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Narrative des Hasses und der Solidarität in sozialen Medien: Der Fall von Yalitza Aparicio.

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Abstract (English)

This article explores the hateful and solidarity-driven reactions directed towards Yalitza Aparicio, the first Indigenous woman nominated for Best Actress at the Oscar Awards (2019) for the film Roma (Cuarón 2018). Her fame and media presence in spaces where Indigenous women are not usually represented contributed to exposing everyday racism more explicitly in the public debate in Mexico.

The comments of hate and solidarity towards Aparicio reveal the entanglement between the imaginaries of coloniality and Mexicanness that are emebbed in everyday life in Mexico. This case study exposes, on the one hand, the continuity and domination of these imaginaries through everyday narratives in a postdigital context. On the other hand, it also shows the reconfiguration of the (digital) imagined community in Mexico.

Keywords: Yalitza Aparicio, hate speech, solidarity, social media, Mexicanness, digital practice

Abstract (Deutsch)

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Hass- und Solidaritätsreaktionen im Hinblick auf der Oscar-Verleihung (2019) und Nominierung als beste Schauspielerin für Yalitza Aparicio als erste indigene Frau, für den Film Roma (Cuarón 2018). Ihre Bekanntheit und Medienpräsenz in Bereichen, in denen indigene Frauen normalerweise nicht vertreten sind, haben dazu beigetragen Alltagsrassismus in Mexiko expliziter in öffentlichen Diskursen sichtbar zu machen.

Die Hass- und Solidaritätskommentare zu ihrer Person offenbaren die Verflechtung zwischen den Imaginären der Kolonialität und des Mexikanisch-Seins, die fest in den mexikanischen Alltag eingebettet sind. Diese Fallstudie zeigt einerseits die Kontinuität und Dominanz dieser Imaginäre durch alltägliche Narrative in einem postdigitalen Kontext. Andererseits zeigt sie auch die Neukonfiguration der (digitalen) imaginierten Gemeinschaft Mexikos.

Schlagwörter: Yalitza Aparicio, Hate Speech, Solidarität, Soziale Medien, Mexikanischsein, digitale Praxis.

1. Introduction

Alfonso Cuarón wrote and directed the autobiographical film Roma, which was released in December 2018 on Netflix. Based on Cuarón's childhood memories of the 1970s in the Roma neighbourhood of Mexico City, the film received several international nominations and awards in various categories. Not just the film itself and the director were honoured, but the leading actresses Marina de Tavira depicting Cuarón's mother and Yalitza Aparicio Martínez with the role of Cleo, Cuarón's former nanny, also received recognition for their work. Aparicio received a number of nominations, of which her nomination as Best Actress in a Leading Role at the Oscars carried the most media attention. This nomination is symbolically important as Aparicio is the first Indigenous Mexican woman nominated in the history of the Oscars and the second Mexican woman ever to be nominated in that category, following Salma Hayek for her role in Frida (2002) (Shattuck 2019).

All of the nominations and awards created a media buzz, attracting international and national attention. Time's magazine ranked Aparicio's as the best performance of 2018 and she was listed as one of the 100 most influential artists from 2019 (Cuarón 2019). She appeared on the cover of international magazines such as the Hollywood Reporter, Vanity Fair with fellow Oscar nominated actors, as well as Mexican fashion magazines such as the Mexican edition of Vogue and Hola Mexico! (Agren 2018). Aparicio's appearance in these magazines, where it is unusual to see Indigenous people, increased the media buzz regarding her (in)experience as an actress, her role as a maid in the movie and her Indigenous origin.

Aparicio was born in the municipality of the so called 'Heroic City of Tlaxiaco', located in the Mixtecan region of Oaxaca in 1993 (UNESCO 2019). Aparicio has mentioned in many interviews that she had no previous experience in acting, and she did not even know who Alfonso Cuarón was.

Aparicio's sister convinced her to do the casting: "My sister pushed me because, in our community, they have never come before to ask us to be in films" (Hattenstone 2018). At the time of the casting, Aparicio had recently concluded a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and wanted to work in this field. Cuarón, convinced that Aparicio was the one for the part, mentioned that she was hesitating but finally accepted the role by telling him that she was able to do the film, since "she had nothing better to do" (Booth 2019; Cuarón 2019).

When Aparicio learned of the plot of the film, which aimed to visualize the importance of domestic workers, she saw it as an opportunity to raise awareness of this topic while paying tribute to her mother, who is an Indigenous domestic worker[1] (Booth 2019). Furthermore, Aparicio has taken the chance to disseminate her reflections and her experiences, addressing the issue of racism and discrimination.

On this issue, two particular topics can be highlighted. On the one hand, Aparicio has talked openly about the fact that she had to learn to speak the Mixtec language as preparation for her character (Booth 2019), stating that her parents decided not to teach her to speak the Mixtec language, the Indigenous language spoken in her home state of Tlaxiaco. This decision was based on the assumption that maintaining the Indigenous mother tongue is associated with discriminatory practices, such as disadvantages in access to educational, occupational and economic opportunities, instead of being a socially valued cultural and linguistic resource (Torres Meixueiro 2018; Solis et al. 2019:68).

Aparicio's success has generated a public debate, which appears to have moved away from her work and acting ability and has focused more on Aparicio's identity and physical characteristics. The dominant reaction in the media has been of surprise at seeing an Indigenous woman succeed in contexts where no other Indigenous person had even been

present. The publication of the photos in fashion magazines caused a wave of both hate and solidarity-oriented comments for Aparicio. The appearance on the cover of Hola Mexico! raised many criticisms from people who complained, arguing that the photo of Aparicio abused photoshop by lightening her skin tone (Agren 2018; BBC News 2019a). The focus of media attention has also shifted to opinions as to whether Aparicio 'deserves' her success or not, being a 'non-actor'.

