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GENDER METHODOLOGIES. DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION IN A CRITICAL REALISM PERSPECTIVE¹

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Abstract

Starting from a methodology defined as 'critical realism', the essay aims at analyzing the concepts of power and domination, in relation to the specific condition of women, also by including the perspective of intersectionality. Along this path, the essay underlines the ambivalent aspects of the relation between women and the different forms of domination, by introducing the category of symbolic and epistemic violence, the correlation between ontology and epistemology. In the last part, the essay questions the diversity among women in the global dimension, through the significant contribution of no western feminism.

Keywords

Political Realism; Gender; Intersectionality; Domination; Oppression.

Resumen

A partir de una metodología definida como «realismo crítico», el ensayo tiene como objetivo analizar los conceptos de poder y dominación, en relación con la condición

1. Aggiungere nota: Reception date: 8th March 2021; acceptance date: 21st April 2021. The essay is the issue of a research project carried out within the Scuola di Studi Universitari e di Perfezionamento Sant'Anna di Pisa.

específica de la mujer, incluyendo también la perspectiva de la interseccionalidad. El ensayo subraya los aspectos ambivalentes de la relación entre las mujeres y las diferentes formas de dominación, e introduce la categoría de violencia simbólica y epistémica, la correlación entre ontología y epistemología. En la última parte, el ensayo cuestiona la diversidad entre las mujeres en la dimensión global, a través de la significativa contribución del feminismo no occidental.

Palabras clave

Realismo político; Género; Interseccionalidad; Dominación; Opresión.

A critical and demanding realism

As a part of the gender studies, the methodological issue about extending the insight (Loretoni, 2014) does not mean only to broaden the perspectives by maintaining the viewer's position ontologically static rather it means to create an opening towards new theoretical mobility which could look at new horizons, new perspectives, and inclusions without forcing the research into that endless movement dangerously appealing some versions of feminist theory. On the basis of this perspective, I would like to propose, there is the hypothesis of a *critical and demanding realism*, that could be described in clear expressions within some of the following assumptions. In an energetic argumentative essay against Judith Butler, although Martha Nussbaum recognizes the limits of the Western feminism provincialism—hardly dealing with what was happening beyond their own world— she states that the threat is represented by the estrangement from the material living conditions. A part of Western feminism, indeed, moves towards a type of verbal and symbolic policy that can only *fancifully* debate about real women's practical situations (Nussbaum, 1999). According to this thesis, since we are prisoners of power structures defining of gender identity, we cannot modify them, but we might find some spaces of verbal resistance in which we can perform some dialectical transgressions or disrespectful parodies. All of this, according to a symbolic and expressive policy which represents the only possible critical practice. The idea of a radical and total change in the structures we live in shifts into

an attempt to find some small spaces of resistance. If it is unlikely to move away from these structures of humiliation, we can only mock them in dimension independently from any public act aimed to create a legal and institutional shift. In this situation, we only risk losing or blowing the public commitment value up, promoting a miserable landing place—as the author of this argumentative essay says— a sort of hardly productive “hip quietism” just for the sake of it. Undoubtedly, Nussbaum’s criticism has some extreme traits, but it is mainly clever. Despite Butler’s (2015; 2020) thought being distant from defining public policies able to overcome discriminations and inequalities, we can firmly state that a political practice that builds alliance between marginalized and accounting individuals is relevant in her thought, as some of her most recent essays confirm. Furthermore, the analysis of power and its genealogical dynamics proposed by the post-structuralist feminism is clearly useful to empower the analytical component of a *realistic* approach towards oppression and discrimination (Butler, 1997). Nevertheless, I endorse Nussbaum’s concerns that women’s thought and gender reflection—even in the most theoretical fields— should never be disconnected from individual practical living reality, nor exempted from the still-open attempt to imagine a fairer social configuration including gender justice. In other words, within the possibility that women might look at the world from their perspective, we should realize that there is an inherent promise of a reality transformation and a hypothesis of a possible change.

