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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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Résumé de l'article

Ces dernières années, le féminisme transrégional a fait un usage intensif des réseaux sociaux pour organiser ses revendications. Cet article analyse le rôle joué par la transmission de l'affect dans la circulation du *hashtag* #WomenStrike et la manière dont ce dialogue collectif et transrégional a trouvé ses racines dans l'histoire du féminisme, notamment dans les échanges fondateurs, les performances et les oeuvres d'art associées à ses débuts. Cette circulation constitue une « contre-archive de l'affect » dont les principales conséquences sont discutées ici.

Archive, Affect, and History in Feminist Transregional Activism[1]

Cecilia Macón

I n recent years, transregional feminism has made powerful use of online social networks to organize and make demands. Indeed, with the hashtags #WomenStrike, *#NiUnaMenos*, #SlutWalk, and #MeToo, social networks have played a key role in incorporating specific claims—for free abortion, and against femicide, trafficking, and sexual harassment—into the constitution of transregional activism.[2] This article examines the role of the transmission of affect[3] in the use of the hashtags *#HuelgadeMujeres* and #8M—Latin American hashtags for #WomenStrike[4]—focusing on the forms by which collective dialogue found its roots in the history of feminism, particularly in foundational correspondences, performances, and works of art. As is well known, the organizers of #WomenStrike chose March 8— International Women's Day—for their worldwide demonstrations and strike. With a flood of tweets that included images of the history of the movement, quotations, and aesthetic representations, activists constituted an archive[5] organized by randomness, tension, and contrast. Local reconfigurations of a visual archive here serve as a form of contacting the past, while the specificity of new technologies generate new rules for the public sphere. It is through this contact with the past, in terms of a sustained

anachronistic overlap ingrained in the visibility of pending demands, that this transregional community is created. It is no coincidence then that this logic arises in the framework of a call for a general strike; an intervention that, as we will see, also challenges linear temporality.

What is compelling about the argument presented here is not the origins of this strategy but rather the transregional and transtemporal effects of its circulation across cultures. Thus, we engage in a transregional approach grounded in tracing the conduits, intersections, circuits, and articulations[6] that make up the multi-directional logic and not in the uniform logic of the global.

In this paper, I specifically examine the Latin American hashtag #HuelgadeMujeres through the circulation of images that refer to an affective contact with the movement's past, generating what I understand to be a "counterarchive of feelings/ affects." This counterarchive is essential to understanding methods of intervention and to evaluating the function of a "public digital history." It is an example, moreover, that, in its most crude form, counters the argument that the affective turn and a large part of fourth wave feminism[7] sustains and structures itself using disempowering melancholy, individualism, and resignation. It takes into account, of course, that this is a mobilization designed to transregionally restore the proletarian roots of March 8, in order to sever that date's cooption by corporate feminism, a trend widespread in the United States and some European countries, but not in Latin America.

In order to deploy this analysis, I will focus on the following steps: a) a brief introduction to certain key characteristics of hashtag activism and a presentation of the reasons why the affective turn is a particularly productive perspective when analyzing these issues; b) a reconstruction of the concept of "general strike"—as used by #WomenStrike—and its impact on the notions of time and action; c) a specific analysis of the images put into circulation under the Latin American hashtag #WomenStrike where the transregional dimension of activism intersects with a transtemporal anachronistic dimension, constituting a counterarchive of affects with its own characteristics.

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6. Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (eds.), *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, p. 6.
7. In her discussion of the hashtag #SlutWalk, Prudence Chamberlain characterizes the fourth wave of feminism as sustained in an affective temporality in which feelings construct immediacy. Prudence Chamberlain, *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality*, New York, Palgrave, 2017, p. 14.

We should take note of some of the features of hashtag activism. Most importantly, social media activism refers to an intervention in which action and speech interconnect, reaffirming a performative dimension. As Marcela Fuentes has analyzed, these social media interventions are constellations of pulsating performances[8] that disseminate, reproduce and amplify a demand in public space, becoming extremely effective in combating apathy. Consisting of malleable—not fixed[9]—forms of memory, hashtag activism is able to maintain the momentum of protests by becoming the heartbeat of campaigns.[10] Public mobilizations are thus hybrid performances where the intermediality between the streets and digital media collaborates in their aliveness.[11] At the same time, it is the profoundly affective dimension of the circulation of tweets or posts that is tasked with executing this performativity. An analysis of the specific role of the affective dimension in this type of activism makes it necessary to briefly revisit the characteristics of the affective turn produced in the last two decades, a framework that will support the analysis that follows.[12]

