

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy



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APA STUDIES ON

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITOR

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Latina feminist philosophers have made some of the earliest and most significant contributions in Latinx philosophy, particularly in the areas of phenomenology and epistemology. Indeed, in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on Latinx philosophy, Manuel Vargas proposes that “Latina feminist philosophy is a main, if not *the* main proximal origin to what we now recognize as Latinx philosophy.” Two of the most important thinkers from this body of work are Gloria Anzaldúa and María Lugones. These thinkers utilize innovative methodologies and offer rich conceptual tools for examining identity and selfhood under oppressive conditions. The essays in this issue of *APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* carry forward the scholarship in this area.

We begin with an essay titled “María Lugones and the Value of Playfulness for World-Making.” In this essay, author Ricardo Friaз focuses on Lugones’s relatively lesser-explored notion of *playfulness*. He weighs in on the debate about whether playfulness is necessary for what Lugones calls “world-traveling,” which enables one to recognize another person as a full subject. Friaз argues that although the attribute of playfulness may not be necessary for world-traveling, it is necessary for collaborative world-making—creating a new, shared world that is opened through the activity of play.

In the second article, “*La Facultad*: Towards Active Embodied Agency and an Embodied Epistemology,” author Karina Ortiz Villa proposes that Gloria Anzaldúa’s notion of *la facultad* is a form of active, embodied, epistemic agency. It integrates conscious self-awareness, bodily experiences, motor skills, and sensory information with the rational mind to engage with and navigate the world. Ortiz Villa argues that when an agent uses *la facultad*, they acquire a novel form of knowledge—one that is only accessible through that capacity.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy is accepting contributions for the spring 2024 issue. Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on any topic related to Hispanic/Latinx thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as *meditaciones*, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

ARTICLES

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All essay 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.

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

The deadline for the spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15. The 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, Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Studies* 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

María Lugones and the Value of Playfulness for World-Making

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María Lugones's essay "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception" has had an immense influence in feminist philosophy, and particularly in the field that Mariana Ortega has called "Latina feminist phenomenology."¹ The essay, which was published originally as a journal article in 1987 before being republished with minimal changes in Lugones's book *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, is self-avowedly about the "possibility and complexity of a pluralistic feminism" that affirms plurality as rich and central to feminist ontology and epistemology.² Lugones argues for the necessity of the practice of world-traveling that is essential for building a deep mutual understanding of one another that is a condition for building meaningful coalitions and community. Although much attention has been given to the concept of world-traveling, significantly less attention has been given to Lugones's discussion of playfulness, which she says is essential for world-traveling. Of those who have responded to Lugones's discussion of playfulness, Ortega's critical reading of playfulness is especially astute, and she ultimately argues for a concept of critical world-traveling instead of playful world-traveling.³

In this essay, I argue that while the attribute of playfulness may not be essential for world-traveling, it is necessary for world-making, which I provisionally define here as the creation of communal social realities facilitated by world-traveling. This essay has three sections: a reconstruction of Lugones's discussion of playfulness and related key concepts, a discussion of Ortega's critique of the attribute of playfulness and its necessity for world-traveling, and an argument for the importance of playfulness in world-making.

WORLD-TRAVELING

The focus of Lugones's essay is on theorizing a way of identifying with others by way of understanding "what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes," and that this is apparently necessary for becoming "fully subjects to each other."⁴ Lugones argues that this can be accomplished by traveling to someone else's "world," and notes that we cannot know others without also knowing their worlds such that we remain in a condition of solipsism or lack of intersubjectivity without this travel. While these citations show Lugones's emphasis on the epistemic and the intersubjective at stake in traveling to another's world, or world-traveling, Lugones also emphasizes that knowing other women's worlds is part of loving them such that world-traveling matters for our affective relations with others. World-traveling not only brings us to intimacy and full understanding, for it can also reveal violent worlds, as well as worlds in which we come to see the ways in which we function as oppressors or arrogant perceivers. The conclusion of the essay emphasizes that world-traveling involves risking the very ground we stand on.⁵

Throughout the essay, Lugones returns to the matter of understanding one another and building what she terms "a coalition of deep understanding fashioned through 'world'-traveling."⁶ The outcome of a coalition of understanding is a feminism that would affirm the plurality in each of us as central to feminist ontology and epistemology.⁷ Prior to invoking the language of "worlds," Lugones refers to the particular experiences of an outsider to mainstream white/Anglo organization of life that she terms a "construction of life" where one is themselves "constructed."⁸ A condition of living in multiple constructions is flexibility for shifting across constructions, but Lugones argues that this condition can also be used resistantly. The resistant version of shifting across various constructions of life where one is constructed across a spectrum spanning being an outsider to being "at home" is what Lugones calls "world"-traveling.⁹

World-traveling can be done willingly or unwillingly, and it is typically done unwillingly to hostile worlds. It is the unwilling version of world-traveling most will be familiar with, and this unwilling version has obscured its value. Unwilling world-traveling is not limited to any one group, such that anyone may find themselves traveling to other worlds at some point, although certainly not everyone undergoes it to the same degree. Unwilling world-traveling takes us, against our wishes, to hostile worlds where we are constructed in ways that are painful. Unwilling world-traveling is painful because we are taken to worlds hostile to our presence, and this hostility is painful to the degree we are subjected to what Marilyn Frye, in an essay called "In and Out of Harm's Way: Arrogance and Love," calls "arrogant perception."¹⁰

ARROGANT AND LOVING PERCEPTION

In "Arrogance and Love," Frye is concerned with developing a revolutionary vision of women that goes beyond the woman as an abstract concept of a victimized "female human animal."¹¹ Frye analyzes exploitation and oppression that is focused on the capture of meaning and meaning-making. In this context, Frye arrives at the concept of the "arrogant eye," which organizes the objects of its perception as existing for its sake.¹² Against the arrogant eye, Frye introduces the "loving eye," which perceives without presupposing that the other poses either a constant threat or exists for its own use: The loving perceiver maintains the difference between itself and those they perceive.¹³ Towards the end of her essay, Frye emphasizes the difficulty of separating from the arrogant eye insofar as it "gives all things meaning by connecting all things to each other by way of their references to one point—Man." Nothing less than liberation depends on the imagination that results from the loving eye, which is able to perceive others in their independence.¹⁴ Lugones's engagement with Frye is concerned to extend and develop her idea of a revolutionary vision, or imagination, that goes beyond either abstract knowledge or a repetition of arrogant perception that fails to "dissolve the structures and dismantle the mechanisms by which Woman is Mediated by Man." It is with Frye's analysis in mind that Lugones conceptualizes world-traveling.¹⁵

