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FEMINISM IN TRANSLATION

Feminism Cannot be Single Because Women are Diverse: Contributions to a Decolonial Black Feminism Stemming from the Experience of Black Women of the Colombian Pacific[1]

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Abstract

This article asserts that European and North American feminisms are colonial discursive elaborations that defined what it was to be a woman and a feminist. The categories of gender and patriarchy established both what the subordination of women was as well as the possibilities for their emancipation. They're colonial discourses in the sense that they have construed women of the third world, or of the global South, as "other." The specific case examined in this article questions the Euro-US-centric feminist construction of women and Afro-descendant feminists. In resignifying the categories of analysis proposed by feminism, such as gender and patriarchy, Afro-descendant feminists assert themselves as diverse Black women who build proposals subverting the social order that oppresses them, without needing to resort to feminism's central categories. Women belonging to ethnic communities elaborate a new type of feminism constructed in relation to the community's collective actions in vindicating their rights. Finally, Black or Afro-Colombian women, based on the legacy of their maroon or runaway slave ancestors, construct feminism otherwise, challenging universalist claims by Eurocentric and Andean-centric feminism, transforming and enriching it.

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."
—Audre Lorde

Joan Scott claims that the history of feminism, when told as a continuous and progressive struggle for emancipation, hides the discontinuity, conflict, and differences that underlie the political stability implied by the categories "women" and "feminism" (Scott 1996). The same happens if we write a linear history of the concepts of *gender* and *patriarchy*,

as Scott does in telling us about the history of feminism. Much of the feminism born in Europe and North America defined what it meant to be a woman and a feminist, and the categories of *gender* and *patriarchy* established the subordination of women as well as the possibilities for their emancipation. For many theorists, salvation cannot be reached outside these categories, as they define them. Therefore, women—all of them—must assume this discourse as the strategy for their emancipation. Such pretension makes this type of feminism a colonial discourse. European and North American women are not the only ones defining for others what it means to be a woman. Many third-world or poor-world feminists, who think that the only valid knowledge about women is generated by first-world white women—the reason they reference only them—do so too. It is a colonial discourse in the sense that it has constructed women from the third world, or the global South, as "other."

It is not only about questioning the universal "woman" of Euro-US-centric feminism, nor about pointing out white women's share of responsibility for racism. The issue at hand is to show how diverse Black women create proposals that subvert the social order differentially oppressing them, because they are racialized, in poverty, and women, without having to resort to feminism's central categories, which many are unaware of, and that others reject out of prejudice. Others, especially Black academic women, have very well-founded criticisms of this type of feminism, and propose instead one that they define as autonomous and local.

In this essay my interest lies primarily in the types of thinking that have been woven in resistance, rebellion, and in the construction of new worlds of Black women—located at the bottom of the social order, without the slightest possibility of exercising dominion over other subjects, whose colonized bodies are thrown to the margins of the world-system: Black women who, in the Colombian context, suffer from gender inequality, historical impoverishment, forced displacement, discrimination, and racism. It is in this context of violence, exclusion, marginalization, and racism, but also of struggles and resistance, that Black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera, and Raizal[2] women are inventing new conditions of life, of knowledge, and of being otherwise.

North American Black feminist poet Audre Lorde affirms that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 2004, 193). If the master's tools are not enough to dismantle, tear down, or demolish the master's house, then what kind of tools do we need if our goal is this destruction, this transformation, this radical change? Are the categories *gender* and *patriarchy* part of the arsenal of the master's tools with which it is impossible to dismantle their house, that place of oppression and confinement that is this capitalist, racist, and patriarchal world-system where we are subhuman? Here I intend to debate with the Eurocentrism of a colonized academy that considers only what is produced in Europe and what was produced in classical Greece as valid knowledge. Likewise, I will engage with the pretension to maintain the West's supposed universality of knowledge through what is transmitted and the ways in which this transmission takes place (Wallerstein 1999). Here the question arises: is the category of gender, as it is generally defined, a construction from the outside, an *other* thought, or on the contrary, is it a product of imperial reason? Is gender useful for the decolonization of patriarchy and heterosexual normativity? I proceed then to relate feminism to Eurocentrism and later interrogate whether it is also part of the colonization of knowledges that delegitimizes, disregards, and renders invisible the thinking of Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquera women.

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Is Gender a Tool of the Master's House or a Critique of Existing Feminism?

Boaventura de Sousa Santos defines modern Western thought as *abyssal thinking*, a system of visible and invisible distinctions where the latter constitute the foundation of the former. He states that the invisible distinctions are established by means of radical lines that divide reality into two universes: the universe of "this side of the line" and the universe of "the other side of the line" (de Sousa Santos 2006, 34). The "other side of the line" is produced as nonexistent: not existing in any way, totally excluded. In this way modern humanity is built on the radical denial of the humanity of those on the "other side of the line": modern subhumanity. This division arising in the colonial period is as real today as it was then, which is why we speak of *coloniality*[3] (Mignolo 2007) as a concept different from *colonization* (Quijano 2007). Although colonization has been overcome by the independence struggles of the nineteenth century, which made way for the configuration of formally independent national states, Latin American and Caribbean societies continue to be dominated by Europe and North America, thus maintaining the colonial hierarchies articulated with the international division of labor and capitalist accumulation at a global scale (Grosfoguel 2002). It is during the colonial period that the invisible distinction between metropolitan societies and colonial territories emerges. Colonial territories are on the "other side of the line," therefore they do not produce knowledge; the field of knowledge belongs to "this side of the line." The colonial imaginary, where Europe alone can produce knowledge (epistemic hegemony), constructs a generalized interpretation of the world that permeates the social sciences of the entire planet, making "most of the social knowledges of the peripheral world equally Eurocentric" (Lander 1999, 53). The categories produced in Europe are used throughout the colonized world to think about reality and in so doing expand the colonial imaginary (Pachón 2007).[4]

> The expectation of universality, however sincerely pursued, has not been fulfilled thus far in the historical development of the social sciences (or humanities). In the past couple of years critics have strongly condemned the failures and shortcomings of social sciences in this quest. The most extreme criticisms have suggested that universality is an unachievable goal, yet most social scientists still believe it is not only a plausible objective, but also one worth pursuing. (Wallerstein 1999, 55)

However, not everyone in the colonized world has access to this knowledge; Quijano notes that "only some of the colonized could potentially gain access to reading or writing, and exclusively in the language of the dominators plus for their own purposes" (Quijano 1999, 103). The same is true for women; thanks to their class privilege, some gain access to this knowledge, which is social capital that most women lack. Hence, the bearers of this social capital are located at the forefront of feminist demands.