While philosophy has always been attentive to the question of passion and its role in politics—we can recall the works of Smith, Hobbes and Spinoza—it has only been in the last few years, and particularly in the area of gender and sexualities studies, that the so-called "affective turn" has taken shape. This new turn has, in many cases, drawn from the foundational work of the above-named philosophers; but the contributions of queer and feminist theory have likewise been profound. What has emerged is a conceptual setting that, while diverse, coincides with—as is the case for queer theory in general terms—the corrosion of a series of dichotomies: the distinction between passions and reason is dissolved, body and mind are considered unified, and

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8. Marcela A. Fuentes. *Activismos tecnopolíticos. Constelaciones de performance*. Buenos Aires, Eterna Cadencia, 2020, p. 47.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
12. It is important to make some clarifications about the vocabulary used here. According to the most agreed upon definitions, affects, understood as the capacity to affect and be affected, belong to the order of intensity and the encounter between bodies. They are thus unstructured and pre-lingual and embody the ability to respond to the world. Emotions and feelings, for their part, are the expression of those affects intersected by the cultural dimension expressed in their codification. Nonetheless, even when this distinction can be made on a conceptual level, I believe that the case at hand is indicative of the ways in which emotions and affects are linked in a circular relationship that makes them difficult to distinguish. It is this stressed relationship that, to some degree, underlies the central argument of this work, as well as the possibility of presenting affective agency as sustained through dynamic affective ties that are associated with practices typical of a social collective.

centrally, affects are understood as much as actions—determined by internal causes—as in terms of passions—determined by external causes.[13] The affective turn could be thus presented as a project designed to explore alternative forms of the affective, passionate, or emotional dimension, and to discuss the differences that might exist through these three denominations, as well as their role in the public environment. In accordance with the characterization here proposed, affects are connected to fragility, contingency, and subtlety,[14] constituting them in articulations of experience: "affects are those that unite, that sustain, or preserve the connection between ideas, values, and objects."[15] Affects, in this framework, are social[16]: they are not psychological states but social and cultural practices[17] capable of producing the surface and limits that allow for the individual and the social to be contained. Social, unstable, dynamic, and paradoxical, affects presented in this way constitute a logic capable of recognizing the social link, thanks to their performativity. This is also related to the conceptualization of capacity to affect and be affected, the rise and fall of the disposition of the body to act, bond, and connect.[18] Thus, affects are here instances that, like the acts that Austin speaks to, are profoundly performative: affects are in themselves acts that are capable of, for example, conforming with their irruption in the public sphere. In the words of Gregg and Seigworth: "affects refer generally to bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the augmentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, and to connect."[19] Indeed, affects act; and it is through this performative dimension that they interact with time. Affects, moreover—and this is key to this article's argument—cannot not be transmitted; this is to say that, by definition, they circulate.[20]

In this light, I will analyze some of the images tweeted or posted with the hashtag #WomenStrike that were inspired in the history of the feminist movement. The circulation of these images constituted a "counterarchive of feelings/affect" that was sustained using a logic that cites the history of feminism, creating, as I see

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13. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (eds.), *The Affective Turn. Theorizing the Social*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2007, p. 48–51.

14. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2003, p. 21.

15. Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, p. 29.

16. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 8.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

18. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (eds.), *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, p. 2.

19. *Ibid*.

20. Brennan, 2006, p. 6.

it, a specific method of political intervention and of public digital history. A series of images, articulated through a circulation of contradictory affects, poses a challenge to linear temporality and the action/inaction opposition, executed through an affective dimension. It should be kept in mind that, according to Hirsch, counterarchives[21] imply the random presentation of decontextualized objects in search of a connection that could apparently not be linked. Moreover, in what Cvetkovich calls "archives of feelings,"[22] cultural texts are explored as collections of codified feelings, not only in terms of their content but also in the practices surrounding their production and reception. Nevertheless, as we will see in an analysis of this case of activism, and in line with the premise that emotions, feelings, and affects maintain a relationship of mutual constitution, a counterarchive of feelings becomes a counterarchive of affects. Digital activism not only interacts with street protests, but—as a pulsating archive—is also capable of forming a particular and affective relationship with the past, articulating its key role in the unfolding of an encounter between bodies within activism itself.

By selecting March 8, International Women's Day, for their action, the organizers of the Women's Strike sought to resignify a historical event. This required a return to the political origins of that date and a distancing from its appropriation by marketing and corporate feminism. Also, rather than illustrating a sense of progress, it made the lack of change since the stark repression that took place in New York in 1908 more visible. The announcement not only made reference to a historical day from the first wave of the movement, highlighting its proletarian origins, but also to forms of protest utilized on two occasions during the second wave: on October 24, 1975, when 90 percent of Iceland's women left their places of work, declaring a "women's day off" and engaging in a mass rally that demanded equal rights; and August 26, 1970, when the United States' National Organization of Women [NOW] called for women to strike and abandon their housework. We also might recall that the strike that took place on March 8, 2017 began to be planned in the aftermath of the massive strike enacted by Argentinian women on October 19, 2016—known as Black Wednesday— which also included a massive demonstration in protest of the more than 200 women killed annually by *machista* violence, organized using the hashtag *#NiUnaMenos*.

