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Instead of the linearity, we need a broad, flexible, totally dynamic multiversum, a continuous and frequently linked counterpoint with historical voices. In this way, and to do justice to the gigantic extra-European material, it is no longer possible to work linearly, without sinuosity, in series (order), without a complex and new variety of time (...) Thus, we need a framework of a philosophy of the history of non-European cultures.

Bloch, E. (1970/1955) 'Differentiations in the concept of progress', in Bloch E. *A philosophy for the future*, New York: Herder and Herder: p. 143.

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WORKING Paper, No: 02/2023

***Addressing the internal colonialism within feminisms
by decolonising Marxism***

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Decolonising Marxism: Addressing the internal colonialism within feminisms

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Abstract: The paper enhances Frida Haug's Theses on Marxism Feminism by discussing a silence in the Theses regarding the internal colonialism of the feminist movement that continues to create racialised hierarchies among white feminists and indigenous and women of colour, and their struggles. The author contends that Marxism Feminism is failing to find new ways to understand diversity due to the influence of traditional -close and Eurocentric-Marxism. To tackle the problem, Marxism Feminism requires a *decolonising Marxism* that draws on 'late Marx' and recent Marxist and feminist theoretical developments aiming to criticise, de-westernise and de-Eurocentralise Marxism. The author explores four elements for a 'decolonising' Marxism (value theory, subsumption and social formation, linear development of radical change, and temporality of struggles), and discusses their implications on Marxism Feminism, gesturing towards the inclusion of a 14th Thesis.

Keywords: internal colonialism, Marxism Feminism, temporality, social formation, subsumption.

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Introduction

I celebrate Frida Haug's *Thirteen Theses on Marxism Feminism* (see **Annex** in this document), which she regards as the unfinished product of a collective process. The debate around the 13 theses testify to the inspirational nature of the Theses and the ideas they elicit for debate, enabling us to seek new answers to old questions and pose new ones. In Thesis VII, Haug points to the limitations of traditional Marxism for Marxist Feminism, specifically for considering the working class and the labour movement as the subject of revolutionary transformation. Traditional Marxism, writes Haug, 'is neither receptive to the new feminist questions nor those of ecology. Therefore, we must keep working on it ... Marx's legacy requires a continuous investigation' (See D'Atri, 2023).

In this intervention, I oblige by addressing a silence in Haug's Theses: the 'internal colonialism' within Feminism. By internal colonialism I mean the discrimination and the 'condition of superiority that Euro-Western feminism assumes towards South American [and other] feminisms' (Guzmán Useche and Triana Moreno, 2019: 23; Paredes, 2013) from the global south. However, this internal colonialism is not only from the North to the South but exists among feminists in the South too, where some sectors of the latter follow feminist liberal agendas, thus 'reproducing the othering against women of colour and indigenous women' (Espinosa Miñoso, 2009: 4; see Castro Varela and Dhawan, 2023). The quietness implicitly disregards the emergence, growth and/or strengthening of diverse feminisms, i.e., decolonial (Vergès, 2021; Icaza Garza, 2021; Curiel, 2009; Curiel et al., 2016), communitarian (Cabnal, 2010), indigenous (Hernández Castillo, 2010), *Buen Vivir* feminisms (Varea and Zaragozin, 2017). It also reveals a 'colonial difference' (Mignolo, 2002) between white and non-white women as an unsustainable political and epistemological problem that is weakening feminism. This occurs in times of the expansion 'environmental' struggles against extractivism, led by indigenous feminists many of them of Afro descent and Latin American. The Zapatista Women are an example of the latter. They organised the First International Gathering of Women Who Struggle, in Chiapas, Mexico, 2018, which brought together 7,000 women of all ages, ethnicities, and beliefs and discuss feminism. They consider themselves feminists *in a way* for they distance themselves from ideological, strategic, and political divisions of the feminist movement. Feminism for them 'is practical and comes from women's experience' (Gies 2018). At the gathering, one of the participants stated that "it is not necessary to call yourself feminist to have an exceptional capacity to organize...Sometimes

ideological fractures have not allowed us to listen” (Participant, cited in Gies, 2018). The question of what feminism can learn ‘from racialized subaltern women's experiment[s] with new political subjectivities [and] emancipatory politics’ (Motta and Seppälä, 2016: 7) like the Zapatista women is yet to be answered.

The presence of ‘racialised hierarchies’ (Lugones, 2003) within the feminist movement is not new. In *Feminism is for Everybody*, bell hooks explains that ‘in those days white women who were unwilling to face the reality of racism and racial difference accused us of traitors by introducing race. Wrongly they saw us deflecting away from gender’ (2000: 57). Wekker’s term ‘white innocence’ (2016), highlights the trouble of white women to relate to women from the South, indigenous and women of colour. Historical research into the ‘similarities’ in terms of the necessity to control, subjugate, shape, classify, in both Europe and the Americas (Mies, 1998; Federici, 2004), and in new forms of global solidarity practices (Ventura Alfaro, 2022) reflected in the Women strike 2017 and 2018 (*Ni Una Menos*, 2018), where the strike is outlined as ‘a tool that we reinvent to dismantle the scheme of violence against us...to investigate and activate resistances and disobediences, the production of alternate forms of life, and rebellious bodies’ (*Ni Una Menos*, 2018). However, in everyday practice, the *coloniality* of power (Quijano, 2000), of knowledge and being (Maldonado Torres, 2007) and of gender (Lugones, 2008; Redcliffe, 2015) persists ubiquitously in the postcolonial world, permeating society, and feminism today. Anibal Quijano coined the term ‘coloniality of power’ (Quijano 2008) to explain colonial practices that penetrate social, cultural, economic, political interactions and relations that exist between countries and people all intertwined by class and gender discriminations. Let us face it: bell hooks’ *those days* are not over.