WORLDS AS SOCIAL RELATIONS

In describing what she means by world-traveling, Lugones explains how she understands the concept of a “world” by way of describing a particular experience that she had which she calls “ontological confusion.”¹⁶ In her narrative, Lugones recounts that the particular and profound state of confusion she found herself in had to do with an antinomic experience of seemingly both having and not having the attribute of playfulness. Lugones talks to both faraway friends who knew her well, and she asks people around her, perhaps coworkers, as to whether she is playful. Her friends tell her with conviction that she is playful, and the others say that she is serious—she takes everything seriously. As she works through this antinomy, Lugones lands on the concept of worlds to begin accounting for why she does and does not have the attribute of playfulness. The stake in what accounts for the antinomy of the attribute is whether or not it is something that Lugones could simply work on herself as an individual or subject: “You see, if it was just a matter of lack of ease [in certain worlds], I could work on it,” and it is in understanding this relation between the interior of the self and its exterior relations that Lugones turns to the concept of “world.”¹⁷

In the introduction to *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, Lugones elaborates beyond the “World-Traveling” essay’s discussion of world by comparing it to Arthur Danto’s use in *The Wake of Art*.¹⁸ In his essay, Danto distinguishes between “expressions” and “manifestations” in order to analyze the way in which symbols are interpreted according to their social context. The essay thematizes “world” only in order to discuss symbols, and Lugones cites Danto because he comes close to her own understanding while remaining distinct from it. Lugones and Danto differ on the distinction between actual and possible worlds: for Danto, there is an actual world with many possible worlds, and for Lugones, all worlds are actual and overlap. Danto invokes the world in order to distinguish between expressions and manifestations as a way to think about symbols in regards to art. In the process of arriving at this distinction, Danto draws another distinction—between interpretation and explanation—such that manifestations can be understood by explanations while expressions are to be interpreted in light of the fact that explanations of a phenomenon as a manifestation have failed.¹⁹

Danto thinks of manifestations as the way in which the actual world offers something to be understood. Using the example of a disordered room, Danto discusses the ways in which a disordered room can be understood as manifestations of our world: a room poorly maintained, or else a room lived in by someone who considers such a state of the room to be quite orderly by their own social standards.²⁰ In contrast, expressions are symbols that refer to a possible world, or a way in which the world could be arranged but is not currently. Danto locates expressions on the side of the individual, and conversely locates manifestations on the side of the social. Expressions are conscious manifestations of an internal state, as Danto puts it, and they depict the way the world could be.²¹ The particular concept that Danto is interested in is the symbolic as distinct from the sign, and this distinction corresponds to the one he makes between expression and manifestation.

Where the manifestation is a sign, which gestures to its cause as a footprint stands in for a footstep, the symbol is a material embodiment of an idea. The symbol is a symbol of a particular world, but in contrast to Lugones’s assessment, Danto’s language threatens to collapse the distinction between actual and possible worlds he elsewhere attempts to maintain. Immediately after Danto writes that the symbol represents a world by embodying that other world “as if it were here and now,” he writes that the symbol “brings into this world another world through something which [Danto is] saying *embodies* it.”²² Danto’s insistence that the symbol brings one world into another makes sense given that his focus is on the artwork, and his essay’s focus on photography in its second half is based on the distinction between the sign and symbol with regard to the distinctions between reality and its images. Lugones is emphatic that she is concerned with actual worlds, and rejects any hypothetical logic involving the “as if.”

Lugones takes “the social” to be intersubjectively constructed through a play of forces such that no world is inherently stable or at rest, and it may be that the instability of a particular world motivates her reticence to define it conclusively. In lieu of a definition, Lugones establishes a necessary condition for something to be a world, and a list of sufficient conditions. For something to be a world, it has to be “inhabited at present by some flesh and blood people,” although it may also be inhabited by imaginary, dead, or other kinds of people beyond those of flesh and blood.²³ A world can be an actual society, but also a resistant construction of society, a construction of a tiny portion of a particular society, it may be incomplete, they can be layered over one another, and its inhabitants may not recognize or understand the ways they are constructed in any given world.²⁴ In all cases, the sense of a world is fundamentally a description of an experience.²⁵

PLAYFULNESS AND WORLD-TRAVELING

Playfulness is the motivating attribute that leads Lugones to reflect on worlds according to her story, and it turns out to be the case that playfulness plays a significant role in world-traveling. While she notes that one can be maximally at ease in a world such as to refuse to travel to other worlds, one can also be maximally confined to a single world. To be stuck in one world scares Lugones: “I am seriously scared of getting stuck in a “world” that constructs me that way, a “world” that I have no escape from and in which I cannot be playful.”²⁶ Before embarking on her own analysis of the concept, Lugones comments that she prepared by reading two classics on the subject of play: Johan Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens* and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s chapter on play in *Truth and Method*. Lugones subsequently gives a short critique of Huizinga and Gadamer, noting that though she will not provide an extended argument for her interpretation of Gadamer and Huizinga, she finds that both of them have an agonistic sense of play.²⁷

To introduce her own conception of loving playfulness, Lugones gives an example of the kind of playing she has in mind. Lugones describes a particular experience that takes place on a riverbank: The river is low, and wet stones appear above the water line. Two friends walk on the stones for a while, picking up and shattering stones

open on each other to reveal beautiful colors inside. Amidst laughter and smiles, the friends break stones open for hours, sharing what they find inside with each other. Lugones notes that there is no purposive activity or set of rules guiding the activity, and instead it is “the attitude that carries us through the activity, a playful attitude” that turns the activity into play.²⁸

Based on her example, I find that loving playfulness has three relevant aspects in addition to having the aspect of loving perception inherited from Frye: it is risky, creative, and destructive. It is destructive because, in being open to multiple worlds, it risks one’s own ground, and can erode those worlds which are grounded upon being the only world. Play is corrosive of rules insofar as it elevates itself above any ruleset in order to derive rules from play. Play is creative because, in its destructive capacity, it allows for the derivation of new rules from out of playfulness, and for Lugones there is meaningful potential for more inclusive rules to arise from out of loving playfulness insofar as it is rooted in caring communal experience. Play is risky for its destructive and creative capacities insofar as it can destroy things that matter to a community, and, just as it can create meaningful communities, it can also create new forms of oppression.

ORTEGA’S CRITIQUE OF PLAYFULNESS

Lugones’s essay has generated many responses since its original publication, and the majority of these responses have focused on the world-traveling aspect of the essay. There has been relatively less of a response to the essay’s discussion on playfulness, and of those responses, a particularly rigorous one is Ortega’s commentary on playfulness and world-traveling in *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self*.

