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ARTICLE

Historically Drowning Othered Voices with a Few Waves

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to problematize how the wave narrative maintains and reinforces the hegemony of Western-dominant feminisms while silencing, excluding, appropriating, and/or diluting Othered feminisms and gender-related perspectives. As Western-dominant feminist historicizations travel to the wave narrative, they become the points of reference to all, while Othered historicizations are either erased or Westernized and whitewashed as they travel to the wave narrative. First, to present these problematizations, I will articulate with Edward Said's travelling theories, Santiago Castro-Gómez's zero-point hubris, and Linda Alcoff's speaking for the other. Secondly, I will argue the wave narrative is embedded in Western myths that reinforce its supremacy, including the myths of: (i) true-universal feminisms; (ii) neutral locus of enunciation; (iii) linear-progressive feminist historicization; and (iv) white feminist savior. Finally, I seek to contribute with the theoretical perspectives presented in this paper by focusing on: (1) the importance of understanding from-to/how-by theories and historicizations travel; (2) how Othered epistemologies are located, according to zero-point hubris logics, within hyper-surveilled points of no-observation; and (3) how the dilution and appropriation of Othered stories and epistemologies by Western-dominant feminisms is not simply speaking for Others, but speaking above Others.

1. Visibilizing my positionalities: On whiteness and otherness

When I first began this paper, I was still living in Brazil as a white, middle-class woman. Then, I would mostly identify myself as the "general" woman; sometimes, in papers, I would position myself as a Latina to point out colonial hierarchies between the Global North and the Global South. These positionalities would depend on the convenience involved, positionalities which I could or could not "disclose". Now, living and researching in Portugal, I can better comprehend the oppressions involved in my contradictory positionalities and my convenient disclosing. In my current context, my Brazilianness means feeling and being insecure and unsafe in spaces in which, in Brazil, I felt absolutely at ease; it means feeling the inferiority of my Otherness, the fault of my Otherness, every moment I open my mouth and speak with my Brazilian Portuguese, the wrong Portuguese. It also means further understanding my Brazilian whiteness.

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Whiteness cannot be left unproblematized nor invisible, and much less can it be a matter of convenient self-legitimizing "disclosure" (see Alcoff 1991; Bento 2002). In this work, whiteness is necessarily historically-geopolitically contextualized, heterogeneous, and intersected with other systems of power (see Crenshaw 1991; Bonnet 2014), representing the colonial power to classify others as "non-white" (see Maldonado-Torres 2007; Fanon 2008), and racial symbolic-material privileges and licenses (see Muller and Cardoso 2017). On a global scale, the white-whites (i.e., whiteness of reference) are Western-white, particularly from the US and UK. However, there is whiteness within the Global South as well, with Latin American elites representing the non-white whites (see Cardoso 2020). Denying or silencing local-level whiteness has served to maintain its ivory towers, particularly within the Global South, a practice that has been reproduced even by some leftist activists and anti-colonial/decolonial scholars, including feminists (see, for instance, Gonzalez 2020; Terrefe 2020; Rodrigues 2023).

This work is also embedded in Othered feminisms' collective "we." If, on the one hand, I recognize how highlighting our Othered selves as the collective "we" can be an important movement, on the other, this collective "we" can become highly problematic, unequal, and exclusionary if it is homogenized, since homogenization tends to favor the most privileged within heterogeneous groups. In this work, "we" does not mean flattening the difference; it means thriving in it, it means being and knowing in messiness, being simultaneously oppressed and oppressor. It is not about equality in sameness but seeking justice in multiplicity and even contradiction. Adopting the Othered "we" is not about having A Voice to represent all voices but resisting the essentialist and narcissistic I-voice through multiple and mutually supportive We-voices. The collective "we" does not mean that I am We. It means that I am not without We.

Assuming that feminist epistemologies, historicizations, and activisms are heterogenous, multiple, and must be socially, economically, geopolitically, and racially contextualized, the purpose of this paper is to problematize how the wave narrative maintains and reinforces the hegemony of Western-dominant feminisms while silencing, excluding, appropriating, and/or diluting Othered feminisms and gender-related perspectives. As Western-dominant feminist historicizations travel to the wave narrative, they become the points of reference to all, while Othered historicizations are either obliviated-silenced or Westernized-whitened as/if they are selected to be traveled to the wave narrative.

In section 2, articulating Edward Said's travelling theories, Santiago Castro-Gómez's zero-point hubris, and Linda Alcoff's speaking for the other, I focus my discussions on how the wave narrative traveled Western-dominant feminist historicizations to a place above all multiple historicizations, making itself a reference beyond all others that is not observed but observes all, forging a feminist pantheon. That way, the wave narrative's dominant feminisms and feminists became the legitimated locus to interpret, judge, and speak for all (see Said 1983; Alcoff 1991; Castro-Gómez 2005), distorting and appropriating or marginalizing and obliterating Othered feminist historicizations and epistemologies.

In section 3, I debate four myths imposed by the wave narrative, which reinforce its superior position in comparison with Othered historicizations and epistemologies, including the myths of: (i) true-universal feminisms; (ii) neutral locus of enunciation; (iii) linear-progressive feminist historicization; (iv) and white feminist savior. The main idea here is to discuss how these myths legitimate the adoption of the wave narrative as a representation of feminist historicization that is universal, epistemically and

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geopolitically neutral, and linear-progressive, creating not only epistemic exclusions, but also maintaining the supremacy of Western-dominant feminist scholars and their license to save Othered women the way they consider more adequate.

In section 4, I will present non-exhaustive and non-essentialist concepts and debates that seek to contribute to the theorizations presented in section 2 (travelling theory by Edward Said, zero-point hubris by Santiago Castro-Gómez, and speaking for the other by Linda Alcoff), also considering the myths debated in section 3. Thus, I will focus on: (1) the importance of understanding, highlighting, and problematizing from-to/how-by theories and historicizations travel; (2) how Othered epistemologies and historicizations are located, according to Western-dominant hierarchies, in hyper-surveilled points of no-observation; and (3) how the dilution and appropriation of Othered stories and epistemologies by Western-dominant feminisms are not simply speaking for Others, but speaking above Others.

