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Source: *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 2022, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2022), pp. 32-67

Published by: University of Nebraska Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27127927>

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The Shoemaker and Her Barefooted Daughter

Power Relations and Gender Violence in University Contexts

MENARA GUIZARDI, HERMINIA GONZÁLVIZ,
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Abstract: For decades, feminist researchers have been denouncing the asymmetries and violence that patriarchy institutionalizes through various mechanisms: marking bodies and performances; meanings and communications; feelings and affections; belongings and possessions; spaces and possibilities. In Latin America, Black and postcolonial feminists and researchers adhered to the critical subaltern perspective have turned this reflection into a methodological, theoretical, and political imperative, highlighting the need to change the places of enunciation of patriarchal asymmetries to identify their persistence in different corners of social life. However, there are many spaces where the reproduction of these inequalities continues to operate in a naturalized way: the world of academic and university research is, contradictorily, one of them. In recent years, we have collected stories and shared experiences with research colleagues and teaching staff from different countries who have been subjected to sexual harassment, threats, discrimination, and gender violence. Some of these situations take place at work; others invade family and domestic environments, evidencing that the violent imprint of patriarchy persists and reproduces itself transversally, even among those professionals dedicated to the social critique of these problems. The present article covers these narratives to reflect on the place of epistemic enunciation that researchers use when we dedicate ourselves to study gender violence. Is it possible to develop ethical feminist research on these issues without adhering to “radical reflexivity?”

Keywords: professional research, gender violence, feminism, reflexivity

PURPOSES

In recent decades feminist researchers and thinkers have been strenuously trying to unravel both visible and invisible asymmetries that the patriarchal order institutionalizes. In their heterogeneity, these mechanisms act by marking bodies and performances; senses and communications; feelings and

affections; belongings and possessions; spaces and possibilities. Although their persistent struggle and work has allowed for some progress to be made in the attainment of women's rights, there are still many battles to be waged in those fields where *masculine domination* acts in a more silent way, with a powerful ability to reproduce modes of subordination of the feminine. With *masculine domination*, we refer to the social order dominated by the male principle, which is constituted through a fundamental "division between the masculine, active, and the feminine, passive, and that principle creates, organizes, expresses and directs the desire, the male desire as possession, as domination."¹

These remaining battles refer to the need to combat the conformation of those "structured and structuring structures" of patriarchy that mark the body and consciousness, configuring themselves between objectivity and subjectivity, challenging scientific and philosophical rationalities.²

The authors of this article are researchers and university teaching staff. Although our life trajectories are diverse, we have all experienced the ins and outs of these battles firsthand and know only too well the challenges involved in this struggle against asymmetries and gender inequalities. We have dedicated important parts of our careers to the research of gender relations, especially in the experiences of Latin American migrant women. The three of us have lived the immigrant experience in person (Guizardi and González currently do). This mix between personal and professional trajectories configures our feminist readings of social processes.

Inspired by the work of Hanson and Richards, this article addresses the multiple dimensions of gender violence that we observe daily in our academic practices.³ In the last three years we have collected stories and shared experiences with female researchers and university teaching staff who are experts in gender and/or in feminism and who have experienced sexual harassment, threats, gender discrimination, and sexist violence. Some of these situations present themselves at work; others invade family and domestic environments. The violent imprint of patriarchy persists and is reproduced even among those professionals dedicated to the social criticism of these problems.

Through these narratives we reflect on the place of epistemic enunciation assumed by academics. What role do we play, as feminist researchers, in enunciating the situations of gender violence if we also experience them? Are we in a position to evade or silence the reflexivity of these debates? Does our silence stimulate the reproduction of the violence experienced by ourselves, the researchers? Is it possible to do ethical feminist research without stating our place as historical subjects that have experienced the same violence, discrimination, or inequality that we point out in our studies?

Given that we have also lived many of the scenes and experiences shared

with us by our “informants,” the research that originates this text constitutes an autoethnographic process. In autoethnography the researcher is subject to the communities or practices to which he or she is willing to observe, record, and analyze. In this methodological technique the subject–object relationship is defined as dialectic, since the researcher lives through her own body those social experiences that centralize her analytical interest. Due to the latter, she is a “native.”⁴ This technique is definable as an *observation of participation*, differing of classic (Malinowskian) participant observation, in which

Ethnographers attempt to be both emotionally engaged participants and coolly dispassionate observers of the lives of others. In the observation of participation, ethnographers both experience and observe their own and other’s coparticipation within the ethnographic encounter. The shift from one methodology to the other entails a representational transformation in which, instead of a choice between writing an ethnographic memoir centering on the Self or a standard monograph centering on the Other, both Self and Other are presented together within a single narrative ethnography, focused on the character and process of the ethnographic dialogue.⁵

The methodology that frames this article assumes that “we” (the researchers) and “the others” (the women whose narratives we reproduce here) are part of the same historical situation. Thus, the text is also an epistemic critique of the separability of the subject and object in social research.

To address these issues, the article is divided into six parts, this introduction being the first. The second section presents our theoretical position on the place of gender violence and power relations inside and outside the academic world. The third recounts narratives of violence experienced by academic women of varied ages. The stories have been made anonymous, and no dates are given to protect our subjects’ identities. The fourth section narrates the processes of censorship facing the publication of feminist texts in different Latin American scientific journals, compiling arguments from expert evaluators and editors that have relapsed into a particular androcentric bias. The fifth focuses on an ethnographic scene taken from the march of university students that took place in Chile (in 2018). This movement exposed the transversal nature of gender violence suffered by women in the university environment, conveying the urgent need for concrete changes in the student statutes and in teaching and research practices. The last section presents our final remarks, positioning answers to the questions raised.

It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our life, that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting.⁶

“¿Ain’t I a woman?” This is the question that Sojourner Truth asked the public, in 1851, at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio. Truth was a Black ex-slave who became a speaker for the abolitionist cause after achieving freedom in 1827. Her speeches were controversial due to her enunciation of the superposition of violence—sexual and racist—experienced by Black female slaves.

