

WINNER
ENGLISH PEN
AWARD

A Feminist

Reading

of

Debt

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and

Verónica Gago

NOTES FROM FEMINIST READING OF DEBT WORKING GROUP USUFRUCTUARIES OF EARTH

composed by Iliada Charalambous & Philippa Driest

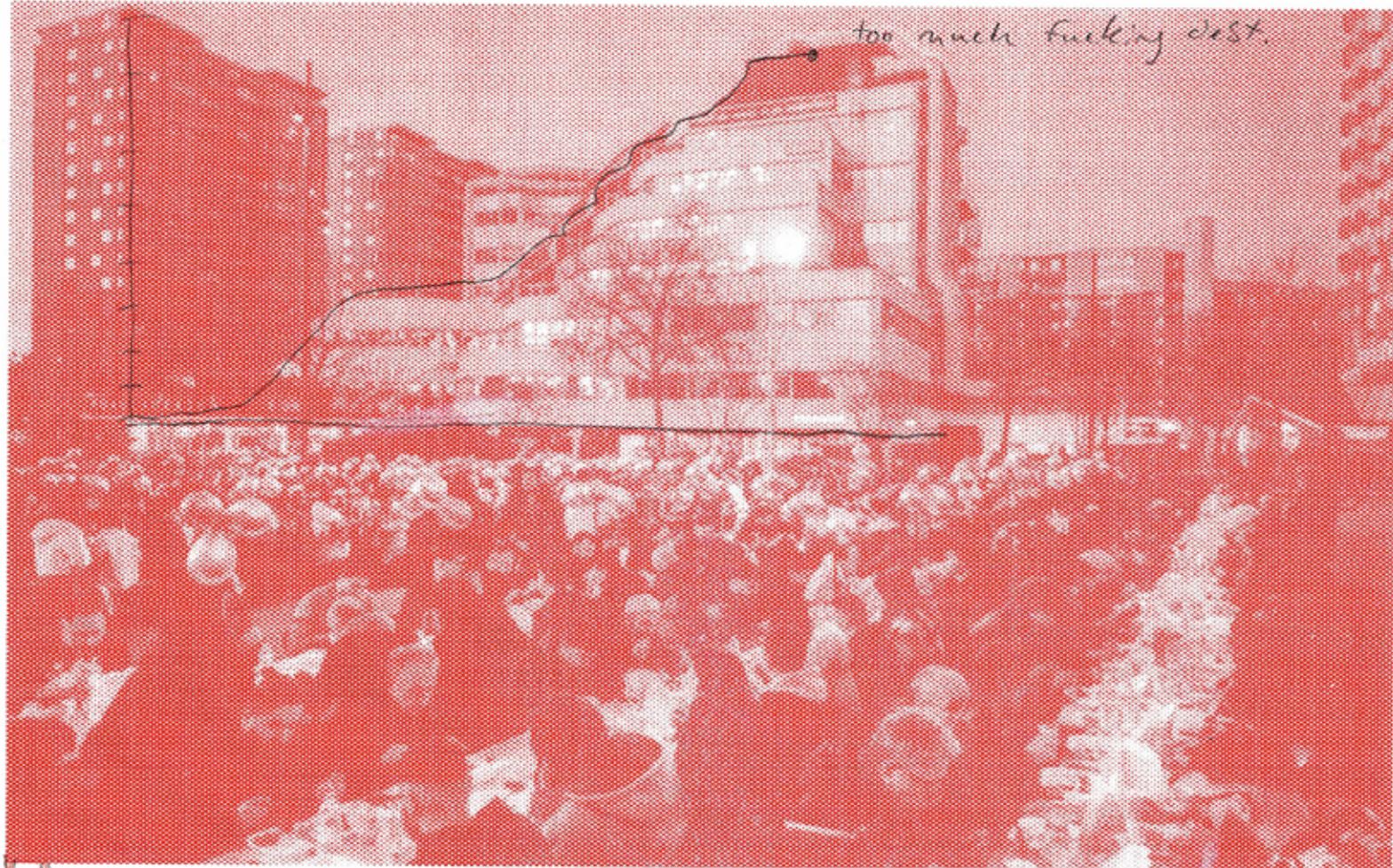
*emerging through the told experiences of farmer women,
workers and prisoners*

*a proposal to think debt through our own perspectives
and rethink debt through a feminist perspective*



The original green scarf with the legend: "Sex education to decide, contraceptives to avoid abortion, legal abortion to avoid death"





What is the idea of disobedience to financialization?