The colonial zone, as de Sousa Santos calls the colonized world, is an invisible side within which there is no knowledge but only beliefs, magical or idolatrous practices, opinions, and intuitive or subjective understandings that de Sousa Santos says could be the object of scientific research but never considered knowledge, neither false nor true. They are "knowledge made incommensurable and incomprehensible, because they obey neither the scientific methods of truth nor those of knowledge recognized as alternative in the realm of philosophy and theology" (de Sousa Santos 2006, 45). The visibility of modern knowledge is given or built on the invisibility of forms of knowledge that cannot be adapted to any of these forms of knowledge. I am referring to popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, or indigenous knowledges on the *other side of the line.*

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They disappear as relevant knowledge because they are beyond truth and untruth. It is unthinkable to apply the scientific true/false distinction or the unverifiable scientific truths of philosophy and theology that constitute all acceptable knowledge on this side of the line (de Sousa Santos 2009).

A geopolitics of knowledge is established in which the colonized world does not produce but reproduces European knowledge. This is why it is possible to speak of a *coloniality of knowledge*. Since European knowledge is proposed and perceived as universal, objective, and true, whatever it expresses will be recognized as scientific truth. One could therefore say that "our knowledge has a colonial character and is based on assumptions that involve systematic processes of exclusion and subordination" (Lander 1999, 53).

In spite of the above, it is undeniable that in Latin America and in the rest of the colonized world, a kind of thinking is emerging that breaks with Eurocentric knowledge, which Walter Mignolo calls *decolonial think-thought* (*pensar-pensamiento decolonial*) (Mignolo 2007). It emerges from the ruins of invaded and destroyed civilizations, in the rebellions of the enslaved, ultimately in the experience of insurgency and resistance to Euro-US-centric colonial expansion. A few examples are the works of Aimé Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, José Martí, Orlando Fals Borda, Paulo Freire, Rodolfo Kusch, Juana Inés de la Cruz, Gloria Anzaldúa, or Angela Davis.

This decolonial think-thought has meant an epistemic detachment that is much more than the negation of the categories with which the world has been interpreted from Europe. It is also much more than "opening up the social sciences," as Wallerstein proposes, which is still inadequate for a decolonization of knowledge. It is the profound critique of the European paradigm that proposes modernity as an emancipatory project for all humanity. But it goes even further, since from within Europe itself (and the US), the critique of modernity has developed as postmodernism or poststructuralism, the great mega-narratives of modernity have been put into question, the failure of reason has been pondered, historically silenced voices that recognize themselves as subordinate identities and who fight for recognition have emerged.

Neither the Frankfurt School theorists, for example, nor Marxism in general, recognized a plural subject of oppression and liberation. The thought of the theorists who gave rise to critical theory (CT) did not go beyond "the Eurocentric limits of Western thought. Cosmological and epistemological diversity, as well as the multiplicity of sexual, gender, racial, spiritual, etc., power relations, are not incorporated or epistemically situated in their thinking" (Pachón 2007, 13).

Critical thinking and its theory claim to oppose the harmonicist and illusionist thinking of society that speaks of a rhetorical we, to argue that "its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature" (Horkheimer 1974, 243).

But the totality of CT does not imply in any way the recognition of the colonized diversities that have been historically excluded from it, nor does it imply breaking with the presupposition of a single historical logic for historical totality. Despite the emancipatory character of CT, its reflections, carried out from the first world, did not consider aspects central to the oppression of the countries colonized by Europe, such as colonialism and coloniality.

Critical theories that allow for the decoloniality of power and knowledge are found in "the ruins of languages, categories of thoughts and subjectivities that have been

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consistently negated by the rhetoric of modernity and the imperial implementation of the logic of coloniality" (Mignolo 2007, 11). In this sense it is still important to reiterate that

> while Frankfurt's critical theory limited its space of experience and its horizon of expectations to the sphere of history and the future of Europe, critical liberation and the decolonial turn operate from the spaces and experiences and the whole array of expectations of various ethno-groups in different parts of the planet, and not in Europe. (Mignolo 2010, 27)

The questioning of the European modernizing and emancipatory project leads us to take issue with all the social relations inscribed in the colonial matrix of power.[5] Decolonizing ourselves means a systemic detachment from European knowledge, thinking our own history, thinking our own liberation but with our own categories, from our own realities and experiences, and also thinking the whole complex structure of relations that are interwoven in the colonial matrix.

For de Sousa Santos, "global social injustice is intimately linked to global cognitive injustice. The battle for global social justice must, therefore, also be a battle for global cognitive justice; to succeed, this battle requires a new type of thinking, a post-abyssal thinking" (de Sousa Santos 2006, 50). In this way the author puts forward the need for epistemological resistance, drawing near to Mignolo's arguments (Mignolo 2007). The latter proposes the need for the construction of a decolonial thinking that translates into a systemic detachment from Europe and North America, from the global North. For de Sousa Santos, "post-abyssal thinking stems from the idea that the world's diversity is endless, and that this diversity still lacks an adequate epistemology. In other words, the epistemological diversity of the world is a project yet to be realized" (de Sousa Santos 2006, 55). We, Black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera, and Raizal women, have much to contribute to this end.

To begin with, we must acknowledge that, in addition to the colonization of knowledge (*saberes*) and being, there is a colonization of bodies, which, although related to the colonization of being, must be explained in and of itself. These colonized bodies are located spatially, socially, and culturally within what Ramón Grosfoguel calls the "European modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system," which means that "we always speak from a particular location in power relations" (Grosfoguel 2002, 151). Therefore, nobody can escape the class, racial, sexual, gender, linguistic, geographical, and spiritual hierarchies of the European, modern/colonial, capitalist/patriarchal world-system (151). What Grosfoguel is telling us with this way of naming the social organization of the world-system is that multiple entangled global hierarchies exist simultaneously across time and space.

The Category *Gender*

Recognizing my own locus of enunciation in the coordinates of global power, I tackle the critical analysis of the category *gender*. The notion of *gender* has come a long way in the social sciences to be recognized as a category, with its own epistemological status, that explains the social relations between men and women. However, it remains a contested category among feminist theorists. *Gender* is credited with questioning the destiny that biology had imposed on women. In so doing, *gender* decoupled sex from culture, and came to mean the cultural representation of sex.