Approximately 131 years later bell hooks reclaimed this phrase using it as the title of her book, one of the foundational works of Black feminism in the United States.⁷ hooks uses it to remind us that the feminine condition, far from being universal, encompasses strong heterogeneities. This positioning raises important philosophical questions about the role of the tension between universalisms and particularisms in the political expression of women’s rights. But it also triggers another question, that continues to be an analytical challenge for women who work in academic research: *Aren’t we women?*

This question leads us to recognize that the subject–object separability between women who study gender issues and the women we investigate is part of the semantic concealment that reproduces the subalternity of both. Universities are “incubators” of gender violence and inequality, and we have experienced that reality since our first days as students.⁸ Now, having graduated and working as university staff, we face indices of gender inequality even higher than the average found in the general labor market:

Contrary to what one might expect, the University, as a workplace, is more sexist than the general labor market, at least in terms of teaching staff.⁹ Inequality in the proportion of women and men rises as you move up through the upper echelons of teaching staff, reaching higher levels of inequality than those found at the management level of private companies. It has been indicated in previous studies,¹⁰ that the concept of “glass ceiling” does not seem to adequately describe this phenomenon. In the particular scenario of academic life, being unable to move up through the ranks tends not to stagnate a career, but rather leads to an inevitable withdrawal from university scientific activity.¹¹

Academic women live realities of exclusion and gender discrimination that are also observed in other social environments. The subalternization of women in different cultures, societies and social subgroups is transversal and reflects the crystallization of the legitimacy of masculine domination in pri-

vate and public spaces: inside and outside universities. This legitimacy is also the basis of the modern identity principle, which relies on the dichotomy between “us” and “the others.” Todorov reaches interesting conclusions by reconstructing the genealogy of the duality “we” and “the others” in modern European thought—which, according to Said, philosophically justifies the violence of colonial and imperialist enterprise.¹² In his exercise, Todorov finds two central elements in the basis of this dichotomous structuring of alterity. First, an ethnocentric construction that aims to elevate the particulars of a given society to the category of universal.¹³ Observing these ideas among influential French thinkers, from the mid-eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, Todorov finds that this ethnocentrism and racism were also projected by an androcentric and patriarchal vision: the “us” imagined by Europeans was universally understood as masculine. This universalism operates its identity logic by equalizing the local women to the primitive mentalities that, in these philosophers’ arguments, would not belong to the European group.¹⁴ According to the author, the genesis of racist and ethnocentric ideas in European modernity and contemporaneity constitutes a reproduction of the subordination of women as a particular and inferior form of a universal (male) version of the *human being*.¹⁵ Therefore, in contemporary societies, it is impossible to understand the articulation of subalternities, hierarchies, and processes of dominance without understanding the founding role of gender as a differentiating factor. According to Segato, it is not possible to move towards a de-homogenizing vision of social groups—and, in our case, of the different ways of being and acting as women—without researching deeply into the forms of gender violence to which we are all exposed (to a greater or lesser extent).¹⁶

This implies considering the debate on patriarchy’s definition as a structuring of the universal–particular dialectic that has foundational dimensions “in the organization of the symbolic field of this long patriarchal prehistory of humanity to which our time still belongs.”¹⁷ Supported by Pateman’s arguments, Segato rejects the approaches shared by Freud, Lévi-Strauss, and Lacan.¹⁸ These three define the “murder of the father” as a transitional moment towards culture, establishing this violent act as the “signature” of the “prohibition of incest” contract: as the symbolic pillar of social intervention on nature in the human species.¹⁹

Pateman points out that the murder of the father presupposes a previous violent action: it requires the a priori domination of the patriarch over the women of his group.²⁰ Therefore, the founding contract has prior origin in the “appropriation by force of all females of his group by the male-father-primitive patriarch, as the crime that gives rise to the first law, the law of status: the law of gender.”²¹ The prohibition of incest constitutes a contract between peers,

between patriarchs, once established the founding law, based on the violent appropriation of the women of the group.²²

Thus gender inequalities constitute an ontogenetic form in human societies: the constitutive content of gender asymmetries is visible in the founding role of patriarchal violence as an *elementary structure*. Between the particular and the universal, patriarchy is a double-dimensional phenomenon. On the one hand, it implies a “topic” dimension, referring to the achievement of concrete relationships, corresponding to the “name that receives the order of status in the case of gender,” as “a structure of relations between hierarchically ordered positions that has consequences at the observable, ethnographic level.”²³ On the other hand, it is the symbolic layer that constitutes all forms of symbolism; in Levi-Straussian language, the mortar of the “structural duration”²⁴ of the cultures corresponding to

the unconscious structure that drives affections and distributes values among the characters of the social scenario [. . .]. For this reason, patriarchy is at the same time a norm and project of self-reproduction and, as such, its plan emerges from scrutiny, from a drawn out ethnographic “listening” that is sensitive to power relations and its sometimes incredibly subtle discursive expression.²⁵

Due to the particular universalizing articulation of patriarchy, gender violence plays a central role “in the reproduction of the symbolic economy of power whose brand is gender [. . .]. It is a necessary act in the regular cycles of restoration of that power.”²⁶ It was Black, postcolonial feminists adhered to critical perspectives of subalternity who turned this reflection into a methodological, theoretical, and political imperative, highlighting the need to change the places of enunciation of patriarchal violence to recover its persistent social reproduction. These reflections highlighted the “intersectionality” of gender inequalities, which operate differentially according to the ethnic-racial, class, and nationality status of women.²⁷ Many of the Latin American feminist debates of the last decades have been investigating the hierarchies of rights that are constituted among different groups of women.²⁸ These debates address that some women are considered as more legitimate subjects of the rights than others.²⁹

However, there are still many spaces in which the inequalities and asymmetries of patriarchy persist: the world of professional research and university teaching is, contradictorily, one of them. The existence of gender violence of various types, degrees, and scales in the academic world should be addressed with the seriousness that its particular–universal character deserves in the reproduction of female subalternization.

Once again, it is the work of feminist thinkers since the 1970s that has denounced the reproduction of androcentric distortions in the conformation of many of the assumptions made in social research:³⁰

Identifying a number of androcentric norms and masculinist biases that structure positivist social inquiry, feminist scholars have critiqued the concepts of objectivity and neutrality as first excluding and then marginalizing forms of knowledge that do not correspond with those of white elite males. Feminist scholars have highlighted the exclusion of certain spaces and actors from study,³¹ the selection and definition of problems for inquiry,³² and the delegitimization of the experiences of women and the validation of those of men as legitimate “knowledge,”³³ as evidence of androcentric norms that structure all aspects of the research process.³⁴

Androcentrism disguises itself as objectivity operating from at least four selective procedures: (1) exclusion of knowledge; (2) exclusion of spaces and actors; (3) exclusion of problems and issues; (4) delegitimization of women’s experience.³⁵ The problem does not stop there: it permeates the methodological procedures and the praxis of empiric research in the field (both in sociology and in anthropology, our own disciplinary fields).