In my closing remarks of this manuscript, I problematize the neoliberalization of academia, and offer a few examples of how it impacts—particularly Othered—feminisms, feminists, and women. Finally, I must highlight that, the same way dominant feminisms reflected in the wave narrative can never represent all feminisms/feminists in the world, I cannot (and no one can/should) universalize Othered feminisms nor exhaustively represent all Othered peoples who suffer from gender-related/intersected oppressions. It would be replacing one form of oppressive, exclusionary, and homogenizing universalization with another. All I can say is I did the best I could, and I will keep working on improving the best I can do.

2. Forging a feminist pantheon: On travelling waves and zero-point hubris waves

According to Edward Said (1983, 2000) a theory or idea can be assumed as pertaining to specific historical circumstances; therefore, a historical approach is always necessary to understand different interpretations of a theory. Said's analysis on how theories can travel from one domain to another, and how such travels can have different impacts on these theories—their distillation and/or misinterpretation, or, on the contrary, their straightening—is very adequate here to discuss how historical contexts can also travel, with a profound impact on the epistemologies shaped within, by, and from these stories. As exemplified by Said (1983), when a theory developed by activists who actually participated in the struggles they theorized about is interpreted from a locus of epistemic privilege, such theory might degrade in its critical strength, being misread as it travels historically and contextually.

In the case of the wave narrative, it centers on Western-dominant feminist historicizations, while Othered stories, realities, and contexts of feminisms rooted "outside" Western epistemic borders are de-historicized and de-contextualized in order to answer to the paradigms universalized by the narrative of reference. For decades, the dangers involved in the Western practice "of speaking across differences of race, culture, sexuality, and power" have been criticized for causing and reinforcing oppressions against Others (Alcoff 1991, 2). Telling Othered stories from dominant places enables the dominant interpreters to judge practices as good or bad, as feminist or sexist, as oppressive or liberatory, based on their own paradigms, which could be completely different—even opposed—to Othered paradigms and realities (see Alarcón 1990, Abu-Lughod 2002).

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This has happened with intersectionality, which has been articulated with/within the third wave (see, for instance, Evans 2015; Keenan 2014). Intersectionality quickly became a threat to the logics of Western-dominant feminisms and their historical roots and activisms, exposing and problematizing the invisibilization of privileges, inequalities, and oppressions within groups of women; at the same time, it became increasingly popular among activists and scholars (see Crenshaw 1991; Collins 2015). To address the coexistence of threat and popularity—which, in Western neoliberal academia, also means market value—Western-dominant feminisms appropriated intersectionality, Westernizing and whitening its perspectives, frameworks, historical roots, and contexts while it travelled/was travelled to Western academia (see Knapp 2005; May 2014) and the wave narrative, so it could fit into their logics.

By de-localizing/de-historicizing intersectionality from Black feminist thought and activisms, Critical Race theories, and anti-colonial movements, and re-localizing/re-historicizing it within "broader" (i.e., Western-dominant) feminist movements, stories, and studies, intersectionality is reframed according to the politics of Western "universal" canonicity and sanitized feminist historicization (see Bilge 2013). Intersectionality's re-historicization means moving away from the core of intersectional thought, genealogies, and most of its influences, such as Ida Wells Barnett and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, civil rights Black feminists who, rarely—if ever—make an appearance in mainstream feminist historicizations (see Collins 2013). Other activists/scholars related to intersectionality, who could not be as easily ignored, can still be re-contextualized in feminist sanitized historicization (see May 2014), such as Sojourner Truth.

As with theories (Said 1983), stories can travel, their versions changing depending on who tells them, how they are told, from where they are told. And the who-how-where of reference can tell a story from a privileged unobserved point of observation (see Castro-Gómez 2007). Just like theories cannot be neutral (Said 1983) neither can be stories; supposedly universal-neutral historicizations tend to represent the version of the dominant. A recent example is represented by the Me Too movement, which has been connected with the fourth wave (see Andersen 2018; Phipps 2021). While many might connect the origins of this movement with actress Alyssa Milano's tweet with the hashtag #MeToo, amidst a Hollywood scandal involving multiple accusations against producer Harvey Weinstein, Me Too was in fact a movement created by activist Tarana Burke to offer support to Black girls and women who suffered sexual violence (see Boyd and McEwan 2024).

By entering the Me Too movement and making it viral, Milano decentered it from Burke's original purpose and recentered it on white feminism through white rage and white tears (see Phipps 2021), forging an "illumination/occlusion paradox that creates the illusion of inclusivity, creates difficulty in community boundary management, and allows for outsider gaze into a previously safe space," with the abrupt hyper-visibility of the stories of violent experiences for some (i.e., more privileged) groups and the simultaneous invisibility of Others (i.e., historically marginalized) groups (see Boyd and McEwan 2024). The erasure of Me Too's genealogies meant, ironically, leaving out the people for whom it was originally created (see Noveck 2021).

However, it is not only Othered stories that (are) traveled—either to oblivion or to the emptying of de-/re-contextualization. The wave narrative also traveled; in this case, it traveled beyond its own specific contexts and *loci* of enunciation, traveling further and higher than it should ever go, creating a narrative above and broader than its own situation, moving up "into a sort of bad infinity" (Said 1983, 239). The danger of assuming the ability to transcend one's location is to speak "for or on behalf of less

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privileged persons," which normally results "in increasing or reenforcing the oppression of the group spoken for," particularly when the dominant speaker is seen as the legitimizer and authenticator for Others' causes (Alcoff 1991, 7). The wave narrative and its epistemic configurations serve as the supreme legitimator for feminist movements, as if wave narrative feminists spoke from a de-localized place, a zero-point hubris.