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21.   Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012.
22.   Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2003.

This intervention also evoked "Black Monday," which took place the previous October 3 in Poland : on that date thousands of women went on strike and protested against restrictive abortion laws.

Thus, there was an effort to communicate a sense of a time suspended—the result of a failure to respond to demands made in 1908, 1975, and 2016 ; at the same time, the mobilization represented the foundation of a movement with new and redemptive characteristics. The resignification certainly implied bringing to light the way in which feminist demands are interlinked and in tension with those of class, race, and sexuality ; however, it also offered an unprecedented strategy that defined the present movement in relation to its history. It was no longer an elevated instance, enshrined as if built on the supposedly fulfilled objectives of the past ; nor was it a return to the movement's origins, the engagement of an optimistic logic relaunching toward the future, or a catastrophic action resulting from a decadent movement. It was about the practice of a strike—which included inaction on social networks—as both an act in and of itself, as well as a circulation of the constitution of a strategy of intervention that constructed the past in order to engage in its task in an unprecedented way.

ON OTHER FORMS OF POLITICAL ACTION

Before presenting a closer examination of the images of this counterarchive—the circulation of which became a political action in and of itself—it is important to grasp the specific characteristic of the strike as a mode of protest and the disruptive logic (in more than one form) of social network activism.

We must first take note of the philosophical dimensions of the notion of the "general strike." As has been discussed widely through the contributions of Georges Sorel and Walter Benjamin, the idea of a "general strike" uses suspension of action and time as a method of working-class protest. The general strike is a pause, a ceasing of labor,[23] an act of interruption, an impasse, and the reiteration of that same impasse. Thus, it contains the "projection of the universal stoppage of work"[24] as an instance of organization.[25] The general strike is not a mere medium for obtaining an objective

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23. Carlos Pérez López, *La huelga general como problema filosófico: Walter Benjamin y Georges Sorel*, Santiago de Chile, Metales pesados, 2016, p. 21.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

but rather a program. As George Sorel noted in *Réflexions sur la violence* (1908) it is a myth, a phantom that targets the implausible.

In *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921), Walter Benjamin takes up these arguments to suggest that, since the established legal order is tied to a legitimizing teleological order, it is necessary to employ a kind of action that can end the inferiority of the oppressed and is only fatal in appearance : thus, the radicalness of the general labor strike. Benjamin here not only puts into play the apparent paradox between a radical action that consists in inaction, but also that of historical temporality under a remote but latent possibility : a suspension of time tied to the need for a redemptive manifestation.[26] The absolute stoppage is an activity that results in a myth, no longer teleological but anarchical[27] and sustained in its destructive character. This implies making inaction apparent in relation to that which the challenged order expects as an intervention, the heart of political action presented and carried out as radical. Efficacy is thus situated in its impossibility.

The challenge deployed here towards a certain incarnation of action implies the stalling of linear time, in terms of progress and chronology, and optimism[28] as an affective dimension of that same progressive logic. The contact with the past can thus be sustained through another type of premise : it is de-centered in a temporal axis that not only implies a signaling of the present as a point from which the past is overcome, but also the subject as the site of transparency. Subverting the notion of action through a paradox supposes, moreover, to reconfigure time.

The "non-action" of the strike implies, thus, two paradoxes : the action of inaction, capable of challenging all expectations, and the impossibility of its complete realization as a form of making demands visible. In this case, the very idea of a women's strike thus interrupts time and puts into action its own way of approaching the past— anachronistic to an extent, but also explosive and capable of sustaining its success in the display of its own impossibility.

In this way it becomes possible to illustrate that, despite its appearance otherwise, there is no such passivity to non-action ; on the contrary, we are faced with a radical questioning of the matrix used to constitute and sustain political action by women. If

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26. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
28. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2011.

the images circulated with the hashtag #WomenStrike display the affective dimension as a strategy to challenge a teleological temporality, it is precisely because affects, like the logic of the general strike, call into question the distinction between the passive and the active.[29] On the other hand, the resignification of the strike's inaction as radical action becomes relevant here; one of the mechanisms that sustains the oppression of women is to deem them passive.

In selecting this strategy, the women's strike radicalizes a key element of the general strike: its effectiveness stems from the destructive impossibility of classical forms of understanding political action and time. Reality is constituted by what is imagined and imaginable as the strike makes visible the order that is being challenged and the possibility of a radically different world. This is not a defect but rather an axis for intervention: it is impossible for all women to stop working, consuming, studying, and caring for others. It is this very impossibility that makes oppression visible.

