

Scientific rigour and academic activism. Tribute to Valentina Glockner

Begoña Leyra, moderator

Participants: Soledad Álvarez (University of Illinois at Chicago), Rachel Rosen (University College London), Valeria Llobet (National University of San Martín), Nara Milanich (Barnard College, Columbia University), Elisa Colares (University of Brasilia)

<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/soci.95509>

Aceptado: 23 de abril de 2024 / Publicado: 27 de junio de 2024

Last December, Valentina Glockner passed away unexpectedly. The news shocked the community of researchers, students and people who knew her through her work as an anthropologist of childhood in her country, Mexico. It also happened in so many other places in Latin America and around the world where she researched, taught and shared projects. Valentina Glockner was part of the Advisory Board of the journal *Sociedad e Infancias*, where her most recent collaboration consisted of her participation in a discussion session on migrant childhoods, published in issue 7(1) of our journal.

Valentina Glockner's research activity is reflected in numerous articles and book chapters, but the Editorial Board of *Sociedad e Infancias* also wanted to include part of her legacy in this journal, through the voices and feelings of some of her colleagues, friends and disciples. To this end, a videoconference was organised, on 12 February this year, coordinated by Begoña Leyra, in her capacity as a member of the Editorial Board, and with the participation of Soledad Álvarez, Elisa Colares, Valeria Llobet, Nara Milanich and Rachel Rosen. The transcript of this meeting is reproduced below.

Begoña: Good afternoon everyone. I am Begoña Leyra and I have the pleasure, the honour and the pleasure of sharing this afternoon with you. I am grateful to Lourdes Gaitán for inviting me to participate in this conversation. I personally did not know Valentina, although I believe that there are many parallel processes between her research and mine. I also did my thesis research in Mexico, in anthropology, but well, life did not cross us at that time. And now, from there, she is bringing us together and connecting us, so it's also a very endearing and beautiful moment. And what we are going to try to do is to make us feel comfortable. Because in the end this is a safe space where, if we have to cry, we'll cry, if we have to laugh, we'll laugh, because that's what it's all about, paying tribute to a colleague, to a friend and also to an absolutely marvellous researcher. And I think that is what unites us today, to talk about the relationship you have had with Valentina, and to reflect on some of the research topics you have shared with her.

First of all, if I may, I will make a short presentation of your academic profiles, although I think you all know each other.

I start with Soledad Álvarez, she is Ecuadorian, although she works at the University of Illinois at Chicago and is a social anthropologist, human geographer and works in the Department of Anthropology and Latin American and Latino Studies. She is part of the Colectiva Infancias and coordinated with Valentina the digital project "Ethnographic Mosaic of Migrant Children in the Americas", funded by the *National Geographic Society*. Thank you very much Soledad for being here and for participating in this discussion.

Secondly, we have Rachel Rosen. She is Canadian by origin. She is a lecturer at University College London (UCL). She also has a very broad experience in children's issues, marginalised children and families, migration processes, intersections, politics with children, and she has a PhD in philosophy and a Master of Arts. Thank you, Rachel, for being here today as well.

In third place we have a representative from Argentina, Valeria Llobet. She did her PhD at the University of Buenos Aires, in Psychology and a postdoc in Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth. She is a CONICET researcher at the Human Sciences Research Laboratory of the National University of San Martín, where she also directs the Centre for Studies on Inequalities, Subjects and Institutions (CEDESI), co-directs the PhD in Human Sciences and has numerous scientific contributions and publications. And it is also a pleasure to have you here with us, Valeria, thank you very much.

In fourth place is our colleague Nara Milanich, who lives in New York. Nara is Professor of Latin American History at Barnard College, Columbia University in New York. Her research interests include comparative histories of family, kinship, childhood, gender and rights. She is the author of numerous studies and is currently working with her colleague Fanny García on the project "Separated: Stories of Injustice and Solidarity", a

project of oral histories of migrant families separated at the US-Mexico border during Trump's zero-tolerance policy. Thank you Nara.

And finally, we also have our colleague Elisa Colares, from Brazil, from the University of Brasilia. She has a PhD in Latin American Studies from the University of Brasilia and is the National Secretary of Judicial Research and Data Science for Labour Justice. She was able to do her doctoral research with Central American boys and girls on the border of Mexico and the United States and, in addition, she has been or is part of the *Colectiva Infancias* and is also a researcher for the *Ethnographic Mosaic* project that I mentioned earlier, coordinated by Valentina.