A useful proposal was formulated by Catharine A. MacKinnon (2006). In the wake of Virginia Woolf, she upgrades the issue about the perspective, or the criterion for choosing, properly linking it with epistemology and ontology. Indeed, these two dimensions are not separable in understanding what matters and, on the other hand, in recognizing which events are ignored or hidden. Women and men exist, however, there is no objective evidence that a power asymmetry—according to which some are oppressed, and some are oppressors— derives from their existence. There is obviously a distortion—created on this fact—that shift this difference into a condition of hierarchy and inequality. Therefore, the feminist theory firstly has to dismantle and then reframe the general framework by providing the missing explanation. The intersection and the blending of these two elements are so complex that we should not be surprised if the subjection, dependency and systematic disadvantage history can lead us to confusing the outcomes of this domain with unalterable data – eventually including ourselves in those stereotypes that force us to have a seat in the economy class. We became aware of what is in the aftermath of deconstruction, however, the feminist theory duty has

not finished yet. There is something else out there not only our efforts, and it is something able to resist even our meditative awareness of faux objectivity. It exists before our awareness, and it can exist even after². After decades of feminist criticism, a faux objective perspective outcome is a wall of reality we can hardly tear down, even though we actually want to do it. The world exists independently of our will. Even though we do not feel to be part of it —recognizing the premises that make us subject to the male other— the world is still real. It needs that the level of reality awareness can intersect with the historical one. Assuming the women's perspective on social living, the feminist theory about knowledge derives from the criticism stating that the male perspective on the world might represent *the* knowledge we have about it. In other words, the feminist theory about knowledge is entangled with feminist criticism of male power as the male view of knowing the world is still dominating. It is critical to challenge the role of “he who knows” in Western political thought, a neutral and objective position defining the vantage point as abstract and non-located. Those who have the social access to this self —acquiring an objective perspective— become subjects. They fulfil the identification of the male as the one who occupies the neutral position. According to MacKinnon, objectivity neutrality and masculinity objectivity are linguistically co-extended. Conversely, occupying a gender marked position, women represent a different matter, a “nature” that needs to be studied, controlled and subjugated. At the top of the hierarchy —being in a social supremacy position— it is difficult to distinguish what is thought from what the reality is. However, if those who are at the bottom in the area of oppression and discrimination just keep stating that we are equal, they cannot create any change. Understanding this is the first step not only to criticize the reality but even to change it. Saying that we are equal does not make us equal, rather it paradoxically risks affirming that we are already equal so a real transformation is hindered. Therefore, to MacKinnon, the feminist debate does not aim to describe the reality as we would like it to be, since imaging an oppression, discrimination and supremacy-free world cannot make it real. Not without irony, this scholar reminds us that what could work in a novel might have no value in the real world. To actually change the world, we need to systematically understand the connection between the fact that few people abuse many for their own

2. In this sense I think is appropriate to talk about “realism” distinguishing it from the *political realism* school. This latter is particularly influential in International Relations and is linked to that thinking front going from Thucydides through Hegel and Machiavelli to the 20th century. Rather it is “gender realism” that does not share with the political realism the discredit towards any normative hypothesis able to modify the reality. However, gender realism tends to maintain methodological prudence, or a disillusioned analysis of reality and its ambivalence. Nonetheless —here, the main gap— it aims to make more effective the possibility to transform the reality, rather than stating its fixity.

pleasure and interest and that we need to demonstrate that those few are men. This is crucial to criticize this connection and eventually change it. To MacKinnon, gender is not an issue about difference, rather a question about supremacy and exploitation. To explain women subordination to men, it is not sufficient to recall that men are not dominant by nature nor women are not subordinated. Conversely, it is fundamental to understand how this difference is sexualized as an inequity.

