

EDITORIAL:

Feminized Resistances¹

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Introduction

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her movement (Cixous, 1976: 875).

Hélène Cixous' emblematic call to write ourselves into the world and political being, is a call which wraps itself softly around our fingers and resolutely holds our hearts as we write this introduction. It is a call that speaks to the experiences of trauma, silencing, and exile of our own, and of which our authors speak. Yet, our special issue renders visible how new political languages, logics, and literacies are emerging from those places and subjects who have been rendered mute, monstrous, and malignant by patriarchal capitalist-coloniality. We invite you to take our hands and cast off the masks that have inhibited sight, feeling, and knowing-being. We invite you to journey with us into this borderland's

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encounter, where a politics enfolded that is being gently and powerfully crafted in the worlds and words of feminized resistances can be found. We hope that our collection of embodied texts will embolden (y)our loving weaving of this feminized politics otherwise.

What is to be done?

As the fissures in the violent logics of contemporary patriarchal capitalist-coloniality become ever more visible and visceral, those of us committed to co-constructing an *other* politics beyond these deathly logics of being and knowing, are faced with the urgent and ever present question: “What is to be done?”. In this special issue of the *Journal of Resistance Studies* we seek to provide a tentative and tender mapping of feminized resistances and subjectivities to support our navigation of these uncertain and transitional times. We believe that engagement with such resistances visibilizes practices of thought and action through and with which to nurture the conditions of possibility for emergent and imminent forms of creating, living, and loving otherwise.

Dominant representations of politics and resistance tend to reproduce the racialized and feminized subaltern subject as the absent other, of populist unreason, conservative particularity, victims without voice, and/or at best subjects of a concrete, identity-based politics that are unable to challenge macro-levels of power. Our issue speaks back to such violent misrepresentations and elisions by centering the praxis and voices of these subjects of, and from, the margins. We demonstrate how racialized subaltern women and communities are in fact at the forefront of the creation of a multiplicity of female political subjectivities and a marked feminization of resistance (Mohanty, 2003; Motta, 2013).

Women’s political engagement in contemporary struggles and movements is varied and complex. Some fight against neoliberal development projects that displace thousands of poor people. Whilst others contest historic logics of coloniality that imbricate smoothly with contemporary neoliberal logics to reproduce the pathologization of raced and feminized communities that results in, among other things, increasing rates of incarceration and forced child removal. Some concentrate particularly on queering politics in their struggle against patriarchal capitalist-coloniality, sexism, and heteronormativity. Additionally,

women's role in many popular movements has intensified, with shifts in the political towards a micro-political subversion and creation of, and in, the everyday. These women in movement enact and embody a communing which nurtures horizontal forms of political power and disalienated subjectivities, as well as collective and collaborative forms of social reproduction.

Such feminized subjectivities, politics, and resistance, if recognized at all, are generally conceptualized from perspectives that draw strongly on masculinist and Euro-centric concepts, approaches, and practices of knowing (Spivak, 1988; Lugones, 2010; Motta, 2013, 2016). What is elided and denied in many analyses is the ways in which racialized subaltern women who simultaneously face multiple oppressions can also create and experiment with new political subjectivities, re-imagine emancipatory politics, and produce and embody multiple grounds of epistemological difference and becoming. Viewed from this perspective, the emergence of female political subjectivities and the feminization of resistance raise fundamental epistemological and political questions. There is thus an urgent “need to recognize a feminization of resistance that is historically distinctive”, and which has the potential to challenge White and “masculinist conceptualizations of political and social transformation” (Motta, 2013: 35).

It is our explicit aim to address and explore these themes from a variety of epistemological perspectives in order to enmesh and decolonize representation, and to contribute to a queering of the very boundaries which have shaped disciplinarity in White masculinist alienating forms of knowing-being which work to produce the feminized and racialized subaltern subject as absent of rationality and subjectivity.

In our call for papers we invited texts with critical reflections, evaluations, theoretical developments, and empirical analyses, encouraging a critical discussion on the forms, conditions, possibilities, as well as problematics of feminized resistances and political subjectivities. We articulated our interest especially in critical understandings of feminized resistance strategies, subjectivities, epistemologies, discourses, tactics, effects, causes, contexts, and experiences. In line with the journal's main aim, we set out to advance an understanding of how feminized resistances and emancipatory practices might subvert and dislocate repression, injustice

and domination of any kind, as well as how such resistance might nurture autonomous subjectivity, alternative communities, as well as oppositional ways of thinking, being, doing, and loving.

Our call for papers received 35 abstracts. We selected the eight most promising papers for potential inclusion in this special issue, which ultimately contains five articles. In our editorial we work pedagogically to map, systematize, and strategize with their theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. Our systematization does not seek to re-enclose the epistemological diversity of enfolded political knowing-being that our contributors demonstrate into a Monological and closed tome of reified political directives or theoretical Truths. Rather, we hope to maintain a tension between the act of representing these feminized resistances and the art of keeping open the possibilities they gift to us in our thinking and being political otherwise.

We start by addressing the articles' main contributions to the field of resistance studies as we see it, and then move on to four key innovative themes in feminized resistances that emerge from the pieces: storytelling as onto-epistemological becomings; reading motherhood politically; feminine semiotics and the feminine divine; and liminality and queering borderlands. We then move to strategies and thinking-being ways forward that emerge from our collective voice: storytelling, storytellers and critical intimacy; onto-epistemological listening; and an ethics of care and care-fullness. We consider as part of this discussion the role and positionality of the researcher together with important methodological and ethical issues in engaging in feminized resistance in feminized ways.