Our perspective on the subject has been strengthened by the conversations that Guizardi held with Professor Patricia Richards. The latter, together with Rebecca Hanson, conducted a detailed research on sexual harassment suffered by sociologists and anthropologists in their fieldwork (carried out in the United States and Latin America) between 2014 and 2015. To the authors’ astonishment, when they began to recruit persons for interviews at American universities, they found many more women willing to talk about these issues than they expected (ninety-three in total). They chose to carry out in-depth interviews with fifty-six of them, focusing on the experiences of doctoral students or teachers at the beginning of their careers.³⁶ Their research develops important reflections on the androcentrism of conceptions about qualitative methodologies.³⁷ They observed that diverse ahistorical presuppositions and a-critical methodological requirements act in the stipulation of what would or would not be “good” fieldwork.³⁸

For example, the notion that fieldwork should be solitary, that it is necessary to cultivate intimacy with the subjects of study (no matter how much danger this intimacy exposes the researcher to), and that we must overcome increasingly difficult experiences that put physical integrity at risk to be a good researcher.³⁹ As various authors have discussed since Stocking,⁴⁰ the scientist who develops fieldwork in social research is archetypally defined

as (1) male⁴¹ (2) solitary⁴²; (3) white, European/North American.⁴³ These “archetypes” constitute a “habitus”, that is, they are a “set of incorporated dispositions and practices.”⁴⁴ They are based on the construction of a series of images and practices (not always conscious) that designate what is understood as well-done fieldwork.⁴⁵ In many aspects that archetype is unattainable, but what matters is not exactly its content of reality (or realization), but the fact that these images function as a border that designates the degree of legitimacy of the methodologies used and, consequently, of the material produced from them. This pictograph of the frontier between “well done” and “badly done” fieldwork is transmitted generation after generation through the processes of professionalization and university education.⁴⁶ The methodological procedures naturalize this archetype and the result is that women (more so if they are considered Black, Latin American, Asian, African, Indigenous and from low-income sectors) suffer exponential violence when trying to reach these performance goals in the field. Despite the latter, some women live the ethnographic condition from a position of relative privilege, given by their ascription of class, or from being considered white (which offers a differential hierarchical situation in societies where social stratification operates through racist markers).⁴⁷

The study by Hanson and Richard found that women cannot talk about these problems in the universities and funding agencies that support their research. The expression of the problems and violence of gender experienced in fieldwork leads to teasing from professors and colleagues, and the delegitimization of the work done.⁴⁸ It is still a taboo to talk about sex and sexuality in methodology classes and, therefore, new generations of researchers (women and men), finish university without receiving any training on the implications that these two elements have in the research praxis.⁴⁹ As Kulick stated, “that silence about the erotic subjectivity of fieldworkers also works to keep concealed the deeply racist and colonialist conditions that make possible our continuing unidirectional discourse about sexuality of the people we study.”⁵⁰

Generally, men are the ones who talk about their sexual practice during fieldwork. On this, González recalls that, while developing her ethnographies in Colombia, male colleagues spoke openly about how their relationships with women in this country had facilitated their “entry into the field.” González wondered if perhaps a female anthropologist could have declared the same without being delegitimized or being judged morally.

There is, effectively, a discursive taboo, among the women that work as researchers (and towards our male peers), to talk about the violence that we experience daily in the development of our professional activities. These difficulties are, as detailed by Hanson and Richards, very present in our empirical

research activity and in the field. But they are also common in our institutional life: in the relationship with our tutors and advisors in the postgraduate training process; with our bosses; with our colleagues (men and women); in our dealings with the academic publishing market; and in our family relationships. All this contributes to diminishing women's access to stable positions within the universities.⁵¹ Studies observe that women who obtain positions in departments are "less likely to be tenured professors and more likely to remain at a lower rank than their male colleagues."⁵²

With the aim of contributing to the visibility of these realities as a framework shared by female researchers and the women we study, we will cover, in the following sections, narratives that illustrate the experiences of female researchers, students and university teaching staff.

UNFAIR FAIRY TALES

Aurora was a dedicated student, with outstanding grades in all her university courses.⁵³ Ever since she was a child, she felt a pull towards knowledge: professional research seemed to her the natural way to go after college. Postgraduate scholarships—MA and PhD—that she was awarded by important Spanish state agencies opened the doors in that direction. She moved from her hometown in Spain to the capital, Madrid. There, she began to work on her PhD thesis with an important and internationally recognized professor, an expert in gender and feminism. But things for Aurora became more and more difficult as she progressed in her research. The relationship with her supervisor became more complex, taking unexpected turns. Her supervisor systematically underestimated her progress: she treated her with an increasing aggressiveness and gave her tasks that were less and less fitting with her position as a PhD student/researcher. These tasks included taking care of her children, cleaning and tidying her office, and so forth. It was very difficult for Aurora to get away from or to establish limits in that relationship. Research students depend administratively and bureaucratically on their supervisors: losing the endorsement of an important professor could mean putting both your job and the possibility of continuing to work in a field of research at risk.

Research students around the world are no strangers to the situation faced by Aurora: various studies and political organizations led by post graduate researchers in training have shown that hierarchical abuses towards young people are, unfortunately, reiterated in the sciences.⁵⁴ It is a reality that affects both men and women, but has more complex consequences in the case of women. Aurora's story exemplifies this: her supervisor was more cordial and respectful to male research students. It is true that the latter group were

also on the receiving end of aggressive and offensive speeches or threats about their professional future in the case of them not delivering their interviews and empirical research inputs to their advisor for her use, for example. However, she never asked male research students to carry out tasks related to the care of her children, or housework (such as food shopping). Unable to put a stop to these abusive situations, Aurora became progressively ill and fell into a deep depression, for which she received medical attention, including medication. After a few months, she decided to leave the job and go back to her parents' house. Aurora managed to finish her PhD dissertation but at great emotional, physical, and psychological cost.

Valentina was a young researcher on gender issues. She developed her PhD and carried out her teaching duties at two universities, also in Madrid. There, she began to suffer the persistent harassment of a fellow male teacher with whom she shared classes. From inappropriate and unwanted comments, the colleague moved on to more explicit harassment strategies: feeling her up by touching her arms, back, and legs. One day, having hid himself in the office they shared, he locked her inside it, blocking her way out. She had always clearly expressed that these situations upset her, stating openly that she did not consent to his actions. She argued with him and managed to escape that particular awful situation. But after that event, Valentina believed he was capable of raping her and was scared to stay at work. At the same time, she was scared to report what had happened, intuiting that her complaint would be misunderstood, but encouraged by colleagues and her PhD advisor, Valentina made a formal complaint to the university. Her intuition proved right. The first voices that publicly passed judgment on the case spoke up in defense of the harasser and pointed the finger at Valentina, questioning her motive. Some important professors claimed that she was posturing for self-promotion, and accused her of leading him on.

