



## Haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat: Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis

Manal Hamzeh<sup>a</sup>, Judith Flores Carmona<sup>b</sup>, Ma. Eugenia Hernández Sánchez<sup>c</sup>, Dolores Delgado Bernal<sup>d</sup>, and Cynthia Bejarano<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA; <sup>b</sup>Honors College, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA; <sup>c</sup>Art Department, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; <sup>d</sup>Department of Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies, California State University, Los Angeles, California, USA

### ABSTRACT

The authors share how their Arabyyat and Chicana feminist pedagogies and methodologies, haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat, contribute to a decolonial praxis. We center haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat and introduce what we term as “Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis” in education as an act of linguistic and epistemic disobedience. Our work, pedagogies and methodologies, advance the esthetic dimensions of our Arabyya feminista praxis. We delineate how in merging theory and practice is intuitively guided by our her/histories, sensibilities, and ways of being for/with each other. Coming from la Mirada al Sur, our transnational collaboration is captured in our testimonios/shahadat and displayed in the poetics and art that sprung via our haki/pláticas. We conclude that this work is needed more than ever and with a brief analysis of the esthetics of these methodologies as our Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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## Introduction

In this article, we share how our Arabyya feminista pedagogies and methodologies, haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat,<sup>1</sup> contribute to a decolonial praxis. We draw on a range of theorizing about decoloniality, decolonization, and decolonizing by different Chicana and Arabyya feminist scholars. We align haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat alongside Arabyya, and Chicana feminist epistemological perspectives as we are always living and resisting coloniality/modernity and imperialism in different global locations. As racialized and colonized border people, haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat is our response “to coloniality and the ongoing colonial process and conditions” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 17) within the academy. As people living in the cracks, fissures, and margins of coloniality, haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat

**CONTACT** Manal Hamzeh ✉ [manahamz@nmsu.edu](mailto:manahamz@nmsu.edu) 📍 New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8006, USA.

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are our resurgence within our attempt to undo hierarchical structures that control our lives inside and outside the academy.

First, a note about the term ‘decolonial praxis,’ and how each of us interprets this somewhat differently. As Arabyya, Mexicana, and Chicana coauthors, we each work from different geographical and historical places. We also read different scholarly and activist sources; therefore, we have distinct and shifting personal ideas about what decolonial and decolonizing mean. We stay mindful that we read/interpret them differently with our layered positionalities. We draw on the decolonizing and feminist work of indigenous scholars, such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Eve Tuck, along with the work of Palestinian scholars including Faiha Abdulhadi, Rabab Abdulhadi and Lena Meari. Such readings are marked by decades of Chicana decolonizing and decolonial methodologies and pedagogies. Indeed, not all Chicana feminists, such as Gloria E. Anzaldúa, used the term decolonize; some, like Emma Pérez, used decolonial, while Dolores Delgado Bernal intentionally used anticolonial. In a different context, Arabyya feminists have, for almost a century, been fighting against colonial and imperial projects on their land and in their lives. Many Arabyya feminists did not use the specific terms decolonial or decolonizing to describe their theorizing, activism or politics. For example, Manal’s Arabyya understanding of decolonization is always informed by the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist-Israeli settler-colonial project and the right of Palestinians to return to their Land (Sykes & Hamzeh, 2018). In contrast, the term ‘praxis’ has a more shared and intuitive meaning to us as a collective of Chicanas and Arabyya feminists. It is the merging of theory and practice—or putting our theories to work, into action.

In this article, we discuss what we term as ‘Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis.’ This refers to our interconnected Arabic and Spanish speaking practices of haki/pláticas and testimonios/shahadat as acts of linguistic and epistemic disobedience in academia. Our Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis are not blueprints but are intentional responses to our struggles against coloniality and the colonial dominance of theory over practice. For three of us, English is a second language, and it is also the language that allowed all five of us to communicate, to have haki/pláticas. We discuss how our haki/pláticas have powerfully prompted testimonios/shahadat,<sup>2</sup> as acts that generate knowledges from the flesh (Moraga, 2002) countering the “epistemic silences of Western epistemology and affirm[ing] the epistemic rights of the racially devalued” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 4). Our hope using haki/pláticas and testimonios/shahadat is to humbly contribute to the on-going decolonizing processes in academia as we “open up the possibility of thinking about decolonization transnationally, across colonial [and settler colonial] constructed borders, nations, racial categories and identities” (Tabar & Desai, 2017, p. x).