- unions – manifesto
- feminist popular economies
- migrant women in Spain

What does it mean to disobey finance?

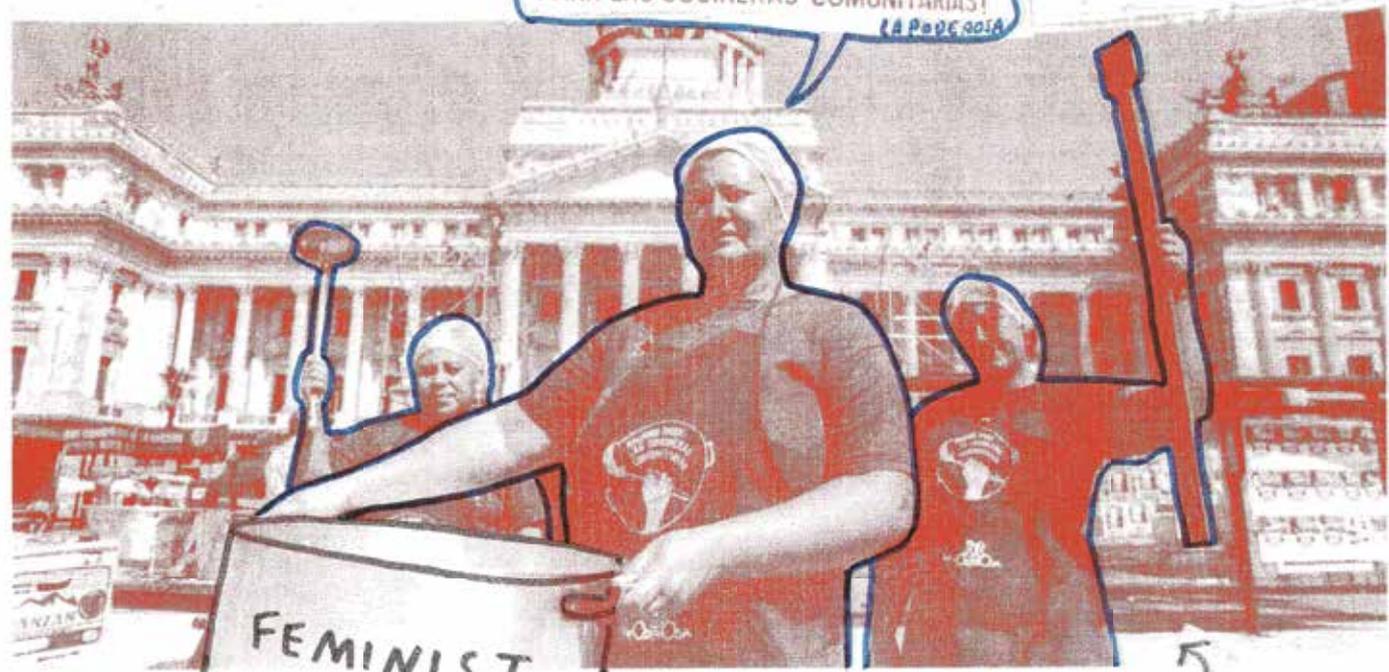
- who owns whom? How to subvert the debt? Give it back to 'finance'?
- Finance, housing, essential labour
- work with various collectives in Buenos Aires and unions
- How is debt transformed for survival?
- Against evictions

How to take debt out of the closet?

- debt requires a moralization to be imposed– taken over/ affecting mainly women
- marxist liberation leaving out women's struggles – gendered and racial difference

LAW OF SALARY RECOGNITION
FOR THE COMMONAL COOKS!