Marcia, Hilda, Edith, and Andrea were teaching staff at an important university in Chile. Three of them worked on gender issues and recognized themselves as feminists. The four were also relatively young and migrants in the country. With a strong background in research—which fully met the institution's standards of scientific productivity—they were employed by the university following rigorous recruitment procedures, competing against a significant number of candidates. The joy of successfully getting such a position soon faded as they began to perceive the inexplicable inequalities between them and their male colleagues and, in certain cases, also between them and female Chilean colleagues. The four of them faced incredible problems. Marcia and Andrea were kept on with temporary, short-term contracts, renewed every four months, for two years, contrary to Chilean labor

legislation which states that, after an initial trial period of a maximum of four months, workers should be given a permanent contract. The women were kept “on trial” for a period six times longer than that stipulated by the legislation. Meanwhile, they witnessed how their male colleagues, who had started working at the same time they did (and in some cases even after them), were given their permanent contracts in the time frame stipulated by law. These contracts provide their male colleagues with many other benefits, such as the opportunity to apply for internal promotion within the academic hierarchy or to receive funding for international travel to congresses. Hilda and Edith, in turn, received a salary lower than that established for the functions they performed. They were paid less than their male colleagues who did exactly the same job. The university refused to pay them the corresponding bonus for carrying out specialized management tasks such as directing academic units (a right stipulated in the university’s statute).

María was invited to attend an important international seminar held jointly by a German and an Argentine university. The seminar was for a small number of researchers who would discuss a specific topic, contributing to the debate in their disciplinary fields. Only a few experts from each field were invited: María was young and looking forward to participating in an event of this magnitude. She prepared her paper conscientiously, discussing in it the results of five years of research. The seminar was held in a hotel and, gradually, the invited researchers from different countries began to arrive. Awaiting the opening ceremony, María sat at the door of the conference room. While waiting, she was approached by one of the important professors who had organized the event. The professor stood in front of her and looking María up and down, asked if she was a hotel worker. Accustomed to this type of treatment—as a young female researcher she had often faced the incredulity of male colleagues—she replied that she was there for the scientific seminar. The professor then asked if she was the intern or assistant of one of the invited professors. María shook her head negatively. Still unsatisfied, the professor asked her, if she was from the university’s technical team that had come to take charge of the logistics (in which case he piped up that there was a problem with the projector). Sensing that these clarifications could take all night, María explained that she was, in fact, an invited researcher, here to present a paper. The professor did not believe her. Perhaps it was not difficult to understand why: of the twenty-seven researchers invited to the event only five of them were women. And of these five, only one of them was young: María.

Verena was a researcher with an education and interest in issues related to public policies. Despite being young, she had years of experience advising on the diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation of social programs.

One day, she received a call from a peer, a researcher with a renowned supranational organization, with expertise in the advising of public policies. This peer explained to Verena that he had been asked to recommend a professional who could assist in the preparation of the public policy plan of a small municipality in Chile. He asked Verena if she would like to work on this project, to which she replied yes. The contacts were made. Days later, Verena was invited to participate in the process, and received an invitation to a meeting. She noticed that, in this first email, the secretary had addressed her as “Mr. Verena,” but assumed this was a typing error. On the day Verena arrived on time for the meeting, the only one to do so. The secretary pointed her in the direction of the meeting room. Twenty minutes later, the other attendees arrived. Nobody talked to her.

Once the meeting had started, in the presence of authorities, technicians, and the mayor himself, the issues were raised by the Secretary of Social Affairs. As he presented the problems, Verena raised her hand and proposed alternatives to solve the problems. From her first intervention, her comments caused discomfort. Every time she proposed to take the floor again, this discomfort intensified. On her third attempt to speak, she was asked directly to be quiet. Verena resigned herself to listening and taking notes of everything that was said. The situation was becoming increasingly tense as new issues were brought up without any of those present managing to find solutions. Verena was scared to speak up again. Finally, the mayor himself stated acidly: “We are not getting anywhere. Where is the expert who was recommended to us, Dr. Verena?” Incredulous, Verena raised her hand explaining that she was “Dr. Verena”, and that she had indeed been trying to talk the whole meeting. The mayor apologized in his own way: “Who would ever believe that such a young woman could be an expert in social programs?”

ANDROCENTRIC CENSORSHIP

In several Latin American countries, the system used by scientific publications follows the editorial rules used by the countries of the Global North. Most of these rules claim to have the objective of ensuring rigor in the research published in specialized journals (indexed by private catalog systems, belonging to large international companies), and in scientific and university publishing houses.

In countries such as Chile, the imposition of these rules on scientific journals is a matter of State. Since the country became a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in 2010, academic productivity assessment metrics have been established in strict accordance to

the criteria developed in the Global North and they have been deemed necessary for Chile's "development" by the OECD.

However, in many cases these parameters of productivity are counterproductive when promoting social research and making it available to the communities and governments of the region. These rules also imply the exclusion of those researchers who do not meet these criteria. For example, the annual publication of numerous scientific articles in internationally indexed journals is a requirement to apply for (and maintain) teaching and research positions, projects and funds (public and private), or even to compete for scholarships.

For this reason, scientific journals and academic publishers in Latin America gained a prominence that they did not have before. Formally the criteria for evaluating texts for publication by a scientific journal should follow "transparent" standards. The manuscripts must be made anonymous (no data that identifies the authors should be allowed) and sent for evaluation to two or more expert researchers in the subject treated. The authors should not be aware of the identity of those who judge their work. This two-tier blind procedure, known as "peer review," indicates whether the text is approved for publication without corrections, approved with corrections, or rejected.

However, there are many things that can happen during this evaluation process that prevent or diminish its transparency, correctness, and anonymity. On several occasions, the authors are the only ones who work on a specific topic in a given space (therefore making it possible to identify who wrote the text, even without mentioning their names). On other occasions, the evaluators do not know the identities of the authors, but they radically oppose their line of studies or their scientific paradigmatic preferences. In other circumstances, editors reject a text before sending it to external evaluation, using random justifications (e.g., arguing that this does not fit the editorial scope of the journal, despite the fact that these issues have not been listed or clearly specified anywhere).

All these problems are widely known by researchers. But, in recent years, we have observed the incidence of a thematic criterion related to these opaque mechanisms of evaluation. Articles that problematize gender relations are increasingly being rejected by publishers of indexed journals, who refuse to send texts for external peer review. The three authors of this article are researchers who have been working on gender issues for years. Each of us has at least a decade of experience in the subject, having directed and participated in several research projects with national public funding (in Chile, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina) and international funding (from supranational organizations). Between the three of us, we have published almost a hundred indexed articles (in five countries) and in three languages. So, we are not dealing with researchers unfamiliar to the international publishing circuit.

