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CONTESTING VALUES IN THE NEW WORLDINGS[3]

ABSTRACT Feminist epistemologies have promoted other worlds as not only thinkable and realizable but already materialized – at the fringes or margins or flip sides of dominating views: in new materialist accounts these practices of world making are called "other worldings". To think the world, and hence truth and reality as plural and in process, as collaborative worldly endeavours and related to multiple entangled – or situated – speaking subjects, has been a crucial achievement of feminist epistemology until today. On this basis, the paper brings together ethical approaches from feminist new materialism with decolonial contestations of Enlightenment accounts on autonomous subjectivity towards a radical re-valuation of interrelating with others and enactments of the "methodology of the oppressed".

The city, in our view, is not only the place of neo-liberal divisions and high-tech competitions but also best suited for realizing encounter zones and creating space for transversal queer-feminist movements. *maiz – Autonomous Centre by and for Migrant Women** in the city of Linz in Austria serves as an example for such a realization of theoretical and practical worlding, as we aim to show in this paper, especially with the foundation of the "University of Ignoramuses" and migrazine.at. We argue that not only this encounter zone seems promising but also its realization in the social, material and virtual space were the pleasure of networking and lived relations of solidarity, learning, un-learning and transformation can be discovered and trained with experts in the field.

On this way, the paper brings together an onto-ethico-epistemological approach with an activist approach for transformation of reality.

Keywords: transversal queer-feminist movement, onto-ethico-epistemology, counter-hegemonic knowledge, methodology of the oppressed, decolonial feminism, dissident feminisms, transformation of reality, European values, activism, ontological relationality

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INTRODUCTION

Feminist epistemologies have promoted other worlds as not only thinkable and realizable but already materialized – at the fringes or margins or flip sides of dominating views: in new materialist accounts these practices of world making are called "other worldings". To think the world, and hence truth and reality as plural and in process, as collaborative worldly endeavours and related to multiple entangled – or situated – speaking subjects, has been a crucial achievement of feminist epistemology until today (Haraway 1988; Alcoff and Potter 1993; Harding 2015). Also, it has become clear that epistemic processes are deeply intertwined with ethical and political value systems (Ernst 1999; 2016). Consequently, here, an onto-ethico-epistemological approach to reality (Barad 2007) is connected to an activist approach of the transformation of reality by transversal queer-feminist movements (Sandoval 2000; Agredo et al. 2013).

Affirmative nomadic ethics (Braidotti 2006b) postulates an interrelational self in need of constant reconnection in a web of exchanges with others. The paper interrogates this account and suggests a new evaluation of value and values in the face of the dominant exclusionist anti-migration discourse framing migration to Europe as a requirement for migrants to 'integrate' to "European values" suggesting European or national homogeneity as if migration into Europe would not be multi-directed and framed by colonialism and European imperialism since hundreds and thousands of years (Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Tate 2015; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2015, 86–88). Is it possible to enact new worldings with a critical evaluation of these values by concerned communities and organizations which strive beyond identity politics for transnational connectivity and transversal movement?

In the middle of the materiality of European cities and dominant exclusionist discourse and practice, movements for realizing safe encounter zones for humans of different locatable spaces and places are striving. Here, we claim, we can find and develop contesting values in new worldings. The city, in our view, is not only the place of neo-liberal divisions, high-tech competitions and proliferation of colonial logic but also best suited for realizing encounter zones and creating space for transversal queer-feminist movements. For 25 years, *maiz – Autonomous Centre by and for Migrant*

*Women** in the city of Linz in Austria has served as an example for such a realization, as we aim to show in this paper (maiz 2017; COMPA / maiz / das kollektiv / Entschieden gegen Rassismus und Diskriminierung 2019a; 2019b). Since 1994, migrant women* have organized themselves in *maiz* to "better the lives and work situations of migrant women in Austria and to promote their political and cultural participation, as well as to transform the existing unjust social conditions" (maiz n.d.a). *maiz* provides language courses, counselling, support for sex workers, research, active participation in cultural work, youth projects, and education for everyday life as well as for the labour market (maiz n.d.b).