By the given premises, a question arises: considering women as historically marginalized in a condition of submission and subordination, can they have a perspective able to propose a positive transformation for them, or are they forced to have disadvantages and losses due to their unchanging condition? This question is relevant since the peculiarity of this form of domination is that women manifest a sort of grateful complicit attitude. Conversely, exploitation and subjection lead to resistance and rebellion. The reason why women adapt to this condition of inequality is crucial for theory since it aims to understand the mechanisms of erotization defining this relation of domination as a sort of seduction in subjugation. Analyzing with difficulty that women submit to men supremacy without using violence and illustrating how this subordination is accepted on purpose are crucial cues to clarify the specificity of this power relationship compared to other kinds of domination. John Stuart Mill (1869) had already underlined how women role was different from other individuals conditions since—in this specific case—the rulers demand a stricter form of servitude. In this power relation, the woman is not only a slave but a favorite, according to a relationship based on the domain erotization, not on fear. A long education process defining the meaning of feminine seduction in abnegation and abdication from any will defines this willingness and compliance towards male supremacy. It is difficult to avoid it. The main traits of this form of subjugation are confirmed by Pierre Bourdieu's work, one of the cleverest interpreters of male supremacy. According to Bourdieu (1998), the strength of this order deriving from this domain can be measured by the fact that it does not have to be justified since it stands out as neutral, natural and thus ineluctable³. To the French author, the order appears not only in the *objective* dimension of things but even in the *social world* of agents' bodies and *habitus*, where it works as a perceptive, thinking and acting system. It determines a full concordance with objective and cognitive structures, with reality and knowing, with facts and related expectations. The socially constructed division among genders is thus considered natural and legitimate. The androcentric view appears neutral (p. 18).

3. Here, I'm referring to the concept of 'symbolic violence' pointed out by Bourdieu, P., Passeron, J. Co. (1970). *La reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*. Paris: Minuit.

Bourdieu means to highlight that this physical and social order lasts as an automatic and agent-free consequence. The differentiation process of the body and its usage through the total exclusion of the other gender is partially an explicit *Bildung* process. However, it is even an automatic effect of an order based on the androcentric principle of division. This characteristic illustrates the strength of this system, its capacity of reproduction over time in fundamental social structures defining things and bodies, the reality and its representation, reproductive and productive activities, and suggesting a historical transcendental macro-order that is imposed itself as transcendent on individuals, men and women. As regards objectivity and common sense, this order is supported by women themselves since they apply to their being subjugated the pattern of thinking emerging from the interiorization of power relations at the base of the symbolic order, reproducing the same violence they are subjected to. If the applying power relation categories are defined by the rulers, relationships seem natural. However, it leads to a self-devaluation of those who are at the bottom of the hierarchy. Therefore, it is evident the importance of the concept of symbolic violence established through the assumption that the dominated cannot grant anything to the dominant since they have only conceptual tools in common with the dominant. Hence, the patterns to evaluate and assess themselves are the outcomes of that division, hierarchy and classification whose are outcomes too. This form of mild and invisible violence overcomes the classical alternation between obligation and consensus, coercion and voluntary submission since the relation created by the symbolic supremacy stands beyond awareness and will in the darker and inscrutable dimension of *habitus*. The condition of women as oppressed and men as oppressors represents a paradoxical rationale —definable either in terms of spontaneity and extortion— that is understandable only considering the long-lasting effects of the social order, in that oxymoronic dimension of regulation spontaneously adapted to the imposed order (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 17, 67-88).

Thus, it is a power unrestrictedly exerted on bodies as invisible and insidious magic but effective since it leverages an extraordinary and ongoing preparatory work. It is not possible to recover from this scenery only through an aware act of will as the effects of this violence are carved in the deeper parts of the body. The ruled's awareness —representing a reflective and effective step towards the recovery from minority— is not sufficient to neutralize the unclear and inertial trait of this power relation. The foundation of this supremacy over women is not in the mystify consciousness that should be enlightened as a faux consciousness —correctable thanks to a revelation— product. The origin of this supremacy lies in the symbolic market: women are objects circulating

from the bottom to a higher level represented by another subject as a different self, they are tools for a higher purpose —according to a totally asymmetric relationship defining the relation between the symbolic capital production and its reproduction. In the symbolic goods economy, women are not just goods— they become gifts: communication tools and supremacy tools at the same time.