The zero-point hubris (Castro-Gómez, 2005) is the representation of a view of the world according to Western-dominant epistemic models. Zero-point hubris models have historically benefitted Global North (including academic) elites, who (re)produce Western-white, cis-heteronormative, patriarchal, neoliberal, colonial-modern logics, concepts, and norms disguised as neutral, apolitical, and de-localized points of observation (see Lander 2005; Bilge 2013; Lugones 2020). Nevertheless, Global South elites have also benefitted—even if partly and often on a local level—from those models, which have been central in the maintenance of their ivory towers (see Castro-Gómez 2005).

Within the multiple, heterogeneous, multi-level feminist movements, epistemologies, and historicizations, Western-dominant feminisms self-position in the zero-point hubris, thus contributing "to the maintenance of dominant paradigms by presenting them as equally legitimate alternatives" (Grande 2003, 337). The wave narrative is not simply insufficient or limited in its historical analysis; by self-locating in the zero-point hubris, the wave narrative offers a view of the world that is interpreted with (and by) Western-dominant lenses, not only failing to combat systems of oppression, but imposing many of them on multiple Others. After all, Othered feminisms seek to combat not a sanitized patriarchy, but white, colonial, neoliberal, cis-heteronormative patriarchy (e.g., Mohanty 1984; Lugones 2020; Gonzalez 2020).

As the zero-point hubris of feminist historicization, the wave narrative has three main (if not only) consequences, which will be briefly discussed in this section and further debated in the myths presented in the following section. The most explicit consequence is perhaps becoming the historicization of reference, with epistemic and geopolitical-social-economic-racial-cultural locations of reference. However, two other consequences must be taken into account: how the wave narrative appropriates Othered stories that it selects to be a part of its feminist mythological pantheon, diluting/distorting them considerably by interpreting them with their own lenses and according to their own historicization; finally, the wave narrative also establishes the paradigms imposed in the interpretation of stories that were excluded from it—if once excluded Othered historicizations are ever remembered, they should be remembered from (and interpreted with) the lenses of the wave narrative.

The "Me Too" case presented before exemplifies all three potential consequences. As it became viral, Milano's #MeToo movement became the movement of reference in the fourth wave, being the supreme representation of resistance against sexual harassment, particularly with the use of social network. This movement, with unquestionable international impact and importance, was still centered on Western-white privilege. Moreover, Milano's #MeToo was an appropriation of Burke's movement and a distortion of her purpose as it travelled to Hollywoodian social media, with a decentering from racialized non-privileged women and girls and a recentering on Western-white privilege. After being left out of the viral movement appropriated from her own, when and if remembered, Burke's Me Too is now a secondary element in the #MeToo of reference, being read by its parameters.

Another example of the aforementioned consequences can be found in the first wave, primarily represented by the suffragists and early feminists related to nineteenth-century

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women's rights activists (see, for instance, Garcia 2011). In the case of the suffragists, despite being represented as a united, common-goals group/movement, they were neither a homogeneous group nor movement; the suffragists mostly represented in the wave narrative are white and bourgeois women from England or the US, and have a deep connection with capitalist practices, especially department stores, which became an important social space for these privileged women, later turning into meeting places for privileged suffragists (see Maclaran 2012). Racial-social-economic-geographical status thus turns into indicators of commitment by the zero-point hubris suffragists.

Privileged suffragists did not go uncriticized: while white poor workers suffragists accused their privileged "sisters" of using their trademark clothing as a form of differentiating themselves from lower classes (see Maclaran 2012), racialized women were not only differentiated, but denied their own condition of womanhood and even repressed by colonialist zero-point hubris wavers, as famously pointed out in the US by Sojourner Truth and her abolitionist and women's rights speech in the 1851 Women's Rights Convention (see Mandziuk 2003; Zackodnik, 2004). Colonial and imperial attitudes were also present in the UK, with the marginalization and, later, erasure of Indian suffragists; even though some privileged British suffragists would call Indian feminists their transnational sisters, they were never considered equals (see Burton 1991).

By making US/UK privileged suffragists the reference, homogenizing the movement and the group within a specific location, the wave narrative dilutes criticism and struggles in which these women were also considered oppressors. Moreover, other suffragist movements—within the Global North or in other parts of the world (e.g., Caughie 2010; Mirza 2014; Valverde 2016) become a secondary effect of the suffragists of reference, if ever remembered. It also creates a logic of temporal reference: even outside the Global North, the only feminisms that are considered "relevant" or "legitimate" are those that reflect the historicizations present in the wave narrative. This generates further forgetting and exclusions, such as with Black women's struggles and feminisms in Brazil, which have been excluded by anti-colonial movements, suffragists, and other feminist movements (e.g., Lacerda 2019; Tenório 2021).

The zero-point hubris also involves metanarratives according to which progress and development depend upon a "valid" education/science based on Western-dominant paradigms of knowledge (see Castro-Gómez 2005, 2007). Just like Western-dominant epistemologies become the "certainty" of true knowledge, produced from an unobserved point of observation (see Castro-Gómez 2007), the wave narrative becomes a privileged historicization in an unobserved point of observation for the production of true, valid, progressive feminist knowledge. The wave narrative is more than a point of (unobserved) reference: it also retains the legitimacy for observing and judging what is true and valid feminist historical movements and production of knowledge (see, for instance, Janiewski 2001; Zakaria 2021).

There is not a shred of doubt regarding knowledges located in the zero-point hubris; its mathematical structure, which divides knowledge into separatable parts that are then put into a logical order of progress, reaffirms its supremacy and location above any possible questioning and reasoning (Castro-Gómez 2007). Such mathematical and logical order is duly present in the wave narrative, and its separation of homogenic stories into certain periods of time, clustering multiple realities, movements, feminisms, and productions of knowledge into one wave—first, second, third, or fourth (see Gamble 2001; Garcia 2011; Maclaran 2012)—as if these historicizations could be linearly, progressively, and homogeneously structured.

