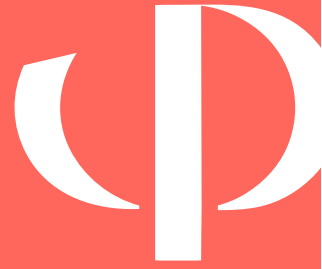


# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy



SPRING 2021

VOLUME 20 | NUMBER 2

## FROM THE EDITOR

Lori Gallegos

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

## ARTICLES

Rafael Vizcaíno

*2020 APA Essay Prize in Latin American Thought: Which Secular Grounds? The Atheism of Liberation Philosophy*

Mariana Gómez

*2020 Essay Prize Honorable Mention: Radical Pluralism and the Hispanic Identity*

Andrea Pitts

*Shifting the Geography of Revolution: Mestizo Nationalism, Pan-Arab Independence, and Feminist Philosophy through the Writings of Vera Yamuni Tabush*

Tadd Ruetenik

*Gloria Anzaldúa, Hybrid History, and American Philosophy*

## AUTHOR BIOS



APA NEWSLETTER ON

# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

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LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

VOLUME 20 | NUMBER 2 | SPRING 2021

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Lori Gallegos  
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

At a time of living and working from a distance, many of us are struggling with isolation, a heavier workload, and other threats to the health and well-being of ourselves and our loved ones. In the midst of these hardships, the efforts others make to create and sustain our cherished communities can be vital and should not be taken for granted. It is with gratitude for the ongoing work of my colleagues who contribute to the Latin American and Latinx philosophical communities—by sharing their research, inviting conversation, inspiring thought, and helping others to refine their ideas—that I proudly introduce the four articles that make up this issue of the newsletter.

The issue begins with the winner of the 2020 Essay Prize in Latin American Thought. In his award-winning essay, Rafael Vizcaíno clarifies the nature of the secularity that grounds liberation philosophy. Focusing on the work of Enrique Dussel, Vizcaíno shows that liberation philosophy as secular does not disavow religion, but rather critiques *fetishism* in any form, including atheistic fetishization. Liberation philosophy's secularity is thus one that remains open to the traditional philosophical question of the Absolute.

Our second essay received an Honorable Mention in the 2020 Essay Prize competition. Author Mariana Gómez examines the possibility of constructing a Hispanic identity that will serve to transform the conditions of Latin America's most oppressed groups. She challenges José Medina's radical pluralist approach, which involves making explicit the experiential commonalities among Latin Americans in the midst of their diversity. Gómez focuses on the case of Mexico to argue that there is no collective experience amongst the people in Latin America, and that positing a collective experience does harm by obfuscating genuine conflicts of interests among different racial groups.

The next essay introduces readers to the work of the Mexican philosopher Vera Yamuni Tabush (1917–2003). Author Andrea Pitts describes the theoretical significance of Yamuni's work, and situates it in terms of Yamuni's perspective as a Lebanese migrant in Mexico. Pitts shows that Yamuni's critiques of European colonial interests, defense of Palestinian independence, and interest in developing a critical voice among women in the history of philosophy are the basis of her critical interventions in

philosophical debates among her contemporaries in the Hyperion Group.

The newsletter concludes with an essay by Tadd Ruetenik, which explores Gloria Anzaldúa's ideas about multiplicitous identity and temporality by applying them to the problem of what has been derided as the "alternative truth age." In what he takes to be the spirit of Anzaldúa's work, Ruetenik defends the unorthodox view that allowing for multiple stories might be more beneficial than insisting upon an overarching account of history.

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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* is accepting contributions for the FALL 2021 issue. Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on any topic related to Hispanic/Latino thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as reflections, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All submissions should be limited to 5,000 words (twenty double-spaced pages) and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. All articles submitted to the newsletter undergo anonymous review by members of the Committee on Hispanics.

### BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews in any area of Hispanic/Latino philosophy, broadly construed, are welcome. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Book reviews may be short (500 words) or long (1,500 words). Electronic submissions are preferred.

### DEADLINES

Deadline for spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15. Deadline for the fall issue is April 15. Authors should expect a decision by June 15.

Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Lori Gallegos, at [LoriGallegos@txstate.edu](mailto:LoriGallegos@txstate.edu), Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

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## FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Newsletters* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an “em dash” (—) instead of a double hyphen (--). Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90. See Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

## ARTICLES

### *Which Secular Grounds? The Atheism of Liberation Philosophy*

Winner, 2020 APA Essay Prize in Latin American Thought

Rafael Vizcaíno

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

La secularización era el nombre falso del fetichismo; y el ateísmo de las izquierdas era un primer momento dialéctico, cuyo segundo momento era una afirmación del Absoluto como liberación.<sup>1</sup>

– Enrique Dussel

## INTRODUCTION

It has been something of an accepted but misunderstood refrain that Latin American liberation philosophy employs the methods and approaches of liberation theology in the philosophical arena, effectively putting liberation theology on secular grounds.<sup>2</sup> While this formulation is true insofar as philosophy is not bound by the hermeneutics of any particular religious tradition, a closer reading of both movements’ methodologies complicates the presumed meaning of secularity in this interpretation. On the one hand, liberation theology is already partly secular in that it deploys the social sciences to diagnose and chastise the sinful character of material oppression. On the other hand, liberation philosophy affirms secularization as a methodological separation between faith and reason, but not rooted in an undialectical understanding of *secularity as secularism*.<sup>3</sup> This essay clarifies the nature of liberation philosophy’s secular grounds.

While not the sole representative of liberation philosophy, I center the work of Enrique Dussel, as his intellectual production spans both liberation philosophy and liberation theology. His work is thus the most capacious entryway into the relationship between these two movements. I demonstrate how liberation philosophy’s secularity is not one that disavows religion, as with the undialectical understanding of *secularity as secularism*. On the contrary, liberation philosophy’s secular grounds require a constant engagement with religion, not in the hermeneutics of

any specific tradition, but with “the traditional question of the Absolute.”<sup>4</sup> This way of doing philosophy contrasts with the secularist repudiation of religion that dominates within much of philosophy’s radical circles, which is why liberation philosophy has repeatedly been “ghettoized and relegated to the ‘safe’ area of theological studies,” as Eduardo Mendieta has argued.<sup>5</sup> It is my contention, however, that liberation philosophy’s secular grounds are an original contribution to philosophy that can provide the foundation for a decolonial and postsecularist liberation philosophy, particularly a liberation philosophy of *religion*. This would be an account of religion with an ethico-political existential dimension as humanity’s liberatory search for meaning, expressed as the search for the Absolute. Moreover, I argue that this dialectical modality of secularity advances epistemic decolonization, for it reveals the undialectical understanding of *secularity as secularism* to be an aspect of coloniality, an obstacle rather than a benefit for Latin American philosophers seeking to gain a better understanding of our historical conditions.<sup>6</sup>

## LIBERATION PHILOSOPHY’S SECULAR GROUNDS

Both liberation theology and liberation philosophy emerged in Latin America in the late 1960s within the social and political struggles that sought to improve the living conditions of the vast majority of the region’s population. On the theological front, figures like Rubem Alves, Hugo Assmann, and Gustavo Gutierrez broke with centuries-old theological paradigms to embrace the secular social sciences—particularly Latin American dependency theory—to develop an understanding of poverty as the result of the sinful character of neocolonial oppression.<sup>7</sup> In the philosophical trenches, Leopoldo Zea and Augusto Salazar Bondy had set the terms of a debate concerning the possibility of an authentic Latin American philosophy.<sup>8</sup> As a response to this debate, a group of Argentine philosophers that included Rodolfo Kusch, Juan Carlos Scannone, Horacio Cerutti, and Enrique Dussel, among others, developed the basis of a philosophical reflection that would contribute to the struggles that were shaping the course of Latin American history. This is how liberation philosophy was born.<sup>9</sup>

Enrique Dussel quickly emerged as a noted contributor to both movements while maintaining a strict division between the two, with philosophy geared toward a universal secular community of reason and theology toward a particular religious community of faith.<sup>10</sup> Despite such a clear separation, however, liberation philosophy has often been discredited for its close association to its theological counterpart—thereby purportedly lacking originality and depth. Yet I argue that it is precisely liberation philosophy’s secularity that offers one of its most distinctive and original contributions to philosophy, in large part because of its unconventional construction of secularity; that is, it is not positioned in direct opposition to the religious. That such unconventional secularity has yet to receive comprehensive attention is why the seemingly “religious” language of liberation philosophy continues to baffle its critics. Where some see a theology in disguise, I see an audaciously atheist liberatory philosophy, especially when it comes to the philosophy of *religion*.

To clarify this point, it is necessary to articulate how Dussel deploys secularity as a broad framework for liberation philosophy. In addition to the aforementioned interpretation of secularization as a methodological separation between theology and philosophy (the classic faith-and-reason debate), there is a prior and more important understanding of secularization that connotes a certain atheism. One of the first prominent historical examples of this modality is found, somewhat ironically, in the early messianic communities that would go on to form Christianity. When these early Christians defended a belief in the Divine as “transcendental exteriority,” as the Other to the Roman cosmos, they contradicted the latter’s intrinsic divinity in a way that precipitated an accusation of atheism and their subsequent persecution.<sup>11</sup> In conceiving of the cosmos as “created, that is, not-God,” these early Christians initiated a process of secularization that would eventually give way to the empirical study of God’s creation.<sup>12</sup> Put differently, because the cosmos is not-God, it can be studied with tools other than revelation. The atheism of a self-proclaimed divinity (the negation of the Roman cosmos) thus becomes the precursor to the methodological separation between reason and revelation, between philosophy and theology as independent domains. This separation would become one of modernity’s essential epistemic divisions.

The historical irony of the Christian origin of secularization was crystallized in the Renaissance, when Christian theology confronted the latest conclusions from the empirical sciences. No longer the wretched of the Roman Empire but an imperial force in its own right, the Church now found itself in a powerful position of social, political, and cultural domination. At this historical juncture, Dussel argues, the Church had the opportunity to deepen the process of secularization that once gave birth to it by articulating that scientific rationality is not “in opposition to the values necessary to faith,” and embracing it.<sup>13</sup> The Church, however, did not defend such separation between faith and reason—itself an outgrowth of Christianity’s own secularizing emergence—and instead rejected the new scientific forms of knowledge, creating “an antinomy that should never have been: science versus Christianity.”<sup>14</sup> The dialectics of secularization initiated by the atheistic critique of the Roman cosmos thus came to a halt and ended the fruitful complementarity between faith and reason. The Medieval Church’s failure to deepen the process of secularization by rejecting scientific rationality resulted in an undialectical reaction. Solidified as an antireligious *secularism*, this undialectical reaction has reigned in scientific and philosophical circles ever since, most evident in the figures and inheritors of the Radical Enlightenment. Contrary to the first atheist modality and the second modality of complementarity between faith and reason, the undialectical modality of *secularity as secularism* disavows religion as a source of criticality and liberatory potential.

That the dialectics of secularization came to a halt in modern secularism has conditioned the development of both liberation theology and liberation philosophy. Both movements are invested in moving away from secularism as an undialectical modality of secularity, thus jumpstarting the process of secularization from their own respective domains of inquiry. They each diagnose the modern

secular/religious impasse as a type of fundamentalism that must be overcome. To that end, liberation theology famously reached out to the secular social sciences. Liberation philosophy followed suit, but on the other end of the divide. This is why liberation philosophy has been committed to developing a dialectically secular account of religion as a source of liberation that recovers the “atheist” modality critical of false divinities or “fetishes.” Such “anti-fetishism” establishes liberation philosophy’s secular grounds. I shall now briefly outline this project.

