Indigenous Movement and Decolonial Feminism

The paper considers the situation of indigenous women of Latin America—Abya Yala—as the powerful indigenous movement in South America has grown and has influenced the new constitutions of both Bolivia and Ecuador. With the movement, there has been a flourishing of indigenous philosophy that recovers or rethinks ancestral cosmologies in relation to ways of living, human relations, and relations with the world of nature.

My contribution is to introduce an account of the oppression and dehumanization of the peoples of Abya Yala that I call the “coloniality of gender.” I rethink the relation between race and gender as I offer an account of the modern colonial gender system. I rethink but do not dwell on oppression as I accompany the indigenous movement in its emphasis on decolonization. I offer what I call a “decolonial feminism.”

The divide between depatriarchalization and decolonization that is central to the framework of the Bolivian constitution can be clearly seen as misguided given the coloniality of gender which shows colonization and the creation of races as inseparable from the coloniality of gender. In thinking of a decolonial feminism I appeal to cosmology and resistance to colonization from a sense of self in community constituted by cosmological beliefs.

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