maiz chose the city of Linz. Linz had been molded by the Nazi regime in the 20th century. Until today, it is marked by its role in the extermination camps and annihilation politics. Here, *maiz* has installed itself to create public space for participation and fight against racist, patriarchal and heteronormative structures and violence. In 2014, for the twentieth anniversary, *maiz* founded the "Universität der Ignorant*innen" (university of ignoramuses) to examine the impact of ignorant productions of knowledge, to contest their hegemonial foundation and to develop strategies for a critical praxis. It is about

> "the displacement of borders, an emancipatory appropriation of space and thus about resistance against the exoticization of the "other". It is important to not only ask what is being spoken about, but also who speaks for whom and what is recognized when and why as legitimate knowledge. It is the creation of an utopian space where counter-hegemonic knowledge can be produced and shared" (maiz 2019, 315–316).

Already in 2006, *maiz* launched migrazine.at, an independent online-medium designed, organized, and created by migrant women*. Migrazine.at stands up against stereotypical representations of migrants in mainstream media. It aims to get migrant voices heard in public and provides alternative information for migrant women* and everyone interested. Questioning claims to objective news coverage and reporting, it represents a platform to present underrepresented voices (migrazine.at n.d.). As *maiz* states in an interview: "The 'zine' publishes current issues surrounding (women's work)

migration and the tension between migration and cultural work" (maiz and Klub Zwei 2008, 185). It also treats tensions that arise in the everyday work practices of *maiz*. As Rubia Salgado, one of the founding members of *maiz*, holds, there is always the tension

> "to critically problematize the goal of liberation and simultaneously support a dialogical process; to constitute adult education with migrants as a place to practice the ability to act politically; and to question taking things for granted" (Salgado 2013, 82).

In order to enact these tensions as practices and products of art and culture, which make a political difference, migrazine.at is an ideal medium to go public. Also earlier, *maiz* has engaged in art and cultural work with performances, art and poster exhibitions, because "it is necessary to be able to envision and realize taking command of the symbolic field" (maiz and Klub Zwei 2008, 184). This awareness of the importance of culture as a field of power and potential change resonates with what Chela Sandoval stresses in her account of "the methodology of the oppressed" as will be discussed below. In the same interview, the protagonists of *maiz* give still another reason for consciously connecting practices of politics and culture, as "we recognized cultural work's potential for resistance and utopian visions that unfold in the tension between reality and fiction". This means, that *maiz* takes into account that what is real is not the opposite of what could exist or what is not (yet) real. With the dedication to not just accept reality as something taken for granted, but to work instead for a change towards democratic relations and realities where matter and meaning is deeply entangled, the approach of *maiz* resonates with the ideas of world making as a process and worlding as a practice in approaches of feminist new materialism as will be shown in the following section.

Methodologically, we have taken into account the power of technoscientific knowledge and world making practices. To understand these configurations not necessarily as true descriptions of a static reality, but instead as a practice of worlding among others, opens the space for alternative realizations of meetings on this contested onto-ethico-epistemological field. To work and fight for establishing other worldings means to establish trust

with strangers and to meet beyond familiar meeting places. Therefore, a new onto-ethico-epistemology is needed which takes into account and is accountable for practices of world making beyond established frameworks of power. It establishes new politics of memory and strategies of resistance that lead beyond the established power-knowledge system that puts ethical questions aside or answers them in favour of those in power and privilege or ignores them completely. Meetings in new collaborative figurations of technoscientific realities demand not only political and ethical responsibility but also willingness to establish trust with strangers in cooperative settings and projects. Therefore, this paper aims at pointing out theoretical strands of feminist new materialism, post- and decolonial theory with a special focus on the "methodology of the oppressed" and at connecting them with the theories and practices of *maiz* as one example for courageous practices of contesting values in new worldings. Hence, as philosophers, scholars, and activists of *maiz*, we do not aim in this paper at an ethnographic or sociological or political analysis of *maiz* as a specific migrant initiative in Austria and eventually answering questions at the end, if *maiz* would fulfil the theoretical aspirations of some specific protagonists. Instead, we consider *maiz* as an experimental onto-ethico-epistemological meeting place, an encounter zone which brings about among other things the university of ignoramuses and migrazine.at as collaborative contributions to a greater network of connected allies and friends and loving migrant women* in transversal queer-feminist movements. So, the subject of analysis is not *maiz*, but rather how feminist new materialism, post- and decolonial theory, including the "methodology of the oppressed", as well as the epistemic, political and cultural practices of *maiz*, especially the university of ignoramuses and migrazine.at contribute together to answer our methodological questions. Consequently, the methodological questions of this paper are rather: (How) can these processes of matter and meaning making be methodologically captured and supported as multiple affinities and coalitions and the pleasure of subversive practices of world making? (How) can counter-hegemonic knowledge as a critical reflection as well as a critical educational practice to contest neo-colonial patriarchal hegemonies as the only way to relate in this world, be developed, realized, and eventually escape usurpation – amidst neo-liberal divisions and high-tech competitions of established universi-