It is in this context that Aparicio has been invited to participate as a spokesperson against racism and as a representative of Indigenous peoples. She became UNESCO's Goodwill ambassador for Indigenous Peoples in 2019 because "she has used her celebrity to promote respect and dignity" (UNESCO 2019). The BBC listed her as one of the 100 most influential women in the world, acknowledging her role as a human rights activist (BBC News 2019b).

The main objective of this article is to explore the comments of hatred and solidarity towards the figure of Yalitza Aparicio in social networking sites (SNSs). Is it possible to link these comments to narratives relating to dominant imaginaries of coloniality and Mexicanness from a specific context of analysis in Mexico? For this purpose, two key public moments that are considered to have unleashed reactions of hatred and solidarity will be analyzed.

2. Theoretical Perspective

2.1 The Co-Construction of Reality in the (Digital) Everyday Life

As a theoretical lens, this paper is centred mainly on the phenomenological constructivist perspective that understands the everyday life-world as a dominant realm for the construction of reality. In everyday life, individuals orient themselves pragmatically in what for them is known as "the natural attitude" enabling common-sense knowledge that is taken-for-granted as normal, self-evident and part of their routine of everyday life (Berger / Luckmann 1991:37).

The dynamic and ongoing process of co-constructing reality is deeply entangled with communicative practices (Berger / Luckmann 1991:151; Hepp 2010; Pintos 2005) within the different fields of action in which actors (human and non-human) (Latour 2008) interact. The fields of action are understood as open networks characterized by multirelationality and reciprocity (Bolten 2014b; Stegbauer 2010; Störmer 2021).

The web of common-sense knowledge and meaning that orients the thinking and doing of agents, which enable everyday practices, is reconfigured by social imaginaries (López García 2021b:49). Social imaginaries may be understood as "socially constructed schemes [of meaning], which allow us to perceive, explain and act, in what each differentiated social system considers to be reality" (Pintos 2005:42–43). They are objectivized and materialized with the form of social representations (López García 2021b:38). Social imaginaries find themselves in a constant ongoing dynamic between dominant and emergent imaginaries (López García 2021b:60). Dominant imaginaries are hegemonic and institutionalized forms of meaning in the form of internalized taken-for-granted knowledge which is not questioned by the agents of the specific field of action. Individuals are caught between autonomy and heteronomy (Castoriadis 2005) tied to a hegemonic and dominant understanding of social life, which builds and moulds structures that may seem difficult to reconfigure. A paramount example of dominant imaginaries are "imagined communities", as Anderson (2006) conceptualizes nations. Nations are imagined to be "inherently limited and sovereign" (6). They have been also conceived as taken-for-granted natural, historically ancient and homogenous containers, providers of culture and identity. It is from this "either, or" logic of identity and belonging (Bolten 2014a) that nationalisms continue to exist; these coherence-based

narratives perpetuate 'us and them' dichotomies based on power, domination and exclusion (Anderson 2006; Wimmer / Glick Schiller 2002). The imaginary should not be understood as unreal or false. Precisely the strength of the imaginary lies in the power that these narratives have in everyday life and the practices they motivate, for example through everyday or banal nationalism (Billig 2002; Fox / Miller-Idriss 2008).

Questioning the dominant imaginaries that shape everyday life is a way to achieve autonomy (Castoriadis 2005). The continuous and dynamic oscillation of imaginaries is understood as emergent processes that are constantly in motion. The imaginaries perspective raises the possibility of social change by establishing other possible dominant realities, which we can imagine as inclusive and respectful.

Social imaginaries are reconfigured through mediatization which influences everyday practices in society and "refers to the relationship between the transformation of media and communication on the one hand and culture and society on the other" (Hepp 2020:4). In the context of digitalization, a "deep mediatization" can be recognized. Deep mediatization refers to "an advanced stage of the process in which all elements of our social world are intricately related to digital media and their underlying structures" (Couldry / Hepp 2017, cited in Hepp 2020:5).

One of the major differences between the Internet and all preceding media is the role that people play (Tubella 2005:258).[2] The users were formerly viewed as receivers of information in a context of mass-media. In the era of Web 2.0 they are able to connect, to actively and interactively communicate, to contribute and create web content (Warf 2021:2). Terms such as "produsers" (Bruns / Schmidt 2011, cited in Hepp 2020:24) or "presumption" (Ritzer / Jurgenson 2010, cited in Sommer 2020:59) describe this transformation. Furthermore, these transformations also indicate that it is not only information and communication (Hepp 2020; Romele 2019) that need to be centred but also new practices such as "sharing" content (John 2017, cited in Hepp 2020:24) and the generation of data; a "fundamental part of the construction of our social world" (Hepp 2020:5). Moreover, registration and recording also become central processes, as "digital traceability has become 'a total social fact'" (Romele 2019:19).

The perspective of analysis posed by imaginaries has recently been used to examine dominant imaginaries in the context of digitalization (Bory 2020; Romele 2019). According to Bory (2020:3), the imaginary "is a key element for the social construction of reality, but also for the symbolic struggle for control which is still taking place in the digital media landscape". Acknowledging the role that the subjective dimension retains in the digital social construction of everyday life, I propose that it can be understood as social 'emaginaries'.

