PEL Pensamiento Educativo. Revista de Investigación Educacional Latinoamericana
2019, 56(1), 1-15

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Facultad de Educación

# Beyond Non-Sexist Education: Contributions from Intersectional Feminist Pedagogies

# Más allá de una educación no sexista: aportes de pedagogías feministas interseccionales

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## Abstract

The feminist student movement of the year 2018 in Chile posed a series of challenges to universities, mainstreaming the demand for non-sexist education. The present article seeks to problematize this demand taking into account the theory and trajectory of intersectional feminist pedagogies, deepening the debate around sexism in education. We begin with a contextualization of the feminist student movement in Chile, pointing out its main demands. Then we explain our intersectional approach, as a positioning and a conceptualization. Secondly, we address intersectional feminist pedagogies presenting four axes we consider relevant in relation to the demands posed by the movement: feminist epistemologies and situated knowledges; feminist pedagogies as embodied and affective practices; relations and hierarchies of power: the emphasis on the relational and collective dimension of the construction of knowledges; and the concern to improve people's material living conditions. Finally, in the conclusions, we emphasize how intersectional feminist pedagogies allow us to go beyond a non-sexist education, proposing a more structural, complex, and liberating social transformation project.

***Keywords:*** education, feminism, gender, intersectionality, sexism

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We wish to thank the 2018 U-inicia Research Fund, operated by Universidad de Chile. This article is inspired by a preliminary literature review conducted for the ongoing project "Desafíos de una 'educación no sexista': resistencias y potencialidades para la incorporación de saberes y prácticas feministas en las ciencias sociales" [Challenges for 'non sexist education': Resistances and potentialities linked to the incorporation of feminist knowledge and practices in social sciences] (Principal Investigator: Dr. Lelya Troncoso).



ISSN: 0719-0409 DDI: 203.262, Santiago, Chile
doi: 10.7764/PEL.56.1.2019.1

## Resumen

Las movilizaciones feministas estudiantiles de 2018 en Chile plantearon una serie de desafíos en el ámbito universitario, transversalizando la demanda por una educación no sexista. El presente artículo busca problematizar dicha demanda, tomando en cuenta la teoría y trayectoria de las pedagogías feministas interseccionales, con el objetivo de complejizar y profundizar el debate en torno al sexismo en la educación. Para ello, comenzamos con una contextualización de la movilización feminista en Chile —señalando sus principales reivindicaciones—, para luego enfatizar en el enfoque interseccional, a modo de posicionamiento y conceptualización. En un segundo momento nos situamos desde las pedagogías feministas interseccionales analizando cuatro ejes que nos parecen sustantivos en relación con las demandas que plantea el movimiento: epistemologías feministas y saberes situados; las pedagogías feministas como prácticas encarnadas y afectivas; relaciones y jerarquías de poder y el énfasis en la dimensión relacional y colectiva de la construcción de saberes; y, por último, la preocupación por mejorar las condiciones materiales de vida de las personas. Finalmente, en las conclusiones, enfatizamos cómo las pedagogías feministas interseccionales permiten ir más allá de una educación no sexista, proponiendo un proyecto estructural, complejo y liberador de transformación social.


***Palabras clave:*** educación, feminismo, género, interseccionalidad, sexismo

## Introduction

> The feminist movement of the future must regard feminist education as a significant element in everybody's life (hooks, 2017, p. 45).

> Is it what I am doing as teacher enhancing our capacity for transformative practice? In my particular circumstances, what kind of teaching and learning has the most potential to develop a collective capacity to engage in transformative feminist practice? (Manicom, 1992, p. 383).[1]

The feminist movement has gained traction over the last years, leading, especially in Latin America, to campaigns, demonstrations, and actions demanding an end to gender violence, legal, safe, and free abortion, and non-sexist education (Fielbaum & Caviedes, 2018).

In Chile, the feminist student movement has become especially relevant by highlighting the need for non-sexist education as an overarching demand (Del Valle, 2016; Follegati, 2018; Zerán, 2018).

In an interplay and tension with other student movements, a large part of the recent feminist movement emerged from the university sphere (Follegati, 2016; 2018), organizing students' demands throughout the country and delineating their two major demands: an end to gender violence in educational centers and the establishment of non-sexist education (Palma, 2018).

The current mobilization[2] came to a head during the months of April, May, and June 2018, after the start of the student occupation of Universidad Austral in April, which was organized in response to the authorities' rejection and indifference regarding sexual harassment cases at the institution. Thus, several universities across the country joined this initiative, drawing attention to cases of sexual harassment and holding demonstrations to highlight the need to have protocols on how to deal with harassment reports, which were often deficient or did not exist at all (Muñoz, Follegati, & Jackson, 2018).

[1] Traducción de las autoras: "¿Lo que hago como profesor/a está realzando nuestra capacidad para prácticas transformadoras? En mis circunstancias particulares ¿Qué tipo de enseñanza y aprendizaje cuenta con el mayor potencial para desarrollar una capacidad colectiva de compromiso con prácticas feministas transformadoras?".]