The very idea of a strike thus brings together the disruptive and redeeming role of anachronism through a questioning of the linear temporal order and the paradox of inaction as revolutionary action; it is something the visual counterarchive created by the hashtag #WomenStrike generates in all of its consequences.

It is important to recall that for Sorel himself the mythology of the general strike is primarily constituted through its images.[30] This inevitably brings to mind Walter Benjamin: in this Sorelan analysis, myths are systems of images capable of condensing a form of experience. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin demonstrates that the method by which images survive implies a manner of understanding the link between past, present, and future,[31] much in the same way as those here analyzed. Benjamin writes:

> It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on the past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal,

29. On the ways in which affects call into question dichotomies like action and inaction, reason and emotion, body and spirit, see Cecilia Macón, "Sentimus ergo sumus: el surgimiento del 'giro afectivo' y su impacto sobre la filosofía política," *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofía Política*, vol. 2, no. 6, 2013, p. 1–32.

30. Pérez Lopez, 2016, p. 155.

31. Natalia Taccetta, "Supervivencia e imagen: Agamben-Warburg-Benjamin y la historia," *Revista Lindes*, no. 5, October 2012, p. 22, http://www.revistalindes.com.ar/contenido/numero5/nro5_art_taccetta.pdf (accessed 19 October 2021).

continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.—Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language. [...] Every present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it: each "now" is the now of a particular recognizability. In it, truth is charged to the bursting point with time (This point of explosion, and nothing else, is the death of the *intentio*, which thus coincides with the birth of authentic historical time, the time time)?[32]

It is these characteristics of the "general strike" that permit us to call into question the forms by which historical images of the women's movement, under the hashtag #HuelgadeMujeres [#WomenStrike], constitute a point of departure for redefining the methods of intervention in public space, an aspect of an activism that generates the premise from which militancy in the streets unfolds.

Feminist counterarchives

The central image used in the call for the women's strike is that of a first wave feminist activist in profile.[33] It depicts a sharp silhouette that, in a defiant posture and stamped in red, black, and white, clearly looks to the future without relinquishing the past that it represents. The circulation via social networks of the image, which is re-appropriated from the movement's origins, led to an initial reiteration, in which the image was transformed into a profile of a woman with an afro. This transformation transpired not only as an operation of intersectionality, reflecting ethnic minorities' struggles for recognition that came to prominence in the third wave, but also as a key challenge in the ongoing fight for civil rights in the United States: the decision of African American women to depart from the white mandate by refusing to flat-iron their hair, taking up instead a natural texture. A second resignification of the original image circulated over the course of the same several days: it used the same profile, but with the woman's hair flowing in the wind, resembling the classic image of Delacroix's Marianne in *Liberty Leading the People (1830)*. In this example, the image's

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32. Walter Benjamin, "Awakening," *The Arcades Project*, Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, (Arcades, 462; n2a, 3–N3, 1, p. 459).
33. This image is available on Transnational-strike.info and on Twitter: https://www.trans-national-strike.info/2020/10/28/our-strike-is-essential-together-with-polish-women-for-freedom-of-abortion/ (accessed 15 October 2021), https://twitter.com/womenstrikeus (accessed 15 October 2021).

circulation not only produced a challenge to a teleological and linear logic of progress, as if to signal temporal superimposition as a path toward reconfiguring the method of intervention, but it also produced a confluence of demands from different moments of the movement. This confluence signals incompletion or, rather, the interruption of a progressive narrative that suggests a teleological feminist narrative.

Thus, in one of the images, Marianne's likeness is superimposed on the image of the woman with an afro, on that of a child, an elderly woman, and on identifiably Asian, Muslim, or—stereotyped—African activists.[34] Some of the profiles are meant to challenge, others anticipate a possible defeat, some are expressions of happiness, others of irony, shame, or fury. The original image also underwent transformations over the course of the several days of circulation to reflect Latin American people and places that took up the cause of strike: it was refashioned with a braid to depict an indigenous activist, an indigenous woman's "kola," and an elderly woman; dreadlocks, and calls to protest were juxtaposed alongside the image of composure of the original suffragette, adding a sense of rage, resentment, or innocence.

The original suffragette survives—altered, anachronistic, under a logic like that outlined by Warburg, demonstrating the role of survival in the dynamic of the occidental imagination.[35] Similarly, survival of the apocalypse is about rescuing the revolutionary under a new perspective.[36] A fact emerges: in the past, the tense visibility of a series of pending demands alongside previous demands collapsed the classic logic of subjectivity, generating anachronistic and anarchic operations—however, that experience did not result in skepticism but rather a new pattern of activism. The phantasmal period of survival refers to the thoughtless, to the anachronistic,[37] to a present woven of multiple pasts[38] and, like the action of inaction and the challenge to the strike's own progressive narrative, it distances itself from the certainties of the action's linear temporality. Reviewing the comments on these images one finds an extremely varied range of affect: love, hate, desperation, resignation, skepticism, exhaustion, but also, superimposed on this tense arch, its own irony, a trope that helps

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34. This image is available on Twitter: https://twitter.com/xabierbenito/status/833712579201626113/photo/1 (accessed 15 October 2021).

35. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Supervivencia de las luciérnagas* [2009], trans. Juan Calatrava, Madrid, Abada Editores, 2012, p. 47.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

to demonstrate two key elements of the experience, that universality is unachievable[39] and that affects cannot be regulated.[40]

There are two images generated for the campaign that are particularly notable for their strong circulation in Latin America. The first is a watercolor portrait of Emily Dickinson on top of which two verses of her poem 1176 are superimposed: "we never know how high we are / til we are called to rise."[41] In the portrait, Dickinson is dressed in a black suit similar to those used by the suffragists (images of her often depict her in a dress); she has her arms crossed and, more than mere discomfort, she emits a pure anger. The portrait was painted in the present and it entangles her words, which were written in the 19th century: this signals both the persistence of past anger as well as its resignification of what has been unresolved over time: oppression. Here we find an operation that again rescues a sense of irony, although here, that irony is coupled with rage.

A second image that was often retweeted was a purple point drawing of a caricature of a witch coupled with the phrase "We are the granddaughters of the witches you couldn't burn." It is, in a way, a phantasmal survival of past victims of the patriarchy that looks to intervene in the present. It does so through an appeal to a chapter in the history of oppression against women that has been the subject of important analysis over the last few years. The focus on witch burning is, without a doubt, a response to a sense of abjection towards the feminine, its pervasiveness in the present, as well as a vindication of the more disruptive implications of being, effectively, witches. The transmission of affects here does not thus refer only to the synchronic method by which a political community is created but also the role held by its diachronic constitution.

As Carolyn Dinshaw has analyzed extensively, contact with the past is strongly marked by an affective experience that, far from existing as mere empathy, involves a superimposition of diverse affects and a constant tension between continuity and discontinuity. As part of the "impulse to make connections through time,"[42] this kind of connection to what happened exhibits the ways in which the past

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39. Jacques Poulin, "Irony is not Enough: The limits of the Pragmatist Accommodation of Aesthetics of Human Life," *Poetics Today*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1993, p. 167.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
41. Emily Dickinson, *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Boston, Little. Brown and Company, 1960, p. 522.
42. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval. Sexualities and Communities. Pre- and Postmodern*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1999, p. 1.

touches the present, helping to construct communities like those generated by the hashtag #WomenStrike. It refers to an "opening of the possibility of being haunted, even inhabited and touched by phantoms,"[43] where the "haunting can entail othering"[44] and not merely repetitive paralysis. The destabilization connected to affects, distanced from both the teleology of optimism as well as the hierarchies of the events connected to certain methods of understanding/experiencing temporality,[45] opens the possibility of hearing oppressions that had been silenced in the past, thus escaping that repetitive paralysis.

The tweeted images offer a second strategy that I would like to briefly reflect on here: the use of historical or iconic photographs of feminism, particularly two that refer to different waves of the movement. The first is a photograph taken on August 20, 1970, when a group of American activists elided security at the Statue of Liberty;[46] the image depicts a crowd of women at the statue, gathered around a sign that reads, "women of the world unite."[47] The second image is a photograph of anarchist women workers with their fists raised; the women appear happy, if not necessarily triumphant. Also in circulation were images that depicted the fury of Argentinian and British suffragettes, including the near-legendary photo of the first "mock vote" of women in Argentina in 1921. All of these images were photographs of groups and were marked by affects of happiness amid challenge, if not also complacency, irony, and the rage of the lifted fist. The concrete historical event depicted was not underlined in any of these reproductions.

In this sense, it is important to remember that one of the first photos that began to circulate in Latin America was that of activist Julieta Lanteri, who, in 1911, took advantage of a loophole in the bureaucracy of registration and showed up to cast her vote in the working-class neighborhood of La Boca in Buenos Aires. The photo captures the moment and was one of the most widely circulated before, during,

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43. Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/ Modern*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006, p. 80.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
45. Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2013, p. 18.
46. This image is available on Twitter: https://twitter.com/francesca_bria/status/1368846361236566018 (accessed 15 October 2021).
47. The action, moreover, was a prelude to the Day of Equality, celebrated sixteen days after with a women's strike organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW.) at the 50th anniversary of the 19th amendment, which granted women's suffrage in the United States.

and after the strike. It shows Lanteri appearing at the voting site dressed in white.[48] She is surrounded by six men, including a police officer. It is a radical moment of confrontation: the activist's challenge collides with the fatal combination of distrust, mockery, and fear on the part of the men. The faces that are in view are of the five persons in charge of exercising patriarchy's power. Lanteri's face,[49] by contrast, is out of view. Although her intervention was hers alone, it could have been anyone's. In fact, the choice to use this photo for activism during the women's strike, rather than a mere portrait of Lanteri, implies exhibiting an action that is, beyond its specific anecdotal story, a collective one. Within the construction of the counterarchive in question, it connects and makes reference to interventions that are geographically peripheral to those that make up the traditional, central feminist narrative.

