• CHAPTER II •

CRITICAL THINKING IN THE MIDST OF HORROR

After the Hebrew Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime in mid-twentieth century Europe, the Frankfurt School raised the question regarding the role of philosophy in preventing the righteous from continuing to be annihilated and executioners from succeeding. The theory of communicative action that came out of this European trauma—particularly developed by the second generation constituted by Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel—expanded seeds of thinking and action towards different corners of the world, including the other European cultures with a Latin background, as well as the thinking of the Americas.

In Spain, for example, Reyes Mate,[1] a Spanish philosopher who delved deeply into the question of *anamnetic memory* as a condition to enable political philosophy. Although it did find resonance in Latin America, Latin American thinking developed this line of reasoning even further. In Mexico, for instance, Enrique Dussel[2]—together with Bolívar Echeverría and other Marxist thinkers—opened a critical dialogue with this German school, resuming a rigorous reading of Karl Marx and Walter Benjamin in order to think about the dialectic of history from the perspective of its *negativity*, but without ignoring the *material* conditions necessary for any democracy and communicative action. From this perspective, Dussel's debate with Apel[3] in Mexico was marked by a critique of the theory of communicative action due to its lack of analysis regarding such "materialist" conditions for the historical constitution of a participatory and social democracy that sought to go beyond formal democracy.

Within this landscape of the *precariousness* of life, critical thinking emerged in a plundered territory but appealed to more radical authors, already located in the theoretical still unexplored ground of *decoloniality*. Franz Fanon, Ivan Illich, Walter Mignolo,[4] and Immanuel Wallerstein[5] were the pioneering voices. The debate later became richer and more complex thanks to various kinds of feminism, such as that of Angela Davis[6] and Judith Butler[7]

in the United States, or the feminism proposed by Sylvia Marcos[8] in Mexico and Rita Laura Segato[9] in Argentina. These Latin American authors set forth anti-systemic thinking with a *decolonial* feminist approach linked to Latin American women's diverse forms of political, social, class, cultural, ethnic, and spiritual resistance.

For this reason, within the initial *genealogy* of Latin American decoloniality outlined in this book, in this chapter, we propose inspiring ideas from today's expressions of anti-systemic resistance. These ideas are practical but also theoretical, as we have already described in the first chapter regarding their social, cultural, and spiritual aspects as survivors in the midst of horror.

We shall follow the course of contemporary critical thinking, using three fundamental pillars that will help us to understand the ethical, political, and cultural interweaving that makes up this anti-systemic critique. The first of these pillars is *internal decoloniality* proposed by Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui, among *others*, as a necessary deconstruction of external colonialism, as a self-criticism of how we have allowed it to predominate in beliefs, values, and practices that we have taken on as colonized peoples. Next, we shall explore the critique of hetero-normative patriarchy albeit deconstructing its binary model of sex-gender sexuality, with the critique pioneered by Judith Butler, followed by non-religious queer theories. Finally, we shall address the pillar of *political autonomy*, characteristic of the different expressions of anti-systemic resistance among the original peoples. This last proposal is a milestone in anti-systemic thinking throughout the world, thanks to its historical materialization in the *Zapatista movement* emerging in Mexico in the late twentieth century.

We here take up the proposal made by Pablo Romo Cedano[10]—which still needs to be thoroughly documented—in order to link this Mexican historical contribution to critical thinking with the School of San Cristóbal and the School of Cuernavaca since they both formed the two threads through which critical thinking was interwoven in twentieth-century Mexico.

The Backstage of Decoloniality: A Pending Debate between Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui, and Achille Mbembe

Critical thinking has one of its most fruitful stands in "the epistemologies of the South," a concept proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos,[11] criticized

by various voices of the South that appeal to a diversity of other categories and diverse practices of thinking in order to dismantle modern hegemony.

We therefore propose here to conduct an "imaginary" conversation between three voices that spell a new language with a view to the common horizon of deconstructing coloniality. However, they each have their own accent, expressive of the diversity of historical experiences, cultural approaches, and political options at stake.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos or the Decolonized Colonizer

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a promoter of the *World Social Forum*,[12] is a Portuguese researcher who has carried out his work from an explicit *decolonial* stance, namely leaving behind any claim to hegemonic thinking. De Sousa Santos characterizes the hegemonic thinking formed throughout the twentieth century through the aforementioned trilogy of capitalism-patriarchy-colonialism as an idol with feet of clay given its will to dominate based on *abysmal thinking*.

De Sousa Santos's analysis is based on a political critique of modern law as a social contract imposed by the European and American invaders who subjected the peoples of the Global South. He thus formulates a critique of the nation-state model that was deployed, for example, in Africa, in an arbitrary and cruel manner almost unprecedented in modern history, by the industrialized powers of the North Atlantic after the First European War of the twentieth century.

Indeed, Achille Mbembe recently called the territorial division of Africa the beginning of the "Africanization of the world," in the sense of a strategy of globalized precarization of dispensable life, i.e., that the human condition is a hindrance to the foreign occupation of territories, accompanied by the extermination of entire peoples and cultures.

As part of this death scene, the role of "Black people" in early capitalism was associated with slavery, thus denoting human condition:

In Africa and in all things Black, many saw two blinding forces—at times only clay barely touched by sculpture, at others a fantastical animal, a metamorphic, heterogeneous, and menacing figure, capable of exploding into shards. In this chapter we seek to evoke this order, which was always in the process of ebullition, half solar and half lunar, and of which the slave was the cornerstone. This chapter, then, constitutes the foundation of the entire book, its ground zero. But to understand the status of the Black slave in the first era of capitalism, we must return to the figure of the ghost. A

plastic subject who suffered a process of transformation through destruction, the Black Man is in effect the ghost of modernity. It is by escaping the slave-form, engaging in new investments, and assuming the condition of the ghost that he managed to endow such transformation by destruction with a significance for the future.[13]

Although we shall later return to Achille Mbembe's proposal, we are referring to it here because it directly relates—as a new voice in the conversation taking place in the epistemic South—to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos initiated as an intellectual quest a couple of decades ago.

Indeed, de Sousa Santos's commitment lay in promoting *an ecology of forms of knowledge* capable of retrieving the rich diversity of the epistemologies of the South, the balance of which was broken by instrumental modernity. Therefore, "epistemological justice" would not be carried out in a merely academic way but would have to be intrinsically linked to the popular and social movements that claim their forms of knowledge are rooted in their ways of living, working, trading, and practicing culture, and even spirituality and theologies, inevitably based on reversing the history of domination.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos has been criticized by his Latin American colleagues due to a certain eagerness to retrieve what has been destroyed, for example, the ancestral forms of knowledge of the great original cultures of the Americas. However, de Sousa Santos does not cease in his deep desire to promote the decolonization of knowledge, in which many battles need to be fought in order to achieve epistemic justice, from retrieving the different forms of wisdom held by the original peoples to the subversion and decolonization of the modern university seen through the lens of epistemic pluralism.

In this regard, Boaventura de Sousa Santos,[14] in his most recent publications, suggests that the research communities embedded in the traditional university—moved by his desire to decolonize knowledge—live amid contradiction. In other words, universities in late modern times that are at present trapped in the service to the global market are a strategic place in which to introduce *other* processes of the gestation of knowledge. This university praxis must always be carried out in alliance with social and popular movements, with a critical dialogue around their proposals in order to promote alternative education and research, keeping in mind the *social impact of knowledge*,[15] in the sense of using specific projects to promote a cognitive decoloniality that goes beyond the dominant instrumental epistemology.

Ultimately, for Boaventura de Sousa Santos it is a question of promoting a multiplicity of university models that go beyond traditional academia

with its demand to produce a certain number of books per year, its quantification of citations in peer-reviewed journals at the service of international knowledge consortiums, as a mere information technology at the service of industrial development.