[2] Currently, there is an incipient debate in feminism regarding the current characteristics of the Latin American and Chilean feminist movement. Although authors agree on the time frame of the rise and organization of the Latin American feminist movement in the 1980s (Escobar, Álvarez, Dagnino, & Montilla, 2001; Largo, 2014; Kirkwood, 2016), its currency in later decades is unclear. Some articles have examined the presence and currency of the movement in the 1990s and early 2000s (Ríos, Godoy, & Guerrero, 2003; Vera, 2006), while others have characterized the rise of feminism as a new type of action (Araujo, 2002). In any case, in order to study the current movement and make its nature explicit, it is necessary to perform a detailed analysis that exceeds the scope of this study. Therefore, we have chosen to use the term "mobilization" instead of "movement", given the temporal nature of the action and demands that interest us.

In this regard, non-sexist education represented a core concept expressed in Universidad de Chile's unified petition letter:

> Sexism in education is palpable in the curriculum, as well as in practices in and out of the classroom. Indeed, such problems are manifold: for instance, reading lists mostly composed of male authors in all classes of all of the university's programs and a lack of knowledge about gender topics among academics, which leads to male chauvinist comments and behaviors and invisibilization of knowledge produced by women (Universidad de Chile, 2018a, p. 11).

This petition letter led to specific demands that ranged from the inclusion of non-sexist policies in educational curricula (modification of reading lists and behaviors in and out of the classroom) to the transformation of internal guidelines, enrollment requirements, and education and training programs.

In an ongoing social process in which disputes remain regarding the languages, modes, meanings, and practices of a potential non-sexist education, we are especially interested in making the debate deeper and more complex through a dialog with what we will label intersectional *feminist pedagogies*. We believe this is an urgent exercise, since it enables us to think about a critical education aimed at working to achieve a higher level of social justice; therefore, it is necessary to articulate non-reductionist perspectives that do not address sexism as a decontextualized issue, isolated from other power relations. To what extent can intersectional feminist pedagogies contribute and add complexity to the debate on non-sexist education?, what elements of intersectional feminist pedagogies could inform the requirements of the feminist student mobilization in a critical and constructive way? These are some of the questions that we will explore in the article.

In this regard, we have observed that some petition letters and demands put forward by students mention the relevance of intersectionality, but do not specify a definition of the concept; also, this perspective does not appear to be substantially developed either in student demands or in university institutionality. Thus, we are motivated by the need to reassess, in view of today's urgency, feminist debates and dialogs able to inspire —as always-situated knowledge— our political praxis as professors and students committed to a feminist project of social transformation that transcends the unilateral views of emancipation processes (Cumes, 2012). Although feminist pedagogies comprise a spectrum that exceeds the university domain, the article covers the problem from the perspective of higher education, since it is there that the demand for non-sexist education has materialized since 2011, later extending to other educational spaces (Follegati, 2016), and because this is the sphere where we conduct our activities as feminist academics and researchers.

In this context, we start by briefly describing the background of the feminist student mobilization in Chile. Then, we explain our intersectional feminist approach and how it enables us to add complexity to the demand for non-sexist education through four core themes that we consider to be particularly relevant: the role of feminist epistemologies and situated knowledge in an intersectional feminist pedagogy; the need to think of feminist pedagogies as affective and embodied; an explicit interest in power relations and hierarchies, emphasizing the relational and collective dimension of knowledge construction; and the feminist aim to improve people's material and concrete living conditions. In the conclusions, we connect the contributions of intersectional feminist pedagogical debates with the challenges that the feminist student movement is faced with in Chile.

## Feminist student mobilization in Chile: The demand for non-sexist education

In Chile, the demand for non-sexist education emerged within the framework of the 2011 student movement, which had raised a set of views on public, free, and quality education (Follegati, 2018). This demand articulated a concern about the persistence and reproduction of sex-generic inequalities in educational domains, a reflection that emerged from university student organizations, which started thematizing the issue, mainly through gender offices and committees. The first National Conference for Non-Sexist Education was held in 2014, binging together a number of university student organizations, feminist collectives, and gender committees that set out to contribute to the construction of an educational project aimed to tackle sexism in education (Follegati, 2016).

Likewise, the demands posed by the mobilized universities in 2018 made visible a number of situations affecting students, academics, administrators, and sexual dissidents in educational spaces, including sexual harassment and abuse, the reproduction of gender stereotypes and sexist, androcentric, and heteronormative biases in the classroom, salary gaps between male and female academics, lower female participation in top administrative positions, prejudices against female academics and students wishing to balance their family life and their work, and institutional heteronormativity reflected in various experiences of violence and discrimination against LGBT+ students and academics, among other issues (Universidad de Chile, 2018a). Without attempting to provide a genealogy of the demands for non-sexist education, we will use examples that will illustrate how female students perceive the problem, thus revealing the broad scope of their demands, as well as of their ambiguities and limitations.

Thus, the demands posed by the mobilized students identify sexist education as a problem that articulates a number of negative situations, mainly targeting how the heteropatriarchy materializes itself in educational spaces, as noted in the Petitorio Toma de Mujeres de FACSO [Petition Letter of the Women's Occupation of FACSO] (Universidad de Chile, 2018b).

> Chilean education, across all its levels, reproduces the patriarchal system currently in force and establishes a division between what is expected of men and women based on gender stereotypes and roles, imposing obligatory heterosexuality and a traditional family model. Sexism in education is palpable in the curriculum, as well as in practices in and out of the classroom (Universidad de Chile, 2018b, p. 1).