In writing about our decolonial praxis, we acknowledge that we all work within universities that are on Indigenous lands and that all of us are borderlands people. We start with an introduction of the main theoretical concepts we think with to do Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis. This praxis is intuitively guided by our histories, sensibilities, and ways of being for/with each other. We discuss the haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat conducted between the authors, and then our esthetic use of art and poetry in testimonio/shahada telling. Our *la Mirada al Sur*/transnational collaboration, along with our enacted solidarity, are captured in our testimonios/shahadat and is expressed in the poetics and art that sprung via our haki/pláticas (Espinosa-Dulanto, 2018a, 2018b). We conclude by emphasizing that this work is needed more than ever and with a brief analysis of the aesthetics of these methodologies as our Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis.

### **Haki/Pláticas and Testimonios/Shahadat**

Testimonio is an established Chicana/Latina methodology rooted in Latin America with a collective aim to shape a discourse of solidarity (Reyes & Rodríguez, 2012). Testimonio is “not the speaking of truth, but rather, the telling of an account from an individual point of view whose conscious has led to an analysis of the experience as a shared component of oppression” (p. 528). Similarly, in Arabic, shahadat are public presentations of people’s truths about oppression. The masculine noun shaahed is defined as the knower/the revealer. Al ashhad are the prophets, messengers, angels who testify about the deceivers and liars.<sup>3</sup> Despite the absence of the feminine form of this noun in major Arabic dictionaries, we use the singular noun shaaheda for she who gives testimony, or she who bears witness. Additionally, shahada is a public practice that intends to reveal oppression (Hamzeh, 2020).

Plática means informal conversation in Spanish. Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) delineated the contours of plática methodology to highlight how this anti-oppressive tool has been in use by Chicana/Latina scholars in and outside of academia. In Arabic, haki also refers to informal conversations and hikayat refers to stories. Haki and hikayat also enable/d Palestinians to bear witness, to reweave historical moments and preserve collective memory (Abdulhadi, 2017), and to imagine “modes of life and futures that are rooted in Indigenous Palestinian epistemologies, memory and relations to land, place and the body” (Tabar & Desai, 2017, p. xi). History tends to bend cuando platicamos as our shared history of oppression and resistance unfold. Haki and hikayat are to feminist Arab Palestinians what pláticas are to Mexicanas/Chicanas/Latinas.

Haki and hikayat are also tools of sumoud, steadfastness and resistance, that Palestinians deliberately use to keep themselves and their memories dignified as they speak back to the Zionist narrative. Sumoud is Palestinians' "mode of anti-colonial being/becoming that constantly engages a process of de-subjectivation" (Meari, 2011, p. 2) and the act of remaining "in place in the face of indignities, injustices and humiliation at the hands of the colonial power" (El Said et al., 2015, p. 13). To Meari (2011) sumoud is not a fixed/definable practice but, "a constant revolutionary becoming" and there are "as many ways to practice sumud<sup>4</sup> as there are Palestinians-in-sumud" (p. 3). What *sobrevivencia* is to Chicanas, sumoud is to Palestinians, standing on their land and insisting to merely be/exist in the face of the Israeli colonial-settler state and its military machine. Our sumoud is a 'revolutionary praxis' (Meari, 2015, p. 82) that turns oppressive practices into acts of resistance and opens possibilities to subvert colonialism/coloniality and re/remember oneself.