For all the above, a new *decolonial university* model must be created, following new criteria for evaluating the relevance and social impact of knowledge. In addition, as part of this colossal task of achieving epistemic justice, it is essential to promote cognitive networks with a diversity of actors that enable another form of *communality* through cultivating land in accordance with ancestral forms of wisdom, a fair market economy, and the production of cultural goods that represent the life and cosmovision of the peoples who have been made invisible, denied, or subdued by abysmal thinking.

Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui: An Aymara Anthropologist Focusing on Internal Decoloniality

Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui is a "rearguard intellectual," in the full sense of de Sousa Santos's term. With her own genius, she represents the *decolonial* profile of specifically Andean Latin American critical thinking.

As part of the *Alice Project* pertaining to the University of Coimbra, the *Conversas sobre o mundo* [*Conversations about the World*] were recorded in order to promote a dialogue between thinkers from the epistemic South. In one of these conversations, Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui exchanges ideas with her Portuguese host,[16] surrounded by the majestic Andean mountain range. In that conversation, Rivera-Cusicanqui made it clear that, while recognizing the importance of the concept of "epistemologies of the South" proposed by her Portuguese colleague, the monographic anthropological work she has developed on the social struggles of the Aymara people has come up with an innovative concept that she coined—*internal decoloniality*.

This anthropological and philosophical category simultaneously points to the inevitable critique and necessary dismantling of *colonialism* that the Andean peoples incorporated into their practices and narratives as part of the colonial subjugation imposed on them, first throughout the three hundred years of Spanish colonial domination, followed by another two hundred years of domination by the Caucasians and descendants of the Spanish under the independent Republic of Bolivia, who imposed their white, urban, and large-scale plantation law on the original peoples.

For Rivera-Cusicanqui, overcoming this historical, social, and cultural trauma has been far more complicated than expected. In fact, the colonialism

of the Spanish invaders became *internalized* over several centuries of viceregal domination. An example of this process is the prevalence of caste systems, which—as occurred throughout the Americas, from Canada, the United States, and Mexico, to Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina—"normalized" the ethnic, gender, and class subordination of the original peoples to the ruling elite of the Caucasians and descendants of the Spanish. An elite commanded by patriarchal males exercised power supposedly for the sake of social harmony with the blessing of dominant Catholicism.

In effect, the Catholic religion was one of the pillars of this *internalized coloniality*—imposed throughout the Americas under its baroque and Tridentine expression—sustained by hierarchies of power with the attributes of the masculine gender and the white race linked to "divinized" hegemonic domination. Ultimately, it was a political and social translation of idolatrous worship to the image of a white god.

This process of political-religious coloniality occurred in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Latin America in such a way that the original communities—such as the Andean peoples studied by Rivera-Cusicanqui—internalized an inferiority complex that has become imprinted in their collective unconscious, driving them to identify as having an inferior condition to those by whom they are dominated. Today, the white and mixed-heritage urban or landowning entrepreneurs, who represent the living image of that almighty god: private property conjoined with the free market.

Twenty-five years ago, Enrique Dussel[17] had already set forth a similar diagnosis of Western domination in the Americas within the context of the 500th anniversary of the clash between the West and Abya Yala. According to Dussel, the colonizing subjects who arrived in these lands had such precise characteristics that they had a political impact of domination on the poor and exploited communities, particularly on the women, and especially on original cultures: domination was modeled around the figure of a European, Christian, white, and male chauvinist subject. Rivera-Cusicanqui adds a fifth element to this hegemonic domination: the large-scale landowner.[18]

Thus, in addition to representing the severely challenging critique of the dominant (de)subjectivation imposed on the colonized, it was not long before this *internal decoloniality* took on a political and epistemic dimension.

In effect, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the original peoples of Abya Yala were able to dismantle the internalized notion of inferiority accepted as a social and political role through their social struggles

in defense of the land, their language, their ways of living, and their coexistence with Mother Earth. The forms of resistance adopted by the original peoples have gained such historical strength that the logic of domination was disrupted through practices of *decoloniality* linked to territorial defense as actual forms of *political* and autonomous resistance.

Behind this decolonial resistance, there is an underlying epistemic ground that has remained hidden for centuries: the cosmovisions and cosmoexperiences of the original peoples. Nevertheless, it has been necessary to bring their cognitive power to light because it reformulates the political sphere, as demonstrated by the social movements of the original peoples based on the critical thinking emerging at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first.

Hence, after five centuries of silence, the *cognitive* dimension of internal decoloniality emerged—with unexpected force—as a reformulation of the condition of subordination and supposed inferiority of individuals and peoples. Emancipated and empowered ethnic minorities, aware of the social, legal, and political dimensions of their right to *difference,* are pursuing *affirmative action.*

This emancipatory project of the original peoples translated into their defending and promoting their ancient modes of production, their governance experiences, and the recovery of their own jurisprudence, together with defending and promoting their cultural expressions such as celebrations, spirituality, and their philosophy of Harmonious Living (*Buen vivir*).

The contemporary political vindication of the Andean peoples, which led Evo Morales to win the presidential elections in Bolivia as Bolivia's first indigenous president is a major example of internal decoloniality. Despite this historic achievement, the transition to an effective multicultural democracy—during his first term in office—was not easy, precisely because of the alienating effects of internal coloniality impacting the new government, in addition to factors exogenous to indigenous autonomies, such as pressures from the global financial market and corruption.[19] The rejection of the myriad reforms necessary to achieve transitional justice—particularly in the cultural, social, and economic fields—after centuries of ethnic and class segregation has made justice administration slow and not always successful. Besides, some of the original peoples who migrated to the cities became uncritical consumers of the capitalist market model. At the same time, they were subjected to the manipulation of political parties in order to gain their support for partisan democracy, remaining subjected to the power of the media industry that today dominates markets throughout the world.

In addition to recognizing this structural difficulty to overcome the colonial past in the economic and social structures as well as in the collective imaginary, for Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui[20]—who critically accompanied Evo Morales's contemporary political project and later distanced herself from him—it is not possible to simply extrapolate this *internal decoloniality* process as a universal theory applicable to all colonized peoples.

Rivera-Cusicanqui proposes that all original peoples must carry out a self-criticism of their own historical-political and cultural conditioning, through which external and internal domination was imposed as part of their specific history. Hence, the critical distance that Rivera-Cusicanqui takes from the general concept of "epistemologies of the South"[21]—because she considers it to be a contradictory concept since it vindicates diversity as a single category: the South as a subject. Instead, she states, it is a question of explaining language's plurivocity and enhancing the oral character of the different forms of wisdom carried by the original peoples, each with its own epistemic status, preserving its irreducible character to a single model of cognitive autonomy.

In summary, following Rivera-Cusicanqui, *internal decoloniality* is an issue of a diversity of autonomies that respond to various types of normative economic, political, social, and cultural heteronomies that, for a variety of reasons and with multiple political and cultural stakeholders, have become accepted as the past and present colonizer's "normalization of sameness."

Ultimately, Rivera-Cusicanqui proposes that the diverse expressions of autonomy of the original peoples should be reasserted as true and just political, social, and epistemic *otherness* in the face of the recurrent onslaught of the hegemonic West.

Decoloniality According to Mbembe

Achille Mbembe is a historian and political scientist from Cameroon who transits between post-Derridian thinking about political deconstruction and Michel Foucautl's critique of *biopower* toward the creation of Black African thinking regarding post-colonial emancipation, particularly in the field of culture and epistemics.

In two recent publications, Mbembe constructs his powerful critique of colonial enlightenment and modernity: *Critique of Black Reason*, published in 2013, and *The Society of Enmity,* published in 2016.[22] The first editions of these two books were originally published in French and later translated into English, German, and, more recently, Spanish.