I would like to pause here to note how the collective dimension of feminism in this counterarchive is exhibited in terms of street protest; the gathering of bodies— all of the photos exhibit this quality—help to construct a sustained network in the circulation of affects—in tension, again—and these generate a collective dimension through contact, via Twitter, between past and present. It is through this temporal overlap that bodies, with their capacity to affect and to be affected, are here resignified and launched into the public sphere again. Thus, cyberfeminism not only does not conflict with the role played by bodies in the streets but it also helps to bring to light the specifically corporeal and affective dimension of activism.[50]

In relation to this matter, I would like to stress that it is not a question of supplementing street activism but rather of generating a new logic through such interaction. At this point, I must reference Judith Butler's influential analysis of contemporary street protest in *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street*. In agreement with her arguments, in which the performativity of the collective body in the street does not enter into conflict with the performativity of language, but rather

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48. This image is available at Cultura.gob.ar, https://www.cultura.gob.ar/julieta-lanteri-sus-frases-sus-luchas-su-historia-en-10-hitos-8814/ (accessed 15 October 2021).

49. This image is available on Twitter: https://twitter.com/solevallejos/status/442342038562807808 (accessed 15 October 2021).

50. For an analysis of the role of cyberfeminism in the constitution of the subjetivity of young activists, see Claudia Laudano, "Feministas en 'la red': reflexiones en torno a las potencialidades y restricciones de la participación en el ciberespacio," Florencia Rovetto and Luciano Fabbri, *Sin feminismos no hay democracia*, Rosario, Ed. Último recurso, 2016.

superposes it,[51] I would like to stress that the bodies that come together,[52] online and off, tend to be connected by, for example, fear, hope, and chaos. Indeed, according to Butler, the importance of the gathering of bodies[53] has to do with the fact that speech acts also involve bodies.[54] When "bodies assemble on the street, in the square, or in other forms of public space—including virtual ones—," Butler says, "they are exercising a plural and performative right to appear."[55] It is not that Twitter is a replacement for bodies in the street, but rather that it represents a version of the same.[56] However, what I am interested in underlining here is that, beyond my clear agreement with Butler in relation to the performative function of social media, I also concur that affective, historical, cyber counterarchives—in terms of both their circulation and their tense constitution— contribute to defining this collective in terms of capacity of action. It is there that one constructs, in a non-linear and unstable manner, the relationship with the past that is necessary for activism. It is there, moreover, that social media interventions obtain a street presence. This is true precisely because the counterarchive has been constructed performatively by affects and because social media not only make street protests pulsate but also introduce particular characteristics.

In fact, the nearly-immediate circulation of tweets transforms affects with such speed that they move from enthusiasm[57] to indignation and vice versa, with one superimposed on the other,[58] to generate a counterarchive that is unstable but no less effective because of it. Social networks are thus spaces where affects are expressed but also where they are transformed and amplified. And it is this transformation that, in the connection between affects and time, expresses a non-linear temporality that forces us—as the general strike does—to reconsider the same idea of action.

It is evident, then, that the digital world reconfigures the way in which our memory is constituted, in particular that which is transcultural, because available

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51.   Judith Butler, Notes *Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015, p. 159.
52.   *Ibid.*, p. 52.
53.   *Ibid.*, p. 145.
54.   *Ibid.*, p. 159.
55.   *Ibid.*, p. 189.
56.   *Ibid.*, p. 136.
57.   Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in an Internet Age*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2012, p. 42.
58.   *Ibid.*, p. 44.

technology permits any person to instantly collaborate in its construction. As Silvana Mandolessi[59] has noted, appropriating the metaphor of the archive—in terms of "public records" but also in terms of "beginning," "origin" and "first place"— implies that what can be archived changes and is constantly being decentered. This signals a topological transformation of the archive: it is no longer possible to refer to a place of memory. Rather, a multimedia digital archive is an online network— an inter-archive—that is accessible, mobile, and capable of being shared. The deterritorialization and dematerialization of memory,[60] taking shape in our case in this counterarchive, implies the need to reconsider the body in the frame of a new sense of the process of *embodiment.*[61] The tense affects exhibited in the questioning of teleological temporality and in the specific form of establishing contact with the past (for this, the commentary and text added during the act of retweeting are key) are those that grant performativity and embodiment to the public digital archive. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that, contrary to what occurs in a classic understanding of memory, here it is not about content or affects that settle over time but rather, as with all archives, those that are actively constituted and exercised voluntarily, publicly, but also eventfully.