I posit that the reason why traditional Marxism is inadequate for Marxism Feminism is not just because it posits that the working class as the subject of radical transformation, leaving out feminists and ecological struggles (Haug, Thesis VIII), but because it is Eurocentric and, therefore, clutches onto a narrow conceptual interpretation of Marx’s work, value, subjectivity, and temporality. The process of decolonising Marxism challenges Eurocentric/Western traditional Marxism and Western Marxist feminism by recuperating Marxism as a ‘philosophy of liberation’ (see Goikoetxea, 2023; Monzó 2019; also, Kitonga, 2021; Anderson, 2016; Brown, 2013; Dunayevskaya, 2000). Decolonising Marxism is a radical praxis that de(con)structs colonial-class-and-gender classifications by joining them in an all-encompassing open critique. Decolonising Marxism draws on ‘late Marx’ (Shanin, 1983), open Marxism and recent important but neglected Marxist and feminist theoretical developments that are rescuing Marx/ism from Eurocentric interpretations. Following

Clarke, we must not fall for a raw 'application' of Marx's categories without confronting them with the 'everyday experience of contemporary capitalisms, and especially with the lessons learned through struggles against capital in all its forms' (Clarke, 1979: 6). Rather than being 'reductionist', i.e., 'a view that collapses the significant differences between world-historical class analysis' (Moore, 2022), this approach opens a space for a discussion of capitalism toward the enhancement of the feminist struggle. In the following, I explore four tenets of decolonising Marxism and discuss their implications for Marxism Feminism, mainly assisting feminism in articulating an anti-racist and anti-liberal understanding of diversity against internal colonialism. I then propose a potential Thesis 14 on Marxism Feminism.

Value theory, coloniality and gender

Let us start with value theory. To situate women's social reproduction activities into the class domain, recent versions of Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) argue for the *unity* between production and social reproduction as two sides of the same coin, the separation of which is historically produced (Bhattacharya, 2015). This is a constructive aspect of the unitary SRT: with the broader understanding of 'work' as existing in both domains -production and social reproduction- and its understanding of capitalism as a *totality*, the struggles around social reproduction (food, housing, water, shelter) which address the 'conditions of possibility of labor-power' (Ferguson and McNally, 2015), are class struggles without which capitalist work would not exist. But the significant downside in SRT is that it deploys a 'labour' theory of value (Lange, 2020; De'Ath, 2018) arguing for the point of production as the 'spaces for the production of value' and the household 'as the spaces for reproduction of labor power' (Bhattacharya, 2015). Why is this a problem?

To start with, SRT reproduces traditional Marxism's misleading labour theory of value. Marx *never* and *nowhere* used the term 'labour theory of value' (Lotz, 2015; Harvey, 2018; Nail, 2020). The labour theory of value belongs to Ricardo who had no concept of abstraction to explain capitalism as Marx did in *Capital*. Ricardian theory of value posits that value is represented by the amount of labour time directly *embodied* in the commodity. As Lange suggests, SRT uses 'bourgeois theoretical framework of use-value centred (non-monetary) social reproduction, similar to that of David Ricardo, which fails to grasp the specific character of capitalist subsumption' (Lange, 2021: 39). The political implications of the labour theory of value is that the *embodied labour* argument deceives us into regarding 'the working class as the subject to break

from exploitation by plac[ing] demands upon capital via the labour movement to redistribute the wealth work creates and reward and recompense workers for the expanse of value they produce' (Dinerstein, 2021: 11; Scholz, 2009; see D' Atri, 2023). The 'conceptual problems in the Marxist tradition' (Holloway, 1995: 157) are the result of the *naturalisation* of the working class as a trans-historical subject, and the insistence on the organisation of the working class's struggles against capitalist exploitation through trade unions and political parties (Dinerstein, 2012: 528; Holloway, 2010).

Marx's investigation into labour was *not* intended to offer a critique of capital *from the perspective of labour* [in the identity of the working class], the position adopted by traditional Marxism and SRT. Marx's critique was 'an exposition of the very developed totality of relations... through a *value theory of labour* ... where value is not merely an economic category but is the social substance out of which capitalist society is derived' (Neary, 2002: 163-164; author's italics). During his discussion of political economists' perspectives on capitalist work, Marx returned the problem of labour and made his 'most brilliant discovery' (Najafi, 2022: 5), a discovery that has been missed by traditional Marxists whose narrow focus is on exploitation: in capitalist societies labour exists in a specific historical form as both concrete and abstract. Unlike Ricardo's value theory, Marx's *value theory of labour* (Elson, 1979) captures both the concrete and the *abstract* qualities of capitalist work, emphasising the importance of the abstract aspect as the dominant form (Elson, 1979: 149). Labour exists in the concrete form of alienated work performed during the labour process and in an abstract and invisible form – abstract labour - a social necessary labour time that is calculated regardless of the form of expenditure of the concrete labours. The former, rather than the latter, constitutes the substance of value. Although both forms of labour, concrete and abstract, are inseparable (Dinerstein, 2022), Marx 'de-associated value with concrete labour and connected it to *abstract labour*, i.e., a social abstraction central to value that is mediated in money' (Dinerstein, 2021: 8). Marx studied capitalism as a dehumanising expansive global system whose most significant feature is the subordination of the reproduction of human and non-human life to *money*, the latter attaining a historical specific capitalistic form, representing the 'abstract power through which social reproduction is subordinated to the power of capital' (Clarke, 1988). However, note that abstract labour should not be equated with immaterial and unmeasurable value, because value has always been a determinate social process rather than a measurable thing (Pitts, 2017). Abstract labour indicates that 'the abstraction that validates labour as productive and cooperative comes after the process of production in exchange...the ultimate arbitration of value is in the exchange abstraction rather than production' (Dinerstein, 2021: 74-75). Contra traditional Marxism and SRT's arguments