The philosophical ground of his thinking forms part of the post-colonial critique of *biopower*, based on his own experience of suffering multiple forms of coloniality. He experienced the first form of coloniality as a member of an English-speaking minority in a French-speaking country, a colonially imposed bilingualism, which made the original ethnic and linguistic diversity in African countries even more invisible. The second form of coloniality he faced was a reflection following that first coloniality, which Mbembe called the "Africanization of the world." It consists of pauperizing and invisibilizing those people deemed disposable by the dominant system throughout the planet, in the image and likeness of what happened in Black Africa.

For Mbembe, in fact, the expression "Africanization of society" far from idealizing Africa in a globalized world that would assume the exotic values of Black Africa, characterizes Africa as a symbol of the increasing *pauperization* and *invisibilization* of many worlds in a single world that does not dare to recognize this diversity.

> Black—we cannot forget—aspires also to be a color. The color of obscurity. In this view, Black is what lives the night, what lives in the night, whose life is turned into night. Night is its original envelope, the tissue out of which its flesh is made. It is its coat of arms, its uniform. The journey through night and this life as night renders Black invisible. The Other does not see it because, in the end, there is nothing to see. Or, if he does see, he sees only shadows and darkness—nothing. Enveloped in the night that was there before he was born, the Black Man cannot even see himself. He does not see that if he strikes his body against a wall with no doors, if he throws himself against it with all his strength and demands that the non-existent door be opened, sooner or later he will fall out onto the sidewalk.[23]

The Black Man's nocturnal condition denotes a complex phenomenon of cultural exclusion: On the one hand, social-cultural invisibilization and, on the other, in its most criminal expression, the pauperization of human life that extends to the universal community. Mbembe continues reflecting:

> The only universal is the community of singularities and differences, a sharing that is at once the creation of something common and a form of separation. Here, the concern for the Black Man makes sense only because it opens the way for a reimagination of the universal community. His critique is relevant today in an age of war without end and the multiple returns of colonialism. Indeed, it is indispensable for contemporary

> conditions, whether in terms of citizenship, of the presence of foreigners and minorities among us, of non-European forms of human development, of the conflict of monotheisms or even of globalization itself.[24]

Mbembe has thus become sensitized to the massive migration of Africans from countries located north and south of the Sahara to Europe and, more recently, to the border between Mexico and the United States. This concern has awakened his interest in thinking about the mechanisms of colonial exclusion that explain this phenomenon from the perspective of both history and political philosophy.

Forced migration, which has spread throughout the world, has its most brutal iconic expression in Black Africa precisely because it has been invisibilized in global geopolitics and has been ignored by the international media. Governments, the media, and international aid agencies mostly refer to the "tribal wars" afflicting several African countries. They focus on the genocide in Rwanda-Burundi, the nationalist wars in Congo, or the warfare between Ethiopia and Eritrea, for instance, particularly when war affects the interests of transnational corporations or when the humanitarian crisis overflows the borders of the South in order to emerge in the North dramatically. No reference is made to the internal African migrations from rural areas to African megacities, with masses of migrants drawn by the mirage of the deceptive prosperity produced by the portentous investments of Chinese, Indian, and European financial capitalism in Senegal, Nigeria, or South Africa.

For Mbembe, it is necessary to draw a map with *necropower*'s geography, where human life becomes "Africanized." This category does not only refer to *the precarious life* characterized by economic and gendered violence that morphs into political domination, as Judith Butler states when speaking about gendered violence. According to Mbembe, precarious life is also subjugated by global colonialism, i.e., it is exposed to a political subjugation beyond the borders of the modern nation-states through new forms of marginalization, injustice, suffering, death, and mass extermination, affecting populations that inhabit "territories of death." The *biopower* of the modern State has thus shapeshifted into the *necropower* of postmodern and neo-colonial States subjected to global transnational financial power.

As a symbol of this death-oriented power, the Sahara Desert, Africa's internal *Mare Nostrum* for millennia—a place of crossings, encounters, and clashes between civilizations—has now become "a clandestine open-air burial ground." Its dunes and immense plains of sand hide the human remains of tens of thousands of people who attempted to cross the desert in order to reach the Mediterranean and eventually European shores, and at

times also dramatically reveal these remains when sandstorms uncover them. Thousands of people have died in the Sahara from dehydration, snakebites, hypothermia, and, ironically, killed by African and international criminal mafias that use forced migration to make business.

Furthermore, like a gigantic gripper squeezes the bodies of people in forced migration, the *refugee* camps—located along the shores of the Mediterranean, or in conflict zones such as the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea—are actual concentration camps where hundreds of thousands of people are imprisoned by the *necro-power* that invisibilizes them in these monstrous places pertaining to a "State of exception."

As stated in the previous chapter, Giorgio Agamben has also analyzed this political and social phenomenon when he reflects about the power corruption of the modern State, an inheritance from the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century that justified the production of *naked life* with tailor-made laws.

These elements of the "Africanization" of human life display a modern model of the nation-state that has fallen into a crisis but is currently under the criminally efficient control of national governments at the service of the interests of globalized financial minorities. This model is supported by nationalisms reemerging within the context of global confrontation.

However, the most shocking and unnerving aspect related to the "Africanization" of the world is that in the midst of these death sites generated by *necropower*—whether clandestine burials in the desert or refugee camps—there are *fissures* through which life shines.

It is precisely within these new concentration camps—the postmodern version of "refugee camps," designed to exterminate and take the life of invisibilized masses—or in the small boats and cargo ships in which the survivors seek to reach European Mediterranean coasts that *resistance emerges* powerfully from the victims. This is similar to what happens in Latin America, in the case of the family members of people who disappeared due to femicide or human trafficking and migrants in forced mobility who are caught by criminal mafias. In Chapter I, we already made reference to these forms of resistance as the beginning of *world change*.

Mbembe has thus constructed his thinking against the devastating backdrop of European coloniality on the African continent during the nineteenth century, lasting until the end of the twentieth century. His thinking has been built by listening to the resistance of the African peoples experi-

encing "the reverse of modernity." Together with other intellectuals from the post-colonial South and their allies in the North, Mbembe has promoted forums for debate on the future of Africa, as a symbol of the resistance of that world that has been invisibized and is starting to awaken.

Despite the similarities between Africa and Latin America, Mbembe has so far hardly been linked to critical thinking in other latitudes of the global South. Regardless, *necropower* has spread to these two regions of the South through mechanisms such as considering bodies "disposable." Hence, in order to promote multiple South-South dialogues, it is imperative to interweave Mbembe's *post-colonial* African perspective with the Latin American *decolonial* praxis and the critical thinking emerging from both epistemic poles.

These two contributions seem to be compatible counterparts of an interweaving of resistance and critical thinking. They coincide in diagnosing the unviability of the modern model of techno-instrumental civilization, which has subjected millions of individuals, entire peoples, and ancestral cultures to the hegemony of a world based on instrumental rationality. Therefore, mutual listening and critical dialoguing have become increasingly urgent to promote the interweaving of these many and inspiring social, political, and cultural forms of resistance against the hegemony of abysmal thought.

Latin American critical thinking insists, more acutely and urgently, on the need to dismantle the economic, political, and cultural warp and weft of the hegemonic system. While African post-colonial thought, of which Mbembe forms part, underscores the cultural dispossession to which the Black African peoples were subjected by the colonial powers, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in order to passionately reassert the need for cultural, epistemic, and spiritual emancipation in Africa.

These two anti-systemic positions are not in contradiction with each other but rather are explained by the different stances from which their authors and thinkers speak, recognizing and naming different heads of the "capitalist hydra," the beast to which the Zapatista movement has referred to in Mexico.

A profound conversation about the debate between African *post-colonial* thought and Latin American *decolonial* thought, given the implications it has for territorial and epistemic autonomies—with political, cultural, and religious content—is an important channel for future dialogues in the Global South.

The Multiverse of Sexual Diversity as a Political and Epistemic Project: Angie Rueda, Jessica Marjane, and Lukas Avendaño

The deconstruction of the gender hegemony imposed by capitalist, colonial, and sacrificial patriarchy is the second linchpin of the revolution of critical thinking.