Likewise, the petition letter issued by students of the Universidad Austral de Chile highlighted the need for higher education institutions to take concrete measures to modify the way in which knowledge is acquired in education centers and implement preventive mechanisms —such as training programs and obligatory gender classes in all areas— to encourage spaces free from sexism and discrimination against women and sexual diversities. In this regard, they emphasize:

> regarding education as a transformative tool, which requires a number of changes aimed at strengthening freedoms —both individual and collective—, thus overcoming the historical basis of male chauvinism in Chile and its correlate with discrimination against sexual diversities, as well as the reproduction of the patriarchal and heteronormative values of society (Universidad Austral de Chile, 2018, p. 1).

For its part, the notion of intersectionality was included in the students' demands, but the term appears to be used in a nominative and additive manner. In this regard, the Universidad Austral de Chile stresses the territorial and historical context:

> therefore, it is necessary to address women's demands taking intersectionality into account, that is, considering all the social categories involved, such as gender, race, social class, and sexual orientation when adopting a resolution (Universidad Austral de Chile, 2018, p. 2).

For its part, the Pontifica Universidad Católica de Chile petition letter highlights the following elements:

> 1. To incorporate a gender-based, feminist, and intersectional perspective into UC's educational mission statement; 2. To establish gender and dissidence quotas for faculty and administrative staff, based on proportional rates; 3. To implement obligatory general education courses introducing gender and discrimination perspectives …; 4. To allow inclusive language use in all domains of university life, including academic writing; 5. To create a binding, multilevel, dissident, and feminist committee to discuss methods for preventing arbitrary discrimination in tests (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2018, p. 5-6).

Given the above, two aspects can be highlighted: first, the inclusion of the notion of intersectionality in university politics –and the corresponding need to understand the intersection of power structures and relationships in the educational field[3]; second, the complexity of the concept, which involves a theoretical, epistemological, and methodological approach –a chance not only to understand how power operates, but also to perform situated psychosocial analyses. In this regard, it is problematic to address intersectionality as a sum of oppressions or simply repeat the term, without explaining how sexism interacts with other forms of domination and what types of inequalities and power relations are materialized in specific

[3] Documents such as petition letters lack the necessary length and format to delve deeper into this problem.

contexts, or how sexism, in students' demands for non-sexist education, becomes the nodal point linking all other dimensions of differentiation/inequality/oppression. So, how to go beyond the demand for non-sexist education? What contributions of intersectional feminisms do we regard as essential for feminist pedagogies? How to go beyond the nominative uses of intersectionality as an arithmetic of oppressions?

## Intersectionality

The notion of intersectionality was coined by feminist and anti-racist lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) as a tool to label and analyze the simultaneousness of experiences of oppression, discrimination, and invisibilization affecting African-American women in the United States. However, several critical genealogies assert that a feminist intersectional approach/paradigm has been developed which is not limited to the explicit use of the concept (Lykke, 2010; Nash, 2018; Viveros, 2016) and which is informed by Black, Chicano, Latin American, and "colored" feminisms. These approaches have explored the relationships among several systems/areas of oppression and differentiation and have problematized the unitary political subject of White feminism —Women with a capital W—, from anti-racist, postcolonial, de-colonial, lesbian, and Socialist perspectives. As a theoretical, epistemological, and political proposal (Viveros, 2016), intersectionality aims to construct a multidimensional and transdisciplinary approach to understand the complexity of power relations, inequalities, and social differentiations in a comprehensive manner (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). That is, intersectionality seeks to reveal the interconnectedness, reciprocity, co-constitution, consubstantiality, and inseparability or ethnicity/race, gender, sexuality, and class, along with other categories that social movements politicize such as capabilities, age, and migratory status. In this regard, gender must always be considered in its situated articulation with other differentiation categories, just as the patriarchy must be considered in its historical situatedness alongside other power structures such as capitalism, colonialism, and mandatory heterosexuality. In consequence, one of the challenges posed by a feminism merely focused on the gender and/or sex category is the need to deal with a varied set of oppressions, without elevating any of them over the rest or –a priori– regarding gender/sex as a cornerstone over which the others stand, thus overcoming arithmetic conceptualizations of inequalities (Viveros, 2016).

The notion of intersectionality has sparked major controversy[4], with authors problematizing its mass dissemination, its depoliticized uses (De los Reyes, 2016), and the limitations of the intersection metaphor (Lugones, 2005; Platero, 2012; Puar, 2011). This article does not discuss this debate in detail; rather, we aim to cover the critical potential of intersectional feminist approaches committed to a broad and complex struggle for social justice, feminisms not limited to challenging the inequality between women's and men's opportunities or problematizing the experiences of inequality affecting groups of more privileged women, but feminisms that link the anti-patriarchal struggle with the anticapitalist, antineoliberal, decolonial, and antiracist struggles, among others.

We adopt a post-structuralist approach to intersectionality that acknowledges it as a discursive space that hosts gatherings and critical discussions among feminist positions that are both productive and controversial (Lykke, 2010). In this regard, one of our challenges is to detect the connections between these power structures to avoid treating them as ahistorical and preexisting, thereby constantly updating our exploration of their modes and processes of articulation and their situated effects, inasmuch as they constitute social materializations of relationships, subjectivities, and experiences of privilege, domination, exclusion, and inclusion.