In her chapter “World-Traveling, Double Consciousness, and Resistance,” Ortega writes the following:

I wonder, however, whether the experience of world-traveling capable of opening possibilities needs to involve playfulness, as Lugones suggests. The value of playfulness in her account stems from the fact that it allows us not to take ourselves so seriously that we cannot construct and reconstruct ourselves, others, and societal norms.²⁹

Further down, she asks, “Is playfulness the only attitude that could yield an opening for possibilities of construction and reconstruction in this case?”³⁰ She concludes, “I am deeply aware of the importance of play for Lugones and other feminists, and I don’t want to minimize this notion here, but I do not consider play as central as it is in Lugones’ view. For her, play is at the ‘crux’ of liberation.”³¹ This last point is quoted from Lugones, who writes that playfulness is “at the crux of liberation, both as a process and as something to achieve. I think there is something important in the relation between playfulness and tenderness.”³²

In the preceding chapter, called “The Phenomenology of World-Traveling,” Ortega writes that for Lugones, playfulness is an attribute that is “character central,” and that Lugones defines “character central” as an attribute

that is central to one’s personality to the degree that the “world” must support or be a good fit for that attribute for that person to be at ease.³³ In discussing the concept of “character central” attributes, I think it is important to note that Lugones is writing in second-person, leaving it somewhat ambiguous whether she is talking about herself or a hypothetical playful person. This point is relevant for discussing Lugones’s theory of the self, which it must be noted is closely linked to world-traveling, but for now I leave it aside. I only note that what is at stake in the concept of “character central” attributes is whether playfulness is at the crux of liberation for Lugones because of who she is, or because playfulness is essential as such.

Ortega makes clear that it is not that playfulness itself is to be rejected, but whether world-traveling essentially needs to involve playfulness particularly in the case of opening possibilities of resistance. While she recognizes the importance of playfulness in allowing for creative space, she goes on to argue that the critical elements Lugones’s account of world-traveling do not need to be essentially playful, and Ortega instead proposes a critical world-traveling instead of a playful world traveling. Critical world-traveling refers to the critical attitude that can change, revise, and reinterpret worlds as well as one’s self-reflection on world-traveling.³⁴ Critical world-traveling helps ensure that world-traveling does not become an “everyday practice dominated by publicness,” and although critical world-traveling offers no guarantees of resistance to oppression, it ultimately creates more openings for such a stance.

A danger that Ortega wishes to avoid is world-traveling becoming a sort of play itself: “a sort of game in which one learns some interesting things about the ‘other’ but that ultimately has no real consequences for the practitioner.”³⁵ Along similar lines, playfulness conveys the idea that there is not much at stake, which ties back to Lugones’s distinction between frivolity and playfulness. If what is truly important is taken lightly, we cross into the realm of grotesque irresponsibility in a time in which, as Rita Segato puts it, “the historical conditions that transform us into monsters or accomplices of monsters stalk us all.”³⁶ I think Ortega recognizes the stakes well, and she is right to emphasize the importance of critical world-traveling. I have reconstructed Ortega’s reading of playfulness, and I will now move into my final discussion where I reflect on what possibilities playfulness may still offer with regard to world-making.

PLAYFULNESS AND WORLD-MAKING

Lugones writes that she sees playfulness as the crux of liberation, but her remarks explaining why that is are short. When she mentions playfulness as the crux of liberation, she links it to a relation between playfulness and tenderness, and she attempts to develop this connection by arguing for a playfulness that is tied to risk, specifically the risking of one’s self in and for a community.³⁷ I read Lugones as proposing a kind of productive risk where exposure to others can be generative of more meaningful relations to one another that is entailed by world-traveling. Lugones stops short of discussing what it would mean to co-inhabit worlds, for the world-traveler must always return to their world if they are by definition traveling and not settling or

migrating. I think that there is a need for communal world-making that accompanies world-traveling without being reducible to it.

Lugones's analysis emphasizes adjectival modifiers on her concepts. I have in mind her account of the Western man's account of play in which competence and established roles are central in what she calls the "agonistic sense of playfulness." Further in her essay, she calls this the agonistic attitude, and qualifies it as "the playful attitude given Western man's construction of playfulness."³⁸ I take Lugones to mean that the Western construction is a flawed account of playfulness, and it would be better to call it agon or competition in distinction to her own account of loving playfulness, which perhaps Lugones means to be playfulness as such.

Lugones's critique of Huizinga offers further insight into the value she places on playfulness and its kinds. Huizinga, a Dutch historian, interprets Western civilization as founded on or derived from play, and this is clear in the title of his lecture that became his book, *Homo Ludens*. Lugones writes that it "is an interesting thing for Third World people to think about" that Western civilization has been interpreted by a White Western man as play in the agonistic sense.³⁹ The agonistic attitude, Lugones notes, is not a healthy, loving attitude to have in traveling across worlds, but it is certainly able to "kill other 'worlds' with it."⁴⁰

Lugones's analysis is brief but faithful: Huizinga's text straightforwardly asserts that civilization is drawn from play, and for him, civilization is synonymous with the Western. His text contains consistent references to primitive man, treating the non-Western as remnants of humanity's childhood in contrast to mature Western civilization in a gesture that Johannes Fabian calls a "denial of coevalness," by which he means "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse."⁴¹ Lugones's reading of Huizinga stops short of theorizing what it would mean to base a world off of loving playfulness. If Western civilization, in whatever reductive manner, is derivative of agon and agonistic world-traveling, what would it mean to imagine worlds derived otherwise?

Lugones's essay is part of her book's larger concern with building and theorizing coalition, as the subtitle of *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* indicates. Lugones's concern with coalition is apparent across her body of work, and is present as early as her 1978 dissertation, *Morality and Personal Relations*.⁴² In her dissertation, Lugones is ultimately concerned with thinking about our personal and impersonal relations—how we love each other across friendships and relationships of all kinds amidst multiple oppressions. In her world-traveling essay, world-traveling is itself invoked as the way by which a coalition of deep understanding is fashioned among "Women of Color" specifically.⁴³

Lugones is clear that world-traveling is meant to be creative as well as a form of loving. I gather that her emphasis on playfulness as risk is meant to elaborate her point that working and playing together involves an exposure to one

another that risks our very tenderness. If it is the case that playfulness is not essential for world-traveling, I think that it is essential for world-making, and specifically a world we derive from loving playfulness with one another that departs from worlds founded on agonistic playfulness. If world-making is a practice distinct from world-traveling, the distinction must rest between a movement to an already-established world and the collaborative creation of a new one. I mean to emphasize the collaborative aspect, and I suggest that the key mode of collaboration is a playful one in which worlds can emerge out of loving playfulness with one another.