As I said, this is a space of trust where we can share and reflect on Valentina's production, our parallel productions with her, and research with migrant children, especially marginalised and excluded children. For the development of the meeting, based on the initial outline sent by Lourdes, I have tried to create three main blocks of conversation.

- - A first round for all of you will be about your connection to Valentina's human profile and your relationship with her.
- - A second block of conversation will be about research with children. The protagonism of children and adolescents in research and also the scientific rigour and academic activism with which it should be approached.
- - The third part will focus on the study of child and youth migration in Latin America. Epistemological and methodological issues, as well as migration policies between repression and protection.

So, we open the first line, your connection with Valentina and the profile that has connected you with her and her research. So, who wants to start?

Soledad: The bond I had with Vale, and still have, is a bond that went far beyond academic collaboration. It began as a meeting in Mexico. In the context of a seminar on transnationalism led by Federico Besserer, a renowned Mexican anthropologist, I met Vale. Our bond began with a convergence on common research themes; a bond that lasted 13 years and developed into a beautiful sisterhood. I realised that I had found a sister that life had given me, with whom together we not only weaved many research projects, many questions, pushing each other as in a kind of intellectual camaraderie, but also a vital camaraderie. Vale, she was and is my sister, I still talk to her, I still think out loud with her. And I miss her immensely, it's a huge void. Talking now about her profile, Valentina was a woman who supported, who put her body, her emotionality and her love into everything she did. So not only did she support her friends, but she also engaged in research, feeling it, resisting it, vibrating through it as a way of transforming reality. She was not just a friend, she was a magician at making connections and weaving relationships of affection and care. This is how she created the *Colectiva Infancias*, where I had the pleasure of meeting Elisa and with the Vale we put together the project, the *Mosaic of Migrant Children across the Americas*, with the intention of understanding how the migratory realities of children and adolescents in the Americas are interwoven, beyond a methodological nationalism that happens in the continent. And that collaboration allowed us to do this digital humanities project and we got funding from National Geographic.

That's where we got together with Nara, because we also ended up putting together, based on that same project, an exhibition at the Museo del Barrio in New York, which was the first time it opened the eyes of Latin American migrant children. Even though this was a museum that had dedicated years and years to serving migrant communities, they had never seen what was happening to children. Valentina weaved bridges of affection and care transnationally, but she also had a very important capacity to weave between disciplines. So she not only had to stay in the more theoretical perspective, but also in the artistic one and of course in the political one.

Nara: Well, I want to take up some of the threads that Soledad has already raised, because in reality I think there are going to be certain themes that will be repeated throughout our comments. First of all I want to say that this very conversation, transnational, collaborative, of women, seems to me the best possible way to recognise our colleague, partner, and friend, because it is precisely the kind of space that Valentina built over and over again.

I remember meeting Vale for the first time in September 2017, at the very exhibition Sole was talking about, an exhibition of photographs of migrant children at El Museo del Barrio in New York. And I remember it like it was yesterday. I even remember the skirt I was wearing that day. I remember the Mexican restaurant - *mediocre!!!*- where we went to eat after the exhibition to eat together. I remember meeting Daniel and Aruna, and I remember very well the panel that Vale organised with some colleagues I didn't know, Sara Gallo, Cintia Santos Briones, a photographer with whom she was very close.

Well, it was a very successful panel: a room full of a non-academic audience, very good conversation, good questions. I liked it a lot because it was the first time that I participated in a panel of that conversational format, and not of academics speaking in front of the public. Instead of a series of presentations, it was more of a conversation and I remember the event very well, because from then on I try to use that format in the academic events that I organize.

And well, this exhibition and this panel, I think, capture Valentina's academic and vital work. Firstly, because her academic work was obviously characterised by her public engagement, and this was a public conversation. Secondly, because it was a collaborative thing, and as Sole said, collaboration, weaving networks, was part of who she was. And thirdly, because her family was also at that event, and I believe that she always managed in some way, and we know, right?, that it is not easy with sons, with daughters, to find that balance, but she always tried to have her family close to her professional life, and that is something that caught my

attention at that moment, and in all the moments I was with her. In the Zooms we did during the pandemic, and in the events where we have met in person, her daughter and her partner were often present.

