



Lilia D. Monzó. *A Revolutionary Subject: Pedagogy of Women of Color and Indigeneity*. Peter Lang, 2019.

In this remarkable text, Lilia D. Monzó elaborates a methodology and a critical theoretical framework following the tradition of Marxist-humanism of G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Frantz Fanon, within an elaboration of critical pedagogy with roots in the thought of Paulo Freire and Sandy Grande. The core thesis of the book is that “Indigenous women and Women of Color bring a source of untapped ‘revolutionary Reason and force,’ that may lead us to freedom” (5). Monzó writes this book “as an outcry to what [she] see[s] among the organized radical left in the United States as a profoundly western and male-centric culture, even among those who condemn imperialism and proclaim to be anti-racist and anti-sexist” (2). She writes from the perspective of a “Latina Marxist-humanist” (107), and she acknowledges that there are many contradictions within racialized communities. However, Monzó subtitles her book “*Pedagogy of Women of Color and Indigeneity*” to highlight the power of the perspective and coalitional work of Indigenous women and Women of Color.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to her overall framework and a primer on the Hegelian-Marxist concept of freedom and its potential critiques of settler colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, and alienation. She draws on the work of Raya Dunayevskaya, Frantz Fanon, and Glen Sean Coulthard for their collective advances within the dialectical materialist approach beyond the underdeveloped areas and blind spots of Marx’s original thought, especially with respect to race and decolonization. Here Monzó highlights the ways in which capitalism is really “racial capitalism.”¹ The chapter ends with an introduction to “Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy,” as a “philosophy of praxis that interrogates conditions of oppression and exploitation and creates conditions of possibility for developing new social relations that are founded on equality, human dignity, and solidarity with all peoples and all living things, including the Earth that sustains us” (23).

Chapter 2 focuses on the intellectual, social, and political struggles of Indigenous women and Women of Color. Monzó problematizes the loss and silencing of Indigenous women in some Women of Color discourses. She engages decolonial and Indigenous thinkers for their critiques of the Eurocentrism of “classic” Marxism for its underdeveloped analysis of coloniality, slavery, and primitive accumulation. Using the work of Indigenous theorists Audra Simp-

son, Nick Estes, and the work of Red Nation, she is able to draw out the sexism of settler colonialism and connect the goals of Marxist-humanism with the abolition of state-controlled borders and solidarity with Indigenous and colonized people's demands for self-determination. One issue with this chapter is that it does not significantly address the silencing and loss of Afro-Latinx experiences and (trans and cis) Black women's voices within Women of Color discourses. While Monzó summarizes a Marxist-humanist analysis of gendered exploitation and oppression drawing on a variety of Marxist-feminist thinkers, Black Marxist women's work was noticeably underrepresented. Additionally, while Monzó offers a substantive critique of "whitestream feminisms" that have distorted and coopted the work of Indigenous women and Women of Color, queer and trans critiques were not explored, which remains an underdeveloped aspect of the book as a whole.

Chapter 3 offers a succinct summary of literature and commentary on Marx's writings on women and Non-Western societies. She works across an impressive range of Marx's oeuvre, as well as secondary commentary by C. L. R. James, Heather Brown, Kevin Anderson, Jenny Marx, Lise Vogel, Nancy Holmstrom, and Raya Dunayevskaya. Her assessments of Marx's overall support of women's liberation, abolition of slavery, anti-imperialism, and his evolving position on the probability of revolution in Non-Western countries is balanced within the broader context of his intellectual and political trajectory. Chapter 4 offers a critical autobiography detailing Monzó's political and intellectual development, situating herself in the Cuban diaspora and within the traditions of Latina feminism and Marxist-humanism. She seamlessly integrates the debates in Marxist circles on "identity politics" and Fanon's critique of Hegel's model of recognition with her own life experiences. This enables her to articulate the revolutionary lucidity of a consciously political colonized/racialized standpoint from which to fight for liberation and forge a path to freedom (122 and 133).

Chapter 5 is an accessible and well-curated global survey of women involved in revolutionary politics in the late nineteenth to twenty-first centuries that would be especially useful in introductory courses in women's and gender studies or history courses. Chapter 6 focuses on Chicanx/Boricua/Latinx women as revolutionary subjects within the paradigm of critical and revolutionary pedagogy. This chapter is co-authored with Anaida Colón-Muñiz, Marisol Ramirez, Cheyenne Raynoso, and Martha Sanchez. All four co-authors are contemporary activists and educators in California who work through a decolonial Chicanx/Boricua/Latinx lens for liberatory anti-colonial education, the development of youth leaders, housing justice, and immigrant rights.

Chapter 7 analyzes the ways in which capitalism and colonialism involve gendered and racialized tensions and contradictions, not just at the global-co-

lonial color line, but also within BIPOC communities. Building from the work of Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Monzó develops a “unitary theory of racialized and colonial oppression in North America within the context of settler colonialism,” by extending “the conversation to a dialectical approach that articulates both immediate and long-term praxis to remake the world” (206). While there sometimes have been strict binaries in settler-colonial studies that put the interests of immigrants from the global South, Black people, and Indigenous people at odds, Monzó navigates this contested terrain by engaging the work of the Black Panther Party, Manuel Karuka, Iyko Day, and Joanne Barker.

In the final chapter, “Pedagogy of Dreaming,” Monzó restates her thesis: our existence, both physical and moral, requires us to transform the world, and it is “Women of Color—Indigenous women, Black women, Latinx women, Asian women, Middle Eastern women, Muslim women, Ethnic minoritized women, and all non-western women—[who] present significant ‘revolutionary reason and force,’ to this gargantuan task” (239). Building on Freire, Monzó develops a pedagogy of dreaming that understands history as possibility, allowing us to envision a new society beyond the “politics of now.” Integrating doubt, humility, and relations of mutuality into our teaching practices allows for new epistemological encounters, moving not with “judgement but the curiosity to understand” and a commitment to “listen loudly to others” (270). Arguing that Marx’s humanism is not at odds with spirituality, Monzó develops the concept of “political grace” as critical to the healing and learning process that will make a coalitional movement for a new world possible (264–66).

A Revolutionary Subject is an interdisciplinary engagement with a wide range of discourses and scholarship, but one that is rigorous, accessible, and eminently relevant. Each chapter stands on its own and could be excerpted for teaching purposes in courses on political economy, women and gender studies, political philosophy, Latinx studies, Indigenous studies, and critical pedagogy. With respect to its theoretical developments, Monzó’s unique contribution furthers a unitary theory of gendered, racialized, and colonial oppression, within the context of settler colonialism and capitalism. It is an exciting expansion of recent scholarship working to bring together disciplines and questions that have for too long been thought of as separate.

Alyssa Adamson, *Northeastern Illinois University*

ENDNOTE

1. For more on racial capitalism see Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Robin D.G. Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism,” *Boston Review* (January 12, 2017). <http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism>; also see the special *Monthly Review* edition on Racial Capitalism, vol. 72, no. 3 (July-August 2020).