Activism on social media—which exercises the body in terms of the exhibition of affect—connects to street protest in a particular way. It does so thanks to the formulation of counterarchives of affect, through which the method by which activism is able to be carried out is clearly framed by a recognition of temporal and affective instabilities, constituting an archive that is transcultural.

In this sense, I would like to recall a key intervention by the Argentinian collective that coordinated the women's strike: the physical and virtual exhibit *Mareadas por la marea. Diario* íntimo *de una revolución feminista* curated by Cecilia Palmeiro and Fernanda Laguna. The activists constructed an affective counterarchive of the intervention that culminated on March 8 that year (but which began in 2015 using the hashtag *#NiUnaMenos* as a movement against domestic violence). On display in the

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59. Silvana Mandolessi, "Memory Unbound: The Issue of Place in Digital Memory," University of York, 2017. Presentation at the Conference Placeless Memories: Digital Constructions of Memory and Identity.

60. Amanda Lagerkvist, "Embodiments of Memory: Toward an Existential Approach to the Culture of Connectivity," Lucy Bond, Stef Craps & Pieter Vermeulen (eds.), *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2017.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

Nora Fisch Gallery (and online as interventions) were banners, pamphlets, homemade copies of theoretical texts (by Judith Butler, Paul Preciado, and Rita Segato), photographs, walls with signs and handwritten accounts of experiences, cellphones with tweets, cans and other homemade instruments used not to make music but to generate noise, headphones to listen to street recordings, collections of books, private photographs, texts in a number of languages. Each had a handmade frame that distanced the materials from a sense of stability. The collective is here, precisely, a sense of vertigo.[62] The colours in the space are sharp and contrasting; as contrasting as the affects that flourish in the counterarchive, which stands open to the future: among the most important are rage and happiness. It attempts to construct a memory of the past—more than recent, it is immediate, allergic to a unified progressive narrative. The counterarchive of the space is also virtual as it is unfolding on social media and kept on a web page open to comments. It is the expression of a desire for history[63] but one that is not developed in terms of fixed identities; rather it is sustained through permanent resignification. We might even say that in performances like this one, it is the transmission of affects which allows for the creation of the affective assemblages[64] that sustain unsettled identities like the ones generated here.

This counterarchive of feelings/affect, which was generated through tweets with resignified images, is charged with the task of constituting the grammar of this public digital history in a new way;[65] and with this task comes the political subjectivity of contemporary feminist protest. It speaks, as Rothberg puts it, of a desire for multidirectional history, but one that does not aspire to be mere decantation; rather it is active and submerged in a polyphonic affective circulation. It is thus, a public collaborative history—perhaps similar to a "history from below"—that involves

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62. According to the exhibit's presentation, it is a "revolutionary process in which sexed bodies mix, are confused and connect. A varied crowd without owners, nor bosses, nor leaders, but which advances and tows with it the structures, institutions and forms of patriarchal life. The tide crosses borders, languages, classes and genders, it grows like an expansive wave of desire."

63. Victoria Hesford, *Feeling Women's Liberation*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2013, p. 256.

64. Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, New York, Routledge, 2011.

65. The notion of "public history" was introduced in 1975 by Robert Kelley as research into the past by professional historians in non-academic areas—NGOs, museums, the design of public policy, film, documentaries, etc.—taking note of the central role of public interest, responsibility, and common good in the evaluation of their work. As Graeme Davidson has noted, this is perhaps the most ancient kind of history (was it not what Machiavelli and Thucydides did?) but the need to assign it a specific name suggests, in the words of its proponents, the need to "put history.

bringing to light different methods by which the public becomes involved in the past. Yet, also, and critically, this narration is presented in dialogical terms,[66] and as a digital public history it is decentered, unstable, and has an infinite capacity to accumulate information and to be rewritten. In this way, it has to do with an archive that is at once voluntary, unstable, polyphonic, and politically effective.

Thus, it is not merely a matter of making "reference" to previous struggles as a way of expounding on a lineage and calling into question the progressive narrative of feminism—something clearly done in Angela Davis's speech at the Women's March in 2017, for example[67]—but it is also a way of articulating a tension with the unsolved collective pain associated with patriarchy. It is not a question of a time compatible with monumental or progressive history, but rather of its refiguration through the affective dimension. Like the general strike, it forces us to review the ways of intervening into or interrupting the world and to thus create a feminist activism on its own terms.