Any discussion of world-making invites rigorous reflection on what a world is such that its making or un-making can be legibly referred to. The world is a concept with much history in philosophy, as Sean Gaston notes that "concepts of world have been a part of Western philosophy since the biblical and classical period," and if the scope of the concept of world is expanded to contemporary considerations of globalization, the literature is even vaster.⁴⁴ All this is to say nothing of non-Western thought, which certainly has much to say about the world and worlds. The creation and destruction of the world is central to Aztec accounts of the Five Suns, where the world has been created and destroyed four times, and a similar account is found in the K'iche' Mayan *Popol Vuh*, which similarly features multiple creations and destructions of the world, as well as a distinction between the world and underworld.⁴⁵ Given that "world" tends to refer broadly to the horizons we inhabit, it makes sense that Lugones would broadly define world as our social realities.

In her essay, Lugones is explicit that she does not want to define precisely what she means by world, for she thinks that "the term is suggestive and [she] does not want to close the suggestiveness of it too soon."⁴⁶ Her usage of the term is tactical, and her aim is to "use worlds against the grain of atomic, homogeneous, and monistic understandings of the social in any of its dimensions" as a practice of resistance.⁴⁷ I follow her then, in thinking about world-making from out of experience as a resistant practice that is valuable for its suggestiveness, and not primarily for its precise description of a phenomenon. It is risky to eschew rigorous definitions in a work of philosophy, and it serves as one kind of example of the risk involved in being playful, but hopefully a less risky proposition in the wake of Lugones's own work.

In describing world-making and playfulness's relation to it, I return to Lugones's own account of loving playfulness in the scene by the riverbank where two friends are showing each other stones. Lugones writes that "I laugh and bring the pieces back to you and you are doing the same with your pieces."⁴⁸ The component pieces of this activity can be broken down to understand the work that playfulness is doing and how it can "make" a world. The gesture that initiates the play is the sharing of the colorful stones with another. Prior to the act, the two friends Lugones describes are driven by playfulness: they are walking along a riverbank without a purpose. While purpose can certainly be attributed to their acts by suggesting they are walking to stay in shape or to visit a local hike a friend recommended,

Lugones emphasizes that the driving attitude is playfulness as an “openness to surprise.”⁴⁹

The playful activity of the two friends depends on a mutual social recognition, and Lugones acknowledges the Hegelian register of this point while disagreeing that self-recognition requires tension or hostility.⁵⁰ I depart slightly from Lugones at this point in her focus on subjectivity here, for while world-traveling is what enables us to become “fully subjects to each other,” I want to suggest that the playful activity of the two friends goes beyond world-traveling to world-making by way of their joint creative activity.⁵¹ What occurs is a moment of risk in playfulness where a friend shows another a pretty rock, and the success of the play activity depends on the other friend recognizing what the first friend sees. I think that what occurs in the mutual recognition of the pretty rock is not a world-traveling by the other friend, but a collaborative activity by both friends that is not reducible to either of their actions as agents and instead concerns a relation between them. This relation opens up a world that is neither one nor the other’s world, but another world that is the space of their playing.

World-making is distinct from world-traveling in this account because it is not the case that the friend who initially breaks open the stone to reveal its pretty colors is inhabiting a previously existing social reality. It is their original playfulness that comes to reveal a world they make together whose previous existence is indebted to neither of them. In this sense, world-making is similar to artistic production by way of what Danto called a symbol, but where a symbol refers only to a possible world, I follow Lugones here in referring to actually existing worlds brought into being. The world that emerges from the activity of the two friends is oriented around a shared appreciation for walking and crashing stones. More relevant than the content of the new world is the way in which it comes into being, and on Lugones’s account it depends on playfulness as a fundamental openness to one another.

Ortega’s critique of playfulness may be reactivated here in order to ask whether it is ethical or always practical to risk the creation of a world without knowing ahead of time what the contents of that world may be. Such a criticism is valid when it comes to deciding whether or not one should embark on world-making at all, or whether one should world-travel with either a playful or critical attitude. It remains that world-making must first involve a playful attitude insofar as making a world involves openness and risk without privileging any particular set of rules. I think that for Lugones, like world-traveling, world-making is fundamentally social insofar as a world is always social, and the success of world-making depends on its recognition by others such that it cannot be a solitary endeavor. In pursuit of liberation and resistance in coalition, it remains important to both hone our critical edges while also risking the uncertainty and fun of being playful to both understand each other and create together.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

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3. Ortega, *In-Between*, 135.
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16. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 86.
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27. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 123.
28. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
29. Ortega, *In-Between*, 133.
30. Ortega, *In-Between*, 133.
31. Ortega, *In-Between*, 133.
32. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 32.
33. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 92.
34. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 135.
35. Ortega, *In-Between*, 141.
36. Rita Laura Segato, *La escritura en el cuerpo de las mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez: territorio, soberanía y crímenes de segundo estado* (Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina: Tinta Limón Ediciones, 2013), 45; my translation.
37. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 33.
38. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
39. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
40. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
41. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (Columbia University Press, 1983), 41.
42. María Lugones, “Morality and Personal Relations” (Madison, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1978), <http://gateway.proquest>

[.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:dissertation&res_dat=xri:pqm&rft_dat=xri:pqdiss:7916564](https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6895384).

43. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 78.
44. Sean Gaston, *The Concept of World from Kant to Derrida* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), x.
45. Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, Austin, 2014), 18; Edgar Garcia, *Emergency: Reading the Popol Vuh in a Time of Crisis*, *Critical Antiquities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 7, <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6895384>.
46. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 87.
47. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 26.
48. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
49. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 95.
50. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 97.
51. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 97.

La Facultad: Towards Active Embodied Agency and an Embodied Epistemology

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INTRODUCTION

We constantly make quick choices we cannot explain or articulate, and sometimes without a feeling at all. Typically, we think that acting is being preceded by a process of deliberation between different options which we weigh against each other (what they are, their consequences, etc.). In this view, acting involves making a judgment about which option is best. Based on this judgment, we choose the best course of action and then act on that choice. When we perform an action in a manner that is not captured by the above, we tend to think that the action is habitual, random, or irrational. In this paper, I want to suggest an aspect of Gloria Anzaldúa's thought that challenges this assumption.