### Road to decolonizing academia

To continue the ongoing decolonizing work in academia and in our lives, we employ a number of guiding concepts from the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), Clelia Rodríguez (2018), Dolores Delgado Bernal and Octavio Villalpando (2002), Emma Pérez (1999), Eve Tuck (2018), Sandy Grande (2018), and Walter Mignolo with Catherine Walsh (2018). Sandy Grande's theorizing of the 'settler university' goes beyond critiquing universities as neoliberal, Eurocentric, and/or patriarchal (2018)—it is about rejecting the logics of elimination, capital accumulation, slavery and dispossession. Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) have also rejected the epistemological racism within the "apartheid academy" and the "apartheid of knowledge." Grande's (2018) praxis of 'refusal' creates options for the acknowledgement of the Indigenous stewards of the land, the denouncement of their displacement, and genocide. The ethics and praxis of 'refusal' is thinking/doing radical reflexivity and reciprocity in relations with all beings intergenerationally and across coalitions. Eve Tuck (2018) adds that this "refusal is a condition of possibility" or what Walter Mignolo presents as an option to 'delink from coloniality' (2011). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) calls for the intentional refusal of "research through imperial eyes" (p. 44). We do the refusal to outlast the colonial university (Salaita, 2017). Clelia Rodríguez's (2018) refusal is a process of unlearning, agitating and "teaching of radical love" (p. 1), a process that "is yours to feel" (p. 2) and thought "in the gut" (p. 3). It is the refusal to "replicate or polish the master's tools" (p. 12).

Decolonizing work/the academy/life is a full commitment. It is not doing a bit of work “related to social justice with a semi-curiosity about decolonizing approaches to pedagogy [and research]” (Rodríguez, 2018, p. 13). Yet, Emma Pérez (1999) prompts us to begin by imagining what decoloniality looks like and defines decolonial imaginary as, “the interstitial space where differential politics and social dilemmas are negotiated” (p. 6). That is, the oppressed, “as colonial other become the liminal identity, partially seen yet unspoken... overshadowed by the construction of coloniality... One is not simply oppressed or victimized... one negotiates within the imaginary to a decolonizing otherness where all identities are at work (Pérez, 1999, p. 7).

With our decolonizing theorizing from the flesh, we have inscribed our lived experiences in academia as holders and creators of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002). We refuse colonial logics of objectivity, competition, and individuality. We have asserted our feminista epistemologies and their relation to our pedagogy. Indeed, our historically excluded Arabyya and feminista knowledges are necessary to critique and challenge colonialist projects often perpetuated in higher education. As Arabyya, Chicanas, and Mexicanas, we are generally seen as outsiders—“others” in academia—but our praxis allows us to center our knowledges and our pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) against settler-university colonizing practices. Pedagogies of the home are methodologies that refuse the apartheid of knowledge in academia that excludes us and our ways of knowing (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002).

We employ these methodologies to transgress and speak against the brutalization against us and to disrupt the silence/s we have experienced in academia. Testimonios/shahadat, for example, highlight how theorizing from one’s own experience and writing one’s own story have produced new knowledges and forms of empowerment. Cherríe Moraga (2002) explains that Chicana/Latina feminist theory centers lived experience to draw out deeper meaning as we theorize from the body. Our sharing and connectedness then move us to situate, negotiate, and straddle the knowledges that spring from our flesh, from our lived realities in order to enact an Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis.

### **Weaving our Haki/Pláticas**

We, one Arabyya, two Chicanas, and two Mexicanas, have had many haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat over the years where we have shared our papelitos guardados (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Some of our haki/pláticas were spontaneous and others were planned but all are expressions of our rejection of colonial esthetic practices of sensing or

perceiving (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013) that insist on fracturing our mind-bodyspirit. In the section below, we draw on recent haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat that we weave to show our decolonial Arabyya feminista praxis.

We all work in the context of public, state, and/or land-grant [stolen land] or “settler universities” of North America (Grande, 2018). Living in the borderlands, as friends and colleagues for many years, we are epistemically interconnected and in solidarity. We have continually engaged the work of Arabyya, Chicanas/Latinas and Indigenous scholars and have built on their scholarship. This is who we are—expressed via poetry and art and then we have our haki/plática.