Advantages in the margin

Although gender studies show how domination over women is produced in a long-lasting way —in my opinion— strengthening the critical realism perspective, some scholars tried to turn the advantages of this condition over. According to bell hooks (2015), having a marginal role does not mean living in deprivation but it provides an access a radical openness dimension (III). Drawing inspiration from her experience as an Afro-American woman in the Southern states, hooks describes the meaning of staying on the margin as an ambivalent sense of belonging to the main body despite being external at the same time. Living on the margin, it is likely to develop a peculiar perspective —an oppositive point of view— and a way of thinking unknown to oppressors. Following this description, marginality stops being only a negative dimension, but it turns into a potential space of resistance and radical possibility. You should not move away from marginality to conquer the center through a mimetic direction, but marginality is a reliable space to plan, create and imagine alternative worlds⁴. Assuming marginality as a place of resistance —and not as place of deprivation and desperation— we might become able to free ourselves from the overwhelming risk produced by an absolute skepticism able to colonize our mind and making us unable to think to any change⁵. Undoubtedly, this consideration leads to rhetoric about the margin as a place of purity. However, it is interesting that the margin is not only a place of resistance against supremacy but an openness towards freedom, a dimension where it is possible to plan a change.

4. This corresponds to Arendt' definition of "*conscious pariah*", that she uses to refer to those who answered the moral quest choosing resistance as a practice and who sided with their own liberty, leaving behind the oppressive condition of being stateless; a condition which they lived as *pariah* left out of the humanity circle, without a place in the world nor among other human beings; See Arendt, H. (1968). Walter Benjamin. In *Merkur*, XXII.

5. The concept of "epistemic violence" has been proposed by Gaiatry Spivak. On the differences between epistemic violence e symbolic violence see Henry, B. (2012). *Asymmetrien in Spiegelbild. Repräsentationen des Selbst und des/der Anderen*. In Henry, B., Pirni, A. (Eds), *Der asymmetrische Westen. Zur Pragmatik der Koexistenz pluralistischer Gesellschaften*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

Methodologically, an interesting useful branch of the research states that if feminist analyses started from women's marginalized community living and interests, they might better understand and make power dynamics visible and reveal the privilege hierarchy. It is more useful to look at the world bottom-up and it is more proficient to analyze the injustice rather than the idea of justice. It is a sort of epistemic privilege which is able to give the marginal position a critical knowledge. As Sandra Harding highlights, the *Feminist Standpoint Theory* represents an important perspective to criticize the objectivity in *mainstream* thinking (Harding, 1987; Narayan & Harding, 2000). Representing the world from concrete contexts means that we are part of a disadvantaged group, and this sheds light on inequality and discrimination, highlighting elements that are not seen by the rulers. On the one hand, it highlights the constructed and artificial trait of injustice and inequality; on the other hand, it proposes an analytical viewpoint on social dynamics by identifying their deep connection. Power and its manifestation are on revealing trial to show something that might not be noticed without epistemic privilege. Certainly, belonging to the margin is not enough to notice the non-seen. It needs to develop a reflexive, critical, and deconstructive ability to access the epistemic privilege. Conversely, we are plunged into objectivity and that natural universality which traditionally dimmed the differences. Consciously becoming an "*outsider within*" means to observe things from diverse points of view and create a new way to know the world, a new realism that needs women's new perspective to be defined. The subject displacement establishes the feminist theory as a rethinking object; thus, this produces a more radical viewpoint in this hypothesis. Teresa de Lauretis's (1990) proposal about queers deals with this viewpoint. To de Lauretis, a feminist theory begins when the feminist criticism of socio-cultural groups becomes aware of itself and questions the complicity of those ideologies and its own conceptual assumptions. Beyond the feminism that questions the main narrations, another feminism questions itself and its own implication, using those narrations and criticism of itself. The politics of location, hence, means to think about the located and historical trait of any kind of thinking. This actual dislocation—a radical shift towards a new place where to think and speak—begins a process of uncertainty and insecurity with no certain outcomes. The theory has to repeatedly cross the solid borders, this implies new pieces of knowledge and a way to know. A difficult-to-acquire attitude but this vantage allows us to see both the feminist theory and the social reality from an internal and an external point of view. According to de Lauretis, this discursive standpoint—defined as queer—is crucial to feminist thinking. It is its resource of resistance and the source of the possibility to think differently, to

