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Viviana Beatriz Macmanus, *Disruptive Archives: Feminist Memories of Resistance in Latin America's Dirty Wars*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020. Photographs, figures, bibliography, index, 218 pp.; hardcover \$110, paperback \$26; ebook \$19.95, pdf \$19.95

Not unlike many places in contemporary Latin America, Brazil is living through a historical juncture marked by the fierce revival of conservative and authoritarian discourses, denials, and loss of historically achieved rights, fueled by state-sponsored discourses of violence against gendered, racial, and other minorities. In this context where I am situated, we are constantly inquiring into how our not-too-distant dictatorial past is indelibly sewn into the structures of the current (un)democratic state, in ways that are both obvious and profoundly elusive and complex.

Decades after the public acknowledgement by Latin American states of the crimes committed by the authoritarian regimes during the 1960s and 1970s and the establishment of truth commissions to investigate and prosecute the violations of human rights, we are still haunted by the memories of those who were persecuted, tortured, and murdered by the regimes, fully aware that justice has yet to be served. In this context, it is imperative to ask how Latin American scholarship is complicit with these silences, and how it can assume its responsibility toward society in delivering substantial forms of justice.

Viviana Macmanus's *Disruptive Archives* shows a passionate commitment to such questions and to the responsibility toward the gendered ghosts of the Dirty War era that continue to haunt the (un)democratic political present in Latin America. In a dialogical,

fragmented, and interdisciplinary narrative, her book explicitly challenges the limits of state-controlled human rights discourses, engaging with women's embodied memories and silenced histories of resistance to authoritarian political systems in Argentina and Mexico. Through an ambitious methodological patchwork sewn with feminist theory, cultural studies, oral history, and social movement historiography, the author builds an intricate dialogue among the testimonies of women survivors, human rights reports, and cultural productions (cinematic and literary fiction and documentary films) that portray women's protagonism in the struggle against political and gendered state violence during Argentina's and Mexico's Dirty Wars. The result of this dialogic research project is the construction of a critical feminist human rights vocabulary able to support new theories of comprehensive gender justice.

The book is structured by an introduction followed by four main chapters and an epilogue. Together, they sustain three interrelated commitments. The first is to deliver a Latin American feminist theory of justice from below, emerging out of the situated, embodied knowledge of those directly affected by state violence during the Dirty Wars. The second is to disrupt the temporality of the progressive narratives of the neoliberal states through a hauntology of the Dirty War ghosts in the political processes of the present. Third, it aims to intervene in the masculine, paternalistic accounts of the armed resistance to authoritarian violence, showing the active role women played in the ranks of the armed insurgencies, retrieving their political subjectivities from the victimizing narratives around their involvement in this process.

The introduction, titled "All of Latin America Is Sown with the Bones of [Its] Forgotten Youth": Hemispheric State Terror and Latin American Feminist Theories of Justice," contextualizes the research and offers a powerful roadmap to navigate the different layers of the unfolding argument. Pairing—more than comparing—Argentina's and Mexico's Dirty Wars, the author aims to show that state terrorism during the Cold War in Latin America was not a prerogative of the military dictatorships of the Southern Cone. Macmanus successfully demonstrates how both the Argentine military regime's overt war against communism between 1976 and 1983 and Mexico's covered history of systemic, state-sanctioned violence during the 1960s and 1970s, conducted by the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI)—and which remains largely absent from historical records on the Cold War Dirty Wars—systematically cultivated a culture of fear, terror, and trauma, sustained by a rigid masculine authoritarianism that targeted the dissenting bodies of politically engaged men and women through a sexualized discourse.

Chapter 1, "Critical Latin American Feminist Perspectives and the Limits and Possibilities of Human Rights Reports," offers an incisive critique of the human rights reports produced by Argentina's Truth Commission (*Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*, CONADEP) in 1984, and by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Social and Political Movements of the Past (FEMOSPP in Spanish), created by Mexico's elected president Vicente Fox in 2002, after the demise of the PRI. While these reports are important political instruments that reflect the unrelenting efforts of human rights groups and the mainstreaming of the international human rights agenda, serving as important platforms for

survivors and families silenced during the dictatorship, they are shown to fall short of delivering substantial justice to survivors of state violence. Adhering to a paternalistic and progressive narrative, both reports center on the transitional state as a benevolent father figure of the nation, using graphic and exploitative descriptions of sexual violence that fail to contextualize and analyze women's political activism.

Macmanus finds alternative sources of human rights documents in the independent cultural productions of writers, survivors, and activists, which defy the progressive narratives of the democratic state sustained by the official reports. Elena Poniatowska's novel *La Noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), which uses multiple cultural sources (oral history, poetry, photography, written accounts, and media headlines) to create a dialogic perspective about the Mexican massacre of October 2, 1968, is explored as an example of a feminist human rights project that includes the gendered and political contexts absent from the official reports. Similar sources of feminist approaches to human rights that center women's political activism are found in the books *Ni el flaco perdón de Dios* (Juan Gelman) and *A Single, Numberless Death* (Nora Strejilevich), both published in 1997 to document the survivors' perspectives of Argentina's Dirty War.

Chapter 2, "Sexual Necropolitics, Survival, and the Gender of Betrayal," builds on Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics and Giorgio Agamben's *homo sacer* to provide an account of the absolute power and systemic violence of the carceral states of Argentina and Mexico over the bodies of men and women. Through the analysis of two cultural productions, the Argentine film *Garage Olimpo* (Marco Bechi, 1999) and the Mexican novel *El apando* (José Revuelta, 1969), the chapter succeeds in tying the operations of the carceral spaces to the foundations of the neoliberal states in both countries. It also makes a strong case for a feminist conceptualization of the operations of necro-biopolitical regimes and for a gender-sensitive discussion of bare life in ways that account for the gendered workings of power in authoritarian and neoliberal states alike. The analysis of the two cultural texts is informed by a commitment to rescue women's voices from the patriarchal logics that sustain collective consciousness, which tend to depict women's complex strategies of survival as *malinchista* (traitorous).