I am from los cañaverales  
Azúcar morena y humedad gruesa  
Tierra mojada y forced migration  
I am from September 15  
Por eso soy gritona y rebelde  
Constantly seeking justicia  
I am from single mother  
Luchadora  
Murdered father and yearning  
Oldest daughter and you better get your shit  
Together  
I am from these scars  
Cada una te cuenta una historia  
Diferente  
I am from querías un Ph.D.  
Ser fuerte  
Soy maestra pero sigo aprendiendo  
Soy de la Virgen de Guadalupe  
Malinche  
Una Chingona, ¿y que?  
I am from strong women  
Matriarchs  
Mariposa Monarca  
Que cruza fronteras

I am always crossing borders

Soy un testimonio de sobrevivencia.

### **Judith**

**Cynthia**//Straddling time and space, surrendering to the pressures of life, my body resists and fails me. My body betrayal is unequivocal.

I CANNOT WRITE, I CANNOT EAT, I CANNOT BEND THE CURVE OF MY ELBOW.

My mind preoccupied with the life cycle//birth (Felix's namesake born), childhood interrupted... then death and dying (Felix, the father/grandfather passing) ... and with him a part of me dies.

I am reminded to re-educarme a mi misma y re-educar a mi alrededor como dice una de mis mentoras Mexicanas, Alma (maestra, diputada, defensora de derechos humanos y ex-presca política) y de reensamblar las cosas con dignidad, justicia y memoria-always- challenging, questioning, speaking in ways that rattle people to the core like my other Mexican teacher, Lucha (activista, feminista, theologian y abogada y defensora de derechos humanos).

I grapple with the question//“What is dignified work, what is work that is just and that which is just work?”//It begins with reframing, redefining and filling the gaps within our humanity that make us vulnerable to oppression.

**Dolores:** I am the granddaughter of storytellers and matriarchs, Michaela and Eloise. And I am the mother of three young men, Olin, Izel, and Pixan. Part of my family has always been in the Americas, colonized, recolonized, and decolonizing. Our migration north from Mexico was in the early 1900s, and my most recent migration allows me to teach and learn on the eastside of LA. My *mujerista* sensibility translates into a way of life that requires me to see myself in relation to family, community, the current sociopolitical realities, and a commitment to social transformation, and to engage in self-critique about my inaction to imperial projects, my role in capitalism, my existence in academia. This sensibility forces me to cross borders, learn from physical and emotional pain, prioritize collectivity, and always look for the hummingbird who visits me in the mornings.

**Maru:** Crows speak to me through their autonomy. I try to observe and learn from them, their gaze, their alertness, how they protect their herd, their community. Thus, as a mirror image of crows, a border crosser feminist positionality in academia clarifies the elements that cannot be negotiated, friendships, the ongoing construction of trust and critique.



Hernández, (2014). Untitled.

Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos. Raise crows and they will take your eyes out.

-Mexican Proverb

**Manal:** Before joining the academy, I was on the frontlines fighting for justice, in both Palestine and Jordan. I stand on the margins. I agitate to unlearn. I use art to make my research accessible to the public and help change colonizing orientalist narratives about Arab women. I work collaboratively with colegas on this borderland. I dare to teach Palestine.

**Maru:** I have always been intrigued by the space that surrounds me, la frontera. I entered academia with a border crosser knowledge that had no specific academic line of thought and that's where I met you all and began a haki transformation. This experience has expanded my notion of belonging.

**Judith:** Dolores, I could never thank you enough for including me in your research as an undergraduate student at CSUMB. "You are Josie in the article." Thank you for introducing me to Cynthia's book (2005), *¿Qué Onda?* it gave me a glimpse into life in the borderlands. Now I'm her colega!

**Dolores:** I do remember. I named you Josie in the article because Josie is my birth-sister. I admired you as much as her. The world is vast, and yet so small, and I'm blessed that I met you, Judith, and that our worlds have been intertwined. Through our time together in Utah, you influenced my thinking more than you realize. You helped me to share my vulnerabilities, to theorize community-engaged scholarship, and to bring the testimonios and pláticas in our everyday life to academia. More recently, you introduced me to Manal, and she opened her arms and her home space to literally break bread with me.



