands point to responsible public policies, which imply participatory territorial reordering, organization and planning in relation to the needs of the Quisquisacate region (Britos-Castro, 2021b).

While we were writing this manuscript, we were preparing the writings that would be presented at non-binding public hearing with the conviction of politicizing from the community's voice.

The proposal of Alternative to Route No. 38 that the government of Córdoba has presented and that presses to concrete will seriously destroy our entire ecosystem, it means, among other things, 40% of water of the people of Córdoba. The route of this highway runs 33% through native forest, it is classified as a red zone by provincial law No. 9814 of Territorial Planning of Native Forest that determines it as a region of a very high conservation value that should not be transformed; with 20 huge bridges it will cross eight water basins that water San Roque Lake, a lake whose waters are already in process of severe eutrophication (decomposition) and the impact they will suffer will end up degrading the region ravaged by lack of sewers, clearing and fires and property speculation. (Britos-Castro, 2021b, p.75).

In the face of so much subjugation and destruction, it is impossible for us not to narrate ourselves from this situated spaces-times, even more taking into account that one of the us live in this territory. Narrating (one) to oneself from Quisquisacate is to speak in Quisquisacate, to "talk to" what the body goes through one and not to "talk about" as mere spectators of this present crisis (Britos-Castro, 2021b). This means to speak from understanding what is enunciated from the local, beyond modern and Eurocentric binary form that conceives the nation-state and its civil society from social, political, and cultural domination. Thus, to narrate or narrate to oneself in Quisquisacate is a form of life management that gambles on processes of identity recognition of indigenous communities that inhabit Valle de Punilla, to recover the linguistic complexity<sup>9</sup> and the denouncement of colonial languages imposition, to attend to its own

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9. See González Almada, M. (2017).

temporality of the forest, to protect the wealth of the native forest, to protect the pluralities of histories and cultures, to work the land at a distance from capitalist accumulation, to revitalize practices and economies based on-place (Escobar, 2003).

To open ourselves to common life experiences allows for strengthening bonds that modern history of systematic separation among economic, political, and social aspects in its logic of conquering and plundering of material and symbolic appropriation has de-communalized (Britos-Castro, 2018; Britos-Castro and Zurbriggen, 2020; Britos-Castro, 2021a).

Thus, the struggle in and for body-territories in Valle de Punilla (Córdoba), coined the slogan for the last four years "we have the right to decide how we want to live." This slogan was consolidated as a denunciation and as a clear positioning that local political forms dispute the horizon to understand the developmentalist and extractivist world (Ross, 2021; Urouro, 2021b)<sup>10</sup>.

The words "development" and "progress" are costly to Latin American experiences. They mean destruction, plundering in a sustained way and constant subjugation of the local; they also favor the violation of rights. Thus, to narrate or narrate to oneself in Quisquisacate implies to be in charge of the needed epistemic and political discussion on the modern civilizational project, its multiple dimensions and diversity of attitudes. We believe current debates in social sciences challenge one deeply and allow for reconstructing ourselves on dominant paradigms. As Omar Giraldo e Ingrid Toro (2020) suggests, there is no thought or knowledge free of sensitivity and affectivity. This is a main statement for this manuscript, since ecocides are expressed in devastation of earth, erosion of life, establishment and consolidation of death projects, plundering of nature and are not irrational actions, on the contrary, those acts intertwined reason and affectivity.

In this context we recover the bond of narrating (ourselves) from the common as an alternative way of reproducing life. The human is nature. "We are the fabric of life," as Mina Navarro and Gloria Martínez (2020) state. Thus, ecocide is a project of death and *common-doing* that has to do with *making collective politics*. When we struggle, we create a memory that guarantees (re) existence, reworking and re-updating the worlds of life.

In this *doing of collective politics*, one expresses the political dimension that every narrative has, as it makes subjectivities and modes of relationship. A

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10. The Assemblies of Punilla and the Assembly in defense of the environment Córdoba Capital have pronounced themselves in relation to the situation that has been experienced since the end of 2020. One of the massive events was the march on December 23, 2020 to the legislature of Córdoba to the session against what they want to impose. See the pronouncements and maps of the new mountain highway: <https://www.facebook.com/Unidos-por-el-Monte-375026479532260>

narrative makes things visible, circulates, fosters a conversation, opens public interaction and does it from a critical reality of its present.