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Multiplicities of realities and fights (e.g., different *loci* of enunciation—see Janiewski 2001; Silva and Ferreira 2017), layers of oppression, with intra and inter-group differences and tensions (e.g., Sojourner Truth and white privileged suffragists, Mandziuk 2003), historical continuities and discontinuities, with backlashes and setbacks (e.g., the 2018 assassination of congressperson Marielle Franco—see Rodrigues and Vieira 2020), they all cease to exist – or are diluted, simplified and lose major parts of their content and critical potentialities – in this linear-progressive historical structure. The zero-point hubris is thus "the great sin of the West: professing a point of view about all other points of view, without allowing the existence of a point of view on its own point of view" (Castro-Gómez, 2007: 83, translated by the author).

This point of view above all other points of view allows the dominant habitants of the zero-point hubris to define what and how history and knowledge are pertinent (see Castro-Gomez, 2005; 2007). The wave narrative, from its zero-point hubris, has been defining the feminists of reference, the "canons", not only historically, but also epistemologically – e.g.: Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the first wave, Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedman in the second, bell hooks and Judith Butler in the third (see Maclaran 2012; Garcia 2011). Moreover, from the zero-point hubris, it is possible to re-establish and even recreate points of reference, such as intersectionality and its genealogies (see Bilge 2013, 2014) and the Me Too movement (see Boyd and McEwan 2024). In the next section, I will further debate four specific myths created within the mythological pantheon of the wave narrative.

3. Reinforcing Westernization: On the myths of the wave narrative

Adopting the wave narrative means adopting a Zero-Point Hubris historicization based on myths that reinforce Western-dominant paradigms, maintaining inequalities, exclusions, and silencings in multiple-intersected dimensions, such as race, sexual orientation, and gender. The myths here discussed are not exhaustive, must be understood in constant and intrinsic intersection with one another, and include: (i) true-universal feminisms myth; (ii) neutral locus of enunciation myth; (iii) linear-progressive feminist historicization myth; (iv) white feminist savior myth.

The traveling of cherry-picked Othered stories to the wave narrative is not incidental: it reinforces the idea that Western-dominant feminisms represent universal values and concepts, while observing all from a privileged point of observation. Having universal validity is a fundamental assumption for zero-point hubris knowledges: it is one of the main elements of the colonial-modern concept of true science (see, for instance, Grosfoguel 2002; Lander 2005). The wave narrative thus serves to further zero-point hubris feminisms' universality: universalist-oriented epistemologies and historicizations can thus legitimatize and potentialize one another's universal validity. Moreover, these universalist logics articulate with the myth that Western-dominant masculinity produces true-universal knowledges that are unpositioned, unlocated, and neutral. For this reason, the true-universal feminisms myth is a foundational myth of the wave narrative, transversally present in all others.

The universalist assumption of neutrality of location and positionalities in the wave narrative and in Western-dominant feminisms serves as a smokescreen for ideologies that are white-centered, colonial-centered, cis-centered (see Carbado 2013; Saad 2020). From the zero-point hubris, the wave narrative masks systems of power, inequalities, and exclusions through a universalism that privileges "the indeterminacy of the subject" which, in turn, protects "the material interests of the powerful and propertied classes,"

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treating masculine oppression and power in essentialist terms, ultimately enabling "difference to be relativized and the power and ubiquity of totalizing projects such as colonization to be diminished" (Grande 2003, 345). It reinforces the myth that only certain feminisms deserve the label of true-universal epistemologies, a tendency that has its roots in colonialism (see Smith 2009).

The wave narrative intrinsically and systemically backstages Otherness, centering on stories of US-European white, middle-class, cis-heterosexual women (Loney-Howes 2019): bourgeois suffragists who met at department stores (Maclaran 2012); second-wave feminists that influenced the fashion industry (Lebovic 2019); third wave post-feminists that sought women's empowerment (Gamble 2001; Aune and Holyoak 2018), or fourth wave Hollywoodian leaders of the #TimesUp and #MeToo movements (Andersen 2018; Loney-Howes 2019). Women's empowerment demands have been particularly articulated with Westernness, whiteness, middle-classness, and neoliberal ideals, and its universalization and institutionalization have been criticized for creating a paradox in which glossy narratives of success business cases that "unleash" women's potential coexist with the incorporation of women in labor markets in precarious, unequal, and discriminatory conditions (see Cornwall 2018).

On the one hand, there is a corporate-oriented hyper-visibilization of the need to empower women and girls; on the other, there is an invisibilization of oppressions, pressures, and precarity loaded on their shoulders in the process of being "empowered," which becomes heavier as they are more marginalized and vulnerable, particularly when they are poor, racialized, and have limited education. The politics of "empowering" have focused on women working for global development, companies' profits, and national competitiveness, rarely addressing much needed structural change in the capitalist and labor market systems so they can work for women (see Cornwall 2018; Zakaria 2021). Colonial logics intensify the burden, with the imposition of Western-dominant structures of patriarchal capitalism and laws disempowering women or worsening their traditional conditions, which has been observed in studies conducted in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Sierra Leone (see Njoh and Akiwumi 2012; Jawondo and Oshewolo 2022).

With this, I am not annulling the value of Western feminist historicizations nor am I stating that the wave narrative does not represent historicizations with influence in certain (even international) spaces. My point here is to problematize the wave narrative's essentialist-universalist agenda and its intrinsic hierarchization of feminist historicization and epistemologies, which further marginalize the epistemologies that are forged outside (and in fact resist and combat) Western-dominant logics. Western-dominant feminisms and their framing of feminist "expertise" become "a kind of gatekeeping of power that locks out people of color, as well as working-class people, migrants, and many other groups" (Zakaria 2021: 14), favoring privileged groups with more access to recognized educational and/or professional spaces that produce zero-point hubris knowledge (see Castro-Gómez 2005).

The wave narrative is part of a very specific narrative, geopolitically, racially, and social-economically located, (re)creating Western/ized hierarchies (see Smith 2009; Jonsson 2016). Privileged *loci* are central in the wave narrative, furthering "the myth of a non-situated 'Ego'," particularly with the decoupling of the subject and their ethnic/racial/gender/sexual epistemic location, concealing the agendas, interests, and systems of power at work in such *loci* (see Grosfoguel 2007, 213). For multiple feminisms, the privileged *loci* of enunciation are a tool of power "from which reality is thought" (Icaza 2017, 27), observing without being observed, judging without being judged, validating without needing to be validated.