Feminizing Resistance Studies

In her article "Telling Stories of Resistance and Ruination: Women Seeking Asylum", Kate Smith examines the relationship between hegemonic narratives about people seeking asylum and women asylum seekers' own stories in Britain. She argues for "new and different narratives which accommodate some of the complexities and contradictions of women's lives and open up the possibilities for women to tell their own diverse and different stories". Her analysis demonstrates that while some women who are seeking asylum "make sense of their lives and tell their stories in

relation to dominant narratives”, not all stories fit into these frameworks, and are thus “at risk of being overlooked, silenced, and unrecognized”. Yet, when these women gain the possibility to produce their own stories, they can challenge “problematic identities and dehumanizing narratives” while creating “new and different narratives” through which it becomes possible to “accommodate some of the complexities and contradictions” they are experiencing in their lives.

Smith’s analysis feminizes resistance studies by emphasizing the importance of narrative forms of resistance which not only produce new representations of otherwise invisibilized and infantilized raced and feminized subaltern subjects, but which also breathe into being the possibilities of survival, resilience, and enfolded hope. Importantly, her analysis disrupts the binary often found in resistance studies which either focuses on the political event as the epitome of resistance, or an unproblematic everyday form of resistance. Whilst Smith focuses our attention on everyday micro-practices of resistance and active agency, she demonstrates how these possibilities are constructed through practices of meaning-making in which contradictory fragments of good sense are put to work in the slow and careful practice of telling our stories.

Liz Mason-Deese’s article “Unemployed Workers’ Movements and the Territory of Social Reproduction” analyzes the role of women in the unemployed workers’ movements in Buenos Aires, Argentina, focusing on the ways on which they have politicized the issue of social reproduction by organizing around issues such as hunger, healthcare, housing, and education, as well as creating alternative economic practices and other autonomous forms of social reproduction. Her analysis shows how women’s key role in organizing around reproduction “implies a different sense of *the political*, which decenters the spaces and institutions of the state in order to privilege *territorial organizing* in the spaces of everyday life”. In addressing the politicization of social reproduction, Mason-Deese’s article contributes to the debate on feminized resistances in a way which “goes beyond a quantitative increase in women’s participation and leadership in social movements or the increasing visibility of women’s issues to imply a qualitative difference in how resistance takes shape”. The feminization of resistance, as she points out, “entails challenging the traditional divisions between the public and private spheres,

politicizing the ‘personal’, and shifting emphasis onto bodies and the everyday activities of social reproduction” – be it in the context of families, trade unions, political parties, state institutions, or within social movements where “certain forms of care work are undervalued and assumed to be women’s responsibility, while men engage in what is typically considered ‘political’ work: decision-making, public actions, speaking”.

Mason-Deese’s contribution arguably feminizes resistance studies by demonstrating how spaces that have been traditionally considered private or women’s space are actually key sites of political struggle and co-creation. This allows, as she argues, “for rethinking not only what counts as labor but what labor is valuable and necessary work”. It is exactly in this way that “women continue to lead the resistance to processes of neoliberalism and the precaritization wrought by this crisis of reproduction, through the creation of autonomous forms of social reproduction and the promotion of an ethics of care that challenges the basic assumptions of capitalist development”. Her contribution suggests the development of analytic lenses that creates potential for subverting masculinist forms of resistance which devalues and invisibilizes the politics of social reproduction and the everyday. It also suggests developing methodologies of critical intimacy with women and communities in struggle as opposed to traditional methodologies which have a strong tendency to value critical distance and reinscribe divisions of labor between thinker and doer, masculinized white mind and feminized, racialized body (Motta, 2011; Lugones, 2010).

In her article “Decolonizing Australia’s Body Politics: Contesting the Coloniality of Violence of Child Removal”, Sara C. Motta develops “a critique of the continual historic and contemporary use of child removal to systematically pathologize and criminalize Black, Indigenous, and poor-white motherhood”. Through her decolonizing feminist re-reading of contemporary child removal in Australia, she demonstrates “how the technologies and rationalities put to work as part of the reproduction of the modern state, wound the body politic in ways that disarticulate the conditions of possibility of the political subjectivity of the subaltern”. Moreover, Motta illustrates “active processes of subjectivity of racialized subaltern mothers and families, and their allies offer emergent possibilities for a decolonizing politics which seeks not rec-

ognition within the ‘state’ of things as they are but a radical disruption of the terms of the conversation as they have and continue to structure Australia’s state and polity”.

From the perspective of resistance studies, the main contribution of Motta’s article is the way in which her praxical analysis and reflection extends our understanding of the feminization of resistance “by bringing to the centre of our analytic and political attention the decolonizing epistemological and methodological aspects of this reinvention of emancipatory politics”. Importantly, this means “beginning from the onto-epistemological politics of subaltern racialized women through embracing the conflicting, tension-ridden experiences of being at once subjugated as a racialized subaltern non-subject *and* resisting this through active processes of subjectivity”. In this way, it goes “beyond both the representational invisibility of the racialized women and also the racialized subaltern woman as victim detailed above, to a perspective of feminism in decolonizing praxis”. As this is necessarily “a praxical task”, it “implies a stepping inwards to the contours of everyday life and the embodied experience of the lived contradictions between the ‘fiction’ and realities of capitalist (self) representation”. Similarly to Smith and Mason-Deese, this suggests a methodological reorientation to an epistemological co-creation of meaning for transformation, and subverts patriarchal capitalist-colonial forms of theory-making and practices of critique. Not only does this challenge the epistemic privilege of the thinker-knower but it also argues for practices of unlearning and decolonizing of that very subjectivity (to be enfleshed later).