Within this digital media landscape interpersonal relationships using SNSs enable a "digitalization of social relationships" (Kneidinger-Müller 2020:68). The social interactions and relationships in the digital realm allow for the network and coordination of offline activities (Störmer 2021:58). Therefore, the influence of deep mediatization in everyday life and its practices go beyond a strict distinction made in older dichotomies of what is considered to be digital/analogue, online/offline, virtual/real, virtual/physical space. These divisions are obsolete (Friese 2020:7); blurred continuities and entanglement must be acknowledged. These continuities are approached from the postdigital perspective "as an attempt to understand what is 'new' about our relationships with the digital, [but] it is also about recognizing the ways that such technology is already embedded in, and entangled with, existing social practices and economic and political systems" (Knox 2019:358).

2.2 Online Hate Speech

The Internet – a public 'intangible' space with powerful material impacts (Kaufman 2015) –offers the possibility to participate and engage in public debates as part of civil liberties and freedom of speech.[3] However, it has also become a space where hatred, harassment and fake news are spread (Eickelmann 2017; Garland et al. 2020). This initiates a contemporary conflict regarding the regulation of the Internet in a manner that attempts to control the dangers it carries, but which does not end up destroying its liberating potential (Kaufman 2015:24).

Shepherd et al. (2015:3f) raise attention to the manifold terms related to the topic of online hate, such as "hater, bullying, trolling, harassment, antagonism, hateblogging" among others. These terms have been present since the earliest computer-mediated communication (CMC) and have usually been used interchangeably. This is problematic as each category represents different motivations, behaviours and phenomena. For instance, online harassment encompasses a wide range of uncivilized and abusive behaviour such as "online incivility" meant as "disrespectful behaviour of participants in a deliberative process" (Massaro / Stryker 2012: 383, cited in Sponholz 2019:158) or cyberbullying, meant as a repeated, aggressive and personal form of online harassment (Saleem et al. 2016, cited in Sponholz 2019:158). Yet, the categorization is fuzzy and depends on one's position and perception of what may be considered as hate or what, indeed, may be considered as valid forms of critique (Shepherd et al. 2015:4).

Kaufman (2015) discusses in his book Odium dicta how unfortunate the translation of "hate speech" to Spanish "expresión de odio" is because of its vagueness and how it can be confused with "libertad de expression" (freedom of speech). Therefore, he suggests latinizing hatred as 'Odium' in order to indicate a precise and typified hatred towards any subject or object:

"The odium dictum is a very particular hatred that qualifies a dictum, making the odium dictum, thus composed, a legally and socially condemnable action due to its destructive potential of individuals who are part of minorities in a situation of vulnerability or discrimination in society" (Kaufman 2015:45–6).

Hate speech always relates to categories which are representative of a historically oppressed group or individual of that group (Kaufman 2015:47; Sponholz 2019:158). This means that hate speech cannot affect everyone, unlike online harassment, which does not necessarily target a historically oppressed group. The differentiation between hate speech and online harassment is crucial for acknowledging the systemic discrimination that historically oppressed groups experience. Equating both terms would erase this fact (Sponholz 2019).

According to Garland et al. (2020) online hate speech can be defined in two senses, both narrow and broad. A narrow sense involves insults, discrimination, or intimidation of individuals or groups on the Internet, on the grounds of their supposed race, ethnic origin, gender, religion, political beliefs, disability or sexual orientation. The broad sense has been "extended to speech that aims to spread fearful, negative, and harmful stereotypes, call for exclusion or segregation, incite hatred, and encourage violence against a particular group […] be it using words, symbols, images or other media" (Garland et al. 2020:2).

It is important to highlight that SNSs magnify and mirror what is already present in society (Lacroix 2019). Furthermore, the possibility to remain anonymous (Gagliardone et al. 2015:14) within the context of computer-based forms of interaction is one of the main factors that create the "disinhibition effect". According to Suler (2004:322), "text communication, avoiding eye contact and face-to-face visibility disinhibits people" and might contribute to conveying messages online that would not be expressed in face-to-face interaction.

2.3 Counter Speech

Due to the wide spread of hate speech online, awareness strategies have been sought to stop and prevent it. Yet, there is little consensus on approaches and strategies to mitigate online hate speech (Hangartner et al. 2021:1).

Content management strategies and establishing rules about what to post and how to post on SNSs can help. However, strategies such as removing hate content or removing users who post such content may be counterproductive; these users may simply move to other online spaces with more tolerant rules, where they may interact with users with similar views. "This could exacerbate the challenge of echo chambers and radicalize individuals even further. It also makes it harder to track the presence or potential plans of extremists" (Lacroix 2019).

The strategy of counter speech as a pursuit to confront hate speech (Hangartner et al. 2021:2; Garland et al. 2020:2) has been employed by international and non-governmental organizations seeking to reduce online hate speech while maintaining freedom of speech (Gagliardone et al. 2015:5).[4] Research concerning counter speech information is currently increasing (Garland et al. 2020; Hangartner et al. 2021; Kim et al. 2022; Kojan et al. 2020) but remains inconclusive regarding its effectiveness. While authors such as Sponholz (2020) point out that it seems counterproductive to engage in interactions whose only result is to generate more data from interacting users. Therefore, Sponholz suggests to delete, block, burst filter bubbles and break interaction. Regarding the effectiveness of counter speech, it has been found that influential users whose opinions and actions reach a wider audience can limit hate speech at least temporarily (Kojan et al. 2020:82).

A recent study from Hangartner et al. (2021) tested counter speech on Twitter by applying three different strategies of posts that contained humour, the warning of consequences and empathy.