LEY DE RECONOCIMIENTO SALARIAL
PARA LAS COCINERAS COMUNITARIAS!
LA PODEROSA



FEMINIST
READING
OF DEBT

(S)MASH
PATRIARCHY!

LA PODEROSA /
THE POWERFUL
WHERE?
WHEN?

THANK

YOU

FOR THE OLLAS POPULARES REFERENCE!

AMAZING FOR FEMINISTAS EN R'DAM

SALARIOS
PARA LAS
COCINERAS
COMUNI-
TARIAS

TRACING LINKS
BETWEEN DEBT
AND SEXIST
VIOLENCE



FOR THE MONTHLY SOPA NIGHTS!

CREDIT IS A MEANS
OF PRIVATIZATION
AND DEBT A MEANS
OF SOCIALISATION

THE
UNDER-
COMMONS
DEBT
AND
STUDY

SALARIES FOR THE COOKS
(WOMEN) OF COMMUNITIES

There is no neoliberalism without

¿Quién le

debe a

quién?

DEBT AS
COLONIZATION
MECHANISM



Who owes who?

→ UNDERSTANDING AND
RE-DEFINING

PAH

PLATFORM FOR PEOPLE
AFFECTED BY MORTGAGE

SINCE
2009
SPAIN

COLLECTIVE PRACTICES
AND DIRECT ACTIONS
TO STOP EVICTIONS



"THE DEBT IS
OWED TO US"
INTERNATIONAL
FEMINIST
STRIKE INVERTS
THE BURDEN
OF DEBT

CONNECTING DEBT,
VIOLENCE AND LABOR
HAS ALSO BEEN
ACHIEVED BY THE
FEMINIST STRIKES

FEMINIST
READING OF
DEBT



External debt (state) and household debt (people) as a methodological finding!

- debt in Global South – we see dictatorship as and in a move to privatize the commons through austerity policies of the IMF, Black Rock and others through alliances with the far right – remaking a colony out of Argentina
 - debt during the dictatorship in the 80s
 - 90s establishment of neoliberalism in order to pay off the debt. Privatization and industrialization
 - relaunch colonialization through debt – state debt. 2018 loan with the IMF, resulting in far-right government. This was the biggest loan acquired by Argentina and it marked the beginning of the austerity measures
 - Mothers of the Plaza Mayo – they link the idea that ‘financing power is terrorism’ on bodies.
 - From abstraction to bodies. The abstraction invisibilizes its dependence on labour and land!!! (no growth but unemployment; people work more yet the money is not enough. Intense labour yet not enough income; so income had to be complemented by debt)
 - encourage a feminist reading on debt on land and labour
 - Authoritarianism is neoliberalism in South America. Neoliberalism starts with dictatorship. Authoritarianism was not born out of neoliberalism but emerged together with it.
 - IMF returns to Argentina as the feminist movement becomes massive in order to control and limit the actions of the feminist movement.

It is us against debt

"WE ONLY GO INTO DEBT BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN VIOLENTLY IMPROVERISHED, TO THE POINT OF INDUCED PRECARIETY. DEBT BECOMES UNPAYABLE BECAUSE FIRST THERE WAS LOOTING AND DISPOSSESSION."

RUNNING FROM DEBT

SCATTERS
ESCAPES
SEEKS REFUGE

ACROSS
THE STATE
THE ECONOMY

(Puerto Rico)

A SECRET CUT
A PUBLIC OUTBREAK
A FUGITIVE FOLD

THEY RAN, BUT DIDN'T GO
ANYWHERE....

ways of movement

GEOGRAPHY OF DISPOSSESSION

THE STRUGGLE FOR HOUSING IS A FEMINIST STRUGGLE!