My relationship with Vale started there, with that event at the Museo del Barrio, but then throughout the pandemic, we developed a friendship through WhatsApp, and I'm sure you communicated with her through WhatsApp too. And here I want to mention one important thing: that Vale had fantastic feminist memes. The best memes of anyone I've ever met - I want to mention this important point about memes so it doesn't get lost! Vale's work took her into powerful and heavy subjects - exploitation, inequality, violence - but she managed to maintain a sense of humour.

And well, I'll stop there. I obviously have a lot more to say about her way of being, her academic work, because I've learned so much from her.

Elisa: I first met Valentina through a registration form for a seminar that Sole and Vale were giving at the UAM in Xochimilco, I think it was. I was here, working with children, but not migrants, in Brazil, and because of my doctorate I was interested in talking about migrant children, and bang! Valentina came to me. Just like that, right? Her writings and everything. So I started and got to know her just because of her theory, her writings, but I didn't know that there would be a person who could have an affective political project in her flesh, in her body, and be the most coherent person in all of this. So when Nara talks about her family and Sole talks about having a sister, it's because she is (I can't say she was) coherent in her whole political and theoretical project, in her relationships. So, affection, building bridges, she did that in her family ties, in the people she met at the academy, and also with the migrant children.

She was very consistent in everything. I was only able to do my thesis because of her. She was the one who put me on the two borders. And when I was on the border between Matamoros and Texas, there was a very tense situation, violence that was happening to me and I was very sensitive. And it was she who placed everything, everything that I wasn't seeing, that emotions are the points that reveal people. She gave me a reflection that I didn't have: that all the ethnography I had done had already exhausted me. So she took me out of there, she said, "no, you can't stay there any longer, you can't do anything more theoretically, because it won't work". And there I was in her house, waiting for me in Sonora, and there I stayed for months to recover and also, by a quirk of fate, the Caravan came to us there. Valentina was an affection, a human point for all the people who passed through her life. I wanted to express that. For me, she is the person who lives what she says, what she writes, and the people who are next to her live it, because it becomes so coherent, so strong, that it marks us and changes us completely.

Valeria: Since we received the questions I have been wondering when I met Valentina. And actually, I don't remember when I met her. I think it was about 10 years ago, but I'm not sure. Which, paradoxically, speaks to me of that kind of presence that Valen had in our lives, doesn't it? I mean, a presence that was so offered, so warm, so whole. And I just want to add another vein to everything that has already been said, because we probably all have some perspectives about her, but I especially treasure two of the personal encounters we had, face to face. One in Sonora and the other in Valparaíso. And in both meetings there were, we were, the same people. It was a coincidence. We were... Valen... Susana Sosensky and Gabriela García Figueroa. And in both moments, the four of us found ourselves in the possibility of enormous enjoyment, of laughter that makes your belly ache, of finding a way to steal time from the most... the most judicious task, to go out with the car on a kind of road movie that we wanted to make between Hermosillo, with its paradoxical name that promises a beauty that is not there, according to Valentina herself, and the sea of Cortés. And that capacity for playfulness and... multiplicity of folds, right?

The other day I was saying to Rachel that I have... I have her last audio that... WhatsApp. I agree, Nara, Valen had some spectacular memes that expanded my collection. She had sent me an article that she had never published so that we could think about writing something together a few days before she died. I couldn't listen to those audios again. But I have her voice in the present, and I think all of them for sure. Her voice and that way of looking, right? That particular way of looking, of looking at us, of looking at the world.

Rachel: Valentina and I met when she came to the UK for a conference that we were organizing here. It was serendipitous in the sense that she came a few days early, just before the first lockdown due to the Covid pandemic. It was serendipitous because we just happened to sit next to each other at lunch. If that hadn't happened, we might never have met or at least not been able to connect in the same way. Like Elisa, I'm having trouble talking about Valentina in the past tense. There is something so wonderful about her spirit, the way she embraces people. So those two hours when we sat next to each other for lunch I felt like: this is a kindred spirit. There was just something so wonderful about the way in which she would bring her herself to every encounter. I think one of you said that she lived what she wrote. She wrote what she meant and she was insistent that there's no point in doing anything if it's not part of an effort to make this world a better place. That infused everything she did and that inspired me for sure, but I think all of us here now maybe feel something similar. Anyway, I feel such a profound sense of luck to have had the good fortune to have been in her presence for those two hours. So it's an odd feeling: I've only ever spent two hours in person with Valentina, but I feel like I know her very, very well. We spent hours exchanging messages and voice notes and talking online.