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Feminist stories, movements, and epistemologies born from/in less privileged *loci*, within and outside the Western world, are either obliviated or interpreted from privileged and dominant eyes, becoming second-category feminisms (see Anzaldúa 1987; Valverde 2016). This causes the "negation of realities and worlds that otherwise exceed the dominant modern geo-genealogy of modernity" (Icaza 2017, 29). Multiple Othered stories, such as the aforementioned activisms of Indian suffragists in the UK, have become a shadow of their colonial-imperial counterparts (see Mirza 2014), while Latina suffragists are either forgotten or considered as a mimicking reflection of privileged Global North suffragists, even when they were heterogeneous within their own geopolitical *loci* (see Ehrick 1998).

The occasional "inclusion" of Othered feminisms/feminists in the wave narrative is not enough to mitigate privileged *loci*—as said, marked inclusions can help further legitimate the wave narrative and its universalist interests. Othered feminists—such as the already mentioned Sojourner Truth and bell hooks, and their historical resistances, activisms, and epistemic perspectives—become labels of legitimation when "included" in the wave narrative. Still, such appropriating, diluting and silencing of Othered historicizations do not go unresisted, since Othered scholars have been highlighting the works of "countless erased lives, forgotten stories, and ignored systems of signification" (May 2014, 97) developed by Othered women.

For those who are in the "souths" within the Global South, the situation receives more layers of marginalization. In my country, Brazilian activists have been historically resisting the oppressions bestowed upon racialized women (see, for instance, Beatriz Nascimento 2018; Lélia Gonzalez 2020). Still, mainstream Brazilian historicization—including feminist historicization—erases indigenous and Black feminist activisms. For instance, if we consider "early" feminism in Brazil, usually only a European-white-aristocratic woman, Princesa Isabel, is remembered for her pioneer feminism (see Junior 2003, particularly for saving all enslaved peoples from their condition of enslavement, despite the centuries-old fights and resistance of indigenous and Black women (see Lacerda 2019; Santos 2019; Amoras et al. 2021).

Othered feminists often seek legitimation through articulation with feminisms/feminists located in the "official" *loci* of enunciation, self-imposing different forms of colonialism (see Anzaldúa 1987; Maldonado-Torres 2007). Self-imposition of epistemologies from *loci* of reference reflects the success of the modern-colonial world system, in which "subjects that are socially located in the oppressed side of the colonial difference . . . think epistemically like the ones on the dominant positions" (Grosfoguel 2007, 213). For instance, second waver Simone de Beauvoir and the *Second Sex* have been celebrated not only in the Global North, but also in the Global South (e.g., see Cagnolati et al. 2019; Varizo 2022), even though her representation of "woman" is centered on Western-whiteness (see Oyěwùmí 2000; Gines 2014).

De Beauvoir is recognized not only for her contributions for feminism but also for her insights on other forms of oppressions (including racism, antisemitism, and colonialism); however, it has also been problematized how de Beauvoir "deploys comparative and competing frameworks of oppression," privileging unidimensional gender oppressions and a conceptual framework for "woman" without qualifiers, which privileges while concealing Europeanness, whiteness, and middle-upper-classness (Gines 2014, 252). Adopting zero-point hubris feminists such as de Beauvoir as the reference can be simultaneously oppressive and convenient to privileged women in the Global South, who can suffer from the colonial difference in a global/international level, while benefitting from contextualized privileges in their *loci* of enunciation (see, for instance, Silva and Ferreira 2017; Gonzalez 2020).

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Most Western-dominant epistemologies and historicizations have also been defined by linear thinking, with a utopic line of conception in which the theory has a specific point of origin and it linearly and naturally progresses until it reaches the world it idealized initially, bringing order to chaos. However, "when these linear models fail to deliver, their visions of freedom seem increasingly unattainable," thus causing linear visions to "ironically disempower their followers" (Collins 1998, 211). Such linear logics are applied not only in theories, but also in Western ways of thinking, telling, and forging history, including the historicization of the wave narrative, which reinforces the linear-progressive feminist historicization myth.

The wave narrative is framed in a neat historicization, creating an illusion that the universal historicization of feminism is linear and it naturally progresses with time, in a precise order of evolution/development: first, women fought for basic rights denied to them; in a second moment, women fought to be equal to men in public spaces; in a third moment, feminisms recognized that not all women are the same; now, some talk about a fourth wave (e.g., Janiewski 2001; Gamble 2001; Garcia 2011; Andersen 2018). Layered, multiple, chaotic, and asymmetrical Othered stories are either forgotten and completely excluded or distorted as they travel to "superior" spaces to fit linear, ordered, and symmetrical logics. However, in our complex realities, advances and regressions occur simultaneously and even contradictorily (see Brown 1992; also Said 1983).

Sanitizing feminist historicization silences and hides multiple asymmetrical fights and struggles, backlashes and resistances, new and old forms of oppression, thus reinforcing Western-dominant narratives, according to which the European civilization—the center of world history—is the result of a long evolutionary process; unilinear, unilateral, and unidirectional. However, Othered societies might understand history differently. Many indigenous societies in Latin America believe history "moves in cycles and spirals," and "the past-future is contained in the present" (Cusicanqui 2012, 96), while Afrocentric scholarships in the US consider "a cyclical rather than linear conception of time, change, and human agency" (Collins 1998, 187). By homogenizing historical processes of feminist movements in a linear-progressive single-voiced narrative, the wave narrative is gagging many Othered voices, stories, and knowledges, while creating utopic visions of an ideal future that destroy "hope without constructing any alternatives" (Collins 1998, 212), imprisoning us within their lines (see Said 1993).