Aja Marneweck’s article “Sexual and Spiritual R-Evolution through Animism: The Feminine Semiotics of Puppetry” explores resistant representational strategies of the feminine through analysis of animism-based creative practices in South Africa. She focuses on puppetry, which she considers “a sentient tool that simultaneously exposes the constructs of being whilst engaging in what could be described as a performative alchemy of imagination and form”. In analyzing how women’s puppetry pushes “the margins of complex political and sexual discourse as the language of the feminine body expressed in her multiplicitous identities and sexualities of resistance”, Marneweck illustrates how these artistic and creative practices based on animism “proffer strategies for expansive

creative distillations that provide new trajectories for feminine resistance and empowerment”. According to her, puppetry can serve as a “feminizing, de-colonizing form of artistic resistance” and “evoke critical and contentious languages of a co-constructive femininity in strategies of resistance today”.

From the perspective of resistance studies, the way in which she interprets feminine puppetry as “an artistic strategy of spiritual and sexual resistance to western patriarchal oppression” is intriguing. With a reference to a “feminized strategy for r-evolutionary creative practices”, she argues that “it is the radical feminine at the heart of puppetry that offers so many of the discursive strategies for resistance that emerge in its contemporary performance applications”. Her contribution enacts a return to the embodied, similar to the other contributions; however, this return to the embodied enacts in form and content a return of the world to the word, of the body to the text, and of the heart/womb to thought. This, in effect, helps in building an infrastructure of feminized resistances and becomings which present an intimate and essential challenge to traditions of critique and resistance studies embedded in logics of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality.

The last article of our special issue, “Queering Resistance, Queering Research: In Search of a Queer Decolonial Feminist Understanding of Adivasi Indigeneity” takes us to Kerala, India, the context in which Padini Nirmal mobilizes a queer decolonial feminist framework and utilizes *queering* to critically examine and analyze contemporary indigeneity as well as indigenous resistance. She does this by analyzing, firstly, the coloniality of development and its material effects on Adivasi lands and consequent land struggles, and secondly, by analyzing gender and sexuality in the same context. Nirmal illustrates how *queering* discloses “the latent structural complexities of Adivasi indigeneity by drawing causal links between systematic processes of land loss and land alienation, material livelihood, and structural changes in various domains, including gender, sexuality, spirituality and health”. Critically analyzing the state’s various policies through a decolonial feminist perspective, she shows how the objectives of different state policies are often contradictory with each other and can be harmful from the perspective of the Adivasis, for example, as development policies create “a state of dependence

rather than empowerment” and conservation policies support “industrial growth rather than socio-ecological preservation”.

Nirmal’s article addresses resistance from a variety of perspectives and on multiple levels. One of her most interesting arguments is that “emergent and existing modalities of Adivasi resistance” can be considered “epistemological and ontological acts of decolonial resistance against the combined coloniality of capitalism, development and modernity on their ancestral lands”. She illustrates how *queering* can be used productively in helping to recognize indigenous agency and resistance while also developing our understanding of “research *as* resistance”, a queer process that destabilizes, rethinks, and questions normative operations of power. It also advances the general understanding of resistance in various ways, for example, by showing that

the active, continuing presence of the Adivasi within the modern nation state to be an act of decolonial resistance... Even when Adivasis do not engage in protests and movement actions, they continue to live in living worlds of their own ontological, epistemological, and material making. This continued presence and prevalence of Adivasi land ontologies, and the living worlds that their ontologies enact and sustain despite years of colonial intervention, indicates presence to be a modality of resistance in general, and a form of embodied resistance in particular.

As Nirmal points out, these kinds of interpretations can potentially broaden our understanding of resistance as “conjoined component of decoloniality where that which is decolonial, is already in resistance”. *Queering*, in other words, works to complicate the concept of resistance by connecting it to acts of refusal, denial, and non-engagement, and by defining ontological difference as a form of decolonial engagement and act of resistance. In this way, her work centers the onto-epistemological multiple practices of being and relating that disrupt and escape attempts to analyze and engage with subaltern resistances using Monological onto-epistemological frameworks embedded in patriarchal coloniality.

The Gifts of Feminized Resistances

Below we map and systematize four gifts emerging from our palimpsest of feminized resistances – gifts that dominant framings of resistance and politics have written over. These gifts move us into uncharted territory of unknown possibilities. Yet, we feel they offer alchemical insights into how we might come to collectively develop multiple, heartfelt, and hope-filled answers to the question, “What is to be done?”.

Storytelling as Onto-Epistemological Becomings

What might be considered an epistemology of becoming underpinning the contributions to the special issue, centers its modes of be-ing around storytelling. Here, female subjects develop practices that seek to uproot the dominant and violent narratives that are told about *them* and which often embed themselves in their stories of self. Stories are, thus, not simply told about us but rather, as Kate Smith in her article explains, “our lives... are produced through, and at times constrained by, our own stories and the storytelling of others”. For women seeking asylum are responsabilized, as Smith continues, to “tell their stories in relation to dominant narratives”. Such demands to speak through and with dominant narratives also manifests in the “helping” professions for whom, as Smith continues, those women asylum seekers who do not reproduce a victim story become often unrecognized and are thus silenced, precluding recognition and engagement with their stories of agency and resistance.