When I think of Valentina, of describing her, what comes to mind is the profound love that she shared in the world. I don't mean this in an anemic liberal sense but in a powerful political sense: love as a collective act of solidarity with the other. So when we were editing a book together, she said, "These are junior scholars. We need to spend time with them and support them". And so we had hours of conversation with contributors to the book where we talked, we cried, we got angry at the state of the world. And this was all part of her commitment to living what she wrote about. Something I heard Valentina say quite often was: 'I hope it's okay, but I'm going to introduce something political here. I want to politicize this.' For me, those are valuable words. She

never let go of this idea that we need to change things for the better and that's what we're here to do. I keep her words in my mind as an important motivation.

Begoña: Thank you Rachel and all of you for your contributions. We will now move on to the second block of interventions related to research with children and academic rigour and activism. Who will start?

Rachel: One idea that Valentina really materialized for me was that of "accompaniment". For me, this exemplified her approach to life: whether in research, whether with colleagues, friends, or community. This idea of walking alongside the other is a profound statement from a research perspective. We probably are all working in fairly neoliberal institutions where we're atomized, alienated, and separated from each other. We are encouraged to compete. For Valentina to insist on research as an act of accompaniment fundamentally transforms the way in which we often think about it.

Soledad: I agree with what Rachel says and I wanted to contribute three very beautiful lessons that the Vale left us with. The first has to do with the power of the collective. Valentina continually insisted that thought, creation and, therefore, research can only be possible when there is a joint effort. This means that thinking, creating, writing is an act of communion, it is an act of many, it is a collective act. This is in line with what you say, Rachel, in line with accompanying. But it means that there are many of us who accompany each other and that means honouring those who preceded us, all that accumulated, historical knowledge that is already there.

But at the same time, and this is the second enormous contribution that the Vale taught us all the time, the importance of co-creating, of co-producing new counter-narrative epistemologies. And in this case, to co-create on the basis of the knowledge that childhood gave us. Vale then made a very coherent proposal: the collective, co-creation as a new way of generating epistemology.

And the third point, which for me was perhaps one of the most important elements, is something that Vale asked herself a lot: how do we return, how do we give back, all that we learn from the communities we are working with and accompanying? Restitution and commitment were two words that Vale insisted on. Commitment as a political act. And I remember her saying: why do we give so much importance to the theoretical framework in our research work, and not to understanding the ethics behind restitution and commitment? For me, Valentina said, (I remember her repeating this with the students, with us) it is as important to define the analytical lenses as it is to define how I am going to return and give back to the people, to the communities with whom I have learned so much. For her, this was a way of putting the importance of co-creating first, as a possible way of breaking the academic hierarchy and that neoliberal notion that individualises when you put the commonality first and learn from those who teach you, from those with whom you are working, which in this case were the migrant communities of children and adolescents. I think that putting this ethical and political dimension in the research work was what defined him.

Begoña: Thank you, Soledad, who else?

Elisa: Following the thread at this point, where do the children stay at this point? Because when there are no academic hierarchies, that too will change. The role of research should have a political ethical point of transformation, of going back to them. It wasn't something like: "later I'll write, I'm the one who's going to tell them what happened". On the contrary, the whole moment of the research was a transition to what can be considered as a change in the lives of these children. So, what we often read theoretically about participatory methodologies was not done in a programmed way but in a real, everyday way, having them at the centre of what they were asking, the centre of the social information.

Once, I remember, I don't know what talk we were in, we were asked about the ethical question of working with children who are in situations of violation, if it was possible to tell them that we are giving them a voice. Then, in these moments of solidarity and radical rage of Vale, he told us: "Well, we are always asked about ethics when we talk about children, nobody is asking what ethics we have when children are detained, when there is a detention policy that is transmitted as protection, nobody asks about ethics, but they ask about ethics to who is investigating, to who is trying to find them, to who wants to give them a voice. So, those people who are trying to transform, the whole burden of the ethical question is placed on them, and that is what they are trying to transform, it is a scientific practice, but the central question of liberalism of detention is not placed on them. All of that was there, I was able to be in the field with her, in the migrant caravan, and that was there from her body, they are words all the time that was very real and very concrete.