Despite the author's repeated denunciations of victimizing narratives that streamline women's strategies of struggle and survival, the discussion of incarcerated bodies through the concept of bare life seems to reproduce a binary logic of agency-passivity that betrays her Latin American feminist ethos. This is seen in the discussion of María Fabiani (the guerrilla protagonist in *Garage Olimpo*) and her sexual involvement with one of her torturers and ex-roommate: "Although María seemingly exerts a certain amount of agency in her decision to have a sexual relationship with Félix, the very nature of the death camps prohibits exercising personal agency or domain over one's embodied existence" (73). The dichotomy that is set up here between agency and nonagency falls short of Macmanus's commitment to complexity and contradiction; this is better shown in her nuanced discussion of Adriana Calvo's and Nora Strejilevich's memories (43) of how extreme violence can fuel women's will to resist and struggle for justice.

In chapter 3, “Ghosts of Another Era,” the author builds a theory of haunting and spectrality to account for the gendered haunting of Mexico’s and Argentina’s revolutionary past in the present. In the twin analyses of Luisa Riley’s film *Flor en Otomí* (2012), which depicts the life and death of Dení Prieto Stock, a former member of the Mexican guerrilla group Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN), and Marta Diana’s collection of testimonies of former Argentine guerrillas, *Mujeres guerrilleras* (1997), Macmanus follows the traces of women whose revolutionary struggles against the authoritarian regimes were effaced from masculinist discourses of the Dirty Wars. By asking what these ghosts want, she implicates us in this hauntology, daring us to assume our responsibility to them and to ourselves by crafting a “hospitable memory out of a concern for justice” (117).

In the final chapter, “Gendered Memories, Collective Subjectivity, and Solidarity Practices in Women’s Oral Histories,” Macmanus circles back to interviews conducted between 2009 and 2013 with 12 women involved in armed and unarmed organizations in Argentina and Mexico. In their fragmented memories, stories of violence and trauma interweave with articulations of community and solidarity that defy narratives of suffering and victimization, centering instead on their radical activism and capacity for social change. Their situated, embodied memories are scrutinized as pathways to engage the transformative potential of trauma in disrupting the linear temporality of the neoliberal present.

This chapter also highlights the uneasiness that many of these women feel toward feminism, often associated with a Global North, imperialistic ideology that fails to capture the complexity of the struggles they were involved with. Even while admitting to the specific challenges women faced in the armed insurgencies and in the hands of the authoritarian states, and while recognizing the difficulty they continued to face in speaking of the sexual violence to which they were subjected, the hesitation to frame their struggle in feminist or gendered terms speaks aloud about the need for a feminist scholarship that does not start from predefined notions of feminism or gender. *Disruptive Archives* excels in this task, evading any engagement with the scholarly feminist canon to make room for an emergent, embodied, situated feminist knowledge. It also succeeds in demonstrating that these women’s shared reliance on a collective subjectivity to articulate their histories of trauma offers a powerful opportunity for crafting a transnational and hemispheric Latin American feminist ethos and imagined community.

The epilogue offers a thought-provoking exercise in connecting the gendered violences of present (un)democratic Latin America to the nascent authoritarian-neoliberal states of the Dirty Wars. It asks the timely question of how current, modernized iterations of violence against women in the public sphere—a violence that is rampant throughout the continent—connects to the gendered and political violence inflicted on the revolutionary women. In this sense, it offers a blatant statement of our haunted present and the insufficiency of state-controlled human rights discourses. However, looking precisely at the present reality to which the author alludes—such as the femicide rates in Mexico and the impunity

surrounding such cases—a deafening silence emerges out of these pages: the specter of colonialism.

While the author's commitment to a Latin American feminist theory of justice from below is remarkable, the book sidelines a profuse body of feminist Latin American scholarship that denounces the structural violence against Black, Indigenous, poor, and peripheral women that sustains the modern colonial neoliberal order in the region. The intricate relationship between colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy in the reproduction of political and gendered violence in the region has now been abundantly thematized in the writings and activism of feminists in the region. (Some important references in this debate are Rita Laura Segato, Lorena Cabnal, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, María Lugones, Francesca Gargallo, Julieta Paredes, Lelia González, and Sueli Carneiro.) These works offer powerful engagement with the gendered ghosts of Latin America. Their absence throughout the pages of this book confronts us with important questions: How can we build a historiography of the Latin American Dirty Wars that disrupts not only gender-blindness but also color-blindness? How is Latin American scholarship still complicit with the silences around its colonial history? And can it assume its responsibility to deliver substantive forms of justice if it does not engage colonialism as the most fundamental ghost that haunts our political present?

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As with the election of Donald Trump two years earlier, the victory of Brazilian presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 has occasioned extensive political commentary. Observers well versed in the administrations' trademarks: the demonization of political opponents and marginalized populations; the populist attacks on "elites," state institutions, the judiciary, and electoral integrity; the defense of patriarchy and "traditional" values; the embrace of chauvinism, "law and order," and militarization of public policies; the braiding of free market policies with truculent economic nationalism; the glorification of a past historical order. The rise of the far right in the United States and Brazil has left civil libertarians scrambling to defend democracies under siege. It has also sent scholars

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