Anachronistic echoes of the past

I believe that in order to understand the consequences of the modes of political intervention expressed by the activism analyzed here it is helpful to evoke the concept of the "echoes of fantasy" developed by the feminist historian Joan Scott years ago. Seeking to refute the belief that women's history is continuous[68] and that there exists something like a feminine identity that cuts across time, Scott develops the idea of

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to work in the world." Nevertheless, over the last few years, and in light of, among other things, the digital age, there has been a superimposition between both notions, making "public history" also refer to the way in which access to the past is collectively constructed by a wide array of actors and in terms not of memory or tradition but of active construction. See Fien Danniau, "Public History in a Digital Context: Back to the Future or Back to Basics?," Low Countries Historical Review, vol. 128, no. 4, 2013, p. 118–141; Gabriela Correa da Silva, "Representation of the Past and Public History: Women's History on the Internet," *Revista Tempo e Argumento*, vol. 8, no. 19, September–December 2016, p. 416–437, available at core.ac.uk, http://dx.doi.org/10.5965/2175180308192016162 (accessed 19 October 2021); Robert Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects," *The Public Historian*, vol. 1, no. 1, Fall 1978, p. 16–28; Graeme Davidson, "Paradigms of Public History," *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 2496, 1991, p. 4–15

66. Danniau, 2013, p. 123.

67. Susana Draper, "El paro como proceso: Construyendo poéticas de un nuevo feminismo," Verónica Gago, Raquel Gutierrez Aguilar, Susana Draper, et. al. (eds.), 8M. Constelación feminista.¿Cuál es tu huelga? ¿Cuál es tu lucha?, Buenos Aires, Tinta Limón, 2018, p. 53–64, https://www.tintalimon.com.ar/public/53lu3fymk97mvao1avou6umunabo/pdf_978-987-3687-37-2.pdf (accessed 15 October 2021).

68. Joan W. Scott, "El eco de fantasía: La historia y la construcción de la identidad," *La manzana de la discordia*, vol. 4, no. 1, January–June 2009, p. 130, https://doi.org/10.25100/lamanzanadeladiscordia.v4i1.1481 (accessed 19 October 2021).

"echoes of fantasy" to refer to the "retrospective stability of identity."[69] If fantasy has a "double structure that at once reproduces and masks conflict, antagonism or contradiction,"[70] the echo is always delayed and incomplete.[71] I see the new feminist mobilization constructing its own anachronistic, unstable, contradictory, ironic, anti-progressive archive through the suspension of time and action and in the frame of the call for a strike. In doing so it clarifies a subjectivity/agency that figures as an echo of fantasy. It is through the exhibition of affects in public space that classic modes of entering subjectivity, history, action and time are altered and—far from generating mere contemplation—propel the invasion of all spaces in a highly effective manner. The transmission of a "historical emotion"[72] that clearly attempts to make use of the past, laid out in anti-essentialist terms, makes a space for desire in its pure peculiarity as well as its more literal familiarity.[73]

The Latin American activism that arises here manages to be transregional—in terms of conduits, intersections, circuits, and articulations—due to its anachronistic transtemporal dimension. It challenges boundaries because it dares to challenge the linear temporality associated with the patriarchal nation-state.[74]

The digital public history generated by the hashtag #WomenStrike not only supposes a confrontation between different histories in the public sphere, sustained in a permanent random negotiation,[75] but also shows that these modes of getting closer to the past can be politically much more effective than those that are sustained with a more linear and essentialist character. It is through the performative survival of its past that women's emancipation is felt—and made—in many ways. And, perhaps—just perhaps—, it is such affective survival of the past that is the force in charge of designing the key principles of a transregional fourth wave capable of challenging the established narrative of the movement by figuring new strategies for activism.

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69. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
72. Hesford, 2013, p. 22.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
74. Victoria Browne, *Feminism, Time, and Nonlinear History*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 10.
75. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 2.

Archive, Affect, and History in Feminist Transregional Activism

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Abstract

In recent years, transregional feminism has made strong use of social networks in order to organize its demands. This article deals with the role of the transmission of affect in the circulation of the hashtag #WomenStrike and in the way this collective and transregional dialogue found its roots in the history of feminism, particularly in foundational correspondences, performances, and the works of art of its early stages. This circulation constitutes a "counter archive of affect" whose main consequences are herein discussed.

Résumé

Ces dernières années, le féminisme transrégional a fait un usage intensif des réseaux sociaux pour organiser ses revendications. Cet article analyse le rôle joué par la transmission de l'affect dans la circulation du *hashtag* #WomenStrike et la manière dont ce dialogue collectif et transrégional a trouvé ses racines dans l'histoire du féminisme, notamment dans les échanges fondateurs, les performances et les œuvres d'art associées à ses débuts. Cette circulation constitue une « contre-archive de l'affect » dont les principales conséquences sont discutées ici.

Biographical note

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