Perhaps some examples will help clarify our point. González and Guizardi have been working on a project about the experience of care, impoverishment, and marginalization of older women in three different districts of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago (Chile). In this project, they have written various scientific articles. The first is a review of the state of the art of research on gender and aging in the social sciences since 1950. The work covers eighty publications considered relevant to the subject in Anglophone and Spanish-speaking research. It was initially sent to a prestigious Mexican journal specializing in social sciences.

The editors' answer stated that the text was of "great quality," well written, but that its topic "does not fit in with the journal's editorial scope." Therefore, they decided that the manuscript would not be sent for peer review (Editor's email, June 7, 2018). Their email was a surprise: González and Guizardi had previously checked the editorial guidelines of the journal. On its website, the editorial objective was broadly described as "to promote research in the social sciences in Ibero-America." According to the webpage, the journal focuses on the publication of articles derived from "scientific research referring to analysis or controversies on contemporary theories, social facts, current debates and case studies that enrich and offer a new theoretical perspective to the diverse disciplines of the social sciences." Quoting these fragments in our response to the editors, we asked them to explain how gender and aging do not conform to these definitions: are they not relevant social facts? Were we not reviewing contemporary social theory?

The lack of any response from the editors prompted us to send the article to another internationally indexed journal, also in Mexico. We chose it after assuring ourselves that, in previous years, they had published texts on gender subjects. This editor's response was clearer: the text was well written, he said; the debate was impressively articulated, and the bibliographic review was "as complete as possible." But the best thing would be to send it to a journal that specialized in "women's issues" (Editor's email, June 19, 2018). After that, we decided to send the article to a feminist journal (which finally submitted the manuscript to peer review).

The latter is far from being an isolated anecdote: González and Guizardi are facing the same problem with all the other texts derived from their research project on female aging; and with many articles that address gender debates. Let us bring another example to light. A second article was produced within the framework of the González and Guizardi project. The manuscript presented a discussion of the public policies aimed at addressing the feminization of aging in Chile. First, it was sent to a prestigious Chilean indexed journal specializing in public policies. The editor's response reproduces the same arguments given by the two Mexican journals:

After careful consideration of the scope of the work, we have decided not to publish it, *because it does not fall within our editorial scope* [. . .]. Our decision *should not be interpreted as a negative judgment on its intrinsic quality*. (Editor's email, June 25, 2018. Emphasis added).

Once again, the “intrinsic quality” of the work is recognized, but this does not stop the editor from taking the prerogative of vetoing its submission for peer review, alleging its supposed irrelevance to the journal's editorial scope. This scope, available on its website, specifies that: “the objective of the journal is to contribute to the examination of socioeconomic development problems in the region, with analytical and policy approaches, in articles by experts in economics and other social sciences.” Considering that Chile is the country with the longest life expectancy at birth in Latin America,⁵⁵ that it has the fastest rate of aging in the region; that aging is strongly feminized in almost the entire national territory;⁵⁶ that seventy-two percent of the elderly do not manage to live on their pensions,⁵⁷ and that the National Government has declared the urgent need to develop public policies for this population,⁵⁸ the affirmation that our article does not concern a topic relevant to “socio-economic development” and “policy” becomes untenable. If our text cannot be questioned for its “intrinsic quality,” then we can only suppose the editor's refusal to send it to peer review constitutes thematic censorship.

After receiving the editor's email, González and Guizardi sent it to an important Colombian journal, also specializing in public policy. A few days later, the editors informed us that: “after a first review by the editorial team, we regret to inform you that we cannot offer to publish your article because it does not fit with the journal's thematic field” (Editor's email, June 29, 2018). The thematic guidelines of the journal—public policies—would not contemplate, according to its editors, a text that deals with a gender analysis on aging policies.

Assuming the task as part of the research itself, proposing to observe these rejections from a feminist critical perspective, González and Guizardi sent the article to another internationally indexed Chilean journal, focused on political sciences. The editors' letter confirms the tendencies and using similar language to previous ones:

Thank you very much for submitting your work to be considered by Journal X [name omitted]. The editors, who subscribe to this letter, have evaluated the manuscript for potential publication. We regret to inform you that we have decided that your work will not continue in the evaluation process. *Despite believing that your research offers an interesting discussion on public policies focused on the “aging process, its feminization*

and the demands of social care of the elderly population”, we believe that our journal is not the best place to *publish this type of study*. With this, of course, we do not want to detract merit from your work. But we believe that other journals such as X, X, X [names omitted] may be better suited to publish your work. We hope that this does not discourage you from sending other contributions to the journal in the future. (Editors’ email, July 21, 2018. Emphasis added).

It seemed quite evident that the only alternative to assure that the article would be sent to peer review (having the opportunity to be evaluated for its scientific merits, and not for the censorship of its subject), was to send it to a feminist journal. That is exactly what González and Guizardi did (the text is currently under peer review).

In these examples, we have five different indexed journals, in three different countries (Chile, Colombia, and Mexico) in which editors use the same formula to discretely reject gender debates. According to this formula, the quality of the material and work is recognized, but it is argued that the topic is not pertinent to the editorial guidelines. The same procedure has been repeated in many other cases. Between 2017 and 2018, we had several texts rejected with the same allegations.

In some cases, the texts are effectively sent for peer review, but receive derogatory comments regarding their gender perspective. That perspective is treated as a “non-scientific issue,” or as an issue only pertinent to journals specializing “in women’s studies.” Within the framework of another research project, Guizardi and several colleagues developed a historical article about gender violence in the Andean Tri-Border-Area. The text was rejected by the editors, without being sent for peer review, of a Colombian and a Chilean journal. The arguments were the same that we have portrayed above (the quality of the text is recognized, but the editors find its topic ill-fitting with the journals’ editorial scopes). In a third attempt, with a Brazilian indexed journal, the text was finally sent to three experts for peer review. One of them recommended the publication of the manuscript, while two others rejected it. The reasons for the rejection are, once more, clarifying:

The publication of the article is rejected since the Journal X [name omitted] is a highly respected publication of great impact in the field of historical studies. It is suggested that the article should be sent to a social science publication specializing in gender studies. (Evaluation report “C”. Editor’s email, August 21, 2018).

Considering that Journal X [name omitted] is evaluated as Qualis A1 [the highest indexing in Brazil], I consider it inappropriate to publish

the text. [. . .] I recommend that the text should be submitted to journals dedicated to gender studies. (Evaluation report “D”. Editor’s email, August 21, 2018).

