Chola Contravisual Contemporary Peruvian feminist narratives of re-existence and liminality

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List of Acronyms

CHCC	Chola Contravisual collective
CG	Coloniality of Gender
DF	Decolonial Feminism
DT	Decolonial Theory
ES	Epistemologies of the South
INGO	International non-govermental organisation
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
NGO	Non-govermental organization
PD	Post-development
PF	Peruvian feminism
PWM	Peruvian women's movement
RP	Research paper

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Abstract

This Research Paper has two main purposes: firstly, to locate *Chola Contravisual* feminist collective in the context of feminism in Peru and secondly, to explore the contemporary Peruvian feminist narratives from *Chola Contravisual* autonomous collective thoroughly. The paper is epistemologically and methodologically informed by approaches derived from theories of the margins: decolonial theory and decolonial feminist approaches, these theories are based in modern-colonial spiral logics. Within these logics, modernity understands the world from a Western epistemology, ontology and axiology; creating binaries and neglecting other ways of knowing, thinking or doing; and, coloniality is a logic of erasure and rejection of those other worlds and knowledges that do not belong to a modern conception of the world and human beings. Initially, these theories are combined with feminist autoethnographic approaches, while the author is attentive to the impossibility of objective social scientific research or strong objectivity (Harding 2005). Moreover, to navigate *Chola Contravisual* narratives, this research made use of sensing-thinking practices (Leyva 2018a), storytelling (Motta 2016) and it finally created an 'otherwise' methodological approach attentive to the author's positionality and the other practices-knowledges learnt in collaborative work with the collective's members, as well as in the exploration of their audiovisual work. Similarly, six online encounters were held with Peruvian feminists belonging to different streams: NGOs, advocacy and public policy, academia and other contemporary feminist collectives; for the purpose of setting the context relaying on primary and secondary data. Two main findings emerged from this research: firstly, the contemporary plurality of Peruvian feminisms existing in Peru discloses a response to counter a modern-colonial Peruvian state that keeps maintaining social hierarchies and marginalisation (inherited from colonial times) over Peruvians, especially women and sexualised bodies; secondly, *Chola Contravisual* transgresses the coloniality of gender (intricated oppressions related with gender, sexuality, race and class) by enfleshing feminist 'otherwise narratives' of re-existence and liminality. Re-existence means the possibility to engage with art in order to defy subaltern subjectivities and modern-colonial binaries that locates their existences as inferior and the possibility of social transformation (Alban 2009). Meanwhile, liminality refers to the way the collective's members located themselves beyond the confines of the modern understanding of the being, the body and the sexuality in binary terms, they treasure their ancestrality and reject to become modern selves nor to be considered the non-beings of modernity (Anzaldúa 2009, Motta 2018a); they inhabit an 'in-betweenness' identity that is disclosed in their audio-visual work and cultural projects. This identity is the starting point for a decolonial project, and the other knowledge-practices interweaved throughout this research.

Relevance to Development Studies

This RP adds to the literature that aims to de-center western feminist approaches that focus on racialised women and attempted to represent them or to sudy them as exotic topics. In so doing, this RP investigates Chola Contravisual, a Peruvian based feminist collective that is particularly attentive to the plurality of woman and sexual dissidents (racialized and sexualized bodies that do not fit in the sexual binaries). Furthermore, I consider that this analysis is relevant to feminist critical theories, specifically to the critiques of hegemonic feminism, because the narratives of the collective are mostly focusing on women as political bodies subjected to oppression and working against a model of 'center/periphery sisterhood' in

which women of color are always in the periphery (Mohanty 1984; Alexander and Mohanty 1997 in Viveros 2016:864). The RP focus on Chola Contravisual proposal for new forms of existence with happiness and dignity; as a countering of the project of modern-coloniality that is continuously trying to maintain them in anonymity. Similarly, this paper contributes to ongoing decolonial feminist projects and studies. Finally, I consider that this RP constitutes an ethical and political effort to open a door for new spaces of reflection (and hopefully action) that might be challenging the modernity-coloniality order and the binaries (in terms of race, class, gender and sexual orientation) that maintain woman and other sexualised bodies oppressed (Vásquez, 2014); thinking towards a new world, as Zapatistas envisage it, in which all worlds are possible (Esteva, 2019).

Keywords

Liminality, re-existence, resistance, coloniality of gender, colonial wound, healing, decolonial feminism, otherwise narratives, other knowledge-practices, decolonial aesthesis, decolonial methodologies, decolonial research.

Chapter 1
Transitions in the academic journey of designing a research paper

1.1 Introduction: Transiting my research journey

The decision of this research paper topic occurred while the mass media and the political agenda in Peru were focused in the COVID-19 Pandemic and its preventive measures, measures that could not prevent a drastic fall in the Peruvian economy, reaching the largest rate of death per capita worldwide(Quigley 2020), an increasing demand for a reformulation of the retirement fund system and many more concerns. While I was in the Netherlands, going through an isolation time that allowed me to go to the supermarket and to exercise in open spaces, my compatriots' civil rights were suspended. The curtailment of the civil rights of all Peruvians, and specifically women and sexual dissidents, due to a never-ending Emergency Alert (in the entire country) was not even announced in the media. Certainly, this public opinion's silence could be taken as a result of years of structural passivity and indolence towards the plurality of people living in Peru; in addition to neoliberal measures that increased drastically in the 90s and the following decades. However, I wondered if this was just the result of mistakes made in democratic years? Or, were democratic institutions perpetuating colonial patterns of oppression over certain Peruvians? Honestly, I would have not been able to question these structures before coming to study this master. However, Post-development and the Epistemologies of the South helped me to recognise otherwise developments based in epistemologies and ontologies that I will try to address in this paper.

Post-development (Escobar 1995, 2007, 2012) is a framework that postulates that development is a Western discursive field. Escobar (1995) provided multiple examples to show how development was an invention to control the Global South, meaning the countries that are not considered 'developed'; and, in order to counter it, he proposes the idea of accepting multiple worlds and multiple ways of development within the world, which Escobar calls 'pluriverse'. It helped me to realise that Western epistemology was not the universal but the hegemonic one. Consequently, PD is considered a transitional discourse (Escobar 2012). Later on, I engaged with De Sousa Santos (2014) and the idea of Epistemologies of the South (ES). ES helps the researcher to acknowledge that there are certain knowledges and ontologies that have been silenced for longer time. Personally, it boosted my interest in my country's historical past and present for looking thoroughly into those other knowledge-practices, commonly neglected or erased by colonization. This decision banished my research interest in possible topics related with public and private organisation; and I consciously tried to find a topic more related with my own living experience as racialised woman.

In this research, I did not intend to be just an observant but a participant in the topics I was aiming to address. Just like they do when *Chola Contravisual* collective's members create a new video: I wanted to create from the embodied experience and engaged it with theory. It was certainly not an easy path, as Chávez & Vásquez (2017, p.39) argue "when invested in decolonial ways of walking and doing, we are constantly held accountable to ourselves, our communities, and our collaborators in ways that demand us to be shifting, moving, and pushing the boundaries of what we hold truest and dearest". This endeavour was truly embodied in the chapter 2.

My next question was which theory should I use now to engage with other knowledges, for answering that I wondered: where and who are those that are aware of these issues and what are they doing? I encountered in Mohanty and Spivak critiques of White feminism that

helped me to reflect on the epistemic violence that as writer I was trying to avoid. Furthermore, informed by Quijano, Mignolo, Maldonado-Torres, Lander and Dussel theorisation, I found in decolonial theory (DT) an approach that helped me to think outside of the Western gaze. In many ways; DT resonated with my living story and my country's past; especially because this theory is generated from the oppressed subjectivity. And, it even challenged my professional background. The project of modernity-coloniality is the starting point to understand this theory; this spiral project understands modernity as a set of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies that are predominant and normalised within the world. Within modernity, there are existing fixed gender binaries, predominant races, languages, etc. Consequently, those who are not part of the accepted categories are oppressed. Meanwhile, coloniality erases other knowledges and creates a colonial wound that silences the subjected others. I will further develop this explanation in chapter 3. Similarly, I engaged with decolonial feminism due to its attention on those other mestizo women and non-conforming bodies that are genderised, racialised and neglected within the Western epistemologies and ontologies; as I will also elucidate carefully in chapter 3.

Although, Peru is a nation with 200 years of independence, it has not been successful yet in creating a fairer and equal country for all its citizens. Therefore, there is a need to disentangle the liberal democracy in which concepts of modernity and coloniality perpetuate the oppression over certain people and the erasure of certain knowledge-practices. As part of chapter 4, I use Brenny Mendoza and other anticolonial and decolonial feminist authors to deepen this analysis. Similarly, Peruvian feminist and women's movements have achieved some victories in terms of gender equality, policy wise; however, women are more plural and multicultural than they have been mainstreamed. Similarly, in the academic literature, I could not find any information about the contemporary feminist narratives of young collectives, as I will describe in chapter 4.

Nevertheless; social collectives, feminist NGOs, autonomous feminist collectives and LGBTQI+ collectives have been bringing to the public attention (mostly by social media) the increase in the violence suffered by women and sexual dissidents during the enforced quarantine to fight the Coronavirus pandemic. While navigating on Facebook in March; there was one that captured my attention within these feminist collectives resisting the structural violence and the daily oppressions due to race, class, sex, and gender. They were *Chola Contravisual* feminist collective and the first video I watched was Tunanteras.

In chapter 5, I will explore the collective subjectivities of *Chola Contravisual*, a feminist collective of filmmakers, artists and other professionals. Similarly, I explore how they are contesting the 'coloniality of gender' embedded in the hegemonic feminist discourses portrayed in the media and concealed by the State (Chola Contravisual, 2020a). Coloniality of gender understands gender -just like race- as an invention imported during the colonial times and it is used to oppress the colonised ones, even after emancipation (Lugones 2008). In the same chapter, I also explore how they are creating media content, artistic and cultural events in an attempt to defy discourses that constantly legitimize the erasure of the plurality of Peruvian women's voices, bodies and identities (Vásquez 2014; Távara, 2019) and in order to trespass a capitalist order using the ideas embodying political practices of alterity of Dussel (2008 in Mendoza 2014).

Finally, in chapter 6, I will describe the main lessons blossoming from the engagement with Chola Contravisual.

1.2 What is *Chola Contravisual*?

Chola Contravisual (CHCC) on its website defines itself as

"a collective of young feminists who mutually seek to achieve dignified, free and happy lives for women and dissidents of sexual and gender norms. Our core work is audio-visual creation, free training and cultural events production. We are located in Huancayo, in the centre of Peru, where we have our cultural house: La Munay" (Chola Contravisual 2020a).

Currently they are five members, four of them are living in the cultural house "La Munay", where they used to perform artistic and cultural events. However, it remains closed currently due to the pandemic. Nowadays, they are still working on audio-visual short films, new musical projects and, last August, they finished a feminist online school.

Every project is printed by their feminist narratives that this RP attempts to disentangle. I engaged in conversations with four of them. The four members I talked to were professionals working as audio-visual professionals, artists, musicians and, one of them was a social worker; and, only one of them was originally from Lima. The first one I met was Geraldine (lately, I ended up calling her Gera) or Gerita (G.) as their *compañeras* (comrades) called them; later on, I met Milita (M.), Renzite (R.) and Lourdes (L.). Gera works as the general coordinator since they are legally formalised, and they needed a legal representative. Nevertheless, they reject hierarchies and they were clear about it since the very first encounter, that is why I did not only meet her. They have been economically autonomous and most of their activities, videos and documentaries were self-funded. According to its website (Chola Contravisual 2020b), they only have two organisations as sponsors: FRIDA (The young feminist fund) and Mama Cash, a Dutch organisation that supports feminist activism (Mama Cash, 2020). My intention was not to delve into the logistics of the collective but into its narratives. However, in the process of working with them I could understand better how they embodied their feminist lives.

Similarly, on CHCC films, I could observe that there were alternative narratives out there, in Huancayo. They were rejecting the Peruvian centralism of the mainstream organisations and the Peruvian institutions located in Lima. After feeling so engaged with their work, I thought that I could start a research journey throughout possibly new knowledge-practices.

1.3 From woman to wxmen: a radical gendered approach to research

In this process, I trespassed my comfortable position of an 'objective' middle class mestiza Psychologist studying 'development' in Holland and I chose to embrace a research journey embracing new collective practices, in spite of the online interactions. How exactly I could go beyond it? I knew this journey could be a risk; but was I ready to shift? To push my boundaries forward and go beyond my personal ways of understanding research?

At the beginning of this research journey and motivated by my initial interests in women's oppression and gender-based violence, I designed research question related with this personal interest. I was aiming to answer to the question on how *Chola Contravisual* understood being a woman, feminism and the role of art. However, as I will describe in the methodological section (chapter 2), ambiguity was part of every stage in this journey. Ambiguity understood as the attitude that emerges in interactions with different ontologies or epistemologies; or, as Lugones (1987) argues when a mestiza travels and engages with other worlds with a playful attitude and, this ambiguity becomes not a threat but a lesson. Later I

discovered that the real aim of this research was to interweave 'otherwise narratives', or what it is conceived by Leyva (2018a) as 'other knowledges-practices'. More than possible answers to preliminary research questions, my findings have blossomed as the result of my own encounter with the collective.

I would say they especially helped me to reflect on new notions of gender, sexuality and bodies. For that reason, from now on, I will use 'womxn' as a replacement of 'women', as an exercise for the readers and for myself, of continuous inclusion of all women regardless her sexual orientation or being considered as sexual dissidents. Even though my objectives changed in the process, I finally focused on disentangling the narratives they had about womxn, feminism, the Peruvian democratic state and, the ways in which they were challenging them. More precisely, it was important for me to understand:

- Which are the otherwise narratives and practices of *Chola Contravisual* in the context of Peruvian Feminism and the Peruvian democratic state?