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Gender as a category sought to overcome the naturalization of women that made sexual difference the cornerstone of female identity, assumed for all women (Suárez 2008), a sexual difference that was not questioned but that rather explained female subordination. Importantly, gender as a category has relativized the meanings of being a woman and being a man, by linking them to culture—something made possible only after the sex/gender distinction. Thus, it could be stated that being a man and being a woman depend on the cultural expectations imposed on the sexes. However, several feminists have questioned the definition of sex as biological and gender as cultural. Following Foucault, sex is considered a cultural product, as well as the result of social discourses and practices in specific historical contexts (Castellanos 2003). "Foucault's basic concept is that the idea of 'sex' does not exist before its determination within a discourse where its meaning constellations are specified, and consequently bodies do not have 'sex' outside the discourses where they are ascribed as sexual" (Moore 1994, quoted in Castellanos 2003, 35).

The primacy given to the notion of sex as the basis for the cultural construction of gender has come under scrutiny. Castellanos reminds us that Judith Butler states that "it is cultural gender that allows us to construct our ideas about sexuality, our ways of living our bodies, including genitality and our ways of relating physically and emotionally" (Castellanos 2003, 36). However, some theorists consider that in many feminist texts, "the sex/gender distinction still allows the ontological basis of sexual difference to remain unquestioned" (Suárez 2008, 30). Furthermore, gender, in its commonplace use, has been denounced as an ethnocentric category that accounts only for the relations between men and women in Western culture, and not for other peoples and cultures with diverse ways of thinking about their bodies beyond the ascription of sex to nature and gender to culture—that is, the use of dichotomous categories to explain the world.

Studying Mesoamerican cultures, Sylvia Marcos finds that there is a constant fluidity of metaphorical, divine, and corporeal dualities that constantly seek balance and that transcend "the fixed and mutually exclusive categories of gender theory" (Marcos 1995, 16). Sylvia tells us that Mesoamerican duality cannot be a binary arrangement between "static" poles as it appears in gender theory, heir in this respect to the classical tradition. To start with, the concept of "balance" can be understood as an "operator" that continuously modifies the dualities' terms. This is what is so particular about the concept of opposite and complementary pairs, a trait of all Mesoamerican thought. It "molds" reality, makes it flow, prevents its stratification. A fundamental requirement for the maintenance of the cosmos, this "fluid equilibrium" could not coexist with closed, immutable, unitary categories. The demand for an ever-reconfiguring "equilibrium," inherent in the Mesoamerican concept of a mobile universe, also meant that every point of equilibrium was also in constant displacement. The very categories of feminine and masculine were open and "in flux." As Alfredo López Austin seemed to suggest, and as some feminist theorists acknowledge: "there is no exclusively feminine or exclusively masculine being but different degrees (nuances) of combinations" (DEAS Conference January 1990, quoted in Marcos 1995, 16).

Francesca Gargallo has also criticized the fact that gender has become a category that always refers to women in terms of their relations to men. For her, this use of gender as "unpolluted, unsexed, apolitical, always confined women to their subordination with respect to men. Meanwhile, 'gender studies' replaced the once feminist studies in universities; and there again men were able to sneak in" (Gargallo 2006, 76).

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When gender persistently refers to the masculine embedded in the feminine–masculine dichotomy, it ends up essentializing women. Although gender may be framed as cultural, it does not necessarily follow that there are different ways of being a woman. Rather, what is meant is that "the woman" is the white, middle- or upper-class, first-world, heterosexual woman.

María Lugones speaks of the modern/colonial gender system and notes that it was consolidated during the colonial adventures of Spain and Portugal as two-sided: one visible/clear and the other hidden/dark. The visible side has hegemonically constructed gender and gender relations, organizing the lives of white and bourgeois women and men, constituting the very meaning of man and woman. The dark side, on the other hand, says Lugones, is compulsive and perverse. She states that this side has to do with the deep reduction of the *anamales*, the *anafemales*, and the people of a third gender (Lugones 2008).

Brazilian author Sueli Carneiro, questioning the essentialist view on women, wonders: "When we talk about the myth of female fragility, which historically justified the paternalistic protection of men over women, which women are we talking about?" And she answers herself:

> We Black women are part of a contingent of women who have worked for centuries as slaves in agriculture or in the streets as vendors, saleswomen, female food sellers, prostitutes, etc. Women who did not understand a thing when feminists said that women should win the streets and work! We are part of a contingent of women with an identity as objects. Yesterday at the service of fragile ladies and the lustful lords of the sugar mills. Today we are the domestic servants of liberated women and grand dames or mulattas for export. When we talk about debunking the myth of women's place in the home,[6] the idolized muse of the poets, which women are we talking about? Black women are part of a contingent of women who are not queens of anything, who are painted as anti-muses of Brazilian society because the beauty standard for women is the white woman. When we talk about securing equal opportunities for men and women in the labor market, for what kind of women are we guaranteeing employment? We are part of a contingent of women for whom job advertisements use the phrase: "good looks required." When we say that woman is a by-product of man, that she came from Adam's rib, which woman are we talking about? We are part of a contingent of women originated in a culture that had no Adam. Originated by a violated, folklorized, and marginalized culture, treated as a primitive thing, a thing of the Devil, this is also an alienating element for our culture. (Carneiro 2008, 4)

The concept of gender did not always acknowledge the intersection of "race" and class in its own structuring (Collins 1998). And though feminisms may be plural, this blind spot is something many have in common. Feminism has been mostly white and Western. Often this has meant that people joining the movement assume the modern/colonial habitus.

Black, Indigenous, and popular feminisms have confronted the most widespread feminist idea: patriarchy. Its conceptual elaboration has almost always been done from the first world, so it is often an ethnocentric conception used to account for gender relations in all cultures. If ethnocentrism is not removed, gender and patriarchy

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become ways of subsuming and subordinating the cosmogonies of other worlds (Indigenous, Black, Roma, and so on) to the known (Western) universe.

The category of gender should be redefined, stripping dualism from it and making it more flexible and fluid. This will render it more useful for the study of worlds otherwise (*mundos otros*), already Westernized, perhaps, but in resistance. Based on her sources, Marcos suggests a concept of gender that contains these characteristics: 1) mutual openness of the categories, 2) fluidity, and 3) nonhierarchical organization between the dual poles (Marcos 1995, 21).