"DEBT AS KINSHIP"

Disobedience to debt:

Feminist unions, students, peasants, migrant collectives and popular economies

- essential work = feminized work
- 'salary for communitarian work' - campaign during pandemic

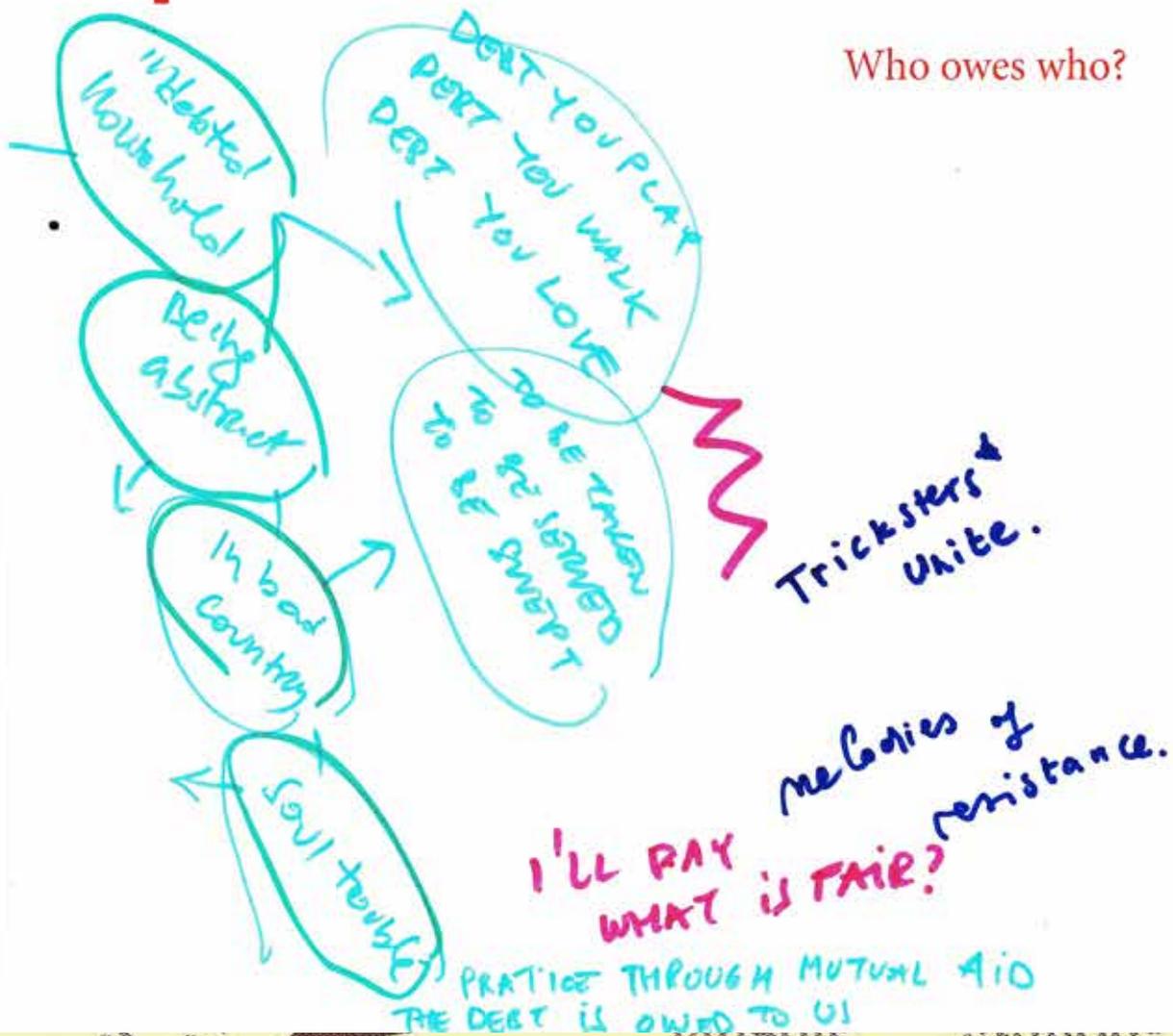
We don't
owe, we
won't pay!

(Spain)

Their crediting is not about money, it's about control. It's about power. It's about maintaining the vulgar position of being owed something for the mere fact of the existence of the Other.

¿Quién le debe a quién?

Who owes who?