In order to answer it, I formulated the following subquestions:

- what transitions in the understanding of womxn and feminism were being enacted by Chola Contravisual narratives and practices and to what extent these transitions dismantle the modern gender and sexual binaries?
- how do they operate and disseminate these 'otherwise narratives'?
- what is the role of art in it?
- to what extent, Chola Contravisual represents an alternative towards a social transformation of the Peruvian state?

This project brings along with the logic of modernity-coloniality, the understanding of a patriarchal capitalist system. Patriarchy is understood as a system and culture that 'attacks women and Mother Earth' (Leyva 2018a: 47) and, that focuses on supremacy of men over women. Capitalism is not just an economic approach, it exerts a relation of subjugation towards all the subaltern citizens of the world, those who do not belong to a dominant class (Motta 2018b: 6); and, it is closely associated with colonialism (Mendoza 2014) as well as the ideologies of individualism. Hopefully, after reading this paper, the reader will be able to understand part of the contemporary narratives they embody, how they locate themselves within the Peruvian feminist narratives and, how their narratives are challenging the modern-colonial project.

Chapter 2
Accepting ambiguity: methodological approaches from the margins

I acknowledge how problematic it could be to fall into the trap of representing this collective without recognising my own privileges (Mohanty, 1984; Spivak, 1987 in Viveros, 2016) and, also the context in which we (they) are embedded. Consequently, this chapter describes thoroughly the methods and methodologies. In order to explicate it, I chose to start with my positionality. Since this research has challenged the limits of my positionality -as a conflicted MA student of development studies moved by the current marginalisation, discrimination and violence faced by me and other women in Peru (due to their race, class, gender and sexual orientation)- in an attempt to engage with alternative feminist responses and to work against it (bell hooks 2014).

2.1 Online methods in times of COVID-19

Inspired by Sara Motta, I chose to engage with research taking into account my political and epistemological stand, a stand that is aware that academy tends to engage with disembodied epistemologies that deny other knowledges and, more importantly for this RP, other genders, classes and races (Motta 2018).

I used secondary data to explore the Peruvian historical context and to complement the context of feminist and women's movements. However, it was not enough. I made two types of online encounters through the Zoom platform. The first ones were online encounters with Peruvian feminists and were mostly focused on the exploration of women's and feminist movements. In order to answer the question about how CHCC locates its narratives within the Peruvian feminism. For the online encounters, I designed a semi structured interview; however, I was open to listen anything they would say. The first feminist I contacted was an academic acquaintance of a cherished professor of Political Science that I have in Lima, Peru. After this first contact, the following 5 online encounters were contacts that each of them suggested me. (for more information, see Appendix 1)

The second type of online encounters was in agreement with CHCC. We engaged in 5 encounters, I met only 4 of members of the collective that currently inhabit the cultural house "La Munay", in Huancayo. The other one was currently living in Ayacucho, another Andean city. It was harder for me to design a methodology that included certain rules and an imposed agenda, beforehand. Especially, because I had recently started a relationship with them. Fortunately, my suggested method was changed into a more collective and reciprocal work. Looking backwards, I think it was a first lesson about accepting 'uncertainty', in other words, the "openness to surprise"(Lugones 1987:15). Besides the five online encounters with the participants of *Chola Contravisual,* I attended some of the sessions of their online Feminist School: *Tipanakuy* that they organised during July and August since they invited me. This school was made in collaboration with other feminist collectives and activists from different Peruvian regions, CHCC offered 12 free online sessions to any womxn or sexual dissident which was interested in learning about feminism. Their topics started by opening space for new alternatives feminists, rejecting centralism; they also addressed theoretic and more

practical topics: antiracism, how to avoid fundamentalism, ancestrality, how to do audio-visual feminist work, etc. With a vivid participation of plural womxn and sexual dissidents.

For analysing the information, I used ATLAS TI. In that programme, I uploaded the videos of 5 online encounters with the 6 Peruvian feminists (one encounter was not recorded), and the 5 online encounters with the members of CHCC. All the encounters were manually transcribed within ATLAS TI, platform which helped me in the organisation and open coding of the topics, that I contrasted constantly with my journal diaries (that I wrote after every encounter) and the theories that informed my paper.

The selection of the narratives unveiled in this RP was a decision informed by two criteria: topics more mentioned during the online encounters with CHCC and topics that the participants and the author were comfortable in sharing. Taking into account sensing-thinking approach and avoiding any risk of epistemic violence, that I will explain in the next section.

I made use of first person writing. I have asked questions in an attempt of practicing a sensing-thinking and engage my readers in an open conversation. This paper was informed by an "autoethnographic approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011: 273). However, I am trying to go beyond essentialist understandings of "cultural aspects" by engaging with political, economic and social experiences, for that reason, I used strong reflexivity (Harding 2005). The main reason for me to use this approach is because I became a subject participant in the process since we did a reciprocal work: I engaged in a lifetime memory and they provided me with the information and memories about themselves for both the memory and the paper.

2.2 Methodologies from the margins

As you will notice throughout the paper, I have tried to be constantly reflective about my positionality (Harding 2005) and the importance of situated knowledges (Harraway 1988) as a way to complement and avoid essentialization. In order to avoid the representation of this group of womxn by only observing their artwork, I have tried to think and feel with them in every conversation. Furthermore, in this RP, I denied the idea of pure and objective knowledge and validity since these ideas lay under certain epistemologies and values that I have tried to refuse (Tuck & Yang 2018) and trespass; especially when they erase other knowledges. Furthermore, I acknowledge that every thinking is partial and situated, including my own (Haraway 1988); therefore, I am aiming to develop new ways of understanding the world putting together feminist and decolonial perspectives that explore the collective narratives of *Chola Contravisual*.

These following words are an extract of the journal diaries that I started to write at the beginning of my RP process. They serve to describe the transitions that I faced when confronted with the feminist collective and how they challenged my positionality and methodology. This day helped me to print a more collaborative approach to research, that I will further discuss in this section.

Figure 1.1 Let's weave a memoria

"Let's weave a Memoria"

The first meeting I had with Chola Contravisual to talk about the possibility of a collective project was at 3.00 p.m. (Peruvian time); in the Netherlands, it was around 10.00 p.m. Consequently, I had the whole day to feel 'ready', I decided to read Lorde's speech about how the master's tools can't dismantle the master house, to be inspired before our meeting and drafted a possible methodology inspired by decolonial research practices and participatory action research; where I set 5 workshops exploring the topics of my research questions and through artistic visual works, fanzines and explorative games we would be able to navigate their narratives.

We spoke by Zoom and I was so happy to finally have the chance to meet 'in person' (online, but in person) a new member: Milita, besides Gera (the general coordinator). Both of them spoke to me gently, with much care and respect for my work, but also assert-ing that la colectiva (the collective) rejected the violence of western institutions such as the State or academia. However, while I told them my life story, my genuine interest in their collective feminist experiences, the switch in my professional interests due to my encounter with critical and decolonial feminism and, my personal stories of oppression, I could feel that they started to see me, not just as an academic but, as a another racialised woman walking into her own healing path; I could slightly start feeling a sense of sisterhood. This switch is related with Esteva's description in O'Donovan's interview (2015) of de-professionalization as way to reclaim our beings beyond our professions, by paying attention to the way we have been embedded in the idea of becoming a professional, an expert person that disables the others, within the confines of a consumerist capitalist society.

I told them that I planned to do five online workshops with them as part of my research methodology and theoretical framework, since my idea was to engage with their way of understanding feminism and how they were operating and delivering their messages. I shared my concern about avoiding unequal power relations that sometimes research inter-views bring along. Similarly, I offered my time for any online activity that they would need my support was useful, as a reciprocal exchange of time and will. They were attentively lis-tening to me and, they were muting their microphones in certain moments (apparently to discuss what I was saying); suddenly, they suggested me: 'let's weave a Memoria', which would entail constant contact with them and to understand their dynamics in order to write for and with them. I was not sure about how I would do it. They were offering me to be with them, I was not sure about what to say so I was honest and spoke from my modern-colonial subjectivity telling them that I had not done that before.

They replied: "it's fine, we will make it work". Later on, they would explain to me the importance of having this document for their future plans as a collective. I was surprised due to the new offer, disappointed due to the change in my original plans, worried about how I was going to find the opportunity to talk and share as I expected, but also happy for this new offer. I was also afraid of doing something for the first time; however, their confidence and my willingness to enflesh a 'fem-inist solidarity' spoken by bell hooks, as well as the 'ayni' (Andean principle of reciprocity that implies reciprocal work and mutual care for the other) and that they mention in their website made me realise that my decolonial practice and research was just starting. At that very moment, certain transitions in my subjectivities were starting too and I was keen to be aware of them: 'learning from their practices' (not only from theories), 'believing in the power of my inner self' (to create a collective Memory) and 'the effects of the collective work'.

not in the pursuit of centring myself in this journey, but in the same way as Sandra Harding

(2005) introduced the term 'strong objectivity', as a way to critique and reject the objectivist aim that oblige scientific researcher to be detached from the research problem. As you could see in the short story, I just shared.

Similarly, this journal entry helped me to practice 'strong reflexivity', a term referred to the effort that, as social scientists and researchers, we are expected to practice along the research journey, in order to prevent us from falling into objectivist epistemologies that tend to separate the subject from the object of study (Harding 2005). For example, when I tried to impose a method of how the encounters were going to happen instead of allowing myself to flow with the practices that they were proposing, I could feel how I was reproducing hierarchies that I meant to avoid. Because in the end, this paper was about their ontologies and epistemologies, not mine. Likewise, when I was afraid to work on their lifetime memory due to my hesitations about the validity of the method.

I realised that similar mechanisms happen for traditions, knowledges or languages to be forgotten in order to become 'developed' or to enter into the colonial-modernity logics. Are these symptoms of my 'modern self'? When I refer to modern-self I refer to a self embedded in logics of modernity. Is this representative of the loss of my capacity to listen and to relate with (Motta 2018b:26-27) and my incapacity to fully understand their practices without subjecting them to the position of the other (Lugones 1987)? Every time it happened, I remained in silence, a silence that is not a sign of absence or submission; a silence that is paralysing my writing and doing, purely as a sign of awareness of what I want to unlearn and taking a moment for reconsidering the methods (Mack & Na'puti 2019); a silence of survival (Motta 2018b: 28-29). And I started again. It is in this ongoing transition -continuous doing and undoing- that I place my Research Paper journey.

2.2.1 My conscious positionality during the encounters[1] (Collantes, 2020)

Since I was a child, I observed certain moments of silence in my grandmothers' and mother's interaction with their husbands. I used to read them as submissiveness. Retrospectively, I wonder if it was instead a survival strategy to counter the suffocation, they were experiencing due to reproduced patriarchal dynamics in which they played the role of the feminised and racialised non-being (Motta 2018b: 23). Perhaps these silences of my beloved female ancestors were the infrapolitics of resistance -a political response to resist domination among non-beings- (Lugones 2000). Patriarchal dynamics are understood as dynamics embedded in patriarchy, a system of domination that institutionalised sexism (hooks, 2014). Motta (2018b) calls non-being to a subject that is prevented to free speech due to the patriarchal coloniality. Intrigued by my memories and by my personal experiences of not feeling adequate in certain spaces, I aspire for my research paper to be a political statement against the colonial patriarchy that oppresses us (women of color/racialized and feminized beings); that suffocated my female ancestors; and, that (re)produced our 'enforced silences' (Motta 2018b: 25). Perhaps, a silence legitimized by a colonial patriarchal capitalist project (Lugones 2010, in Motta 2018b), where our forbidden otherness are expected to become 'domesticated others' (by going to school, learning imported languages or becoming educated in western epistemologies) which lead to the fulfilment of a modern project, the project of development. If we do

[1] This section is an adaptation of the section 1.1 of the essay: "My transitions in the academic journey of designing a research paper and my encounters with Chola Contravisual", written in June 2020 for the Transitions in Social Justice course.

not accomplish that fate, we are condemned to be simply a non-being (Motta 2018a), where our knowledges about the Earth or the stars and our ancestral practices are only accepted due to their exoticization. (Collantes 2020:1).

I am a Global South and cisgender feminist middle-class Peruvian mestiza struggling to fit in the dominant social order of the academy. Tuck and Yang (2014, p.10) define the academy as "a community of practice that is focused upon the propagation and promulgation of (settler colonial) knowledge" which remains problematic and triggers a refusal in the conscious/responsible researcher. For that reason, I chose my own conflicted positionality as the starting point of my paper, in order to stablish a commonality with the collective and to avoid reproducing the same modern-colonial logics. I also come from parents that were internal migrants living in the capital of Peru and they worked hard to achieve a middle-class status. I am part of the first or second generation going to the university, speaking English and Spanish, and, currently the only one living in Europe.

It is hard to academically describe my own identity in this world; it is a constant feeling of being lost and placed, scared and fearless, marginalized and privileged, silent and willing to scream that sometimes even becomes a cry. Considering that colonial wounds are signs of oppression and inferiority, inherited from colonial times (Fanon 1967 in Ureña 2019a). Is this conflicted positionality a sign of my wound, the colonial wound that needs to heal? I choose to believe that it is.

When I read Lugones (1987), I put words to what I also experienced in the latest months, during the encounters with the Peruvian feminists and CHCC. Since she presents herself as a 'worlds traveller' throughout her different worlds: the academy, her world as daughter of another mestiza or the worlds she encountered engaged with other communities that she worked with. In my online/offline 'travels' to Peru, The Netherlands, ISS, my RP, I felt myself as a multiplicity of selves too and, I certainly enjoyed it (Lugones 1987).