## AN ATHEIST LIBERATION PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

A liberation philosophy of religion is systematically developed in the fifth volume of Dussel’s first *Ética*, aptly subtitled, “An Antifetishist Philosophy of Religion.”<sup>15</sup> This is a project that includes an analysis of “fetishization” as the process by which an entity encloses itself and assumes itself to be an absolute source of power and legitimacy.<sup>16</sup> It is an account of the self-divinization of the Same at the expense of the Other. This concept of fetishization sheds light on the aforementioned case of Christianity—a movement that started as a messianic and atheist anti-imperialist project but became the religion of the Roman Empire. Such processes of fetishization saturated the Crusades, the colonization of the Americas, and the European wars of religion. Fetishization in this case denotes the self-enclosure of Christianity into the Absolute—i.e., into Christendom.<sup>17</sup>

The task of the philosopher of liberation is to diagnose fetishization wherever it occurs. It means being atheist of the fetish that demands compulsory worship.<sup>18</sup> Such atheism, as the “negation of the negation,” is indeed “the first thesis of Liberation Philosophy.”<sup>19</sup> Here, the religious moment par excellence is that which comes *after* the negation of the fetish; it is the affirmation that “Divinity is Other than any system.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, the negation of the false divinity is itself substantiated by the positive affirmation that true Divinity can only be found beyond the system, as the Absolute Other. As “infinite exteriority,” the affirmation of the Absolute provides criteria “to accuse any system of being guilty.”<sup>21</sup> Without such affirmation of infinite exteriority, any given system risks enclosing and absolutizing itself into a self-sufficient false divinity, a new fetish. Liberation philosophy essentially understands religion to be this anti-fetishist practice. It is the affirmation of the Absolute Other as true Divinity, as infinite exteriority, that gives one the footing to be an “atheist of every system.”<sup>22</sup>

The radical aspect of this formulation of re-ligion as anti-fetishism is that *secularism* is understood as a new fetish—the merely reactionary undialectical rejoinder to the fetishization of Christianity; part of the problem and not a solution that can disrupt the process of fetishization. This is based on the understanding that secularism similarly does not leave room for exteriority and collapses into a practice of self-divination.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Dussel characterizes such undialectical understanding of *secularity as secularism* as “the false name of fetishism.”<sup>24</sup> This intricate formulation—the epigraph to this essay—

criticizes an undialectical understanding of the process of secularization, exemplified by a certain kind of Marxism, for its inadequacies in mounting a full critique of fetishism. For Dussel, the infamous Marxist critique of religion as “the opium of the people” rightly advocates for an atheism of the fetish.<sup>25</sup> But in its inability to take the next step of affirming exteriority, Marxist critique closes on itself, thus leaving the possibility to emerge as a new fetish of its own (as seen in Soviet bureaucracy): “Forgetting the second moment has distanced the left from the peoples who explain their daily lives, in the *Lebenswelt*, with symbols, rituals, and cults.”<sup>26</sup> This is why secularization (as secularism) became the false name of fetishism.

One of the original contributions of liberation philosophy, then, is the articulation of the second moment that follows the negation of the fetish missing in the Marxist critique of religion: “the affirmation of the Absolute as liberation.”<sup>27</sup> For if there is an Absolute, Dussel claims, “it ought to be Other than every historical system.”<sup>28</sup> It is the affirmation of the Absolute as infinite exteriority, as “perfect justice,” that can trigger the dialectics of secularization *once again*, where secularization no longer implies fetishism.<sup>29</sup>

Such articulation of liberation philosophy’s secularity has gone largely unnoticed in its reception, even amongst its supporters. For instance, Eduardo Mendieta’s English translation of this formulation partially obscures the fact that Dussel is here calling for the reinterpretation of the meaning of secularity. Mendieta translates the first clause of this passage, originally in the past tense (“La secularización era el nombre falso del fetichismo”), into the English present tense (“Secularization is the false name of fetishism”).<sup>30</sup> In my view, this slight modification makes it difficult to see (1) the fact that the process of secularization at some point went wrong, becoming “the false name of fetishism,” and (2) that restoring the properly dialectical and critical aspect of secularization is one of liberation philosophy’s crucial tasks.

That such articulation of secularity has not received the careful attention that it deserves may also explain why components surrounding this reinterpretation have been a constant source of criticism, especially from other Latin American philosophers. Ofelia Schutte, for instance, finds Dussel’s “critique of secular-scientific education” to be “conservative in its stand against modernity.”<sup>31</sup> From the very brief sketch I have offered above, it should be clear that such criticism does not take into account the way in which liberation philosophy affirms secularization at the expense of rejecting secularism. In other words, it is true that liberation philosophy is critical of secularism, but because it is not secular *enough*. The rejection of secularism does not come from a reactionary religious intention, but from a radically atheist secularizing position that is just as critical of fundamentalist iterations of religion. This is the sense in which I argue that liberation philosophy’s critique of secularism should be understood as being both *postsecularist* and *decolonial*, insofar as secularism is to be overcome for being “an Eurocentric and metropolitan ideology typical of the colonialist expansion and fruit of the theoretical conception of the Enlightenment and liberalism.”<sup>32</sup> In this formulation, liberation philosophy

is prepared to contribute a specifically Latin American decolonial position to the “postsecular debate” regarding the shifting roles of religion and secularity in late modernity.<sup>33</sup>

More recently, Nelson Maldonado-Torres has similarly criticized the move in liberation philosophy to understand the affirmation of the Absolute as part of a praxis of liberation from domination. For Maldonado-Torres, this is a conflation between the “trans-ontological” (beyond Being) and the “sub-ontological” (below Being) realms that, in his view, results in the problematic a priori normative grounding of liberation philosophy.<sup>34</sup> While this is a point that I am unable to fully address in this essay, as it requires an exposition of analogy and revelation concerning transcendental and empirical alterities, it should be clear that the anti-fetishist methodology is *also* meant to avoid any such problematic collapses. The notion of fetishization is here utilized to understand the false absolutization of an entity. In this sense, the Absolute is what fully escapes our grasp, thereby avoiding false confluences in any historical praxis of liberation. Liberation philosophy does argue, however, that the Absolute is expressed, for instance, in the popular imaginary of the oppressed. And far from being the exclusive domain of theology, it also ought to be the subject of philosophical interest. This is why philosophy cannot avoid “the God of the mythical narrative of the Latin American popular imaginary.”<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have sought to illuminate the nature of liberation philosophy’s secular grounds. The secularity to which liberation philosophy ascribes is not an undialectical modality of *secularity as secularism*, which disavows religion as a source of criticality and liberatory potential. On the contrary, liberation philosophy cultivates a secularity that retrieves a prior semantic meaning of secularization—an atheism of the fetish. Dialectical in nature, this modality of secularity respects re-ligion as the critique of the fetish.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore attuned to the ways in which re-ligion can and must provide sources of criticality and liberation within changing contexts of domination. From the perspective of liberation philosophy, secularism, as the undialectical modality of secularity, proves to be not the solution to fetishization but another shape of the fetish that has absolutized itself into a new totality. Liberation philosophy endeavors to overcome such limiting secularity by leaving room for the Absolute as true infinite exteriority; as the excess that escapes the system and thus grounds an anti-systemic critique. The affirmation of this Absolute, as the regulative ideal of perfect justice, is the religious moment *par excellence*. There is, then, a religious element in all liberatory praxis. With this insight begins a postsecularist and decolonial liberation philosophy, especially a liberation philosophy of *religion*.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Enrique Dussel for his generous camaraderie and intellectual mentorship over the last few years. I extend my appreciation to Nelson Maldonado-Torres for guiding my studies on Dussel’s work and decolonial thinking, as well as for facilitating my first personal exchanges with Dussel. I thank Jeong Eun Annabel We for many discussions that have helped me sharpen my arguments, as well as for commenting on several drafts of this essay. I also thank

the audience and organizers of the 2019 Philosophies of Liberation Encuentro at Loyola Marymount University, where I first presented some of the ideas defended here and received valuable feedback, especially from Dussel himself. I thank Grant Silva for introducing me to Dussel's work a decade ago and for offering feedback on an earlier draft. Alix Genter also provided helpful feedback on a near final draft. Lastly, my sincere gratitude to the APA Committee on Hispanics for their confidence in the value of my work.

## NOTES

1. Enrique Dussel, *Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, y la filosofía de la liberación: con respuestas de Karl-Otto Apel y Paul Ricoeur* (Guadalajara, Mexico: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1993), 24. My translation of this passage is "Secularization was the false name of fetishism; and the atheism of the left was a first dialectical moment, whose second moment was the affirmation of the Absolute as liberation." In what follows, all Spanish to English translations are mine.
2. Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 174.
3. Enrique Dussel, *Pablo de Tarso en la filosofía política actual y otros ensayos* (Mexico City, Mexico: San Pablo, 2012).
4. Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, ed. and trans. Eduardo Mendieta (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996), 11.
5. Eduardo Mendieta, "Editor's Introduction," in *The Underside of Modernity*, xiii.
6. On the secularist obstacle to decolonization, see my "Secular Decolonial Woes" in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 35, no. 1 (2021): 71–92.
7. Juan Carlos Scannone, "La filosofía de la liberación: historia, características, vigencia actual," *Teología y Vida* L (2009): 60.
8. Alejandro Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014).
9. Scannone, "La filosofía de la liberación: historia, características, vigencia actual," 61.
10. Dussel, *Pablo de Tarso en la filosofía política actual y otros ensayos*, 11–14.
11. Dussel, *Hacia una Filosofía Política Crítica* (Bilbao, Spain: Editorial Desclée, 2001), 413; Enrique Dussel, *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism, and Liberation Theology*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 188.
12. Dussel, *Hacia una Filosofía Política Crítica*, 413.
13. Dussel, *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism, and Liberation Theology*, 191.
14. *Ibid.*, 190.
15. Dussel, *Filosofía ética latinoamericana V: Arqueológica latinoamericana: Una filosofía de la religión antifetichista* (Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Santo Tomás, 1980).
16. *Ibid.*, 34–35.
17. As an act that leaves no alternatives to truth, fetishization also explains why medieval theology is effectively incapable of affirming the autonomy of new forms of scientific rationality.
18. Dussel, *Filosofía ética latinoamericana V: Arqueológica latinoamericana: Una filosofía de la religión antifetichista*, 45, 35.
19. Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, 11.
20. Dussel, *Filosofía ética latinoamericana V: Arqueológica latinoamericana: Una filosofía de la religión antifetichista*, 59.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Dussel offers Hegel as an example of the divinization of secular modernity, where world history and the history of philosophy both culminate in "Spirit worshiping itself in and through [European] man." Dussel, *Filosofía ética latinoamericana V: Arqueológica*

*latinoamericana: Una filosofía de la religión antifetichista*, 44, my brackets.

24. Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, 12.
25. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 3: Karl Marx - March 1843-August 1844* (London, UK: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), 175.
26. Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, 12. In his *Las metáforas teológicas de Marx*, Dussel goes on to develop what I argue is a postsecular reading of Marx. I analyze the originality of this interpretation in a manuscript in progress.
27. Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, 12.
28. *Ibid.*, 11.
29. Dussel, *Filosofía de la Liberación* (Mexico City, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011), 159.
30. Dussel, *Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, y la filosofía de la liberación: con respuestas de Karl-Otto Apel y Paul Ricoeur*, 24; Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, 12, my emphasis.
31. Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*, 180, 85.
32. Dussel, *Hacia una Filosofía Política Crítica*, 409.
33. Justin Beaumont, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Postsecularity* (London, UK: Routledge, 2019); Philip Gorski et al., eds., *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012). I articulate this contribution in a book-length manuscript in progress.
34. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 182–83.
35. Dussel, *Pablo de Tarso en la filosofía política actual y otros ensayos*, 39, n. 75; Dussel, *Filosofía de la Liberación*, 167; Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Morkovsky (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985).
36. This formulation is not without its problems. I explore the potentially colonialist ramifications of such notion in a forthcoming essay.