ties and technoscientific world making? How to establish values which are worth living for?

FEMINIST NEW MATERIALISM

Feminist new materialist approaches have criticized conceptualizations of human exceptionalism in many accounts of European Enlightenment on the subject, especially the ethical subject. They claim that to deconstruct human exceptionalism, as well as dichotomous and binary thinking of the big Eurocentric categorization systems, opens the discursive space for more promising re-evaluations. In re-evaluating the bodies of humans, non-humans, non-organic matter, and naturecultural environment regarding their materiality and their agency, arguments have been brought forward that locate human exceptionalism as fertile ground for exploitation, oppression, and hierarchies (Haraway 2016; Braidotti 2013; Åsberg, Koobak, and Johnson 2011). In her widely discussed book, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett promotes a more generous distribution of value on the basis of the relatedness of all beings instead of founding human value on uniqueness and autonomy:

> "The ethical aim becomes to distribute value more generously, to bodies as such. Such a newfound attentiveness to matter and its powers will not solve the problem of human exploitation or oppression, but it can inspire a greater sense of the extent to which all bodies are kin in the sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations" (Bennett 2010, 13).

Bennett seems to connect the claim of human uniqueness with autonomous subjectivity that has been endued too much value, and therefore, it has been venerated as the goal of human becoming, while devaluing relationality and interdependency and hence everything and everyone in need.

In a related way, Rosi Braidotti argues for an ethical positioning which she calls affirmative nomadic ethics: "Affirmative nomadic ethics … proclaims the need to construct collectively positions of active, positive interconnections and relations that can sustain a web of mutual dependence, an ecology of multiple belongings" (Braidotti 2006a, 250). Here, two elements are important.

First, on the basis of the insight into the mutual dependence of beings – not autonomy – it becomes a necessity for all humans as well as non-human beings to develop active and positive interconnections and relations. Second, multiple belongings – not neatly separable identity positions – are forming this new ecology of becoming and relating. In this account, being is not a static idea of existence but an always renewable positioning in the world.

In her book on *The Posthuman*, Rosi Braidotti describes how it is possible to transgress the Eurocentrism and universalism of European Enlightenment, namely by "becoming-posthuman" (Braidotti 2013). She describes this as a "process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be" (ibid., 193). She develops a posthuman ethics based on "ontological relationality" (ibid., 190). Rosi Braidotti leads to a "new way of combining ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental inter-connections" (ibid.). In our view, this move toward enlargement of the ethical community is interesting for new economies of knowledge production and world making. How can the idea of basic relationality as well as new conceptualizations of interdependency work to overcome outdated imagined categories of sex/gender/sexuality and the question of native/other? It seems necessary to develop research questions which focus on the relations of humans to other material entities, being it human or non-human organisms or non-organic matter. Is there to be found a non-hierarchical relationality and an awareness of attachments and relations beyond human consciousness? In her book *Staying with the Trouble*, Donna Haraway provides examples and arguments for multifaceted interdependencies, solidarity, and kinship beyond generativity and beyond the limits of species for earth-wide bonding (Haraway 2016). Does this provide a step in the direction of a posthumanism connected to feminism and anti-racism and also a step to undo eurocentrism on a global scale?

In her book on *Transpositions. On Nomadic Ethics*, Braidotti describes the ethical moment in concrete terms:

> "The ethical moment consists in overcoming the slight sense of shame, the ethical nausea that marks the recognition of the intrinsically negative structure of one's passions. In other words, the ethical act consists in relinquishing the

> paranoid-narcissistic ego and installing instead an open-ended, interrelational self" (Braidotti 2006, 202).