concrete labour does not *produce* value at the point of production, but *anticipates* it, for value is expected to be socially validated and appear materially in the form of its monetary expression in exchange or in the form of commodities (Dinerstein, 2021: 74). Consequently, 'there can be no *a priori* determination of value, for not until commodities are exchanged on the market can the products of individual producers satisfy the needs of others' (Himmelweit and Mohun, 1994: 158). Furthermore, in today's world, the circumstances of production, the introduction of technology and other matters *create a gap* 'between the actual labour time required to produce a commodity and the socially necessary labour time [which] disables producers from controlling their immediate activity' (Najafi, 2022: 8). This does not mean that the experience of exploitation is irrelevant. It means that while our experience is an experience of exploitation, the pain, suffering and misery of the concrete labour is abstracted into a measure of time *regardless* our experience. Value is a mysterious process that is not completely created at work.

Marx's value theory 'provide[s] a basis for showing the link between money relations and labour process relations in the process of exploitation' (Elson, 1979b: 172). Marx's value theory elucidates how the expansion of value in motion generates an *indifference* 'toward any specific kind of labour [which] presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labour, of which no single one is any longer predominant' (Marx, 1993: 103). Indifference, writes Cleaver, 'is not that of the workers, who may have very distinct preferences, but is *that of capital* (Cleaver, 2002: 14, italics in the original). Capital expands by *homogenising* concrete labours into abstract labour, thus creating a universal abstract time. Abstract labour or the *form* of existence of labour in capitalism facilitates the capitalist 'social synthesis' (Holloway, 2010). Existing differences produced by domination, exploitation, in form and content are synchronised. Being essential for the survival of capital, synchronization aims to manage different temporalities in such a way that slavery and free labour can exist side by side: they 'are always re-synchronised through the violence of the state' (Tomba, 2013: 405).

If value is not produced at the point of production, how do we theorise gender discrimination? Scholz's *value dissociation* offers an alternative to SRT's production/social reproduction unitary approach without abandoning Marx's value theory. To Scholz what matters is not 'whether housewives produce value or not, or whether production and social reproduction are forms of expression of one reality' but the fact that 'value itself must define as less valuable and dissociate domestic labor, the non-conceptual, and everything related to non-identity, the sensuous, affective, and emotional' (Scholz, 2009: 131-132). Scholz's 'feminist twist' to value theory suggests that value has a gender dimension, i.e., *gender* constitutes a pillar in, and is

inherent to, the *formation of capitalism*. The categories of value and abstract labour are not enough to explain capitalism (Scholz, 2009: 127; see Goikoetxea, 2023). We need to look at those dimensions of capitalism that are dissociated from the expansion of value: female-determined reproductive activities are *necessarily dissociated from value and abstract labor* (Scholz, 2009: 127). According to the author value dissociation is a precondition for the formation of capitalism, the expansion of value and capitalist accumulation: ‘the gendering and subsequent dissociation of an entire range of broadly reproductive activities’ is not as a side effect of capitalism and its value form but a *necessity*’ (Larsen et al., 2014: xxiv).

Value dissociation can be traced back to the historical time of the devaluation, dissociation, discrimination and annihilation of indigenous people, people of colour, especially female, during the imperialist expansion of the Spanish Kingdom of Castilla and Aragón, and the conquest of the Americas since 1492. This violent and brutal process of classification and the damaging actions toward females were central to *class* formation in both the region and in Europe (Federici, 2004). As Nail pertinently argues ‘Marx’s thesis is that the condition of the social expansion of value is and always has been the *prior* expulsion of people from their land through devalorization, appropriation, and domination. Without the expulsion of these people there is not expansion of private property and thus, no value’ (Nail, 2000: 179).

Indeed, Marx criticised fervently classical political economists’ naturalisation and mystification of primitive accumulation, revealing instead the violent and bloody process of expropriation at stake. Capitalism was racial from start (see Bhattacharya, G. 2018; Virdee, 2019; Robinson, 2019). Singh suggests that Marx’s consideration of colonialism and slavery permits further thinking ‘about the ongoing development of [...the social reproduction of race as an ascriptive relationship anchored in ongoing violence, dominion and dependency’ (Singh, 2016: 33). As the authors of *Feminism for the 99%* argue, ‘Capitalism was born from racist and colonial violence’ (Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser, 2019: 40). However, Marx did not address the colonial violence and the ‘primitive’ accumulation as a gender problem.