It is possible to draw several conclusions from these two reviewers. Both consider that gender issues are not appropriate to be published in a prestigious journal of history, leading us to understand that these debates are not pertinent to this field of study. They also believe that gender debates do not concern a journal considered to be “highly respected and of high impact.” It is clear from these comments that gender debates do not constitute “serious science” in historiographical terms. In addition, both indicate the submission of the text to evaluation by journals specializing in gender, leading to the conclusion that these journals are not as “serious,” as “high-brow,” or as “impactful” as those of history. We observe, thus, mechanisms of censorship and hierarchy according to which the gender debate is deemed as less important, less relevant, and less scientific: it is considered to inferior to “truly objective science.”

The article was finally sent to a feminist history journal. In all these examples, critical gender debates are being progressively cornered as issues that cannot be publicized and published except in feminist journals. This thematic censorship, which extrapolates the supposed meritocratic guidelines that define the way journals evaluate, has concrete consequences for those of us who work with these issues: by making it difficult, slowing down, and frustrating our publications, they push us to the periphery of the scientific productivity system, reducing our ability to compete and access financing. The possibility to publicize our work is also reduced, preventing it from being circulated in different fields and academic media.

WINDS OF CHANGE

The year 2018 was marked by the protagonist role of feminist struggles in the American Southern Cone. In Argentina there were national demonstrations in support of passing the law that guarantees legal, free, and universal abortion which drew crowds. In Brazil women assumed a leading role in the presidential elections, protesting against the extreme right-wing candidate, Jair Bolsonaro, who relapsed into a misogynistic discourse for the reduction of women’s rights (such as maternity leave).

In Chile females took to the streets in May 2018, with the national movement of university students to protest against gender violence perpetrated in higher education institutions. Guizardi was in the country for fieldwork and participating, as a guest professor, of postgraduate courses. Stefoni and

González work as researchers and teaching staff at two universities that were occupied by the students. Almost twenty universities around the country were taken over. Most of them were located in Santiago, but there were also institutions situated in the north and south of Chile. Complaints regarding sexual harassment, sexist treatment, violence, and rape began to come to light the length of the national territory: the movement pushed the unveiling of abuses that had previously been naturalized and covered up by the institutions themselves.

Many ethnographical surprising scenes unfolded during the student protests in Santiago, but one of them in particular had political transcendence to many researchers and teaching staff working in Chile. It happened on May 16 during the National March that went along the *Alameda* (the emblematic central avenue of Santiago where the *Casa de la Moneda*, the governmental palace and seat of the national executive power is situated). The Chilean government deployed its usual violent security operatives that, profess to “contain” the protests and safeguard “public order.” These “security” forces usually assume citizens are an internal threat, and so restrict the right to free expression in public spaces. In general, the marches end with choking tear gas being fired, and streets blocked by battalions of police on motorcycles and horseback that advance on people. They also end with a variety of armored tanks throwing jets of water and rubber bullets at people who in turn respond by throwing back whatever can be found on the ground—sticks, stones, pieces of cars, garbage cans.

For the university women’s march that Wednesday May 16, the streets were full of policewomen. The authorities thought that it would be appropriate to use women to repress other women. On one side of the *Alameda* there was a wall of policewomen, arms linked, trying to divert the young women and move their march in another direction.

A group of young women stopped in front of this police wall and began to chant various phrases from women’s liberation movement: for equality in men and women’s salaries, for the end of violence against women, for equal access to education and equal division of care in the homes. Contrary to the normal reaction of “pacos” and “pacas”—the street name for police officers in Chile—these girls were not repressed. The pacas stood motionless. It was at that moment when the girls realized that several of the pacas were crying. The young women approached the policewomen, who were not allowed to move, and embraced them collectively. They shouted: “this is for you too.” The policewomen, still crying, thanked them with a nod.

This scene has been recorded in photos, videos, and comics. It condenses political transformations of great importance. First, a recognition among

peers that manages to challenge strongly established social separations, such as the opposition between law enforcement and citizens facing each other on the Chilean streets. It also challenges generational barriers: women ranging from five to eighty years old have supported the marches promoted by university students. The young women's movement has reorganized certain differences in class: the public protests were followed by women from the richest universities as well as those from the less well-off ones. They recognize a sense of trans-commonality very scarce in a such an unequal social environment; their commonality was based on sharing gender demands. Therefore, the banner of equal rights among the diverse gender identities became a transversal political cause in Chile. This sort of connection constitutes a breath of fresh air for contemporary democracies: that diverse, heterogeneous people can recognize themselves dynamically as political actors intervening for a common cause, even though they are from a wide range of positions and discourses.

Part of the student movement's petitions is for equal pay in the universities. They demand gender equality in all positions—administrative, and for research and teaching staff—but especially in management positions, in which women are drastically underrepresented. They ask that the bibliographies of the bachelor and graduate courses contemplate women authors, that there is proportionality regarding the work done by male researchers or thinkers in the material that will be taught. These brave and lucid students have given our generation of researchers their voice back and an image of ourselves that is much more coherent. They have made public the demands that we had been whispering under our breath in our places of work.

(RE)SIZING THE FACTS

The narratives presented in this article lead to a number of reflections. Nevertheless, we will circumscribe ourselves to three of them in these final remarks. First, the slippery nature of the forms of violence experienced by women in academic environments; second, the reproduction of the taboo regarding discussing them; and, third, their political outputs.

The Sinuosity of Violence

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.⁵⁹

The stories narrated in the third section show a wide range of manifestations of violence faced by women in the university environment. Aurora, a PhD research student, was treated violently by her advisor. The latter used to raise



Fig. 1. "The embodied voice." Young women preparing for the performance against gender violence at the International Women's Day March, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2020). Photograph by Menara Guizardi.



Fig. 2. “The backstage at the Square.” Young women preparing for the performance against gender violence at the Plaza de Marzo (in front of the Argentine national government house) at the International Women’s Day March, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2020). Photograph by Menara Guizardi



Fig. 3. "Girl's power." Young women at the International Women's Day March, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2020). Photograph by Menara Guizardi.



Fig. 4. Popular feminist militants animate the protest from the stage at the International Women's Day March, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2019). Photograph by Menara Guizardi.



Fig. 5. Women from the Socialist Workers Movement (MST in its Spanish acronym) protesting against gender violence at the International Women's Day March, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2020). Photograph by Menara Guizardi.



Fig. 6. “Engendering percussions.” Women Socialist Workers Movement (MST in its Spanish acronym) play drums at the International Women’s Day March, called by the movement “Ni una menos” [“Not one woman less”], Buenos Aires, Argentina (2018). Photograph by Menara Guizardi.

her voice to mistreat Aurora in public spaces of the university, and to force her to carry out tasks unrelated to her academic position (looking after the advisor's children or doing her grocery shopping). The advisor also publicly discredited Aurora's work, dismissing its quality in her conversations with other professors and researchers. The violence in their relationship ranged from thinly veiled insults to outright verbal aggression, although there was no physical attack or aggression perpetrated against Aurora.