It seems that it is precisely this non-hierarchical interrelation with others – humans or non-humans – and experiencing pleasure in this kind of relationships, which is the most urgent and the most challenging for ethics, and especially for a decolonial queer feminist onto-ethico-epistemology. In the conclusion of this book, Braidotti defines the ethical moment beyond an internal disposition of self-irony, as a process of interrelated becoming which is possible only through interaction with others, as an "active effort to reconnect oneself to the web of social exchanges". On this path, she also envisions collective becomings "by relations of positivity or affinity with other forces" (ibid., 201). This vision of ethico-onto-political practice might make it just dispensable to order people into neat categories which never fit because they are too simplifying models for the complex and fluid relationality of bodily existence. On the other hand, this account of being makes it indispensable to research on how to develop and practice these capacities of relating in always new ways.

Social and political movements may offer opportunities to engage in ethico-onto-epistemological practice and reconnections of oneself along affinities with others within a decolonial queer feminist movement. Accordingly, the Autonomous Centre by and for Migrant Women* *maiz* offers such opportunities. The university of ignoramuses, founded in 2014, at the twentieth anniversary of *maiz*, has been installed as a format of continuity with regular installed "laboratories of knowledge" taking place since then. In 2017, a "laboratory of knowledge" was organized with the thematic focus on values. There, the position of a European "WE" got reflected, that claims to have no more need to learn anything but questions democratic values and ethical commitment of strangers, in an implicit attribution of civilizing backwardness. Also, the need for projects countering the neo-liberal community of values was discussed which measures humans only according to their usability and migrants according to their achievements towards (one-sided) integration. It was an intensive full-day event with condensed input on the conceptual history of "European values" as well as on its hierarchizing and exclusionary functions until today from experts in the

field. Then followed small group discussions and plenary sessions by about 50 participants to share and deepen the acquired knowledge. The experts contributed as allies of the "WerteWeisenRat" (counsel of sages concerning values) on a voluntary basis which constitutes a principle of the university of ignoramuses. To provide access to this material encounter zone for others, a video was produced and broadcast by the local TV channel. Correspondingly, the second number of the 2017 volume of migrazine.at had a focus on "Werte" (values) and consisted of contributions of several languages, including English and poetry and works of art as well as scholarly and journalistic approaches concerned with the topic (migrazine.at 2017). The intention was to invite for a critical debate and reflection of a new law of the Austrian migration regime, the requirement to teach and examine "foundational values" within and aside from the language courses in so-called integration courses (Mineva and Salgado 2017). This number of the magazine was conceptualized and organized by activists of *maiz* and *das kollektiv* (www.das-kollektiv.at) in an interim situation when the old migrazine team had left, and the new team was not yet consolidated. The new team for migrazine.at presented itself and its new approach at the "laboratory of knowledge" for the 25th anniversary of *maiz* in October 2019. The old team was also present and reported experiences, pleasures, and lessons learned in the plenary, so that everyone emphatically took part in the transfer process.

POSTCOLONIAL CONTESTATIONS

Feminist new materialism is not the first and not the only approach to problematize European universalism. European Enlightenment accounts have promoted universal truth and universal human rights on the basis of universal values and natural rights. With this powerful discursive tool and intellectual endeavour, it became possible to contest the claims to absolute truth held by Christian churches and claims to absolute sovereignty and exclusive rights held by god-like kings and feudal rulers in eighteenth-century Europe. Yet, it has been shown, that these universalist accounts of the world could not bring freedom and justice for everybody. Instead, they have been instrumentalized to promote European superiority and to support European colonialism and patriarchy worldwide (Spivak 1999; Dhawan 2014).