Lugones’ term *coloniality of gender* (Lugones, 2008) accounts for the ‘invention of gender and the distinction between ‘women’ and ‘non-human females’ by the conquerors as a necessary step to the subjugation of indigenous. Like Davis who wrote about the ‘genderless’ feature of slaves in the eyes of their traders (Davis, 2019: 4), and inspired by Oyěwùmí’s approach to gender as a historical construct (1997), Lugones portrays the *de-humanisation* of females during the period of the Spanish conquest as something much more than the ‘classification of people in terms of the coloniality of power and gender’ (Quijano’s argument): she portrays it as an active dehumanization

and subjectification, i.e. 'the attempt to turn the colonized into less human beings' (Lugones, 2008: 4). Colonised females *were not* considered women (Lugones, 2010). This fact is most evident in the 'brutal access to people's bodies by the "civilizational mission", and its 'unimaginable exploitation, violent sexual violation, control of reproduction, and systematic terror (feeding people alive to dogs or making pouches and hats from the vaginas of brutally killed indigenous females)' (Lugones, 2010: 744). In the same vein, Federici's seminal work *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) offers an unprecedented historical analysis of the systematic vicious practice of violent control over the female body in both Europe and the New World, and the classification of females into witches, women, prostitutes, mothers, slaves, workers, inhuman, also *essential* to the conquest and further expansion of capital into an imperialist phenomenon. Federici powerfully connects the obliteration of indigenous people with the population crisis and the problem of reproduction. The conquerors dreamt of an infinite labour supply (Federici, 2004: 93) they were confronted with a population decline of 75 million in South America and the largest holocaust in human history, affecting eight million people (Dinerstein, 2015). The conquerors later 'turned reproduction and population growth into state matters' (Federici, 2004: 97). A 'war against women' (Federici, 2004: 97) to control the female body was unleashed: the control over procreation and reproduction, witch hunting in Europe and the New World (Federici 2004: 254), subjugation, brutalisation, expropriation of knowledge. The 'war' also involved social degradation, demonisation, demoralisation, humiliation, hostility to female waged workers, prostitutes, domestic workers, and slaves: all women were controlled and manipulated for the purpose of growth of the population, development of science, political power, economic growth and expansion, and male entertainment services and sexual satisfaction. The hidden aspect of this violence was the establishment of the 'myth of modernity' which, as Dussel explains, permitted that the modern (European) civilization understood and established itself as the 'most developed, superior, civilization,' which obliged it to develop 'the more primitive, barbarous, underdeveloped, civilizations' (Dussel, 1993: 75). If the 'barbarian resisted the civilising redemptive action of the modern and advanced, violence was applied [again] so that the victims became guilty of resisting development, while modernity remained innocent (Dussel, 1993: 75). This is still commonplace in the twenty-first century modern world.

Subsumption and Social Formation

The second tenet of decolonising Marxism -against traditional Marxism, addresses the concept of real subsumption. In *Capital*, Marx explains *real subsumption* as a process that takes place as the production of relative surplus-value takes the form of large-scale industry within which workers become part of the machine and their nature is transformed into something other than human. In this process, the concrete material character of labour is no longer recognisable or feasible as an independent form of existence and is completely overwhelmed by capital's abstract-social dimension. Real subsumption is a qualitative social change from 'formal subsumption', in which capital becomes totalising and the process intrinsically capitalist. More importantly, it is at this point when the logic of accumulation is considered as evading human control, that the capitalist large-scale industry takes over not only human capacities but also the institutions through which human life is dominated (Dinerstein, 2002). To Marx, real subsumption indicates that 'the entire development of *socialized labour...in the immediate process of production*, takes the form of the *productive power of capital*. It does not appear as the productive power of labour' (Marx, 1976: 1024; author's italics). As we can see, real subsumption does not only mean the subsumption of labourers into the production process but the subsumption of all social relations under money. To describe this process, early Negri coined the term 'social factory' to also consider those who were excluded from the process of production but were subsumed under the law of value (Negri, 1984). Workers had become part of 'the machine' within the factory, but outside it, those not at work 'were actively put to work in the circulation and reproduction of capital. [Since capital was now exercising its] endless command over society' (Cleaver, 1992: 116), Negri assumed that total submission of life to capital was now 'complete' (cited by Menozzi, 2021: 126). However, while real subsumption creates a totality, it cannot be generalised to all societies and to all sectors of the same society, for there are clear differences in the North and the South and within each of them (see Harootunian, 2015; Tomba, 2017; Menozzi, 2021).

In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Luxemburg criticises Marx's focus on the internal logic of capitalist accumulation by which he disregarded the *constant* need for capital to expand by conquering, absorbing, and destroying non-capitalist economies and territories to survive and reproduce, producing environmental devastation. To Luxemburg, the capitalist global expansion was a *necessity* rather than an unfortunate development (see Hudis, 2018: 62-63; Dunayevskaya, 1991). The continuing process of external expansion was for Luxemburg, and many others after her, the way in which the North constantly subordinates the South to comply to a destructive [and extractive] world economy (De Angelis, 2001). Luxemburg's critique allows us to regard 'primitive accumulation' as a capitalist feature and as an ongoing process 'of dispossession' (Harvey, 2004),