We can't
debt-
increase of
the

The debt from within - Kinship
That sustains life in the face of institutions
...ing debt as an individualized, masculin

We don't owe, we won't pay!

Redirecting capilarization:

- Mobilization – protest – talking to our comrades with the appropriate need to work beyond campaigns (Spain)
- Organisation
- Sustaining – assemblies of different parties and struggles – a way to capilarize the feminist struggle

Strategies:

- information
- transnational infrastructures – internationalism coming from fem. Migration in domestic work.

Capilarization = draining our relationships for capital's valorization

- Reparations – emotional debt – reappropriation
- beyond the question who owes whom. Collective wealth that we can reappropriate that would allow us to think for an urban solution.
- Structural repair
- land struggles and feminist struggles.

They owe us a life!

"Pass the hand"
Pasana ku in Bolivia
Arisan in Indonesia

Tricking - challenging
language - abstraction
of finance

(Chile)

Amhem
- Mayor
is buying
all household
deb +

Debt and extractivism, exploitation of Earth!

- mining
 - appropriation of the commons
 - finance extracts value from specific territories - exploits land and labour
 - direct appropriation of labour value
 - extends the borders of the territory made available for the extraction of value.
 - Capilarity - debt inserted into the day to day economy as mechanism of managing precarity.
 - Privatize within the household the impact of austerity.
- Redirect state debt onto people and specifically women.

We don't owe, we won't pay!

(Spain)

WHAT DID SHE BUY?
A BLENDER AND A REFRIGURATOR



in 80's Chile dictatorship the neoliberal dictatorship system of debt was tried out

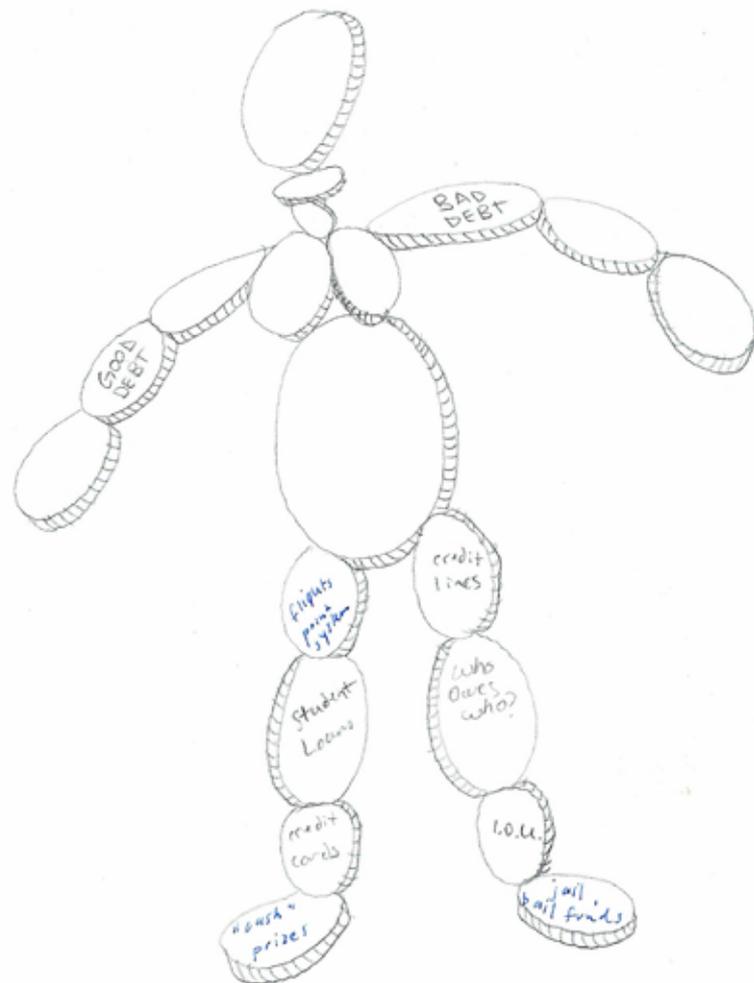
RUN AWAY FROM DEBT?
within European Union they find you but outside not

Annie♥
when she leaves NL no problem, but when she enters it is-Jeanne

♥ IT IS NOT LOVE - IT'S UNPAID LABOR ♥
BLACK ROCK
↕
BLACKSTONE?
PAY
OR
NAY?