However, the feminist movements of the twentieth century have been through a complex formulation, initially determined by the demands of modern white urban European women, who focused their main social struggles on women's sexual rights, autonomy over their bodies, and their civil and political rights. Black feminisms, first in the United States and later in Africa, as well as indigenous feminisms in Latin America have challenged the modern Western view held by white feminisms.

Another significant rift in the debate on patriarchy was placed in evidence by the sexual diversity movement, initially, the gay movement, followed by the lesbian movement, but transfeminisms and trans-masculinities, as well as new masculinities, have expressed dissident voices with practices that disrupt the binary (male-female) gender model that prevailed for decades in the debates on identities, preferences, subjectivities, and currently diverse sexual subjectivations.

Therefore, as part of the critical thinking of the twenty-first century, it is necessary to include this frontier of criticism of patriarchy, but from a decolonial perspective. This particularly implies mainstreaming the male chauvinist and phallocentric hegemony that has accompanied colonial capitalism in order to pave the way to new forms of sex-gender, non-binary or cis-gender subjectivations that promote individual and collective diversity, with their unrestricted civil, social, political, and spiritual rights within postmodern participatory democracies undergoing a process of (de)construction.

We are presenting this cross-cutting linchpin of the critique of patriarchy as part of critical thinking in a triptych of profiles that depicts the decolonial genealogy in progress: the transfeminist marginality of two Mexican leaders: Angie Rueda and Jessica Marjane; and, finally, the critique of the Western gender model coming from *muxe* identity as a practice and performativity of the liberated body in an indigenous Zapotec context in southeastern Mexico.[25] There is a need for further research into transmasculinities and other voices expressive of dignity, as well as political and spiritual resistance. The voice of non-binary people, who do not recognize themselves as part of any of these transgender groups, still needs to be heard.

This brief genealogy of gender diversity in Mexico may set the foundation for documenting the history of political, social, and epistemic resistance in the Global South.

Angie Rueda, Jessica Marjane, and Lukas Avendaño or Gender Disruption

Postmodern feminist critical thinking has diversified into a whole spectrum of post-patriarchal feminisms, which go beyond the gender binary model of either cisgender males or females. Specifically, feminisms and new masculinities of *transgender* individuals and communities have brought forward the political debate regarding the gender issue that crosses all possible subjectivations, new feminisms, and new masculinities in the process of unfolding in social space.

For this reason, we are here picking up the thread of the critical thinking and political action of two Mexican transgender activists who—each according to their sexual-gender identity and their own political cause—contribute an unprecedented diversity to the different forms of epistemic resistance. We shall also present the political and performative praxis of a *muxe* social activist and choreographer, who—based on his own Zapotec culture, from the state of Oaxaca, southern Mexico, addresses sexual diversity by questioning Western categories.

These three contributions to critical and decolonial thinking must be heard and known in order to be able to have a critical dialogue in public space about the different forms of gender empowerment at stake, in relation to the sexual minorities made invisible by the patriarchal, cisgender, and phallocentric hetero-normative system.

Angie Rueda[26] is known by the lgbtiq movement in Mexico for her radical position—with an anarchist tendency—that is hyper-critical of closed identity causes, characterizing the collectives of this community that promote respect for sexual diversity and its social visibility in the public space, in spite of being encapsulated in class privilege and an uncritical sexual-gender identity. As a transgender woman who was born a male, Angie Rueda has journeyed from naïve feminism to *political transfeminism* that, in principle, excludes all men from its political, social, and epistemic cause since men

are considered to be complicit with the privileges of the hetero-normative system.

In light of this proposal, the struggle of transfeminism in twenty-first century Mexico lies, as a priority, in the recognition of transgendered women's rights as women, which should be recognized by traditional feminism, as well as by groups of gay men, who enjoy a privileged position in the labor market and the consumption of goods and services, a privilege pertaining to a well-off social class.

Although anarchist transfeminism recognizes the social drama of hate crimes against the homosexual community of sex-gender males, it does not accept their struggle unconditionally because this struggle is considered complicit with the patriarchal and phallocentric hetero-normative system.

Furthermore, transfeminism is characterized today by its political critique of patriarchal capitalism. It is thus open to other groups that suffer exclusion, as highlighted by Sayak Valencia:

> Transfeminism, as an epistemological tool, is not disconnected from feminism neither is it proposed as going beyond feminism, but rather is a network with the capacity to open spaces and discourse to all those practices and subjects of the contemporary world and the process of *becoming a minority* that had not been considered directly by white institutional feminism. It also feels bonded with historical memory and recognizes the heritage contributed by feminist movements integrated by racial, sexual, economic, and migrant minorities, while being nourished by them, both politically and in their discourse.[27]

In this regard, the *transfeminism* that Angie Rueda represents in Mexico highlights the greater complexity of the issue of sexual diversity which includes the political critique of hetero-normative patriarchy and the severe disqualification of uncritical cisgender identities.

This stream of *anarchist transfeminism* denounces the class privileges of certain lesbian-gay empowerment struggles. Since their emergence in the twentieth century, based on sexual diversity movements, from the *Stonewall* riots to the present time these struggles have enjoyed class privilege. After five decades of sex-gender demands—which have led, among other successes, to the recognition of civil marriage between people of the same sex[28]—it is necessary to go beyond class privilege and cisgender identity and move into a new sexual diversity politics inclusive of all the gender subjectivations existing in a diverse society.

Jessica Marjane is a novel voice in the transfeminist vindication of the twenty-first century in Mexico and Latin America. Biologically male by birth, Jessica transitioned in her adolescence to a transsexual condition. She is now a young lawyer and activist for the rights of the transfeminist community both in contemporary Mexico and internationally. Her active presence in international forums such as the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, reflects the international scope of the legal frontier in which Jessica Marjane reinforces her activism. She began her social work in Mexico City with the collective *Red de Juventudes Trans, A.C.* [Trans Youth Network, a non-profit organization], which she founded some years ago to provide psychological orientation, legal advice, as well as community accompaniment to young men and women who have decided to make a transition in their sex-gender identity, who are exposed by this difficult decision to family rejection, segregation in their neighborhood, bullying at school and, in general, marginalization within the social and religious context in which they live.

Based on this experience and that of *others*—which contradictorily and paradoxically oscillates between exclusion and empowerment—Jessica Marjane's legal proposal consists of using national and international forums to promote transpeople's defense of the right to change sex-gender identity, whether they are transwomen or transmen. This legal battle implies the concurrent unrestricted respect—by authorities from various fields, from politics to education and religion—for the civil, social, and political rights of transpeople in matters of health, inheritance, work, education, and cultural development.

The issue of gender-based violence against transpeople, particularly hate crimes, is another question altogether in these struggles. Due to the marginality into which transpeople are forced through the misogynistic and homophobic context in countries like Mexico, people who assume their *transfeminity* or *transmasculinity* suffer a triple exclusion: for being transwomen or transmen, for being poor—given the social exclusion that often leads them to sex work—and for being transsexual, i.e., transmen or transwomen, or non-binary people. The rights of these groups are not only violated by the hetero-normative system but are also affected by the social and religious discrimination that stigmatizes transpeople as prostitutes, without this necessarily being in itself an aspect of their transitional option.

In this context, Lukas Avendaño, another key actor of postmodern social resistance, has made a significant contribution to the critical thinking that is developing in Mexico and Latin America.

As a *Muxe*—enriched by her training as a Zapotec anthropologist and her expression as a choreographer of critical performativities—Lukas Avendaño's contribution is key to understanding the *cultural and political mainstreaming* of the gender issue. Her performative work[29] is explicitly inscribed within the framework of the various forms of resistance against abysmal thinking in these times of systemic global violence.

