



Call for Papers

University of Miami - Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

2020 Graduate Student Conference

February 21, 2020

Seeing More Queerly in the 21st Century:

The Challenges of Gender, Feminism and Queer Theories and Practices in Our Contemporary World

In a New York Times interview, Gayatri Spivak linked decoloniality to depatriarchalization, exposing gender inequality as the root of overarching inequalities in our world. Until gender inequality is addressed, societies are bound to exacerbate extant disparities in social and economic policies. When law cannot guarantee justice, the value of aesthetics increases as power is decentered, discourse is charged, and affect is commodified. Spivak advocates for an "imaginative activism" and "affirmative sabotage" in which narratives are undone, and from which a new social textile is woven¹. What does it mean to weave a narrative, though, when technology can simply screen-print our realities? In a political climate where truths can be created, maintained and deleted, the role of art and culture is continually reinvigorated through the capacity to resist and reimagine.

Feminist and queer practices are also processes that imagine and interrogate the scripts that have been written for the patriarchal societies in which we live. By doing so, they attempt to weave new narratives through depatriarchalization. Black feminism, decolonial feminism and indigenous feminism (among other trends within contemporary feminist theory and activism) demonstrate the importance of making visible the

¹ "Gender is bigger and older than state formations and its fight is older than the fight for national liberation or the fight between capitalism and socialism. So, we have to let questions of gender interrupt these revolutionary ideas, otherwise revolution simply reworks marked gender divisions in societies" (Spivak 2016)

intersectionality of oppressions within the colonial/modern gender system. Seams are exposed and interstices can be read as places of possibility.

Latin American decolonial feminist theorist such as Maria Lugones and Ochy Curiel understand that a panoramic awareness of socio-political and economics structures is key to overcoming gender oppression. The intersections of and gaps between the threads sewn by queer theory and feminist activism suggest that awareness combined with imagination can reveal a new social fabric which we are only beginning to discern. With imagination as a bridge linking consciousness to action, how are current feminist and queer theories currently disrupting the way societies perceive gender and sexuality? How are feminist and queer practices influencing theory and scholarship and how are theory and academia contributing to new feminisms? In what ways do gender, feminist and queer theories and practices merge to imagine new cultural ways of being, and what challenges do they face along the way? How have artists attempted to represent gender and queer identities? What is the role of art and culture in addressing and overcoming the challenges of contemporary feminism? How do intersections of culture, race, class, gender and sexuality call us to defend the freedoms won by earlier feminist and queer leaders?

The Annual Graduate Student Conference of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Miami calls for papers focused on intersections of art, culture, sexuality and politics in the re-imagination of societies in our contemporary world. We invite academics, students, artists and activists throughout the world to think and debate about History, Culture, Art and Society from a gender and queer gaze. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Relations between Art, Performance and Activism surrounding the topic of gender
- Feminist and/or Queer Culture, Struggles, Movements, Activism and Solidarity in the 21st Century
- Role of Art in Gender and Queer reterritorialization
- Gender Studies as Interdisciplinary Consciousness and Imagination
- Institutions and Gender- Academia, Politics, Science, Media and Business
- Contributions and Challenges of feminist and queer activism and theories
- Gender Intersectionality
- Gender/Queer/Feminist Decolonial Thinking and Practice
- Transnational feminism and solidarity

Abstracts of no more than 500 words and art proposals such as performances or displays are welcome in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Creole or French. Please provide a short

author bio with the abstract. Papers and presentations may be delivered in the language of your choice. The Conference will take place February 21, at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. Submit proposals before December 15, 2019 directly to: mllgraduateconference@gmail.com

Works Cited

Curiel, Ochy. "Hacia la construcción de un feminismo descolonizado". Espinosa Miñoso, Yuderkys; Gómez Correal, Diana; Ochoa Muñoz, Karina (Eds). *Tejiendo de otro modo: Feminismo, epistemología y apuestas descoloniales en Abya Yala*. Popoyán: Universidad del Cauca, 2014, 325-333.

Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System"
Hypatia, Volume 22, Number 1, Winter 2007, pp. 186-209

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty and Evans, Brad (2016). "When Law Is Not Justice." *The New York Times*, July 13, 2016 (Web). www.nytimes.com/2016/07/13/opinion/when-law-is-not-justice.html