Valeria: More than once we talked about some of the issues that we shared, also as research problems, and one of them, which is a kind of monotheme, something that we found in common, is the problem of the trivialisation and banality of approaches to child agency and the idea of the voice. And I think there is always, not only a romanticisation, but an enormous reification in most of these approaches and for me it was always very, very intense, very instructive the way in which, for example, they worked (I think it was in Soledad's project, I don't remember well) with the stop-motion videos that the children made during the migration and the way in which, based on the construction of that narrative, which is a visual narrative that also offers depth and enormous folds, it was achieved, or she managed in the project, to avoid that trivialization, to avoid that idea that what the child says is what we need to know. That always seemed very, very relevant to me, an enormous learning experience that was very contradictory to an entire production line.

Another question is that, along the same lines of voice, we once talked about the book *Desierto Sonoro* by Valeria Luiselli and we both had an ethical conflict with that book, in relation to the way of presenting children's experiences. And it's the problem of the equivalence of the voices of the children, of the narrator's children and the migrant children, an equivalence that leads, on the one hand, to an over-dimensioning of age as

an analytical category and that is one of the things that lead us to a decontextualisation of these children in terms of their racial, social, cultural, etc. dimensions.

And on the other hand, the problem of the aphantasming, which is Luiselli's twist, but the aphantasming of migrant children (which generated a great deal of tension for us), is it a link with a permanent presence or is it an ethical and temporal mediation with their lives that always places them on a plane in which they are spoken about by another? And I think Valen had that theoretical, ethical and methodological clarity to look precisely at those problems that are often the ones that are most quickly overlooked. Especially in certain fields and in certain research processes, it is the easiest thing to overlook, and that is precisely what she brought to the forefront.

Nara: I'll just add one small thing. The last time I saw Valentina in person was in October 2022, when we finally managed to arrange a trip for her to New York as an O'Gorman Fellow, a stay we had been organising since, I think, 2018. I remember this because a few days ago, before our conversation today, I re-read the many messages we exchanged over the years - so many messages, so many projects, so many dreams, so many ideas, so many exclamation points in her messages. And well, that journey has finally come to fruition and she has presented her documentary *Epifanio: Memorias de un niño migrante*, which obviously captures very well her philosophy of co-creation that Sole was talking about.

And the other thing I wanted to mention is that Valentina seemed to have a world of godchildren, god-daughters, comadres and compadres, people she had met in the course of her ethnographic research and with whom she had formed affective bonds. When I read her messages this weekend, these godchildren kept coming up, and that seems to me to be very important. She was certainly developing a methodology of research, but also a methodology of life.

Begoña: Thank you Nara. I don't know if you want to add anything to this section or if we should move on to the third block of topics... Well, as we said, we would like to talk now about the study of child migration, migration policies, between protection and repression. Also from your experiences, related to Valentina or to your research career.

Valeria: Thank you, I will start because I am the one who is furthest away from these issues, but I think that, as Nara said, Valen's exclamation points and anger in relation to the procedures that the Mexican state used to collect children who were deported from the United States to Mexico, but above all children who were not Mexican and who were later to be deported again by the Mexican state itself. I believe that for those of us who work, or have worked, within the framework of children's rights, bureaucratic procedures always take on the temporality and smoothness of Weberian administrative rationality. It is precisely for this reason that I believe that the strategy of assigning the exclamation mark that Valentina had to this dimension is extremely necessary in order to see the degree of violence towards the construction of mobilised, transportable bodies, as if they were precisely a form of cattle. In addition, these bureaucratic procedures also constructed the invisibility of the fate to which these children were thrown. It seems to me that all these folds that Valentina highlighted about the bureaucratic procedures of deportation, as well as the ways in which these forms of protection were constructed, included very harmful modalities of approaching childhood.