Firstly, the *Muxe* identity claimed by Lukas Avendaño is, in itself, a form of *epistemic* resistance against Western stereotypes of homosexuality. Being *Muxe* in the Zapotec culture of southeastern Mexico—the culture of which Lukas Avendaño forms part—is not identical to Western gay identity, nor is it the sex-gender identity that some US anthropologists called "the third sex" a few decades ago.

The *Muxe* identity[30] is a cultural practice of sexual diversity experienced by Zapotec men in different social roles that the Western culture identifies as male or female. In most cases, it denotes social roles of care work traditionally assigned to women in Western culture: family and home-related roles, housekeeping, embroidery, hairdressing, cooking, and sex work. However, it also denotes "masculine" roles of protection, security, breadwinning, and authority, performed usually by the *mayates*, i.e., men who are sexually active with other men but form part of the network of *Muxe* identities. As part of this *Muxe* culture in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca State, families, particularly mothers, recognize and support people who decide to form part of the *Muxe* collectives.

Muxes are also respected by the fathers, brothers, and even priests in the region; for example, when they organize their traditional *velas* or processions of fraternities worshiping their patron saint, such as San Vicente Ferrer in Juchitán, Oaxaca, that takes place in April each year.

Based on this cultural practice of *Muxe* sexual diversity, Lukas Avendaño became an "object" of his own anthropological and choreographic discourse, thus moving towards a vindication of the *Muxe* body as a territory of simultaneous personal and community autonomy, with political, cultural, and spiritual implications. Her performances, therefore, include displaying the *Muxe* body with an intense disruptive erotic and political charge, dressed as a *Tehuana* woman in a man's body.

Lukas Avendaño's performative representations denounce the gender violence to which these groups are subjected outside their ancestral cultural milieu, the Zapotec culture, which for years has been their cultural hab-

itat. Specifically, given the forced migration from rural to urban areas in Mexico—which has plummeted those who have been dispossessed by global capitalism, such as small-scale farmers and indigenous people into a severe economic crisis—the *Muxe* community has also suffered a transition to new environments that are hostile to their cosmovision of sexual diversity.

Once they migrate, *Muxes* are exposed to human trafficking, prostitution controlled by criminal mafias, drug addiction, and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as poverty and social exclusion in cities that are hostile toward their culture. Migrant *Muxes* thus suffer from a lack of reproductive healthcare[31] and are often trapped in labor marginalization. Hence, like other marginal groups such as cisgender gays and lesbians, the *Muxe* community suffers social invisibilization on the lowest rung of sex-gender discrimination.

Another constitutional dimension of *Muxe* identity is the celebratory and spiritual character of *Muxe* fraternities and feasts known as *velas*[32]—or communal festivals with a harmonious fusion of prayers to the fraternity's patron saint, dancing, food, beauty contests, and free sexual encounters—that re-creates the *muxe* community in its full diversity, with the support of the local community.

It is important to highlight that the *Muxe* spirituality that Lukas Avendaño expresses is rooted—to the surprise of many—in the Liberation Theology she learned in the grassroots communities of the Tehuantepec Diocese led by the Bishop Arturo Lona. The *Muxe* community can thus be said to be experiencing a "Spirit-inspired liberation" that transforms it into a unique protagonist for God's option for the poor and the excluded, which took on the Latin American Liberation Theology as a translation of Jesus of Nazareth's alternative for the excluded in his time.

In recent times, the social activism of *Muxe* Lukas Avendaño was dramatically disrupted by the disappearance of his brother Bruno, a young soldier, while he was visiting his mother on May 10, 2018. Bruno Avendaño is one of the 80,000 people who have been forcibly disappeared in the last twelve years in Mexico. This experience of uncertainty, pain, and agonizing hope that the Avendaño family experienced in Juchitán, Oaxaca, has been a turning point to radicalize Lukas Avendaño's word and performativity.[33]

Since his brother's traumatic disappearance, for Lukas Avendaño the political vindication of *Muxe* identity became interwoven with political outrage at the horror of systemic violence at the service of necropower that invisibilizes, disappears, and disposes of human lives, as described in the interview conducted by Tania Adam[34] for a Barcelona television channel. For Lukas Avendaño, it is not only a question of the *Muxe* collective struggling

for the right to be different, but this resistance also acquires a new dimension by demanding that all the disappeared people be brought back alive, since it is a *structural* or systemic problem of both Mexico and the world.

Therefore, in her performative discourse, she finds it necessary to mainstream the resistance of systemic victims so that those who have been invisibilized by necropower can enjoy the right to life, justice, and truth.

As part of these anti-systemic expressions of resistance—facing the escalation of a global war that we are experiencing worldwide—the cultural resistance of the *Muxes* now joins the resistance of the family members of those who were disappeared by the criminal mafias that operate under the logic of the narco-State: in alliance with international financial capitalism, for the benefit of the transnational corporations sheltered by the Mexican extractivist State and other modern States. After all, as Laura Rita Segato[35] emphasizes, it is hetero-normative patriarchy that subjects bodies and territories to its logic of domination, hegemony, and death.

To summarize, it can be said that the critical thinking emerging from *Muxe* identity is a multiple process with several subversive practices: it dismantles stereotypes of sex-gender identities; it evidences ethnically-related cultural discrimination; and it denounces the social and political discrimination of indigenous peoples within the context of societies in which *mestizo* and Caucasian people predominate.

The above enables a diverse sex-gender community, which celebrates its Zapotec cultural roots as an environment in which *Muxes* flourish at the service of their local community and the greater Motherland, to experience Spirit-inspired empowerment.

Territorial and Political Autonomies: the Zapatista Caracoles as Postmodern Symbols of Liberated Bodies-Territories

As the third part of this triptych of epistemic forms of resistance, another significant contribution to the slow and profound formulation of *decolonial* critical thought in Mexico is formed by the contributions made by the anti-systemic intellectuals of what is known as the San Cristóbal School in Chiapas. As part of this stream of critical thinking, there are those who are linked either to the Zapatista movement, or to Liberation Theology, although some participate in both processes.

With intellectuals of great depth such as Bishop Samuel Ruiz García,[36] along with historians like Andrés Aubry[37] and Jan de Vos,[38] anti-systemic thinking delved more deeply into its historical memory during the second

half of the twentieth century thanks to the work of the Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. Following the example of the indigenous church, this diocese promoted indigenous theology as part of these expressions of resistance within the context of an awakening of the original peoples, after five centuries of colonial subjugation. As part of this memory-related process, critical thinking took root both in the *Zapatista caracoles* and in the processes of *autochthonous* ecclesial communities.

This initial movement of rebellion later paved the way to deeper reflection, generated through "conversatories" and "thought incubation gatherings," organized as international meetings of anti-systemic thinking with the participation of social scientists such as Xóchitl Leyva, to whom we referred in the first chapter. These conversations were joined more recently by *mestizo* writers of the stature of Juan Villoro,[39cxx] or renowned Mexican journalists, such as Marcela Turati[40] and Daniela Rea.[41]

To close the second chapter of this book about the resurrection as an uprising, we shall focus on anti-systemic thinkers whose reflections are germane to the theme of the critique of global violence. This will enable us to understand the scope of the epistemic autonomies under construction more clearly, from the mountains and jungle of Chiapas to the Mexican highlands, but with a global reach in these times of systemic violence caused by necropower.

Raymundo Sánchez or Anti-Systemic Thinking "in the Middle of the Storm"

There are "rearguard intellectuals" who, for several decades, have chosen to fade as "avant-garde" authors to facilitate the cognitive autonomy of ignored peoples and collectives.

This is the case of Raymundo Sánchez Barraza,[42] director of Cideci-Unitierra in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. Rather than publishing his own work, he organizes national and international forums that discuss the course of history "seen from a grassroots leftist perspective." His voice is expressed through the many voices that meet in intercultural debate colloquiums to reflect upon diverse perspectives in the face of the current epochal crisis.