Under the umbrella of claimed humanism, universal values have been instrumentalized to sustain privileges for those of unquestionable performance of masculine gender, heterosexuality and whiteness, material wealth and bourgeois class positions as well as national belonging to one of the bigger European colonizing nation-states, until today (Spivak 1985; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2011b; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2011a). All three authors, Spivak, Dhawan, and Gutiérrez, do not suggest a complete refutation of European Enlightenment thinking or the demand on universal human rights, but a critical reflection of the values attached to identity and alterity. Spivak points out already in 1985 what is omitted too often in discussions about value as labour-power in the "materialist" account of the subject or value as consciousness in "idealist" predication of the subject concerning the international relationality of globalized high-tech capitalism:

> "It is a well-known fact that the worst victims of the recent exacerbation of the international division of labor are women. They are the true surplus army of labor in the current conjuncture. In their case, patriarchal social relations contribute to their production as the new focus of super-exploitation" (Spivak 1985, 84).

In a similar way, Gutiérrez Rodríguez points to a quite specific, yet pervasive location of the feminization and coloniality of labour in the European household:

> "The value of domestic work is pre-set by a cultural system of meaning production based on historical and socio-political systems of gender differences and racialized hierarchies. This correlates with its feminized labor force, particularly that of the racialized, feminized subaltern" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2011b, 1).

Drawing on a comprehensive interview study with migrant domestic workers and their employers, the author invokes the potential for transversal conviviality on the basis of this interrelationality. Dhawan points to the deep entanglement of European Enlightenment theories with colonialism, but she also discusses the potential of the Enlightenment as a methodology of

critique by postcolonial theory and warns of a strengthening of conservative nationalist political orders through a complete rejection. She aligns with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's call for "an 'affirmative sabotage' of those Enlightenment principles 'with which we are in sympathy, enough to subvert!'" (Spivak quoted in Dhawan 2014, 71). In pursuing this line of thought, this paper tries to re-entangle political, ethical, and epistemological strands on diversely situated and more-than-human connected and collective movements.

Another important theoretical strand to trace the collective movements needed is offered by Marina Gržinić (2014). Gržinić understands the situation in Europe after the breakdown of state socialism in its eastern part as necropolitics, taking the concept from Achille Mbembe, who developed it to describe the exploitation of Africa as a "postcolony" until the present. Gržinić argues that capitalism has changed "every social and political dimension, or every common interest, so to speak, into an individual matter through the process of individualization" (Gržinić 2014, 27). In this context, Gržinić searches for new agencies in the social and political space. Moreover, she searches for a different definition of political subjectivity. Gržinić argues for a repolitization of biopolitics through necropolitics and necropower, "to frame biopolitics from the perspective of all those who do not count for biopower, but who are fiercely over-exploited (migrants, paperless peoples, third world populations, etc.)" (ibid.). Gržinić locates theses agencies in dissident feminisms:

> "Dissident feminisms (in plural) dismantle the one-sided history of feminism and put at its center the struggle against normative, discriminative, patriarchal, and racist society of tomorrow that has at its core capitalist neoliberal subjugations based on exploitation, dispossession, racialization, and privatization. Dissident feminisms insist on the destruction of all political policies that codify distinctions between class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality" (ibid., 129).

The author presents *maiz* as an example of the needed artistic and political interventions and refers to Luzenir Caixeta as coining the term "dissident feminisms" to name the needed collective transformation of the 21st centu-

ry (Caixeta 2013, 146). There, Caixeta refers to the suppressed revolutionary visions "of the 'proletariat of feminism,' the despised subjects of which are migrant women, prostitutes, lesbians, violated women, transsexuals, all non-white women, Muslim women, etc. – so really almost all of us" (ibid.). How can these manifold visions and agencies be brought together to constitute promising encounter zones for contesting values in new worldings?

THE FEMINIST SELF IN THE METHODOLOGY OF THE OPPRESSED

Braidotti's perspective on the need of the others to become oneself not as a fixed identity but as a moment of transposition from one state to another resonates with Chela Sandoval's idea of the body as "nodes in fields" that are able of "constant reapportionment of space" and boundaries and "realignments of oppositional powers" (Sandoval 1999, 260). This idea of constant becoming seems to be a valuable critique of identity politics. It might very well also serve as a subversive strategy to undermine ubiquitous classification and contest values in new worldings. Chela Sandoval argues against fixed identity categories as the basis for feminist science and politics and a differential movement as the fifth technology of the methodology of the oppressed. The first technology of this methodology consists of "sign-reading", the second challenges dominant ideological signs through their "de-construction". "The act of separating a form from its dominant meaning" provides the third technology which she calls "meta-ideologizing". "The operation of appropriating dominant ideological forms and using them whole in order to trans-form their meaning", is the fourth technology: "democratics". It orients the previous three to bring about egalitarian social relations and "love" in a "post-empire world" (ibid., 249–250). Re-evaluating love as a potential for feminist alliances, as suggested by Audre Lorde, has been analysed lately as potency for "mutual recognition, dialogue and growth" (Milatović 2014, 31).