produce new narratives, and challenge them. New political subjectivities arise from this creative ability, they might adopt original viewpoints and test new forms of community life and participation through imagining them⁶. This is a political avant-garde establishing when women and men reflection settles in society, but it looks ahead to the future. In this case, the political change began from the protests against paradigms of values and political institutions of the society we live in, proposing alternative views based on our own needs and values of empowerment, equality and freedom. Extending the existing insight, political avant-gardes are similar to artistic and scientific ones —as Antonio Gramsci highlighted— they express new questions, open new sceneries, and propose alternative paradigms. Exercising policy not as a government of the existing but as a creative dimension, those new subjectivities could transform society through proposing original assumptions and developing awareness of existing debates. These subjects can develop concrete plans of social emancipation, filling the blank space created in the institutional practices and normative interpretations, and introducing excluded and dimmed themes. Since the exclusion from the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* in 1789 and the acknowledgement of full gender equality in international, global and national constitutional systems, the women movement goals show how the political avant-gardist role of gender studies, and the feminist movement allows women to have new ideas and principle to be acknowledged on a political and juridical base. Using this critical and deconstructive strategy, feminist thinking and practice gave the critical debate on modernity a new essential dimension.

An *intersectional* and multidisciplinary methodology

Recently, the theoretical need to respond to the fact that women live in equal but different conditions has been emerging, hence, an appropriate definition of diversity has to rest on elements of affinity and traits of differentiation at the same time – overall avoiding any kind of identity essentialism. Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality viewpoint tries to pursue this course of action towards both the *politics of identity* and even the multiculturalism critical path. Indeed, despite assuming different and not completely overlapping concepts, they both propose a view of the identity based on a single interpretive axis, whether it is gender, culture, racial, language or sexual

6. The concept of political avant-guard has been repropoused by Ypi, L. (2012). *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency*. New York: Oxford University Press.

related. Conversely, at the *intersectionality* level, difference acts on the diverse features describing the way of living the world of each individual. Therefore, talking appropriately about diversity implies multiple dimensions. If the identity is something so shifting, stratified and complex that everyone states their own sense of belonging to more than one social category, group and community at the same time and over time, then the intersectional methodology has to focus on the “crossroads”, the “intersections in the balance of power” created by weaving these elements. Another level of analysis is how these relations interact in a different context, intersectionality tries to answer it by articulating the different elements contributing in turn with different weights to define the condition of discrimination, oppression and inequality. The major emphasis given on the overlapping volume of the discrimination axis reinforces the diversity not only related to masculinity as it occurs in traditional gender studies but *within* the gender in the different conditions *among* women. How can we think about establishing an equal condition of oppression and discrimination among all the women only because they are women? Apart from their gender belonging, is it not clear that women live in diversified conditions due to their social position, nationality and/or ethnicity and their sexual orientation? The *intersectionality* perspective proposes a promising reflection to these questions controversially asked to *mainstream* Western feminism since —after deconstructing the unicity of the neutral subject— it is accused to disown the intra-gender differentiation for an understanding of a binary logic based on differences.