Empathy was found to have consistent, although relatively small, effects for reducing xenophobic online hate speech. The study discusses how its findings echoes previous research regarding the encouragement of the empathy perspective – whether in-person conversations and survey experiments – which reduces hostility toward marginalized groups (Hangartner et al. 2021:3).

2.4 The Dominant Imaginary of Coloniality in Mexico

Identity, understood as an open and continuous dynamic process, relies partly on dominant imaginaries that provide structure and cohesion that enable individuals to connect to others in the sense of a collective shared identity within specific fields of action. Particularly in the case of the imagined community of Mexico, the construction of a collective national identity has resulted in the imagined construction of a sort of homo mexicanus (Bartra 2006). By referring to Mexicanness, I point out the dominant imaginaries in which Mexican national identity has been constructed as a "container" (Beck 2008), with a closed understanding of culture which has been sedimented and institutionalized in the process of nation-building (López García 2021b).

The imaginary of Mexicanness is deeply entangled with an imaginary of coloniality. Coloniality as a term comes from the influence of postcolonialism from the context of Latin American and Caribbean scholars claiming 1492 as the beginning of colonialism and modernity (which are two faces of the same coin). Following independence in several Latin American and Caribbean 'new' nations, the system imposed by colonialism remained as the "Coloniality of Power" (Quijano 2007). Coloniality of power refers to a system of domination where the category of race is a fundamental criterion for the classification of society in social ranks and roles within that society, which correlate distinctly to origin, phenotype and occupation (Solis et al. 2019:49). This distribution

is structurally linked to the division of labour (Quijano 2007:320).

The imaginary of coloniality has imagined Indigenous people as 'the Others', as non-existing, as 'bodies without soul'. This is meant by the coloniality of Being, in order to highlight the dehumanization and denial of the status of human being that began within the systems of complicity with colonialism and slavery, with the treatment of people as 'things' (Quijano 2007). Within a Eurocentric dominant view and understanding of the world, the knowledge from and of 'the others' was also denied – this is what coloniality of knowledge refers to (Mignolo 2005).

With the end of colonialism, the same logic of domination remained after the independence movements in Mexico (1810-1821). Coloniality continued in the construction of nation-states, with the imaginary of modernity (progress, development and growth) (Mignolo 2005), the aim of homogenization and creation of a collective national identity in terms of the "imagined community" (Anderson 2006). According to the anthropologist Bonfil-Batalla (1987), Mexico has been divided between the 'Imaginary Mexico' (Mexico imaginario) and the 'Deep Mexico' (México profundo). The first involves the 'modern' and 'civilized' Mexico imposed by the 'West'. The latter involves the 'denied civilization' of 'the Others', constituted by the remaining Indigenous communities, the rural mestizo communities and the poor urban populations.

The process of building the Mexican nation and Mexican identity involved questions of becoming modern and developed (Imaginary Mexico), matters that were intrinsically connected to the problem of integrating and mexicanizing the Indigenous population. Mexico's historical construction has struggled with recognizing and managing its heterogeneity and processes of cohesion, aiming for homogenization through acculturation. For instance, the political project of 'Indigenismo', which started in the 1940's, aimed for the development in education, culture and socio-economic spheres in the Indigenous regions with two main goals: First, to achieve a 'planned acculturalization' with the goal of reaching homogenization as 'Mexicans' (Mestizos) and second, to achieve the modernization of local and regional economies (Dietz / Mateos Cortés 2011:71). The shift of discourse from acculturation to interculturalization started with the 1990s project of the recognition of the 'pluricultural composition of the Mexican Nation', which has recognized, to an extent, Mexico's diversity – not only Indigenous peoples but also with the constitutional recognition of Afro-descendants – in the year 2019.

However, such recognition efforts have not been sufficient to redress the deep intersecting social inequalities of ethnicity, social position and gender. Regarding this issue Solis et al. (2019) have shown in their study on discrimination and racism in Mexico that people belonging to discriminated ethnic groups, or with physical features socially linked to them, begin their lives in a situation of social disadvantage; a product of the historical accumulation of deprivations based on the imaginary of coloniality. Inequality associated with ethnic-racial characteristics still exists, of course, not only because of the historical accumulation of disadvantages but also because of the very real persistence of discriminatory practices in various social contexts.

Therefore, it can be said that the system of domination and classification based on the imaginary of coloniality, which has formed a complex relationship between racialization and social class, remains as a dominating imaginary which persists to this day in Mexico. Moreover, the recognition of Indigenous populations has developed on a basis of romanticizing the 'original and glorious roots of Mexicans' past'. In this sense, Corona Berkin (2016) has argued, the depiction of Indigenous people in text books contextualized in ancient landscapes, pyramids and

pre-Columbian times has meant learning about Indigenous people at school in a kind of 'museumification' of Indigenous people. However, integrating them into everyday life on equal terms has not occurred.

The shared sense of belonging to Mexico and the construction of the identity of Mexicanness has been built, transmitted and experienced to a large extent through communication and through media. For instance, with the daily practice of broadcasting the national anthem, which by law is played daily on television and radio at the beginning of transmission in the mornings and at the end in the night. Since 1937, the weekly broadcast of the 'National Hour' (Hora Nacional) has aimed at the promotion and strengthening of national integration (López García 2021b:77). While these formats remain in traditional television and radio, they have adapted to the digital condition retaining a presence on YouTube, as well as on SNSs. This may be seen by observing the power of the dominant imaginary of Mexico's imagined community, based on the symbolic resources that reconfigure imaginaries such as official education and media such as television, radio and books (López García 2021b:69). Thus, this is a perspective that may consider agents as a more or less passive audience receiving what the mass media have broadcasted. In a context of Web 2.0 it is, therefore, necessary to learn how these dominant imaginaries are reconfigured in the digitalized everyday life. The case of Aparicio is significant in the context of 'deep mediatization' (Hepp 2020), as it sparked a public discussion on racism and discrimination. It is therefore necessary to examine the narratives on social media and to unravel the imaginaries on which they are based and how these are reconfigured.