Linear-progressive narratives do not consider how regression and progression coexist in complex and multi-layered ways, such as the historicization of Marielle Franco, a Brazilian federal deputy. Franco's political fights were focused on protecting Afro-Brazilian peoples in favelas, particularly women and the LGBTI+ community against police lethality. Marielle Franco's death represented how lethal and perverse hegemonic repression can be, when she was assassinated in 2018 (Danin et al., 2018). Her death marked, simultaneously, the rise and continuous repression and threats by the extreme right, and the insistent resistance from Othered political activists (Rodrigues and Vieira 2020), including, for instance, her sister Anielle Franco, who is now the Brazilian Minister of Racial Equality (see Planalto 2023).

Marielle Franco's historicization cannot "fit" into the perfectly organized linearity of the wave narrative, as it assumes that each wave linearly led to the other, with progressive improvement. By privileging historicizations in and within Western-dominant logics of problem-solving linearity, there is a legitimized erasure of non-linear, heterogeneous, and "messy" alternatives, with a promise that a mythical gender equality will be reached if all follow the linear-progressive feminisms of reference. Thus, instead of considering how "repetitions and resurfacings are the very mechanism of change,

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within a historical time that is multilinear and internally complex," the wave narrative presents us a historicization of complex multiplicities of realities as if they were "linked together through one uniting history" (Browne 2013, 915).

Such linearity, in articulation with the aforementioned myths, also creates an illusion that waver feminists/feminisms were the pioneers that opened the doors and windows for all women, legitimizing the white feminist saviors myth. According to wave narrative logics, first and second wavers were the true pioneers and savers of all women, and suddenly, "during the third wave of feminism, women of colour make an appearance," which places "white middle-class women as the central historical agents to which women of colour attach themselves" (Smith 2009, 159), making Othered women not only secondary to but dependent on zero-point hubris wavers' saving.

Originally connected to colonial narratives, the white savior myth represents the white progressive heroes that saved Black and indigenous peoples from slavery. Currently, the white savior is the one who rescues racialized peoples from poverty, disease, and underdevelopment[1]. White saviorism reinforces ideologies of white innocence and white invisibility within racial inequalities, while emphasizing whiteness's natural superiority and alleviating white guilt, with "color-blind morality, racial cooperation, and inclusive victimhood" (Maurantonio 2017, 131–32). While they are usually associated with Western-white men, Western-white women can also use these narratives (see Daily 2019).

For decades, Othered feminists have questioned, criticized, and pointed out the problematic ways in which white feminists impose their saving on Othered women (see Abu-Lughod 2002; Daily 2019). Such saving is many times articulated with an idea that Western-dominant societies have already dealt with "issues" of gender inequalities, and now must help Others to be more developed in this area, thus creating invisibility of gender inequalities for some and hyper-visibility for Others. Western-dominant feminist saving usually comes as an imposition and with the silencing of Others in order to "protect" them: from their non-observed points of observation, Western-dominant feminists and their universal saving do not permit contesting nor questioning (see Abu-Lughod 2002; Arat-Koç 2012).

White (feminist) saviors control Otherness and the Othered (see Anderson et al. 2021) through "the orientation, regulation, and decision of the process" of knowledge construction in the terrain of scientific feminism (Mohanty 1984, 335). In this context, white (feminist) saviorism also becomes "a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation or as one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise" (Alcoff 1991, 22). White savior feminist wavers thus self-legitimate as the gatekeepers not only of feminist epistemologies and historicizations, but also of women's salvation (see Zakaria 2021). Within white feminist saving logics, Othered women become the helpless and submissive victims that are saved by the independent and empowered Western-dominant feminists (see Daily 2019).

Muslim feminists have highlighted how hurtful and oppressive the feminisms represented by the wave narrative can be against them, colonizing feminist historicization in a way that presents Muslim women as an uneducated and homogeneous group that needs their saving. This saving has also led to Muslim women's exclusion from feminist spaces, furthering their marginalization, since colonial times (see Abu-Lughod 2002; Imran 2023), and it continues up to now. For instance, the social media movement "Don't Touch my Hijab" seeks to protest Islamophobic bans on hijabs, and some might be tempted to articulate this as part of the fourth wave; however, this would mean the erasure of criticisms of Western-dominant feminisms/feminists for

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their policing of Muslim women's bodies with the reproduction of colonial and racist oppressions through gendered Islamophobia masked with savior flags (see François 2021; Lodi 2021).

It is through Othered women's collective struggles and resistances, shaped with our bodies and experiences, and our individual-collective historical, systemic, and institutionalized oppressions, that we build our own multiple epistemologies (see Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Collins 1998). Resisting these white savior pioneers is hard, because they forge a universal-linear historicization that is framed with their own language, a language that represents their cultural-social-racial-geopolitical realities, a language that is also embedded in Western-dominance (see Anzaldúa 1987). The wave narrative offers good intentions, simplicity, and a broad representation that is comfortable and convenient for Western-dominant feminisms and the reproduction of their historicization and epistemologies.

4. Being (in) Otherness: On hyper-surveilled points of no-observation

The determinants and assumptions imposed in travels of theories and historicizations reflect how they occur, with the "asymmetrical distribution of knowledge that counts." Thus, the hierarchies/exclusions/appropriations of theories and historicizations discussed in this paper must take into account Western academia's endeavors in "accelerating the travels of some, blocking the distribution of others" (see Knapp 2005, 251; also Said 1983). As Western academia accelerates—and is accelerated by—its process of neoliberalization, traveling to and within its spaces also accelerates, changes, and becomes more complex to analyze.

It is thus essential to highlight and problematize how, from where, and to where feminist stories are traveling, and who is behind those travels. If the where (from Othered *loci* to Western academia) and the who (Western-dominant scholars) are kept invisible or unproblematized, we might end up with Western logics that de-contextualize, de-localize, and de-politicize such travels, supporting them as natural progress and neutral, instead of what many of them are: appropriation of Otherness by Westernness. The points of origin and destination of the travels and those directly or indirectly involved in "piloting" those travels are essential to understand how the historicizations and theories being traveled might be impacted during those trips.