2.2.2 Collaborative strategies towards a decolonial methodology

As postcolonialist writers have accurately indicated, research can become "a conversation of us with us about them" (Grande 2004; Kelley 1997; Marker 2006 in Cahill & Torre 2007), this approach is clearly observed when policymakers come up with 'perfect' solutions for remote populations but that are normally disconnected to their daily life and reality, looking at them as passive receptors; as a non-visible result of that, "raced, gendered and classed hierarchies" are reproduced (Cahill & Torre 2007: 196). For that reason, my encounters with the collective were guided by participatory approaches and the constant reminding of *knowing with* and sometimes even from the participants (Barboza Da Costa et al 2015:.261). My intention is to show how their narratives and practices constitute alternatives to resist the oppression in a non-academic way.

This RP meant to work adopting collaborative strategies in opposition to mainstream approaches. Among social scientists, there were 3 mainstream methodological assumptions almost unquestioned (Leyva 2018b: 452-454). Firstly, within the social sciences there is an irrefutable neocolonial past which has been criticized by communities and academicist; it is simple to observe. Secondly, there is an evident academic arrogance in the belief that scientific knowledge is superior to other ontologies that come from the social actors. Thirdly, the politics of knowledge production, when the knowledge turns into a commodity that is demanded by the academy and it loses its possibility to contribute to the real transformation of oppressive or marginalized life conditions.

In the seventies, the participatory action research of Fals Borda and the liberation theology of Paulo Freire proposals focussed the research in the subject participants; and, both

were aiming to transform their oppressive environments (Leyva 2018b). Informed by these approaches, Leyva (2018b) describes *Co-labor* as method towards a decolonial methodology; since it is a collaborative approach that challenges the colonial supremacy embedded in social sciences.

For *Co-labor*, the researcher needs to become aware of her positionality: gender, culture and political stand for the research to take place (Hale 2008). When this conscious positionality is aligned with the participants in the research, the *co-labor* works well. Leyva (2018b) describes how a decolonizing process needs to start from the objective's definition and the set of an agenda in benefit of both parties. Which is exactly what we did with CHCC members before starting the encounters.

In the *co-labor* experience, it is also important to pay attention to the existing tensions and to create the space to speak about it (Hale 2008). I must admit that the tensions were not reflected with CHCC, especially because the last sessions happened only with one of the members. I tried to counter this lack of reflection by writing and reflecting about my research journal entries. In some parts of this RP, I became a storyteller. I aimed to be conscious of the hierarchies and power relations that academic research entails and reject them. The creation of a *Memoria* for CHCC was also an attempt to practice knowing/doing/feeling with others, as Leyva (2018a) describes. Likewise, I was looking forward to start exiting my modern-self, and instead to attempt nurturing and learning 'other knowledges practices' (43).

As I have mentioned, from the beginning of this RP, my aim is to decentre dialogues that maintain hegemonic epistemological assumptions in which the academic privilege endows the researcher with the power to know about others. Consequently, the *co-labor* I attempted to practice was a way to consciously refuse the individualism embedded in the practice of research (Tuck and Yang 2014).

2.2.4 Sensing-thinking (*Sentipensar*) as a decolonial practice

Informed by non-hegemonic methodological approaches, I planned to engage with other knowledge-practices of sensing-thinking (Leyva 2018a, Walsh 2014) that allow me to be with others rejecting hierarchies, with the purpose of avoiding the logics of erasure that surround us when certain methodologies are in place (Tuck and Yang 2014).

I found out how Walsh in her encounters with *Abya Yala* communities described *Sentir-Pensar* (Sensing-Thinking) as a technique that she uses to counter the hegemony of the academic writing, which tends to be objective and to separate the rationality from the feelings. Her perspective is not only rooted in the academic work but in the struggles to counter the modern-colonial power. Decolonial thinking is based in the critical relationality with the past; this critical relation is erased in the modern thinking and, by doing that, they delegitimize any other non-western ancestral knowledge (Vásquez 2014). Similarly, Lopez Intzín (2018) , when speaking about sentipensar speaks about the possibility of speaking coming from a mixture of two worlds 'the Western academic' and the'tseltal' (other world, in this case maya) that allows us to recognize and learn otherwise knowledges coming from different epistemologies, without erasing the ones we already had. It implies to place the action of knowing in the heart: 'thinking from the heart' and in collective(183).

Similarly, Walsh (2014) affirms that only by being close to collective struggles, it is possible to theorize and to practice 'sensing-thinking'. Something that I certainly did in my encounters with *Chola Contravisual* collective; but also, when writing about it.

2.3 Summary

The methods deployed were a conscious effort to be reflective on my situated knowledge, sensing-thinking during the whole process, writing in my journal diaries and, when necessary, contrasting my findings with my interlocutors. Since the first encounters, I found constant support in CHCC- solidarity and trust; this encouraged my inner self to be playful, enjoy the process and forget logics of competitiveness. I certainly aimed to continue discovering new knowledges-practices in my journey with them.

The methodologies were aligned with the theoretical background and they have tried to frame a decolonial endeavour. It started from my conscious positionality in an effort to practice strong reflexivity and strong objectivity. Likewise, it was also influenced by each encounter with CHCC. I tried to be aware of the relational genderised and racialised body that I am, and, I was continuously trying to find my inner voice (Anzaldua 1987). Two more important considerations were: engaging in a collaborative and reciprocal project 'with' the participants and, to practice sensing-thinking throughout the process.

Chapter 3
Theories from the margins

This chapter attempts to summarise the theoretical approaches that have informed my research journey. I start by explaining my rejection of a purely psychological study due to its lack of sensitivity towards alternative epistemologies and ontologies. Later on, I make use of decolonial theory, decolonial feminism and, the understanding of arts as re-existence as approaches that helped me to explore and understand some of the *Chola Contravisual* otherwise narratives.

3.1 Challenging the social sciences and mental health humanities

Before describing the theoretical and methodological approach that I used for understanding *Chola Contravisual* subjectivites and contributions to feminism, I would like to share a personal dilemma that I faced.

As social scientist, I could have decided to use a classic psychological approach and reproduce methodologies learnt in my undergraduate studies. However, I decided not to follow it after reflecting on the neglections and erasures that this path could generate. As organisation psychologist, it was common to use standards in order to determine normality. However, those standards are not innocent since they serve strategically to a model of human being that responds to a certain state and economic model (Gomez 2014).

For a psychologist, a subject is constructed as an object of study and its narratives exist in certain context (normal and accepted). Likewise, it is possible to homogenise them to a certain extent (Gomez 2014). In consequence, 'other' subjects (that do not fit an expected context) and their narratives are simply considered abnormal.

As a response to this effect, not only in Psychology but in the social sciences in general, Grimson et. al (2014 in Gomez 2014) describe the need for radical contextualism which is standpoint that takes seriously the postures of social resisting movements with the aim of understanding their claims and struggles, defying preliminary assumptions constructed by depoliticised social studies.

I wondered if practicing this radical contextualism would be enough. Which theories could help me to go beyond it? Which theories could help me to understand experiences from the margins like the ones I was going through with CHCC? Decolonial theory (DT) challenges ('undisciplines') hegemonic epistemologies and it avoids the methods that pursue a formal-logic embedded in the universalisation and the normalisation of certain subjects and the 'subtle' neglection of others (Gomez 2014).

Certainly, DT is a political and intellectual effort (Gomez 2014) that goes beyond a unique or individual way of being and, it is connected with sensing-thinking practices that are collectively achieved. With this in mind, I started preparing the online encounters with *Chola Contravisual* collective.

3.2 Beyond radical contextualism, theories from the margins

Taking into account the context described in the former section; I decided to go beyond mainstream epistemologies and ontologies . My aim was understanding in its full complexity

the narratives that counter Peruvian womxn's and sexual dissidents' oppression. In this section, I delve into decolonial approaches as well as critical and decolonial feminism and explore art as a tool for *re-existencia* (re-existence).

3.2.1 Decolonial theory in Latin America, a response from the marginal 'others' against the modern-colonial world order

Decolonial theory (DT), as briefly introduced in chapter 1, is "a compelling framework that has articulated a complex lexicon, proposing that eurocentrism is the knowledge form of the modern/colonial world system since 1492" (Escobar 2015: 458).

The modern-colonial world system is based in two theoretical concepts: modernity and coloniality. To comprehend both concepts is important to remind that "A relation of direct, political, social and cultural domination was established by the Europeans over the all conquered of continents. This domination is known as a specific Eurocentered colonialism" (Quijano 2007:168). The first beneficiaries of this violent process were the European ruling classes and, later on, the Euro-North American descendants, meanwhile the exploited ones were located in Latin America and Africa. With the emancipation of the colonies, Eurocentric colonialism muted to Western Imperialism; and, the latter is understood as a close relationship between the West and the ruling classes in each emancipated country that happens to maintain unequal and oppressive relations of power; relations that were inherited in the subjectivities of the colonised ones (Quijano 2007, Maldonado-Torres 2018). Therefore, decolonial theory proposes that the effects of colonization did not end with the emancipation of the colonies; furthermore, they still last until the contemporary times through a complex system of dominant epistemologies and ontologies originated in Europe and that neglect other knowledges and practices (Quijano 2007, Escobar 2015, Mendoza 2016).

Modernity is a set of discourses and practices in movement accepted as valid and universal paradigms (Quijano 2007, Maldonado-Torres 2018) and, it "constitutes a dominant civilizational project that claimed universality for itself at the moment of its violent en-counter with 'the Other' and the subsequent concealment of this violence" (Icaza 2017: 27). Therefore, "cultural Europeanisation was transformed into an aspiration" (Quijano 2007:169). Consequently, in Western development discourses and practices, modernity becomes the main goal of any developing country (Quijano 2007). However, Quijano (2007:177) disentangled its close relation with colonial powers which distorted the 'liberating promises of modernity'.

On the other hand, coloniality refers to all forms of intersubjective relationships of domination and subordination existing within the context of a capitalist world and, specifically, taking into account race (Quijano 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2018), it is unavoidable for the discourse and practices of modernity (Maldonado-Torres 2018: 570). Coloniality symbolises erasure (Icaza 2017). It obscures and rele-gates to the past 'other knowledges' that exist in the exteriority of hegemonic discourses of modernity. Coloniality exerts control over the subjectivities of the colonized ones, even after their emancipation, by erasing their ancestral memories and creating colonial wounds (Mignolo 2007, Vásquez 2014, Maldonado-Torres 2018). Colonial wound is understood by Fanon (1967 in Ureña 2019) as a sign of suffering and pain created in the racialised beings and minds due to the presence of systems of domination and marginalisation (coloniality); he asserts that "only by working to heal the wounds of coloniality (…) true revolution can take place"(Ureña 2019b:249). And, with revolution is possible to trespass the confines of coloniality (Ureña 2019b)

Just to be clear, the idea of modernity/coloniality is not a dichotomy between the modern and traditional knowledge or a modern self and a traditional self; it goes further than that.

It is more like a never-ending spiral, it changes with the pass of time and, it is indefectibly affected by the socio-historical-political context (Quijano 2007, Maldonado-Torres 2018).

Furthermore, according to Quijano & Ennis (2000), coloniality refers to two main central assumptions used to dominate America: the identification of the superiority of one race (White Europeans) over the colonised ones and, the control over labour and other resources informed by capital and worldwide markets. Unfailingly, coloniality remains closely connected to capitalism (Maldonado-Torres 2018). Focused on the idea of racial hierarchy as a tool for domination, exploitation and conflicting relationalities, Quijano (1992 in Maldonado Torres, 2018) understands coloniality as coloniality of power. This means that new modern identities were created according to the race. 'Whiteness as the ideal human being' becomes a dominant subjectivity that emerged in colonial times (Quijano 2007, Quijano 1992 in Maldonado Torres 2018). Within modernity and coloniality spiral founded in the category of race, four existing forms of control and domination are in conflict: gender and sexuality, work, collective authority and subjectivity/intersubjectivity (Quijano 2001-2002:1 in Lugones 2008:78).

The last affirmation is problematic since it assumes a heteropatriarchal modern-colonial-capitalist world order (Lugones 2008). Although, Quijano accepts the influence of capitalism and eurocentrism in gender, it is unable to truly understand the ways in which women of color were subjected and power was stripped from them (Lugones 2008). In the next section, I go deeper in Lugones' analysis of the domination over the colonised due to gender.

3.2.2 Feminism from the margins

coloniality of gender

While I was looking for theories that could give shape to the analysis of the encounters with CHCC, my first idea was to use a theory that somehow intersects race, class, gender and sexuality. I use the verb 'intersect' informed by the understanding of intersectionality as an analytic strategy that links 'the material, the discursive and the structural' (Mendoza 2016: 106) within the colonial condition. A theory that could question critically the hegemonic feminism that this *colectiva* does not recognize as familiar to them. In that journey, I found the concept of coloniality of gender (CG), a term studied by María Lugones (2008). Lugones (2008) identified an epistemological blindness in the coloniality of power; since in Latin America, she affirms that gender is a category of oppression -equally important as race- constructed by the conquerors. In this regard, Mendoza's (2016) studies showed sexist practices that did not happen in Latin America before 1492, such as 'witches hunting'. Based in Horswell's and Allen's studies about gender and sexuality in precolonial cultures; Lugones argues that the knowledge production after colonisation is genderised and, heterosexuality was constructed in a capitalist modern-colonial world. Although gender was discursively reduced to the private sphere, gender was a functional ideology in the modern-colonial system; therefore, it was key to problematise the reduction of gender and sexuality to a biologic dimorphism (Lugones 2008: 93).

During colonialism, gender placed racialised women in a dehumanizing position; however, it remains until nowadays. Lugones (2008:99) describe two sides in the understanding of the modern-colonial system of gender: a visible (or light) and an invisible (or dark). The visible side characterised white women as fragile and sexually passive. In opposition to the dark side, where colonised women seen as tough and sexually aggressive, therefore they were subjects of sexual assaults and easier subjects of exploitation.