These dominant stories often tear us and our families into pieces, as Sara C. Motta demonstrates in the case of forced child removal in Australia. Such stories, in this case, reproduce historic violent practices of state intervention onto the body of the racialized and feminized in the name of “civilization” and “saving”. In the contemporary period, they are put to work to produce raced and feminized subjects as “hate” figures. They aim to divide the popular body politic against itself and make women dance to a tune that is not theirs, distorting their realities and possibilities in an attempt at suffocation under layers of disembodied concepts, materialized through the everyday violent tentacles of state-capitalist power.

In contrast, as our contributors demonstrate, the storytelling of feminized resistances constitutes a re-telling that re-worlds and re-roots otherwise negated feminized and racialized subjects. It enflashes an existential coming into (collective) being which reclaims and re-members the arts of speaking-listening. Through this, seeds of possibility of our becoming are planted as we weave the actualities of be-ing otherwise in the world. This weaving, as Aja Marneweck demonstrates, connects, and is of, the sacred and the profane, of the everyday sweat and blood and breath, with the cosmic utterings of a feminine semiotic. This epistemological practice of relationality and connection develops a voice that embodies fragility as its strength and cannot be contained by the literacy of the phenomenology of Patriarchal Whiteness and the logics and rationalities of Coloniality. Rather, it is here that our serpent's tongues begin to speak through whispers of worlds and desires that beautify the grey-ness of disconnection and despair. It is here that a prefigurative transformation is actualized in which the pain body of internalized shame and disbelief becomes an embodied speaking back, at times beyond patriarchal capitalist-coloniality.

The voices and the stories told are of a subject that is multiple. This subject moves against and beyond the prophetic “from on high, thus speaks the Truth” form of storytelling so dominant in masculinist forms of emancipatory left critique (for further reflection see West, 1989; Motta, 2016). Such masculinist traditions of critique are characterized by an affectivity of ruptures, roughness, and a fierceness which re-articulates a terrain of the Monological, speaking over our embodied witnessing, and negating our grief and joy as sites of philosophical possibility. Feminized critique, as our contributors demonstrate, instead honors, and speaks from, the embodied experiences of subjugation *and* resistances, weaving as Lugones describes “an incarnated peopled memory”.

These practices push beyond the restrictive confines of critique which reify forms of resistance valuable and visible to an external audience and instead, as Smith discusses, “acknowledge personal or intimate activities, as well as practices and behaviors of resistance in response to a subtle and complex set of different circumstances and situations”. These “other” histories form the ground for a re-rooting of subjects negated by the dominant script of the political. Such re-rooting subverts

the paradoxical gaze that marks us as invisible as subjects and yet hyper-visible as objects of intervention, through the co-creation of a visibility of our own. This feeling-speaking visibility does not seek to speak in the master's language, but rather orientates itself towards a re-creation of the very terms, logics, and rationalities of the political, including the revolutionary/radical political.

Reading Motherhood Politically

Our contributors demonstrate how the raced body of the subaltern mother becomes a legitimate site of state interventions which attempt to reproduce the non-subjectivity of these women and their families. As Motta demonstrates, neoliberal logics and rationalities of individualization of social ills and raced pathologization of the poor imbricate smoothly with the historic violent rationalities and logics of coloniality. Here Black and Indigenous mothers, and increasingly poor white mothers, become positioned as outside and against citizenship, a threat to civility and their children, and thus subject to forced child removal or in the case of women seeking asylum, as Smith demonstrates, represented as bad mothers and/or bogus asylum seekers. Black and Indigenous motherhood becomes positioned as a stain on the body politic, in need of cleansing and removal. Additionally, as Mason-Deese demonstrates in the case of Argentina, this combined with increasing labor precarity and removal of public services often place mothers in the paradoxical position of both being blamed for their poverty and shouldered with the burden of their families' survival. The combination of these disciplinary interventions, social abandonment, and (mis)representations reproduce historic wounding and inflict new layers of wounding across and upon the body politic in an attempt to disarticulate the conditions of political voice and subjectivity of the subaltern.

However, as the terrain of the political economy of neoliberal violence shifts increasingly to the community, and mothers are often at the heart of their community, they have moved from the margins to the centre of the re-creation of a new politics of the commons and social reproduction. As Liz Mason-Deese quotes,

The men were embarrassed, they didn't want anyone to know they were not working, so they would stay inside all day, many started drinking... Meanwhile, us women had to go on providing for our families, we had to eat, we didn't have time to go about being embarrassed or worrying about our pride... that's why we came together and started organizing. (Interview, November 11, 2011, La Matanza)

From a place of devaluation, individualization, and often despair, mothers become the key organizers, thinkers, and collective nurturers of their communities. Positioned as a stain on civility and empty of thought, history and subjectivity, they collectively subvert this and come into being as political subjects with voice, agency, and dignity. Through their practices they create social relationships that do not produce for capital but for the commons and an *other* politics of well-being. Collective motherhood and forms of mothering such as these enact a politics in, again, and beyond the traditional figure of the mother. Such subversion and recuperation of an otherwise disparaged and negated motherhood, is also enacted in the narratives of mothers seeking asylum in which they foreground their continued care and loving-being as a mother even after being forced to separate from their children. Similarly, mothers who have faced, and are facing child removal, as Motta demonstrates, seek to recuperate and subvert dominant (mis)representations, often internalized, that they are unfit mothers and unable to care by practices of testimony and re-telling in which they identify, and strengthen, their capacity to care, survive, and nurture.