Interethnic Relations or Mutual Learning

The region of the Colombian Pacific[7] was once part of Colombia's national elites' project to populate in a Christian way (*cristianamente*) and thus control all the national territories (Almario and Castillo 1997), but by the end of the nineteenth century they opted to "restrict" their project spatially and culturally to the Andean Region. In addition to the internal *criollo* wars, the Western Cordillera, separating the Pacific region from the rest of the country, was a strong deterrent for mestizo settlement, a population that also despised the heat and humidity of the region.

The ancestral presence of the Afro-Colombian population in the Pacific is especially linked to maroonism, although toward the end of the eighteenth century, a good number of enslaved people were taken to the northern area (Chocó) for mining, and in some areas of the south, such as Barbacoas, work crews of enslaved people were brought in for the same purpose.

The fact is that this population, located in a region considered inhospitable and unsanitary by the rest of the country, managed to constitute a *sui generis* society that established an important link between territory and cultural identity as the basis for their ethnic identity as a people. For the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, the *Conquista* (conquest) by the Spanish and Portuguese meant an almost total wipe-out of their religions and worldviews. "The agony of the old gods and goddesses is a traumatic process that drags with it a whole vision of the world, of men, women and their interrelationships" (Marcos 2009, 11). Something similar happened with the religions and worldviews of the African peoples who were abducted to be enslaved in America.

Evangelized by force, Africans, as did Indigenous people, had a special relationship with death that was born in the holds of slave ships:

> Torn from his native country, a living sore in the cellars, the Black man has always been a corpse ever closer to his grave. For many children born in African exile, death—the agonizing mother, the chained or absent father, the cries invoking ancestors—constituted the natural habitat. The legend of the zombies, the burial gods, the protective magic, the cult of the shadow, belonged more to the rites of life than to death itself. (Zapata 1990, 67)

This is why Afro-descendants have a special relationship with death, one where women play a prominent role as *rezanderas* (prayer-sayers). Being a *rezandera* is one of the most important positions of leadership among Black communities. This is similar to what Marcos finds in Mesoamerican cultures, where women preside over rituals and transmit traditions and myths, exercising religious leadership (Marcos 2004).

In Colombia, more than anywhere else in the Americas, African cosmogony had to be disguised among Catholic religious practices; it was not possible to maintain an

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African religion as in Cuba, Haiti, or Brazil. In addition to the diverse origins of the kidnapped Africans, another reason for this absence lies in the fact that nowhere else were African religions persecuted as much as in Cartagena de Indias, seat of the Holy Inquisition's most severe tribunal. With the exception of two or three Jewish or Protestant people, the totality of those prosecuted were Black, accused of being reprobate, possessed witches, and blasphemers. Here the Babalawos were not allowed to intertwine syncretism with their orishas and the Christian saints. Santa Barbara could never personify Changó, as happened in Haitian Vodou or in Brazilian Candomblé (Marcos 2004).

The priest Pedro Claver played a very important role in the process of uprooting African religions and worldviews. He was just as willing to help them when they arrived sick from the transatlantic journey as he was to persecute them and whip them when he found them "playing drums," a signal for a celebration of some African ritual that the priest was quick to demonize. Here we find a noteworthy difference between Afro-descendants and Indigenous peoples. Black women are not in the same conditions of heritage as Indigenous women since our ancestors were kidnapped from Africa, evangelized sometimes in the very slave ports in Africa. What is more, the cultural diversity of Africans was consciously taken advantage of by merchants and slave owners to avoid rebellions by mixing people of different ethnicities who did not share the same language, making communication among them and consequently group rebellion far more difficult.

The lack of a millenary cosmogony to turn to and the repression of the religious forms that refused to perish notwithstanding, we can find elements of a cosmogony among the Black peoples of Colombia. I do not interpret these as traces of an African cosmogony but rather as reconstructions, re-elaborations made by Afro-Colombians themselves. An underworld and a world above emerge in this cosmogonic universe, where in all likelihood there was also mutual learning with Indigenous peoples. The creator god and the spirits of the ancestors are found in the world above, whereas the forces of evil and the spirits of the dead are in the underworld, underneath the earth.

Kalunga, the African divinity of fertility, is present in the mortuary rituals of San Basilio de Palenque[8] as a voice of lamentation that joins the chants of the community's funeral rituals (Machado 2007). In Palenque, Kalunga is not a divinity but an expression or word part of a funeral ritual whose meaning we no longer know.

Among Afro-American peoples, there is a correlation between divinity and health or medicine. This may be the result of an ancestral African memory as well as of the interethnic relationship. We know that contact between Afro-descendants and Indigenous peoples in Colombia, especially in the Colombian Pacific,[9] has built interethnic, symbolic, and family ties that led to the establishment of obligations and alliances. One of these is *compadrazgo*, which occurs when Blacks, who are generally intermediaries in the commercialization of products grown on customary land,[10] become godparents to the children of Indigenous people (Ulloa 1992, 126–28; Jiménez 1998, 228). The mining technology currently used by Afro-descendants, which corresponds to that used by the Indigenous people at the arrival of the Spaniards, is one of many examples of the links between Indigenous people and Blacks. The kinship system developed by Afro-descendants and known as "*tronco*" (tree trunk) is also found among the Indigenous people of the Chocó.

Exchanges in the sacred sphere have been very important, as pointed out by Jaime Arocha, as they show the extent of the union between these peoples (Arocha 1999). He

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concludes: "*Compadrazgo*, commercial exchanges, agricultural work, and botanical and medical knowledge formed the raw material of the links that united Amerindians and Afro-descendants in a coexistence of at least 250 years in the region of the Baudó mountain range in the Colombian Pacific" (quoted in Machado 2007, 15).

This is why we find not only similar elements in terms of religion and traditional holistic medicine (*curanderismo*) among these peoples, but also that healers of one or the other ethnic group are consulted, that is, Blacks can turn to Indigenous healers and Indigenous people to Black healers. Anne Marie Losonczy notes that Black healers are consulted by Indigenous people in the case of illnesses that do not arise from the intervention of the *jais* (spirits) and that are rather associated with contact with the "whites," such as influenza, smallpox, or tuberculosis. In turn, the Indigenous shamans are consulted by the Black population concerning accidents related to jungle animals or in poisoning events and especially when it comes to "curing with the devil." Just as there is mutual help there are also mutual fears. For example, the Indigenous people fear the "evil eye" that can be transmitted by Black women, and the Black population fears certain powerful spirits such as the "*madredeagua*" or water mother, sometimes represented as a naked Indigenous person who abducts, drowns, and devours the insides of Black adults and other times is represented as an evil spell made of corn, poisonous herbs, and animal remains placed in the food that Indigenous people offer to Blacks or in a projectile sent from a distance. "In any case, in one way or another, the inferred ailment necessarily provokes contact with the 'other' who holds the wisdom and the specific cure" (Losonczy 2006, 232).