## Radical Pluralism and the Hispanic Identity

Honorable Mention, 2020 APA Essay Prize in Latin American Thought

Mariana Gómez  
INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

## INTRODUCTION

In his writing, "Pragmatic Pluralism, Multiculturalism, and the New Hispanic," José Medina argues for a pragmatic reconstruction of the Hispanic identity given the vast ethnic diversity within Latin American countries.<sup>1</sup> As Hispanic cultural differences have come under suspicion and a post-ethnic American identity is often invoked, Medina urges that a reconstruction of Hispanic identity is needed now more than ever.<sup>2</sup> To adequately articulate the nature of the Hispanic identity, he suggests that a pragmatic account of *radical pluralism* can allow us to reconstruct an intrinsically pluralist identity that is singular through shared collective experiences. For Medina, radical pluralism offers the best

way to collectively elucidate Hispanics' experiences as it anticipates political unity and multiculturalism across Latin America.<sup>3</sup>

In this paper, I argue that Medina's account of pluralism is not adequate for describing Hispanic identity, as it problematically presupposes the existence of a collective experience common to every Latin American. Furthermore, I claim that Medina's reliance on an experience-based reconstruction of identity will reproduce oppressive tendencies already at the forefront of Latin American politics. By highlighting the incommensurable differences that exist within historically colonized countries, I conclude by gesturing at another approach that suspends the desire for a unified identity for the sake of liberation in Latin America.

### MEDINA'S ACCOUNT OF RADICAL PLURALISM

The aim of conceiving a singular radical pluralistic identity, according to Medina, is to unify Hispanics with a common history of colonial *oppression* and a common project of *liberation*.<sup>4</sup> But achieving this new pluralistic identity means reconstructing the old one. For that purpose, Medina begins building his account of radical pluralism by turning to a reconstructive model of identity inspired by Deweyan pragmatism, which he calls a *critical reconstruction of collective experiences* (hereafter, CRCE). This model (or rather, process) broadly consists of an examination of experience that allows individuals and groups to reconstruct a new identity with reconstructed accounts of experience. By taking this approach, Medina explains that experiential commonalities between individuals will become more explicit, and a reconstruction of a *group* identity will be possible.

Essentially, CRCE involves a twofold task of inquiry into conditions and consequences.<sup>5</sup> First, there is the *genealogical* task in which individuals critically inquire about their past. Here, one examines the conditions of her past experiences as they inform her present self-image. For instance, if marginalized individuals engage with this backward-looking inquiry, they may come to find internalized racist beliefs that have been historically cast upon their self-image, which they can now deconstruct. Second, there is the *projective* task whereby individuals engage with their future. Here, they explore new possibilities by creatively reworking their self-images for a new identity.<sup>6</sup>

On an individual level, CRCE specifically benefits individuals who are members of marginalized racial groups as they acquire a better self-understanding and a *creative agency* in recreating their new identity on their own terms. They gain significant self-empowerment as they can break free from an inner grip of prejudice.<sup>7</sup> Medina refers to this type of self-empowerment as a *spiritual emancipation*. On a collective level, if members of marginalized racial groups follow CRCE, the self-knowledge they acquire will help reveal their shared histories and futures. Once complete, Medina trusts that CRCE can function as the foundation for relationality amongst the radical diversity that confronts marginalized people both on an intracultural and intercultural level.

For instance, as commonalities between individuals emerge via CRCE, Medina explains that the facilitation of intracultural understanding and communication will arise. By sharing experiences of oppression and empowerment with one another, they can build an identity amongst their group *despite* their diversity. Once said ethnic group reaches the point in their development where they have engendered sufficient empowerment, they can then focus on improving relations with other groups. Medina's goal in advocating for CRCE is to reconstruct an ethnic identity on an intercultural level for all Latin Americans. In his terms, Hispanics are now in a position to reconstruct and collectively take on the identity of the *New Hispanic*.

To articulate how a reconstruction of identity is possible for the Hispanic community, Medina relies on the work of José Martí, a Cuban political thinker whose philosophical views provide the constructive elements of the pragmatist approach to ethnic identity.<sup>8</sup> In line with Medina's view, Martí believes that Latin Americans must undergo a cultural transformation that prompts them to re-examine their current identity. Furthermore, Martí argues that a genuine cultural transformation depends on Latin Americans' understanding, criticizing, and expressing themselves by reworking the self-images already available to them to create new ones.<sup>9</sup> In this way, it is apparent that Martí's approach to the cultural transformation of the Hispanic identity is similar to Medina's use of CRCE.

As Medina sees it, Martí's analysis of Latin America provides further support for the idea that Hispanics are ready to acknowledge their collective experiences. Thus, it is critical that Latin American countries first fulfill the genealogical task of inquiring and repairing their historical ignorance about their cultures. Upon taking on such an introspective task, Martí believes that Latin Americans will realize that they must critically acknowledge the *colonial mentality* they inherited regarding their Indigenous lineage. Also, Latin Americans will come to find that their current cultural and political agency is largely determined by imitations of Eurocentric models, ideas, values, etc. As such, Martí encourages Hispanics to strive for their spiritual emancipation to undo the colonialist self-hatred they have towards their current image by re-appreciating Indigenous customs and traditions on an intracultural level.

Once Latin American countries independently fulfill the genealogical task and gain an adequate appreciation for their Indigeneity, they can take on the projective task towards reconstructing a collective identity on an intercultural level. In addition to acknowledging their common history, which concerns the repression of Indigeneity, Martí's work foundationally describes the common future Hispanics must work towards. Put simply, what is most important is that Hispanics collectively attempt to move beyond the imitative tendencies that inform their identity. More specifically, they must interrogate the parts of their identity that rely on imitating the history, customs, and traditions of the United States.

All Latin Americans, both Martí and Medina agree, must work towards fighting a common oppressor. Because non-Latin America has played a significant role in constructing

many well-known racist misconceptions and inaccuracies about the Hispanic identity, Martí specifically cautions Hispanics to stop imitating American “truths” or values based on falsities. Martí uses the United States as the point of commonality between various Latin Americans because by critiquing the United States, they will develop more purposeful liberation projects. Most of all, they will understand that they must seek liberation under the New Hispanic identity. With a new identity that embraces radical pluralism, Medina states that Hispanics’ intercultural projective tasks will have to become politically creative.

To begin this political journey, Martí suggests that Hispanics should start by electing new political leaders who are willing to study Latin America’s diverse realities. Given the creative agency demanded by CRCE, Medina believes these politicians can properly recognize those realities via CRCE and thus be able to create original forms of government that emancipate Hispanics from colonial politics. While not yet fully knowing what these forms of government will look like, Martí emphasizes that Latin Americans must aim for their communities’ social and political emancipation from their countries’ oppressive conditions. The mark of this liberation, Martí concludes, will be the genuine transformation of the material conditions of the lives of members of oppressed groups.

Stated frankly, I regard Medina’s account of radical pluralism as a compelling theoretical apparatus, as it attempts to unify vast diversity with the aim of liberation for Latin America. Yet, I do not think his account is capable of reconstructing the Hispanic identity, as it relies on reconstructed experiences. I argue that Medina’s radical pluralism cannot historically account for a collective experience common to every Latin American and, therefore, cannot compose a singular intercultural Hispanic identity. Although Medina uses Martí’s discussion of Latin America to support his argument, I believe that Medina employs an oversimplified articulation of Latin American history, especially as it relates to identity.<sup>10</sup>

In what follows, I show that even attempting to conceive of a singular pluralistic identity compromises Latin American liberation. To support my argument, I first provide evidence that will help reveal the limitations of Medina’s approach to constructing the New Hispanic. In particular, I use an analysis of Mexican history recounted by Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla and cultural analyst María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo. With their work, I will demonstrate that the reconstruction of a single intercultural identity across Latin America via CRCE is not achievable for even one historically colonized country alone.

## **MEXICO: THE PROBLEM OF FICTITIOUS IDENTITIES**

In his book, “México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization,” Bonfil Batalla argues that Mexico has historically established a national narrative under a fictitious identity and an incorrect reality.<sup>11</sup> Mexicans, he explains, tend to understand Mexico as a perfectly unified civilization of both Mesoamerican and Spanish culture without acknowledging that they each share these cultures to a different degree.

According to Saldaña-Portillo, a reason Mexicans have come to understand their country and themselves in this way is largely a result of how Spanish colonists contributed to the geographical planning of Mexico; for Mexico’s geography paradoxically excludes and includes the existence of Indigenous communities and experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Spanish colonists, Saldaña-Portillo argues, created racial geographies that plotted Indigenous people in particular landscapes in the service of depleting those communities and forming new communities of identity.<sup>13</sup> While the Spanish confined Indigenous people in certain landscapes (e.g., ejidos), they legislatively established the land as a representational space of democratized *mestizaje*. In other words, while Mesoamericans were geographically separated from the Spanish, the Mexican government symbolically rendered those communities as equally “Mexican.” As a consequence of the Spanish’s strategic geographical-political planning, Mexicans began to render any semblance of their Indigenous lineage as entirely historical. As Bonfil Batalla sees it, many communities today “are Indian without knowing they are Indian.”<sup>14</sup>

What both Bonfil Batalla and Saldaña-Portillo’s work implies is that Spanish colonialism not only created long-lasting effects on the Mexican identity but also on Mexicans’ *understanding* of experience. Under a fictitiously unified “Mexican” identity, those of mostly Mesoamerican origin cannot politically account for their experiences of oppression as Indigenous people. So, even as they suffer the worst of the economic, political, and social consequences of the hierarchal racial categories that exist in Mexico, Indigenous experiences seemingly do not exist. Conversely, those of mostly Spanish origin have reaped not only various benefits of colonialism but also enforce neocolonial practices as they hold positions of power in the Mexican government. And the Western political ideologies (e.g., capitalism) that inform these practices inherently disallow any Indigenous values to work against the country’s regime. Inequality thrives in Mexico as long as experiential differences are ignored.

If the historical analysis of Mexico’s fictitious identity can teach us anything, it is that when a fictitiously unified ethnic identity exists, noting the existence of collective experiences will face unassailable difficulties. Even if Mexicans decided to undertake the challenge of identifying as a New Hispanic via CRCE, as they begin at the intracultural level, I ask this: How exactly would they go about reconstructing a *New Mexican* when the *Old* (current) Mexican is a fictitious identity with no real bearing on similar experiences? I claim that it is not possible to reconstruct an already misconstrued identity without political disunity. As I now turn to my objections, I hope to prove that even if Hispanics manage to follow the logic of CRCE all the way through, the Hispanic identity will only face further misunderstandings of experience.

## **OBJECTIONS TO MEDINA**

First, supposing it were possible for Hispanics to follow Medina’s articulation of CRCE, I argue that the process would result in a Hispanic community that does not properly recognize each group’s oppressors.



If all Hispanics individually complete the genealogical task of CRCE and gain self-empowerment, without emphasizing racial or cultural differences, they would gain disproportionate amounts of self-empowerment. Hispanics who have benefited from colonialism would likely gain an unnecessary level of self-empowerment when, in reality, more Indigenous individuals require it on a higher level. Additionally, the genealogical task for many might facilitate motives for cultural appropriation as not all Latin Americans share an Indigenous lineage. If they genuinely lack a colonial mentality, those of more colonial heritage must realize that they have no given right to practice Indigenous customs. As many have benefited from colonialism, we must be careful in presupposing that all Hispanics share the same genealogy.

Second, if Hispanics complete CRCE, upon trying to find commonalities with one another, Indigenous and white Hispanics will rediscover their inherently conflicting values that cannot be fixed by electing new political leaders. As Medina fails to address the different values between Western and Indigenous politics, I claim that CRCE cannot guarantee the political unity Medina aims for. In his work, Medina presupposes the existence of some type of equality in Hispanics' historical experience, which leads him to expect that differing values in Latin America are commensurable. However, since Westernized Hispanics have failed to recognize Indigenous experiences and values for so long, CRCE may instead motivate them to *stop* seeking political unity, as they might consider implementing their values in politics. As other critics of pluralism have pointed out, pluralism is "not a pragmatically viable response to value conflict," especially with historical asymmetric power dynamics.<sup>15</sup> To me, trying to find collective experiences will not allow Indigenous groups to overlook value conflicts as they have had extensive experiential differences from white groups. CRCE simply cannot promise politically feasible results.

Medina might argue, however, that the genealogical task of CRCE should anticipate these abovementioned issues, as it is supposed to help one evaluate how her past conditions have informed her current living conditions. In fact, Medina might say that I have pointed out something his account already foresees, as he explicitly mentions throughout his paper that the oppression within Latin American communities is tied to the colonial mentality there. With CRCE, Hispanics will actually recognize the historical damages of colonialism, and they will now have the chance to work together to mend those damages in their projective task.