3. Methodology

This paper focuses on two key public moments in Aparicio's career that provoked reactions of hatred and solidarity in different media. I focus specifically on the social media platforms Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG) and Twitter. These two key moments are taken from Yalitza Aparicio's appearance on the covers of the fashion magazines Vanity Fair and Vogue.

The qualitative analysis is based on the bricolage approach (Kincheloe et al. 2018:245). I combined tools of thematic analysis (Braun / Clarke 2006), elements of online discourse analysis (Meier / Sommer 2013; Sommer 2018) and the perspective of digital hermeneutics (Romele 2019; Romele et al. 2020) for the purposes of understanding and interpreting the way in which narratives in a digital context are conceived and shared regarding an understanding of the world.

I considered public posts from journalists and media as well as from users commenting on SNSs publicly. I have chosen examples of comments and interactions which are presented in the form of screenshots in Spanish, which I have translated to English. I have decided to anonymize the users' name although there are written in public SNSs such as Aparicio's FB, IG and Twitter accounts, excluding the comments made by public figures.

For the purposes of this research, it is not considered relevant who wrote the comment. On this matter, however, it is important to consider Sponholz's (2019) argument regarding research that explores only the content of hate speech. She argues that reducing social media analysis to language alone is "blue collar hate speech" that overlooks incitement to discrimination and even violence, as well as the spread of discriminatory messages. Therefore, she suggests acknowledging hate speech as a process of communication. Thus, producers, readers and the technical architecture of the online platforms should be included in the analysis. This approach considering hate speech in a broader sense indeed makes sense, not least for research that involves the mobilization of far-right groups in the manner of Garland et al. (2020) and

their differentiation of hate speech. In the example of Aparicio, hate speech is approached in a narrow sense. Yet, the tools that I combine for the analysis allow for reflection upon dominant emaginaries in which the meaning of the comments' content are based.

4. Analysis of Yalitza Aparicio's Key Public Moments

4.1 First Key Public Moment: Vanity Fair (November 2018)

As the first key moment and trigger for discriminatory comments towards Aparicio, one can identify the article carried by Vanity Fair magazine in its English version of November 2018 entitled "Alfonso Cuarón on Roma and the Mexico City of His Youth" (Weir 2018), which deals with the content of the film in a promotional manner. The text focuses on the story of the film but presents four photos of the actresses de Tavira and Aparicio (two pictures each) wearing clothes by designers such as Dior, Gucci and Louis Vuitton (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Twitter Post about Aparicio's Vanity Fair Photos, Source: Solorzano (2018). Translation: "Something cool to end the week... #YalitzaAparicio dressed in Louis Vuitton and Gucci in an exclusive VANITY FAIR photo shoot, BRAVO! #ROMA"

The publication was commented on, published and shared in various media such as television, radio, (digital) newspapers and in diverse SNSs such as Twitter, FB and IG, focusing largely on Aparicio, as it is possible to read in the above tweet from journalist Enrique Solorzano (2018).[5]

A thematic analysis of the comments based on the Vanity Fair publication shows that there were both likes and dislikes. The likes were based on three main themes: Aparicio's 'natural' beauty, her 'authenticity' as an Indigenous woman, and pride as Mexicans to see a 'truly' Mexican woman succeeding.

Figure 2: Twitter Screenshot, Source: Reply to tweet at Revista Melodrama (2018). Translation: "Yalitza represents the real Mexican woman, whose brown skin reflects the real struggle of women in this classist country. When I see her, she reminds me of my mother, my aunts, my grandmothers, my friends. Finally, someone represents them well."

These comments align with the "either, or" logic of identity and belonging (Bolten 2014a) that perpetuate the 'us and them' dichotomies. From Figure 2 it can be interpreted that the 'truly' Mexican woman apparently belongs to or is represented by brown-skinned people, in this case women. Interestingly, the post alludes to classism in Mexico and claims to finally feel represented by a successful figure in the media. It can be noted that the majority of people who are seen as successful figures or the standards of beauty in the media in Mexico tend to be women of light skin tone or light brown tone (Muñiz Muriel et al. 2013; Tipa 2020).

Regarding the comments showing negative reactions to the photos, there were, on the one hand, respectful and neutral comments of users who did not like some feature of the photo, the clothes, or how Aparicio was styled. For instance, three comments on Twitter: "I

even feel that the photos don't do her justice", "[…] They could have made more out of Aparicio and I don't just mean the clothes, everything is wrong there"; "She lacked a bit of make-up, she would have looked more beautiful" (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Twitter Screenshot, Source: Reply to tweet at Solorzano (2018). Translation: "She lacked a bit of make-up, she would have looked more beautiful".

On the other hand, there were racist comments that criticized Aparicio's appearance, based on her phenotype and her being an Indigenous woman (see Figures 4 and 8). In addition, discriminatory comments were found using common everyday phrases in the Spanish language and from the specific Mexican context. These phrases combine elements of double connotations, classism and racism and are often disguised as jokes. However, the question of who makes the joke and in what contexts it is considered funny is related to power and the position of the speaker in society.