Gender Relations

Religion and medicine are two fields in which Black women have excelled and where they unquestionably hold leadership positions. I mentioned earlier that Black women lead mortuary rituals with their songs as *cantaoras* as well as celebrations with the Catholic Church, yet always from the community's own standpoint or viewpoint. The women lead the birth ritual, which has several implications: preparing the mother, midwifery itself, burying the placenta and the umbilical cord, and the *ombligaje*. These rites show a very entangled relationship with nature. The placenta and the umbilical cord are buried under a special tree that represents certain qualities. Likewise, the *ombligaje* involves making an herbal plaster with a plant or animal and placing it on the newborn's recently cut navel to transfer the plant or animal properties to the baby. This could indicate a notion of *permeable corporality* in which "the exterior and the interior are not separated by the hermetic barrier of the skin" but "between the outside and the inside, there is a permanent and continuous exchange," so that "the skin is constantly traversed by flows of all kinds" (Marcos 1995). This is reaffirmed if we consider that illness and discomfort are linked to the ritual universe in which they are inscribed. We could speak of a porosity of the body in relation to the way a disease can be transmitted. Disease can be "sent" or "placed" in relative bodily proximity with the victim or by witchcraft. These diseases are inflicted from a distance by a witch of great power who has made a pact with the different manifestations of the devil or of evil.

As for medicine, women cure the evil eye, *mal aire* ("evil air"), *espanto* ("soul fright") among others, with herbs and prayers. The spoken word has great healing power among these Black communities; the appropriate prayer can cure at a distance, curing even snake bites. This kind of prayer is called a "secret." Although this type of healing is more common for men, women practice it too. The same is true for the secrets to

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"bind" a woman or a man, so that they do not leave their partners for someone else. And just as it is possible to heal from a distance with the power of words alone, the pledged word secures any commitment: "A man stands by his word." The power of words can be protective, maleficent, or restorative.

Healing plants are classified according to the concepts of hot and cold and according to the conception of the body and the disease. A cold disease will be cured with hot remedies and a hot disease with cold remedies. There are plants to cool and remove heat from the body and hot plants that serve to get rid of the cold inside. In general, cold plants release "slime" or drool, are associated with the feminine, and are considered dangerous. Hot ones are bitter, associated with the masculine, and are always benign, good to think about or good to consume.

Six "spaces for use" (*espacios de uso*) can be identified depending on the places where men and women carry out their activities: village (*pueblo*), beach, sea, mangrove, river or creek, and forest (*monte*). In some cases, they correspond to clearly identifiable ecosystems and are related to the historical settlement process of the Pacific done by the Afro-descendant population. Activities carried out in each of these spaces are differentiated by gender and age. Juana Camacho's study distinguishes complementary activities from exclusively masculine or feminine activities. Certain places are associated with feminine or masculine attributes and present restrictions for women depending on their menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and postpartum diet. "In this sense, the spaces for use can be located in a continuum that goes from the wildest or undomesticated (wild forest, out at sea), which is associated with the masculine, to the most domestic and/or domesticated (village, house)" (Camacho 1996, 23).

Interestingly, contrary to the Eurocentric Western culture that has assimilated men and women to the culture–nature dualism identifying men with culture and women with nature, the Afro-Colombians of the Pacific identify the wilderness or the undomesticated with the masculine and the domesticated, that is, what has passed through culture, with the feminine. Perhaps what we find here is not dualism but duality,[11] as defined by Marcos. Yet the "wild," the undomesticated, could also be understood as the proper masculine space given that it requires the use of physical force in tasks such as hunting, logging, and deep-sea fishing. These activities require physical strength and courage because they are carried out in dangerous places inhabited by snakes, pests, and *la Tunda*.[12] In other words, men's work requires two conditions: physical strength and courage. Women, on the other hand, perform less risky jobs in terms of dangers and with less need for physical strength, apparently. I say apparently because women partake in agricultural activities on land that was once "wild forest" (*monte bravo*) and that had to be "tamed" by the first settlers. The agricultural practice of crop-rotation to avoid land-depletion[13] requires preparing the land, an activity in which the whole family and even the entire community participates in a tradition of mutual help called *mano cambiada,* which could be translated to "exchanged hands."[14] There is a division of labor in which the men clear the land with machetes while the women section the trunks, sow seeds, gather, and care for the poultry. Although we could speak of a complementarity of tasks performed by men and women, it seems to me more of a rigidity of roles that prevents men in particular from participating in so-called feminine activities, especially in the domestic sphere. This is a complementarity without fluidity, which ends up being subordinating for women. When preparing to go to the farm, women have to get up earlier to make breakfast as well as lunch for everyone, which will need to be packed for the day's work. Upon return, while the men rest, women prepare dinner or snacks. Women

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can participate in masculine activities, although with certain restrictions, as mentioned above, according to their menstrual cycle. Perhaps the origin of this restriction was the intention to protect women. I believe this is the case for the mangrove; given that it is cold, it should not be visited by women during their menstrual cycle or when pregnant. However, there is another less understandable restriction in terms of duality: women who had "a poor night's sleep," that is, who had sexual intercourse the night before, cannot go to the mangrove or to the mine—this restriction does not exist for men. To work in the mangrove to collect *piangua*, a type of clam, is female work par excellence. In groups or alone and sometimes in the company of their children, women spend all day in the mud in knee-deep waters digging for clams, often their only income source.

In the village, the cultivation of medicinal plants is an important task that women carry out. These are grown in *azoteas*,[15] common to houses in the Pacific. Yards, gardens, and plots of land host medicinal plants, as well as food crops, plus fruit and timber tree seedlings that are later taken to the farm. This is feminine knowledge, transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition. The *azoteas* and vegetable gardens represent ancestral women's knowledge, and their preservation means a good deal of labor, not always sufficiently recognized.