Acknowledging the complexity of the debate on intersectionality, we will employ the concept strategically, stressing its feminist political potential. Thus, we agree with Viveros (2016) that any genealogy of a concept is political, emphasizing the contribution of Black, colored, Latin American, and sexually dissident feminisms as "decolonizing epistemic approaches" (2016, p. 1), and that intersectionality studies must preserve their self-critical reflectivity as well as localized and contextualized analyses. In this regard, intersectionality is contextual and practical and not a general theory of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). In this context, we must as ourselves *How can we incorporate the intersectional approach into the educational sphere and into multiple knowledge domains from a feminist perspective?*

[4] For a critical genealogy of the concept, which includes a debate informed by Latin American feminisms, see Viveros (2016).

One way to do this is via "intersectional feminist pedagogies", a label that aims to identify those feminist pedagogical developments that put into practice an intersectional approach in their way of tackling social inequalities and power relations, encompassing a wide range of Black, decolonial, post-structuralist, and queer/cuir[5] sexually dissident critical debates, all of which make it possible to resist the depoliticization and (neo)liberalization of feminist demands.

## Intersectional feminist pedagogies

Feminist pedagogical debates have taken place as part of a conversation with critical pedagogies, with both positions regarding themselves as liberating and revolutionary pedagogies. The latter aspect is understandable given the demands of the feminist student movement, which highlights the need to understand a space and an "other" pedagogy able to encourage a liberating process, rather than one of inequality and discrimination. When students point out the "patriarchal" nature of the educational system, they refer to the entanglements and conflicts developing in its midst, where feminism emerges as an effective possibility of transformation. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider the proposals advanced by liberating pedagogies in this regard.

On this subject, it is impossible to overlook the inspiration of the works of Paulo Freire (2005), whose ideas influenced hooks (1994; 2000; 2003; 2017), Korol (2007; 2016), and Walsh (2013; 2017). with their feminist and decolonial initiatives engaging in a critical and constructive dialog aimed at going beyond Freire's proposals. Likewise, critical pedagogy theorists have incorporated feminist notions into their work (Giroux, 1991; McLaren, 2011). Thus, feminist pedagogies comprise both a specific philosophy and a set of classroom teaching practices informed by feminist theories and based on principles laid out by feminisms, reflecting an interest in what is taught, how, and why (Crabtree, Sapp, & Licona, 2009). Similarly, the field of feminist pedagogies displays a set of discussions around the practices whereby knowledge is produced and legitimized, along with specific approaches to contents, aims, and teaching-learning strategies focused on change and social justice (Crabtree et al., 2009). However, feminist pedagogical contributions should not be regarded as a clearly defined instruction manual or as a set of teaching techniques, but rather as a feminist political positioning, characterized by open and constructive debates that inform the ways in which teachers and students teach and learn (Manicom, 1992).

Manicom also introduces a relevant distinction by separating initiatives focused on equal opportunities from anti-sexist intitiatives in the educational domain. Anti-sexist approaches are characterized by challenging and aiming to transform structural relationships of domination and inequality, while equal opportunity initiatives tend to disregard the patriarchal power relations that re/produce women's subordination, instead focusing on inequality as a problem that is solved as more women attain positions of power similar to those of the most privileged men. This preserves the power structures that should be challenged by an intersectional feminist approach.

The notion of intersectional feminist pedagogies that we propose encompasses Latin American decolonial pedagogical approaches such as those developed by Catherine Walsh (2013; 2017), who understands teaching as "a productive sociopolitical practice and process, an essential and indispensable methodology based on people's reality and their subjectivities, histories, and struggles" (2017, p. 37). Drawing inspiration from Freire, Walsh also acknowledges her limitations due to the absence of a sex-generic and decolonial approach. We also include the contributions of queer pedagogies, which seek to disturb the norm and normalization of heterosexuality, binarisms, and the assumption that identities are fixed and essential (Britzman, 2002; flores, 2015; Luhmann, 1998; Trujillo, 2015). Yet, if we agree that "pedagogy is not a neutral knowledge transmission tool, but an institutionalized domination technique that reproduces the hegemony of male thought, gender hierarchies, essentialisms, and obligatory heterosexuality" (Da Silva, 1999, p. 51), then any feminist pedagogical practice should aim to achieve de-patriarchization, de-heterosexualization, and de-colonization in education (flores, 2015; Martínez & Ramírez, 2017).

[5] We are aware that, by grouping these diverse contributions under this umbrella, we are glossing over the north-south debate and the criticisms leveled between these different approaches and their uses in several geopolitical contexts. Without wishing to devalue this debate, we consider that it belongs to another level of complexity, outside the focus of the present article. Similarly, we make reference to queer and *cuir* aspects to highlight the displacements, tensions, torsions, and translation markers of queer theory (which originated in the English-speaking world) in the theorization and activisms of Latin American sexual dissidence that explicitly label themselves *cuir* or *kuir* (see Falconí, Castellanos, & Viteri, 2014).