Such processes by necessity open our politics to horizons of other ethics and practices of care, not limited or framed by the privatized heteronormative and colonial rendition of family to the nuclear family unit. Indeed, they expand motherhood to the non-maternal body, and bring value to practices and relationships normally relegated to women's work and yet essential to ensure the reproduction and well-being of our communities. As Mason-Deese describes in relation to unemployed movements in Argentina, this includes

taking care of a children a collective, community responsibility, not the sole responsibility of mothers or other female relatives, and enables

women to be more equal participants in the movement as a whole. On the other hand, by paying members to work in childcare and educational projects, either directly or through government subsidies, the MTD demonstrates the importance it places on these activities. Valuing and compensating this labor thus directly contrasts against its invisibilization and naturalization as women's labor under capitalism, and allows for the work to be shared rather than falling solely to women.

This politics of motherhood also nurtures what is arguably the terrain of a new cosmopolitics, a new enfolded political communion embedded within care; care for self, other, and cosmos. This takes seriously an affectivity of tenderness, attentiveness, connection, and love, and moves beyond and below a disembodied politics of momentary ruptures, cataclysmic events, and great egos. As Mason-Deese describes, "Speaking of care implies a way of engaging differently in reproduction by prioritizing the creation and reproduction of life and healthy social relations over the reproduction of capital". Feminized resistances are, clearly, at the very heart of this politics of care and social reproduction otherwise.

The politics of motherhood thus foregrounds and centralizes the site of the community and practices of social reproduction in this new feminized politics of the commons. Here a politics in, against, and beyond the figure of the hegemonic mother is articulated, one which vindicates the capacity and the dignity of Black and Indigenous motherhood and traditions of mothering, at the same time as it collectivizes mothering to the non-maternal body. By valuing labor that is traditionally individualized, feminized, and invisibilized, it re-thinks and re-shapes the contents, forms, rhythms, and textures of emancipatory politics and resistance. It shifts our attention and bodies to the intimacies of reproducing everyday life against and beyond the politics of capitalist negation and dehumanization *and* masculinist and White forms of the (revolutionary) political.

Feminine Semiotics and Feminine Divine

Now I-woman am going to blow up the Law: an exposing henceforth possible and ineluctable: let it be done, right now (Cisoux, 1976: 887).

As Walter Mignolo explains, in capitalist coloniality the “word is separated from the world” and becomes a disembodied source of Truth and Reason in the world premised upon the epistemological annihilation of the raced other. However, this raced other is also deeply gendered, as a feminized dark body of lack, barbarity, death, and madness that must be tamed and contained. Such epistemological logics and rationalities create a Monological language and onto-epistemological text of a singular world:

given over to ritual, repetition, a secondary attribution of values, speculation and to a logic unsuited to life and its breath... uprooted from its engendering in the present, from its connection to my own and the other’s body (Irigaray, 2016: 123).

A return to the enfleshed feminine as the basis of a feminine semiotic that speaks from this space of abjection and negation, not as an Other to the Self, but as an *other* outside and autonomous, becomes thus a mode of creative becoming in the practices of feminized resistances. Feminized forms of representation are a central thread in such enfleshed coming into being of our-selves otherwise. These necessarily exceed the logics and rationalities of representation of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality.

Here the contribution of Marneweck is paradigmatic of this untameable feminine semiotic of being-knowing-feeling. In its form the piece conjures into being the third space of the inappropriate other (Trinh T. Minh-Hha, 1987), with the word as both representation and expression weaving undulating, wild, untameable, and allegorical texts. In its content, it engages with the feminine semiotic as represented and called into being through the embodied animistic performances of “feminist” puppetry in South Africa. As she describes,

Through the body of the performed puppet, deliberate attention is brought to the inherent multiplicity of being that facilitates life... It is these multiple performing differences that converge in the puppet that render it an inappropriate other, as that which both expresses and confounds construct and being, visually and critically bridging inside and outside, critique and aesthetic, binary and liminality. Puppetry reveals

itself as a sentient tool that simultaneously exposes the constructs of being in the sculpted, created form (morph) and the performing feminine body, whilst engaging in what I can only express as a performative alchemy of presence and embodiment (forces, power, abjection, creation and decay, sentience, emotion).

Language becomes multiple, taking embodied, spiritual, ancestral, cognitive, and aesthetic forms. Language also exceeds representation and calls into being the presence of the third space of the inappropriate other of which Marnebeck speaks. In these performances of play, ritual, and imagination, the sacredness of connection to the feminine body, the ancestral knowledges of women and of the body of the earth and cosmos are re-called and re-remembered to be present. The creative re-connection to what black feminist Audre Lorde (2000) spoke of as the erotic, is nurtured, and in this the sacred multiple sexed and embodied liminal sexuality at the heart of the feminine semiotic speaks. As Marnebeck explains, this en fleshed feminization of re-evolutionary resistance “holds open the doors of not just an alternative resistance to the destructive segregations of hegemonic discourse and systems, but of living awareness of the fluidity of boundaries so crucial to revisioning identity, sexuality, self, environment and being in the 21st century”.