Soledad: I wanted to start with the issue of the border regime and the critique that the Vale made. Her argument was created by the way she carried out her research: by intertwining herself with the lives of migrants, following and reconstructing the life trajectories of many children and adolescents like Epifanio, Silvia and many others whom she accompanied throughout her life. And while she accompanied and reconstructed their trajectories for years on end, what you were saying Nara, she became their godmother, their comadre, becoming directly involved in their lives. In that involvement, she understood that mobility is not something extraordinary in the lives of Mixteco children, it is not something extraordinary in the lives of Central American adolescents, but rather resistance to systems of oppression, adult-centrism, racism, neoliberalism, classism, patriarchy, the forms of resistance have historically been mobility and that emigrating, therefore, is not an extraordinary episode of the 21st century, of the last decade of the 21st century, but that Latin America was built on movement and that children and adolescents have historically been on the move. And I think this is something that was fundamental for Vale. I remember Vale reflecting on the life of her godson Epifanio, who was born and was already on the move on the back of his Mixtec mother, going back and forth to work in the fields. Later he migrated to the city, and then went to the United States, from where he decided to return to Mexico, only to leave again. On the move, he built his life, and mobility became a form of resistance.

In reconstructing the migratory trajectories of children, we understand that what is extraordinary is not the mobility of migrants; this experience has been at the heart of our communities' lives for centuries. What is extraordinary is the brutality of control, of a blatantly racist border control regime that attacks children and adolescents by tearing families apart, separating children from their parents, detaining them, deporting them, just as it does adults.

Another contribution of Vale's work, present since she began her research on migration, is the importance of understanding the intertwining of mobility, capital and work through the lens of children. Working migrant children have been at the heart of Latin American economies, as Vale showed with her work on working children. And today, undocumented, unaccompanied migrant children from Central America, but also from Mexico, are also working as migrant children in the United States. In analysing this relationship between mobility, capital and work from the experience of children, Vale told us: "Look, the extraordinary thing about this system is that it has historically trapped children between protection and repression, and has never really

managed to protect them, because they are children who are totally alone and with their only strength of mobility fighting against these systems of oppression”.

I would like to end with something that I think brings us all together in this beautiful dialogue, and that is that Vale has pushed us to question adult-centrism as the power structure that shapes the ways in which the regime of border control, protection, humanitarianism and research silences, invisibilises, victimises and assumes that children are subjects without any kind of power and agency. Vale insisted that although children are subject to these power structures, they are subjects with power. And there was a great distinction there that I think was very enlightening for us to question a regime that is slowly and increasingly violating and killing the child population in the Americas.

Elisa: It is difficult to complement what Sole said, but I just wanted to emphasise the issue of state control, and its need to say bureaucratically that it is protecting children. We just put the emphasis on the concept of “unaccompanied”, a euphemism used by the state to say who these unaccompanied children are. We had the example of the four-year-old boy who was accompanied, but the state ripped him away from his father; but there are other children who are unaccompanied, because their parents have already left, ripped away by violence, by inequality, by the trajectory of undocumented migration that separated them from a relationship. So, the “unaccompanied” is a construction that expresses the violence of the state towards these children and adolescents. And the state, throughout its discourse, also questions the autonomy of children to decide to migrate.

And Valentina always emphasised that this is also a neoliberal trap. We have to reclaim children’s agency, we have to talk about it from a place of vulnerability. This autonomy is constructed in order to escape, because they were forced to move because they did not have what the state was supposed to give them, whether in Mexico, Central America or the United States, which is protection. In other words, these are strategies that the children have adopted. So what Soledad raises, the question of capital and work, is central to talking about the power that these children have and why these are the strategies that they adopt in their lives. The whole history of their family is built around control and never around protection.

Rachel: One of the things that I really learned from reading Valentina’s work and listening to her speak is a sort of similar point to the one Sole was making about care. What has stuck with me really profoundly is the idea that it’s not exceptional that children are involved in caring practices, that children are deeply embedded in relations of care in their communities, but what’s exceptional is the circumstances under which they’re having to do this, be this forced displacement or induction into a global capitalist economy, which means that caring practices become ones of exploitation. So when Valentina would say: ‘I’m going to say something political now’ or ‘I want to politicize this’ it was when we were maybe going off into a kind of theoretical discussion that wasn’t grounded in these concrete conditions of existence.