The *conversatories* and *thought-incubation gatherings* that Raymundo Sánchez creates together with the *Zapatista comrades* are aimed at delving more deeply into the critical thinking arising from the resistance of the original

peoples[43]—specifically the Mayan peoples who opted for the Zapatista rebellion leading up to 1994—which often inspires many other rebellions.

Just as de Sousa Santos has been one of the main promoters of the *World Social Forum* since 2001, or Achille Mbembe has organized the *African Futures Forum* within the context of African post-coloniality, Raymundo Sánchez has created, together with the insurgent sub-commander Galeano formerly known as sub-commander Marcos, the famous *Conversatories* organized by Cideci-Unitierra Chiapas.[44]

In order to ponder the contribution made by this theologian and philosopher by profession, but above all a "de-professionalized" Mexican thinker, we shall here approach two meetings (a seminar and a conversatory) that he promoted in recent years: (i) The seminar entitled *Critical Thinking in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra,* held in 2015; and (ii) The conversatory entitled *Looking, Listening, Words: Is it Forbidden to Think?* held in 2018.

(i) *The Seminar Entitled "Critical Thinking in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra"*
For twelve days, 65 anti-systemic speakers from all over the world held 13 discussion tables, first in the *caracol* or autonomous municipality of Oventic, and later at cideci-unitierra in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. The participants included around five thousand people—girls and boys, young women and men, adult women and men—from the hosting Zapatista communities organized in *caracoles* or autonomous territories in Chiapas.

Capitalist expansionism in its neoliberal version was recognized as the common problem underlying the many forms of violence suffered by marginalized peoples and groups worldwide, from the original peoples of the Americas to ethnic minorities in Kurdistan or the survivors of the nuclear holocaust in Japan.

Unlike the academics at the forum who referred to the decline of the hegemonic capitalist patriarchal system, the speakers from the Zapatista communities in rebellion, with Commander Moisés as spokesperson, envisioned the system reaching peak development. In his opinion, global financial capitalism is not facing a crisis but rather going through maximum globalization, sustained by an extractivist State model and particracy as a guardrail for formal democracy, as well as the media-controlled manipulation of information. All the above is sustained by a "religious" ideology of the market as god with a prosperity-oriented theology that has turned the peoples subjected to the tyranny of "bad government" into mass consumers. This collusion of capitalism with Christian fundamentalism is behind the

return of fascist social and political movements in Europe, the United States, and, more recently, Brazil.

Beyond the "Marxist revolutionary" language, characteristic of the 1970s, what seems to us to continue to prevail about this anti-systemic critique is the warning by the original peoples about the *voraciousness* of the patriarchal capitalist monster: this system will not tire of waging wars of plunder which are currently pillaging territories that conserve the planet's natural wealth, thus prostituting Mother Earth, exterminating the original peoples, and edging humankind as a whole towards extinction.

Within this panorama of global devastation, anti-systemic thinking calls for multiplying resistance, identifying the unifying threads, and interweaving a solidarity network[45] of rebelliousness, "dignified rage," and different forms of bodily-territorial autonomy in order to face the omnipresence of the global market. It was thus set forth, for example, that indigenous feminism faces the challenge of meeting the urban feminisms of *mestizo* (mixed-heritage) or white women and the emancipatory struggles of the various forms of transfeminism and other sexual minorities in order to deconstruct the hegemonic capitalist patriarchy.

It is worth highlighting the methodology of "unlearning"—which picks up and updates Illich's idea of "deschooling"—proposed as an initial procedure in these forums and as a condition for the gestation of other forms of decolonial, post-patriarchal, and anti-capitalist knowledge. The *Zapatista school,*[46] thus, illustrates how to learn to look at the world "from a grassroots leftist perspective" as an anti-systemic expression of raising social consciousness and retrieving ancestral forms of wisdom. It aims for those invisibilized by the system and their multiple struggles for dignity to gain not only justice with truth but also participatory democracy emerging from the grassroots.

It is ultimately a proposal to re-utopianize the world in the midst of the global discrimination generated by patriarchal capitalism in order to keep hope alive for a shared future for humankind.

(ii) *Conversatory Entitled "Looking, Listening, Words: Is it Forbidden to Think?"*
The other dialogue and debate about anti-systemic thinking, organized by CIDECI-UNITIERRA Chiapas, was held in 2018. It sought to lay bridges between the Zapatista movement and the National Indigenous Council (CNI by its acronym in Spanish) with cultural, social, and political actors within

the context of the presidential elections in Mexico where, for the first time in the history of the country, an indigenous woman was nominated by the *Indigenous Government Council* (CIG by its acronym in Spanish) in order to become a candidate for the Mexican presidency.

It is worthwhile to explain here—albeit briefly—the important relevance that the Mexican National Indigenous Council[47] has gained in recent times. After five centuries of domination—first, three hundred years of Spanish Viceroyalty, followed by two centuries of modern, liberal, and "institutional revolutionary" regimes—the original peoples of Mexico have been able to survive that long dark night.

Aware that "the dawn would be slow to arrive," and having received a call alert and experienced the collective awakening triggered by the *Zapatista National Liberation Army*'s armed uprising in Ocosingo and San Cristóbal de Las Casas, advancing the defense of indigenous autonomy, the indigenous peoples gathered in 1994. A *National Indigenous Council* was then created to accompany this historic struggle, culminating in the 1995 "San Andrés Dialogues" between the federal government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), with its promise of a constitutional reform that would recognize indigenous territorial autonomies in Mexico. An unfulfilled promise, which never translated into new laws, due to the complicity of the Federal Congress with the de facto power brokers in Mexico, apart from the fact that the Congress was dominated by the alliance between the dominant parties: the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the National Action Party. In those congressional debates, there was an opposition minority, the Party of the Democratic Revolution—then a leftwing party that brought together the struggles of social movements in Mexico in the twentieth century—which never reached a constitutional reform in the terms agreed during the "San Andrés Dialogues," signed by both parties in conflict on February 12, 1996.

The National Indigenous Council thus remained demobilized for several years until the collective awakening on a national scale triggered in 2011 by the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity reanimated its consciousness of resisting a failed State that increasingly sacrificed the innocent.

Approaching the change of federal government in 2018, after a complex joint reflection to promote a "politics reconstructed from the grassroots" beyond particracy, the CNI decided to nominate María de Jesús Patricio, an indigenous Nahua woman from the state of Jalisco, as its spokesperson.[48] Using the slogan of "command through obeying," María de Jesús Patricio was sent, together with the *Indigenous Government Council* (CIG by its acronym in Spanish), to give voice to the original peoples in order to bring the polit-

ical agenda of collective rights, defense of Mother Earth, and participatory democracy to the presidential elections.

The conditions to register as an independent candidate set by the National Electoral Institute were unfavorable, inequitable, and discriminatory for the original peoples.[49] The federal electoral authority was precisely at the service of the party system. However, civil society's response nationally—in contexts as diverse as rural and urban areas, indigenous and *mestizo* sectors—was able to collect around three hundred thousand signatures (only a third of what the Electoral Law requires). However, 93% of these signatures were collected in a transparent and legal way, something that the other two presumably independent candidates were unable to achieve in spite of the mobster-like support they received from the extant political powers.

The lessons learned from this democratic consultation process were at the heart of the 2018 *conversatory* at Cideci-Unitierra. For ten days, on that occasion, the panels on culture, journalism, politics, human rights, and gender, for instance, were comprised of intellectuals, journalists, and artists from various ideological, social, and political backgrounds. The commonly shared question focused on how to imagine Mexico's future beyond the 2018 presidential elections with the priority of recognizing the rights of the original peoples for the well-being of the whole country, aware that the CNI spokesperson would not be participating in the elections.

For Raymundo Sánchez, Subcommander Galeano, and Juan Villoro[50]—a renowned writer and member of *El Colegio Nacional* who, following in the footsteps of his father, the philosopher Luis Villoro, co-organized the event—it was a question of interweaving a network of solidarities in the midst of a corrupt political system, considered by some as a narco-State that had already fully engaged in the logic of necropower.