CG impacts in the understanding of laws, human rights and democracy, especially in Latin America (Mendoza 2014). For example, when human rights were recognised, they only benefited white western men (later on white women) that were in the top of the hierarchical social-economic and political pyramid constructed in Europe (Mendoza 2014). It also created a hierarchical and modern-colonial gendered ruling system that it is known as capitalism and liberal democracy, where the gender social pact impacts the racialised labour (Mendoza 2014). Therefore, looking at CG, it is important to visibilise new political subjects: racialised women (women of color), with legal, civil and individual rights as well as the right to decide about their own bodies (Mendoza 2014).

decolonial feminism: the liminal selves and the infrapolitics of resistance

Based in women of color critiques of feminist universalism and modern-colonial system of gender, Lugones (2010) proposes that decolonial feminism (DF) goes beyond hegemonic feminism and "exceeds the categories of modernity" (2010: 742). DF invites us "to practice thinking/ being/doing/sensing that exceeds the dominant discourses about women, gender, sexuality and the body" (Icaza & Vásquez 2016:63).

While the potentiality of the decolonial perspective was addressed by many feminists specifically in Latin America, Mendoza (2014, 2016) has also challenged the theoretical production because of its content, geographical purchase (mostly from *latinas* living in US) and mestizo feminist epistemic postures that are written partially or completely in English. Although Lugones, Anzaldua, Moraga, Alarcón and others declare themselves as decolonial feminists; for *latinas* that do not speak English, these theories could still be missing a part of the real embodiment of a womxn living the Latin American experience in her own locality (Mendoza 2014, 2016).

Being conscious of this critique, I do not feel that it makes justice to the work and positionality of decolonial feminists. Because, on one hand, we, '*latinas*' share a common racialised identity. On the other hand, we speak from *our* sensing-thinking facing the modern-colonial system of gender.

The entanglements between modernity and our identities (what we inherited from our *ancestras*[2] and the modern-self we are supposed to be) are addressed by Gloria Anzaldúa and her notion of 'pensamiento fronterizo' (the liminal thinking). In fact, my current positionality as author of this RP is falling in this 'in between' as a racialised and sexualised cisgender body interacting from The Netherlands with CHCC a collective that is also placed in an 'in between'.

Anzaldua (1987) describes this liminal space as a place of 'in between', in which new knowledges emerge. She also argues that this position allows a decolonial revaluation that comes from below, from the '*atravesados*': a term in Spanish that brings forward incoherency and non-binary existences. The *atravesados* are the resistant non-beings in the hegemonic world, they find in the reframing of their fractured existences a source of endless power and knowledge about themselves as well as the world surrounding them (Anzaldúa1987 in Ureña 2019). In this spiral of modernity-coloniality, outside there is something called exteriority. For the 'liminal subjects' as CHCC (like Anzaldua calls them), exteriority is their place of enunciation, where they recognise the erasures of their bodies or festivities, and, they intertwin their ancestrality with their present beings (raised in modernity) but, at the same time, politically resisting the erasures. Mignolo (2000 in Mendoza 2016) conceives the knowing of the colonized as the origin for the decolonial epistemology of the border thinking. This way

[2] Spanish word to refer to female ancestors.

of thinking transcends the binaries and dichotomies that oppressed 'the others', meaning those who do not comply with the hegemonic standards of knowing and being.

Is it possible to convey this border thinking to the oppressors? They cannot elaborate on this thinking but are they able to understand it? In the methodological chapter, I introduced the term infrapolitics, to speak about the oppressed infradiscourses. In light of the liminal thinking and "the *atravesados*", I would like to bring up Lugones' (2000) understanding of the infrapolitical. Firstly, Lugones (2000) begins the explanation evoking the meaning of infrapolitics designated by Scott (1990 in Lugones 2000) as a low-profile resistant expression in the public sphere, in front of the oppressor but, where the resisting non-being dare not speak on its own name due to the existing power relations, probably using sarcastic jokes, gestures or any other camouflaged code. Secondly, Lugones (2000) includes Kelley (1994 in Lugones 2000), because of its distinction of the organised and unorganised resistance, where the unorganised is outside or even critical of the public rebels and in spite of the institutions. Inspired by this author, Lugones (2000) speaks about infrapolitics of resistance, when the subordinate discourse emerges in spaces controlled by the oppressors, when it is not disguised but, it requires taking sides and the oppressors needs to travel politically and conceptually outside of what makes subjection possible. These infrapolitics allow the oppressor to see and understand the subaltern's resistance to oppression. In this RP, I presume that CHCC artwork could be understood as infrapolitics of resistance since the messages they promote in their documentaries and social media are just ways in which they channel their transgressive understandings of feminism, sexuality and their identities, when the interlocutor decodifies this messages is able to see more clearly their marginalisation and expectations. This approach will help me to understand CHCC narratives of resistance and its decided separation of the Academy and State as modern institutions that constantly oppress and marginalise racialised womxn and sexual dissidents.

Similarly, I would like to recall one of the last interviews given by Lugones (2020), since she opens up a possibility for feminists to act together, where resistance should not be understood as opposition but as weaving, with anything we have in hand. In these exercises of practicing with others, we find our *yo comunal* (communal self). This idea entails an intellectual, emotional and physical transition; an ambiguity; a thinking without words, without identities. As CHCC it entails a living in a togetherness, body with body, hand with hand, for a continuous knitting of the communal self; when *estar* (to 'be' with others) is better than *ser* (to 'be' a given identity). With this sensing-thinking in communal self, CHCC attempts to defy modern oppressive discourses (Lugones 2020).

the danger of epistemic violence and womxn misrepresentation

In my first encounter with CHCC, they emphasize 'the conscious distance' they have es-tablished from the academy and the feminists that write about other cultures whether they belong to them or not. Therefore, it was also important for me to engage with feminist critical theories, also considered coming from the margins. In that sense, I selected the critiques of Mohanty and Spivak to locate my research far from the possibility of a violent encounter with other knowledges and to avoid misrepresentation. Gayantri Spivak, post-colonial feminist, coined the term "epistemic violence" as constitutive for western knowledge production (Mendoza 2016).

Epistemic violence raised my awareness about the danger that hegemonic knowledges could cause in the encounter with other knowledges. Spivak (1985, 1988 in Mendo-za, 2016) affirms that every time that a "third world woman" was represented as a subal-tern woman in the academic discourse, existing hierarchies of the West over the Non-West were

perpetuated. Furthermore, she affirms that "the subaltern woman could never be known in her own terms" (p.109) by other than themselves.

In the same line, Mohanty (1984) made a profound critique of the hegemonic western feminist discourse due to the structural domination they exerted over non-western women, western (white) feminists tended to homogenize the idea of 'third world women'. Mohanty (1991:.56 in Mendoza 2016: 109) criticized the binary: first world/third world women, due to the poor representation of third world women which was seen as ignorant, uneducated, etc. Mohanty (1984) uncovers the relations of power present in the practice of Western feminism and how first world feminist studies and practices minimised the complexities present among women's identities. After studying several hegemonic dis-courses and practices in feminism, Mohanty (1984) realises that there was an arbitrary rela-tion created between the idea of 'a woman' as a cultural and ideological concept produced in hegemonic discourses and representations and, 'women' as real subjects, materials, with different life stories and neglected by ignored premises of privilege and ethnocentrism.

Thus, I consider important to be reflective on these theoretical assumptions, since I aim to uncover the narratives of Chola Contravisual, a feminist collective that confronts feminism from a non-western posture, which could be somehow far from what I have seen or experienced before.

3.2.3 Art as a form of resistance or re-existence to the hegemonic power and decolonial aesthesis

During colonialism, the colonized was categorised as 'the other', non-capable of representing him/herself. Because of that, the colonizers assumed the role of representing them and that subjective representation was assumed passively (within the logics of modernity-coloniality)by the colonized (Alban, 2016). This was considered as the 'coloniality of our existence'.

For Soto (2014) art is another tool that serves to control subjectivity and imagination, historically, used by the dominant classes for maintaining the dynamics of oppression and exclusion. Albán (2016) expands the former definition and he endows it with a possibility to act against it, considering it as a system to interpret, represent, comprehend, imagine, symbolize, and ultimately, problematize the reality. Nowadays, in the symbolic space, arts -portrayed by the media or social media- are being used by the ruling systems (in Peru, a neoliberal capitalist system) to deliver alienating messages that maintain the social hierarchies and passive attitudes of conformism among the public opinion (Soto, 2014). A good example is the historical use of visual production for political propaganda.

Nonetheless, art/visual representation has also been used as a political silencer. In Peru, for example, under contexts of social repression after the last intern armed conflict, art was re-signified as 'pure' with no political traces -conveniently for the dominant classes-. However, that basic conception of art was denied by theorists as Perez Carleson (2009 in Soto, 2014), he affirms that to engage with art, without engaging with a political purpose , is to engage with the maintenance of an oppressive economic model, condemning art to the irrelevance. Furthermore, to create art in a hegemonic way maintains unidirectionality, and, the consumption patterns that avoid creativity (Albán, 2016) maintaining the alienation of the marginalized groups.

In order to counter the hegemonic powers, Albán (2016) refers to art as a pedagogy that serves as counternarrative of the modern educational system that contributes to create

modern subjectivities embedded in narratives of stability and correctness (rejecting the not normative) and, by doing so, it perpetuates the 'coloniality of our existences'. Art could also be used to emancipate the 'underrepresented' from the so called "modern emancipation" that it is still oppressive towards the 'non-occidental subjectivities' (Albán, 2016).

Mignolo refers to decolonial aesthesis when speaking about art as a possibly healing practice that serves to unlearn and decolonize the mind, a pedagogy that help us to reflect about the purpose of the human beings from the practice (doing); since, every time a creative process goes on, it requires to go deeply inside our inner being (in an interview with Gaztambide-Fernández 2014)

3.3 Summary

This chapter reflected on the theories that came from the margins. I started with a brief explanation of my decision of writing an RP with a less psychological and more political approach. I made use of decolonial theory, decolonial feminism and, the understanding of arts as re-existence as approaches from the margins that helped me to explore and understand the *Chola Contravisual's* otherwise narratives. I started by DT because it helped me to frame my epistemological stand. I reflected on the dichotomy-modernity coloniality as spiral logics of oppression and erasure. DF and CG emerged to understand the intricated oppressions that CHCC audio-visual works is trying to overcome. Within DF, I navigated to understand the subjectivities of the liminal beings (non-beings) or "the *atravesados*", since they helped me to locate CHCC and my own positionality. Finally, I focused on arts as re-existence and as a tool to liberate the non-being of coloniality. And, I argue that infrapolitics of resistance connect CHCC narratives with re-existence and social transformation.

Chapter 4
Peruvian erasures and the response from Peruvian Feminism

In this chapter, I set the socio-historical context where *Chola Contravisual* exists. Concretely, I have pointed out to specific events in the history of Peru that helped me to develop the arguments and connect it with decolonial theory and decolonial feminism. Firstly, I briefly share some precolonial studies in order to observe the colonial erasures, informed by Lugones' coloniality of gender. Secondly, I describe the birth of the democracy and brief events of the last 30 years of democracy in an attempt to define to what extent, contemporary Peruvian democratic institutions perpetuate oppressions over certain groups of people due to race, gender, sexuality and class (Mendoza 2014, Jacqui Alexander 1994). In the second part of this chapter, I will focus in the genealogy of women and feminist movements in Peru in order to locate CHCC feminism within the larger context.

4.1 Peru, two centuries of 'a' nation-state with almost five hundred years of erasures

Let's remember that coloniality recalls the 'erasure', specifically, the erasure of the historical past of the cultures that were not considered 'modern'. In Peru, descendants from Incas and other pre-colonial cultures were not accepted as 'modern' unless they rejected their past and get adjusted to the 'modern' an imported language and a new ruling system. Similarly, the notion of 'the Other' creates "social relations founded in the category of race" and it "produces new historical social identities in America", this is also known as the effects of the coloniality of power, coined by Quijano (2000: 534).In this context, colonial wounds appear as invisible confusions and inextricable sufferings for the subaltern others (Motta 2018a).

In a pluricultural country as Peru, the notions of dominance and 'the other' were crucial and they meant the erasure of several alternative knowledges and practices that were not considered normative (Palermo 2014). Furthermore, Peruvian erasures were not only related with race, they also happened in terms of gender, sexualities (Lugones 2008) and knowledges (Maldonado-Torres 2018). For instance, in a study about pre-colonial times practices in the Andean regions of Latin America (like Peru), Horswell (2006) reveals the so called 'third gender' among the Quechua and Aymara cultures. This affirmation is based in the *tinkuy*, "a practice that affirms social relations and was (and is) expressed ritually and symbolically in both Quechua and Aymara cultures" (2006:38). This practice shows along a figure of an *ipa* or *orua* (a man that wears female attachments), which is a word that refers to a person that mediated between the feminine and masculine pre-hispanic cultural worlds. Nevertheless, in the colonial chronics were depicted as sodomites or sexual transgressors (Horswell 2006). This argument of sodomy becomes a powerful discourse that was used by the Catholic Church (and the colonizers) to maintain the hierarchies among the new society that they were enforcing (Horswell 2006 in De los Reyes 2007).

Horswell's (2006) studies bring to the table many arguments about gender and sexuality beyond binaries that were certainly erased (or condemned to exoticisation) even before the Peruvian State became a democracy. His arguments set the perfect preamble for Lugones (2008) understanding of gender as a construction that came with colonisation and

perpetuated due to coloniality takes importance when analysing the development of the Peruvian state and institutions.

Officially, democracy in Peru exists since 1821. The Peruvian nation-state was created after a long process of emancipation (Luna Victoria, 1988). The birth of the Peruvian State as democracy was marked by a lack of a politic class in charge of leading the transition between an ex-colony into an independent state; because of that, the power laid in the hands of the upper classes of white mestizos[3] coming from the military and from countries that were part of the emancipatory wars (Aikman 1997, Luna Victoria, 1988). They were considered subjects with 'the capacity' to be in charge of the new independent nation, due to their education and adjustment to modern institutions following the European modern-colonial requirements for developing a nation-state (Luna Victoria 1988). The constant change of constitutions revealed the difficulty for reaching a consensus on the type of state that Peruvians were aiming to have (Aikman 1997), in 1860 the longest Political Constitution was approved and it described the Peruvian State as liberal, inspired in European constitutions and turning a blind eye to the indigenous population living in Peru (Luna Victoria, 1988).