In response, I reassert that correctly enacting the genealogical task will not result in this outcome. That is, if Hispanics genuinely inquire about their past, they will not find a collective experience amongst themselves, as their inequalities will become more explicit, showcasing the various formulations of their political, social, and economic experiences. Once they recognize experiential differences, it will become quite apparent that part of why they continue to oppress each other might have little to do with the inheritance of a colonial mentality, and more to do with the fact that those of more Indigenous lineage

are different people altogether. Hispanics will have to consider whether what they actually inherited is a fictitious national identity that CRCE cannot reconcile. At that point, if some Hispanics begin to highlight the way a fictitious identity obscured their experiential differences, why would they not consider firstly reconstructing a new identity that avoids radically pluralistic unity?

With such a question on the table, I argue that it will be difficult for Hispanics to have a common projective task that is solely based on being critical towards the United States. As I see it, for Medina to only use Martí's work to prescribe Latin America's projective task is a questionable gesture. Medina writes as if they can all blame one settler-colonial nation-state for their racist internalizations. The United States has undoubtedly cast negative images on the Hispanic identity. Yet, while it seems that Latin American countries' problems stem from merely imitating the United States' political values, I claim that they are also just imitating themselves. Keeping Mexican history in mind, I insist that we must seriously entertain the idea that overcoming a colonial mentality is not enough, as the United States and Latin America have separate colonial legacies to undo. We have to see Latin American countries for what they are—part colonizer or, in more accurate terms, part settler.

#### BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

In summary, I have argued that Medina's radical pluralism is not achievable for the Hispanic community, as members do not have a collective experience that binds them into a singular identity. In other words, I maintain that Medina misses a critical fact about Latin American identities—there are incommensurable differences that Latin Americans have historically never been able to accommodate under a real identity precisely *because they lack collective experiences*. To support my argument, I used Mexico's history vis-à-vis identity as a driving example of the differences other Latin American countries may have. I also explicated the problematic implications of following Medina's endorsement of CRCE and the political difficulties his account as a whole may face.

To conclude, I want to mention some of the implications of my argument. While my criticisms of Medina rely on the claim that there is no collective experience amongst all Latin Americans, I believe there is another discussion to be had about the plausible benefits of acknowledging experiential differences. For one, explicitly acknowledging those differences will allow us to better address Latin America's political problems, as the presupposition of collective experiences has been a direct cause of vast inequality within and across Latin American countries.

I believe experiential differences explain why it is so pragmatically challenging to construct the Hispanic identity under a pluralist paradigm, and it is preventing us from seeing the colonialist political values upheld currently. But once we emphasize experiential differences, we can understand the more significant task at hand. That is, by suspending the search for a common identity, Hispanics can concentrate on a more pragmatic way to liberate Indigenous communities in Latin America. If Martí is correct in saying that liberation is the genuine transformation of the

material conditions of the lives of members of oppressed groups, then perhaps we must first put our attention there, starting with the decolonization of Indigenous land.

#### NOTES

1. José Medina, "Pragmatic Pluralism, Multiculturalism, and the New Hispanic," *Pragmatism in the Americas*, ed. Gregory Fernando Pappas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 199.
2. Ibid.
3. While there are debates about calling someone from Latin America a "Hispanic" instead of "Latino/a," because the term is legible and Medina makes no distinction between the terms in his essay, I also continue to use the term "Hispanic" in what remains of this paper. Historical context on this terminology can be found in Francisco Hernández Vázquez and Rodolfo D. Torres, *Latino/a Thought: Culture, Politics, and Society* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
4. Medina, "Pragmatic Pluralism, Multiculturalism, and the New Hispanic," 222.
5. Ibid., 201.
6. A clear example of the completion of these tasks is that of several Mexican-Americans in the United States who have taken on a more politically informed self-image known as Chicanos/as.
7. Medina, "Pragmatic Pluralism, Multiculturalism, and the New Hispanic," 204.
8. Ibid., 218.
9. Ibid.
10. One of Medina's historical oversimplifications I do not get to discuss in this paper is Latin Americans who do not have Indigenous (Indian) lineage, but African lineage. The experiences of the Afro-Latinx community, much like in Latin American countries, are unacknowledged in his discussion.
11. Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization Vol. 1.* (Grijalbo 1990), 65-67.
12. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (Duke University Press, 2016).
13. Ibid., 9, 18.
14. Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo*, 46, 65.
15. Robert B. Talisse & Scott F. Aikin, "Why Pragmatists Cannot Be Pluralist," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, no. 1 (2005): 109.

## *Shifting the Geography of Revolution: Mestizo Nationalism, Pan-Arab Independence, and Feminist Philosophy through the Writings of Vera Yamuni Tabush*

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The writings of Vera Yamuni Tabush (1917–2003) play a significant yet unorthodox role in twentieth-century Mexican philosophy. Yamuni, Costa Rican by birth and of Lebanese parentage, earned her doctorate in 1951 under the direction of the exiled Spanish philosopher José Gaos at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). There, she worked alongside a group of existentialist thinkers during the 1940s and '50s known as

*El Grupo Hiperión* ("The Hyperion Group"), a generation of philosophers whose writings are distinguished by their attention to themes of universalism/particularism, alienation, and historicism within the context of Mexican intellectual history. Yamuni's publications, spanning from the 1930s to the 1990s, also address questions within ontology, existentialism, and philosophy of history.<sup>1</sup> However, her work is distinct from that of other *hiperiones* in that she also engaged carefully with issues in Arabic philosophy, Islamic thought, and feminism.<sup>2</sup> As such, Yamuni's work serves as an important contribution into the creative philosophical work conducted by women during this period of Mexican philosophical history. While a number of commentators have explored the writings of Yamuni's contemporary, Rosario Castellanos, who also studied at UNAM during this period, Yamuni's work has not yet been as carefully examined within Anglophone discourses of Mexican philosophy. I offer here a brief opening into the theoretical significance of her work, focusing specifically on how her critical contributions intervened in philosophical debates among *El Grupo Hiperión*.

While Yamuni's work commands more time and attention than I can provide here, in this paper, I situate Yamuni's corpus and her philosophical perspective as a Lebanese migrant in Mexico within the context of the nation's mid-century philosophical discourse of *lo mexicano*. My central claim is that Yamuni's critiques of (1) European colonial interests in the Levant, (2) her defense of Palestinian independence, and (3) her interest in developing a critical voice among women within the history of philosophy provide important points of tension against the broader discourse of *lo mexicano* circulating during this period. To elaborate these claims, first, I briefly describe the discourse of *lo mexicano* as it existed during the 1940s and '50s in Mexico to highlight some of the context for her work. Second, I situate Arab migration to Mexico to contextualize her standpoint within a broader national context during this period. Notably, I outline migration from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the regions that are now known as Lebanon and Syria to offer a sketch of the context for Lebanese migrations in Mexico during Yamuni's early years at UNAM. Lastly, I situate Yamuni's writings on European imperialism, Arab independence movements, and feminism within these contexts. The goal is thereby to demonstrate how her work can be read as bearing important theoretical and political relevance within the philosophical milieu of post-revolutionary Mexican philosophy. Notably, building on Lewis Gordon's decolonial formulation of "shifting the geography of reason," I propose Yamuni's life and work as shifting the terms of Mexican philosophy away from the mestizo nationalism of post-revolutionary Mexico, and towards a transmodern geography of revolutionary movements including those of the Arab world.<sup>3</sup>

### **I. EL GRUPO HIPERIÓN AND THE DISCOURSE OF LO MEXICANO**

Within the context of Mexican philosophy, existential questions regarding the significance and meaning of identity, including national and cultural identities, became prominent during the post-revolutionary period beginning roughly around 1909. The group known as *el Ateneo de la*

*Juventud* (the Athenaeum of the Youth) included significant theorists such as José Vasconcelos, Antonio Caso, Alfonso Reyes, and Pedro Henríquez Ureña. They sought, among other efforts, to define themselves against the philosophical and political doctrines that existed during the thirty-year reign of Porfirio Díaz, the president ousted during the revolution. Within this context, a number of philosophers of the *Ateneo* sought to redefine systems of aesthetics, metaphysics, and ethics in order to address the prevailing reliance on scientific doctrines that had marked the industrial and economic booms, as well as the philosophical traditions of the previous century. Guillermo Hurtado, a current historian of Mexican philosophy, writes that Antonio Caso, a member of the *Ateneo*, was the first philosopher in Mexico to explore themes regarding the particularity of the Mexican existential situation.<sup>4</sup> Notably, Caso's writings made two significant contributions to the study of Mexican identity. He claimed that Mexican philosophers needed new tools to explore their circumstances following the revolution, and that the previous era's emphasis on Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill was not fit for the conflicting political, historical, and cultural circumstances of Mexico. Specifically, the Mexican revolution's rejection of purely scientific and economic models for interpreting social norms required philosophical methodologies in line with the *Ateneo*'s interests in aesthetics, moral philosophy, and politics. Caso chose, then, to utilize vitalist and personalist views of the imagination and spontaneity to theorize the circumstances of Mexico's placement in the context of a broader intellectual world history. Several of Caso's prominent influences were Henri Bergson, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, and Arthur Schopenhauer. Such philosophical threads of research were also present among the writings of Caso's colleagues, including Vasconcelos and Henríquez Ureña. The general view was that an emphasis on duration, aesthetic intuition, and moral personhood would prevent the reduction of normativity to scientific determinism, the latter view characterizing much of the philosophical doctrine under Porfirio Díaz.

Following Caso, one of his students, Samuel Ramos, extended this trajectory of analysis and completed, in 1934, an extended study of Mexican identity titled *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*. Ramos's work was an existential treatise of the conditions of Mexican being and the relationship between this form of being and that of other geopolitical forms of existence. Ramos argued that *lo mexicano*—"the Mexican"—was characterized by an inferiority complex due to his constant comparison to Europeans. Struggling to find identity within both European and indigenous cultures, "the Mexican," in this sense, considers himself false, fraudulent, and without value. Ramos's proposal was to resituate the locus of value from within this fraught situation, and accept that there is no prior model for Mexican existence. This turn toward the situation and context of Mexican thought, then, eventually under the guidance of Spanish exile José Gaos, would lead to the generation of philosophers known as *el Grupo Hiperión*.

Gaos's own philosophical work was deeply influenced by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset. Hurtado writes of Ortega: "For Ortega, the error of the philosophy

has been to take man as a definable entity outside of his historical, social, political, moral, etc. circumstance. The man does not exist, there are men in specific circumstances, beings in the world and in time."<sup>5</sup> The following generation of philosophers, *los hiperiones*, took up this call by both Ramos and Gaos to examine the concrete circumstances that made up the meaning of *mexicanidad* [Mexicanness] and, accordingly, they published a significant series of articles and books between 1948 and 1952. These efforts often coalesced around the distinct naming of "lo mexicano"—the typified character of Mexicanness, and a number of conceptions of the moral, religious, and social features that characterize Mexican being. For example, Emilio Uranga writes in 1952 *Análisis del ser del mexicano* [Analysis of Mexican Being] that the central existential feature of *mexicanidad* is the realization "of the radical contingency of being," of humankind's accidentality and lack of necessity and purpose.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, as Carlos Alberto Sánchez has noted in his recent book on *el Grupo Hiperión*, the insufficiency or insubstantiality felt by Mexicans in comparison to Europeans marks their prescient insight into the accidentality and lack of purpose inherent in being itself.<sup>7</sup>

However, as one might expect, criticisms of this discourse of *lo mexicano* abound, including feminist work and contemporary philosophical scholarship that marks the essentialism, androcentrism, romanticized and primitivizing *indigenismo*, and the selective readings of history that appear throughout many of the writings by philosophers of this period.<sup>8</sup> However, within the work of Yamuni, I propose that we find a contemporary interlocutor of *los hiperiones*, who offers a significant albeit indirect critique of their articulation of *lo mexicano*. Notably, she too was a student of Gaos, and completed her dissertation in 1951, a work titled *Conceptos e imágenes en pensadores de lengua española*. The project was a sustained study of the meaning of "thought" within Spanish-language philosophical traditions, including extensive analyses of theorists such as Ortega y Gasset, Miguel de Unamuno, José Enrique Rodó, José Martí, and José Vasconcelos. While her dissertation is worthy of further analysis than I have space for here, I will instead focus, in the final section of this article, on Yamuni's writings before and after the 1940s and '50s, to develop the claim that these works demonstrate a significant series of reasons to critique the discourse of *lo mexicano* in terms of its framing of the cultural, racial, and gender politics of Mexico. To better understand her critique, however, it will be helpful to briefly offer some biographical details of her life and some of the historical circumstances of the emerging Mexican nationalism in which her work was situated.