In terms of origins and destination, the Western world—particularly Western academia—can direct historicizations from-to what I call here the hyper-surveilled points of no-observation and/or from-to non-observed points of observation (zero-point hubris). Those points, separated into binary logics by Western-dominant academia/academics, do not reflect the heterogeneous, multiple, and complex realities, layers, and contexts within each of them, and serve to maintain and legitimate intrinsic and intersected systems of power and oppression. Feud exists within the zero-point hubris, with scholars, universities, and nations battling to be at the top of the top. Western-dominant epistemologies are thus embedded in a winners–losers logic, even within their dominance. However, the winners–losers logic can also be reproduced by Othered perspectives (see, for instance, Ray 1992; Grosfoguel 2016; Ortega 2017).

Epistemic violences on Otherness have become increasingly sophisticated; the superiority of Western knowledge, protected by its untouchable zero-point hubris, is made attractive to convince all how Western-dominant knowledge is, in fact, the (sustainably) developed reference that all should wish to follow. That way, many Othered scholars end up playing the Game of Thrones to be "accepted" in the zero-point

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hubris club, even if playing this game only increases the burdens on Othered shoulders, while maintaining the logics of the thrones (zero-point hubris knowledges). The existence of thrones is, in itself, the continuance of patriarchy and its intersected systems of oppression; being included in the zero-point hubris means to accept "transformative" justice to be Westernized and whitewashed, becoming a mere narrative to accommodate the status quo.

Accepting the existence of thrones also means accepting and even furthering the burdens of Otherness. After all, the zero-point hubris cannot exist without extractivist logics. Thus, Othered epistemologies—particularly feminisms—have to find ways to exist and resist without the zero-point hubris. We need to understand the necessarily and unavoidably oppressive-exclusionary-extractivist dynamics imposed by the zero-point hubris on the hyper-surveilled points of no-observation. Intellectual extractivism is rooted in appropriation, framed within reification processes that transform Otherness into objects that are instrumentalized, extracted, and exploited, in favor of those in the zero-point hubris. Othered knowledges are thus "included" out of their contexts, through an integration with an assimilatory mindset, and a market-oriented framework (see Cusicanqui 2012; Grosfoguel 2016).

As long as the binary dynamics imposed by the zero-point hubris exist, hyper-surveilled points of no-observation will continue to be the epistemic *terra nullius*, open to Western control, vigilance, appropriation, and/or oblivion. During territorial colonialism, non-European societies inhabited lands that were labeled *terra nullius*, a land that belongs to no one (see Anghie 2006). As epistemic *terra nullius*, hyper-surveilled points of no-observation contain knowledges that are legitimized objects of appropriation, re-contextualization, and reinterpretation, according to the paradigms and logics of the zero-point hubris. Being in hyper-surveilled points of no-observation means being systemically and institutionally controlled, individually, and collectively, unable to critically observe the zero-point hubris, prohibited from becoming a threat to its dominance.

Western-dominant feminisms must assure that knowledges and stories produced in/from Otherness will not become a threat to their privileged position (see Zakaria 2021). As the historical point of reference, the zero-point hubris wave narrative can either recreate and/or reinterpret hyper-surveilled points of no-observation historicizations according to their interests or label them as irrelevant or questionable, if they challenge the wave narrative and its feminisms of reference. Either way, epistemic binary logics mean Otherness remains as the object and Westernness, the subject. That is why, many times, when Othered epistemologies are apparently welcomed in the zero-point hubris, the (Othered) people responsible for their development remain unwelcomed (see Said 1979; Collins 2013).

Those practices maintain the subject-object framework, according to which the zero-point hubris subject is located in "an uncontaminated epistemic place" (Castro-Gómez 2005, 307, translated by the author), while the hyper-surveilled point of no-observation object is expected to be passive, submissive, and non-autonomous (see Said 1979). Even though Western-dominant feminisms have highlighted that the abstract subject is ideally represented by maleness, they seem to (conveniently) overlook that this subject is also represented by Westernness, colonialism, whiteness, cis-heteronormativity, and so on. The same way the Western male subject objectifies the Other, so do Western-dominant feminisms (see Tomlinson 2018).

Even when Othered scholars/thinkers seem to be "included" in the zero-point hubris, this inclusion is embedded with politics of (un)gratefulness. Being grateful means behaving according to conform-or-else rules, and smiling while doing it, otherwise the ones included

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receive the label of ingratitude (see, for instance, Fanon 2008). Simultaneously, by doing the favor of "including" Others, zero-point hubris scholars are celebrated for their niceness, managing to recenter the debates on them, while decentering from Otherness. So, regardless of the intentions of zero-point hubris wavers, the inclusion of Othered voices is not about Otherness, but about reinforcing their own voice.

Othered activists, scholars, and feminists might try to protect their own realities and stories through resistance not only against Western-dominant logics, but also Westernizing travels (see Knapp 2005; May 2014; Collins 2015); however, Western-dominant pilots—historically, structurally, and systemically—have the best resources to travel faster, longer, and further than their Othered counterparts. In such situations, problematizing "speaking for Others" practices becomes insufficient, since it can still be convenient to Western dominance. On the one hand, if Western-dominant feminists "innocently" speak for Others and are left unquestioned, they are celebrated as white saviors, receiving many benefits for speaking about Others without (even against protests of) Otherness. On the other hand, if they are called out for appropriation and for speaking for/about Others, they can always claim good intentions and white innocence. I believe it is more appropriate to debate this situation as speaking above Others, since multiple Others have been speaking loud and clear against Western-dominant feminist historical saving, obliviating, and/or appropriating (e.g. Mohanty 1984; Bilge 2013; Saad 2020; Zakaria 2021).

Othered feminisms/ists do not remain silent and submissive; like our interpretations of our own stories and the oppressions of Western-dominant historicizations, we keep traveling and moving around as well. However, competing with Western dominance is extremely challenging, especially with its growing neoliberalization, making Western-dominant logics even more hegemonic in the "academic market," while, at the same time, becoming more competent in selling themselves as counter-hegemonic, sustainable, diverse, and inclusive (see for instance Ahmed 2012; Collins 2013; Ackah 2021). As the white-colonial-neoliberal Western/ized academia increases the control of knowledge—what is produced, how it is produced, and who produces it—those travels are also being more and more controlled. So, anything that travels to Western academia more often than not must pass through the control of its gatekeepers. Those gatekeepers keep, above all, the status quo.