Mendoza (2006) inscribes a very interesting comparison between the Christian Church in the role of colonisation and the role of democracy in perpetuating certain colonial values after emancipation of postcolonial states. When Peru was founded as a democracy, there was no intention of restoring the rights of the indigenous communities (original citizens of the lands). Paradoxically, in the name of democratic and liberal values, white mestizo aristocracy founded the Peruvian state under undemocratic foundations (Mendoza 2006).

Throughout the next 200 years, there were constant tensions between the indigenous communities, the peasantry and the working classes on one hand, and, the ruling classes, on the other. Until the recent present, we can observe how the social conflicts are still a present tension(Agency EFE 2019, Barnaby 2019, Cervantes 2019, Melendez & León 2010). Especially when it involves lower classes, ethnic minorities interests, or indigenous communities normally related with (un)intended omissions made by the Peruvian state. These structural oppressions take place as a result of power relations, in which race, gender, class, and ethnicity were important to define the possibilities of being considered a normative being (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2007; Lander, 2004; Maldonado-Torres 2018). These oppressions were inherited from the colonial times and perpetuated after the emancipatory process, it is key to be reflective about it in light of a collective that speaks up from Andean and Quechua identities.

Only in the seventies, there was an attempt of the State to change the structural oppression. When, the military president in charge, General Velasco challenged the power relations that maintained the dominance in the elites(Aikman 1997). Although it sounds contradictory, the authoritarian and nationalist regime of General Velasco imposed reforms towards the decentralization of the education and agriculture; for the first time in Peru, indigenous communities were recognised and its participation in education was a first step towards an intercultural 'integration' (Aikman 1997). Years later, in the eighties, those reforms were stopped by the upraising of new 'democratic' governments that maintained the centralization of the economic and political power in Lima (the capital, mostly habited by mestizo middle class Peruvians) and re-imposed the Spanish as the unique official language (Aikman 1997). With the return to liberal democratic measures, an internal conflict was born, with armed groups attacking civilians, private and public institutions. On the other hand, the power in the Peruvian social movements and trade unions was severely weakened (Lust 2019).

[3] Aikman (1997) defines the Peruvian Oligarchy as 'mestizo' however, I indicated white/mestizo because of my personal encounters with them, they are mainly white (although, they could be mestizo since their ancestral past could be mixed).

In 1984, there was an attempt of challenging gender inequality, due to the approval of the inclusion of gender equality as a norm in the Civil Code (Boesten 2006). However, this inclusion was never reflected in light of the racialized and sexualized bodies existing in Peru (Moromisato 2004; Gómez 2004) and neglected since the colonial times. Furthermore, Boelsten (2012) insists that the political agenda that promoted gender equality with the underlying idea of heteronormative family was harmful and it maintained the marginalization of certain bodies. Peruvian nation-state developing perhaps is another case of what Jacqui Alexander (1994) defines as a postcolonial nation-state founded in patriarchal and heterosexual logics that serve to legitimize oppressions. In her explanation of how the project of a postcolonial nation-state exists, she studies the legislation and how the creation of official documents in foreign languages and imported government systems -non-existing before colonialism- become the new way of ruling people's lives. In the case of Peru, for instance, the several Constitutions and Civil Codes were entirely inspired in the French Revolution and other European legislative documents (Luna Victoria, 1988).

In the nineties, it is important to remember that in the name of defeating the internal armed conflict, the authoritarian president of Peru Alberto Fujimori violated several human rights and severely sanctioned any social mobilisations, due to its 'possible' relation with terrorist groups (Lust 2019). This president was critical for the neoliberalisation of the Peruvian market since he imposed the elimination of price control for basic products, a reform of the public services prices for future privatizations, liberal trades and, the beginning of a new and long-lasting relation with international financial organisations (Lust 2019:59). Due to the radical measures, poverty rates increased from 6 to 11 million of inhabitants in one day (Burt 2011: 81 in Lust, 2019: 59). In March 1991, more economic reforms started, one of them severely affected the indigenous communities since their lands could be bought and held as private property; likewise, labour stability was eliminated (Lust 2019:60). The measures taken by Fujimori reaffirmed the inequalities and oppressions over a large group of Peruvians that were not part of the normative white/mestizo oligarchy dominating Peruvian economy (Lust 2019), evincing the coloniality of democracy (Mendoza 2016).

Heteronormative laws are enforced in the modern-colonial Peru. The notion of heteronormativity started in colonial times in order to racialise, sexualise and discriminate certain bodies (Horswell 2006, Jacqui Alexander, 1994, Lugones 2010). For instance: the fact that conjugal heterosexual marriages and heteronormative families are still considered necessary for preserving the state, in Peruvian Civil Code (D.L. 295) shows how heteronormativity is still highly embedded in the state institutions. Until now, feminine biological bodies are mostly recognized as reproductive beings (Mendoza 2014); and, rights to decide about their bodies and sexual identities to women and LGBT community are still secluded of the legislation (Boelsten 2012).

As Mendoza (2014:116) affirms, the coloniality of gender created antagonisms between non-European men and women, breaking the previous solidarity and reciprocity existing in the Andean gender system (Cusicanqui 2004 in Mendoza 2014) by creating internal hierarchies. Likewise, the Peruvian state failed to address the current existing inequalities that marginalize women. The concept of CG as explained by Lugones unveils a genocidal power, since racialised womxn were 'endlessly exploitable as well as eliminable' (Mendoza 2014:118). Is it the reason why feminicides have been increasing yearly since they started being criminalized in 2009? Similarly, several cases of gender-based violence (including domestic violence) are accounted in the news and in academic research (Boelsten 2012).

In sum, coloniality of power, gender and democracy are vividly experienced in the Peruvian nation-state as well as in its political institutions.

4.2 Untying women and feminist movement(s) in Peru, during the last four decades

In this section, I present some brief elements of the history of Peruvian modern feminist and women's movement in Peru in order to locate CHCC in the context of Peruvian Feminism. On one hand, it was a personal debt, a pending endeavour that I started before engaging with the collective; and, on the other, an ethical and political effort to locate CHCC feminist story.

Scholars such as Barrientos & Muñoz (2014) have studied the Peruvian Feminism movement history and they suggest that it started at the beginning of the twentieth century with the struggles for achieving the right to vote and education. However, in those times, it was ideologically supported mainly by high class intellectual women.

Interestingly, the power relations played a big role and the coloniality of power and gender was so entrenched in the Peruvian society that being identified as a feminist was a sign of privilege since it was closely related with the access to education and the right to work; as in many other Latin American countries (Vargas 2004; Quiroz-Perez 2017; Barrientos & Muñoz 2014).

After the first years of feminist struggles in the beginning of the XX century, there was an apparent silence or anonymous female presence in politics and popular movements archived. However, it suddenly changed during the seventies (Barrientos & Muñoz 2014). One of the most memorable collective actions was the so called Rebelión de las Brujas (Witches Rebellion) in April of 1973: a manifestation against "Miss Universe", an annual beauty contest. This 'taking' of the streets was echoed in the press and it took its toll in Velasco's government and when a first victory took place in the form of beauty contests suspension, a measure taken by the Ministry of Education since they agreed with the feminist claim that women's bodies were objectified in those contests (Barrientos & Muñoz 2014). After that moment, the 'taking of the streets' with the slogan "the private is political and not untouchable", and new feminist endeavours such as self-awareness groups for women and reflection workshops (Vargas, 2008) were enacted by Peruvian women.

Peruvian's women movement has been one of the largest in South America, especially between the 60's and the 90's (Vargas 2008). However, the heterogeneity of this movement accounted different dynamics and discourses resembling the plurality of Peruvian women's and the realities they have gone through (Vargas 2008). For Villavicencio (1984 in Vargas 2008:35) the women's movement evolved into three important streams: a feminist, a popular and a political stream.

The feminist stream identified a patriarchal system that subordinated women; therefore, it worked permanently to transform the permanent sexism in the several public spaces. Feminists were mostly working in academia and their developing started among privileged groups of middle-class women with higher education, as in many other Latin American countries. (Quiroz-Perez 2017). This stream's claim was mostly focused in the sexism and gender discrimination that women underwent, they worked to create awareness and to transform society's understanding of women and gender (Vargas 2008:35).

The second stream is known as popular or 'urban popular' and related to women that find struggles in their daily spaces while enacting their traditional or ordinary roles. By engaging in the movement, they turned their once individual struggles into collective and public struggles. In this stream, women reinforced the idea of the possibility of self-controlling their own lives as some of them were single mothers or heads of household living in the

peripheries of the urban cities, which frequently entails to belong to lower classes and less access to education.

The third stream emerged from the increase in the female participation in public spaces as a way to contribute to working against the social struggles that women faced, they were militants or militants' wives in political parties, trade unions, etc trying to achieve internal changes within the parties and a truly recognition (Villavicencio 1984, in Vargas 2008; V. Barrientos 2020, feminist online encounters, 2020; C. Espinoza, feminist online encounters, 24 August 2020).

There was not such a strict difference among them, since a woman could belong to more than one stream; some of the political militants were also feminists or came from the peripheries of Lima; or the other way around (Vargas, 2008).

The history of women's movement in Peru, as well as other existing social movements, took an unexpected turn due to the armed conflict in Peru. Between 1980 and 2000, this historical process contributed with a depoliticization that silenced many of the existing social resistance groups and the social movements presence among the academy (Hoetmer 2014). On one hand, the armed conflict along with Fujimori's 'pseudo democratic' but authoritarian regime changed the population subjectivities about social struggles converting them into terrorist claims (Hoetmer 2014; Quiroz-Perez 2017, Barrientos & Muñoz 2014). On the other hand, feminists and social collectives stopped its articulation in provinces due to the armed conflict that was severely dangerous in the provinces; as accounted by Marfil Francke[4] :

> "*In the 1980s Belaunde took the presidency, a few weeks before Sendero declared the beginning of the armed struggle (...) in the 1980s, dead dogs were seen hanging from the headlights. Between 1980 and 1982, there were several attacks in the countryside, they attacked mines and conquered the mining-metallurgical sector, they also raided police stations. I worked with communities in Ayacucho, Huancavelica, Apurimac ... and it was no longer possible to travel by road*".
>
> (Marfil Francke, online feminist encounters, September 3 2020, translated by the author)

The feminists that were trying to work with communities like Marfil were relegated to work in safer spaces like the capital. Thus, most of the feminists became either institutionalised as part of NGOs or were working in the academy. And the political proposals of the movement were again silenced by the government in turn.

There is no specific literature about feminist struggles recognized in other Peruvian provinces until the nineties; articles about provinces start in 2005 (Perez 2005; Gomez 2005). However, during the interviews that conducted with active militant feminists in the eighties up to today such as Carmen Espinoza, Marfil Frankle and Virginia Vargas, I found out that there were lower class women, from the peripheries of Lima and some provinces, that were starting to realise the importance of fighting for their rights and that used to work collectively to pursue certain objectives such us overcome poverty and hunger. For instance, women in charge of the *comedores populares* [5] (community kitchens); most likely considered part of the urban popular stream of the women's movement, accounted by Villavicencio.

For feminists in Lima, this revelation of lower classes women struggling for their rights was certainly a turning point; most of them decided to become politically autonomous and

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[4] Marfil Francke is a feminist and a sociologist. In the eighties, she worked as researcher in the provinces of Peru with several women organisations and Centro de la Mujer Flora Tristan NGO (Feminist online encounters, 2 September 2020).

[5] Community kitchens (*comedores populares*) were women's collectives not accounted as feminists as such, they were created by women householders as part of a response to the economic crisis underwent by Peru between 1985 and 1990 (Silva Santisteban 2004). They are articulated until the present.

to engage in the claim for a real citizenship that recognized all the female subjects (Barrientos & Muñoz 2014).

The women's movement different streams were highly important for the development of PF main agenda, relations among them and sense of solidarity. In a conversation with Carmen Espinoza[6], a feminist that articulates for an antiracist collective called *Presencia y Palabra* (Presence and Word), I could observe and feel a truly wish to accept the plurality of feminisms existing in our country and the care she had while reflecting on them. She said: "what unites us now is more than what divide us" (Online Encounters, 30 August 2020, translated by the author), referring to the fact that she acknowledges the difference among the movement. Nevertheless, she also acknowledges common agendas related with abortion or a democratic space that provides access to equal rights among all of us.

Nevertheless, I wonder whether this affirmation could still become problematic towards the agendas of the less visible women's and sexual dissident's struggles? As stated by Rosa Villafuerte, photographer and feminist activist, there are still largest differences in the feminist movement, especially between the institutionalised organisations and the autonomous collectives; she rejects the verticality of the institutions, and, feels that NGOs are still leading the actions of FP: "We talk, we are in the same assembly and we talk but, the decisions are made by them. They don't abandon their leadership position (…) we want more horizontal relations" (Online Encounters, 6 September 2020, translated by the author). Personally, for this RP I have tried to remain careful towards affirmations about a unique feminist cause in Peru, again in an effort to avoid universalism; however, I agree that diverse feminists need to work together for certain agendas; again, the question is how to prioritise them?

Under an evident State apparatus' passivity, along with a lack of gender and intercultural sensitivity (Bueno-Hansen, 2015), feminist and women's movements as well as other social movements started to articulate again (Barrientos & Muñoz 2014). Quiroz-Perez (2017) founds that the recent emergence of feminist collectives in Peru was disconnected from academy and gender studies; perhaps, because they are not representing the same causes that the new collectives are enfleshing. Some authors believe that they emerged as a rejection of the institutionalization of feminism (Vargas 2004; Barrientos & Muñoz 2014; Barrig 2008) but I would suggest, it is more than that.