In this regard, from the perspective of intersectional feminist pedagogies, we will highlight four common principles that should be relevant when initiating the debate toward feminist education.

## Feminist epistemologies and situated knowledge

The first relevant aspect to examine when envisioning feminist education is the challenging of the dominant forms of knowledge production. In this regard, feminist theorizations have linked disputes about the nature and forms of knowledge production, addressing both "the question of women in science" and "the question of science in feminism" (Harding, 1996). Complementarily, authors have challenged the false assumptions of neutrality and objectivity of the "universal man" of science, instead proposing situated knowledge: that which is always partial and embodied (Haraway, 1995). For their part, situated knowledge has been labeled a "politics of localization" (Rich, 1986) in order to visibilize a positioning that is never neutral or disinterested, but political, since it cannot be separated from its production context and includes the knower's temporal, spatial, historical, and bodily location as well as their position within power relations (Lykke, 2010).

As asserted by indigenous thinker Aura Cumes (Cariño et al., 2017), it is still necessary to develop a criticism of the modes of normalization of colonial-patriarchal powers, since "knowledge that parades its neutrality and objectiveness is neither neutral nor objective, since it is produced by concrete subjects with specific circumstances, powers, positions, and feelings" (p. 512). For Manicom (1992), feminist pedagogy is in itself a political point of view that seeks to generate feminist analyses able to inform and transform our ways of acting in the world: in other words, a liberating kind of education that will articulate a radically different relationship with knowledge production and society.

Discussions belonging to the field of feminist epistemologies (Haraway 1995; Harding, 1996; Lykke, 2010) are incorporated into feminist pedagogical proposals by establishing distance and suspecting the conditions of possibility and uses of knowledge for social, political, and economic control (Harding, 1996). This decision was made because knowledge is always the product of power relations (McLaren, 2011); in this regard, the question about who occupies positions of power and allows the generation of knowledge considered more legitimate or authorized will be key for both feminist and decolonial pedagogies, which will seek to determine the privileges and ways in which these subjects give others the possibility to "speak" and "listen" (Cariño et al., 2017, p. 509).

From this perspective, intersectional feminist pedagogical practice casts doubt on gender, sexuality, class, and "race"[6] privileges in capitalist neoliberal societies, acknowledging that educational institutions transmit, reflect, and reinforce the dominant values of a given time and historical context (McLaren, 2011), manifesting "a limited commitment to question the privileges afforded by colonial 'whiteness' and masculinity as reference points of the traditional subject-authority of knowledge" (Cariño et al., 2017, p. 512). Feminist epistemological criticism proposes a dialog between heterogeneous bodies of knowledge, which should inspire people to take action, become socially committed, develop awareness of oppression, and challenge the processes of normalization of power relations and the denaturalization of the instituted world to imagine and create other more inhabitable worlds (Cariño et al., 2017) while acknowledging the heterogeneity of knowledge, emphasizing the reassessment and appreciation of knowledge that has become subordinated (Martínez & Ramírez, 2017).

> In this respect, the knowledge constructed by feminist approaches must be complemented by processes of institutional transformation in the spaces where it is produced, disseminated, and legitimized (Cerva, 2017). Feminist studies in academia are crisscrossed by points of tension which affect the relationships between activism and academia, the processes of institutionalization of women's studies, gender, feminisms in academia, the theoretical and political dispersion of feminisms, and their relationships with women's and gender studies (Ciriza, 2017, p. 5).

As knowledge produced in the periphery, feminist studies are marginalized by the epistemic and centric knowledge that localizes them as immigrants (Martínez, 2015). Therefore, it is relevant to reflect on how resistances against the incorporation of feminist approaches and knowledge and the delegitimization processes targeting them produce "genderization" and "binarization" practices within educational

[6] We use quotation marks to stress our critical attitude toward the naturalist and racist use of racial categories, emphasizing racialization processes instead of a race of a subject's intrinsic characteristic.

institutions (Ríos, Mandiola, & Varas, 2017), considering that the science and the space where it is produced is a process and product marked by sexism (Cerva, 2017; Maffía, 2007).

Consequently, the undervaluation of feminist pedagogies goes hand in hand with the devaluation of teaching in university institutions as a feminized task (Ríos et al., 2017). The latter is especially pertinent in Chile if we consider, for instance, the vertical and horizontal segregation affecting the Universidad de Chile (Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades de Género, 2014).

Yet, we must also look beyond the subordination of women and what has been constructed as "female" or abject according to cis-heterosexual norms to make visible how the epistemologies of ignorance have operated, systematically marginalizing and denying indigenous, Afro-descendant, and non-heterosexual knowledge, among others. The epistemologies of ignorance (Pitts, 2016) produce and support structural injustices, constituting deliberate and socially accepted ignorance that conceals, distorts, and rejects certain bodies of knowledge for the benefit of certain population groups. From the perspective of queer pedagogies, authors also discuss the production of heteronormativity through ignorance, through the ways in which schools restrict certain subjects, bodies, and ways of enunciating desires considered to be deviant and impossible. Ignorance is not opposed to knowledge; instead, it is an effect and correlate of the exorbitant normality of pedagogy (Britzman, 2002). For this author, exorbitant normality produces the "other" as someone/something unintelligible or only intelligible as a special case to be resisted, never as someone authorized and legitimized to participate in everyday life or be recognized as a knowledge-generating pedagogical agent (Bello, 2018). This author proposes a transpedagogy born from questioning the limits set by normalizing pedagogy with respect to "what we can or cannot learn, and overcoming the barriers concealing other ways of feeling, thinking, and acting" (p. 115).