rather than an initial stage in the formation of capitalism. Why is this important for Marxist feminism? Because together with the real subsumption of labour and society in capital, there are formal, partial, and exclusion-like forms of subsumption, which have an impact on the formation of radical subjectivity. Like Marx, Bolivian Marxist Zavaleta Mercado (1937-1984) views the law of value as a movement creating a horizon of visibility and marking a historical epoch. While value constitutes an expansive totality, Zavaleta observes the social reality of Latin American countries from the 'borders of abstract labour' (Tapia, 2016). In those territories where capitalism has been the product of colonial expansion, there has not been a total generalisation of the law of value and, therefore, capital creates 'blind spots' that need to be explored to capture the composition of radical subjectivity, such as the formation of the 'national-popular' elements of radical subjectivity in Bolivia and other Latin American countries. These types of societies combine different forms of subsumption (real, formal, and exclusion-like) (Dinerstein, 2015), which Zavaleta (1986) called *sociedades abigarradas* (motley societies), coining this term to designate those societies where there is a combination of different forms of subsumption under the law of value. One of the most important aspects of *sociedades abigarradas* is that they produce a 'superimposition of several historical times in the same territory' (Tapia, 2016: 69). Aiming to capture the 'multitemporal character of *abigarramiento*' through the notion of *ch'ixi*' (McNelly, 2022: 113), Rivera Cusicanqui (2018: 75–77) provides the example of modern-day Bolivia, which exposes the ongoing articulation of pre-conquest, colonial, liberal and national-popular elements. *Ch'ixi*, she writes,

'is a colour that is the product of juxtaposition, in small points or spots, of opposed or contrasting colours: black and white, red, and green, and so on... [it captures] the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time ... A *ch'ixi* color grey is white but is not white at the same time; it is both white and its opposite, black...*Ch'ixi* draws attention to the patchwork of incommensurable pieces that form *sociedades abigarradas* (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012: 105).

Finally, Zavaleta Mercado's methodological nationalism has been taken forward by those aiming at explaining transnational *abigarramiento*: a 'transnational process of subsumption over territories and populations which not so long ago were only formally or downrightly not at all integrated into nation-state arrangements' (Lagos Rojas, 2018: 148; McNelly, 2022: 110).

The non-linearity of feminist radical transformation

The third principle of decolonising Marxism is to contest the linear conceptualisation of the development of radical transformation. As we know, G. Frank, Said, and others, accused Marx of being a 'complicit supporter of Western Imperialism' (G. Frank cited by Pradella, 2017: 147) and an 'Orientalist' who allegedly contributed to the 'racist orientalization of the non-Western world' (Said cited in Lindner 2010: 1; see Castro Varela & Dhawan, 2023). Initially, Marx suggested that the progress brought about by British rule would work in the direction of the social revolution guided by the resources and interpretations available at the time. However, he reflected on the idea and surpassed this interpretation. Following Linder, Marx reconsidered his views on the colonies when he realised that had used historical resources from the orientalist historian François Bernier, following his narrative and interpretation of the colonies as being inferior uncritically (Lindner, 2010: 13). Once he subjected his explanation of the colonies to deep consideration, he shifted his position, 'lead[ing] to his first break with Eurocentrism [for] he no longer credits English colonialism with initiating progressive developments in other regions of the world. Thus, the universalisation of the 'Western social order... begins to crumble' (Lindner, 2010: 18).

'Late Marx' (Shanin, 1983), i.e., the work that Marx developed in the last ten years of his life, 'is a major and scandalous neglected resource for socialists today' (Sayer and Corrigan, 2018: 91); for during this period that ended too early with his death at 64 years of age, this 'Marx at the Margins' (Anderson, 2016) began to walk a new path to 'develop[ing] new ideas about multi-directionality and heterogeneity and 'a non-auto-centric conception of change' (Tansel, 2014: 93). It is safe to say that during the last period of his life Marx's experience a sort of *decolonisation* of his research. Marx began to be openly 'more concerned with *humanism*, ...with the values and structures of pre-capitalist, non-European societies, and the relationship of the sexes in those societies' (Rich, Foreword in Dunayevskaya, 1991: xvii), and became interested in 'new research horizons' (Musto, 2020): he read Kovalevsky's work on the discussions of land ownership, collected data on Spain, Latin America, India, and Argel, wrote the *Ethnological Notebooks* (1880-1881), studied pre-capitalist civilisations (Musto, 2020), and, influenced by Chernyshevsky, he deconstructed 'the idea of inescapable historicity and scientific inevitability tied to the origin and evolution of capitalism and industrial society' (Chakrabarty, 2016: 71).

But it was the letter exchange with the Russian populist Vera Ivanovna Zasluch what prompted a real difference in his thinking, regarding the directionality of revolutionary process (see

Anderson, 2007). Zasluch's letter of February 16, 1881, contained a momentous question as she explained to him that many Russian comrades were studying *Capital* for its critical role in Russian activists' discussions on the agrarian question and the rural commune (Zasluch in Marx-Zasluch Correspondence, 1881). This was the dilemma:

'For there are only two possibilities. Either the rural commune, freed of exorbitant tax demands, payment to the nobility and arbitrary administration, is capable of developing in a socialist direction, that is, gradually organising its production and distribution on a collectivist basis. In that case, the revolutionary socialist must devote all [their] strength to the liberation and development of the commune. If, however, the commune is destined to perish, all that remains for the socialist, as such is more or less ill-founded, calculations as to how many decades it will take for the Russian peasant's land to pass into the hands of the bourgeoisie, and how many centuries it will take for capitalism in Russia to reach something like the level of development already attained in Western Europe ... [H]ow do you derive that from *Capital*?' (Zasluch in Marx-Zasluch Correspondence, 1881).