Such onto-epistemological politics of the embodied decolonizing other are also touched upon in Nirmal’s contribution, which seeks to develop a queer decolonial feminist reading of Adivasi Indigeneity in Attappady, Kerala. In this decolonial politics of presence, the land is subject and indigeneity is always-already in relation to the land which has spiritual, material, and ultimately ontological value. Monological and reductionist linguistic representations reproduced by the state of/as coloniality thus enact continuing symbolic and material violence upon Adivasi peoples. For instance, state renditions of land as empty and/or object to be commercialized render silent Adivasi complex representations in which, as Nirmal describes citing one of her interviewees, “kaaTu” refers to land for agriculture, while “maNu” refers to all land, territory and living world, “veeTu” refers to home, and “solai” refers to the forest. If land has presence, history, and knowledge, then its rendition as absence reproduces violent logics of silence and silencing.

Land as already always ontological-political has clear resonances and connections with what other activist decolonial scholars such as author Marisol de la Cadena (2010), speaking in relation to Indigenous politics in the Andes, calls a new cosmopolitics which embraces earth-beings as subjects. *Queering*, as Nirmal describes, “is not just about decolonizing relations to land, but also about the decolonization of everything in relation”. This ontological politics or cosmopolitics ruptures the historic hierarchical and violently enforced borders of masculinized White man against and over feminized and racialized nature, that is, the natural upon which the coloniality of liberalism is embedded. Queering feminist decoloniality thus helps to visibilize and resist the Monological and singular politics of knowledge of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality which renders land as object, empty of being-knowing relationality, and thus void of onto-epistemological value.

Resistance and calling into being an *other* way of life as an ultimately Queering Feminine Semiotic seeks not to speak in the terms of White masculinist logics, rationalities, and performances of resistance and critique. For these, as Cisoux describes “[create] the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing”. Rather, the queering feminine semiotic as the feminization of resistance seeks to “inscribe the breath of the whole wo-man”. A complex multilayered, embedded, and embodied co-creative being in the world which embraces all that is exiled, denied, and rendered mute and pathological within masculinist forms of the political become the grounds for our speaking. Such speaking is multiple, excessive, unruly, heretic, and it re-works in multiple and open ways the epistemological grounds of being and becoming in/as/with the world.

Liminality and Queering Borderlands

Motta, Nirmal, and Marneweck all resist and subvert in form and content hierarchical binaries and bordering practices constitutive of patriarchal capitalist-coloniality. In different ways, they speak a politics from the abject or the marginalized others that finds in these places and bodies the possibilities for a queering feminist decolonial politics otherwise. This subverts the re-presentations of the margins and the marginal as epistemologically monstrous and devoid of any capacity as speaking-subject.

It instead seeks to co-create collective practices of meaning-making in which we imminently call into being other worlds and epistemological grounds of becoming.

The first steps in this as practice and representation are, as Nirmal describes, taking “the inversion of the margin and the center” and exposing the violence that brought into being and undergirds the reproduction of this hierarchical binary/border. Like this, we become willing and able to “look Medusa straight on to see her” and as Hélène Cisoux (1976: 884–885) so beautifully describes, what we see is that “she’s not deadly. She’s beautiful and she’s laughing”.

This epistemological privileging and political centering of the margins and otherwise disposable or infantilized subject disrupts and dislodges the complex politics of invisibility and hyper-visibility, which all our authors touch upon and which reproduce the onto-epistemological negation of these feminized and racialized subaltern subjects. The imminent co-construction of knowing embodied presence subverts the dehumanizing gaze of coloniality, shining a collective light on the continued biopolitical violence of the rationalities and technologies of contemporary neoliberalized coloniality.

The creation of our own visibility on our own terms not only involves subverting the external gaze between the binary, but also casting a tender look at the ways in which the colonizers’ gaze becomes internalized and creates epistemological and ontological soul wounds (Gill et al., 2012; Duran et al., 2008). As Motta and Smith demonstrate in relation to mothers experiencing forced child removal in Australia and women asylum seekers in Britain respectively, this involves complex and multiple forms of testimony and embodied witnessing, premised upon an ethics of careful attentiveness, deep listening, and active unlearning. As Jasmina Husanović (2015: 26) writes in relation to the politics of trauma, “enacting a modality of witnessing... is an embodied experience which creates anew shattered webs and coordinates of humanity, sociality, and politicality”. It also crafts new feminized literacies of grief, joy, and embodied hope.

Subverting the violence of the gaze of Power, Truth, and Reason does more than speak from and centre the margins and marginality as

site of epistemic possibility. It seeks to disrupt the very binaries between centre and margin, colonizer and colonized, masculine and feminine, self and other. It thus enacts a decolonization in form and content of the categories of subjectification in which we (dis)appear as racialized and feminized (non)subjects. As Motta recounts in relation to the act of witnessing the agentic narrative of a misnamed and shamed mother, a radical relationality can be forged which disrupts the boundary between, and categories of, self and other. In this occurs a mutual learning and unlearning of the wounds of coloniality, and which, as Nirmal discusses in the case of queering feminist decoloniality but equally applicable here, co-creates a “simultaneous construction of epistemological and ontological narratives of the researcher and the research, whereby the researcher’s own world-making merges with those of the research subjects”. These encounters enact alchemical processes of meaning-making in which liminality and plurality of being and becoming are foregrounded. Echoing the sacred practices of the Feminine Semiotics in the animistic puppetry of which Marneweck speaks, this praxis, as Nirmal continues, “is not about border crossing, but about shape shifting borders themselves”.