## II. MASHREQI MIGRATION TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO<sup>9</sup>

One important historical trajectory to trace for Yamuni's life and work would be to examine the waves of Mashreqi migration to Costa Rica and Mexico during the nineteenth century. We know, for example, that Yamuni's father was born in 1881 in Lebanon. His decision to migrate, as we can glean from birth records and analyses of Lebanese migration in the nineteenth century, was likely due to the

conflict between the Druze and Christian Maronites in what eventually became Lebanon (Bejos Yamuni, Vera Yamuni's father, was also a Maronite).<sup>10</sup> A civil war was being waged during the 1860s in what is today Lebanon between the Druze and the Maronites, which also implicated the French (supporting the Christian Maronites) and British (supporting the Druze) interests in collapsing or controlling the Ottoman empire.<sup>11</sup> Between 1860 and 1900, some 120,000 people migrated from the region to the US, Australia, and Brazil. Between 1900 and 1914, 210,000 more people migrated as well.<sup>12</sup> Some of these emigres who left Lebanon also ended up remaining in Costa Rica, which is where Yamuni was born and lived until her late twenties.

For our purposes, this migration history bears relevance for the presence and cultural prominence of Arab migrants in Central America and Mexico. In particular, the relevance of Arab migration in Mexican culture and political discourses remains a contested issue, and, Yamuni's writings, as I hope to show below, will present some of the philosophically relevant issues regarding the nationalist discourses of *lo mexicano*. More generally, Mashreqi migration to Mexico boomed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and as Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp describes, Lebanese Mexicans, in particular, came to establish an elite middle-class in the following decades of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> However, as Alfaro-Velcamp also argues,

From President Porfirio Díaz (1886–1911) to post-revolutionary President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940), Mexican policy makers aimed to bring Mexico out of underdevelopment by reclaiming “Mexico for Mexicans.” This effort, however, has led to an ambivalent treatment of foreigners. Immigrants, mostly Europeans, who were perceived to potentially “better” the nation with skills and capital—and in some cases fair skin—were welcomed by Mexican elites and policy makers. Meanwhile, the Mexican populace often felt exploited by these foreigners. Other immigrants such as the Chinese, Japanese, and Middle Easterners did not meet the criteria of “bettering” Mexico, yet they provided necessary services to the Mexican people. Some even prospered from direct dealings with the poor. These immigrants, often storekeepers or peddlers, improved the lives of campesinos and rancheros with commercial options such as purchasing items outside the stores of hacendados, yet many Mexicans still subscribed to anti-foreign attitudes.<sup>14</sup>

Referring to the discourse of *lo mexicano*, Alfaro-Velcamp also describes the tensions that many Mashreqi migrants experienced with respect to the rise of mestizo nationalism in the twentieth century. In this vein, the strong nationalist sentiment that attempted to unify and homogenize diverse populations across Mexico often erased existing Indigenous communities, as well as the significant contributions of immigrant populations throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

For example, in the post-revolutionary period, the era of the Ateneo de la Juventud and el Grupo Hiperión, many

Mashreqi immigrants in Mexico were portrayed as “carrying disease and increasing poverty and criminality” in the country.<sup>15</sup> Also, because the US Disease Act of 1891 targeted the exclusion of Middle Eastern and Asian migrants due to the racially motivated belief that they were more likely to carry contagious diseases, this led to the emergence of a prominent set of smuggling networks across Mexico into the United States. Anti-Arab sentiments continued throughout the 1920s and '30s through accusations by Mexicans that Arabs were cheats, liars, and swindlers in their business affairs.<sup>16</sup>

Also during this period, however, a number of Lebanese migrants began developing ethnic enclaves within Mexico. Camila Pastor de Maria y Campos attributes some of the emergence of these Lebanese enclaves and the accompanying forms of identification as Lebanese to efforts of the French during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s.<sup>17</sup> Following World War I and the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire to the French and British, the regions that would later become known as the independent states of Syria and Lebanon were put under French rule from 1922 to 1943. Pastor writes that the French government, while occupying Lebanon and Syria, retained a vested interest in Lebanese and Syrian migrants abroad. Notably, records from French administrators who sought to classify these “Syro-Lebanese colonies” in Mexico noted some 20,000 migrants in the country. Moreover, in order to shore up French imperial and economic interests in both the Levant and in Mexico, French administrators sought to demarcate specific Mashreqi populations within Mexico. Pastor traces one French administrator, M. Charpentier, who was responsible for writing the census report on Syro-Lebanese migrants in Mexico. Charpentier used a class-based metric to distinguish between “an urban bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie of small shop owners and established merchants, [on the one hand, and on the other] a nebulous mass of [Mashreqi peddlers, merchants, and workers] who subvert the French colonial project and the concerted efforts of the migrant elite to collaborate with it by taking little interest in their politics.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, she writes:

The visibility of poverty evoked orientalization and racialization. Those migrant populations that could successfully present themselves as European, and therefore white rather than Semitic, had more probabilities of social ascent. This French class–civilizational distinction, echoed by the migrant elite, contributed to legitimizing the differential relationships established by the mandate authorities with the early migrant elite and the peddling majority. It also justified, and in fact called for, the migrant elite's institutional leadership and cultural and economic mediation.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, another axis of demarcation impacted Mashreqi migrants in Mexico during this period as well. Namely, as Pastor writes: “The other axis sorts migrants according to their proximity to France as expressed through allegiance to the mandate project.”<sup>20</sup> Whether or not the migrants supported French occupation would determine how they were viewed as upholding the modernization and betterment of the nation-state.

It was thus within this context that Yamuni would travel to Mexico in the 1940s to begin her studies at UNAM in Mexico City. During the time, the planning of Mexico's first Centro Libanés (Lebanese Center) was being formed in the city, and the wealth from textile industries that had been booming during and after the second world war also fueled the institutional developments of an elite class of Mexican Lebanese citizens. As such, I hope to situate Yamuni's work within this contested and vibrant series of historical, political, and philosophical contexts in Mexico City.

### III. YAMUNI'S WORK IN CONTEXT

Importantly, Yamuni is cited among Mexican philosophers as the earliest feminist philosopher in Mexico. In this regard, Graciela Hierro writes in a 1998 interview: "They always say that it was I who brought feminism to philosophy, but I would say that it is Vera Yamuni who brought feminism to philosophy in Mexico" (Prada Ortiz 2016). Before moving to Mexico, she was publishing on feminist themes as early as 1944 in the Costa Rican journal *Repertorio Americano*. Regarding Yamuni's encounters with sexism while at UNAM (1945–1955), she notes that she was encouraged by Gaos to pursue a systematic study of the positive contributions of Hispanophone philosophy in her thesis. However, she also writes of Gaos's negative views regarding women. Namely, she compares Gaos with another mentor with whom she studied in Costa Rica, Joaquín García Monge. She states that García's ideas about women were much better than Gaos's and that unlike Gaos, her previous mentor's ideas were "without any prejudice."<sup>21</sup> She writes, in 1998, "My discussions and struggles with Gaos about the topic of feminism were many and later he changed his position."<sup>22</sup> Gaos's writings support this as well, in 1982 he states that his "experience as a professor" of women at UNAM led him "to the exact opposite ideas than those of the tradition," which were that women are intellectually inferior to men.<sup>23</sup> Notably, Gaos's turn and the influence of Yamuni on him point to the neglect and ignorance of a number of men during the 1940s and '50s at UNAM regarding women's contributions to philosophy.

However, after finishing her studies at UNAM and teaching for several years (1955), Yamuni traveled to Paris to study French and Arabic, and from there she traveled to Algeria and Lebanon to enrich her studies as well. Throughout the 1960s, she wrote a number of essays outlining the philosophical relationship between Arabic and Spanish philosophy, and studying specific figures in Arab philosophy, including publishing on Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century philosopher and historiographer, and translating the work of Avicenna into Spanish in 1965. Additionally, she wrote in the late '60s and early '70s about the roots of the Israeli-Palestine conflict and published works in marked defense of Palestinian independence during that period as well. As Grace Prada Ortíz notes of Yamuni's work, as a scholar in Arab Studies, she sought to explain the worldviews and varied beliefs of Arab peoples, and the forms of European domination in the Middle East that led to the need for pan-Arab solidarity movements.<sup>24</sup>

For example, in a review written in 1961, shortly after her studies and travels to the Middle East, she offers a direct critique of a French author's historical account of the

Middle East. She writes that the book, *Destin du Proche-Orient* by Pierre Rondot, "is not a book for Arab nationalists" and that despite the book's treatment of themes regarding the current politics of the Middle East, the book actually "demonstrates the nationality and French patriotism of the author."<sup>25</sup> She critiques Rondot for overlooking the role of the French in "establishing colonies or 'mandates'" in the Middle East through the Sykes-Picot Treaty. Moreover, she faults his lack of attention to the manner in which the British deceived Sharif Hussein of Mecca and exploited Arab participation against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Rondot also leaves out, she notes, the scramble for the territories of the Middle East that transpired through the Sykes-Picot treaty.<sup>26</sup>

From this short analysis, and from her other writings outlining struggles for independence in Arab countries, we do not find an aspirational attitude toward the civilizing mission of the French or other European powers. Notably, in a piece titled "Arab Countries in their Struggle for Independence" (1971), Yamuni outlines European occupation throughout the Middle East, beginning with the French campaign in Egypt in 1798. Additionally, she writes of Zionism in the twentieth century comparing it to the colonization of Africa: "[Since] the 19th century, Europe, without any problems of conscience, conquered and distributed Africa. Zionism was influenced by such an attitude."<sup>27</sup> Citing a work by a Zionist of the late nineteenth century, Theodor Herzl, Yamuni proceeds to analyze the connections between European imperialism and the establishment of the State of Israel.

We can glean that Yamuni's writings do not appear to fit comfortably within the frameworks of *lo mexicano* or the Lebanese Mexican elite class emerging during the twentieth century. More concretely, her work rejects the nationalist framings of homogenization, and the mythologizing of ancient origins that is present in forms of both *indigenismo* and orientalism that were prominent during post-revolutionary Mexican philosophy.<sup>28</sup> In these veins, her work demonstrates a relevant distance from the aspirational whiteness and class ascension that characterize some social practices within the context of mid-twentieth-century Mexico.

Returning to Gordon's articulation of "shifting the geography of reason," within which he writes: "Shifting the geography of reason means, as we take seriously the South-South dialogue, that the work to be done becomes one that raises of the question of whose future we face."<sup>29</sup> In this, Gordon's call is to consider which struggles and which calls for liberation to uphold through our work. Thus, to interpret Vera Yamuni's life and writings, a contextualist analysis suggests that we can perhaps best understand her work through what Enrique Dussel has called "transmodernity." Linda Martín Alcoff describes Dussel's conception of transmodernity as such:

The idea of the transmodern is . . . designed in part to retell the story of Europe itself with an incorporation of the role of its Other in its formation, surely a more accurate and more comprehensively coherent account. But it is also to retell the story of world history without a centered formation

either in Europe or anywhere; no one becomes the permanent center or persistent periphery, which would result if European modernity were taken to be the uncaused cause. In this way, Dussel presents the idea of the transmodern as one that has both inclusivity and solidarity: it is more inclusive of multiple modernities without signifying these under the sign of the same, and it offers solidarity in place of hierarchy, a solidarity even extended to European modernity.<sup>30</sup>

Accordingly, examining the relationships between Lebanon, Costa Rica, Mexico, and European empire through the lens of Yamuni's life and writings offers philosophical trajectories beyond both the more common Eurocentric universalizing narratives, and beyond the unifying and homogenizing appeal of mestizo nationalism. In this thread, Yamuni's feminist writings on women in Arabic literature, including Scheherazade, the narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, demonstrate Yamuni's own commitment to "multiple modernities" and historical trajectories that have shaped her own political and cultural feminist location.<sup>31</sup> For example, Yamuni positions Scheherazade as emblematic of the complexities of Muslim women's control and power over speech. This emphasis on women's narrative presence within Arab intellectual history and literature, and her defense of pan-Arab independence from European colonial rule, offers a transmodern approach that displaces any presumed unified voice consciousness of women within the context of twentieth-century Mexican philosophy. As such, her approach stands in contrast to the figurations of *lo mexicano* that were circulating among her contemporaries throughout the mid-century. We can thereby consider her work as offering a transmodern framing of philosophy and feminism, which although they include European authors such as the British author Virginia Woolf, the Greek poet Sappho, and the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, did not merely erase or displace questions of Arab literary and philosophical contribution.<sup>32</sup> For these reasons and her philosophical commitments to multiple paradigms of intellectual value and struggle, Yamuni's life and work offer an important approach within twentieth-century Mexican philosophy. She is thus someone whose life and writings, I hope, will be further studied and appreciated within future scholarship in this field.