The first victim of this new setting is the idea of sisterhood in its universal and global concept. Since the '70s US feminist theory has been redefined as a consequence of methodological and philosophical reflections on power and social change. Focusing on themes as subjectivity and identity led to critically analyzing studies of the race and the Third World, firstly, fostering a de-essentialization of the identity process thanks to post-modern critics. *Identity politics* was blamed for equating the diverse concepts of oppression, removing the analysis of the debate on the forms of structural supremacy. Placing the theme of difference within intercultural feminist studies supported Chandra T. Mohanty's (2003) approach to analyze the political *agency* in its historical and well-placed form to offer a viable alternative to the hypothesis of universal gender oppression. According to her approach, the idea of universal gender oppression is problematic since it is based on the invisibility of race and class categories. Strategically, it is possible to preserve the debate on women universal rights as the normative horizon, however, the gender oppression universality must be deconstructed on behalf of a more accurate

and transformative feminist politics. If being feminist is not naturally related to being women, if living the experience of being women does not turn us into feminists by osmosis, then being feminists means being on a level different from only being women, but it means to severely choose the level of political protest. According to Robin Morgan's (1984) hypothesis —criticized by Mohanty— universal sisterhood can be defined by the fact that women are a homogeneous group regardless of the cultural context, a group defined by the same experiences, hence, by the same interests and aims. Deepening and deconstructing this condition of apparent homogeneity, it proves that the women experience is actually the Western women self-representation, the same one which states “*sisterhood is global*”. Solidarity among women on a global scale, thus, is possible only by removing history as a model that aims to an aprioristic assumption of this commonality and overshadows the social environment, assuming a common condition for every born-woman human being. Therefore, according to the sisterhood hypothesis, women are kept together only by the ahistorical idea of equality in their oppression and by the identity of their political commitment. Regarding this homogeneity, the only possible difference is male/female as a shared opposition to androcentrism. We are all women, we are all feminists, we are all oppressed and therefore we resist. The possibility of an aware and severely experienced protest has no place in this kind of analysis due to the implicit removal of the idea of women agency representing them as victims of oppression. We cannot write *her-story* instead of *his-story* only because we are women. This new writing has to be accompanied by a gap severely assuming the feminist *agency* on the basis of diverse contexts. Mohanty's interesting viewpoint on sisterhood is the perfect example of the gender studies literature proposed by this scholar. Ultimately, the aim is to emphasize those elements —still present in the Western feminism narration— that unequivocally represent a colonial tendency through a discourse deconstruction imposing the white feminist to focus on internal contradictions and aporias. Taking advantage of Afro-American feminism, the Western universalism perspective has been deconstructed since it behaves as a global project, but it removed any specific and different reality related to Third World and immigrant women. Creating cartography of Third World women's historical and political role, Mohanty emphasizes the Eurocentric dimension where these subjectivities are placed. It leads to a previously unknown challenge to feminist historiography and epistemology supported by race critical theory, postcolonial studies and critical approaches to neoliberal globalization. In this scenario, the concept of gender —isolated from the research assumptions— is questioned. Describing Third World women conditions —certainly, an essentialist concept— other

dimensions and concepts are necessary to define the compound reality of the specific oppression conditions. For instance, racial discrimination is not avoidable in the analysis of the subjectivity of the black and Afro-American women whose identity is more complex than simply belonging to a gender⁷.

This consideration is supported by the critical perspective around colonial thinking, as it is expressed by Homi K. Bhabha (2004). According to this author, colonialism works and reproduces in a series of stereotypes to describe the cultural alterity defined essentialistically as closed and unalterable. The use of stereotypes seems to be functional to an identity threatened by the gathering with the alterity since the discursive mechanism behind the stereotypes can “fix” the other in an ideological identity construction progressively seeking itself in the inclusion of the unknown into the known essentialistic definition. This specific criticism of the colonial dimension is analyzed by Mohanty (1984) within the feminist view on the creation of the “Third World Woman” category proposed by Western scholars. Through a view from above, this category might colonize

[...] the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular “Third World Woman” – an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, nevertheless it carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse. (pp. 333-358) As well as it is not complex to talk about “Western feminism” as a single entity, it is not possible to talk about “Third World feminisms” except as “imagined community” emerged from the connection of the women of Third World’s battles, that is representable within the hypothesis of a “horizontal camaraderie” on a political and elective base, neither biological nor natural. The sexual and color similarity do not create a common ground, but how we understand it creates a political connection across the different experiences of resistance. A “community of resistance” —as the “imagined community” proposed by Benedict Anderson (1991)— represents a political and non-essentialist definition.