In "Willing, Wanting, Waiting," Richard Holton gives us two compelling examples of this type of action. The first is the case of a fire lieutenant who leads his crew into a burning building. The fire crew tries to put out the fire, but nothing they do makes an impact. The lieutenant then starts to feel "as if something is not right" and orders his fire crew to leave the building. As soon as they are out, the building collapses. Right after this event, the lieutenant reflects on it and comes to believe he may have relied on some "sixth sense." How else would he have known that the building was going to collapse? The second case is about subjects in an empirical study who were given the job of pressing a button corresponding to a quadrant with a cross in it. They unconsciously "learned to use this algorithm to predict where the next cross would appear."¹

Holton explains this phenomenon as "choice absent judgment," where our choices respond to "features that we have registered but of which we are unaware," compelling us to act either in the absence of judgment

or prior to judgment because of the complexity of the situations we find ourselves in.² According to Holton, these actions contribute to knowledge such that the choices we make inform our judgments. In other words, by rationally reflecting and forming explanations about our choices, our actions give us *prima facie* evidence as to why we chose to act as we did, either because we learn which states of the world are best by looking at the consequences of our actions, or because we learn something about why we chose what we did by reflection.

However, this framework crucially leaves out the body in its discussion of agency and knowledge, making it seem as though the process Holton describes is purely cognitive. Though bodily responses can play an instrumental part in this exercise of agency, it is relegated to a minor role in the form of haptic feedback, or as Letitia Meynell argues, a "mere medium through which information passes and by which the will pursues its ends."³ Further, the account overlooks the fundamental role of the body in influencing actions, as well as shaping our understanding of ourselves and the world. But as philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, Mexican existentialists such as Emilio Uranga, and third-world feminist philosophers have compellingly argued, agency and embodiment are intrinsically tied.⁴

Thanks to her training as a literary scholar, Gloria Anzaldúa has contributed uniquely creative tools to help us understand human actions in their context. She created theories that reflect the diversity and multifariousness of her culture as well as have the power to be transformative and liberating. Her framework, which can be described as an epistemic borderland, is "partially outside and partially inside the Western frame of reference."⁵ Importantly, Anzaldúa's agential and epistemological framework builds on existential and phenomenological traditions by fusing it with the language, ideas, and concepts of her indigenous heritage and her life on the border. This, according to Alessandri (2020), places Anzaldúa within the Chicana existentialist tradition⁶ often bearing resemblance to concepts found in the broader Mexican existentialist thought.

In this paper, I argue that Gloria Anzaldúa's own philosophy *la facultad* captures a form of active, embodied, epistemic agency. I further argue that when an agent uses *la facultad*, they acquire a novel form of knowledge, one that is only accessible through this capacity. In Section II, I define *la facultad* as consisting in the active integration of conscious self-awareness, bodily experiences, motor skills, and sensory information with the rational mind to engage with and navigate the world. As such, the actions we choose to do are not solely determined by reasoning or mere mental states but are fundamentally shaped by the dynamic interplay between our bodies, sensory perceptions, emotions, and the situational context in which we find ourselves. In Section III, I elaborate on the epistemological contribution of *la facultad*. Finally, in Section IV, I conclude with some questions for further research.

LA FACULTAD AS EPISTEMIC AGENCY

At the center of Anzaldúa's epistemology is *la facultad*. First introduced in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa's

discussion of *la facultad* is succinct, and it only features centrally in Chapter 3, “Entering into the Serpent.” The term is introduced here to recapture the marginal ways of knowing that have been historically cast aside, alienated, and frozen. We can translate the Spanish term *la facultad* as a mental or physical power, capability, or capacity. But Anzaldúa defines *la facultad* as “the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface.”⁷ In her writings, Anzaldúa’s way of conceiving of this mechanism evolves. At first, *la facultad* is thought to be a type of sixth sense, but later it becomes an “intuitive form of knowledge.”⁸ Some philosophers have interpreted *la facultad* to be a form of clairvoyance or a new form of perception that “encourages exploration into [the Shadow self]” and promotes “creativity and embodied agency.”⁹ Others like Cynthia Paccacerqua (2016) argue that *la facultad* “is the power to bring the obscured, scattered, unintelligible parts into a unified whole, to regenerate the expressive relationship between thinking and sensibility.”¹⁰ However, I’ll try to show that these interpretations do not capture the complexity and richness of the epistemological framework that Anzaldúa offers. So, in this section, I will try to do justice to the notion by showing that *la facultad* is a form of active, epistemic agency in which emotional, bodily responses to stimuli elicit action before judgments are consciously made. It does this through a sense of urgency to understand what we have experienced.

Anzaldúa’s overarching aim is to problematize the view that there is a neat distinction between mental and physical phenomena. In line with this, *la facultad* can then be thought of as a capacity that is both mental and physical, where the mental and physical are interdependent, intertwined, and inseparable. According to Anzaldúa: “*Coatlicue, la facultad, la frontera, and nepantla*—concepts that mean . . . ‘a mestizo/mestiza, cognitive kind of perception . . . it’s hybridity, a mixture, because I live in this liminal state between worlds, between realities, between systems of knowledge, between symbology systems.’”¹¹

This inseparability of the mental and physical is highlighted by two different aspects of *la facultad*. The first, which she calls the proximity sense, is a “quick perception, arrived at without conscious reasoning” and an “acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols which are the faces of feelings, that is behind which feelings reside/hide.”¹² This sense is constructed through physical responses to unconscious risk assessments. The second aspect, a deeper one, is described as a “shift in perception” that “deepens the way we see concrete objects and people.”¹³ This latter one can only be developed through the first. This is because *la facultad* shakes us out of our habitual existence.

Though Anzaldúa’s discussion in *Borderlands/La Frontera* is brief, we can find this concept in most of her corpus and even in her early interviews, both explicitly and implicitly. For example, in *Luz en lo Oscuro / Light in the Dark*, Anzaldúa deploys *la facultad* as part of the stages of *conocimiento* (knowledge). Though not defined as robustly as in *Borderlands*, the way she uses the term *la* and its

elements offers important clues to the second, deeper aspect mentioned above.