#### NOTES

1. Yamuni also directed the first course in mathematical logic at UNAM in 1953. Gabriel Vargas, "Cronología de la filosofía mexicana del Siglo XX." In *Esbozo histórico de la filosofía en México (Siglo XX) y otros ensayos* (Monterrey: CONARTE / Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2005).
2. Grace Prada Ortiz, *El pensamiento filosófico desde las mujeres: Matilde Carranza, Vera Yamuni y Ana Alfaro* (Costa Rica: EUNA, 2013), 83.
3. Lewis R. Gordon, "Shifting the Geography of Reason in an Age of Disciplinary Decadence," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 2 (2011): 95–103.
4. Guillermo Hurtado, "Dos mitos de la mexicanidad," *Dianoia* 40, no. 40 (1994): 265.
5. *Ibid.*, 267.

6. Carlos Alberto Sánchez, *Contingency and Commitment: Mexican Existentialism and the Place of Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2016), 124-25.
7. *Ibid.*
8. See, for example, Rubí de María Gómez Campos, *El Sentido de Sí: un ensayo sobre el feminismo y la filosofía de la cultura en México* (Mexico D.F: Siglo XXI, 2004), and Hurtado, "Dos mitos de la mexicanidad."
9. The term "Mashreqi" refers to the geopolitical spaces between the Mediterranean Sea and Iran.
10. For more on Bejos Yamuni, see Ricardo Martínez Esquivel, "Inmigrantes libaneses en Costa Rica y sus participaciones en la masonería del país (primera mitad del siglo XX)," in *200 años de Iberoamérica (1810–2010): Congreso Internacional : Actas del XIV Encuentro de Latinoamericanistas Españoles, Santiago de Compostela, 15–18 de septiembre de 2010*, ed. Eduardo Rey Tristán and Patricia Calvo González (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2010), 268–80.
11. Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
12. Martínez Esquivel, "Inmigrantes libaneses en Costa Rica," 271.
13. In fact, the foremost billionaire of Mexico, Carlos Slim Helú, a civil engineer and founder of a Mexican telecommunications company, is now the seventh richest person in the world, and is of Lebanese parentage.
14. Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So far from Allah, so Close to Mexico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 15.
15. *Ibid.*, 20.
16. Also during this period (1937), a number of Syrian and Lebanese families received threatening letters from the Ku Klux Klan stating that they would come to Coahuila from Texas and harm them. The content of these letters were so grave that they eventually led to the then-president Cárdenas writing a letter to those representatives of the Syrian and Lebanese communities in Coahuila that the governor of the state would protect them. Accordingly to Alfaro-Velcamp, these letters raise questions about how Texas-based Ku Klux Klan members knew of the small communities of Middle Eastern migrants in Mexico, and perhaps whether disgruntled residents of Mexico may have communicated with the Klan during this period (*ibid.*, 114-15).
17. Camila Pastor de María y Campos, "Inscribing Difference: Maronites, Jews and Arabs in Mexican Public Culture and French Imperial Practice," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 6, no. 2 (2011): 169–87.
18. *Ibid.*, 174.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Grace Prada Ortiz, "Vera Yamuni Tabush (1917–2003)," *Enciclopedia Electrónica de la filosofía mexicana* (Iztapalapa: Centro de Documentación en Filosofía Latinoamericana Ibérica a la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Iztapalapa), 5.
22. Prada Ortiz, "Vera Yamuni Tabush (1917–2003)," 8.
23. José Gaos, *Obras Completas: Confesiones profesionales. Aforística*. Prologue by Vera Yamuni Tabush and ed. Fernando Salmerón (México City: University Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982), 92.
24. Prada Ortiz, "Vera Yamuni Tabush (1917–2003), 6-7.
25. Vera Yamuni, "Destino del Cercano Oriente," *Foro Internacional* 3, no. 3 (1961): 483.
26. *Ibid.*, 483.
27. Vera Yamuni, "Los países árabes en su lucha por la independencia," *Anuario, Centro de Estudios Orientales* 3 (1971): 161.
28. For more on Mexican Orientalism, see Laura Torres-Rodríguez, "Orientalizing Mexico: Estudios indostánicos and the Place of India in José Vasconcelos La Raza Cósmica," *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 68, no. 1 (2015): 77–91; Andrea J. Pitts, "Occidentalism

and Orientalism in the Writings of Antonio Caso," in *Comparative Studies in Asian and Latin American Philosophies: Cross-cultural Theories and Methodologies*, ed. Stephanie Rivera Berruz and Leah Kalmanson, 13–32 (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2018).

29. Gordon, "Shifting the Geography of Reason," 100.
30. Linda Martín Alcoff, "Enrique Dussel's Transmodernism," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 3 (2012): 63.
31. Vera Yamuni Tabush, "El mundo de las mil y una noches," *Anuario de Filosofía* 1 (1961).
32. See, for example, Yamuni's essays such as "Reflexiones sobre Virginia Woolf" (1944), "Safo, mi guía de siempre" (1944), "El mundo de las mil y una noches" (1961), "La mujer en el pensamiento filosófico y literario" (1966), and "El feminismo y el neofeminismo de Simone de Beauvoir" (1993).

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## Gloria Anzaldúa, Hybrid History, and American Philosophy

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The best history, one might think, is the version that most closely matches what actually happened. What actually happened, however, is expressed in a story. Apart from that, it becomes difficult to imagine why what actually happened would matter. To read a book by understanding each individual word, but in a random order, is to know the contents of the book, perhaps, but it is not to understand the book. What's more, to read a book properly, and then provide a detailed account of what happened in the book, and nothing more, is not to have really understood the book.

This interest in history as what actually happened, I argue, is in question now, particularly in the context of the contemporary United States. I would like to present an unorthodox view here, namely, that what has been recently derided as an *alternative truth age* represents, for better or worse, a more authentic expression of the multicultural American culture than that which any attempt at a what-actually-happened history has provided. In a multicultural, there are multiple histories that can be either synthesized or just admitted as incompatible. Either way, history has to be conceived differently, evaluated differently, and even imagined anew. For better or worse, the United States is at a breaking point, conceptually if not also politically, and attempts to hold it together with an overarching story are not guaranteed to work.

What follows is an explanation of what I will call the idea of hybrid history, and centering this idea on the life and work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who identifies herself as a person with multiple and simultaneous identities, drawn from multiple and simultaneous traditions. She is known as a philosophical border-crosser, whose life and work is especially relevant for a time in which there is increasing attention to political and geographic border questions regarding the United States and Mexico. With our eyes directed toward Anzaldúa, we can ask whether it is realistic

to have one history for a country. If so, is it essential to have the most comprehensive history, one that captures what actually happened but from multiple perspectives? Or is it permissible, if not beneficial, to have multiple stories, even if these stories seem to be in conflict, and thus overall incomprehensible? If it is the case that we are indeed living in an alternative truth age, perhaps Anzaldúa might be of use to us, if only as a reminder that comprehensibility involves holding together many things at once, not necessarily in creating and maintaining one clear and distinct idea about the things.

Anzaldúa seems to express both the many and the one as part of a poem:

This land was Mexican once  
Was Indian always  
And is.  
And will be again.<sup>1</sup>

What follows in this paper is in large part an elaboration of these brief lines. Rather than see them, for example, as an expression of a political revolution involving a change in ownership of the land, I think we can see it as an expression of an ultimately unknowable land over which we tell multiple stories.

### THE CARTERIAN TIME SPAN

To explain the relevance of considering the idea of multiple stories about one land, I provide an anecdote involving a former US president's curious understanding of history.

In 2016, after touring a creationist theme park in Kentucky, Jimmy Carter was interviewed about his experience, and he noted that he personally believed in evolution. Yet, he added, "If God created it four billion years ago, or six thousand years ago, it doesn't matter to me."<sup>2</sup> This idea seems to be based, for better or worse, on a legacy of popularized pragmatism. The context is likely the seemingly interminable dispute between creationists and evolutionists. And yet both groups are likely to find Carter's statement unsatisfactory, if not offensive. Creationists would say it is yet another instance of worldly corruption, shown in the fact that a former president of what they think of as a Christian nation would deny what they believe is the true Christian teaching. On the other hand, evolutionists would find it to be disappointing, if not harmful, that a scientist and former president of a secular nation would sanction the right to believe in things contrary to what evolutionists believe are settled fact. Carter puts himself in the position of validating two contradictory histories. And for him what actually happened—or precisely *how long* what actually happened, happened—is just not that important.

We can classify the four-billioners and the six-thousanders as two types of historical communities. This idea should not seem completely foreign to us. Different Indigenous communities, for example, conceived of time in different ways. Interposed on a system of an occupying culture, this resulted in the overestimation among some of the significance of events that might occur in North American, and even world history in the year 2012.

This *choque* of cultures is, of course, not unprecedented. For example, in Scott Pratt's 2002 book *Native Pragmatism*, the author argues that it is plausible that Native Americans, as much as European philosophers and psychologists, were influential on the development of pragmatism in the early United States. "To account for the development of American thought," he says, "we may refigure the frontiers as borders, as regions of interaction, exchange, and transformation." He notes, significantly, that "some aspects of the border are surely aspects of conquest, that is, 'frontiers' of European expansion and the accompanying destruction of Native life and culture." This is not the end of the story, though, since "borderlands are regions of colonization," in addition to being "regions of decolonization." Pratt's overall argument is that "much of what American philosophy is known for can be traced to its origins in the borderlands between Europe and America and its 'originality' to well-established aspects of Native American thought."<sup>3</sup>

Pratt's history is selective, and he establishes links between ideas without relying on finding concrete records that would prove a transmission of ideas. But Pratt's work is not out of place in American philosophy. Again, if we acknowledge that Indigenous people might have a different way of conceiving of historical fact, we can see Pratt's contribution as a form of myth-making, neither useless nor implausible. As Vine Deloria explains, "Indian tribes had little use for recording past events." Rather,

"The way I heard it" or "It was a long time ago" usually prefaces any Indian account of a past tribal experience, indicating that the story itself is important, not its precise chronological location. That is not to say that Indian tribes deliberately avoided chronology. In post-Discovery times, some tribes adopted the idea of recording specific sequences of time as a means of remembering the community's immediate past experiences.<sup>4</sup>

It is worth noting that past tribal experiences were bound to a community, and not merely fancied by an individual storyteller. The historian is bound to the people through whom the story is transmitted. Deloria merely denies that the story is bound to a chronological location, that is, a supposedly high-fidelity picture of what actually happened that can exist apart from human experience. Eschewing traditional history, Deloria speculates that "we have on this planet two kinds of people—natural peoples and the hybrid peoples." He continues with a claim that some might find surprising:

The natural peoples represent an ancient tradition that has always sought harmony with the environment. Hybrid peoples are . . . an ancient genetic engineering that irrevocably changed the way we view our planet. I can think of no other good reason why these people from the Near East—the peoples from the Hebrew, Islamic, and Christian religious traditions—first adopted the trappings of civilization and then forced a peculiar view of the natural world on succeeding generations. The planet, in their view, is not our natural home and is, in fact, ours for total exploitation.<sup>5</sup>

It is apparent that Deloria is creating an alternative history. Compelling in spirit, it starts from the fact of humanity's exploitation of nature and postulates a transcendental exploiter, some form of extraterrestrial engineering. One can take this literally and envision alien science, or one can take this in a fairly ordinary but significant way. To think of something as extraterrestrial means, ultimately, to think of something that is in some important respect outside of *la tierra*. To think of an earlier time in history, with people who had an uncanny and distanced relationship to the Earth, is to have imagined something extraterrestrial. In mythology, there tends to be a collapse of the literal-figurative distinction, and we can, without excessive difficulty, understand Deloria as postulating either space aliens or alienated humans. It is the latter that is the most plausible, fitting better into what we already believe factually about our world, namely, that human beings are, for better or worse, the exploiters of the Earth, and the primary exploiters were those from the Hebrew, Islamic, and Christian religious traditions. If we consider Deloria's version of history, and then accept the plausibility of the influence of Indigenous thought on American philosophy, former President Jimmy Carter's comment about not caring about the difference between four billion years and six thousand years, again, is less surprising to hear.