These phrases or refrains are embedded in Mexican daily life and form part of the racist, discriminatory and classist imaginary of Mexico, based on the imaginary of coloniality. A typical phrase that was found in several publications on Twitter, IG, and FB is "Aunque la mona se vista de seda mona se queda", (See Figure 4) which in English reads: "An ape is an ape, a varlet is a varlet, though they be clad in silk and scarlet" (Instituto Cervantes n.d; Oxford Reference n.d.). According to the Cervantes Institute for Spanish Language, this phrase means that the individual's condition or natural defects cannot be covered up or changed by merely external improvements (Instituto Cervantes n.d.).

Figure 4: Twitter Screenshot, Source: Reply to tweet at Revista Melodrama (2018). Translation: "Although she may be dressed in silk, she's still an ape". Meaning in English "An ape is an ape, a varlet is a varlet, though they be clad in silk and scarlet".

In the Mexican context, this phrase is usually expressed to denote that a person is considered to belong to an inferior class: even if they have a social positioning that allows access to luxuries, they will continue to belong to the underclass. That is to say, the person is considered 'other', different, and despite their efforts to 'belong', they will not achieve it. A meaning thus that is deeply rooted in the imaginaries of coloniality.

Therefore, these comments are here considered as hate speech in a narrow sense because they involve insults, discrimination, mainly based on her imagined race, her ethnic origin and gender as Garland et al. (2020:2) suggests.

4.2 Second Key Public Moment: Vogue (December 2018)

Another key moment was the interview and images produced by the Mexican edition of Vogue in December 2018 (Torres Meixueiro 2018) (see Figure 5). This is symbolically important, as it was the first time that an Indigenous woman appeared on the cover of such a magazine (Piñeiro 2018). Unlike the Vanity Fair publication, Aparicio is given much greater prominence. This publication is also posted in Aparicio´s personal Twitter, IG and FB accounts. The feature dedicated to Aparicio entitled "A Star is Born" – which also contains the title in Mixtec language "In tiu'n ntav'i" – includes an interview in which Aparicio talks about her story and the challenges she faced while filming. One of those challenges was speaking Mixtec in the movie.

As already mentioned in the introduction, although this language is spoken in Aparicio's native region, she did not learn to speak it, by the decision of her parents, believing that this would be detrimental to her because of discrimination against Indigenous people in Mexico. The article was also accompanied by a promotional video published on YouTube where Aparicio expresses the following:

"[…] My skin, very Mexican, very Oaxaqueñan and very human. From the color of my land and the diversity of its colors. Lights, cameras, red carpets, magazine covers. It is for hope, it is to shed light on where you are from, it is to inspire […] A normal and strong woman, like all other women, who is succeeding in being an inspiration for other people. Despite a few obstacles, she has continued fighting for her dreams […] Certain stereotypes are being broken: that only people with a certain profile can be actresses or be on the cover of magazines. Other faces of Mexico are now being recognized. It is something that makes me so happy and proud of my roots […] You can never stray away from your roots. Forgetting about them, would mean forgetting who I am. My mission is to keep moving forward, keep fighting. I feel that this will be the opportunity for so many people, to achieve what they have always wanted" (Vogue 2018).

In the Vogue fashion photos, Aparicio also wears clothes by European designers such as Dior, Valentino, Dolce & Gabbana among others and the Mexican-oaxaqueñan designer Remigio Mestas. The costumes worn by Aparicio's designers allude to traditional Mexican garments in the form of embroidery, such as the Dior dress. Other traditional garments, such as the Huipil and the rebozo[6], are designed by Mestas. The set of photographs were taken in typically Mexican locations, with exotic flowers in the background such as birds of paradise and heliconia, also taking Frida Kahlo's poses as a reference (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Aparicio's Instagram about the Cover of Vogue Magazine. Source: IG Aparicio Martínez.

Figure 6: Aparicio's Instagram about the Picture Wearing Huipil Published in Vogue Magazine, Source: IG Aparicio Martínez.

The analysis of posts referring to Aparicio´s cover at Vogue magazine are considered to be mostly supportive in her FB and Twitter accounts. The main arguments are based on pride and the use of typical aspects of traditional Mexican culture. One possible interpretation is that depicting Aparicio as a 'typical' Mexican or as 'typically Indigenous' – as the set of Vogue does –does not seem to bother anyone as it is a known context from the perspective of the dominant imaginary that combines coloniality and Mexicanness. In this example it is possible to acknowledge the 'museumification' of Indigenous people (Corona Berkin 2016) by contextualizing Aparicio's image in 'typical' Indigenous settings, which seem to be seen in a favorable manner. However, when integrating her image to a more contemporary everyday life context, as Section 4.1 has shown in relation to the Vanity Fair images, the disapproving comments increase.

Pride for Aparicio's international success, national pride, pride at being represented as an 'original and authentic Mexican' woman are all present in these comments. The comments shown in Figure 7 reflect the positive perspective regarding Aparicio's relation with 'authenticity' by mentioning adjectives such as being 'natural', sitting firmly in her 'origins' and 'roots'.

It is interesting to note that, at times, the term Mexican is combined with the term Indigenous or is at times separated. Overall, these comments may be deeply linked to the imaginaries of Mexicanness, where the category of pride at belonging to the imagined community of Mexico necessarily evokes the category of 'race'.