According to Ripamonti, "it is politics because it is a voice, it inhabits a plural plot without axiological hierarchies, but with anamnestic force, in the way of a subversion of time (linear/past/suffered/lived). It is politics because it constitutes a practice of resistance to silence" (2017, p. 86).<sup>11</sup>

*To perform collective politics* also connects one with the notion of political intersubjectivity, as a social, political and cultural relationship between different body-territories, multiple experiences of construction of subjectivity from the local are named, understood, and recognized. The political intersubjectivity approach comprises a pluriverse of interpretations and feelings that, even mediated by hierarchical power relations of colonialism and domination, are defined and expressed in shaping historical experience of the plural (Britos-Castro, 2018; Tapia, 2002). In this way, it is the notion of political intersubjectivity that makes the idea of co-inhabiting the epistemic-colonial political modernity possible. That is, to articulate the various political aspects and historical and cultural experiences of one's own dynamics of local and testimonial forms of resistance. Therefore, it entails a greater gamble of recognizing only the symbolic forms of different cultures that implies subverting the dominant and hegemonic monocultural order.

## Conclusion: Tracing and (re)Tracing to Wellness

The call to problematize alternative methodologies aligned with critical epistemologies have quickly challenged society. In recent years, thinking about the ways one knows has become urgent. It implies the political positioning, as well as doing justice to current forms that traditional methodologies seek to clarify and makes invisible what "contaminates" our ways of producing knowledge.

According to this statement, keeping the fabrics that are traditionally hidden is relevant. The intention is to continue gambling on the construction of

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11. Paula Ripamonti, the intellectual person that are referred to in this manuscript works the notion "anamnetic force" based on Manuel Reyes Mate proposal and the extensive work regarding the category "anamnetic justice" that supposes a conception of the right as reparation emphasizing on victims and injustices they suffered. From this point, Ripamonti argues that it demands a critical review of western history and philosophical tradition in its stated project and domination.

Ripamonti's work meant motivation for the construction of a living theory from several elements that the philosopher Mendoza presents, even so, all this development on memory and forgetfulness in the recovery of history exceeds this development and motivates further writings.

critical epistememes and methodologies in context for this situated thinking. We believe that for this purpose it is necessary to use a collective and intersubjective political work to transform in and with the struggle.

Certainly, there is no methodology without epistemological assumptions, nor epistemology without methodological support, both are co-constructed in a dynamic relationship and reciprocal benefit. According to Ripamonti (2017), methodologies are a kind of toolbox that one has to choose and build those that best suit the problems and searches, and they can even always be modified and new ones created. Thus, this manuscript causes tensions and seeks legitimized truths. It chooses the construction of a living theory that is nourished by the relationship among narration, report, and experience as a way that marks genuineness of one's own writing.

Likewise, the starting point is the body-territory, as an extensive surface of feelings, background and memories that exceed and spill from the body enabling the invention of other ways of life. The possibility of reporting one's history (Roig, 1981) as a body-territory configures a dynamic collective memory contrary to a record of what happened. Who narrate from something lived, from something meaningful, perceived and intersubjective. For this reason, as Ripamonti (2017) argues, the constructions of memory are not merely personal but political, and the presence of struggle is nourished by the memory that interferes, acts, and dislocates meanings.

From these positions, we seek to understand why the methodologies that arise from the margins are not yet incorporated. It is urgent to change those pending and out of circulation tools for mechanisms imposed by different institutions within an emergency context such as the one that crosses oneself as humanity (and not humanity). These still do not attack the criticisms of colonial and patriarchal modernity ways that have been built in the Global South for decades. We consider it of utmost importance to abandon pretensions of objectivity and neutrality in order to install, as Maristella Svampa (2020) states, a paradigm of care as a sociocognitive framework and an ecosocial and economic agreement.

The advance of real estate and agro-industrial business on areas declared as reserves or water basins in Cordoba, Argentina, is another face of neo-extractivist logic that still crosses body-territories (Domínguez, 2021). The terror and sustained war mechanisms to take the lands leave one breathless and with a naked corpoterritoriality, without taboos that freely cries out for expression and resistance. Here it makes sense to raise one's voices again to be firmly against these subjugations. When in 2018 the banner of struggle in Valle de Punilla "that Progress does not cost life" was coined, many understood that disputes for

defense of this way of life do not end with a specific event, on the contrary, it is the constant construction of an epistemic and political horizon of (re)existence.

However, one has rehearsed a way of answering the question of what happens to one's body-territories, and with it, to the questions of what to do, say, and think about so much urgent militant investigations. We strengthen the proposal of a contextualized thought, on an individual colonial and patriarchal rationality, to approach a thought as a place of *enunciation* and as a place of *being*, a thought as a territory, as a habitat. We have put the body and the word to open a space of interrogation to alternative methodologies and to propose a living theory.

In this way, and based on the debates on methods and epistemes, we consider it is important to rethink their work from different transdisciplinary contributions in order to build that thought positioning and focused on the territories, their struggles and their resistances.

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