To close this section, I would like to point to a practice that persists in the Pacific and in the Andean region of contemporary Peru (Marcos 2009): the trial marriage, known in this region as *congeneo*. The couple will give marriage a try, and by the end of one year they can decide to maintain their commitment or go their separate ways. This may stem from Indigenous influence, although anthropologists have made no mention of this practice among the Indigenous people of the region. It is interesting to note that despite strong evangelization during the period of the slave trade, difficulties of geographical access spared the Pacific region from the uninterrupted presence of the Catholic Church. In its absence, older members of the community stepped in to perform rituals such as the water baptism, a type of baptism performed by a community member in the absence of a priest since it is inadmissible for a child to die without this sacrament. This sporadic church presence gave the Black people of the Pacific a certain freedom to carry out particular celebrations of Catholic religious festivities and to leave aside certain sacraments such as marriage, as well as the possibility of living a more fluid eroticism.

The Role of Black Women in the Defense of Territory

Black women or women of African descent have been looked upon or constructed by the social sciences and the state as poor, vulnerable, illiterate, having too many children, generally incapable of action. It can be said that the *colonialist move* is applied with greater rigor to Black women who are often considered "oppressed by their own obstinacy and lacking initiative."[16] Therefore, it is difficult to imagine that women framed in such terms could contribute to the process of Law 70 of 1993. This law was a strategy for the defense of territories that succeeded in mobilizing a large number of social, cultural, youth and, of course, women's organizations throughout the Pacific region:

> It was us, female leaders, rallying people in the formation of this proposal. We began to lead it because we were the ones with the best community outreach back there in the river. At that time our women's organization that was born in 1980 was the only one. By 1987 and 1988 we began with the transitional (Transitory Article 55 of Law 70), later more people joined ONUIRA

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> (Organization of the Anchicayá River), it was not only women but mixed. And we began to fight for everything that had to do with our organization as a Black people. The leading role has always been played by women. (Beatriz Mosquera)[17]

Few women's names are recognized within the social movement of Black communities in Colombia. Little attention has been paid to the contribution of a large number of women, leaving the majority of them invisible, who, with much courage and even risking their lives and exile, contributed to the whole process of the construction of Law 70.[18]

> We have been threatened women and displaced from our communities, but we have to resist. There are times when in order to protect one's life one leaves, but then one returns to continue with the process. We are in it and every day we invent internal protection measures so that the processes do not die. We have to look for ways of resistance so that our rights are not lost. I have been threatened twice. We know that our colleagues have been killed and that hurts a lot, but we continue to persist with the process. (Beatriz Mosquera)

Black/Afro-Colombian women faced the pressing need to demand their land rights, alongside men, and often against the will of their husbands, partners, or spouses, even suffering physical abuse from them because of their leadership. Libia Grueso, a recognized PCN[19] activist, reminds us that the Black community moves in a permanent present that includes the legacy of slavery, which has determined gender relations between Black men and Black women in a particular and different way than among other populations. Maternity and paternity were an occupation for the reproduction of merchandise. She stresses that it is "a reality that is present in the Black men and Black women we are today; this is one of the strongest traces in the construction of the Self and of which little is said, even within the social movements" (Grueso 2007, 148).[20] However, this slavery mark, this *carimba* (branding seal) seems indelible in the male brain, which continues to think of itself in reproductive terms.

Black/Afro-Colombian women, before thinking of themselves as women, thought of themselves as a Black people, as Black communities:

> It was said that Blacks did not have the right to anything, the state did not know that there were Black organizations. We fought for Black people to have the right and recognition, especially to participate in the territory. These were called "vacant" lands, but there was actually a Black population, that is what we fought for, so that the rights of Black people would be seen. We attained a space that makes us feel we have the right to participate in any part of life, and because it is in a law, the government cannot take away the right of Black people to participate. Law 70 is a tool to encourage Black people to claim their right. (Natividad Urrutia)

As mothers these women are aware of the household's needs, which they see as being undermined by all the development projects and programs. This leads them to affirm that "as mothers we realize what the needs of a household are, that is why as women we get involved, to make things get better. You can't fix anything without battling" (Natividad Urrutia).

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"The disregard of their basic needs, effected through alienation of rights and environmental degradation" (Shiva 2004, 138) mobilizes these women just as it mobilized the women of Chipko, who tied themselves to the trees of the Himalayas to prevent their felling, since these trees meant food security for their families.

Although at that moment they did not demand specific rights as women, the experience of patriarchy in their communities and organizations led them not so much to a discourse on the defense of women's rights, but rather to practices that forced men to take them into account, listen to them, and respect them, based on the weighty leadership roles they had been taking.

Rosana Cuama Caicedo, better known as Mama Cuama, from the Raposo River, took the initiative to write a letter to the Process of Black Communities in Buenaventura a few days after seeing that heavy machinery had arrived at the river for gold mining. She says:

> a few days after the backhoe loader, . . . the *paisas*[21] got into the river to grab their gold. They were going up and down the river minding their own business, until one day I told the people who would say, "if I had anywhere to go, I would leave this river because here we don't have enough to eat or to bathe." I told them one day at church: you guys get upset because the river is dirty, but we do have some tools . . . if we write a letter, those people will leave the river. And they kept silent. I also stayed put, until December came, and I thought to myself, my God, could it be true that we don't have the power to get these people out of here. So, I said, I don't know how to write well but I'm going to write a letter. I spent two days writing it and I sent it to the process (PCN). They xeroxed and distributed it. A cousin told me: "don't put your life on sale," and that they (the backhoe loader people) were asking where Mama Cuama lived. As they passed by me, I looked back at them and they didn't say a word to me. (Mama Cuama)

Thanks to Mama Cuama's effort, the backhoe loader was forced to leave the river, protecting the community's food and drinking water sources. Mama Cuama has been vice-president of her river's Community Council and has also led women's organizations. She states:

> The government was testing us with the constitution. We participated in Law 70 because that was the tool to ensure [the protection of our land and water]. Some men got involved but most of us were women. We held meetings with the community, we told the community that we had to organize, get prepared so that when people came to the river to take our land, we would not let them take it, because the land is our mother. That is why we told them we had to stand with the people in Buenaventura, and they would come here. (Mama Cuama)

Women's organizations also joined the cause of Law 70. Without losing their specificity as women's groups, they gave way to what they considered the greater cause. Mirna Rosa Rodríguez, one of the leaders of FUNDEMUJER, created in 1985 from study circles around the issue of gender in Buenaventura, tells us:

> We participated in the activities for the Transitory Article 55 and Law 70, particularly contributing to the development of proposals. We met in the evenings