The term race in Mexico is a common form to refer to 'the people' 'la raza'.[7] However, it is also applied to differentiate groups of people who have been racialized, based on the imaginary of coloniality (Quijano 2007; Solis et al. 2019).[8]

Figure 7: Facebook Comments regarding the Vogue Cover, Source: FB Aparicio Martínez.
Translation: Comment 1: Congratulations beautiful you look exactly as you reflect your natural elegant beauty with a confidence and pride in being Mexican.
Comment 2: Precious woman, how proud to see you there, sitting firmly in your origins, spreading roots, blossoming, sharing yourself... congratulations!
Comment 3: Many congratulations, I also wish you to take care of your kindness and humility forever.
Comment 4: You are beautiful!!! I ADMIRE YOU!!! NATIONAL PRIDE!!!
Comment 5: Congratulations, we as Mexicans are proud to have as a representative that represents our true Mexican roots and keep going don't listen to the bad comments or criticisms because the people who speak negatively about you are ignorant and envious people who have no education or morals and I personally like the original costumes that they make and we must not forget where we come from we are strong and brave races and never forget our roots and our land.

The comments in Figure 7 show, on the one hand, the idea of 'authenticity'; the naturalness of being Indigenous which is also mixed with Mexican national pride. Comment 5 is particularly interesting because it shows that one should not forget one's origins and alludes to the imaginary of being a strong and brave race, just as the idea of the 'cosmic race' (Vasconcelos, 2014)[9] has developed in the Mexican imaginary. It can also be read in comment 3: It is wished that Aparicio takes care of her nobility and humility. This type of commentary was found on several occasions, 'cautioning' Aparicio not to lose ground or forget her roots. Humility is above all an attribute related to the Indigenous people, who are expected to 'be humble', which can be understood as a historical colonial subjugation.

The same post of the Vogue cover on IG (see Figure 8) showed comments that are based on the dominant imaginary of coloniality highlighting the 'race' category, as well as retaining the imagining of Indigenous as 'others' who are different.

Positive comments, such as the third comment of Figure 8, are intended as supportive. However, the comment refers to Aparicio's 'race' as beautiful arguing that "all people of 'that' race" deserve many opportunities. Although in this case the intention is actually to support Aparicio, one can interpret that alluding to 'that' race shows the belief that there are racial differences and that Indigenous people are 'one race'.

The second comment in Figure 8 is based on Aparicio´s phenotype referring to her "disgusting black legs". This comment demonstrates the racialization of people, based on the imaginary of coloniality, which places people within a certain pyramidal social position depending on phenotype. In this case, light phenotypes are placed at the top and darker phenotypes are placed at the bottom. In this sense, complex intersections are created that combine the standards of beauty that tend to be related to light skin complexion (Salazar Cortés / Solís Hernández 2019).

Moreover, one can interpret that the post also refers to the public discussion regarding Aparicio's lack of merit for her role as Cleo in the film. On this issue there was indeed a media controversy that questioned Yalitza's acting skills by arguing that there was 'no acting' in her part, as she depicts an "indigenous domestic worker playing an indigenous domestic worker" (La Razón Online 2019).[10]

Figure 8: Instagram Comments regarding the Vogue Cover, Source: IG Aparicio Martínez. Translation: Comment 1: Never imagine where you can't go, imagine how far you will go!!!! Comment 2: Hahaha (laughs) no shit, by showing in a stupid movie your disgusting black legs on the cover of vogue no shit, you sucker not even you believe it. Comment 3: Very beautiful your race, all of them like you deserve many opportunities.

In this regard it has been previously mentioned that Aparicio plays the role of a domestic worker, inspired by the director's real nanny. However, these comments are also based on the stereotype that, in Mexico, most of the people who work as domestic workers are Indigenous.[11] This archetype is constantly reproduced by media. For instance, Mexican soap operas have repeatedly re-enacted the same formula of reproducing the dominant imaginary of coloniality in the distribution of roles: the protagonists are usually light-skinned, the antagonists possibly light-skinned, but also dark-skinned. The housekeeping staff are dark-skinned and of Indigenous origin, in line with the same representation of characters from lower social classes (Muñiz Muriel, et al. 2013). Therefore, these comments show the intersection of racism, classism and sexism that remains in Mexico (Solis et al. 2019).

Within this highly classist and racist Mexican context, remarks were made to Aparicio with the phrases that Aparicio should "return the clothes to her employer" (see Figure 9). This post means that Aparicio could not afford designer clothes, or it would not be normal that

someone like Aparicio – because she is an Indigenous person – would possess such clothing. This type of comment was to be found on several occasions, sometimes even referring to Aparicio as having "stolen" her employer's clothes.

Figure 9: Screenshots Interaction Users on Yalitza Aparicio´s Instagram Profile, Source: IG Aparicio Martínez. Translation Comment 1: Return the clothes to your employer. Comment 2: You rude, better get off her page if you're not going to say anything nice. Comment 3: I do not leave her account [social media page]. Comment 4: On a cool vibe, check your classism. Comments like these are not funny, and yes, it does make us angry that in the XXI century there are still people who can judge someone and assign them minor roles just because of their appearance. But instead of offending you, I invite you to learn and leave these thoughts behind you.

4.3 Interactions between Users: Hate Speech vs Counter Speech

Some of the posts show interactions between users that are sympathetic to Aparicio and others who are critical of her, whose comments fell under the theme of disrespectful and discriminatory posts.