The deconstructive strategy directly deals with white feminism texts, emphasizing that the internal aporias and the distinct and monolithic category of sexual differences herald essentialist and static scenarios. The victimistic paradigm of the Third World women pro-

7. A strong criticism towards essentialism, in particular concerning the definition of individual identities, has been proposed by Cerutti, F. (Ed.) (1996). *Identità e politica*, Roma-Bari:Laterza; see also Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*. London: Penguin Books.

duced by the same feminist narration is emphasized with its imperialistic features. These women —victims and described within the underdevelopment context, with oppressive traditions and almost illiterate— must be guided by Western women through a modernization process. On the specific condition of Third World Women —a political concept that combines Asian, African, Latin American and Middle Eastern populations as well as the US and Europe minorities— an appropriate analysis must be done to highlight *agency*, subjectivity practices, and resistance ability within exploitation contexts, however, seeking to overcome the victimistic approach. Therefore, the analysis has to be historically specific and dynamic not to assume an immutable and repeatedly similar scenario. These feminist's works underlined that the simultaneity of the oppressions is specific to social and political marginality, furthermore, even the strong relationships among feminist policy, racism narration, and imperialist history. Dynamically analyzing the forms of antagonist collective and individual agency in everyday life allows us to better read into systemic relations and power relationality. This produces some analyses showing how the racial, class, and gender domination systems have different outcomes in diverse contexts. Mohanty's analysis of power relations falls outside the binary logic of the colonizer-colonized/oppressor-oppressed relations. Furthermore, it emphasizes how government forms and processes should be the object of the feminist analysis rather than their crystallization in the "social index" defying women conditions. Different levels of empowerment could match with the same quantitative data, for instance, relating to literacy rate, it is not possible to read the data if not using a different lens from considering the women education simply as the ability to write and read. Despite the assumptions in this analysis, Mohanty does not support the juxtaposition between white feminism and *other* feminisms. After having deconstructed an imperialistic and victimizing system of categories, the crossing policy presented in her theory allows to elaborate transnational and global strategies, not a priori but re-formulated *from below*, or specific experiences in different contexts. Considering these elements, we can define the *women's studies* task. A *cross-border* transnational reflection is needed to deconstruct and unmask the dominant systems through the creation of transnational solidarity —even academic— that could reflect on the plural forms of citizenship able to overcome these supremacy structures.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize how the gender perspective places the injustice experiences at the center of the research thanks to the debate about intersectionality, and it could understand and recognize the theoretical importance of this experience to formulate new paradigms (Renault, 2017). In the Rawlsian —and more generically contractual— paradigms, the perception of injustice is eventually irrelevant; after defy-

ing the transcendental traits of injustice, the only level of analysis is to measure the gap between the theory and the practice, principles and their realization. In this different framework, analyzing the injustice and *cum patire* towards individuals discriminations and inequalities —together indulge— discrimination and inequality could result in a series of collective claims through the emphasis on new ideals and values (Pulcini, 2013). The “immanent critique” perspective can be helpful to better understand this methodological approach (Jaeggi & Celikates, 2019). Indeed, it does not work internally on the lack of reality suitability to the ideal dimension of the analyzed society, but it transcends the same society normativity in a work of criticism, managing to transform the society and its relating normative and ideal dimension. The missed realization of an ideal model of justice does not preserve the same ideal but modifies it along a performative pathway relating not to an abstract and preset model but to the theoretical approach. This approach is elaborated from the same reality, injustice conditions developed in it and to be noticed. There is no *a priori* in the critique, but there is a critically and realistically context-based critique, that could transcend the context towards a mild normative transformation that might reduce its discriminatory and oppressive traits.

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