Our collective contribution in this special issue on Feminized Resistances subverts and challenges much current critical debate that fails to recognize or condemns and is fearful of a politics which begins from the place-based experiences of multiple oppressions. Such critical debate often suggests that such place-based and intimately embodied forms of feminized and racialized politics can only ever do the work of capitalist hegemony and recuperate potentially radical politics into a liberal and individualistic moralism which disarticulates popular revolutionary subjectivities and collectivities.

We speak back, in and through multiple tongues, to this (mis)representation of the possibilities of politics which begin from such experiences through the work of decolonial feminist autonomist praxis emerging from racialized subaltern women across the globe. Centrally this “we” does not seek in form or content to re-enclose political possibilities into a singular and Monological onto-epistemological project. Rather, these praxical methodologies and relational onto-epistemic encounters enmesh the provincialization of the Euro-centric revolutionary subject assumed in extant critique, and demonstrate how its grounds of

being are premised on the denial and dehumanization of the raced and feminized “other”. In this way, we seek to open immanent and embodied possibilities of a multiple liminal pluridiverse subjectivity that is birthing into being both an other feminized politics of resistance and affirmative decolonizing onto-epistemological grounds of becoming (political) otherwise.

Strategies and Ways Forward: The Role and Positionality of Researcher and Methodologies of Feminist Decolonizing

This final part of our editorial moves to strategic considerations specifically in relation to fostering and nurturing the conditions of possibility for the seeding of an enfolded politics and epistemological becoming otherwise. We move through and dialogue with the contributors’ insights, practices, and commitments. We speak from a perspective of scholar-activists living and breathing an “activist life” (Seppälä, forthcoming) in which we seek to co-construct the conditions of our self-liberation with the communities in which we are embedded.

We center the importance of tender and complex forms of both coming to voice amongst and within ourselves and our feminized and racialized communities, as well as the importance of co-creating tender and complex forms of solidarity between different groups of women in engaging in a broader yet multiple project of constructing decolonial forms of feminist solidarity (Mohanty, 2003; see also Seppälä, 2016a, 2016b). This kind of feminist praxis is based on the idea that through the creation of “a plurality of forms of knowing” and transnational as well as local alliances and solidarities, it is possible to destabilize “epistemological politics of patriarchal capitalist coloniality”, to challenge “the dramatic effects of neoliberal capitalism on the lives of women” (Motta, 2013: 38), and to co-create the conditions of possibility for a new pluridiverse emancipatory politics for our times.

Storytelling, Storytellers, and Critical Intimacies

All the authors in this special issue share an embodied and existential embrace of, and commitment to, decolonial forms of feminist solidarity

and being-knowing, and discuss their ethical and political commitments very openly in their work. They all, in their differing ways, either through feminist narrative methodology (Smith), feminist ethnographic methodology (Mason-Deese, Marneweck), queer decolonial feminist (QDF) methodology (Nirmal), or decolonizing feminist Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Motta), seek to co-create the conditions of possibility for the telling of “other” stories. Such stories enact enfolded and existential coming into being of racialized subaltern women and their communities which subvert and dislodge hegemonic renditions of Reason, the Law, and Truth which attempt to render them mute, absent, or pathological.

For all our authors, such a methodological commitment involves, in one way or another, a return to the body and the embodied, and a new poetic of embodied knowing/ledge. Such a return cannot be enacted through the lens of critical distance and abstraction as separation, which is common to masculinist and Euro-centric theoretical traditions and practices of knowing-being, as we have argued above and in previous writings. Rather, as Mason-Deese argues, this means “recognizing that self-reflective knowledge production is a fundamental element of this new form of politics”. This underlines the need for actively embracing the unlearning of academic privilege and transforming the divisions of labor and alienating practices of knowing-about within which such privileges of the geo-politics of coloniality are embedded.

For Nirmal, this means queering the very binaries and boundaries between knower and known, mind and body, concrete and universal, which are characteristic of 20th century forms of hegemonic and critical theorizing of resistance and the political. Like this, binaries which produce a knowing-researcher positioned as the subject that can both visualize and theorize domination and guide liberation, are disrupted and jettisoned. Instead, as Marneweck describes, it is the fostering of practices and performances of self and/as other in which we can co-create diverse, yet overlapping strategies for meaning-making, new languages of resistances, and tongues of social and political change. This requires, as Motta continues, the researcher moving away from representing the “other” and rather, moving “towards collective problem-solving, healing, and transformation”.

Arguably, the researcher(s) become(s) a storyteller(s), but such a storyteller that is neither unitary nor separate yet rather a committed co-creator of “other” enfolded stories in which “we” come into knowing-being. This involves a step away from seeking to discover one Truth and one emancipatory political rationality and subjectivity, and rather emphasizes ontological and epistemological multiplicity and diversity through practices which nurture critical intimacy. Such a praxis, as Motta describes, necessitates “An epistemological stepping inwards which involves nurturing and experimenting with knowledge processes in which we collectively bring to awareness how systems of oppression wound us as communities and as individuals”. Yet, as she continues:

it is of no surprise that decolonizing epistemological practices comes from those who inhabit the epistemological margins of colonial difference. They emerge out of the struggle and practice against ontological and epistemological denial as outsiders-within formal education and in the multiple informal spaces of everyday life and community organizing against processes of subjectification of coloniality.