How to transform this issue from abstraction to the politicized street?

- through street interventions of any/many kinds.
- With what kind of language can the feminist reading translate?
- Mapping not only with theory but with intervention
- why does debt exploit precarious and reproductive labour?
- Debt assumes the figure of the exploiter



Property is not accessible anymore
and more...

What kind of struggle comes prior to the debt struggle?

– countries going through decolonisation acquire debt and hence capture – political and economic. Remove debt by policies/ actions of 'staying alive and debt free'.

Economic autonomy as a method to fight against femicide.

– the link between shovenism, domestic violence and non-autonomy.

– Debt in everyday life - feminist reading and increase of extractivism (labour and land)

– Real Estate!

AID
orgs promoting
this as
liberatory
for
women
especially

the
implication
that women
only become
legitimate
financial
entities
when
they hold
debt
for the
first or
official
time

→ distressed debt hedge fund

investing
in buying
weak/
distressed/
precarious
debt

high risk/
high reward

debt x
two paths

Fragmented labour experience

– debt and gender mandates – remove the abstraction of debt!

– Neoliberalism as a system of violence – femicide

– Debt as obidience economy in household. Mostly taken on by women through social

reproduction. Gendered division of labour through debt.

– Can't say no when you want to say no

– entrapment in violent homes and precarized jobs

by its bad debt but only by bad debtors. To creditors it is just a place where something is wrong, though that something wrong – the invaluable thing, the thing that has no value – is desired. Creditors seek to demolish that place, that project, in order to save the ones who live there from themselves and their lives.

They research it, gather information on it, try to calculate it. They want to save it. They want to break its concentration and put the fragments in the bank. But all of a sudden, the thing credit cannot know, the fugitive thing for which it gets no credit, is inescapable.

Once you start to see bad debt, you start to see it everywhere, hear it everywhere, feel it everywhere. This is the real crisis for credit, its real crisis of accumulation. Now debt begins to accumulate without it. That's what makes it so bad. We saw it in a step yesterday, some hips, a smile, the way a hand moved. We heard it in a break, a cut, a lift, the way the words leapt. We felt it in the way someone saves the best stuff just to give it to you and then its gone, given, a debt. They don't want nothing. You have got to accept it, you have got to accept that. You're in debt but you can't give credit because they won't hold it. Then the phone rings. It's the creditors. Credit keeps track. Debt forgets. You're not home, you're not you, you moved without a forwarding address called refuge.

FROM Gabriella & Pinay sa Hollanda (philippino comrades)

'The debt from within'

- chains of reciprocity
- who is our community?
- Kinship cells

-Philippino women in care work in the West. Policy of the Philippines to send out people so they can send money back into the country. They go into debt to travel abroad. Remittance goes to the oldest daughter/woman and ties them as well to the debt of the person abroad. Commodities become common in the community which wasnt so much the case before.

Gabriella – part of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (communist party)

- what is the social reproduction of the struggle?
- it is a war against time. We have less and less time
- what is our sequence of struggle and what is the reaction?
- 1) accept defeat or
- 2) analyse how the far right won

DEBT AND FORGETTING

Debt cannot be forgiven, it can only be forgotten to be remembered again. To forgive debt is to restore credit. It is restorative justice. Debt can be abandoned for bad debt. It can be forgotten for bad debt, but it cannot be forgiven. Only creditors can forgive, and only debtors, bad debtors, can offer justice. Creditors forgive debt to offer credit, to offer the very source of the pain of debt, a pain for which there is only one justice, bad debt, forgetting, remembering again, remembering it cannot be paid, cannot be credited, stamped received. There will be a jubilee when the North spends its own money, is left with nothing, and spends again, on credit, on stolen cars, on a friend who knows he will never see that again. There will be a jubilee when the Global South does not get credit for discontinued contributions to world civilization and commerce but keeps its debts, changes them only for the debts of others, a swap among those who never intend to pay, who will never be allowed to pay, in a bar in Penang, in Port of Spain, in Bandung, where your credit is no good.