According to this work, *conocimiento* proceeds in stages. In the first stage, when a person suffers an *arreatamiento*, that is, an event that shocks her, she is moved to “question who [they] are and what the world is about.”¹⁴ Because the *arreatamiento* is inherently uncomfortable, the person develops a strong sense of urgency to understand what they are experiencing. Through this sense of urgency, *la facultad* awakens. In the second stage—*nepantla*—*la facultad* (although it is not explicitly invoked by Anzaldúa), is developed or honed. Because *nepantla* is the place where “different perspectives come into conflict,” *la facultad* becomes an ability to control perception.¹⁵ *La facultad*, then, plays an integral role in moving through the stages of knowledge. In fact, it is a capacity that compels the agent from the state of *arreatamiento* to an attempt to control what is seen in order to make it intelligible.¹⁶

When highlighting its epistemic import, Anzaldúa calls *la facultad* “the proximity sense.” Anzaldúa describes the proximity sense of *la facultad* as a “perception without conscious reasoning” and an “acute awareness.”¹⁷ What Anzaldúa has in mind here is a form of proprioception, or the ability of our bodies to sense our movement and its spatial relation to the world. However, *la facultad* goes beyond proprioception by incorporating our relationship with social structures. In other words, our body is aware of how we move in material spaces (i.e., how close I am to this chair, whether I am upright or crooked) and how others perceive us and how we relate to them. As embodied, social beings, we unconsciously register information about our environment, the people we engage with, and the social structures and locations we reside in. This can be as mundane as unconsciously learning to use an algorithm for prediction, as cited by Holton, or as crucial as picking up on behavioral and bodily cues from an abuser in order to predict when the next act of violence will happen. This embodied capacity to register information unconsciously, however, most often originates from psychological and physical trauma and constant apprehension of bodily, mental, and spiritual harm. Trauma, marginalization, and oppression condition the body to be hypersensitive and hypervigilant to the material and social environment to avoid situations that may harm it.

This information produces bodily responses such as a “tingling on [the] skin,” an impending sense of doom, or a gut feeling.¹⁸ These responses offer tangible information regarding the consequences of expected actions and are utilized instinctively, often bypassing the necessity to deliberate between actions consciously. Importantly, this ability significantly shapes an agent’s perception of the environment, narrows attention, and influences the choice to act. Like Holton, Anzaldúa claims that these bodily reactions are not reducible to pure emotions, nor do they have the form of an unconscious judgment or propositional evaluative attitude. Instead, it seems to involve a non-conceptual representation of content or, as she writes, “the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols.”^{19,20} Unlike Holton’s account of choice absent judgment, however, *la facultad* is not informationally

encapsulated nor cognitively impenetrable.²¹ Because, as we will see later, Anzaldúa argues that when the full capacity of *la facultad* is developed, it can be altered by conscious thoughts, beliefs, or intentions.

With the proximity sense fleshed out, we can turn to the second aspect of *la facultad*. Anzaldúa says surprisingly very little about what this aspect entails. She calls it both a “shift in perception” and the “ability to shift attention and see through the surface of things and situations.”²² Thus, we can interpret the second aspect in two different ways: (1) if it is a shift in perception, then this “deeper sense” is a fuller understanding of the world that follows from the proximity sense of *la facultad* being deployed; and (2) if the “deeper sense” is an ability, then it is an act of embodied agency.

On the one hand, several passages suggest the first interpretation—this deeper aspect of *la facultad* entails, as a consequence of the proximity sense, a change in the way we view our external world, by forcing us to see the true aspects of reality. As Anzaldúa writes, it is a “mode of initiation,” taking away our “innocence” and our “safe and easy ignorance.”²³ In other words, we often walk this world unaware or ignorant of the social contexts that we inhabit. We become comfortable with this mode of existence because it is non-threatening and safe. However, there are times when we are placed in dangerous and life-threatening situations that force *la facultad* to deploy. This mode of being is uncomfortable because it feels like we have no rational control over our choices and actions. Nevertheless, in the process of self-reflection (Why did I move away? Why did I feel uneasy? Why did I get goosebumps on my skin?), we learn something new about the world and our social location in this way.

However, this interpretation fails to capture the ways *la facultad* is deployed in *conocimiento*, or even in how Anzaldúa initially thought of it in interviews conducted in the 1980s. Further, to think of it in this way is to keep *la facultad* as an individual capacity and alienated from our rational mind and ourselves, thus in conflict with the transformative aspect of *la facultad*. Worse, it is to deny the inseparability of mind and body crucial to the overall Anzaldúan framework.

On the other hand, if Anzaldúa means to say that it is an ability, then *la facultad*, in its fullest (deeper) sense, is an act of embodied agency. It is the active integration of conscious self-awareness, bodily experiences, motor skills, and sensory information with the rational mind to engage with and navigate the world. As such, the actions we choose to do are not solely determined by abstract reasoning or mental states but are fundamentally shaped by the dynamic interplay between our bodies, sensory perceptions, emotions, and the situational context in which we find ourselves.

This interpretation is supported by multiple passages where Anzaldúa deploys *la facultad* in *conocimiento*. Anzaldúa writes that *conocimiento* “comes from opening all your senses, consciously inhabiting your body and decoding its symptoms.”²⁴ Consisting of seven stages, Anzaldúa deploys

la facultad explicitly between the first (the *arreatamiento*) and the second (*nepantla*) but is developed in *nepantla*.²⁵ At first, the *arreatamiento* causes a person to “question who [they] are and what the world is about.”²⁶ The person becomes “split,” unsure about themselves and the world, continuously questioning all elements. Because questioning is inherently uncomfortable, as she writes, *la facultad* awakens.²⁷ Thus, in the first stage, we get the proximal stage of *la facultad*, insofar as it concurs with how she thinks of it in *Borderlands* (as coming from and developed through traumatic experiences).

In the second stage, *nepantla*, Anzaldúa writes, “The outer boundaries of the mind’s inner life meet the outer world of reality.”²⁸ Here we can begin to see part of the activity inherent in *la facultad*, as Anzaldúa describes “seeing through” and being “able to access knowledge.”²⁹ In this stage, she also describes the “ability to control perception” and “staying *despierta*” as a survival tool.³⁰ The exciting suggestion is that Anzaldúa thinks that *la facultad* can be controlled and deployed (even if in a very weak sense), as well as that it is fundamentally plastic. However, it is not so much that the rational mind has control over *la facultad*, but that *la facultad* is like an arm to a body, part of a whole system and unified. Through actions done on or with the body, *la facultad* can be developed. As Paccacerqua says, Anzaldúa willfully “[deploys] affective techniques like sustaining periods of sense-deprivation to lock herself into fantasies that grip her body, or holding and animating words, images, and body sensations to imprint the sense of self in new ways.”³¹ Because *la facultad* crucially involves both an active and conscious self-awareness and the ability to hone and develop these unconscious bodily abilities, it is open to change and transformation as new forms of relationality and accountability emerge.