Chola Contravisual, the 'colectiva ' I am working with, is situated within this new revival and, although their claims of autonomy coincide with the rejection of institutions; they are not aiming to influence in public policies as some of the more well-known feminist NGOs are trying to. CHCC emerges as a collective that is not expecting external validation. As a *colectiva* they argue that the hegemonic Peruvian feminism that started in Lima does not represent their claims (Gera, 28 August 2020). The Quechua artistic identities they embody, with a rejection of sexual binaries, was missed within the feminist scenario (Milita, 19 september 2020). Their main goal relates with social transformation, but it starts with micropolitical changes: "first is a personal transformation, an inner healing for us; then you can start transforming and impacting over others"(Milita, online encounters, 19 September 2020, translated by the author).

According to its website, CHCC is a collective that works for cisgender, lesbians, gays, trans and non-binary conforming bodies, professionals or people interested in visual arts and culture; their goal is to contest the current oppressions created by the power structures existing in Peru due to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc (Chola Contravisual 2020a). The collective is based in Huancayo (an Andean region, located in the centre of Peru) rejecting the centralism of the institutions. Its name is meaningful since *Chola* is a pejorative name to refer to a female mestizo and *contravisual* refers to visual arts that "are countering

[6] Founder and current Associate Director of Manuela Ramos Feminist NGO.

established and unquestioned discourses". In the past 5 years, this collective has been trying to portray, mainly through short documentaries but also through other artistic manifestations, several oppressive events that are faced by the plurality of women and sexual diversities in Peru. The stories narrated by them portray the womxn's oppressions happening in a context where a hierarchical society legitimizes certain races, bodies and spaces (Chola Contravisual 2020b, 2020c, 2020d). Their narratives are not located within any women's movement stream previously described, they are part of a new generation that is using social media for creating defying discourses about the State and feminist institutions (See appendix 2).

4.3 Summary

Focusing on the contemporary institutions and laws, modern conceptions like the one adopted by the Peruvian State neglects the rights and existences of the non-heterosexual bodies by only speaking about heterosexual marriages. Perhaps, some might think that the opposite of modernity is the traditional way of existing, where we would need to go back to the Ancient Quechuas and Aymaras traditions of the "third gender"; however, it is not exactly that. It is more about accepting the differences and the citizens that currently inhabit the Peruvian state. They could be white, black, indigenous or a mix of some of the races described, they could have Quechua, Aymara or other cultural influences or none, they could have any kind of sexual orientation and they might all be equally before the law.

Peruvian feminism is characterized by the plurality of voices that represent different standpoints. While repassing their genealogy, I was inspired by recognising that all the feminists I met were and are mostly moved by the political ideas of the feminist movement. Each of them was embodying causes that have challenged their own existences. Not necessarily the feminist NGOs, since they are still embedded in modern-colonial logics. Finally, CHCC unveiled a new Peruvian Feminist paradigm, a feminist project with a very different approach from the ones developed in Lima. They are a cultural-artistic political alternative out of modern-colonial logics like centralism and capitalism; as well as, rejecting institutions coopted by coloniality.

Chapter 5
Interweaving narratives on the infrapolitics of Chola Contravisual[7] (Collantes, 2020)

This chapter intertwins the findings of my online encounters with CHCC and *Tunanteras* short documentary. Their otherwise narratives emerge in the exercise of trying to find commonalities between our/their orality (during the online encounters) and their creative production. Similarly, I will explain CHCC knowledge-practices, besides their filming work and the infrapolitics that underlay these practices.

I consider the otherwise narratives as infrapolitics because they are intertwining public and hidden discourse in ways that non-beings can completely understand. Since the message is not disguised, oppressors could be able name and, with an effort to truly understand, they could recognize the violence that triggered it.

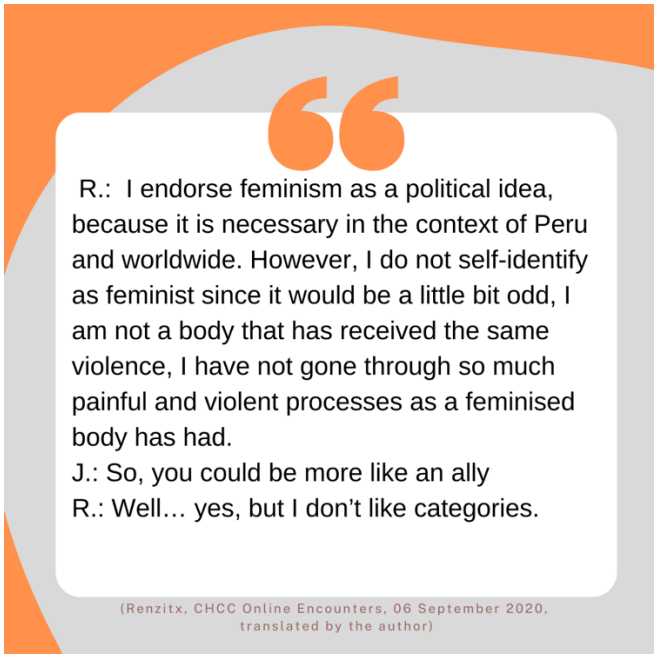
5.1 Navigating our (feminist) identities

The short film *Tunanteras* was the first encounter that I had with *Chola Contravisual*. This visual work triggered emotions, feelings, expectations and reflections that challenged me on many levels. *Tunanteras'* main characters are three trans women living in Huancayo, a city in the highlands of Peru. While watching the story and listening to the soundtrack (Peruvian Andean music), I stayed in silence, not just a physical silence but an emotional silence that triggered my awareness of what I understood about being a woman in Peru. As a cisgender feminist but also a racialised body trying to defy the modern conception of Peruvian women, I realised that I did not think about trans women's struggles. Although, I self-defined myself as an ally of sexual dissidence. They never emerged in my mind, which I felt was risky. Since my modern-self that I was constantly challenging, sometimes could stood in the way for my understanding of their struggles.

In one conversation with CHCC, Renzite (R.) explained me the importance of being aware about our own identities in relation with other beings, specifically when they have been politically and socially grieved. They[8] defines themself as a "person that loves" (Online encounter with CHCC, 06 September 2020), their physical appearance is masculine, for that reason, they mentioned me that their body has not been subjected to similar violence such as women or trans women. This understanding was reflected in a conversation about their relation with the collective, R. did not exactly self-identified as a feminist but an 'ally', though they preferred no categories:

[7] This section is an adaptation of the section 1.2 of the essay: "My transitions in the academic journey of designing a research paper and my encounters with Chola Contravisual", written by me, in June 2020 for the Transitions in Social Justice course.

[8] To speak about Rencite, I will use the pronoun "they" as a replacement of "le" (Spanish non-genderised pronoun).



I was not able to speak about that topic with Renzite again. At first glance, this reflection about feminism could be mostly coming from the body, however it was also coming from a conscious being that recognised the violence that a female body representation faces.

Since the aim of this RP was understanding how the collective subjectivities of CHCC's members embrace modern conceptions of womxn and feminism; I spoke in a different moment with Milita and Gera, they both explained me the aggressions they experienced in encounters with masculine bodies in previous events organised by them in Huancayo. They mentioned how men wanted to occupy women's or sexual dissidents' spaces and voiced up for their struggles, creating tension in the events and limiting the womxn interactions: "For that reason, the few times when CHCC events invited men, Renzite was in charge" (Milita, Online encounters with CHCC, 06 September 2020).

This exchange with the collective's members helped me to understand the effects of the modern colonial patriarchal project that creates an apparent indifference in male representative bodies (racialised/genderised or not), when confronted with other non-beings intersected by gender or sexual orientation. As Lugones (2008,2016) indicated, referring to coloniality of gender, while in the Eurocentric modern-colonial project we are subjects of racialisation and genderisation, not all of us are oppressed in the same way; this oppression is binary dichotomic and hierarchical and it implies much more violence when it comes to a women of color, non to say to a trans-body. Were Renzite, Gera and Milita expressing what politically entails to be a woman in their collective and the shared awareness of this understanding? Was I witnessing how other knowledge-practices endows CHCC with a common understanding of its feminist collective identity where gender hierarchies (masculine body over feminine body) were left behind? Does feminism become a political tool that sometimes comes from embodied experiences (like in Gera and Milita) and in other cases come from/emergences from the conviviality (like in Renzite)? After this conversation, , I started to reflect on being a woman as being not as a binary category with feminine characteristics but as a subject of violence which needs to recover her spaces. Masculine bodies like Renzite are able to understand this difference; and, they can help in the recovery of this spaces.

Just like CHCC members did, "*Tunanteras*" video confronted my conception of women and women's oppression in the context of Peru. I found myself in part of Jacqui Alexander's (2006) analysis of the decolonial project's difficulties, where she invites us to think that:

> "both complicity and vigilance [in decolonial projects] are learned in this complicated process of figuring out who we are and who we wish to become. The far more difficult question[s] we must collectively engage [with] ha[ve] to do with the political positions (in the widest sense) that we come to practice, not merely espouse" (296).

Which was my actual position regarding transwomen and transdancers or non-binary bodies before watching the video? was I a silent accomplice in their invisibilisation? Did I just consider myself an ally because I knew it was 'politically' right to do it? I remained in silence, a restorative silence. It was not a silence of subjection, it was different from the silence that facilitated the erasure of certain historical facts such as in Western historiography (Ghaddar & Caswell 2019), and not a fanonian deathly silence that perpetuates colonial wounds (Fanon 1965 in Ureña 2019) but a silence of attentive awareness on my self-identity and how it was trespassing previous 'modern-assumptions' of gender. 'To be in silence' is of course not the same than 'to be silenced' and, silence as a restorative possibility is deeply contextual. Again, I realised that my personal decolonial endeavour was not an easy one (Jacqui Alexander's 2006, Gomez 2014); it inquired not only my academic but my political and ethical positions; and; furthermore, it entailed a new writing practice that I have used for this research paper. CHCC work and interactions had an effect on me and my relation with the bodies transgressing gender and sexual binaries.

5.2 Wounds, dancing and healing

In the next lines, I will try to explain how the CHCC'S short film "*Tunanteras*" and my interactions with CHCC invited me to un-learn notions about the oppression of Peruvian womxn and the power of feminism:

This was the first line of a song that Rubi (one of the three main characters in *Tunanteras* short film)sings in Quichua and served as an introductory framing of Rubi's story, who at the age of 10 had to migrate alone from her hometown to Huancayo (a bigger city). She had to face and deal with her mother passing away, which forced her to work in precarious

living conditions. Her narration triggered my reflection about how several conditions were intertwined: the precarity she faced, her condition as a migrant, her indigenous origins and her trans body. Was the 'river of blood' a metaphor for the dynamics of oppression she faced? Was the river chasing her just like the project of coloniality chases the non-beings and reproduces colonial wounds?

For Rubi, those wounds were present in her memories and dreams, like in most of us who have lived in post-colonial spaces. Perhaps, Rubi's body was also the tool for her own healing, the pleasure of dancing where she could stop thinking in a life of continuous grievances due to her non-conforming body; even though, they did not mention how they were focusing on the body in the sense Fanon (2001, 2008 in Ureña 2019) speaks about the body, when he suggested that the decolonial embodiment helps in getting rid of binary subjectivities about inferiority/superiority; this story could be similar but it includes the layer of gender representation.

Rubi detaches herself from the CG that her body is subjected and embodies a healing decolonial practice in dancing and singing. This film was about *Tunanteras;* however, as most of the visual art CHCC creates, it also reveals their own thinking-feeling regarding gender and sexuality.

In an encounter with Milita, she mentioned the wounds experienced in the sexual and gender violence faced by us, as women, and how she understood it as a form of erasure of our feelings:

> "We, diverse women such as afro descendants or other identities, have been gener-ationally silenced, speaking about violence is extremely painful. Even the fact of affirming a posture, to say: 'No' or 'I don't like' has not been allowed for us. On the contrary, we have learnt not to think about the self, not to think about our feelings, nor to give them a name; therefore, thinking about our own feelings for us or for sharing it with other com-pañeras (female comrades) is extremely hard (...) We think that healing is a personal but also collective process, it starts with noticing my own emotions; however, I share them and let them out with my compañeras".
>
> (Milita, CHCC Online Encounters, 13 September 2020, translated by the author)

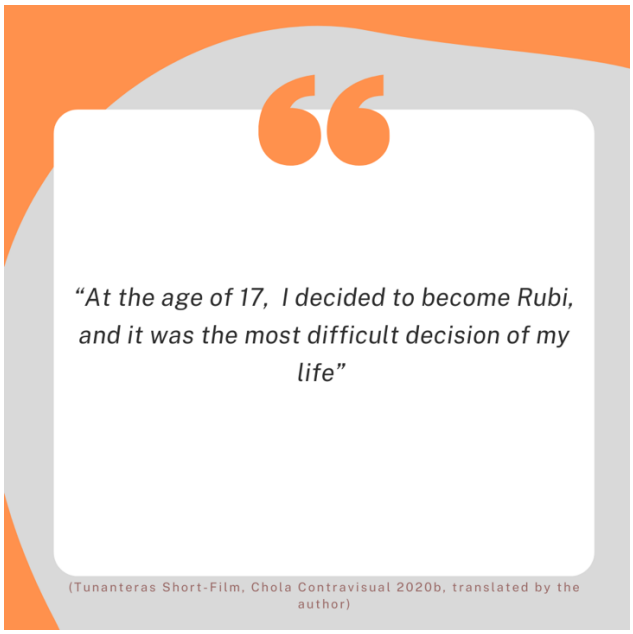
I associated this conversation with memories of my sessions in psychotherapy (a few years ago) and my difficulty to name my emotions, I never understood completely why it was so hard for me. On the other hand, Milita discovered by a very different path, a collective one, in feminist encounters with *compañeras*. I think we both faced what Motta's (2018bL9) describes as the colonial wounds of the non-being in 2 levels: "ontological and

epistemological as we come to internalize non-subjectivity, shame, denial, disassociation, and lack of self-worth".