A second point that I wanted to talk about were some ideas that she introduced in our co-edited collection, *Crisis for Whom? Critical Global Perspectives on Childhood, Care, and Migration*¹, and which we had been continuing to develop: minorization. This refers to the processes by which border regimes and regimes of adult supremacy come together to produce the minor, wherein some children as positioned as minors and others as children. We had been thinking together about the bureaucratic, institutional, quotidian, and larger scale structural processes that that made this possible and thinking across global contexts. I hope in some way to be able to continue some of that work, that thinking. To do her justice, I’d like to keep pursuing those ideas.

And I guess the last point that I wanted to talk about was her commitment to understanding children and young people’s mobility in in Latin America but also globally. So the chapter she wrote for our collection was about children on the move in India and Mexico, and a lot of the work that we did together moved across the UK and Mexico in order to think about the ways in which processes of forced dispossession are connected through long standing processes of empire and colonialism, but also through present day practices.

So part of what I wanted to say about Valentina was her curiosity and push to think beyond borders – both politically and intellectually. The other aspect of this was about the way she always looked for the cracks in borders. They have fragilities, fortunately, and she never accepted borders as fixed divisions of the world or divisions between us. My last communication with her was so emblematic of this point. It was about “Letters for Palestinian childhoods” which a group of us have been working on as part of a global effort to speak out against the western-backed Israeli genocide against Palestine. In her letter, Valentina wrote about children on the borders between Mexico and the US, and she wrote about that in relation to children in Palestine, and about the importance of looking for cracks, for fragilities in borders. For me, this is a call for hope, a discipline of hope, and a way of being that she brought to her academic work but also to her political work and her relations with others. That is the memory of her that I want to hold with me.

Nara: Well, it was always very enriching to think with the Vale, as Rachel says, and I want to pick up very briefly on a thread that Sole suggested. I’m a historian, so my conversations with Vale were always about looking for interdisciplinary dialogues and bridges and understanding the connections between the contemporary work she was doing and my historical perspective.

Reflecting on our collaborations, it is interesting for me to note how the pandemic was the context for many of our dialogues. Thanks to Vale, that period of isolation was at the same time an opportunity to build

1 Rosen, R., Chase, E., Crafter, S., Glockner, V., Mitra, S. (2023). *Crisis for Whom? Critical Global Perspectives on Childhood, Care, and Migration*. London: UCLPress

bridges. For me in the pandemic she was a very important figure, because of all those conversations we had, by email and WhatsApp and phone.

During the pandemic, Vale and I, along with our colleague and friend Isabella Cosse, a historian in Argentina, edited a special issue of the journal *NACLA* entitled *Exiles, Refugees, Displaced: Children and Migration in the Americas*. The three of us wrote a short introductory essay. We wanted to trace the links between child migration in the present and an earlier historical moment of movement of families and children across the continent, during the Cold War. It was very enriching to write this essay, to somehow look for the roots of the present in the past and to link our respective works. The idea was to historically contextualise contemporary migration and also to 'de-provincialise' the US-Mexico border - which is often seen as something exceptional - and discuss it along with the many borders throughout the hemisphere and the world. We had planned to write something beyond this little essay, maybe an article or a book, a project that may have been cut short, but at least we managed to produce this essay, which is a work I'm quite proud of, something we produced over the course of a few weeks. And, well, for me as a historian, it was always very interesting to think and talk with Vale, precisely because of the different disciplinary perspectives.

Begoña: Thank you very much, I don't know if you want to add anything to this last block or if we can end the conversation... Sole, please.

Soledad: I just wanted to follow up on something you said Rachel because I think it's a very important concern that Vale had at the end and it's important that it remains in what is going to come out of this conversation. It has to do, and perhaps she has also discussed it with you, with the importance of thinking about the forms of re-existence, with this idea that the control of power has cracks, as you said, Rachel, and that from the collectives, and in particular from childhood, from childhood in connection with the mothers who care, with the grandmothers who care, with the sisters who care, with nature that cares, that we care for, we can recreate different forms of existence.

It's about how we rethink new existences in the light of existing practices of terror. And I would like to read you a phrase that Valentina has repeated and that, apart from the tributes that have been paid to her in Mexico, from what has been written about her, has circulated a lot. It is her voice, it is hers, she said it in some of her interventions and it is very revealing in terms of the project that I think she wanted to continue to push and it goes like this: "For every practice of terror, there is a practice of life, and for every practice of love, there is a practice of life in isolation, there are practices of solidarity". This is a phrase that Vale has been teaching us over and over again to push us towards where these cracks are and how in these cracks we can think about the politics of life and the politics of radical solidarity, not from us but from what the communities we work with teach us, the children we work with, and I think it is very much connected to what you said Rachel and I think it is also a task for all of us who are here, because I know that Vale is here with us, she must be happy already, knowing that we are once again together with such beautiful people, pushing for these other existences and how we think transnationally with the children, from their voices and their silences, which is also what you said, Valeria, that Valentina's legacy, which was so great and so rich in her young age, continues and circulates and is set in motion.