CREATING KNOWLEDGE FROM LA FACULTAD

With this in mind, a crucial question remains: How does *la facultad* afford or generate knowledge? Unfortunately, I am only able to partially answer this question, as Anzaldúa is mostly silent on this process. First, Anzaldúa is explicit in *Luz en lo Oscuro/Light in the Dark* that *la facultad* contributes to knowledge in these cases through a sense of urgency to make sense of a world that seems opaque to us. But, as previously argued, at least in this deployment, Anzaldúa seems to be invoking the proximal sense of *la facultad*. Thus, when we are in situations that awaken the proximal sense of *la facultad*, we start to pick up on patterns from our bodily responses in order to track what elicits them, and so be able to avoid or promote them in the future. This is supported in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, where Anzaldúa describes being “forced” to develop *la facultad* so that “we’ll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away.”³²

In addition to picking up patterns, *la facultad*, according to Anzaldúa, gives us access to a form of instinctual knowledge. This is supported by the fact that she derives the concept of *la facultad* from stories of *la Llorona*, who represent for her “not the root of all evil but instinctual knowledge and other alternative ways of knowing that fuel transformation.”³³ Instinctual knowledge or intuitive knowledge, as she writes, “is the closest you come to

direct knowledge (*gnosis*) of the world, and this experience of reality is partial, too."³⁴ It is worth pausing here to point out the use of the word "gnosis," a term seldom used but notably found in José Vasconcelos's *Estética*. According to Stehn and Alessandri, who painstakingly document the influences of Mexican philosophy on Anzaldúa, Anzaldúa not only was familiar with Vasconcelos's work but, they write, she "read Vasconcelos' philosophy in order to critically rework it."³⁵ Though we only know definitively that Anzaldúa was familiar with Vasconcelos's *La Raza Cósmica*, her use of the word "gnosis" suggests a further familiarity with his corpus. In the first chapter of *Estética*³⁶ titled "Gnoseología Estética," Vasconcelos claims that our "gnosis" of the world comes through three principal (and axiologically progressive) faculties: "(i) through sensation [*conocimiento sensorial*], (ii) through reason [*conocimiento intelectual*], and (iii) through emotion [*conocimiento emocional*]."³⁷ Emotion is the "highest" because it brings us closest to metaphysical truth and brings us to direct contact with our body and world. As Emiliano Salomon argues, "rather than abstracting data from the wealth of our sense perceptions, [emotion] instead creates values, i.e., it adds significance to the objects we conceptually determine."³⁸

With this in mind, a fuller picture of *la facultad* is now illuminated. As epistemic agents, Anzaldúa claims that we are merely interpreters of knowledge (or Truth) and thus, our access to this direct knowledge is only partial and always mediated through our mind/body, social location, emotions, etc. Further, individuals are not objective, non-relational observers but part of a collective identity that is both constituted in relation to the self, others, environment, and knowledge and thus shapes (or is an active participant in) knowledge and reality. One can only see a "complete" picture by understanding where we are in relation to everything and how we shape it. As such, the deeper sense of *la facultad* becomes a crucial mechanism to generate new frames of reference and categories that are relational for which to interpret Truth. Chela Sandoval has a similar idea in mind when she describes *la facultad* as a process that "provides the basis for a differential and coalitional methodology."³⁹ In other words, through the active synthesis of self-reflection with embodied action, we simultaneously deconstruct oppressive, ideological frames of reference (such as identity categories) while creating or generating new ones that incorporate our own lived experiences and marginalized ways of living. As Andrea J. Pitts writes, it is a "resistant form of epistemic practice."⁴⁰ In addition, what this entails is that creating values or new frames of reference is a collaborative function that requires epistemic humility and deference to those harmed the most.

Considering the ability to generate these frames, if a person acts in the world with an eye toward generating new frames of reference for the purpose of social and political justice, then it is possible, as Anzaldúa writes, to "generate subversive knowledges."⁴¹ Thus, the ability to "shift attention" allows us to examine how we construct our view of the world (our social context). It forces us to confront ourselves and the reality we take for granted and be able to "see" realities that we typically would not. It also

helps generate the tools needed to create, develop, and refine epistemological methods for advancing forgotten or destroyed knowledge systems to become better positioned and empowered to represent and advocate for our communities.⁴²

What we understand from Anzaldúa is that there is a kind of knowledge we traditionally (or in a modern dualistic context) fail to recognize as knowledge. The consequences of this failure of recognition include an impartial understanding of reality and Truth, negative implications for other forms of theoretical knowledge, and unethical practices that are ultimately justified by this misguided pursuit of impartial knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. Anzaldúa further helps us illuminate how knowledge practices can be oppressive because they fragment and split the self. Though these other forms of knowledge are often conflated with a sixth sense or relegated to the margins, if we adjust how we think about making choices, and how we engage with the world as active, embodied agents, then *la facultad* is one way of helping us capture that version of accessing knowledge that dominant frameworks do not.

CONCLUSION

Even considering my interpretation of *la facultad*, much remains to be pieced together. First, considering the evolution of *la facultad* throughout Anzaldúa's writings leaves open questions about its mechanism and how it fits into *conocimiento*. Part of addressing this requires paying attention to the philosophical influences that shaped how she developed her philosophical theories and how they interact.⁴³ In particular, it is worth exploring further how much Anzaldúa takes up Vasconcelos's aesthetic monism in building *la facultad* and *conocimiento*. This is because while Vasconcelos publicly rejects existentialism, Anzaldúa makes significant use of it.⁴⁴ Thus, it opens the question as to whether and how Anzaldúa's framework is a synthesis of these opposed theories.

Another interesting line of inquiry is how Anzaldúa provides important insight into the intellectual evolution of Mexican philosophy in the United States.⁴⁵ We now know that Anzaldúa read a significant amount of Mexican philosophy and thus was building from frameworks that had already been established. Less work has been done, however, in how more contemporary theorists end up taking on board Mexican philosophy through Anzaldúa. Seeing it through this lens not only will allow us to classify Anzaldúa as part of a larger Mexican philosophical tradition but will potentially help us build bridges.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that Anzaldúa's philosophical contribution remains significant. Her work picks up on a phenomenon that we continue to discuss in epistemology, philosophy of action, and the cognitive sciences. My objective was to bring her contributions into conversation with some of the contemporary theories in these areas and to show that essential and groundbreaking theories can be developed from those that have suffered the most. If we can connect this dimension of her work with other contemporary and previous similar philosophies, we would come a long way in showing her philosophy as part of a broader tradition.