**Judith:** Maru, la estudiante superó a la maestra. You inspire me and teach me every time you speak your knowledge, your wisdom. It is humbling to witness and experience your teachings.

**Manal:** Maru, when I first met you, Cynthia's friend, I was touched--drawn to you. I wanted to listen to your wisdom. After fourteen years, living on/by these borders and seeing Gaza, Palestine mapped on it, not daring to cross it, you welcomed me to your home in Juarez. We bonded on the meaning of translation and the hegemony of English. We saw the militarization of the borders at the core of the making of an empire raging for five centuries. We are in the same struggle together.

**Judith:** Manal, you have continually encouraged me to be self-reflexive, critical and to enact a praxis that is just, equitable and inclusive. Co-teaching and learning with you was self-serving and transformational. Your kind and giving soul have touched my life in ways that allow me to be a better person.

**Manal:** I recall when I read your book Cynthia, *¿Qué Onda?* I was a doctoral student. You came to our class to talk about the methodology of your study. I understood your commitment, your drive and was taken by your passion. You were almost speaking to me in Arabic that day. A year after self-exile out of Jordan, I was living in the heart of the empire that was waging a brutal war against my people. I was living on the borders that looked like the Israeli siege of Gaza. The young people in your book could have been those I worked with in Jordan and Palestine. You welcomed me in academia, you gave me hope and you demystified research for me.

**Judith:** Cynthia, I admire and respect your scholarship and the phenomenal person that you are. I will never forget that you were the first to invite me una taza de café when I arrived to NMSU. Our souls connected because we both have experienced, viscerally, the yearning, the desire to be mothers. I relate and connect with you and your scholarship--lo siento en la piel.

**Dolores:** I read *¿Qué Onda?* right after it was published, and I was inspired by the methodology and the commitment within the pages. But what really inspired me about your work, Cynthia, was the convivencia I witnessed when hearing you and a group of mamás you worked with in Juarez present at a plenary session at Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS). You embodied the late Ruth Trinidad Galván (2015) articulation of convivencia with respeto, confianza, and deep relationships. It was clear to me that you live Anzaldúa's idea of "Do work that matters. Vale la pena."

**Manal:** I was working and struggling with young Muslim girls to write my dissertation. My committee were mostly White 'feminists.' But I found my theoretical inspiration when I read Dolores' work (1998). As a consequence, I was able to name myself as an Arab-muslim feminist with an

insider's literacies. You invited me to draw on my organic knowledge and intuition, resilience, and deep survival skills.

**Manal:** I know we bonded as sisters the moment you, Judith, arrived to NMSU. I wanted to break bread with you right away in my home, your home. You wanted to do it with chile and I wanted to do it with zeit ou zaatar.<sup>5</sup> With the first haki/pláticas you shared, I witnessed your pain from the violence of a White feminist. I took responsibility and I was humbled by your trust. We co-taught and we leaped into the beauty and the love of pedagogical solidarity.

**Cynthia:** My hakkayat/platicadora colleague femtors and feminista sisters ARE radical love to me. You are supportive and compassionate and intent on healing, mending border spaces. Naked in my thoughts, my fears and inhibitions exposed, you have encouraged me. My relationship and experience to each feminista in this collective radiates radical love and what decolonizing the mindbodyspirit entails. Manal as a colleague in my home department that I have known the longest, who opened her home and family to each of us, as well as unlocking another world for the Chicanas/Mexicanas in the group-like me. Manal has gifted us an Arabic belonging that translates into a new palate for learning and an other worldly decolonizing outlook... My hermana en la lucha, Maru, illuminates the rugged spirit of the border with a raw sensibility, beauty and acuteness to understanding dignity in life in the border. With a sophisticated and artistic style, she speaks to and is from the margins-like me- in constant dialogue with the ragged yet luminescent edge of the border. ... Our senior scholar, Dolores, an academic icon of border pedagogy has offered many infinite scholarly gifts, that my head spins with her influence. Speaking of the mindbodyspirit, Dolores has helped me to feel less isolated with my body betrayal and has offered animo in recovering hope after illness—helping to have a sense of permanence in academia. And, Judith, whose intellectual stamina, grit and in-betweenness in the urban, the rural and the border and within broader Latinx spaces serves as a conduit for these hakkayat/platicadoras-like me- with other feministas in praxis that learn to blend scholarship, life, and friendships with sharp lucidity. Judith's clarity and smart assertions remind us of the power of testimonio and our own voices, which makes this Arabyya feminista collective's "thinking work" centered on decolonizing practices. Like me, you are an *hija del barrio* y te adoramos.