So, it is the political consciousness – a cyber-consciousness – not an idea of the same social positioning of all women or of sameness or common identity of women, which aligns with the social movement as well as feminist scholars who try to make a difference with their research. In this account, egalitarian social relations are the explicit goal of feminist scholarship and

politics, not an ideology of female homogeneity and gender dichotomy. This seems especially important if we want to understand the transformation in feminism effected by minoritized women in Europe (Caixeta 2013). It seems that the often-repeated critique on post-modernism to make the political subject impossible proves inadequate regarding this account. Instead, fluid and transversal positionings provide a flourishing ground for solidarity and change. Sandoval states at the end of her discussion:

> "Under post-modern disobediences the self blurs around the edges, shifts 'in order to ensure survival,' transforms according to the requisites of power, all the while, under the guiding force of the methodology of the oppressed carrying with it the integrity of a self-conscious awareness of the transformations desired, and above all, a sense of the impending ethical and political changes that those transformations will enact" (Sandoval 1999, 260).

Here, it is the necessity of transformation of individuals in the face of oppression in which knowledge is elaborated for overcoming suppression in general.

This also *resonates with* what Maria Lugones calls an "impulse towards coalition within the logic of fusion":

> "It is because each fusion is lived and understood relationally and one can appreciate whether or not the relation is conceived in categorical terms or in terms of fusion. Since fusion is a resistance to multiple oppressions, one can also appreciate the ways in which others have conceived, given cultural form to, theorized, expressed, embodied, their resistance to multiple oppressions" (Lugones 2014, 77).

Here again, it is the knowledge and practice of resistance within multiple oppressive systems of power – not oppression itself, which serves as a source of wisdom and solidarity. This is because the epistemological foundation of European modernity is tied to a system of categorial hierarchization which can only be overcome by developing and theorizing resistance through decolonial feminism which reaches to and teaches ethical and political values as well as visions of reality beyond this framework (Lugones 2010; Cusicanqui 2019).

This seems a powerful picture for transversal queer-feminist movements. Is it possible today, for a group of women scholars and activists, to deconstruct normative systems of knowledge production and realize encounter zones and create space for movements? Can this be considered as subversive practices of world-making?

THE "UNIVERSITY OF IGNORAMUSES" – A DECOLONIAL PRACTICE OF ONTO-ETHICO-EPISTEMOLOGICAL WORLDING?

The opening of the "University of Ignoramuses" by the Autonomous Centre for and by Migrant Women *maiz* on November 14, 2014 in Linz, Austria, was intended to give "space to the collaborative production of contra-hegemonic knowledge" (maiz 2014). The organizers explain:

> "The starting point of our university is the realization that everyone is ignorant, as long as bodies of knowledge are possessed and knowledge continues to be produced without a critical reflection of the power dimension and the violent processes of legitimization and de-legitimization of knowledge and without implementing the resulting consequences in praxis" (maiz 2014).

The goal was to establish an environment for reciprocal learning and teaching with the awareness that nobody knows nothing, "nobody is 'tabula rasa'", and to minimize the distance between intellectual work and political activism" (maiz 2014). There was a call for papers and workshops send out, and many responses allowed a very rich program. The "University of Ignoramuses" is understood as part of a network of self-organised initiatives of education in the face of the epistemic violence and ignorance of established universities, against neo-liberal organisation of knowledge production and "to contribute to social change by resistance against capitalist exploitation, racist exclusion, against patriarchal and heteronormative structures and violence" (maiz 2019, 317). This goes along with a broader feminist and decolonial critique on mechanisms of exclusion and subjectification within the neo-liberal university (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2016; Binner et al. 2013).