In the case of Valentina, also a young researcher, the harassment was physical and sexual, but it was perpetrated by a male figure. This harassment also triggered various other aggressions, woven around the discredit voiced by male professors that Valentina had to face when she decided to report what happened. The accusations about her motives for making the complaint were yet another form of violence. In turn, in the narratives of María and Verena, who had finished their PhDs and were working as researchers, gender violence manifests itself as the recidivist "non-recognition" to which they were exposed. It gained materiality through the refusal of those around them—a renowned professor, in the case of María; the mayor and the technicians of the town hall, in the case of Verena—to grant a young woman the legitimacy of "knowledgeable authority." In their examples, the violence was made explicit through non-recognition, but its effects were amplified: they were denied their right to participate and to express themselves in certain spaces.

For Marcia, Hilda, Edith, and Andrea, discrimination materialized in economic inequality (lower salaries than male peers); in heavier workloads (they had to carry out more management tasks, teaching, or research activities); in legal inequality (they did not get the legal permanent work contract in the normal time frame); and, finally, also in an unequal representation in positions of power. They did not have access to decision-making positions within the university hierarchy.

The diverse examples show that the violence experienced by female researchers in the university environment manifests itself in a variety of ways. Such is the range that it does not necessarily imply the violation or perpetration of physical intimidations. Given the above, pinpointing it can be difficult: violence is everywhere and in different intensities, becoming diffuse, confusing. Thus, a first analytical aspect to highlight, is the definition of these aggressions of such varied spectrum as "sexism":

Sexism is one of the forms of expression of gender violence that subtly and in hidden ways transits vertically, horizontally and circularly among the different agents present in universities. The use of physical force—rape and daily abuse—is not the only means of exercising vio-

lence; sexism is, among all forms of gender violence, one of the most archaic and persistent, referring to discrimination based on sex.⁶⁰ [. . .] Sexism, then, refers to the exercise of power to maintain the situation of inferiority, subordination, exploitation of the opposite sex, as an assessment (in the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions) that is made of a person regarding the biological sexual category to which the person belongs. It can be labeled as negative or positive, and targets both women and men.⁶¹ However, there is a tendency to circumscribe negative qualities—the sexist ones—towards women.⁶²

Sexism constitutes a general frame that reproduces male domination. The profusion of these varied manifestations of sexist violence is not, therefore, random. Rather, despite the aforementioned difficulties in pinning it down, through its constant repetition it takes on a stable form. Thus, entangled concentrically around a structure of masculine domination, sexist violence in the university environments constitutes a semantic organizer of women's subordination. It makes up the symbolic support, "it paves the way," to be metaphorical, which in turn normalizes the advance towards other forms of violence. The reproduction of this sexist violence engenders a variety of classificatory mechanisms. For example, the stereotypes applied to women when they suffer or report violence. Guizardi recalls, in this regard, the phrase she heard from a superior at a Chilean university when she complained about the sexist treatment received from a female official of the institution: "you are already known [at the university] as a communist and a feminist. If you keep complaining like that, you'll become a feminist, and a communist with a chip on her shoulder." The message is clarifying: feminism, communism, and resentment are pejorative attributes with which women who enunciate their criticism on the reproduction of these practices can be disqualified.

In this example from Guizardi and in the case of Aurora, older women perpetrate violence against young women. Regarding the latter, Segato's analysis is particularly pertinent. Revisiting both Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, Segato agrees with their assumption that there are floating signifiers and that the power of gender violence condensed in the patriarch can move towards other figures: "the position of the patriarch is, therefore, a position in the symbolic field, which is transposed into variable signifiers in the course of social interactions."⁶³

Although it is hard to recognize, many academic women (even feminists) who manage to reach positions of power in universities end up reproducing these mechanisms of sexist violence towards younger women, or towards women who are subordinated to them. The forms in which power is exer-

cised in the academic environment reproduce the patriarch's *modo operandi*. Frequently, female authorities in the university mistakenly associate their position with the capacity and power to exercise violence against other women.

The above gives meaning to Lorde's phrase that opened this subsection: "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."⁶⁴ In order to establish principles of gender equality, it is necessary to advance towards a feminist egalitarian praxis in the spaces of power. It is also necessary to learn how to discuss, and create mechanisms to allow debate regarding the exercise of positions of authority by feminists. None of us should be excused the duty of self and collective reflection on that subject. This demands an increasingly lucid positioning in relation to the coherence between the social theories to which we adhere, the professional practices; the social relations and our ways of acting, feeling and relating in university spaces. As Todorov said, this form of coherence is eminently political and conditions a necessarily ethical reflection.⁶⁵

The Personal is Political

A second analytical point derives from the observation of the recidivism of a mechanism of "foreclosure" of female experiences and interpretations in the university environment. Foreclosure is a Lacanian concept that refers to those signifiers that are erased by the subjects—from their conscious and unconscious registers. It is related to the founding mechanism of psychosis and, according to Lacan, is produced by the total absence of the father figure, which renders the subject incapable of registering it as a signifier in his or her early childhood (up to five years).⁶⁶

Segato expands the use of the concept to explain that patriarchal violence is based on a process of foreclosure of the feminine element which, operating as the founding mechanism of all symbolisms, produces the progressive concealment of women's knowledge, practices, and worldviews.⁶⁷ Thus the power of the patriarch has something of the psychotic in it, given its inability to register the feminine and to recognize it, or give it an existential ontology. When we speak of a mechanism of "foreclosure" of female experiences and interpretations in the academic world, we are referring to the institutionalization of practices that relegate, hide, and subtract the knowledge produced from women's perspectives.