**Dolores:** Ahh, yes, our bodies' betrayal. I have more than appreciated our check-ins over the years about the struggles to live with a chronic illness. For a long time, I held onto a silence about that betrayal and it was Judith and our collective testimonio work with other mujeres in Utah that allowed me to break the silence and publicly share my digital testimonio

about pain, shame, and an autoimmune deficiency. There is a healing power via haki/pláticas and shahadat/testimonios.

**Maru:** I met Judith before I met her. I read her work and asked to visit her office until she agreed to become co-chair of my dissertation. I often asked myself; how can such a young woman know so much? What really moved me was (and is) Judith's capacity to confront oppression and take risks for others. She knows what it's like for a woman of color who dares to enter the academy.

**Judith:** The work we do as we enter the academy is jammed and jamming with tension. These tensions are also fueled among Women of Color. It is a contradiction that took me by surprise at the beginning. The racist colonial structure of the university also tricks People of Color and pushes them to compete against each other. Now, I know that sharing haki/pláticas with you all help to expose those tricks, helps to work through the hurt from racism. It is an act of bearing witness that is so powerful.

**Manal:** As an Arabyya with Palestinian grandparents<sup>6</sup>, right away I realized that this border [Mexico-US] is built on the same logic of the borders imposed by the Zionists on my people. I clearly feel the connection with your people and your history and their encounters with the U.S. imperial violence.

**Maru:** We move so much to get our knowledge legitimized. The bridging work among us is decolonial work. It is the work of un-silencing ourselves when we are together then in academia. It is the action of giving ourselves permission to be our whole beings anchored by our knowledges.

**Manal:** By doing and living between languages, translating from Arabic to English and English to Arabic, and you doing the translation from Spanish to English and vice versa we are in a constant move toward decoloniality, refusing to stay put and locked into English.

**Maru:** I can see this decolonial action of translation in a visual form and even as a physical movement as a transborderly act of solidarity with my people on this side of the border and with you. We do the heavy lifting of the English language and dare to sit, love, think, sing, and write with our mother tongues, our bridging of coalitional thinking. We are also doing purposeful code switching to survive the academy

**Manal:** I am more and more humbled to be working/learning with you all and excited about the possibilities this convivencia/taa'yaush is bringing us and will bring us. I refuse to work in isolation, disconnected or fractured, mindbodyspirit.

**Judith:** Collaborations and convivencia (Trinidad Galván, 2015) foreground our relationships of confianza (trust) as scholars/pedagogues within and across institutional walls and visible/invisible epistemological borders. Our relationships as sisters-colegas, coauthors span over twenty

years—where we have been femtors to each other, we have read and built on each other’s scholarship, or have shared our pain and struggles in academia. A simple question, “how are you/como estas?” can take us to understand that colonialism is deep and steep in academia and yet, as in “In Lak’Ech, tu eres mi otra yo/you are my other me (Valdez & Martinez Paredes, n.d.)

**Dolores:** In Lak’ech is a Mayan philosophy, a Mayan moral statement about how to treat others and how to be in this world. It reminds us how important it is to work together, to support each other, and to see ourselves as connected across borders. It’s clear from our pláticas that our lives are intertwined in deep ways and we are each other’s other me. Our interconnectedness is felt. It is powerful how in some cases we knew each other through our written words before meeting in person.

**Cynthia:** We denounce the oppression and silencing we have experienced in academia. Haki/pláticas have been used in our transborderly collaborations as sites of resistance where our survival/sobrevivencia and sumood is the only way of being and existing.