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> where each and every one of us made contributions from their own backgrounds, later our *compañeros* articulated them in the documents sent to Bogota. Our *compañeros* did not see that the particularity of gender was important, sometimes there were discussions, they said that it would divide the process even more, and we also saw the need for recognition of all things Afro and Black in a broader sense. It was discussed in informal spaces but not in formal spaces. It was raised as something globalized, without the specificity. The fact that we existed as a women's organization sparked interest, both positive and negative. That is an ideological event, at least we were there with our presence, even though we did not participate as women in the proposal of Law 70. We demanded the recognition of rights as Black communities in the constitution. The momentum only allowed for general discussions. Black communities were acknowledged with levels of participation and decision making in politics, that was key, we worked as women but did not disregard that. (Rosa Rodríguez)

> Now women are the most important part of the Community Council. Although previously there were feminine and masculine organizations, feminine organizations were meant to cook for the workshops. Now the women have taken over the organization and they are the ones who lead and are always involved in the organization's board. (Susana Ortiz)

It is important to recognize that Black women have always had a "natural" leadership role in their communities as midwives, traditional midwives (*comadronas*), *cantadoras*, and traditional doctors. Since the times of enslavement, they have exercised a *marronage of cultural resistance* in the masters' homes that even enabled them to gain certain control over their masters by virtue of their knowledge of herbs and spiritual matters (Grueso 2007), for which they were labeled witches, trailed, and killed by the Inquisition.

Examples of this *insurgence of knowledges* (*saberes*) of enslaved and maroon Black women are many. It is important to mention the way in which territorialities were constructed, linking knowledge and tasks or trades according to gender. Land use by women was coupled to the knowledges (*saberes*) associated with health, upbringing, and socialization, whereas those related to hunting, gathering, and sea and mountain management were left to men (Grueso 2007).

The knowledges (*saberes*) of Black women that have enabled place-making and a sense of ownership in their lands are linked to the practices that Libia Grueso calls *well-being from one's own perspective*, which are about meeting human needs "from the use and management of the environment for the development of knowledges about natural resources and their uses" (Grueso 2007, 154). Traditional cooking and medicine are part of this. Women develop agricultural practices in the natural surroundings, cultivating various medicinal and culinary species on *azoteas* and patios near the houses. Black women are vital for the defense of food self-sufficiency.

This life project embodied by Black women of the Colombian Pacific is seriously threatened by a project of death expressed in the intensification of the extractive model that has characterized the economic history of the region, as well as the monoculture of illicit crops such as coca and licit crops such as oil palm. All armed actors are now present in Colombia's Pacific region and compete over territory. The region has been integrated into the national geography of war throughout the last ten years, though paramilitary action since the 1960s has imposed and expanded palm plantations in

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Tumaco (Nariño-Southern Pacific).[22] Today, forced displacement of entire communities is a constant: they lose their territory and their ethnic identity to the state, which treats them individually, not offering effective solutions to their dire situation.

Women continue to be by far the most affected, not only because they are the largest percentage of the forcibly displaced population, but also because violence against women in the region has become more severe over the years. Black women have become the spoils of war for all armed groups. Ninety-five percent of the mortal victims in the Pacific are Black and under twenty-eight years of age, according to the PCN database. A large number of these deaths are feminicides and disappearances of women: unfortunately, the data available is not disaggregated by sex. Often, the women are mutilated and thrown into the estuaries, accused of being informants. When that is not the case, they are physically and psychologically abused or subjected to various acts of sexual violence.[23]

In spite of being subjected to this regime of terror and horror, Black communities in the Colombian Pacific take diverse actions of resistance to remain on their territory. Women's organizations cling to their ancestral knowledges (*saberes*) to sustain life—endangered by the predatory civilizing project. In some places, women are the only ones with the strength to rise up to protest, mobilize, and speak out. All these struggles and sufferings form the foundations from which Black women are building what could be called an *other* feminism, one that stands with Black people's struggles yet is well aware that the possibility of decolonizing being Black must challenge gender relations configured in the process of slavery as much as in the processes of resistance and marronage.

> I participated as a woman who wanted women to be empowered in the defense of that territory and at the same time to know that they also have rights as women, because the more women know their rights, the stronger they are to demand that they be fulfilled and also to defend their families. (Mónica Granados)

> We women defend programs with a gender perspective focused on women, in everything that has to be planned there, the gender variable should be contemplated so that it has the effect we need it to have. They should be aware that women are not only reproducers, that we have equal rights to a fair salary, to generate employment . . . we don't want to be seen only as the lady who is ready to cook, or in the board of directors only hold office as treasurers or secretaries and not legal representatives or higher positions. That is why we are always in this struggle. (Beatriz Mosquera)

An *Other* Feminism

From our palenquera and maroon ancestry, we Black/Afro-Colombian women have been creating an *other feminism* that questions universalist claims of Eurocentric and Andean-centric feminism, transforming and enriching it.

I do not suggest that categories such as *gender* or *patriarchy* be abandoned altogether in research on Black/Afro-Colombian women, but rather that they be defined from local circumstances and particular contexts to avoid confirming what we all know already: that these women are oppressed by patriarchal structures. Feminism has been among the first to challenge science's positivism; yet feminist researchers risk falling into that same trap when they fail to revise their initial theoretical framework—structured

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by feminist theory, regardless of where it may come from—based on the results of the research process. This revision and adaptation path would make it possible to enrich feminism with new categories, ones that emerge from local experiences and from the acknowledgment of the multiple power structures that act upon Black, Indigenous, peasant, popular, and nonheterosexual women.

Black women, members of Black communities or ethnic groups, cannot generate a feminism that leaves out the struggles to vindicate their collective rights. It is in the context of these struggles that their feminism is expressed and strengthened. For these women, their rights as such are inextricably linked to the defense of territory and nature as the possibilities for the reproduction of life and of the community. Linked to the defense of traditions generated in resistance to the hegemonic culture, it is less about negating than it is about recognizing that tradition must be reinterpreted in light of each specific subject. We need more studies that go beyond the ethnocentrism of the categories used to analyze the reality of Black/Afro-Colombian women, that listen to the voices that express themselves in their own terms, that enable a true understanding of the religion and culture of Afro-Colombians, a people of oral tradition, but on their own terms. We need more studies that account for the way gender relations have been constructed to discern if categories like duality, fluidity, balance, and corporality are pertinent or if, on the contrary, others are more appropriate for understanding the relationship between gender and worldview in this culture, something I consider more probable. Likewise, the ways in which Afro-Colombian peoples resisted evangelization and recreated Christian discourse needs to be interrogated. This is merely an approach using categories that Marcos found in her work with Mesoamerican Indigenous peoples (Marcos 1995; 2009). Our categories are, in all likelihood, different ones. The idea would be to find elements within Black oral culture of the Pacific that foster not only understanding their ideas and practices, but that these idea and practices serve, beyond the critique of Western culture, to formulate alternatives to the ideals of modernity within which it is impossible to transform the living conditions of Black women particularly.