When the travel of a theory/historicization occurs within and is guided by hyper-surveilled points of no-observation, it is highly possible that such travel/travelers do not have at their disposal the same resources that travels from-to/by the zero-point hubris have. Moreover, the ones who have benefitted the most from being and knowing from/in the zero-point hubris do not want to lose their privileges, comforts, status, cushy jobs (see, for instance, Bourabain 2021; Zakaria 2021). Maintaining their ivory towers is essential—even when they seem to be trying to make things fairer and more inclusive. In academia, the use of blunt and/or coercive force (explicit discriminations and/or nepotism) might not be the usual strategy, since it generates more resistance and loss of legitimacy. Instead, coercive and seductive practices with counter-hegemonic narratives (diversity policies, celebrating Otherness) are usually a more effective strategy to maintain things as they are (see, for instance, Ahmed 2012; Law 2017; Sian 2019).

Even when Otherness guides our own travels, it is closely watched, creating additional burdens that Othered scholars and researchers must face on a daily basis in Western academia (outsiders-within in Collins 1986; strangers-making in Ahmed 2012). The power relations that allow such surveillance and lack of legitimation to observe are hidden competently by the zero-point hubris, as happened with the zero-point hubris

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wavers and their "inclusion" of cherry-picked Othered stories to self-legitimize while appropriating-controlling them. It is frustrating to resist such zero-point hubris inclusion, especially since many of us are doing our very best to survive (the ones who are still surviving) in academia. Still, efforts should not be in the direction of "playing" the Game of the Thrones to be included in the zero-point hubris, but to think/be/know outside this game, otherwise we will be simply reproducing it.

5. Ending (with) neoliberalism: On the bridges called our backs

The Western domination of feminist historicizations and epistemologies is part of a broader reality of the zero-point hubris, which is becoming harder to identify and problematize in neoliberal academia. After all, neoliberal academia is an expert at increasing inequalities while masking them with happy diversity (Ahmed 2012), predatory inclusion (Seamster and Charron-Chénier 2017), and ornamental intersectionality (Bilge 2013). These masking strategies must not be taken lightly, for their exceptional power of convincing and seducing on the one hand, and Westernizing and whitewashing on the other. The burdens for Others in academia become increasingly heavier when we have to occupy spaces for intellectual activism while resisting happy diversity narratives that not only maintain but also strengthen the myths of Western academia according to which problems, oppressions, and inequalities we have been combating are solved.

The apparent inclusion of Othered epistemologies/historicizations in the zero-point hubris benefits almost entirely the zero-point hubris itself. The market value of Othered knowledge is profited from by zero-point hubris scholars—including zero-point hubris feminists—who gain legitimacy, good jobs, funding, and prestige on the back of Otherness, particularly Othered women (see Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Zakaria 2021). In neoliberal academia, Otherness is simultaneously (un)welcomed, in the sense that it is apparently being "included" to bring transformation, while this showing-not-doing strategy does not actually change the status quo, only offering piecemeal change instead (see Ahmed 2012; Ackah 2021).

Neoliberalism is not entering academia; that ship has long sailed. The neoliberalisation of academia has been so effective to even become part of our daily routines. Instead of doing research, we are producing papers; we must prioritize impact factor instead of field contributions. Moreover, (neo)liberalism articulates dangerously well with centuries-old systems of oppression, promising counter-hegemonic principles and progressive ideals, while dictating how we work, how we research, how we gain funding, and even how we speak. We have naturalized the corporate language many of us have disdained for so long, talking about targets, goals, indicators, and infographics, as if we were always preparing for a board meeting with the CEO to present our ranking position or pitch for new strategies.

Neoliberalism has taken control of our tongues. And, as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) has already taught us, if you control someone's language, someone's tongue, you are controlling that person's existence itself, how they express themselves to the world, how they exist to the other (see Fanon 2008). In the case of feminisms, particularly the Othered feminisms here discussed, neoliberalism affects how we are and know. Neoliberal academia (re)creates and celebrates interactions and relationships based on competitiveness, with individual-narcissistic logics of recognition through the myth of merit which furthers paranoia and wars of egos. Othered feminisms, in their multiplicity and heterogeneity, are many times based on collectiveness, with practices of solidarity and affective relationships.

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Neoliberal academia also affects and benefits people differently. For women—particularly those also oppressed in other dimensions, such as sexual orientation, race, and class—the neoliberalization of academia has meant the intensification and furthering of precarious conditions (see O'Keefe and Courtois 2019; Bourabain 2021), with more work for less recognition (many times, even without pay), temporary contracts that usually translate into various periods without salaries, job insecurity, and overall situations that increase the chances of subordination, exploitation, and different forms of abuse and extractivist practices, making precarious female academics non-citizen workers of academia.

Englishization is also a trend in neoliberal academia, being embedded not only in colonial differences but also in class privilege. Not only does Englishization create global hierarchies between English native speakers and non-speakers, it also creates local hierarchies in non-English-speaking countries, particularly in the Global South (see Boussebaa and Brown 2017; Assis-Peterson 2021). For decades, studies have been highlighting how women have more and different barriers to access, remain, and grow in higher education spaces, a difficulty that increases with the intersection of other systems of oppression (see Moore 1987; Ahmed 2012; Collins, 2013), and Englishization is a barrier that needs to be further explored, particularly how it articulates with womanness, whiteness, and middle-classness.

In this context, we must be alert to the seductive promises of change through problem-solved narratives and happy diversity politics; Othered feminists must be "vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a genuine change," since "revolution is not a one-time event" (Lorde 1984).

The fight goes on ...
The fight grows on ...

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Note

1 On the white savior myth in the contexts of international aid, I strongly recommend Teju Cole's "White savior industrial complex" (https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/).

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