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Appraisal of the MA Thesis *Decolonial/Postcolonial, Feminist, and Mapuche Dialogues through Ana Tijoux: Collectivity and Voice in Artistic Practices* by Jules Lighuen Rodríguez Cantero

In this thesis, Jules Lighuen Rodríguez Cantero examines music from the 2014 album *Vengo* by Chilean French hip hop artist Ana Tijoux in terms of its potentials for amplifying political struggle and enacting possibilities for change (3). A key claim is that Tijoux's music making contributes to an 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos) by creating dialogue and connecting people, suggesting a new method or tool for fostering a different ethics and enacting decolonial thought. Eschewing a more conventional divide between theory, methodology and empirical analysis, four chapters interweave Tijoux's lyrics and passages from her interviews with historical, philosophical, anthropological, ethnomusical and feminist conceptions. The first chapter (II) introduces Tijoux's work and, via the album's lyrical and visual references to indigenous Mapuche culture, also decolonial thought (Santos, Quijano, Galeano) and feminist thought (Haraway, McKittrick, Loomba). It further presents the author's commitment to interdisciplinary inquiry, close reading and content analysis and a brief positionality that sketches multiple identifications of Tijoux and the author, including links to the Mapuche/region. The second chapter (III) starts from biographical data of Tijoux's émigré mother to briefly sketch aspects of Chilean history under Allende and Pinochet, as well as the anti-colonial resistance and later dispossession and forced assimilation of the Mapuche, the 'original people' closely related to the land and often denigrated. Introducing indigenous concepts, Jules highlights Mapuche' emphasis on relational respect (48f) and solidarity established in communal dialogue and storytelling - all of which is said to inform Tijoux' protest music of internationalism, anticapitalism and everyday solidarity evoked by short lyrical citations.

The third chapter (IV) zooms in on ethnomusicology and the claim that music (making) constitutes collective identity and ontologically can engender momentary feeling of oneness, in Nazism as much as in protest. It also introduces affect defined (in a FN) as circulating force that can enable a practice of listening to self and others, 'cohabit with difference' (53), as well as some general suggestions that music making and 'sound practices'(56) might be included in classroom learning. Tijoux's music is described as participatory in its making and affording 'dialogue', relating to a feminist ethics of care and affirming that 'the (in)possible



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can become actual' (61). The final chapter (V) zooms in on the song of *Antripatriacha* and the relation of women's agency and the forces of water. This short summary indicates that the thesis covers a lot of ground in the quest of 'find(ing) a link between theory and practice' (9) and experimenting with a form of presentation/analysis that enacts decolonial practice rather than merely writing *about* it. It is animated by what the author later describes (though not explicitly examines) as their being 'fascinated and deeply affected by the fusions of genres, instruments, and the powerful lyrics' (59). Indeed, from a decolonial perspective one could argue that Tijoux's music *is* a form of theorising.

Given the breath of the material traversed, what is missing is a signposting for the reader in the form of a set of guiding research questions that lead through the text, chapter introductions and conclusions, and a more explicit naming of strategies and materialities by which decolonial 'dialogue' might be achieved with/in Tijoux's music. Given the many area experts cited and to underscore interdisciplinary it would be helpful to characterise the theorists by inter/disciplines – are these indigenous or Chilean philosophers or anthropologists who write about the Mapuche? The many 'lyrical fragments' (81) – particularly in the first part presented without interpretation or comment – make it difficult to discern musical contents and tactics, or indeed specific struggles that Tijoux aligns herself with. If Mapuche refer to an inseparable connection with the land, how can this relation be 'embodied' (40) by the artist? As an aside and given the central argument of an ecology of knowledge, I'm puzzled by the absence of acknowledgements. In the still largely single authored scholarship of the social sciences and humanities, acknowledgements do not take away from authorship but are a way to account for the 'communality of voice' and what sustains and enables it that the thesis traces.

In the thesis defence I would like to invite Jules to address the following three concerns. First, the central notion of dialogue and an 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos 2007 – wrongly attributed to Santos et al's edited collection where the term is not used) that is interpreted by Jules as a normative ethics where 'human beings [are] *ought* to cohabit with different knowledges, dialoguing with one another with the intention of enriching the perception of ourselves and others. The idea behind this concept is the eradication of social inequalities' (7). What notion of dialogue (and of self and other) is used here and how does this relate to colonial violence, trauma, and the eradication of other ways of knowing, signalled in Spivak's claim that the subaltern cannot speak or be heard within prevalent modes of discourse? How does the ecology of knowledge relate to the emphasis on 'epistemic disobedience' and 'epistemic de-linking' often associated with decolonial thought?



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Second, while I agree with the strategy of naming the sexual harassment allegations against Santos, I also wonder about the politics of citation and particularly the absence of Latin American feminist decolonial scholars such as Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's whose short piece „Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization“ I had sent Jules to alert them to other sources and genealogies of decolonial thought, and Cusicanqui's claim of the undue dominance of authors such as Anibal Quijano produced in part by English scholarship. What are key contributions of feminist decolonial scholars that are useful for the analysis?

Third, while the thesis refers to examples of Tijoux' international collaboration with other musicians, I'm surprised by the lack of discussion of the processes of Tijoux' music making. In a cited interview with Democracy Now Tijoux describes herself as a 'bad sociologist', 'not an intellectual or academic, but a musician who works with emotions' – touched by *teoria*. On the basis of the thesis, what are main tactics and materialities (including perhaps the beat, rhythm, timbre of particular songs) by which 'dialogue' is achieved?

I recommend the thesis for defense and suggest the grade very good (2) or excellent (1).

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Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer, Ph.D., opponent