I wonder if Rubi's, Milita's and my own healing were somehow connected by CHCC practices (the documentary, the feminist encounters, the online encounters with me). As Milita mentioned 'a collective healing' process could also be starting. Are these documentaries a possibility to start a new collective process of healing? Who is invited to heal by films like these? Are dancing or singing tools otherwise of resisting and re-existing through arts? Affter reflecting on the colonial wounds and healing through embodied practices like dancing., the violence received (Motta 2018b) is converted into practices of decolonial embodiment (Ureña 2019) or healing. In the same way, my own experiences of marginalisation were starting to heal while sharing experiences with CHCC and writing about them.

5.3 AestheSis: embodied arts a practice to represent Andean liminal identities?

While revisiting *Tunanteras* documentary, as well as most CHCC audiovisual art, I could also observe and feel how they convey messages of resistance against the sexual binaries in which Andean identities are supposed to fit. Besides the dance itself, the documentary shows how Rubi overcomes her life circumstances, she challenges the modern dominant representations of how to behave when our biological sex does not match with the heteronormative expectations of who we are or how we should feel:



I was extremely touched by this line, where she transgresses the barrier of the dominant expectation of how a biologically "masculine sex" was supposed to perform in a binary-colonial-patriarchal-capitalist world and decides to come out. Was this a turning point in a life of resistance and re-existence? While she describes that she is a singer, a dancer of *Tunantada* and a hairdresser in the video, I could feel and observe in her face how those activities were moments and spaces of collective enjoyment. However, when she is not doing one of these activities, she is still marginalized since she carries a body that does not belong to the

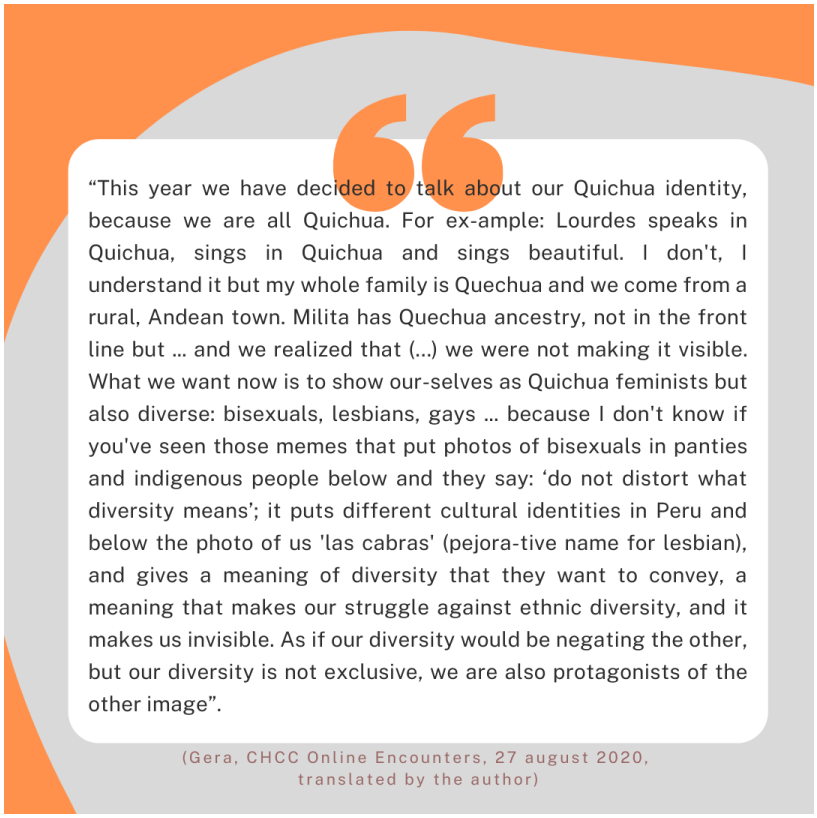
norm. The 'fluidity' of her identity (between being a dancer, a hairdresser and a non-being) was portrayed also in the stories shared by the two other characters. Does it convey the fluidity of the identities within CHCC? Was CHCC trying to dismantle the binary sexualities? Renzite, who rejects the binaries and self-identifies themself as 'a person who loves', could certainly fit in that description. With *Tunanteras* they are creating a liminal space for 'new beings' who love.

"Tunantada" was a dance that came from the colonial times and it is danced by "Tunanteras" (biological masculine bodies wearing dresses). "*This dance was used for mocking the Spaniards"*, one of the characters mentions while laughing. Was this a sign of Peruvian ancestors defying the colonial power and the sexual binaries? Were "Tunanteras" recovering this tradition and trying to challenge the oppressions they faced? Was this an infrapolitic of resistance? As Chávez & Vásquez (2017) indicate, the connection that arts (and, specially, trans art) can make to the history of resistance allows the artist to counter the binary and heterosexual colonial project; in this case, dance becomes a weapon of the weak. As the documentary becomes a weapon for CHCC. For "Tunanteras" (the dancers), this dance shows that they have not been the first transwomen in the history of Peru; furthermore, it shows how to use art as a tool to disobey the erasures of coloniality and it is a tool to reassure their present by going back to their past.

As I watched them dancing, I reflected on how their bodies were collectively enacting a challenge to the modern dominant heteronormativity, I could feel how the performance embodied a challenge to a vivid "ongoing struggle against the silencing, against the oblivion of suffering that is imposed by power" (Chávez & Vásquez, 2017: 42), and I wonder if that is what healing is about? Were they embodying a healing process while dancing? Were there other possibilities to trigger emotions and senses through art? Could this documentary be considered as part of what it is called 'decolonial aestheSis'?

Mignolo -in an interview for Gaztambide-Fernández (2014)- and Mignolo & Vasquez (2013:12) theorised about decolonial 'aestheSis' which is precisely an 'embodied consciousness of the colonial wound that moves towards healing' and that is detached from 'aestheTics[9]' since it is deployed out of its Western canons. This mechanism is conducive to the re-existence of worlds, sensing and meanings that otherwise would be forgotten of our memories (Chávez & Vásquez 2017). Rubi's story is showing this switch in her identity from a 'marginalised one' to a 'festive dancer'. Would the collective or myself be able to enact similar decolonial embodiments? In fact, Chola Contravisual with different techniques brings more than images in the short films, it triggers emotions, it connects them with land (Chola Contravisual 2020c, 2020d), with music and with the historical past (Chávez & Vásquez 2017). In a conversation with the four of them, they reflected with me about the main goals of their artistic and cultural production.

[9] Aesthetics is a word derived from the Greek word 'aesthesis', the latter refered to the knowledge that was received by the senses. This word was rejected during the reasoning primacy era, and it was converted into a philosophical stream by I. Kant. From there on, it was understood (within Western epistemologies) as a " theory of the beautiful and the sublime, and the theory of artistic genius" (Mignolo in an interview with R Gaztambide-Fernández 2014: 199-200).



Within these lines, Gera challenges the subjectivities of a heteronormative-modern-colonial society that keep erasing her complex identity (she is not just Quichua or just lesbian, she is both); her reflections regarding the Andean and the diverse identities they embody provides me with a better understanding of their identity as individuals and as a collective. Gera and the members of CHCC do not consider themselves academics; nevertheless, their practices while doing videos are telling the story of a non-conventional audio-visual team that is transgressing the passivity of their society.

Lugones (2016:28) urges us to be critical on “the biological dimorphism and the position that gender socially constructs biological sex” since it is highly important for the conformation of the modern-colonial gender system. Perhaps, embodied arts as CHCC are not based on theory and do not need it, in that case, is it necessary to be theorised? Have I researched with no need to do it? I do not think so. Although, I accept that embodied knowledge is not possible to be completely theorised; since the theorisation of certain things is not feasible under a modern logic as academy and, as Lorde affirms ‘the master tool does not dismantle the master’s house’. I must say that I found in the academy and in academic research, a place where other ‘non beings’ or ‘liminal subjects’, like me, can find themselves and; hopefully, inclined to rethink their positionality and ‘modern self’. Perhaps, in the same way aesthesis works for CHCC and other decolonial art projects, academy could become a space to re-think theorisation.

5.4 Embodied 'feminism has saved us': Care, motherhood and radical empathy among the members of CHCC

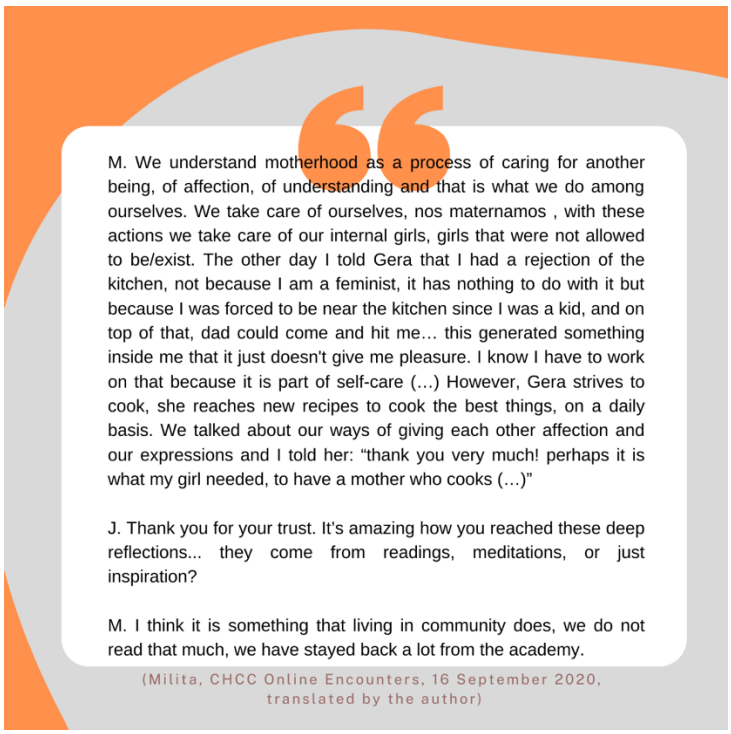
As I have described in appendix 2, any space can become a nurturing space for CHCC. With them I also undertstood that re-existance was possible while living and working in arts projects. The principles of their life in community are embodied knowledges they discover while engaging in their practices: cultural events, the creation of a new short documentary, or a conversation with a "*compañera*".

For CHCC members: care, love and maternity are not just feelings meant to be lived and learnt within the confines of a heteronormative family living in an ideal modern world. However, from time to time, my 'modern self' was again trying to understand with a linear logic what it is only explained in spirals. Sometimes I assumed that they either would have long theoretical debates on their convivial principles or they 'just went with the flow' which implied that it was not necessary to discuss further what they felt but with the risk of not having clarity. In spite of my misunderstandings, Milita, with much care, explained it to me:

> M: We are always sharing how we are experiencing within the spaces in which each one of us is working and more than flow, it is how the experience tells us how it is going, and if it is not working, we no longer plant any more effort.
>
> J: More than flow, it's more like you trust in each other abilities
>
> M: Yes. Another value is trust and love because I think it is something fundamental because it is something that provides us with confidence. The fact that my 'compañera' (comrade) is betting on me, because she is totally sure that my research will be correct for the short film. For me, it's like: I have a responsibility and I don't have a boss, but if I have the support of my colleagues and my ability to discern the right path for this new pro-ject, then ...
>
> J: There is nothing better than that
>
> M: Yes! nothing better…And I think this happens to each of us: Lourdes and Renzite are making a new song, and, since early in the morning, I hear how Renzo is exploring music, sounds, and starting to rethink the lyrics, because we are also betting on his talent and we believe in him, and we always cheer each other up, like: "baby, how beautiful" or "how good! you know this or that, now"
>
> (Milita, CHCC Online Encounters, 6 September 2020, translated by the author)

CHCC does not just 'go with the flow', its members are related with each other in ways that allow themselves to trust in each other (in their inner feelings) and, to let things go when they feel that they are not reciprocal or fruitful. This is what Milita describes as 'trust and love'. And, in my interactions with them, I could also feel that they were not pushing me for something specific, I was engaging with them entering in their embodied feminism as a racialized body or as a world traveller that feels safe in a space that is not ruled by individualistic rules (Lugones 1987).

In these exchanges of knowledge and practices, Milita shared with me CHCC's ideas about maternity, besides the understanding of motherhood as another way to subject racialized women within a patriarchal-modern-colonial system (Gonzaga & Mayorga 2019). Milita created a definition that I recorded not only for my writing but for life:



Her description left me speechless, for some time I did not know how to answer back to it. I had understood motherhood as an institution that should not remain in the private sphere and should be politicized in order to allow women not to be mothers if they did not want to. When exploring the CG, Lugones (2008) speaks about darker side of coloniality of gender and it is explained by the fact that racialised womxn are expected to perform certain roles and they are unquestioned even by racialised men, should be mothers. I think it applies to the idea of mother and mothering that Milita and CHCC are trying to defy.

Within modern-colonial patriarchal societies being a mother comes from a fake identity of woman informed by naturalized ideas of women as subjects that are prone to care and devotedness for their siblings (Gonzaga & Mayorga 2019), they are expected to be good cooks as good housekeepers. And what happens if they do not comply with it? what if they decide not to have kids? My reflections, inspired by Milita, are not rejecting the role of a mother but trying to create space for those who did not want to have children, we can still mother others. In the same way that others could mother us and to provide us with the care we deserve. What a nice way to be compassionate with ourselves.