In the fourth section we illustrated this in relation to the "editorial market" of indexed journals, where publications that are structured from gender perspectives are sometimes considered incompatible with "high science." On other occasions, those works are recognized as having an "intrinsic quality,"

but still, they are “thematically incompatible with the editorial scope.” These arguments are repeated with increasing frequency among editors from different countries, given that feminist texts are assumed as being a “political discussion” rather than an “academic” one in many Latin American contexts. Both this positivist assumption of a necessary depoliticization of scientific arguments, and the outright attack on feminist reflections are symptoms of the “great regression” we are facing throughout the world, but with strongly femi- cidal and androcentric nuances in Latin America.⁶⁸

I cannot help but be surprised that the recent maneuvers of power in the Americas, with their conservative return to moral discourse as the mainstay of their antidemocratic policies—2016: Macri in Argentina, Temer in Brazil, the “No” from an Uribeist and corporate Colombia, the dismantling of citizen power in Mexico, and Trump in the United States—have shown irrefutably, the relevance of the familialist and patri- archal onslaught in their respective strategies [. . .]. Indeed, the pres- sure unleashed throughout the continent to demonize and render pun- ishable what they agree to represent as “the gender ideology”, and their emphasis on defending the ideal of the family as a subject of rights at any cost, transforms the spokespersons of the historical project of cap- ital in sources of evidence of what I have been affirming for some time: that, far from being residual, minority and marginal, the gender issue is the cornerstone and axis of gravity of the building of all powers.⁶⁹

Far from being a coincidence, the growing refusal to submit feminist re- search to peer review procedures in journals from different Latin American countries is part of this regressive context of rights in which gender debates are being demonized as “ideological.” Our feminist perspective prevents us from considering science as an apolitical form. Frequently, in Latin America, our male colleagues use this epistemological political position as a legitimate reason to denigrate or to silence our research. By rejecting our texts because of the topic, journal editors are gradually excluding feminist debates from the discursive universe of social research. The latter characterizes a foreclosure; a refusal to register our statements as scientific language.

This foreclosure has become stronger and stronger in the academic pub- lishing market in the last three years. But we also come across it as a prin- ciple of reproduction of sexist violence among academic women ourselves. The stories treated in the second section of this article emanate from women who thought twice—all of them—about discussing those problems with other women, or with their superiors. It has taken some of them years to be able to talk about the situations they have gone through. Insofar as we do not feel

authorized, insofar as we feel shame or fear of being harmed professionally if we talk about those situations, we reproduce sexist violence by foreclosing our right to enunciate our own experience (our particular existence) inside the universities.

The foreclosure is even more violent, even more psychotic (if you will), insofar as the women who execute it are subjects who work on these issues in the lives of other women. How can we explain that feminist researchers who study women are not able to denounce the violence they themselves experience? The refusal to recognize ourselves as subjects of violence turns the women we study into others; it builds a bipolar relationship that makes them inferior in relation to us. The latter reclaims the enlightenment identity dyad—"we" and "the others"—that characterizes the colonial encounter.⁷⁰ By "foreclosing" the gender violence experienced by ourselves, while shedding light onto that experienced by "others," we activate an alterity principle that colonizes these others.

Consequently, talking about gender violence in the academic environment is an ethical requirement, in Todorov's terms: a necessary step to reinstate a critical coherence between what we think, feel, and do as political beings.⁷¹ A step towards the rupture of our own foreclosure. Overcoming this foreclosure implies considering that the equation between objectivity and subjectivity constitutes a dialectic for those women who study the experiences of other women. For, our condition as subjects alters and is altered by the people and phenomena we study. It also implies assuming that the separation between professional and personal is a symptom of this patriarchal foreclosure. As Anzaldúa said, we "are a crossroads."⁷²

To solve these dichotomies implies that we advance, in the social sciences, towards a "feminist perspective from below": attentive to the contradiction of the authority figure of the researchers—recognizing the place of subordination that we occupy in the academic world due to our gender condition—and also to the political nuances of the process of constitution of subjectivities among the people we study.⁷³ It assumes that the analytical tension between particularism and universalisms reproduces a concealment of the feminine as a source of knowledge.⁷⁴ Due to the latter, it is necessary to return to the partial and situated nature of scientific knowledge, in order to

restore the value of experiential, involved and committed knowledge. A knowledge from which reason and emotion are not assumed as two distinguishable and opposed poles, as the androcentric and ethnocentric western thought would have us believe, oversizing the value of the "rational" versus the "emotional", the scientific versus the un-scientific,

and, and in the end, the masculine, in its Aristotelian association with reason, versus the feminine in its association with the emotional.⁷⁵

As the title of this section indicates, it is necessary to advance towards the understanding that this feminine personal condition is, also, political. “The personal is political,” as the feminist movement shouted repeatedly in the 1970s.⁷⁶ It seems that the new generations have understood this, as we explain below.

Domesticating Politics

Finally, we would like to return to the feminist student mobilizations in Chile. In this process of insurgency against the continuity of sexist abuse, the assemblies, the organization of the university occupations, the debates, the writing of the petitions; in short, everything has been built up from the care of and empathy between peers. The young female mobilizations in Chile constituted a manifestation of care as a contemporary political expression. The know-how regarding social care, knowledge, and social responsibility that has been unequally burdened on female backs, seems to be making way for a new proposal to act politically. Politics from care and for care.

This new politics emanates from a humanizing ethic that has been swept aside and fiercely attacked by this neoliberal model of State that has been generalized (in an increasingly catastrophic way) in South America in the last three years. In this sense, Chilean students have made progress in what Segato called “the domestication of politics”:

The approach I propose is [. . .] not a translation of the domestic into public terms, making it digestible in order to achieve some degree of political recognition, I propose the opposite approach: “to domesticate politics”, de-bureaucratize it, humanize it through domestic logic; make the domestic political again [. . .]. What we must recover, by dismantling the public-private binarism, are the technologies of sociability and a type of politics that rescues the lost language of domestic politics, of *oiconomies*, as well as the styles of negotiation, representation and management developed and accumulated as women’s experience throughout their history, given their status as a group differentiated from the species, beginning with the social division of labor.⁷⁷

The young university women taking to the streets of Chile generate new forms of action in space. Various scenes that for so long were labeled “things of the domestic world,” diverse forms of care and organization of the ordi-

nary, of the community, are unfolding and surpassing limits with the feminist movements, woven by these young women who will be, in the future, researchers and professors (although *not only* this). This breaking down of the fictional barrier between the public and the private is liberating for women—we are often obliged to be the “watchdogs” of the domestic, and that is a difficult and unfair role—but it also liberating for politics itself. It lets in a breath of fresh air to politics driven by a transformative, and deeply humanizing affection.

These Chilean students, through their political acts, not only embraced the “paca” in the scene that we narrated in the fifth section, but they are also embracing us, the researchers and university teaching staff. They are achieving a gender democratization of the teaching and research institutions where we work. They are pushing us to recognize the sexism, and to break down the foreclosure of gender violence in the university space. By doing that, they have inspired us to make a socially decisive step towards the politicization of this debate.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the National Commission of Scientific and Technological Research of Chile (CONICYT) that funds this study through the project Fondecyt 1160683: “*Ser Mujer Mayor en Santiago de Chile: Organización Social de los Cuidados, Feminización del Envejecimiento y Desigualdades acumuladas*,” directed by Herminia González Torralbo and Menara Lube Guizardi.

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