In our opinion, the main contribution of these conversatories at the Cideci-Unitierra in San Cristóbal de Las Casas lay in interweaving a mutual awareness of the existing signs of resistance in Mexico and the world in the face of savage globalized capitalism. This was a way to generate knowledge, new narratives, and new political, cultural, and spiritual scenarios that have the power *to reinvent utopia* amid the horror prevailing in Mexico and the world today.

Globally, we live in territories plagued by clandestine burials, forced migrations, and protectionist States that only safeguard the voracious interests of a minority.

In the eye of the storm, the original peoples—unlike many anti-systemic thinkers and movements—envision a new dawning.

Sylvia Marcos or Decolonial Feminisms

In recent years, indigenous feminisms in Mesoamerica have been deeply inspired by the leadership of Mayan women, many of whom form part of the *Zapatista caracoles*. However, these indigenous feminisms are in an ongoing dialogue with other feminisms that are already situated "on the other side" of hegemonic thinking.

In 2018, a meeting of *decolonial* women was held as part of the aforementioned *conversatories*. Entitled the "First International Political, Artistic, Sports, and Cultural Meeting of Women in the Struggle,"[51] it was convened by EZLN women, taking place from March 8 to 10, 2018 at the Morelia *Caracol* in the Ocosingo canyons in Chiapas.

For years now, in *The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle*,[52] the issue of justice and equity for indigenous women within the context of a secular male chauvinist and racist culture—which Rosario Castellanos[53] masterfully detailed in her literary work—had been prioritized by the Zapatista emancipation movement. Decades ago, the work conducted by the Women's Coordination (CODEMUJ by its acronym in Spanish) pertaining to the San Cristóbal de Las Casas Diocese—endorsed by the *Third Diocesan Synod* held in 1999—had started to promote women's awareness of their own bodies, their own way of being in the world, and their role in the community's life by means of assuming different leadership roles in family and community, as stewards of the land, catechists, and other collective roles. The social work carried out by the civic association *Kinal Ansetik* explicitly promoted the training of women leaders in the indigenous communities of the Chiapas Highlands and the Ocosingo canyons with a marked feminist emphasis on vindicating the rights of their indigenous sisters.

Taking the above into account, it should be recognized that the "empowerment" of indigenous Mayan women took place throughout half a century in that region of Mexico, as a phenomenon not only explained by a feminist agenda but also as the result of a long and complex journey of recognizing their subjectivations, based on the correlation between Christianity and emancipatory modernity.

For the sake of our reflection upon decolonial resistance, it is important to highlight that the vindication process of indigenous women transitioned from Liberation Theology, seen through a feminist lens, to receiving support from feminist groups and some social scientists who proposed indigenous communities as a path towards empowerment. One day, the Mayan women themselves said "Enough!" to these new colonialisms and began to articulate their own narrative of indigenous feminist reassertion. This was a

fertile ground for the emergence of a *decolonial* vindication of today's feminist movements, based on the bodies and voices of their own Mayan cultures in Chiapas.

It is necessary to contextualize Sylvia Marcos[54] within this framework of *feminist decoloniality*. As an anthropologist devoted to intercultural studies—following the thread initiated decades ago by her friend and colleague Ivan Illich at CIDOC in Cuernavaca, Morelos State, Mexico—Sylvia Marcos conducted interdisciplinary research projects using a critical perspective of modern colonial anthropology in her fieldwork with communities of indigenous peoples in Mexico, but also in Asia and Africa.

However, the experience of the *Zapatista autonomies* in 1994 allowed her to discover a new point of departure for her own anthropological research. Sylvia Marcos thus began to "unlearn" the Western way of making anthropological monographs—which, after all, were Eurocentric neo-colonial forms of anthropology—and with her expertise, achieved throughout years of field research from a global perspective, a *new way* of carrying out decolonial anthropology.[55]

Using this new model, together with communities of Mayan and Kurdish women, for example, Sylvia Marcos carried out interdisciplinary and intercultural studies that described the feminist emancipations that were taking place, from the perspective of social and cultural reassertion, as part of the underpinnings of the critique of patriarchal capitalism with its embedded racist coloniality. From these studies, emerged projects such as the *Network of Decolonial Feminisms*,[56] in collaboration with Márgara Millán, Ana Valadéz, and Mariana Mora, which set forth the need for a decolonizing feminist epistemology that assumes women's political autonomy as a space for the emancipation of their bodies and ways of living-knowing-caring-transforming reality.

A key concept of these new decolonial feminisms is the critique of Western patriarchy's objectifying rationality, proposing their own way of knowing and caring for reality, which is synthesized in the *feeling-thinking* experience as an original communicative action specifically pertaining to women.

The EZLN's Revolutionary Women's Law is a major expression of these decolonial feminisms. It was the outcome of a consultation process with the Zapatista communities over several years, before 1993. It was carried out by Commanders Ramona and Susana, Zapatista women, in the Ocosingo canyons. This law begins as follows:

In its fair struggle to liberate our people, the EZLN incorporates women into the revolutionary struggle regardless of race, creed, color or political af-

filiation, with the only requirement of making the demands of the exploited people their own and committing to comply with the revolution's laws and regulations. In addition, taking into account the situation of working women in Mexico, their fair demands for equality and justice are incorporated into the Revolutionary Women's Law that follows.[57]

This law actualizes a decolonial feminist vision in the voice and social demands of the Zapatista women themselves. Thus, it does not express the imposition of Western feminism but rather the unfolding of the knowledge held by indigenous women, vindicated by an awakening of the original peoples, specifically, the Mayan peoples in Chiapas.

Decolonial feminisms thus form part of critical thinking with the imprint of the women of original peoples, as a powerful critique of hegemonic, patriarchal, and racist thinking underlying global capitalism.

Raquel Gutiérrez or Communality in the Making

Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar,[58] with the team researching new *communalities* that has its nucleus in the Autonomous University of Puebla (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla/BUAP) represent another facet of decolonial critical thinking in Mexico.

Raquel Gutiérrez forms part of the intercultural critical thinking research group, along with colleagues such as John Holloway[59] from Scotland and, in her initial years as a researcher in training, Gladys Tzul Tzul[60] from Guatemala. Over several years, they have been organizing as a group the "Subjectivity and Critical Theory Seminar" at the BUAP's Institute of Social Sciences and the Humanities.[61]

After her trajectory as a social activist and participant of the guerrilla movement in Bolivia, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar subverted modern sociology. A study of social struggles for water in Bolivia during the second half of the twentieth century led her to discover new decolonial and emancipatory approaches to the emergence of intersubjectivity out of the struggle for the recovery of territories, bodies, and subjectivities.

The conferences that this Seminar organized in the last five years have revolved around the formulation of studies on *communality*. Because of the number of their participants and the quality of critical thinking they are proposing, these two conferences reflect the vitality of this epistemic revolution that is part of critical thinking in Mexico and Central America.

In 2015, the first conference[62] focused on "Community Struggles and Strategies: Horizons Beyond Capital." At that time, *communality* was defined

as a social network enabling the reproduction of material life within a context in which the State and capital have been transcended by social struggles.