Lastly, it is important to point out that feminist epistemological discussions must nourish intersectional feminist pedagogical practice with their richness and diversity, thus making it possible to help validate other forms of knowledge (situated, relational, collective, and political) and delineating a variety of ways of generating research and knowledge committed to problematizing the forms of legitimization of the dominant, heteropatriarchal, capitalist, and colonial social order. Validating other forms of knowledge is key if we recognize that the normalization of social violence and inequality is also a way of knowing and inhabiting the world whose dismantling is urgent, but which systematically resists being challenged.

## Feminist pedagogies as embodied and affective practices

The problematization of the genderized dichotomies reason/emotion and mind/body is central to many feminist theorizations, given the questioned relegation of "the female" to the emotional and bodily sphere, and of "the male" to the domain of reasoning and assumptions of disembodied objectivity (Lykke, 2010; Pedwell & Whitehead, 2012). In this regard, the latter axis is intimately connected to the former, which refers to knowledge that is always situated, embodied, and contextualized. hooks (2017) considers feminisms to be passionate politics, stressing the centrality of the body and embodied and affective experience in feminist practice, where the distinction between theory and practice is meaningless. Likewise, for feminist popular educator Korol (2016) a feminist pedagogy springs "from our bodies, felt and experienced as territories, to recognize ourselves in our communities as organizations, movements, and peoples" (p. 81).

Thus, feminist pedagogy is an affective pedagogy that promotes passion for ideas and critical thinking, acknowledging that these are dangerous passions for anti-intellectual societies that fear revolutionary critical reflection. For hooks (1994), emphasizing the enjoyment of teaching is an act of resistance that opposes the overwhelming boredom, disinterest, and apathy that often characterizes classroom experiences. Pleasure and enthusiasm must take center stage in education. Feminist pedagogy needs the joy of learning and reading as well as enthusiasm to stimulate intellectual and academic commitment. For Manicom (1992), passionate teaching is a characteristic of feminist educators, who are propelled by the vision of a world that has yet to materialize. In this regard, feminist pedagogy requires that teachers be able to inspire political commitment in students. In this vein, flores (2016) urges practitioners to recover the erotic power of the classroom as a way to disjoint the heterosexualizing politics of bodies and knowledge –not only students' bodies, but also the sex-gendered bodies of teachers within the feminization and subordination device of teaching. Here, the term *erotic* is used broadly and refers not only to sexual desires, but also to intellectual, knowledge, and affective ones.

This suggests that emotions are not absent from academic culture; in fact, some of them are overrated (Winans, 2012), with institutions promoting a specific type of emotional orientation that includes distance, coldness, and harshness, which are regarded as signs of cultivation, whereas other emotions are perceived as weaknesses (Ahmed, 2004). In this respect, emotions are not individual, nor do they circulate symmetrically, since their meanings emerge from power relations and in historical, social, and cultural matrixes (Ahmed, 2004; Winans, 2012).

The generalized hierarchization of emotions is reproduced in everyday utterances heard in the university domain, such as those collected by students during the feminist occupations in 2018: "You look like a girl, trembling like a fag", a doctor told an intern in the middle of a surgery, or "No, I'm not going to make him cry. I only make women cry". These typical phrases reflect behaviors and affective expressions defined as suitable depending on gender, while also revealing the interplay among multiple types of discrimination: in this case, sexism, homophobia, and adultcentrism. In this regard, some studies assert that bodies marked as vulnerable due to racialization, genderization, or class-based prejudices tend to be perceived as risky, generally being understood as "older" by academics, and therefore more responsible for their actions, although more deficient and less intellectually capable (Martin, 2017). The feminized body, for its part, emerges as a sexualized body subjected to more regulation, control, vigilance, and punishment; that is, a body whose sexual harassment and abuse has been naturalized and normalized (Martin, 2017).

Working on the role of emotions in the classroom does not equal strengthening specific emotions (those perceived as positive); instead, our aim should be to cultivate emotional literacy, understood as greater awareness of the roles that emotions play in the negotiation of identity, the impact of emotional rules and differences in our community, and how emotions guide our attention and knowledge construction patterns (Winans, 2012). Thus, an embodied and affective pedagogy involves acknowledging bodies and their existences, marked by power relations materialized in ways of relating to others and concrete experiences of privilege and oppression. It also requires overcoming the fiction of an educational space where minds engage in a conversation in which bodies have no place. Normative pedagogical spaces generate discomfort and suffering in people who do not fit in; in this context, transpedagogy encourages us to transform that discomfort into an invitation to challenge the safety and comfort of those who occupy privileged positions and establish disquieting dialogs through differences (Bello, 2018).