In this article I have related the concept of gender, often employed as a dual, universalist category with hegemonic pretensions, to the lived reality of Black women of the Colombian Pacific with the intent to find avenues for breaking out of that dualism. This is only an outline of the issues I tackle in my dissertation. The task is to contribute to a decolonization of feminism by shedding light on the diversity of contexts, realities, and cultures that make women a plural and not a homogeneous subject.

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank the people who made it possible for the silenced voices of Afro-Colombian Black women to resonate in the first world, especially the editorial team and my rigorous translator.

Notes

1 This article was first published as: Betty Ruth Lozano. 2010. El feminismo no puede ser uno porque las mujeres somos diversas. Aportes a un feminismo negro decolonial desde la experiencia de las mujeres negras del Pacífico colombiano. *Revista la Manzana de la Discordia* (5)2: 7–24.

2 The terms *Black*, *Afro-Colombian*, *Palenquera* or *Palenquero*, and *Raizal* are ethnonyms recognized by the state and used by the Black peoples of Colombia to self-identify. Palenqueros and Palenqueras are the inhabitants of the Palenque de San Basilio, close to Cartagena. The Raizal are the Black population living in the San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina archipelago.

3 "Coloniality, that is, the devaluation of human life through the constant colonization of knowledge and of being" (Mignolo 2007, 203).

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4 "There is no modernity without coloniality and vice versa, modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin. The one is unthinkable without the other. Let's say, for now, that Europe was able to produce human sciences as a unique, valid, universal, and objective model (although not in a causal but in an interdependent relation) to produce knowledge, while discarding all epistemologies of the periphery all at the same time" (Pachón 2007, 13).

5 From 1500 to 2000 the colonial matrix of power—the patriarchal as well as the racist control of wisdoms and hierarchies—emerges; it is the four-headed monster: first, the economy, that is, capitalism; second, authority; third, subjectivity (gender and sexuality); and fourth, knowledge (Walter Mignolo, lecture notes, August 3, 2009).

6 The expression in Spanish is *la reina del hogar,* which literally translates to the queen of the home.

7 The Pacific Region, also known as the Biogeographic Chocó, is a corridor of approximately 1,300 km in length and an area of 109,060 square km, which corresponds to 10% of the national territory. It is one of the rainiest areas of the planet, with precipitation ranging between 5,000 and 12,000 cubic milliliters per year. It is covered by humid forests, and to date 55% of the territory has been maintained in a relative state of conservation, making it the second most biodiverse region of the planet.

8 Founded between 1650 and 1700 by African maroon warriors and their descendants, the Palenque de San Basilio, located on the Atlantic coast, like all palenques, emerged as a bastion of resistance to slavery and, as such, was a closed environment with its own cultural, sociopolitical, and military structure (Friedemann and Arocha 1986, 147–66). African maroon female warriors also founded Palenque.

9 Because of difficulty accessing the area, the historical settlement of the Colombian Pacific coast with African populations to work in the mines began only in the eighteenth century. The area was inhabited by Embera, Noanamane, and Cuna Indigenous peoples. Since the seventeenth century, Black slaves sought ways to escape from the mines to form palenques and spread throughout the Pacific from the north on the border with Panama to the south on the border with Ecuador. Blacks settled in the middle and lower parts of the rivers along the coast while the Indigenous people occupied the headwaters of the rivers in the highlands.

10 *Resguardo* is the term for the land assigned to Indigenous peoples by Spain since colonial times for the purpose of protecting the Indigenous labor force. Indigenous people have made it a bastion of the struggle for their cultural preservation.

11 "Duality is fluid, nonhierarchical, and in permanent movement to achieve a fluid equilibrium. It is not dualism. Two opposites in permanent flux toward each other. It is not nature 'out there'; I am also the environment. I am me but I am also the other person. That explains collectivity. 'We, ourselves, are nature.' Commander Esther" Class notes, Sylvia Marcos, August 24, 2010.

12 La Tunda is a kind of female entity in the Pacific coast mythology who lives in the jungle and seduces men by concealing from them the way back to their village.

13 "Previously, they could have up to thirty years of rest, but with population growth and the sale of land, the pressure on agricultural land has increased and the resting period has been reduced" (Camacho 1996, 16).

14 The *mano cambiada* is a form of cooperative work or labor exchange, like a *minga*, that is also practiced among Black communities. It involves people going to lend a day's work (or however many) to a farm, and later the owners of that farm will in turn reciprocate at the neighbor's farm.

15 The *azotea* is a raised vegetable garden that is made on old boats or on planks on which banana leaves and soil are placed, supported by cones to keep ants and other crawling pests out.

16 According to Chandra Mohanty, ethnocentric feminism qualifies third-world women as passive victims of patriarchal and sexist domination structures. The qualifications or rather disqualifications that place urban feminist women in a better position or status than Black, Indigenous, and peasant women are also found at the regional or national level. What is questioned is the reductionism that operates through the homogenization of the studied subject (Suárez 2008).

17 The quotations from women here correspond to interviews I conducted in 2008 on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of Law 70. This is the first time I have used them in an article.

18 Women such as Rosana Cuama (Mamá Cuama) from the Raposo River, Natividad Urrutia and Beatriz Mosquera from the Anchicayá River, Bibiana Peñaranda from San Bernardo del Viento, Mercedes Segura from Tumaco, Blanca Pinzón, Marta Cuero, Mirna Rosa Rodríguez, María Mónica Granados, María Elcina Valencia, Libia Grueso, Leyla Andrea Arroyo, Olivia Balanta and Sister Ayda Orobio from Buenaventura, Susana Ortiz from the Cajambre river, Mercedes Moya from Quibdó, exiled in Switzerland, Yolanda Salcedo from Cali, among many others.

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19 Proceso de Comunidades Negras, Black Communities' Process is a national organization based in Buenaventura, Valle.

20 Libia Grueso received the 2004 Goldman Environmental Prize for her role in the protection of the natural resources of the Colombian Pacific.

21 In the Pacific, *Paisa* is the name given to any outsider.

22 For more on these events, see Escobar and Pedrosa 1996.

23 "Women and Violence in Buenaventura." Statement by Buenaventura's women organizations, March 2010.

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