In CHCC, they turned motherhood into a possibility of caring for others in ways that they feel right, mothering stops reducing care to the attitude that a woman (or a human being) should have for a son or daughter and it extends it into an attitude that a woman chooses to have for something or someone that needs to heal and, in this mothering, healing also happens. I found this understanding of mothering and motherhood as very empowering, comforting and, inclusive with any other human being. While mothering, they generate new spaces for themselves, they allow themselves to re-exist in a happier home.

In CHCC, 4 members share the same house, they inhabit "La Munay", the cultural house they founded in Huancayo. While living together, they practice several values and

ethics. There is one that I found specially interesting because I read about it in critical race studies, when Terry Givens (2020) spoke about 'radical empathy' as an attitude that goes beyond walking in other's shoes, but it also implies a change in the society. For that to happen, a change in the person which was practicing radical empathy should happen too. Milita explained to me the real interest in understanding the motivations and interests of the other, so we could avoid judging them when they understand things differently or speak about things differently:

Without saying anything directly, I felt like she was speaking about me and the way they managed their relations with me. I was a cisgender feminist living in The Netherlands but, they saw and listen something, they understood my main feminist motivations and genuine interest, regardless of my possible lack of experience as researcher. They were empathetic as much as I have tried to be during this journey. Which I think it is not going to be the end, it is just the beginning.

5.5 Summary

This research journey has been a nurturing journey and I am happy for that. At the beginning, I thought about this section as a simple critique to the modern colonial patriarchal system; but it turned out in a more joyful section of lessons about other knowledge-practices on the infrapolitical. We started by navigating with them how plural our feminist identities coexist, we explored *Tunantada* dance and its ability to heal the colonial wounds of the non-beings, I deepen in my experience of their audiovisual arts and how they understand it; and we finally conclude by sharing the feminist living practices that CHCC embodies.

Chapter 6
Peruvian otherwise feminism blossoming from the liminalities and the infrapolitics of re-existence

6.1 Conclusions

CHCC narratives and practices helped me to defy my notions about womxn, bodies and sexualities; as well as, their understanding of feminism, social transformation and the role of art in creating a happy re-existence.

Although, while writing this paper, I still found myself falling into the trap of the modern-colonial order and its logics of control, logics (or methods) that attempt to 'civilize' and to 'erase', rational 'mono-logics' that replicate the onto-epistemological death of mestizo/indigenous womxn. On one hand, the methodology was key in this journey in order to align my objectives with my methods and disable the ideas that were not helping me in that path. On the other hand, it was very important to analyse the Peruvian historical context in which we/they are embedded.

Our online talks were what challenged me the most but also, what I enjoyed the most. They helped me to unlearn universalizing categories of *mujer* (womxn) that invisibilize the violence that a feminized body (regardless its biological sex) goes through. In a similar way as Mohanty (1987) describes this phenomenon, especially when you have not experienced the same violence, it is hard to understand it. I am a woman and I have experienced violence, maybe not as evident as other bodies. However, being a sexual dissident adds an extra layer of oppression. Especially within the modern-colonial logics in which Peru is embedded. The laws and institutions place certain womxn in a more difficult position.

From CHCC, I learnt that woman is a word they use politically to refer to 'subject of violence'. It is also a word that unites our processes of pain, suffering (our colonial wounds) and our processes of healing. However, they reject the sexual binaries.

Their openness allowed me to understand that they speak from their context of Andean racialized women and sexual dissidents partially embedded in concepts of modernity while resisting it. Do they think about themselves in fluid terms? Milita told me how their (our) beings and our capacity to love trespasses categories and they are aware of that. Their audiovisual work does not just focus on woman in binary categories, they go beyond by including Andean sexual dissidents regardless of their identification as women or as non-conforming with gender categories bodies, they create a new space for them or as Milita told me they are 'recovering' our space and in that process, they are re-existing. Motta's (2018a) notion of non-being becomes the main character of their visual work.

I learnt with them that their otherwise narratives are not located within the feminist dominant narratives, They belong to a new generation of feminists. CHCC is a liminal project. They are living in Huancayo and recognizing their ancestrality but using modern tools like the social media or connecting with international NGOs, and, they travel successfully to different worlds. This capacity to travel is reflected in the characters of their embodied art, since they are not exactly beings that live as their ancestors and they suffer the colonial wound and they reject it (Chola Contravisual 2020c, 2020d).Furthermore, my encounters with CHCC showed me that 'this ambiguity that goes beyond gender categories' is an unlearning process that becomes relevant in community, in this "*yo-comunal*" (communal self) argued by Lugones (2020) this way of being together, to start thinking without words, to start connecting in less corporeal planes and in more emotional/espiritual planes that does not require words; when to be considered a communal being is better than just to be by yourself. This communal self it is found only in playful and collective spaces, like the house they share as CHCC, when the attitude for the playful moments are far distanced from the individualistic

competitiveness of the capitalist attitude, therefore it is possible to accept ambiguity since we are not looking for a perfect or unique ending, it is more about the joy in the path (Lugones 1987, 2020).

CHCC knowledge-practices went beyond the figure of the State. *Chola Contravisual* does not aim to incide in politics because the State does not represent them. They dismantle the State with different tools than those used by institutions. They acknowledge that they cannot work in every aspect of the social transformation and, they focus on their specialty: audio-visual and culture. They have feminist collectives that act as its allies, when it comes to politics representation or policy advocacy.

This RP is not just a political statement but a co-laborative project that turned into a radical political practice. It was more than academic assignment, it was also that start of a healing process for my own colonial wound, a wound that is not silencing myself anymore. *Chola Contravisual* showed me new knowledges practices such as the embodiment of a new way of living and enflesh-ing feminism, putting together their expertise as artists, audio-visual professionals in an attempt to create new ways of living that accept the non-beings, such as the *Tunanteras* dancers.

Finally, we understood that CHCC members are their own agents of development. They are crossing the bridges of western epistemologies, and their development. They trespassed the mo-dernity-coloniality. In this journey, they showed me that it is possible to re-exist. Personally, with this RP journey, I ended up in a completely different place than expected, by finding and engaging with collective feminist responses that taught me that it is possible to live a life politically engaged and happy about it, especially when you live it in a community with shared values.

6.2 Recommendations and Limitations

After years with no academic work, my main difficulty was to fulfill the academic criteria for re-search in the right time, for that reason certain topics remained not addressed in this paper. I kept some information for future research in collaboration with the collective.

Similarly, I found out about more autonomous feminist collective within Peru. It is a pending task for future research to explore the different narrative, taking into consideration the conscious positionality of the researcher and the considerations for a social research that does not erase any other knowledge.

There was a limitation (or risk) mentioned in my research paper presentation and self-reflected thoroughly, it was the risk of romanticizing CHCC. I accept that I have not offered critiques about the collective as such, but the real question was: am I in the position to do it? this paper has been a practice of sensing-thinking-doing not a desk research. Thus, I do not agree with the critiques of romanticizing them, since I was not trying to fulfil a descriptive academic research of what a social collective, or a feminist collective is. On the contrary, my aim was to knit lessons that came from shared reflections with the members of the collective.

Finally, I would say that writing while bearing a pandemic was the biggest challenge I faced, since I aimed this research journey to be as collective as possible and as reflective as possible. Nevertheless, the constraints imposed by the shifting periods of isolation plus the sickness of some of my beloved ones have been a constant struggle while engaging in this research.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methods in Times of Covid

I collected relevant data for two main purposes, firstly, to improve the context of Peruvian Feminist and Women Movements; and, secondly, to engage with CHCC narratives and practices. Due to the current conditions around the globe, my interactions with Peruvian Feminists and participants of CHCC were via WhatsApp and Zoom, both are technological platforms that allow interaction in real time. Nevertheless, they limited it too.

In order to construct a more solid chapter about Peruvian feminism and the challenges of Chola Contravisual narratives, I planned to invite for an online video presentation to a heterogeneous group of Peruvian feminists, where we could explore together which notions of womxn and feminism were conveyed by Chola Contravisual's short documentaries and video-series. However, their schedules did not coincide; specially, due to the time-zone difference with me, in consequence, this idea was rejected. Therefore, I decided to show them, at the end of each individual feminist online encounter, the first chapter of *Mejor chola que mal acompañada*, a short video-series (2 minutes duration) recently created by the colectiva that stresses the problematic of a Peruvian Andean mestiza during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to receive their impressions about it. I ended up not using that information due to words limit restriction. I encountered 6 feminists, the first feminist I encountered was referenced by a professor of Social Sciences of a Peruvian private university that I knew before coming here. The first feminist requested me to maintain her anonymity. However, after our first interaction, she referred me with other feminist that wrote a paper about the history of Peruvian Feminism in 2014, her name was Violeta Barrientos, which works as consultant and in the academy. Violeta was very enthusiastic, and she referred me to Carmen Espinoza. Carmen was also a very caring and generous feminist and, one of the founders of Manuela Ramos NGO. Later on, and due to their references, I also met Marfil Frankle (working in the academia); Virginia Vargas (founder of Flora Tristan NGO); and, Rosa Villafuerte, a youngest feminist which leads a radical feminist collective in Lima. All these interviews were done during August 2020.

At the same time, I worked with CHCC. When we spoke in June, I planned to develop meetings via Zoom, and, to collaborate with them in a project (invited by the Gera, the General Coordinator); nonetheless, with the pass of time, plans changed. I approached them again at the end of July and they had new plans in mind, I told them that I could support them with any other online activity needed and, after some time, we agreed that I could to do a lifetime memory (including all their relevant work in the media) and as a sign of ayni (Quichua word that means reciprocity), a value they cherish, they would give me the chance to know them in practice.

My initial plan was to suggest a participatory workshop where we could build together what Chola Contravisual represents for them and, how they envision it in the future; however, it became very difficult to gather the five members at the same time, so we decided to start the encounters individually or in pairs, and once with four out of the five members; for the purposes of the memory but also for my RP. They assigned Milita as the contact that I could talk to for this process, and she was the one who was always present during the encounters and in constant communication via WhatsApp. Initially, I structured the topics for

the online conversations as: women and feminism, art and culture, the Peruvian State, the institutions and the current pandemic; I sent them this schedule in advance, so they could adjust or modify the topics, they agreed with it. After each session, I sent them the video recording with information we shared as a way of receiving their feedback on the knowledge we co-constructed; similarly, for the encounters and the analysis of this RP, I took into account the visual elements that they portray in their website: videos, workshops, and, my participation in the online Feminist School Tipanakuy that they organised during July and August.

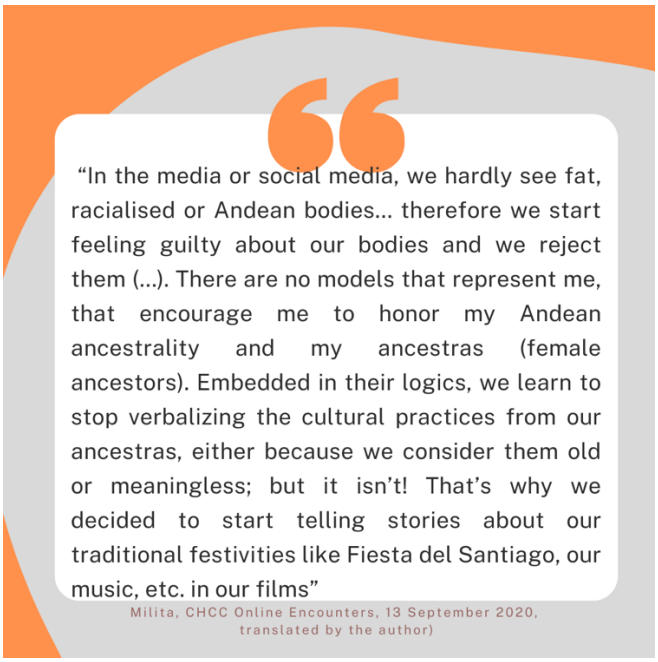
Finally, for this to happen, rather than imposing my standpoints, I aim to create, with them, a space in which we/they can reconfigure alternative narratives of resistance that allow social change to happen, being attentive to the social power relations in which these changes might take effect.

Appendix 2: Lessons about nurturing the self (selves) and austerity

I found CHCC on Facebook while browsing feminist groups; in a post shared by Feministas en Holanda (Feminists in Holland collective) that portrayed one of their recent audio-visual works. It is interesting how my expectations were also reflecting the thinking of a modern self that exoticizes 'other thinkings' and that never thought on the idea of 'modern' tools as the social media for showing feminist counternarratives.

After finding them on Facebook, my first reflection came along when I remembered what Gustavo Esteva mentions in an interview to O' Donovan (2015: 533-4); he suggests 'austerity' as an alternative practice beyond economy-centred systems and, in line with processes of deprofessionalization. In O' Donovan's (2015) interview, Esteva defined the notion of 'austerity' as a new and 'convivial' relationship with 'industrial tools' like technology or social media (globally used for the capitalist purpose of increasing individual consumption and superficial desires).

In this new relationship, the purpose of the 'industrial tools' shifts into new goals of conviviality that contribute to normalise the difference and reject the norms imposed by the project/s of coloniality. I related this reflection with how CHCC operates, they use social media to portray representations of the Peruvian womxn and sexual dissidences alternative to the Peruvian state's dominant (and modern) gendering/heteropatriarchal representations and discourses. This happens in clear response to the lack of audio-visual emancipatory alternatives in which they do not find themselves represented (Chola Contravisual 2020a):



When CHCC changes the use of social media and turns it into a tool to convey messages of emancipation and resistance to the dominant order that constantly rejects their bodies, races or sexualities, they are indeed practicing 'austerity' (O'Donovan 2015) and nurturing themselves as well as those who follow their social media accounts.

While I was talking to Milita or Gera, I could feel how they were nurturing me by sharing feminist readings or simply by creating a space for me in their collective (Esteva 2018). Similarly, by engaging with their messages, their followers (like me) are being invited to rethink their existences and to practice 'austerity' by using social media to abandon modern conceptions of Peru (Esteva 2018).

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