The second international conference on communality[63] was held in Oaxaca in 2018; it dwelled on the theme of "Sharing in the Face of a Collapsed State in the Nascent Era." Four state universities and three intercultural universities convened in addition to dozens of small-scale farmer and indigenous peoples movements in Mexico, producing the following Statement:

> The participants of this Conference consider that *communality*—as a way of thinking and living—*is an alternative* to the neoliberal civilization model currently in crisis.
>
> Communality is a category/concept and a historical key to the material, cultural, and political reproduction of the original peoples and communities from various regions of Mesoamerica who are in resistance and today inspire the creative engagement of very diverse peoples, communities, universities, and organizations in different contexts. It is a way of living, opposed to the neoliberal, capitalist, patriarchal, and neocolonial economic and political model that can only exist through imposition, dispossession, genocide, and ecocide. These death-oriented policies are expressed in indigenous territories by the imposition of megaprojects such as mining, wind farms, hydraulic fracking, hydroelectric plants, gas pipelines, oil pipelines, oil wells, airports, highways, and tourist complexes.[64]

The thematic linchpins of their reflections revolved around caring for the earth, the role of communities in the face of an extractivist State, and the forms of governance arising from the wisdom of the original peoples, such as ancestral and emerging epistemologies, which are a guiding compass in the middle of the storm that humankind is currently undergoing.

These conferences on *communality* are a specifically Mexican contribution to the critical thinking produced in Mesoamerica and in the Andean countries, in a rich convergence through the contribution of the original peoples with their philosophies of Mayan *Lekil Kulejal*, Aymaran *Smuak Kawsay*,[65] or mestizo Harmonious Living.

In this same vein of critical thinking, Gladys Tzul Tzul,[66] a Maya *K'iché* sociologist is another main voice in Boaventura de Sousa Santos's project *Conversas do Mundo* [Conversations of the World]. She also forms part of a project entitled "Alice, Strange Mirrors," pertaining to the Center for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, in Portugal. She has also been appointed to the area "Community Framework and Political Forms," at the BUAP's Institute of Social Sciences and the Humanities. She is the founder of the "Community Society of Strategic Studies" that reflects upon the indigenous production of the common and the *communal* in the Andes and Mesoamerica.

Tzul Tzul's point of departure is *communality,* a heuristic category that refers to the social relationships strategically arising to create new ways of organizing daily life, rather than referring to the essence or abstract structure of collectivity. Its main stakeholders are, firstly, the indigenous peoples with a communal structure, such as the *K'iché* people of Guatemala. At times, these original peoples receive solidarity-based support from civil society and other times, they are joined by left-wing political parties struggling for participatory democracy.

In the secular tradition of the Mayan *K'iché* people in Guatemala, the bond with the land defines all the life caring strategies ruling the principle of *communality*. Therefore, from the production of goods through governance and democratic life limiting the Western state, to the grieving processes of massacred people, all these social actions are permeated by the experience of the *communal*.

Tzul Tzul's decolonial sociological research interweaves the indigenous post-feminist critique of patriarchy, in its Western or colonial indigenous versions, with *communality* as practiced by the Maya *K'iché* people and the anti-systemic struggles against globalized capitalism.

Tzul Tzul's critique of Western feminism lies in the fact that urban feminists—whether Caucasian or *mestizo*—who arrived in indigenous territories of Guatemala in the 1980s and 1990s, within the context of the military dictatorship war, responded to an individualistic model of subjectivity, which was alien to the experience of Maya *K'iché* women. They acted as "dictatorial and prescriptive women," who promoted the liberation of women through sexuality and the body, but without any bond with the land.

Based on her own family and community experience of the communal lands in Totonicapan, Guatemala, Tzul Tzul sets forth three principles comprising this strategy: (i) social struggles for land; (ii) communal self-government; and (iii) the communal dimension of grieving.

We shall briefly look at each of these elements that are highly relevant to our research on clandestine burials and survivor resistance.

(i) Social Struggles for Land from a Communality Perspective

Western sociology uses the term "social agency" to refer to processes to control a territory. However, for Tzul Tzul, it is an ongoing process and strategy to "take charge of life": our own life, that of others and the life of Mother Earth.

Consequently, from this sense of *communality* that de-objectifies human action, political life consists of the organization of daily life to inhabit the land, cultivate it, take care of its forests and rivers, hold celebrations, and organize the community. With the passing of years and centuries, this *communal* experience accumulates wisdom and a historical force strength around caring for the territories, which in moments of crisis is expressed as resistance and struggles for land.

Such has been the case of the 48 villages comprising Totonicapan—one of the four subdivisions of the ancestral *K'iché* kingdom, together with Huehuetenango, Sololá, and Quiché, as they are known in modern times—that have defended the *communal* character of their territory from the seventeenth century to the present day.

In recent times, the historical consciousness of the Maya *K'iché* people proved to be a social form of resistance against the neoliberal Guatemalan state, following a massacre in Totonicapan on October 4, 2012, in which six people were murdered and dozens wounded, thousands of people demonstrated against an agrarian reform bill, the abolition of teacher training schools, and an increase in electricity tariffs.

The political realm is based on the *communality* principle as that web of relationships and strategies that promote life for all through actions that are invariably linked to caring for and protecting the land. This communal experience and organization prevents the formation of the State as the only political stakeholder, thus establishing itself as cultural and political resistance at the same time.

To sum up, the social struggles seen through the lens of *communality* of one of the original peoples of Mesoamerica, i.e., the Maya *K'iché* people, will always be linked to the land as part of their ancestral cosmovision and cosmo-experience.

(ii) Communal Self-Government

If the political sphere encompasses the care of life through caring for land, then there is a structural correlation between the Maya *K'iché* subjectivities and the territory that, in turn, defines governance as self-government. In other words, communal self-government is aimed at generating the conditions for reproducing everyday life and, then, diligently taking care of these conditions, i.e., managing them.

The *communal* is managed through the principle of *communality*, by means of a deliberative assembly, made up of delegates from all the villages. This assembly is charged with the everyday administration of justice in managing communal property. However, it is also responsible for ensuring justice in access to water, forest management, access to roads, the fair distribution of food, and the social organization of communities.

Communal self-government thus emerges as a main secular strategy that regulates communal land ownership through kinship alliances, land cession for use and cultivation, or even for the management of community resources such as water and forests.

Throughout its lengthy history—during the colonial and independent periods—given the framework of the political rea in terms of *communality,* communal struggles have resisted the political power in turn; for instance, during the 36 years of civil war.

In short, communal self-government is rooted in a collective practice of property administration in order to regulate the use and distribution of goods necessary for life.

(iii) Communal grieving

A third element of Maya *K'iché* communality, which is crucial for our study about the resurrection seen from a decolonial perspective, which is the goal of this book, is the experience of grieving for the victims of the massacres, killed for defending the land. There is a historical memory of these events spanning over several centuries of communal history.

The case of the massacre of October 4, 2012 in Totonicapan is of key importance to understand the three-stage structure of the Maya *K'iché* grieving process: (a) three days of mourning; (b) nine days devoted to the memory of the dead; and (c) returning to the earth.

The first moment is the communal wake that is inspired by the principle of the community sharing the sorrow of the bereaved. The bereaved receive

the condolences of relatives, neighbors, and other community members. This is followed by a second moment devoted to communal prayer for the deceased, in which the religious officials perform their ritual and symbolic functions, through prayer, celebration, chanting, weeping, flowers and music. For closure to the grieving process, the "return to the earth" of the deceased is commemorated as a symbol of the continuation of life not only for the deceased, but also for the wives, husbands, sons and daughters, and other family members, whose mandate is to continue caring for life through caring for the earth.

The ultimate meaning of this *communal grieving* process is to celebrate life beyond death, recognizing the deceased as ancestors, particularly recognizing the martyrs who have fallen in their struggle to defend land and life.

In this chapter, we shall use the lens of this experience of *communal grieving* to understand the grieving experienced by the early Christian community after the assassination of Jesus of Nazareth in the year 30 of the Common Era. Both grieving processes will serve as a fertile dyad to understand the praxis of today's survivor communities in their *spiritual resistance*. This is an essential aspect of our contribution to the interpretation of the resurrection from a decolonial perspective grounded in the survivors' resistance.

To summarize, it can be said that the incipient but significant work carried out by Gladys Tzul Tzul, one of the new voices of Mesoamerican anti-systemic thinking, expresses the relevance of critical thinking for the new generations of postmodern Latin American subjectivations.