Credit can be restored, restructured, rehabilitated, but debt forgiven is always unjust, always unforgiven. Restored credit is restored justice and restorative justice is always the unswayed reign of credit, a reign of terror, a hail of obligations to be met, measured, meted, endured. Justice is only possible where debt never obliges, never demands, never equals credit, payment, payback. Justice is possible only where it is not asked, in the refuge of bad debt, in the fugitive public of strangers not communities, of undercommons not neighbourhoods, among those who have been there all along from somewhere. To seek justice through restoration is to return debt to the balance sheet and the balance sheet never balances. It plunges toward risk, volatility, uncertainty, more credit chasing more debt, more debt shackled to credit. To restore is not to conserve, again. There is no refuge in restoration. Conservation is always new. It comes from the place we stopped while we were on the run. It's made from the people who took us in. It's the space they say is wrong, the practice they say needs fixing, the homeless aneconomics of visiting.

DEBT AND STUDY

of being so vulnerable to being blamed enough to request a gift

dynamite. OSCAR GUISONI (2012) RECOGNITION,

How different from justice? →
 restorative feels like an alternative "punitive" system? →
 victim focused, not system focused →
 sometimes, you ask to "borrow" →
 you become a "creditor" knowing both that you are owed →
 and the "creditor" then in the giving of a gift that costs, becomes somehow the psychopath, villain →
 the gift giving is unrecoginized because, for saving face, the debtor has asked to "borrow" instead of being blamed enough to request a gift →
 How's depend on the creditor & the debtor →
 What is transformed to in justice to in a way of help →
 or refuge

¿Quién le debe a quién?

Who owes who?

What is the difference between the EU & the countries of G. South when it comes to debt? Who owes who?

Although the same mechanism exists in both localities, how/where can we observe the EU states functioning as multinational corporations?

LEY DE RECONOCIMIENTO SALARIAL
PARA LAS COCINERAS COMUNITARIAS!



DEBT, DEBT
DEBT, DEBT
DEBT, DEBT,
DEBT, DEBT
DEBT, DEBT
DEBT

dissolves when it
encounters community
From UNDERCOMMONS:
"debt a means of socialisation"

as if debt ^{were} something
essential to live.