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NOTES

1. Richard Holton, *Willing, Wanting, Waiting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 78.
2. Holton, *Willing, Wanting, Waiting*.
3. Letitia Meynell, "Introduction," in *Embodiment and Agency*, ed. Sue Campbell, Susan Sherwin, and Letitia Meynell (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 4.
4. Meynell, "Introduction."
5. Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990), xxvi.
6. Mariana Alessandri, "Three Existentialist Readings of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*," *Cuadernos de ALDEEU* 34 (2020): 120.
7. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 60.
8. Anzaldúa, *Interviews/Entrevistas*, ed. AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2000), 121; Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, ed. AnaLouise Keating (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 244.
9. Andrea Pitts, "Toward an Aesthetics of Race: Bridging the Writings of Gloria Anzaldúa and José Vasconcelos," *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2014): 85.
10. Cynthia M. Paccacerqua, "Gloria Anzaldúa's Affective Logic of 'Volverse Una,'" *Hypatia* 31, no. 2 (2016): 344.
11. Anzaldúa, *Interviews/Entrevistas*, 268, my emphasis.
12. Anzaldúa, *Interviews/Entrevistas*, 268.
13. Anzaldúa, *Interviews/Entrevistas*, 268.
14. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
15. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
16. Sarah S. Ohmer offers a competing interpretation of the dynamic between *conocimiento* and *la facultad*. In particular, she writes, "Conocimiento and being/self are interrelated, and *espíritus* lend *conocimiento* to an individual, hence the shamanic exercise. The path/ journey of *conocimiento* comprises a confrontation of avoided elements, which in turn leads to the full use of *la facultad*, a perception that transcends the programming that censures/blinds/represses/distorts. *El conocimiento* is "skeptical of reasoning and rationality"; it involves spirituality and intuition, with intuitive knowledge coming from "unmediated constructs" and not from the filter of identity." See Sarah S. Ohmer, "Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Decolonizing Ritual de Conocimiento," *Confluencia* 26, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 149. However, it is unclear to me as to whether this is what Anzaldúa had in mind. In a 1999 interview, Anzaldúa describes *conocimiento* as the "awareness of *facultad* that sees through all human acts," but in *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, she only talks about *la facultad* as being awakened in the first stage and doesn't refer to *la facultad* again. Similarly, she also talks about *conocimiento* as a theory of consciousness, an epistemology, a theory of composition, counter-knowledge and an awareness.
17. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 60.
18. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 60.
19. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 56.
20. Much more needs to be said about how *la facultad* captures non-conceptual representation and whether it is a form of non-conceptual representation of values, as Christine Tappolet suggests in the cases of emotions. See Christine Tappolet, "Truth Pluralism and Many-Valued Logics: A Reply to Beall," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 50, no. 200 (2000): 382–85. I believe that Anzaldúa might have something like this in mind considering the influence of Vasconcelos on Anzaldúa's philosophical theories. However, a deep exploration into this is beyond the scope of this paper though a worthwhile project to pursue in the future.
21. Here, Holton takes on board Fodor's thesis of modularity to argue that these choices cannot be beliefs because they are too "informationally encapsulated (knowledge from outside cannot get in) and cognitively impenetrable (not under the control of central processes)." See Holton, *Willing, Wanting, Waiting*, 68. By taking this on board, Holton seems to suggest that pre-judgment choices are like emotions with fixed behavioral dispositions. However, I agree with Tappolet that the modularity model fails to capture the complexity or wide range of human emotion and its action tendencies and thus, so too, do pre-judgment choices framed in this way fail to capture complexity. More needs to be said to flesh this out, however, and it is beyond the scope of this paper.
22. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 58; Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
23. Anzaldúa, 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 58.
24. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 120, my emphasis.
25. See note 14 for a competing interpretation of *la facultad* and *conocimiento*.
26. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
27. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
28. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
29. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 125.
30. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 127.
31. Paccacerqua, "Gloria Anzaldúa's Affective Logic of 'Volverse Una,'" 344.
32. Emiliano Salomon, *Metaphysics, Aesthetics, and Race: An Examination of the Philosophy of José Vasconcelos* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 18.
33. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 121.
34. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 120.
35. Alexander V. Stehn and Mariana Alessandri, "La Mexicana en La Chicana Sources of Anzaldúa's Mexican Philosophy," in *El Mundo Zurdo 8: Selected Academic and Creative Works from the 2019 El Mundo Zurdo Conference and Meeting of the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa*, ed. Norma E. Cantú, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz, and Adrianna M. Santos (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2022), 174.
36. José Vasconcelos, *Estética* (Mexico City, Trillas: 2013).
37. Salomon, *Metaphysics, Aesthetics, and Race*.
38. Salomon, *Metaphysics, Aesthetics, and Race*.
39. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 196, fn2.
40. Andrea J. Pitts, *Nos/otras: Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Multiplicitous Agency, and Resistance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021), 36.
41. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en Lo Oscuro*, 120.
42. Shirley Tang, "Community-Centered Research as Knowledge/Capacity Building in Immigrant and Refugee Communities," in *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles R. Hale (Oakland: University of California Press, 2008), 245.
43. This work has already been started by Pitts, Jacqueline Martinez, and Alessandri. For example, Martinez shows that Anzaldúa draws heavily from Merleau-Ponty and as such, concepts like *borderlands*, *la conciencia de la mestiza*, and *la facultad* are inherently phenomenological interventions and that *la facultad* is a perceptual capacity. See Jacqueline Martinez, "Culture, Communication, and Latina Feminist Philosophy: Toward a Critical Phenomenology of Culture," *Hypatia* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 221–36. At the same time, Alessandri argues that Anzaldúa is ultimately an existentialist philosopher and an "intellectual bridgebuilder connecting European, Mexican, and Africana

philosophies." See Alessandri, "Three Existentialist Readings of Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera."

44. Vasconcelos is quoted to have said in the 1950s, "existencialismo? Eso es basura!"
45. For example, although *la facultad* bears a strong likeness to Uranga's *corazonadas*, it is unclear how similar these two concepts really are. According to Carlos A. Sánchez, a *corazonada* is an "emotive intuition . . . [they] grant access to the mysteries of Mexican being; they are heartfelt intimations that reveal the secrets of existence." It is also something that can be used to produce knowledge or is a source of truth. (See Carlos A. Sánchez, "(M)Existentialism," *The Philosophers' Magazine Archive* (n.d.), accessed July 10, 2023, <https://archive.philosophersmag.com/mexistentialism/>.) Ultimately, while at this moment we can't ascertain whether Anzaldúa had access to his work, it does help us put Anzaldúa into a Mexican philosophical context. Whether Anzaldúa built on Uranga or she and Uranga had similar intellectual evolutions and commitments remain to be seen. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for this crucial point.

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