#### ANZALDÚA: THE NONE AND THE MANY

What we see, then, is at least three histories here. One insists on the time span of a literally interpreted Judeo-Christian Bible, while another requires a far greater time span in order to account for natural change. It is likely possible to refute the second one if one chooses to do so, but the question I want to ask is precisely why we would want or need to refute it. In doing so, it seems to me, we should also want just as much to refute that provided by Deloria. From Deloria we have a historical consciousness set in opposition to both of these competing Western views. It rejects the importance of time span and insists rather on a story about the exploitation of the Earth. It could be that those who wish to refute the six-thousanders, and maybe even the Carters who tolerate them, are likely uncomfortable refuting the beliefs of Indigenous people. But this fact suggests that there is something more to our understanding of history than merely the extent to which the story is believed to correspond to the reality.

In one sense, my proposal here is modest in that it simply suggests that the story of Gloria Anzaldúa become part of a the-way-I-heard-it history of American philosophy. If the story is about natural and hybrid peoples, we need a place for the hybrid peoples too, and this should not be the well-defined traditional place inhabited by the Protestant white male subject of frontier adventure. Anzaldúa identifies herself, implicitly, as a hybrid person. However, she does not support the exploitation of the planet. Rather, she believes in a multiplicity in personality that allows her to transcend what we have come to see as natural boundaries. Anzaldúa's frontier philosophy is an ungrounded movement between cultures, races, ethnicities, and sexualities.

More ambitiously, perhaps, my proposal requires us to consider that the alternative truth era is indeed upon us, and this is not as bad as it seems. It entails that we accept a



radically pluralistic idea of American history. Again, Anzaldúa is important here. Similar to Deloria, she is engaged in the development of new historical consciousness, one that Jacqueline Doyle refers to as the “collective birth of a new culture.”<sup>6</sup> More specifically, Anzaldúa promotes two forms of consciousness, a *mestizaje* consciousness that is located “in the synthesis of many sites at once,” and a *nepantla* consciousness that “affiliates herself with no side at all.”<sup>7</sup> This amounts to an expansive process of identification in the North American continent, what we can think of as a Pan-American version, for example, of Walt Whitman’s famous contradictory self-identification. Whitman is large, containing multitudes, but these were presumably limited to the US border; Anzaldúa is larger, containing more multitudes, spanning borders.

Especially earlier in her career, Anzaldúa was trying to be a multitude. “*Simultáneamente, me miraba la cara desde distintos ángulos,*” she says, invoking mystical art. “*Y mi cara, como la realidad, tenía un carácter múltiple.*”<sup>8</sup> She can be interpreted as multiple-Marys standing on a serpent, while, as she says, “Something in me takes matters into our own hands, and eventually, takes dominion over serpents—over my own body, my sexual activity, my soul, my mind, my weaknesses and strengths.”<sup>9</sup> Or perhaps she is the serpent, the unsettling force underneath the foot of those hybrid people attempting earth domination. She is also the unsettling force underneath those hybrid people whose stories attempt human domination by creating a story that legitimizes colonialist violence.

Demographic shifts in the United States signify that white supremacy is due for a fall. The mestiza consciousness is leaking into the American psyche, which provokes the kind of psychic restlessness that results in many collisions among, for example, white supremacist viewpoints and multicultural viewpoints, each with a different history. One of these indicates a wish to return to a mythical beginning, while the other one wants to move forward toward a utopian end. As Anzaldúa says in her poem, the land both *is* Mexican and *will be* Mexican at the same time. The land both *is* Indian and *will be* Indian at the same time. Anzaldúa is Mexican and she is Indigenous, but not mixed. It is perhaps only a little bit of an exaggeration to say that Anzaldúa is a figure who provides a new theory to unite time and space.

### SPIRITUAL PRAXIS

To talk about this time and space multiplicity, it is necessary to talk about Gloria Anzaldúa’s spirituality, an essential part of who she is, and thus what she writes. Chris Tirres has stressed the importance of spirituality in the work of Anzaldúa. He identifies three different philosophical positions: a “realist” position that assumes spirits are real; a “pluralist” position, “which affirms that spirits are both literally and imaginatively present”; and a “functionalist and pragmatic option” that considers “whether or not the spiritual journey makes positive changes in a person’s life.”<sup>10</sup> Tirres notes that “Anzaldúa’s pluralism is evident in her defense of imaginal journeys as both literally and imaginarily present. Wary of intellectual imperialism, Anzaldúa does not want to have to decide definitively between one or the other.”<sup>11</sup> Anzaldúa’s spiritual praxis involves “trying to create a

religion not out there somewhere, but in my gut . . . trying to make peace between what has happened to me, what the world is, and what it should be.”<sup>12</sup> The world is not what is out there, but that which is yet to be changed. If Anzaldúa sounds pragmatic, it is of a more idealistic kind, one that might better be described in terms of transcendentalism than pragmatism:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.<sup>13</sup>

Anzaldúa does not say that the *source* of the struggle is interior, as a traditional idealist might; rather she can be interpreted as saying that the *place* of the struggle is interior. As Aimee Carrillo Rowe explains in regards to Anzaldúa, “Personal experience which might be taken as individual or unique, is actually a function of the socio-political forces that extend well beyond the individual.”<sup>14</sup> Anzaldúa is thus neither a passive victim stuck in her own world nor an active reformer focused only on the outer world, but a spiritual revolutionary taking the conditions imposed upon her and transforming them. Anzaldúa is a transcendentalist poet who promotes changes of heart first and only then a pragmatist philosopher who acknowledges the fundamental interconnectivity of self and world.

Anzaldúa’s spiritual praxis is that of creating a new myth. She says she is cultureless, challenging “the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos” and also, paradoxically, “participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet.”<sup>15</sup> This culture is deep, drawing from the same hidden source that motivated the transcendentalists in the United States. “Man is a stream whose source is hidden,” says Emerson, famously. Anzaldúa refers to this same kind of hidden source in terms of her own geography:

I have to surrender to the forces, the spirits, and let go. I have to allow el cenote, the subterranean psychic norias or reserves containing our depth consciousness and ancestral knowledge, to well up in the poem, story, painting, dance, etc. El cenote contains knowledge that comes from the generations of ancestors that live within us and permeate every cell in our bodies.<sup>16</sup>

The cenotes of Central America have existed for just as long, for example, as any New England stream or pond that collects it. Henry David Thoreau muses about this with a peculiar sense of history. “Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, Walden Pond was already in existence,” perhaps as a mythical pool

for countless “unremembered nations’ literature.”<sup>17</sup> The underground lakes of central America are metaphors just as deep as legendary Walden Pond, and just as good of a referent for unremembered people. To find an American literature, and I would argue an American philosophy as well, we must go to the cenotes, and apt representation of the fluidity of identity, and of time and space in the American consciousness.

### ALTERNATIVE TEMPORALITY AND SPIRITUAL PRAGMATISM

To talk about Pan-American philosophy, we must acknowledge that the project is often vague. As much as it might lead to the kinds of tangential, subjective, and imaginative musings that, for example, philosophy professors have been trained to control, this popular-metaphysical philosophy is not as far from philosophy proper as we might believe. This is especially true when we consider American philosophy. William James described philosophy as “our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos.”<sup>18</sup> If we are to criticize James here, it is on the “individual” part. James sees each of us as an *individual* agent existing in the cosmos; Anzaldúa is less individualistic than James, seeing herself as the individual embodiment of *communities* existing in the cosmos.

We might think that James’s definition of philosophy serves to allow Anzaldúa to enter, but she was already in. In fact, in terms of American philosophy, Anzaldúa might be closer to the norm than James. In Mexican popular religion, according to social anthropologist Renée de la Torre, there is already a mixture of “las cosmovisiones indígenas familiarizadas con la magia, el curanderismo, el animismo, y el ‘paganismo’” with “el catolicismo articulador de la devoción a los santos y vírgenes, el milagro y el ritualismo, pero también la espiritualidad nueva era y la neoestoteria.” This, along with cultural globalization,

tienden a universalizar las religiones históricas, y a generar novedosos hibridismos en contacto con las tradiciones esotéricas, con los nativismos exóticos, y con creencias seudocientíficas, gestando nuevas narrativas y dotando a las practicas populares de novedosas eficacias simbólicas, por lo general dentro de una visión terapéutica o mágica.<sup>19</sup>

Anzaldúa is a representative of what de la Torre summarizes as a “practica cohabitada y regenerada constantemente por el sincretismo,” in which “se vive permanentemente los procesos de redefinición y reinterpretación del sentido práctico de la religión.”<sup>20</sup> Resisting definitions allows religion to be adapted in practice in response to changing circumstances, making it therapeutic rather than dogmatic, and, for better or worse, magical as much as rational.

Again, I want to suggest that it is time to adapt to a new world of philosophy. This world includes, in addition to traditional philosophers of North, Central, and South America, those that fall outside of the norms established by these philosophers. This need for philosophy to adapt is evident, for example, upon consideration of the World’s

People Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, which took place in 2010 in Bolivia. Participants spoke not just of the Kyoto Protocol, the result of traditional philosophical-legal deliberation, but also of the need to follow “traditional ecological knowledge.” Anzaldúa scholar Joni Adamson interprets this knowledge as being part of “an ‘alternative modernity,’ which calls on all the world’s people to turn away from an ‘irrational logic’ that threatens all life on Earth.”<sup>21</sup> “Modernity” can refer specifically to a project of technological development, or it could refer more extensively to the whole project of philosophy identified, for example, with the traditional white male sextet of Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. More extensively, the critique of modernity involves what Anzaldúa scholar Tace Hedrick refers to as “the appeal to ancient or primitive knowledges as a foundation for the rebirth or renewal of the present.” And Anzaldúa needs to be part of that. According to Hedrick, Anzaldúa serves as “an antidote to the sense that modernity’s emphasis on technology, science, and rationality had precipitated a spiritual crisis.”<sup>22</sup>

Given an appreciation of the Anzaldúan critique of modernity, claims that Darwinian evolution has created a similar spiritual crisis for Christianity are at least understandable. Carter’s historical ambivalence expresses a spiritual crisis in America, one that can end up being productive. The problem, however, is that the Christian crisis differs from the Anzaldúean crisis in that, among other things, it assumes a spirituality limited to its own form of Christian spirituality. In this respect, we can see Anzaldúa calling for an upheaval of Christianity, too.

### MESTIZA IMAGINATIONS

At this point, we can re-read Anzaldúa’s verse:

This land was Mexican once  
Was Indian always  
And is.  
And will be again.