Feminist education has also been studied as an "ethic of care" (Crabtree et al., 2009; Tronto, 2013), a political and affective ethic characterized by interest in students as people. These ethical principles encourage teachers to help students link what they learn with their personal lives and to accompany them throughout their personal and intellectual growth trajectories. In this respect, it should be noted that an essentialist reading of the ethic of care has been problematized (Manicom, 1992), since it presumes that care is a female trait or that women display more solidarity and kindness by nature. Other non-essentialist readings of the ethic of care, based on notions of interdependence (versus autonomy of the neoliberal subject) have made it possible to problematize work experiences of life in accelerated neoliberal academia (Conesa, 2018). The ethic of care (Tronto, 2013) levels a major criticism at neoliberalism by displacing the productive subject and placing care and interdependence at the center of human relationships. The figure of the disembodied academic that dominates neoliberal academia is based on the masculinized ideal of a subject whose main responsibility in life is work (Bailyn, 2003), which perpetuates the white, middle-class male model and the image of the provider characterized by competitiveness and success in climbing the academic excellence hierarchy ladder (Conesa, 2018). This model greatly affects women and other feminized subjects who take on care tasks, either as mothers, main caregivers, or homemakers. In this regard, an ethic of care is considered to be disruptive in the neoliberal university (Conesa, 2018) and can also inform new relationship modes among academics in institutions that promote competition, the construction of instrumental relationships, and the individualization of success.

### Power relations and hierarchies: Emphasizing the relational and collective dimension of knowledge construction

The problematization of power relations, both in society and in the classroom (Crabtree et al., 2009), along with the need to actively construct more horizontal spaces for exchange, mutual learning, and debate, will be central in many feminist pedagogical proposals (hooks, 2003; Martin et al., 2017).

In fact, initiatives aimed at reducing teacher authority in the classroom have led to concrete teaching practices such as the use of less directive techniques, circular desk arrangement, the validation of students as experts, and shared leadership (Manicom, 1992). However, the establishment of more horizontal relationships has been hotly debated, since teacher authority is hard to displace and decenter in practice. In this respect, it is important not to romanticize feminist pedagogical or research practices as fictions of equality and horizontality; instead, we should be critically aware of power relations accepted to be unavoidable (Troncoso, Galaz, & Álvarez, 2017).

In this vein, Manicom (1992) asserts that a feminist pedagogy must use its authority to problematize and interrupt the power relations operating among students. For hooks (1994), this means that it is essential to challenge teachers' exercise of power and authority in the classroom, which can become a sort of little kingdom where students are often humiliated and ridiculed. hooks emphasizes that power can be used constructively, although it is relevant to consider that the structures of educational institutions tend to defend the notion that it is not problematic to use power in the classroom to reinforce and maintain coercive hierarchies.

Dale Bauer (2009) addresses the topic of authority from a different angle, which we can link to the first axis that we defined in our study of feminist knowledge construction. Indeed, Bauer problematizes the ways in which feminists have established their rejection toward all forms of authority due to its association with domination and patriarchy and advocates for the need to accept the authority of feminist knowledge, stressing that the tension generated by this authority must be used constructively to promote social transformations. However, it is still difficult for feminist studies to gain academic recognition as a source of relevant topics and disciplines. For instance, although gender studies were incorporated into Chilean universities over twenty years ago, stereotyped views on feminism persist: it is only regarded as a social movement and not as a theoretical and methodological[7] body that tackles transdisciplinary issues. Thus, advocating for the authority of feminist theories and knowledge to discuss social inequalities, sexism and sex-genderization processes, heteronormativity, knowledge production, and the full set of power relations from an intersectional perspective can be regarded as an emancipatory strategy.

The democratization of formal learning spaces, however, is not considered to be easy: authors describe it as an openness toward the discomfort that characterizes the act of problematizing the authority positioning enjoyed by teacher knowledge. In addition, this democratization process requires willingness to hold uncomfortable debates in the classroom. This task (which is challenging for both teachers and students) can be deeply transformative for both parties (Martin, 2017): establishing dialogs and addressing theorizations that explicitly challenge the dominant social order, taking into account non-hegemonic points of view about social reality, and openly examining power relations and subordination experiences in the classroom can lead to pain, guilt, and denial among those in more privileged positions and sadness and impotence among those who belong to non-hegemonic social groups (e.g. people who are racialized, stigmatized for class-related reasons, or discriminated against for their physical appearance or abilities) (Martin, 2017). However, it is crucial to recognize that gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality privileges will empower some students more than others; therefore, actively constructing learning communities where everyone's voice is acknowledged and valued is a permanent challenge –one which is colored by the critical need to subvert and make visible the power relations and knowledge that domination relationships reproduce.

For hooks (1994), it is essential to use class antagonism in a constructive way in order to subvert and challenge existing structures. This involves, for instance, avoiding the term "women" when referring to experiences of materially privileged women. Therefore, teaching in an intersectional feminist manner requires an active commitment to prevent the erasure of the situated experiences of subjects produced outside both the sex-generic norm and racial, ethnic, and class hegemonies. Likewise, it requires that teachers acknowledge their own positioning as subjects within relationships of privilege and oppression in classrooms characterized by diversity in terms of gender, class, nationality, and sexuality, among other aspects.

[7] This also displays a view of social movements as unable to produce knowledge relevant to educational spaces.

### Interest in improving people's material living conditions

> We who are poor, we who are lesbian, we who are black, know that survival is not an academic subject (Lorde, 2003).