The opening of the "University of Ignoramuses" of *maiz* took place in a former bunker, a huge shelter tunnel system beneath the ground in the city

centre of Linz, Austria, which was constructed by the Nazi-regime during the Second World War and dug out by thousands of prisoners convicted to death through compulsory labour. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak volunteered to personally take part in the opening ceremony in the former bunker. The subsequent discussion with scholars, activists, students, clients, companieras and companions of *maiz* and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was attended by about 200 people in a former tobacco factory. The workshops were embedded in panel discussions, book presentations and the opening of an exposition with international known scholars as well as local politicians and a party.

As Luzenir Caixeta and Rubia Salgado, two of the founding members and coordinators of *maiz*, explain in an interview, they chose the title 'university' in order to continue the already existing tradition of alternative universities, on the one hand, and to give an impressive name to processes, which take place in *maiz* on a day to day basis. On the other hand, it was meant to re-signify the concept 'university' with a new meaning, with the situation of *maiz*, being at the same time a political collective, a research institution and an organization which offers services and paid employment (Caixeta, Salgado, and Pratter 2014).

It seems to us, that all five technologies of the "methodology of the oppressed" developed by Chela Sandoval, were used in the process. The activists of *maiz* deciphered the sign *university* as a powerful and useful one (1) and challenged it in a deconstructive way through their process of re-signification (2). The "meta-ideologizing" took place in terms of the collective reciprocal learning and teaching processes, which had little to do with what one encounters at established universities (3). The democratic dimension got established through constant possibilities to take part without any restrictions of access and reflect and discuss what happened, no matter if someone was an outsider of *maiz*, or student of the language courses or client of the counselling service or university professor, everyone was permitted to take the microphone and share her view with the others (4). The differential movement took place, as there were so many participants from so many different countries, clothing traditions, social positionings, and language skills without any name tags, so everyone needed to find others to connect through affinities and attraction and experiment with one's own language

skills, identity projections, and reflections as well as one's social ability to connect (5). It enabled participants wherever they came from to engage in new epistemic and social experiences and relationalities, to enter processes of learning and even un-learning, especially of one's privileges and epistemic expectations (Castro Varela 2017).

Since 2014, there have been many continuing activities within the framework of the university of ignoramuses. They materialize as encounter zones, where long term followers, activists, and supporters as well as clients who became allies can meet with experts in the field as well as newcomers and relatives. The latest realization of the university of ignoramuses has happened from September to October 2019, in connection to the 25th anniversary of *maiz*. Workshops, lectures, discussions, performances, concerts, and an art exhibition have taken place in the city of Vienna, Austria, as well as in Linz. The "laboratory of knowledge" in Linz materialized as "Politics of memory and strategies of resistance" in the old city hall, where about 300 persons took part during the plenary sessions and parallel workshops throughout the day as well as the evening programme. The latter included speeches, a concert, and DJline as well as the opening of an art exhibition in the foyer of the city hall which combined pieces from a famous graffiti artist from Brazil and pieces by young women assembling in *maiz* who produced these pieces in a one-week-art-production-workshop with this artist (maiz 2019).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, feminist new materialist accounts with feminist decolonial accounts have been brought together to deconstruct European myths of human superiority and autonomy. Against these founding myths of European modernity which are deeply related to the history of European colonialism and patriarchy, a new relationality from a perspective of nomadic feminist ethics as well as from decolonial feminist perspectives was developed on the theoretical realm. It has been shown that these reflections do not only exist in a utopian realm of other worldings, but have been realized for 25 years by *maiz* – Autonomous Centre by and for Migrant Women*, a self-organization by migrant women*. This organization along with its many support-

ers always creates again new safe encounter zones for migrant women* and those who are interested to unlearn their privileges and enter into new networks of transversal feminism. It has been shown, that the foundation of the "University of Ignoramuses" provides ongoing emancipatory space for the development of counter-hegemonic knowledge. It has been shown that the online medium migrazine.at offers alternative views on migration policies, about everyday living and cultural contributions, and political participation of migrants in general and especially of migrant women*.