Marx drafted five responses to the Russian activist reducing his initial 4,500 words to 350 words in a letter sent to her on March 8:

'The analysis in *Capital* therefore provides no reasons either for or against the vitality of the Russian commune. But the special study I have made of it, including a search for original source material, has convinced me that the commune is the fulcrum for social regeneration in Russia' (Marx in Marx-Zasluch correspondence, 1881).

In the *French* edition of *Capital*, Vol. 1, Marx ensured that he corrected his linear view of revolutionary development to argue that it was *only applicable to Europe* (Anderson, 2002: 87). In his letter to Zasluch he confirms

'the 'historical inevitability' of this course is therefore *expressly restricted to the countries of Western Europe*. The reason for this restriction is indicated in Ch. XXXII: '*Private property, founded upon personal labour ... is supplanted by capitalist private property, which rests on exploitation of the labour of others, on wage labour*' (*loc. cit.*, p. 340) (*Capital*, French edition, p. 315)'" (Marx in Marx-Zasluch Correspondence, 1881).

In the 'Preface to the *Communist Manifesto* of 1882', Marx and Engels addressed Zasluch's concerns, explicitly enquiring whether the Russian *obshchina* -as a form of common land ownership- could go directly to the highest form of communist common property and considering that in Russia more than half of its peasants lived on the common property of the land (Marx and Engels, *CM*: Preface 1882: 56).

Despite the fact that Marx questioned his previous linear conceptualisation of revolutionary development, traditional Marxism continues to hold a linear 'historicist' approach (Althusser, 2015), which is un-Marxist. Chakrabarty highlights how historicism presents capitalism as a system 'capable of overcoming differences in the long run' (Chakrabarty, 2000) by subsuming them under a linear vision of time rather than understanding difference. Historicism implies binary thinking (e.g., pre-capitalism versus capitalism) and regards difference as 'incompleteness', implying, for example, that the uncivilised are expected to become civilised, the undeveloped are expected to develop (Anieva and Nişancioğlu, 2017: 44). 'For non-European countries' the politics of historicism mean that 'there is nothing left to do but to accelerate the race towards capitalism and recover the historical stages lost along the course of universal history in as short a time as possible' (Tomba, 2017). As Vera Ivanovna Zasluch implied in her abovementioned letter to Marx, the North/West imposes the rhythm of development and therefore 'entire regions of the world are branded as backward and a multiplicity of modes of production may be regarded as residual' (Tomba, 2017; see Castro Varela & Dhawan, in this issue).

Abstract Time, Non-Contemporaneity, and the Multiversum

The final element of my journey into decolonising Marxism is a critique of traditional Marxism's abstract universal time and the contemporaneity of everything. Historicism moves along a universal 'homogeneous empty time' (Benjamin, 2015: 261), the time of capital, of domination (Holloway, 2010), and creates what Diestchy names the 'abstract contemporaneity of capitalism' (Diestchy in Pineda Canabal and Dietschy, 2018). Abstract empty time, wherein all differences are violently synchronised, produces the invisibilisation of 'the other'. In a way that causes 'the social production of oblivion through the question of time' (Vázquez, 2009: 2-3).

Against the 'abstract contemporaneity of capitalism' is the concrete non-contemporaneous struggle. In a famous passage of *Heritage of our Time*, Bloch states: 'not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, through the fact that they can be seen today. However, they are

thereby not yet living at the same time with others. They instead carry an earlier element with them.' (Bloch, 1991: 97). This bewildering idea speaks of the 'non-simultaneity of the simultaneous' (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*) (Bloch, 1977; 1991) that designates the coexistence 'of things that express or represent different times or that have different dynamics of development' (Basaure, 2018: 125; Diestchy, 2003; Kufeld, 2003; Hahn, 2007).

Bloch used the notion of non-contemporaneity, also non-synchronicity, or non-simultaneity (Schwartz, 2005) to understand fascism. The Left did not understand fascism at the time because, according to Bloch, they could not realise that there were overlapping contradictions that interacted to the antagonism between the bourgeois and proletariat, because of the permanence of old strata's temporalities. Fascism combined different temporalities forming 'a cultural synthesis' (Rabinbach, 2017). As a philosopher of praxis (Rehmann, 2020) and aiming to explain non-contemporaneity, Bloch draws on William James' psychological concept of the 'pluralistic universe' (Morfino, 2017) to coin the term *multiversum*. The multiversum creates an 'explanatory model of plural temporality' to understand the formation of Nazism in Germany (Morfino, 2017: 137). In the 1950s, Bloch gestures towards decolonialising (Dinerstein, 2022: 54) by using the multiversum to articulate an alternative historiographical paradigm against historicism. Bloch writes,

'Instead of linearity, we need a broad, flexible, totally dynamic multiversum, a continuous and frequently linked counterpoint with historical voices. In this way, and to do justice to the gigantic extra-European material, it is no longer possible to work linearly, without sinuosity, in series (order), without a complex and new variety of time (...) Thus, we need a framework of a philosophy of the history of non-European cultures' (Bloch, 1970: 143).

