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BOOK REVIEW

Decolonizing Feminism: Transnational Feminism and Globalization

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Margaret McLaren's anthology *Decolonizing Feminism: Transnational Feminism and Globalization* addresses a broad range of issues that underscore the importance of decolonizing feminist theory. Chapters included in this book examine a wide variety of approaches to decolonizing feminism from a transnational and global perspective. Theorists champion Indigenous feminism, global and communal forms of knowledge, collective movements that emphasize women's rights, citizenship, care chains and democratic processes, home in a global worker context, and the plight of refugee women, to name a few. These issues demonstrate the need for feminism to have a transnational, decolonial, and global lens. McLaren and the authors in the anthology face these challenges head-on. The result is a bold and innovative anthology that makes a significant contribution to feminist philosophy.

Decolonizing Feminism links feminism and decoloniality by joining the conversation about decoloniality begun and sustained by Anibal Quijano, María Lugones, Sylvia Wynter, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (Wynter 1990; Quijano 2000; Lugones 2003; Mohanty 2003; Wynter 2003; Lugones 2007; 2008). Decoloniality as Quijano theorizes it locates the coloniality of power in Latin America's colonial period. According to Quijano, race has a structural connection to labor and foments a globalist and capitalist economy. Racial dominance emerges out of these relationships. Lugones begins the approach in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* by calling for an "anti-structural understanding of selves, relations and realities" (Lugones 2003, 21). Lugones amplifies the discourse with an intersectional analysis of decoloniality that includes gender (Lugones 2008). Although McLaren does not identify Sylvia Wynter as one of the roots of the anthology's discourse, she most certainly is. Wynter's contribution is in the masterful ways in which she tackled critiques of feminism from an anticolonialist perspective (Wynter 1990). She also uses coloniality to encourage a revisioning of the term *human* (Wynter 2003). Finally, Mohanty's decolonizing approach to feminism includes calling for healthy and equitable basic principles such as "economic stability, racial equality and the racial redistribution of wealth" (Mohanty 2003, 4). These three theoretical perspectives are generative of decolonial discourse. As such, they influence the writing in this volume.

A worthy and unique perspective that McLaren adopts in curating this anthology is linking decoloniality with transnationality, globalism, and feminism, and her volume joins the decoloniality conversation. In so doing, McLaren merges often-disparate conversations with an intersectional approach. This conjunctive and layered perspective is better suited for feminism's twenty-first-century pluriversal challenges.

It is fitting that Chandra T. Mohanty opens the volume with the preface, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism for the 99 Percent." Among the most important contributions Mohanty makes to the anthology in this opening essay is to contextualize the volume. She calls attention to the idea that a transnational approach in the twenty-first century requires considering large-scale global issues such as geopolitical climate destruction, militarized national borders, displacement of peoples and corporatist, racist misogynist cultures, proto-fascist governments around the world . . . ," among others (vii). Second, Mohanty calls attention to the ways in which neoliberal institutions, like universities, appropriate the term *transnational*. So, in effect, both feminist and transnational onto-epistemic positions need to be transformed. For Mohanty, innovative thinking is required to construct a transnational feminism that addresses ninety-nine percent of women. For feminism to be innovative in this environment, Mohanty insists that the approach provided by this volume (merging decoloniality with transnational feminism and globalization) is essential.

The first section of *Decolonizing Feminism* has two essays. These address varying strategies of practicing a decolonizing feminist philosophy. Intersectionality is a key tool in this method, because it helps to complicate and understand gender in varying contexts. This first section also attempts to enhance our understanding of knowledge, especially one that goes beyond the individual and navigates through borders.

Linda Martín Alcoff's essay, "Decolonizing Feminist Philosophy," begins the first part of the volume and sets a tone of vigorous dispute against a universalized vision of "women." She argues that both social-constructionist and deconstructionist views of feminism make this same universalist error. The problem lies in that both accounts fail to consider cultural, social, economic, and historical differences as circumstances that influence who women are, how they are seen, and what they are able to become. In effect, social constructionist and deconstructionist views of women erase situated specificity. These accounts fall short of considering many women's lives. For this reason, Alcoff proposes creating a new form of understanding gender, outside of a universalist model.

Gaile Pohlhaus continues the theme, but with more concrete solutions. She points to the idea that feminists are responsible for the ways in which their theories may be exclusive and render inaudible situated resistances to oppression. Pohlhaus also encourages the reader to consider how situated embodiment affects the central knowledge shaping our understanding. Decolonizing feminism from this situated, embodied perspective via "the work of epistemic gathering" will lead to disengagement from the impetus to universalize women.