Fragmented labour experience

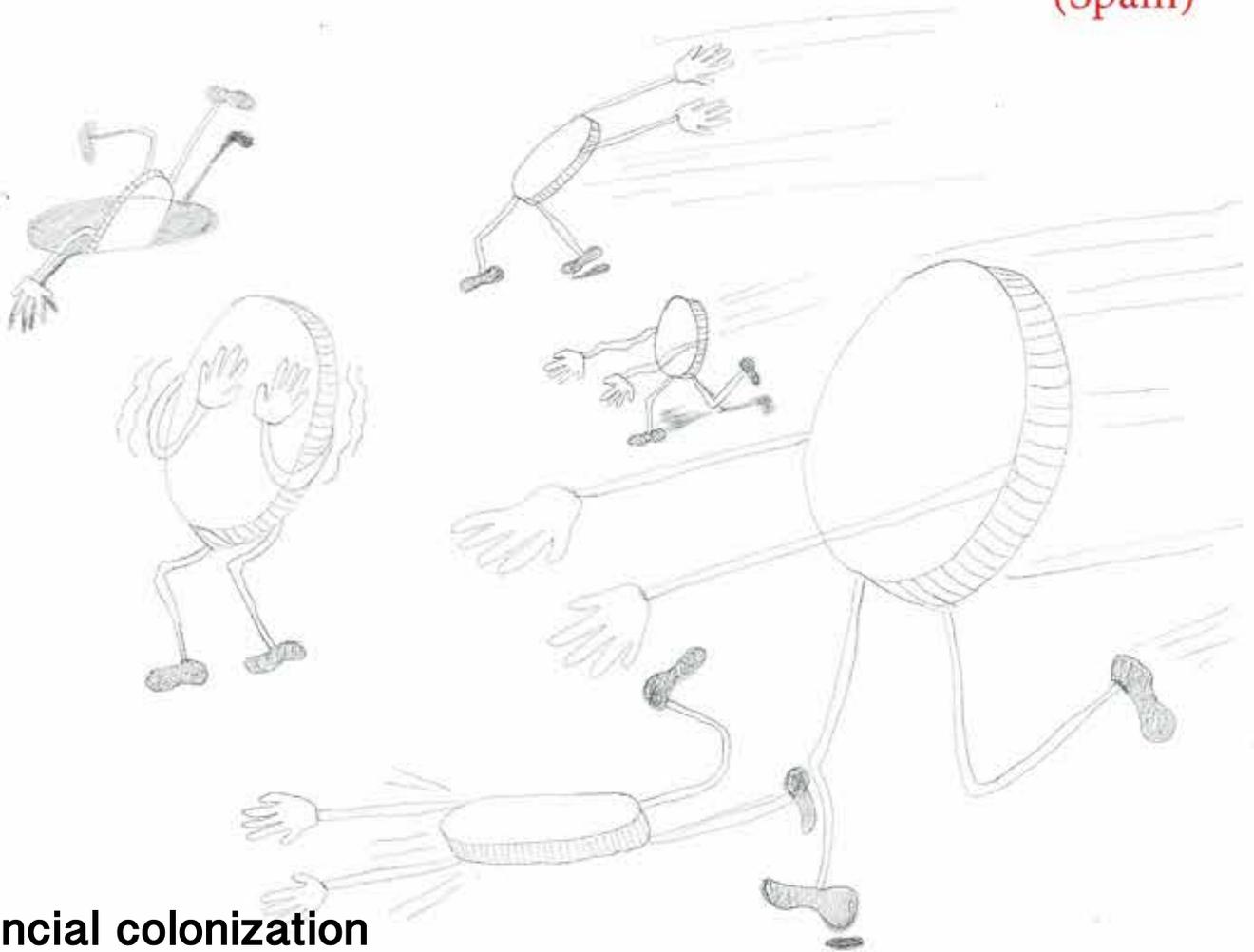
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- Neoliberalism as a system of violence
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- Can't say no when you want to say no
- entrapment in violent homes and precarized jobs

if we understand debt
outside of an economic
context, then yes, debt
is what ~~marks~~ ^{marks} keeps,
... social relations creates...

we cannot avoid to be in debt with
each other. in a society where we
cannot make it alone, of course we
are in debt with our sisters, brothers,
lovers, teachers for many things.
we are also in credit for some.

We don't
owe, we
won't pay!

(Spain)



Financial colonization

Debt presents itself as a solution to the financial crisis erasing all previous manners through which common practices used to tackled precarity.

They owe us

a life!

implies
creditor
rather than
lender

there is a
difference between
debt & indebtedness

the matriarchy

is

↓
kinship,
chains of
reciprocity
(Chile)
gratitude
mutual
care

Moody

(the patriarchy
is predictable)

→ there is a
possibility
of
refuge / forgiveness

↓
credit will
never be
forgiven

There is no isolated house!
We are built from the same bricks
That come from the same system and support this structure

Emotional debt collector
'Bitch better have my money'

gentina and Chile -
ary dictatorship
regimes - its not through

as an extravist dynamic > on which bodies is
an extravtivism?
where domestic work is applied
the pl.
'power'
territory
deconstructing an
appropriate
- mining an
- commons
Househc
ambivalent
economy an
T. Highlight is the p
what is the p
function to privatiz
and land dependence
ect to bodies directy?
orizes bodies - abstract
- pt of financial powers that produce terrors, -

period - the precarity
by greater precarity

id the precarity
and
diffe

's of labor
financial > 100.

'stronger
'reproduc
possible to
less and
ological s
the sequen
an canoniz
ere feminis

Argen
Ext

Mar
phys
We ne
How the
far right
a way of protest
S. CO.