The multiversum does not just point to the *plural* character of the global world but refers to its temporal of *diversity*. Plurality can co-exist with unilinear time. For diversity to be understood it is necessary recognise the non-contemporaneous elements hidden in the unilinear (universal) reality of time (Hahn, 2007: 141). Multiversum also transforms our view on history. History is not historicism, history is not as 'advancing linearly, in which capitalism, for instance, has resolved all previous stages [or historicism], but is rather a *polyrhythmic and multi-spatial entity which enough unmastered and yet by no means revealed and resolved corners* (Bloch, 1962: 62, cited in Schwartz, 2005: 112, italics in the original). These unresolved corners are similar to Zavaleta Mercado's 'blind spots' in social formations.

Implications of decolonising Marxism for the renewal of (Marxism) Feminism: towards Thesis 14

In this intervention, I critically engaged with Frida Haug's *Theses on Marxism Feminism* by focusing on an existing silence in the theses concerning to the internal colonialism within feminism. Despite the feminist accomplishment in creating new forms of solidarity and joint actions like the International Women Strikes of 2017 and 2018, internal colonialism continues to create crude and subtle racialised hierarchies among feminists. Marxism Feminism is failing to find new ways to understand diversity without reproducing coloniality. In this article, I aimed to contribute to the task of decolonising Marxism, arguing for the inadequacy of traditional Eurocentric Marxism for Marxist Feminism. To break away from Eurocentrism, or at least to start walking in the right direction, Marxism Feminism requires a *decolonising Marxism*. I explored several tenets of a non-Eurocentric critique intending to de-Westernise and de-Eurocentralise Marxism.

There are several connected implications of my journey. First, my critique of Marxist Feminists, including SRT, for their use of a Ricardian 'labour theory of value' and the absence of a theory of abstraction that acknowledges the specific form of existence of labour in capitalism: concrete and abstract opens the possibility to abandon the focus on concrete labour and the belief that value is produced at the point of production, for value materialises through social validation. Hence, we free ourselves theoretically and politically from the interrogation about *where* to situate gendered social reproduction vis-à-vis the working class' activity (see Goikoetxea, 2023). The use of a wrong value theory constitutes the main deterrent for traditional Marxism to be able to recognise the radical agency of women, the colonised, indigenous people. Marx's value theory of labour points to the significance of the abstract aspects of labour as a way for capital to organise society through money. Money is not just the means of exchange but the universal representation of the power of capital which expands as *value in motion*. Interestingly, the substance of value is not concrete labour but *abstract labour*, a socially necessary labour time at a specific point in the technological development of capitalism. The feminist subjectivity emerges amidst, against and beyond the process of indifference, and homogenisation created by the expansion of abstract labour as the substance of value. To contest the 'male' value theory of labour, I brought Scholz's 'value dissociation theory' (Scholz, 2009) to assist us to move our focus from the 'exploitation' of women, or 'unpaid' work to the violent expansion of value, amidst which the value dissociation of female activities is historically produced and an ongoing dimension of capitalism.

Second, I highlighted that to Marx, capitalism was an inherently colonial global phenomenon and there was a problem with his understanding of the 16th and 17th centuries: he did not reflect on the *necessity* of capital to bring gender and ‘control the female body and their reproductive roles by classifying female bodies. Albeit in a brief manner, I engaged with the seminal works of Federici, Davis, Mies and Lugones to explain the beginning of it all: a process of classification and brutality toward the female body for the purpose of control to the point of dehumanisation in the case of genderless slaves. This process of -brutal- subordination continues to be the case in our present day, in different forms.

Third, I discuss value, totality, and different forms of subsumption of labour and society in capital and argued that absolute real subsumption cannot be generalised to all societies and to all sectors of societies, particularly in the global south. Capital subordinates the social reproduction of human and non-human life to value but the form of subsumption depends on the development of capitalism in the social formations, where capital creates blind spots. *Abigarramiento* is mainly an attribute of those societies where capitalism was formed because of colonialism and provides the context for the emergence and development of feminist praxis in, against and beyond different forms of subsumption in one territory (nation-state). The feminist struggle is necessarily varied with significant differences between the North and the South and within the North and within the South.

Fourth, I claimed that traditional Marxism has neglected ‘late Marx’ and Marx’s abandonment of the linearity of time in processes of radical transformation. Against traditional Marxism’s historicism, the re-conceptualisation of radical transformation as non-linear posits new enquiries about global solidarity, radical subjectivity, and the role of the nation state. Non-linearity subverts universality exposing instead the co-existence of non-synchronous temporalities that resist the violence of abstraction, homogenisation and the state’s synchronisation of the multiple temporal experiences and struggles. This way of recognising diversity enables us to dismantle the racialised hierarchies and the internal colonialism that persist within the movement. Each *concrete feminist struggle* is the result of historical and concrete political, social, cultural, and economic processes that shape the former in, against and beyond capital. In the multiversum, *concrete* means the unity in the diverse (Marx, 1993: 101). In the multiversum, the feminist resistance counterposes recognition to indifference, diversity to homogenisation, naming to classifications, and non-synchronicity and on contemporaneity to violent synchronisation. *Motley feminism* encompasses myriad of textures, colours, processes, temporalities, histories, that enrich the movement rather than weaken it for with its diversity comes its necessary anti-racism, anti colonialism, and its multiversal features. *Motley*

feminism subverts the abstract contemporaneity of capitalism, rejects universal empty time, and articulates diversity in a beautiful and powerful weaving against the expansion of value on motion.

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ANNEX

13 Theses of Marxism-Feminism

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I.