Figure 9 shows an example of hate speech and counter speech between two users. The second comment refers to the first comment as "rude" inviting that user to leave the page if there is nothing positive to say. The original user answers that they will not leave Aparicio's page. Then finally the user defending Aparicio suggests, "on a cool vibe", the other user should reflect on the classism of the comment. Moreover, the user explains that classist posts are not funny and that instead of engaging in offensive interaction, the person is invited to "learn and leave these thoughts behind" (Comment 4, Figure 9). This answer shows dialogue and empathy as a strategy to countering hate speech, as Hangartner et al. (2021) suggest. The post did not get another answer, so it is not possible to learn how effective this interaction was, however, one can say that the discussion, at least relating to this interaction, ended.

Figure 10 depicts an interaction that engages with more disrespectful comments in comparison to the previous example. This Twitter screenshot shows the entanglement between dominant racialized narratives and the complexity of imagining Aparicio's beauty as 'authentic' and 'original' Mexican. Here it is possible to see the combination of a diverse and plural understanding that accepts being both Indigenous and Mexican. However, the narrative regarding authenticity must also be seen critically as it may also risk essentializing Aparicio. Also, the diversity among Indigenous people might be at risk of overgeneralization under the figure of Aparicio if this essentialization remained.

The answer to the first comment regarding Aparicio's beauty and representation says not to overgeneralize Mexicans as brown, referred to here as "colour of a carton box" (see Comment 2, Figure 10). The answer highlights that the "mediocre white actresses" are commonly watched in Mexican media and continues discussing in an impolite manner as to whether Aparicio is overrated or not. The post highlights what Aparicio has achieved; moving to another symbolic space which is usually imagined for light-skin people, belonging to more privileged classes. The post highlights that no other actress will ever achieve what Aparicio has achieved with just one movie. Here one can interpret that it is referring to another Mexican actress. The interaction continues, stating that the user is over-valuing Aparicio, while the other user answers that "The one that is overrated is you idiot! [sic]". In this case, it cannot be said that the interaction is based on an empathic dialogue and it is abruptly ended with offensive language.

Figure 10: Screenshots Interaction Users Twitter, Source: Revista Melodrama (2018)
Translations: Comment 1: "And yet, she is beautiful, she does represent us as authentic Mexicans."
Comment 2: "Not all Mexicans are of the colour of a carton box, be aware."
Comment 3: "Then stick with your mediocre white actresses dude, Yalitza in her first movie achieved what NO other actress will ever achieve in her entire life".
Comment 4: "I don't know why I think you're over-valuing her".
Comment 5: "The one that is overrated is you idiot!"

5. Final Considerations

Exploring the case of Yalitza Aparicio is a starting point for the analysis of the reconstruction of social emaginaries, that is, the analyisis of the subjective dimension embedded in the everyday life of a postdigital context.

Aparicio's example represents a social phenomenon that shows the deep entanglement between dominant imaginaries of coloniality and Mexicanness. These emaginaries are reconfigured in the digital context showing how the (digital) imagined community of Mexico reproduces narratives mixing national pride, the imagination of Indigenous population as 'Own' but somehow also 'Other' and the continuity of everyday discriminarory practices in a postdigital context.

The effectiveness of counter speech needs to be further investigated in order to develop strategies concerning how the Internet can become a place where reflection and empathy may become part of a dominant emaginary in order to respond to hate speech.

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Endnotes

1 See: Canevaro (2019) on domestic work and care and the film *Roma*.

2 However, other large amounts of people remain excluded from this process. Here it must be pointed out that, in Mexico many people are still excluded from the infrastructure and do not have electronic devices, nor Internet. The digital divide has gained visibility in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic, where the taken-for-granted assumption that 'everyone is included in digitalization' has been shown to be untrue. This situation was particularly clear in the context of people from rural and Indigenous communities. See here: Dietz / Mateos Cortés (2020).

3 On freedom of speech see: Kaufman (2015) and Eickelmann (2017).

4 See Gagliardone et al. (2015) on differing international standards and regulations concerning hate speech.

5 It is interesting to note that these photos and what is related to this publication were not found on Aparicio's official FB, IG and Twitter profiles.

6 The huipil is an Indigenous garment of Mesoamerica and is recognized as a marker of Indigenous identity. The term derives from the "Náhuatl word 'huippopi' meaning blouse" (Cantú 2020:26–7). Rebozo is a shawl-like garment woven on a backstrap loom (Cantú 2020:47). See Hurtado / Cantú (2020) on the history and usage of Huipiles and rebozos.

7 José Vasconcelos' essay "The Cosmic Race" (2014), published in 1925, is a manifesto concerning Mestizaje between the 'glorified pre-Columbian Indigenous ancestors' and the 'colonial Criollos' (among others) in order to create the 'cosmic race' or 'bronze race' in Latin America. From this perspective the figure of the 'Mexican' embraces Mestizaje and has become a dominant imaginary leading towards the aim of unity and coherence.

8 Usual comments in the Mexican collective imaginary would refer to 'improving the race', meaning to procreate with other groups of people and creating better looks. I have discussed this issue regarding comments that Mexican migrant women who are married with German men often receive. See López García (2021a).

9 See endnote 7.

10 In relation to the lack of merit of her role as Cleo, a controversy with soap opera actor Sergio Goyri was aired in different media channels. The actor was captured in a video saying how surprised and uncomfortable he was with Aparicio's Oscar nomination for being "a fucking Indian who says: ,yes ma'am, no ma'am'". Aparicio received a lot of support on social media, while Goyri was widely criticized for his comments (La Razón Online 2019).

11 García Guzmán (2019:259) concludes in her study regarding domestic and care work in Mexico that members of Indigenous households are more highly involved (than members of non-Indigenous households) in domestic and care-work.