As we initially pointed out, for intersectional feminist pedagogies, the aim of education is to promote liberating processes focused on visibilizing, problematizing, and transforming social inequalities, taking into account both their structural dimension and the ways in which concrete and situated experiences of privilege and oppression are materialized. In this regard, feminist pedagogies share a commitment to generate changes that improve people's concrete and material life (Martin, 2017), that is, it is not only a matter of making debates and reflections possible, but also of changing our ways of understanding and materializing the world.

From this perspective, feminist pedagogies have the explicit aim –and the dream– to liberate subjects and seek to improve people's existence in a world that is presumed to be hostile. A learning community ruled by feminist principles must seek to uncover abuses of power and the knowledge that promotes and preserves social inequality, while also inspiring subjects committed to achieve the social transformations necessary to come closer to the future that we long for. Critical thinking is therefore central to this principle, since it provides tools for the analysis of social differences between groups and sheds light on how all people are part of domination, subordination, and exploitation relationships (Crabtree et al., 2009).

Lastly, it is a major task to understand how education links together multiple aspects; thus, it is necessary to challenge and delve deeper into the articulation of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age, nationality, and physical appearance, among other aspects, establishing complex associations and positionings that involve power, privilege/oppression, inclusion/exclusion in specific contexts of the educational domain. Here, the contextual dimension is key, because we know that even if we identify macrostructures of power and inequality, these manifest themselves and interact with one another differentially. Thus, intersectional feminist pedagogies not only add complexity to the debate, but also provide useful tools to understand new ways of defining and approaching the modes of reproduction of injustices and inequalities from an educational perspective and in the educational sphere.

## Conclusions

> My cry is part of a related and relational horror, it is a cry in response to the capitalist-extractivist-patriarchal-modern/colonial system that is killing us all (though not necessarily in the same way), a response to exasperating hopelessness (including that of so-called "progressivism"), and a response to the question of what to do and how to do it (think, act, fight, cry) in and from my contexts and with other contexts and under collectives (Walsh, 2017, p. 26).

The Chilean feminist student movement in 2018, led by women, lesbians, and trans people, gave us a new chance to address the inequalities manifested and produced in education, while also enabling us to reassess key questions about the aims and meaning of education from a feminist perspective. These very questions have taken center stage in both critical and feminist proposals.

From an intersectional perspective, the demand for non-sexist education will be limited and reductionist if it fails to acknowledge the articulation of sexism with other power structures and its materialization in complex experiences of privilege and inequality, in the concrete and material lives of groups and people in specific contexts. Likewise, an intersectional point of view will emphasize the situated analysis of power relations and their articulation, instead of employing sexism as an articulating axis and/or an arithmetic sum. In this respect, we consider that adopting intersectionality as an approach, theory, and methodology in the educational domain would enable us to counter possible liberal readings of feminist demands in terms of equality, which ignore the structural dimensions of power and end up individualizing social and historical problems.

Another key challenge for the Chilean feminist movement today is to continue progressing toward the articulation of multiple struggles, based on the recognition of the interconnectedness of various forms of violence, domination, and marginalization, understanding the specificities and hegemonies that determine which subjects and voices are subordinated and excluded. By referring to intersectional

feminist pedagogies, we choose to advocate for situated and contextual analysis and for the need to establish alliances and articulations. Thus, we do not intend to subsume everything under the banner of feminism, ignoring other trajectories and genealogies of knowledge and struggle; instead, we seek to construct a feminist pedagogy (one that is more complex than simply non-sexism) that is able to open up, challenging its boundaries and the power structures in which it positions itself as a demand and praxis in relation to other subjects, demands, and bodies of knowledge.

From an intersectional perspective, we intend to make a critical and constructive contribution to the pending tasks derived from the explosion of this social mobilization. Without a totalizing intent, the four axes that we defined aimed to identify certain elements in order to approach teachers' task in this context, presenting the topic to be discussed within the (heterogeneous) group of student feminisms. Regarding institutional work, we think it is relevant for universities to consider intersectionality as a perspective and methodology of sociological analysis when studying how to shape their policies, how the dimensions of oppression are being prioritized and categorized, the subjects and articulations that develop among gender policies in universities, and other agendas (e.g. diversity, ethnicity, outreach). One of the essential goals to meet is to continue engaging in three-level work (involving faculty, administrators, and students) to shed light on the inequality and power relations experienced differentially by students, academics, and staff according to their sex-gender, ethnicity, racialization, contract status, and bodily capabilities, among other factors. An intersectional approach encourages us to constantly ask ourselves what inequality subjects and experiences we are talking about when we discuss gender and sexism, what realities are excluded from our demands, and how we adopt positions and participate in complex power relations.

As hooks (2017) repeatedly asserts, feminism should not be understood as a lifestyle or an identity, but as a praxis of collective political struggle. A feminist education must contribute to the task of constructing critical consciousnesses and praxis that, based on the acknowledgment of the complexity of power relations and structures, encourage an active commitment to participate in the transformation of social inequalities in order to attain a fairer and more livable world for everybody.

The original article was received on December 15th,2018
The revised article was received on March 14th, 2019
The article was accepted on March 21st, 2019

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