Marxism-Feminism are two sides of one coin, but it must be added that this coin itself requires transformation. Feminist Marxism holds firmly on to Marx's legacy, and thus to the significance of the analysis of work in the form of wage labour and as the driving force of the workers' movement. However, in the attempt to move the remaining female activities likewise into the centre of the analysis, MF shifts the question of the domestic and non-domestic activities from the paralyzing attempts to think them either completely as one or, vice versa, as completely apart (dual economy debate, domestic labour debate), into the fundamental challenge of occupying and transforming the concept of relations of production for feminist questions.

II.

Thereby **two productions are assumed, that of life and that of the means of life.** The two are related to each other, so that it is possible to examine individual practices and how they interact. This opens up an enormous field of research, in which specific modes of domination may be investigated and possibilities of transformation can be sought in different historically and culturally specific ways.

III.

It is clear that **gender relations are relations of production**, not an addition to them. All practices, norms, values, authorities, institutions, language, culture, etc., are coded in gender relations. This assumption makes feminist Marxist research as prolific as it is necessary. The contemporaneity and connectedness within global relations, and the simultaneous heterogeneity of historically concrete kinds of women's oppression require international activists bring together their knowledge and experiences.

IV.

Marxism is not useful for capitalist society and its academic disciplines that legitimize domination. Since **Marxism-Feminism** assumes, that humans make their own history (themselves) -or, where they are prevented from doing so, self-empowerment must be gained -, it is unsuitable for a structure of top-down commands. This makes available research such as memory work as well as the **historical-critical treatment of oneself in the collective, thus also self-criticism as a force of production.**

V.

That all members of society must participate in relations of domination in order to act necessitates **concrete study of those knots of domination that paralyze or shackle the desire for change in capitalist patriarchy**. Feminists have the advantage here of having fewer of the privileges that come with participating in power, they therefore have less to lose, as well as more experience in viewing the world from below.

VI.

All members of capitalist society suffer the damage sustained in these relations of domination/subjection; and to that extent, no one is close to living in a liberated society. In our present, there are historically sedimented forms of domination and violence, which can't be reduced to one continuous path of development or a central contradiction. The savage forms of violence (against women), of brutalization, readiness for war, etc. are to be grasped as the historically disparate horrors stemming from old relations. For Marxist feminists, these **violent relations have to be a fundamental theoretical and practical part of their struggle for liberation**, and the struggle for the attainment of the status of subjects over and against male-human underdevelopment.

But violence is not just an expression of traditional and outdated relations, but also of relations produced at present. That is why a specific understanding of critique and analysis is needed which avoids essentialisms. – The most brutal forms of violence have returned as horrors from relations we thought of as overcome and which are products of present relations at the same time.

VII.

Marxism-Feminism takes a position on the primacy of the labour movement as a historical subject and agent of transformation. Bringing feminism into Marxism, and thereby changing the latter as well as the former, makes a critical view of traditional Marxism indispensable, which refers solely to the labour movement. Marxism is Marx's critique of political economy + labour movement – that makes its incomparable strength. It also makes its limitations visible. The fate of the working class also shows its inability to recognize and to further develop questions that transcend the historical horizon of class struggles. This traditional Marxism is neither receptive for the new feminist questions nor for those of ecology, therefore we must keep working on it. The wealth of the various movements as well as the still unused wealth in Marx's cultural heritage require continued working into the present. This is a challenge for all Marxist feminists, there's a consensus in nearly all contributions.

VIII.

The controversy over race, class, and sex/gender (intersectionality) should be taken further. The connection between class and sex in all societies seized by capitalism is to be investigated in detail; what appears as "race question" is to be answered concretely for each society and culture separately and to be related to the two other kinds of oppression. Nonlinear thinking is necessary.

IX.

In the upheavals since the crisis of Fordism, manifest in the series of crises of the rapidly globalized economy and driving people into more and more precarious conditions, **women are among those that lose out, just as other marginalised practices and groups.**

X.

The dismantling of the Western welfare state in a globalized economy leaves the care for life to women in unpaid domestic work or in low-paid wage work, something that can be experienced in the global care-chain. We can conceive of this as “care crisis”, as a necessary consequence of a capitalist society, which in the shift of its economic centre to services gets into a profit squeeze, while it seizes on ever more barbaric forms of handling the crises through unequal creation of value levels.

XI.

Common to us all is to move life into the centre of our struggles and thus the struggles for collectively self-determined time. We can also follow the suggestion to analyse the crises around life as the consequence of unequal time logics within hierarchically organized areas. **As a politics Haug suggests the four-in-one perspective**, i.e., to let policy-making be led by the disposition of time, thereby not to adapt the areas to each other, but to free them from hierarchy through generalization. Only when all are active in all areas a liberated society shall be possible.

XII.

Our struggles are directed against domination and radically democratic – this requires also politics from below. Our resistance is situated culturally and temporally in different ways. But we are in union with Marx, “to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being”. To organize a Marxist-Feminist Congress, and to reflect our modes of cooperation and conflict within it, is a means to translate our resistance into the development of a continuous Marxist-Feminist movement.

XIII.

Marxist feminists do no longer remain in the position the labour movement ascribed to them, by virtue of division of labour, as women embodying peace and being made responsible for keeping it, while men continue waging wars. We refuse being reduced to this politics but want to bear responsibility for the whole. In the current global situation, characterised by crises and wars, we consider feminist power as indispensable. **We bear responsibility and have powerful possibilities.**