**Manal:** The timing of my arrival to New Mexico, a year after the U.S. army invaded and occupied Iraq, the surge of racism against Arabs and Muslims, heightened my awareness of the parallels and need to listen to each other, bond and collaborate. I do not live in exile anymore, as I have when White feminists questioned my legitimacy.

**Judith:** Tu eres mi otra yo then is about building a bridge of coalitional thinking and action. Where we travel to different spaces – across public, institutional, temporal and disciplinary boundaries to reveal our decolonizing ways of being and belonging in academia.

**Cynthia:** Each haki/pláticas ~ testimonio/shahadat uplifts us with new knowledge, new ways of coping, new ways to challenge the established or expected way of being in academia.

### **A decolonial Arabyya feminista praxis**

In the previous section, we shared a haki/plática to illustrate our decolonial Arabyya feminista praxis through poetics, art and their esthetics. Our haki/plática are also a glimpse of our multiple knowledges, witnessing, and lived experiences in real time that cannot be overlooked or separate from our work in the academy. It is visceral, raw, emotional, meaningful care and loving and learning. As people who “have lived—and live—the colonial difference” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 2), we shared our transborderly stories, world sensibilities, and retellings/resensing through our haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat. We shared about our health, about the tenure process, about loss, or about experiencing oppression in academia. We

engaged in “epistemic disobedience and delinking from the colonial matrix in order to open up decolonial options—a vision of life and society that requires decolonial subjects, decolonial knowledges, and decolonial institutions” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 9). We also refused what Boaventura de Sousa coined as epistemicide, or the silencing and erasing of perspectives and knowledges of racialized academics (2005).

We further made visible our decolonial subjectivities through the aesthetics of our haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat as we deliberately rejected the colonial conventions of writing and of truth-telling. So, how do our truth-telling methods serve to refuse colonial logics and structures, in and outside of academia, and how do these theories of the flesh (Moraga, 2002) allow us to delink from the logics of coloniality? Divulging our haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat brought forth an urgent sense of solidarity work that is needed to begin decolonizing academia.

We all spoke from the body, from our lived experience. When we introduced ourselves at the beginning of this article and then as we had the haki/pláticas, we did so in a nonhierarchical way and informally. We acknowledged our ancestors and the land. If we wrote in a language other than English, we tried to not translate or to italicize because we don't want to relegate these languages. In fact, Rodriguez (2018) reminds us that “living in the margins of vocabulary explicitly smells like disobedience” (p. 11). Hence, these esthetic methods were decolonizing for us because they emerged from asystemic spaces like the kitchen table, having together a home-cooked meal or tea. These are our *papelitos guardados en la memoria con la Mirada al Sur* that allow for a crossing of nation-state borders—Maru in Ciudad Juárez, Manal in exile from Jordan and Palestine, and Dolores in Los Angeles. Our haki/pláticas ~ testimonios/shahadat serve as a bridge to understand the intersubjective knowledges we possess, share and enact. In academia, where patriarchal systems promote and reinforce fragmentation and isolation, we bond together to continually fight for our right to survive and thrive—to remain whole, to recognize ourselves in each other and to exist and resist in solidarity. These methodologies allow us to bridge our border-crossing feminist experiences and our testimonios/shahadat of survival in occupied Palestine and in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands.

We use these methodologies and pedagogies of healing and solidarity as an act of resistance. They help us to challenge post-positivist neoliberal methodologies that replicate racist, sexist and colonial knowledge. We place these methodologies in the forefront of our everyday actions and work, confronting and refusing coloniality. They allow us to carve out spaces of dignity in academia where we disrupt and refuse the fracturing of our mindbodyspirit. As *hakkayat/platicadoras* and *testimonialistas/shaahadat*, we can be open, playful, loving and vulnerable with each other.