Do these new decolonial queer feminist theories and practices provide a framework for research on postcolonial conditions in order to specify and overcome manifold power imbalances? Do they exemplify intersectional struggling, or are they better referred to as transversal experimental practices? In which way do these feminist epistemological practices form a reliable basis for such investigations? In shifting the focus (again) on the material conditions, challenges, and potentials of life, is it possible to make sense of new emergent forms of subjectivities transgressing sexual, gendered and racialized classifications in global contexts? What happens, if we take communities and organizations which strive beyond identity politics for transnational connectivity and transversal movement as epistemic agents seriously? What happens, if epistemic and political movements collaborate for the realization of safe encounter zones for humans of different locatable spaces and places – against the exclusionist discursive practices concerning values in Europe?

All these questions could not become answered sufficiently in this paper. It is our intention, though, to develop in and with this paper space for the encounter of a widely received onto-ethico-epistemological approach from feminist new materialism with an activist approach for transformation of reality by transversal queer-feminist movements. We hope that we could show that not only this encounter zone seems promising, but also its realization in the social, material, and virtual space were the pleasure of networking and lived relations of solidarity, learning, un-learning, and transformation can be discovered and trained with experts in the field.

We have argued for the importance of an analysis of one's and other's positionings in epistemic frameworks of domination, oppression, and exploitation, but also for subversive sharing of knowledge beyond border po-

licing, being this geopolitical and institutional borders or social and cultural boundaries. We think this capacity of decolonial queer feminisms is needed, especially today, when it is not always evident to realize encounter zones and to create space for movements in shifting patterns of local and global political, cultural, epistemic and economic entanglements. However, it is only in practicing new relationalities where new democratic bondings can be experienced with the guiding aim to overcome social and emotional borders of racism and sexism installed by national and supra-national governing authorities and kept alive by too many followers. Therefore, what is needed is more discursive and material space for contesting values in new worldings.

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Sporenja o vrednostima u novim svetovima

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maiz – Autonomni centar migrantkinja*

Sažetak: Feminističke epistemologije se zalažu za druge svetove ne samo kao mislive i ostvarive nego kao već materijalizovane – na rubovima, marginama, ili naspram dominantnih gledišta. Novi materijalizam ove prakse stvaranja sveta/svetova naziva „drugim osvetovanjima" („other worldings"). Promišljanje sveta, pa prema tome istine i stvarnosti kao pluralnih i u procesu, kao zajedničkog poduhvata i u odnosu sa brojnim, višestrukim, ispreplетanim – ili situiranim – govornim subjektima, predstavlja ključni doprinos feminističke epistemologije do danas. Na osnovu toga, ovaj tekst povezuje etičke pristupe novog materijalizma sa dekolonijalnim osporavanjima prosvetiteljskih prikaza autonomnog subjektiviteta, u cilju radikalne re-evaluacije međupovezanosti i odnosa sa drugima i ostvarenja „metodologije potčinjenih". Grad, prema našem gledištu, nije samo mesto neoliberalnih podela i visokotehnoloških nadmetanja, već je i mesto gde se na najbolji način mogu ostvariti zone susreta i gde se može stvoriti prostor za transverzalne kvir-feminističke pokrete. *maiz – Autonomni centar migrantkinja** u gradu Lincu u Austriji služi kao primer realizacije teorijskog i praktičnog osvetovanja (worlding), kao što to u tekstu pokazujemo na primeru osnivanja „University of Ignoramuses" i magazina migrazine.at. Tvrdimo da je ova zona susreta potentna. Ali potentno je i njeno ostvarenje u društvenom, materijalnom i virtuelnom prostoru, gde se zadovoljstvo umrežavanja i življenih odnosa solidarnosti, učenja, razučavanja (un-learning) i transformacije mogu otkrivati i razmenjivati sa ekspertkinjama u ovom području.

Na taj način, ovaj tekst povezuje onto-etički-epistemološki pristup sa aktivističkim pristupom u cilju transformacije stvarnosti.

Ključne reči: transverzalni kvir-feministički pokret, onto-etička-epistemologija, kontrahegemonijsko znanje, metodologija potčinjenih, dekolonijalni feminizam, disidentski feminizam, transformacija stvarnosti, evropske vrednosti, aktivizam, ontološka relacionalnost