The second section focuses on the role that decolonizing feminism can play in revisioning human rights. A key component of this revisioning is in questioning the value of individualist notions of human rights. In particular, it is interested in shifting from the privileging of individualist notions of human rights to considering the efficacy and applicability of collective social movements in bringing positive changes in women's lives. A second important goal of this section is to make visible how neoliberalism and corporate interests have a global impact on the human rights of women.

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The third chapter, written by Pascha Bueno-Hansen and Sylvanna M. Falcón, critiques human rights awards as neoliberal and as part of a systemic appropriation of Native cultures to suit transnational corporate interests. The impact of this connection is that the awards do not honor the lives and the work of the awardees. A practice of decolonial transnational feminism, in this case, would include a nonhierarchical vision of the world, a nonindividualist view of the awardee, and a delinking of this merit from corporate interests.

The third section addresses citizenship and immigration. It tries to provide decolonizing frameworks for citizenship. This section pays special attention to citizenship issues, especially those that emerge from global women who live "in-between" spaces. Kanchana Mahadevan uses Habermas and Benhabib to argue that care chains, especially those involving immigrant women, ought to be included in democratic processes. Along with this idea of accounting for the immigrant female worker in the democratic dialogue, this section tackles notions of home, especially for transnational women workers. Cecilia T. Bardwell-Jones addresses how women who work in other countries but maintain a house in their home countries have a dual sense of home. She argues that this duality creates a "space between" that opens an interval for transnational feminist dialogue. Finally, this section highlights the plight of refugee women. The chapter written by Kelly Oliver reminds us that refugee women are often victims of sexual violence. This violence also extends to pregnant refugee women and their newborns, who are subject to high mortality rates. Oliver also brings to light the fact that children born in refugee camps may be stateless. Given these constraints, Oliver argues for enforcement of the rights of refugee women. This may include the need to reconsider our definitions of terms such as *human*, *humanity*, and *humanitarian*.

The fourth section is among the book's most important and ambitious as it tackles questions of dialogue, solidarity, and freedom. It addresses the need for transformative places for women where global solidarity and dialogue can occur. Primacy is given to Indigenous women's voices, which see freedom as synchronous with nature.

Barbara Fultner's focus on the concept of cultures as porous enables us to see culture as sustaining a set of ideas and practices that are important to locate and understand. As such, Fultner cautions us against taking positions that assume a "static" or implacable understanding of culture that may be difficult to maneuver in transformative, transnational feminist spaces. In this context, a transformative practice within transnational feminist dialogue transcends difference by enabling conversations between women of varying cultures and perspectives despite disagreement. A mutual understanding of culture as porous moves the dialogue forward, because it unhinges the discourse from cultural relativism debates. Fultner adds that accountability is essential in this practice because it enables feminist responsibility to create a dialogue, which remains open to how global women process their realities.

In "Building Transnational Feminist Solidarity," Sergio Gallegos shows how transnational feminist networks are already at work in Latin America. He points to the ways in which alliances coalesce through identities. In the next chapter, Allison Weir gives a final transformative call. Indigenous linkages to land are a situated episteme that informs how some Native feminists maintain a decolonial perspective. This linkage to land brings into relief the secular nature of mainstream feminism. Despite this spiritual/secular difference between mainstream and Indigenous feminists, Weir's chapter emphasizes a decolonizing feminism that would operate outside of this binary.

McLaren attempts to address the plight of global women in the variety of themes and perspectives the volume contains. However, given the fact that most of the contributors

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are US based, the volume still feels US-centric. A transnational, global, decolonial feminism should not just theorize about but also include the voices of women from around the world. It should not just talk about intersectionality, but also be intersectional in its praxis. As such, *Decolonizing Feminism* is a great first start. It opens us to the merged dialogue and gives us some guideposts for great theoretical explorations. Even with the aforementioned deficiency, this volume makes an original contribution to feminist philosophy, because it is unique in its approach of considering decolonization as a central and indispensable tenet in transnational feminism. Very few feminist theorists acknowledge the incomplete nature of the decolonization project. A decolonizing transnational global feminism also enriches the decolonization project. For these reasons, this is a volume worth reading.

Young and mature scholars interested in an up-to-date and engaging approach to feminism would benefit from this book, since it attempts to address ninety-nine percent of women in a multidisciplinary, intersectional, and decolonial way. Young scholars will find a way to engage feminist views more holistically. Mature scholars would be able to review and revise their approaches to feminist theory considering the more complex approach offered in this anthology. *Decolonizing Feminism: Transnational Feminism and Globalization* would work well in the courses such as Introduction to Women's Studies, Feminist Theory/Philosophy, Postcolonial Theory and Decolonization, Postcolonialism: Theory and Practice, Decolonial Theory/Turn, Decoloniality and Decolonization, and Introduction to Feminist Frameworks, to name a few. Finally, nonacademic readers who are interested in diverse and dynamic approaches to feminism would benefit from reading this book.

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