We refuse the silencing of our experiences and with this Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis we create different options for being scholars/pedagogues. Our refusals and epistemic disobedience are decolonial acts of survival. Our Arabyya feminista options are not blueprints, but are intentional responses to our struggles against coloniality and the colonial dominance of theory over practice. We think with theory, we theorize from the flesh, we theorize practice, we create and enact lived struggles, and we live with/by *sobrevivencia/sumoud*, in the space of knowledge and life itself. Indeed, we delved into *convivencia/taa'yaush* by interweaving our *haki/pláticas*. Our bridging work is decolonial work. It is the work of un-silencing ourselves when we are together then in academia. It is the action of giving ourselves permission to be our whole beings anchored by our knowledges.

Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis is our revolutionary way of doing, being, and becoming. Our praxis is unlearning, refusing, being disobedient, engaging in *convivencia/taa'yaush*, *sobrevivencia/sumoud*, holding ethical relationships and strategic alliances. We are enacting our visions, or our decolonial imaginary, to be inclusive of our epistemologies in a place that was never meant to be for us. This Arabyya feminista decolonial praxis crosses geographies from the borderlands of Mexico-U.S. to Palestine.

## Notes

1. The ~ (tilde) between *pláticas~testimonios* serves as a bridge, our process of *reflexión*, that allows us to “cross the spatial borders that often separate *lo académico de lo personal*” (Delgado Bernal, 2009, p. 5)—our *pláticas* allow us to *desahogar* our *testimonios*” (Flores Carmona et al., 2018, p. 51).
2. See Flores Carmona, Hamzeh, Bejarano, Hernández Sánchez, & El Ashmawi’s article *Pláticas ~ Testimonios: Reimagining Methodological Borderlands for Solidarity and Resilience in Academia*.
3. From Arabic dictionaries, *Lisan Al ‘Arab* and *Al Sihah fil Lughah*.
4. Also transliterated as *sumud*.
5. Olive oil and roasted thyme in Arabic. This is a Palestinian staple food that reflects Palestinians’ labor and love for their land/soil. It also reflects their *sumoud*, steadfastness, and resilience, given that the Israelis uproot Palestinian olive trees to build settlements or the separation wall, and prohibit Palestinians from harvesting the wild *zaatar* on barb-wired military-confiscated land.
6. In 1948, the Israeli Zionist settler colonization of Palestine resulting in “the mass eviction of the overwhelming majority of the Indigenous Palestinian people who were expelled and forcefully dispossessed from their homes/lands... Palestinians have termed this *al-Nakba* (catastrophe) which signifies the theft/loss of their land and the establishment of the Israeli settler-colonial state... [In 1967] what was left of historic Palestine... became occupied by Israel. Palestine remains colonized... while exercising routine violence through massacres, mass incarceration, targeted assassinations, restricted movement, home demolitions, sexual violence, and implementing racist

apartheid policies that fragments the Palestinian population into Bantustans” (Tabar & Desai, 2017, p. ii–iii).

## Contributors

**Manal Hamzeh** is a Professor in the Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies at New Mexico State University. Her current research focuses on Arabyyah feminist methodologies, particularly on the shahadat (testimonios) of Egyptian women resisting state violence since the January 25th Egyptian Revolution.

**Judith Flores Carmona** is Associate Professor/Faculty Fellow for the Honors College and interim Director of Chicano Programs at New Mexico State University. Her research interests include critical pedagogy, Chicana/Latina feminist theory, critical race feminism, social justice education, and testimonio methodology and pedagogy.

**Ma. Eugenia Hernández Sánchez** is a full-time professor at the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez UACJ, Art Department. Her research interest focus on transnacional feminista pedagogies, Latinamerican testimonio, art-based research, youth migration and radical friendship.

**Dolores Delgado Bernal** is Chair and Professor in the Department of Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. As a scholar-activist, she has worked for 30 years with schools and communities to disrupt the mis-education of Chicana/Latina students. Much of her teaching and scholarship has focused on feminista methodological approaches to research and social justice.

**Cynthia Bejarano** is a Regents Professor in the Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies at New Mexico State University. Her publications and research interests focus on the intersections and interstices of border violence, migration and immigration issues, and gender violence at the U.S.-Mexico border.

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