This does not, however, imply erasing the complex and non-unitary power differences between researcher and her research subjects. On the contrary, as Nirmal argues, it requires “reflexivity and respect in all research settings”. To support this, she positions her own research within a *space of queerness*, where the researcher, the researched and the research itself are queered by difference in their marginalities, oppressions, and liberations, and united by the common goal of decolonizing understandings, experiences, and practices:

Within this *space of queerness* it becomes possible to question the ways in which marginality comes to be constructed, and recognize the agency of each entity in relation to the other. The *space of queerness*, in my analysis, accommodates multiple marginal positions, serving as an inclusive, shifting space of borderlands, and thus offers a more complex, less rigid understanding... As a relational, decolonial zone, it allows the centering of previously marginal beings and ideas by recognizing both

the shifting nature of marginality whereby the marginal is often within, and sometimes alongside the center, and the operation of marginality as a modality of resistance.

Onto-Epistemological Listening

Decolonizing feminist and queering methodologies described above are committed to dislodging patriarchal capitalist-coloniality premised as it is on closure to listening to other epistemological grounds of becoming. This requires enacting a practice and politics of listening. Such listening is epistemologically pushing us towards our borders of self in an effort to reach out beyond the categorizations used to name, shame, and tame us.

Listening such as this is both a starting point and also a premise of a political practice that seeks to prefigure resistance and decolonizing as research. In Kate Smith's work this has, for example, included the use of a reflexive and multi-layered interpretive approach called the Listening Guide which "provides a research process that can disrupt and challenge dominant narratives told about women's lives", enabling "a different subjectivity to bear upon the old 'universality'" (Brown and Gilligan, 1992: 16 cited in Smith, this issue).

For Marneweck and Nirmal, such listening practices entail attentiveness to the rhythms of the black female body and the sacred body of the earth. Additionally, epistemological listening embraces and is inscribed in practices of "ritual, living sculpture, presence, symbol, slippage and embodiment" which, as Marneweck continues, are places in which we can encounter "expression that provides a feminized strategy for r-evolutionary creative practices".

This listening not only calls for attentiveness to the other as external subject and being. It also necessitates the uncertain, often discomforting, and fragile practice of internal listening that enables a blurring of the borders between self and other, and a return to all that we have exiled. Such homecoming to a third space of the inappropriate other, as Motta describes, nurtures the kinds of reciprocal relationality of co-healing and transformation that can work to dislodge the traces of coloniality dwelling within and between us.

Spaces and practices of epistemological listening involve creating the conditions of possibility for a speaking from the silence – silence that has been enforced by the violent misrepresentations of Power; silence that has become habit as a practice of survival; silence that is a mark of our traumatized collective bodies, minds, and psyches. In doing so, we can foreground the urgency of reading trauma politically and thus bringing from the margins to the centre healing as emancipation.

An Ethics of Care and Care-fullness

Listening in this way is not possible for the White masculinist knower. For such a knower is a careless subject, able to distance and distract away and over the messiness of everyday encounters, needs, and suffering. Such a praxis can but emerge through a collective politics of care and caring, as Mason-Deese so wonderfully describes through the stories and experiences of women in unemployed workers' movements and communities in Argentina. This, as Annette Maguire describes in her book review of Isabell Lorey's *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*, entails valuing the labor of caring and social reproduction that has been traditionally relegated to women's work, invisible, and/or devalued. Here, we would argue that feminisms from the margins, particularly those that have resisted commodification and institutionalization, are of particular importance if "we are to think in common and materialize affective solidarity by investing in hope and labour in the politics against the governing terror which increasingly deepens and cements the ultimate precarity of women's bodies and labour, life and thought" (Husanović, 2015: 20).

An ethics of care and nurturing calls for taking seriously the conditions which make collaborative feminist decolonizing and queering knowing-praxis possible (and impossible). Without such attentiveness, the collaborations that we co-create run the risk of re-producing the very same exclusions, elisions, and silences which render us absent and isolated. This means taking seriously and reading politically questions such as food, childcare, housing, mental and physical health, and embedded trauma. These labors of love – or, acts and practices of love as described in Tiina Seppälä's book review of bell hooks' *All about Love* – necessitate the co-creation of new languages and literacies that begin from the body, for the body is already-always inscribed in the speaking from the experi-

ence of being violently rendered abject and absent.

Such care-full labor is tender, slow, and often centers on what might otherwise be considered the mundane and outside of, or a distraction away from, the political. However, we believe that it is by weaving the magic of the everyday into conditions of our speaking, that we might foreground the possibilities of a politics with which we can nurture the self-liberation of our communities, and the co-creation of an autonomous feminized politics of resistance otherwise.

New Beginnings...

Birthing worlds
writing silence
breathing life into liminality,

excavating from the denied.
Tenderly holding
to find the will to write

something shared, already
carried in collective memory
enfleshed into be-ing,

wandering through shadows
surviving dark alleys
swimming in the deep.

I journey with you;
this eternal multiple journey
where 'I' is multiple too.

Storytellers re-rooted into life
passionate listening
nurturing care-fully desire.

We look Medusa in the face
realizing her beauty,
realizing we are not mistakes.

Speaking whispers
delicate tongues
feminized politics otherwise.

In Newcastle, Australia and Rovaniemi, Finland
Sara and Tiina, 28th November 2016

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