This is a prediction of revolution, in a sense as political as one likes to consider it.<sup>23</sup> This is a revolution of thought at the least, involving new consideration of history. As Michelle Bastain argues, Anzaldúa does not “assert a linear history of the South-West US. Instead, she writes a history of the borderlands that affirms and recognizes its contradictory historical trajectories simultaneously.”<sup>24</sup> Hedrick says that Anzaldúa replaces “a sense of time (past) with . . . a deep space of the psyche”<sup>25</sup> And as Felicity Amaya Schaeffer puts it most succinctly, “She queers notions of time and space.”<sup>26</sup>

One can be offended by what has been specifically created by historical imagination. Such creations can suggest, for example, conservative worldviews that some believe are bad, or radical worldviews that frighten others because of their material implications. Yet it seems to me to be a strange kind of offense that can be elicited simply by considering that some history is not an accurate copy of some postulated state of affairs anterior to any story that is being told about it. Our claims about the plausibility of a story do not involve only consideration of the *what-actually-happened* of the

matter, but a consideration of a story in relation to other stories. And this plausibility involves consideration of how the stories work in relation to other parts of our experience. Offense at the idea of imaginative history amounts to a preference for what Serge Grigoriev calls a “pre-conceptual vision of reality, of the kind that would be delivered by an impartial camcorder in the sky.” Conflicts arise “because different conceptualizations of reality, undertaken with different interests in the mind, are obliged to measure up” to this ideal,<sup>27</sup> an ideal that must be ahistorical because it is outside of any engagement or interest in history. Perhaps history is shifting from the impartial recording of events to what we might call, admittedly with a touch of oddness, an *omnipartial* representation of events. To take Anzaldúa seriously here is to take seriously her *mestiza* identity, that is, her *omnipartial* identity in which many things are occurring at once.

This requires a *mestiza* imagination. Rubén Medina, following Arjun Appadurai, distinguishes “fantasy” from “imagination.” The former is

un pasatiempo elitista y una forma de escapismo. La imaginación, en cambio, representa las aspiraciones de una comunidad y sobre todo constituye un factor en la agencia de las personas. Por tanto, realidad e imaginación no se ven ya como en oposición, sino como entidades complementarias, que afectan mutuamente, es decir, que inciden sobre la agencia de los individuos.<sup>28</sup>

On this view, imagination is pragmatic, representing ends-in-view for a community. What Anthony Lioi, for example, explains in terms of sacred symbols also applies to myths. As he says, the “peculiar power” of myths “comes from their presumed ability to identify fact with value at the most fundamental level, to give what is otherwise merely actual, a comprehensive normative import.”<sup>29</sup> This fundamental task seems especially difficult when considering the feasibility of developing an overarching myth to encompass the diverse perspectives of what we call “America.” The colonizer myths are normative for the colonizers, while the Indigenous myths are authentic only for the Indigenous. The task is thus contradictory and difficult. As Gregory Pappas explains, Anzaldúa’s multifaceted border-crossing existence make us consider the importance of a cultural metaphysics, which he refers to as a “landscape of all cultures.” He extends this cultural metaphysics to the individuals themselves:

On our map of political nations, we do not recognize the border between two nations as some distinct third nation, that is, it does not have the same ontological status. Does it then make sense to talk about border cultures as being cultures or as having a distinctive existence in the landscape of all cultures?<sup>30</sup>

To deny the ontological status of political borders is to reject the presumed legitimacy of the conquest that has established these borders. As Benay Blend accurately states it, Anzaldúa lives in a “synthesis of the conqueror

and the conquered.”<sup>31</sup> So perhaps the answer to Pappas’s question is that, for Anzaldúa, there are indeed no border cultures, but there exists rather a no-border culture. It is this no-border culture that would neutralize the colonialist history. A conqueror’s history tries to justify the colonial violence; Anzaldúa accepts the violence, without the justification. Rather, her spiritual practice accepts suffering in hopes of transforming it.

## AVOIDING THE PHILOSOPHICAL BORDER GUARDS

In his 1994 article “Half-Hearted Pragmatism,” Gerald Mozur argues in favor of “‘transhistorical’ truths—beliefs that hold good for all epochs.” His choice of examples, though, seems to me to reveal the most important issue. Mozur says “such transhistorical beliefs as ‘Caesar crossed the Rubicon’ hold good across all contexts subsequent to the one in which it was first formulated and in which the events occurred.”<sup>32</sup> Yet how is it, we might ask, that *crossing the Rubicon*, which references a military event, has come to mean what William James referred to in “The Will to Believe” as a momentous decision, that is, one which is the opposite of a trivial choice in which “the decision is reversible if it later prove unwise?”<sup>33</sup> Anzaldúa shows us that the American condition is indeed momentous, that is, irreversible. It is not possible to return to anyone’s particular ownership of the land, since land is not the kind of thing that can be owned. Rather than deny that colonization took place, or insist that colonization took place, our response could be the creation of a new form of conceptual, spiritual, and ultimately political border-crossing. Attempts to stop such border-crossing by referring to the way things really are—whether those things are nation, gender, or original event of creation—will confront the figure of Gloria Anzaldúa straddling the Rio Grande like a mythical giant. What makes her compelling is her willingness to accept blurred boundaries of class, gender, sex, language, race—as well as nation—while also somehow maintaining a personal integrity. One is drawn into this creative tension, perhaps even recklessly, as one tries holding together the various parts as loosely as possible without experiencing a repellant dispersal. “En vez de dejar cada parte en su región y mantener entre ellos la distancia de un silencio,” Anzaldúa says, it is “mejor mantener la tensión entre nuestras cuatro o seis partes/personas.”<sup>34</sup> According to Marisa Belausteguigoitia Rius, this means that “la tensión que demanda al cruce entre subjetividades diferentes producen una textualidad llena de atravesamientos, de negociaciones entre opuestos, con el fin de aceptar, entender y recodificar lo ajeno.”<sup>35</sup>

Acceptance, understanding, and recodification are themselves temporary states, and so border-crossings are perpetual. Nothing can be completely forgotten, and nothing can be tenaciously maintained.<sup>36</sup> Still, it is difficult for me to see how it would be bad, all things considered, if any transhistorical truth supposedly behind “Caesar crossed the Rubicon” was forgotten. And Anzaldúa is an invitation to a transgressive form of imagination, a spiritual crossing of the Rubicon that makes unnecessary the kind of material crossings of the Rubicon that characterizes colonialist history.

NOTES

1. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/ Aunt Lute, 1987), 113.
2. Heather Clark, "Jimmy Carter Visits Ken Ham's Ark Encounter, Tells Reporters: 'I Believe in Evolution,'" in *Christian News*, June 4, 2016. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://christiannews.net/2016/06/14/jimmy-carter-visits-ken-hams-ark-encounter-tells-reporters-i-believe-in-evolution/>
3. Scott Pratt, *Native Pragmatism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 16-17.
4. Vine Deloria, *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994), 99.
5. *Ibid.*, 2.
6. Jacqueline Doyle, "Assumptions of the Virgin and Recent Chicana Writing," in *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 26 (1997): 173.
7. Martina Koegeler-Abdi, "Shifting Subjectivities: Mestizas, Nepantleras, and Gloria Anzaldúa's Legacy," *MELUS* 38, no. 2 (2013): 71-88.
8. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 66. "Simultaneously, I was looking at my face from different angles. And my face, like reality, has a multitudinous character." Of note is Anzaldúa's possible reference to Walt Whitman's famous line about being large and containing multitudes.
9. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 73.
10. Chris Tirres, "Spiritual Activism and Praxis: Gloria Anzaldúa's Mature Spirituality," *The Pluralist* 14, no. 1 (2019): 120.
11. *Ibid.*, 132.
12. *Q.t.* in Tirres, 137.
13. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 87.
14. Aimee Carrillo Rowe, "Subject to Power—Feminism Without Victims," *Women's Studies in Communication* 32, no. 1 (2009): 14.
15. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 80-81.
16. Anzaldúa, *Reader*, 291.
17. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: NAL Penguin, 1980), 123. As Kevin Dann puts it, "Thoreau's martial attitude" involved believing that "he was doing daily battle with a godless adversary," something that Dann calls "as much historical reality as personal myth" (164). Kevin Dann, *Expect Great Things: The Life and Search of Henry David Thoreau* (TarcherPerigree, 2018). The blending of history and personal myth is thus not unprecedented in American philosophy.
18. William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Dover Publications 1995), 1.
19. Renée de la Torre, "La Religiosidad Popular: Encrucijada de las nuevas formas de la religiosidad contemporánea y la tradición (el caso de México)," in *Punto Urbe: Revista do núcleo de antropología urbana da USP* 12 (2013): 7. To be clear, de la Torre offers a critique of the therapeutic and magic vision when it represents individual menus of belief a la carte (13).
20. *Ibid.*, 18.
21. Joni Adamson, "'Todos Somos Indios!': Revolutionary Imagination, Alternative Modernity, and Transnational Organizing in the Work of Silko, Tamez, and Anzaldúa," in *Transnational American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 7.
22. Tace Hedrick, "History Is What Hurts: Queer Feelings, Alien Temporalities in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa," in *Cultural History* 4, no. 1 (2015): 70.
23. Perhaps Anzaldúa represents the eventual destruction of a largely white nation-state, or of the nation-state altogether, in favor of what Martina Koegeler-Abdi calls a "vision of planetary citizenship beyond essentializing frames of reference" (79). Or, as Claire Joysmith notes, "hybridity and novel proposals of *mestizaje* are, ironically, often perceived in (central) Mexico as unsettling, even threatening, particularly when they are gender related and when they demand that we seriously and pragmatically rethink mobile cultural identities" (49).
24. Michelle Bastain, "The Contradictory Simultaneity of Being with Others: Exploring Concepts of Time and Community in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa," *Feminist Review* 97 (2001): 158.
25. Hedrick, "History Is What Hurts," 65.
26. Felicity Amaya Schaeffer, "Spirit Matters: Gloria Anzaldúa's Cosmic Becoming across Human/Nonhuman Borderlands," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43, no. 4 (2018): 1005. See also the work of Miriam Bornstein-Gómez, who sets Anzaldúa against a "hegemonic history" that "constructs itself as the default point, giving primacy onto itself and imposing a history that marginalizes and oppresses" (48). Miriam Bornstein-Gómez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)signification," *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura* 26, no. 1 (2010).
27. Serge Grigoriev, "Dewey: A Pragmatist View of History," *Journal of Philosophy and History* 6 (2012): 180.
28. Rubén Medina, "El Mestizaje a través de la Frontera: Vasconcelos y Anzaldúa," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 25, no. 1 (2009): 122. "Fantasy is an elitist pastime and a form of escapism. Imagination, on the other hand, represents the aspirations of a community and over all constitutes a factor in personal agency. Thus, reality and imagination are not set in opposition, but rather as complementaries that mutually affect each other, that is, that influence individual agency."
29. Anthony Lioi, "The Best-Loved Bones: Spirit and History in Anzaldúa's 'Entering into the Serpent,'" *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 1-2 (2008): 4.
30. Gregory Pappas, "Dewey and Latina Lesbians on Purity," in *Pragmatism and the Americas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 266-67.
31. Benay Blend, "'Because I Am in All Cultures at the Same Time': Intersections of Gloria Anzaldúa's Concept of Mestizaje in the Writings of Latin-American Jewish Women," *Postcolonial Text* 2, no. 3 (2006): 6.
32. Gerald Mozur, "Half-Hearted Pragmatism," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 8, no. 4 (1994): 249-50.
33. William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 4.
34. Anzaldúa, *Reader*, 166. "Instead of leaving each part in its region and maintaining a silent distance among them, it is better to maintain a tension among our four or six parts/personas."
35. Marisa Belausteguigoitia Rius, "Límites y fronteras: la pedagogía del cruce y la transdisciplina en la obra de Gloria Anzaldúa," *Estudios Feministas* 17, no. 3 (2009): 765. "The tension that results from an intersection among different subjectivities produces a textuality full of transgressions, of negotiations between opposites, to the goal of accepting, understanding and recodifying that which is alien to it."
36. According to Panchiba Barrientos, Anzaldúa "problematiza la identidad en el borde del abismo entre la continuidad y la promesa de término de un proceso migratorio que parece no tener fin." "Múltiples quiebres sobre un signo: Repensar a 'la mujer' desde las fronteras," *Revista Nomadias* 19 (2015): 156.

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