Begoña: Thank you all very much indeed. I think that, as Sole said, Valentina must be very happy with these energies that are moving, that have moved in other places as well. The truth is that you have said incredible things and it is not possible to synthesise everything, but I would like to rescue some strong ideas from everything that has come out here.

Regarding your connections with Valentina in the first block. I think she must be very happy, wherever she is, because you have said some very valuable things about her ability to reach agreements, to unite, about how she created alliances, networks, nodes, relationships of affection, care, magical synergies. I also believe that this conversation between women is part of her legacy, of that coherence you spoke of, of that political, public, research commitment, which she also combined with other values of being a person, a woman, a mother, a friend, a researcher; humanity, warmth, the ability to play, jokes, ways of looking at things, of combining all this inspiration and also perseverance.

In the second block (although I think the three are linked, because you do not stop being everything when you take on the role of researcher, when you also take on the study of child and adolescent migration), to highlight some ideas, to say that you spoke several times about "accompaniment", which is ultimately a role, another level, in which you put yourself in front of people, in front of children and adolescents. You also insisted on the power of the collective, that this is only possible when you unite, when you create these synergies, when you create these links with all the people, which also in a way contradicts the image we have of competitive, toxic, individualistic research, which we know is a way of researching, but it is not the way Valentina positioned herself, nor the way I think we all position ourselves, because we value other issues.

You talked about all that, the honouring of historical accumulated knowledge, much of it from a gender perspective. Also the question of co-creation, which again speaks to us of generosity, of the capacity to create collective thinking and activism, of commitments to communities, of what we might call accountability to the people we're working with and the people we're researching, as opposed to these academic hierarchies that often distance the researcher from the people they're working with.

And then I'd also like to highlight your criticism of some terms, such as the trivialisation of child protagonism, which shows how certain terms that suddenly become fashionable are emptied of content and people don't even know where they come from. This often happens with empowerment. Or the question of the

over-dimensioning of age in relation to other variables and other categories of analysis that overlap, or the “aphantasming” of boys and girls, which you also commented on, as Valeria said.

I think that all of this accompaniment, all of this commitment, all of this responsibility also creates, in the end, this world of affective bonds that you mentioned, that she has managed to have with this world of godchildren, goddaughters, comadres, compadres, from which we can learn to continue to weave these relationships.

In the third block, I think one of the issues that Valentina represented the most, according to what you have all said, and is the criticism of all those brutal procedures that are applied against children, especially those who are “unaccompanied”. Whether it is the Mexican state, the bureaucratic procedures, or those other borders that Rachel mentioned. You also talked about care, which I think is something that represents a lot of the values that Valentina, and that she rescued from migration and mobility studies. The idea that children’s migrations are forms of resistance, not something exceptional in the historical development of the peoples of Latin America. And from there, to see how migration is articulated with labour and capitalism, which also have global connections, and how children and adolescents are silenced and made invisible.

In conclusion, I would like to rescue the theme of “re-existence”, which is also linked to resistance. Resisting, re-existing, reinventing ourselves, rethinking ourselves. And finally, I think that Valentina’s very valuable phrase about life and solidarity in the face of isolation and terror is the call that touches us, touches us in the stomach, at the base of our ethical and political positioning. I believe that Valentina’s legacy will last for a long time, in the end everything she left behind in real life will remain: writings, books, articles, academic and scientific production, but above all her emotional, political, emotional and networked legacy will remain. And I think you are very lucky to have been with her.

I did not have the opportunity to be with her directly, but I also feel fortunate to receive part of that legacy and to share this very special and magical evening with all of you. Thank you for your generosity and for being here today to pay this heartfelt tribute to Valentina, which will also be a motivation to continue working, researching, fighting, activating and defending children and adolescents as active subjects and agents and human beings, which is ultimately one of our goals, so thank you all very much.