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The Vocal Void:
A Phenomenological Exploration of Afro-Indigenous Femme Identities
in the Hispanic Caribbean

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Abstract

"The Vocal Void: A Phenomenological Exploration of Afro-Indigenous Femme Identities in the Hispanic Caribbean"

This doctoral thesis embarks on a transformative journey, unraveling the intricate layers of identity for Afro-Indigenous femmes in the Hispanic Caribbean through phenomenological descriptions. Amidst a white supremacist environment, it challenges conventional notions of Latina identity, prompting a critical examination of preconceived ideas.

Defined as a conceptual space, the Vocal Void operates insidiously, silencing and erasing Afro-Indigenous femmes. However, through meticulous engagement and critical analysis, this research unveils the potential of the Vocal Void to emancipate us from one colonial box after another. It becomes a tool not only for escaping past confines but for shaping a liberated narrative.

The thesis represents a continuous process of investigation and reorientation, offering insights into the complexities of interpersonal relationships, ancestral narratives, and self-awareness. It delves into the creation of the subject, scrutinizing the processes by which coloniality determined humanity through racialization and gender. The ambition emerging from the exploration of the Vocal Void is a transformative shift — a commitment to thinking and producing without dependency on predefined subjectivities.

This work contributes to the broader discourse on identity, challenging established norms and fostering a deeper understanding of Afro-Indigenous femme experiences. Through phenomenological inquiry, it invites a reevaluation of societal constructs, paving the way for a future that transcends the limitations of the Vocal Void and empowers individuals to craft their narratives independently, without a need for embracing the colonial subject.

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Introduction

Revisiting La Sangre Llama

The first instruction taught to me when I initially stepped upon a skateboard in 2021 was that I do not control the board, I respond to it, and by extension I control my response. A simple lesson shaped how I skate, an activity that became my salvation and freedom, and it gradually became the metaphor for how I began to approach my life in the everyday. I have realized the lesson transformed into a large part of the spirit of this thesis, which began in 2019. I cannot control the world, but I can control how I respond to it. What's more, I can push the lesson further: I cannot control the world as I arrived in it, but after I learn what other movements there are for freedom and being-at-ease, as a result of phenomenological description, I can control how I begin to orientate myself within it. The metaphor becomes a practice, a movement I come to understand, I learn I do in fact know how to do, but perhaps until I fully was being intentional with my movements and descriptions, did I realize the movement(s) are a practice with a purpose.

My thesis *La Sangre Llama* (2019) was principally an experiment, moving through phenomenology and performance in an urban, colonial space. I chose phenomenology in part because I could work from the center, from my own perspective, while I was facing towards the world. For example, if Afro-Indigenous people are scarcely represented in the Caribbean or stated by local and international governments and their administrative bodies, that we are extinct-then legally we do not exist. I do, however, exist, and so do my elders, and so did their elders, and members of their villages, communities, etc. If phenomenology is a philosophy that allows for the study of experience, then I can legitimize my own existence without a dependence on the state and its census, for example.

According to the Stanford dictionary's definition of phenomenology, "An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions" (Phenomenology (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy), n/a, 2022). The first-person account that I provided in *La Sangre Llama* was an introductory attempt in how to do phenomenology from my own positionality, understanding racism, misogyny all whilst living in the epicenter of coloniality. Orientations, arrivals, turning towards and away, from objects are a part of phenomenological work. How do we use phenomenology when one is the object, too? Is that possible, and if so, what does phenomenology look like? According to Sara Ahmed, we can use phenomenology to see what is offered through the philosophy, as she not only demonstrates its use when studying "...how bodies are gendered, sexualized, and raced by how they extend into space, as an extension that differentiates [between binaries]...a model of how bodies become orientated by how they take up time and space" (Ahmed, 5, 2006).

Throughout the writing process I was unsure of not only my own understanding of phenomenology as a philosophy, but also of phenomenology's capacity for use by an individual such as myself. This is to say that I often doubt the ability of frameworks or theories to function intersectionally, a framework for an amplified approach to analysis, to consider the complexities of Black and Brown embodiment, and this was true for how I approached phenomenology. Nonetheless, through examining phenomenology and also hermeneutics through an intersectional framework, I finished *La Sangre Llama* with the realization that there was much to be discovered about situated phenomenologies, specifically Afro-Caribbean and Latina Feminist phenomenologies. If hermeneutics, simply put, is the study of interpretation, and it is used alongside intersectionality and phenomenology, then as scholars we can continue to

broaden the horizons of analysis. Moreover, my focus is lasered focused upon ways for us Afro-Indigenous feminists to push phenomenology further.

Writers from both the Caribbean and Latin America had invested in their own versions and movements through phenomenological practices, and thus provided me with a foundation for work I could build upon. I completed *La Sangre Llama* noting that there was an in-between space concerning the philosophical canons of Afro-Caribbean, West Indian phenomenology and Latina Feminist, Chicana phenomenology; what existed was an erasure of Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity, whose national and ethnic identities shifted between Latin America and the Caribbean by virtue of language, race, and geopolitical situations. Even if the matter seemed far too complex and layered to understand, I myself hold these markers, therefore, it was a space that was being taken up in a physical manner but needed more articulation. Consequently, the work of this thesis, *The Vocal Void*, began.

My initial ambition was to create a more strategic framework in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean could use phenomenology in a manner that was not dependent upon what the male European fathers of the philosophy created. There was a caveat, however, it being the works by Latin American feminists and the West Indian writers, whilst creating bodies of work that are thoughtful and provide salient analysis of various colonial conditions, were not suitable for what I desired to unearth. In one canon, African and Indigeneity are ancestral, dark-skinned women operating as near myths within fairer-skinned mestizas and their imaginations, erasing the existence of African and Indigenous femmes in Latin America. In the other, rarely is a woman's voice heard, or her description of the colonial

condition in the Caribbean; she is subjected to the same misogynistic mechanisms of coloniality by her own community. How do we engage the lived experience of a cross section of the human that was not meant to be told nor heard? What about a subjectivity of racism within the borders of the mother countries and not just the borderlands with the dominant Anglo country? What about the voice of Caribbean women in a society still playing by patriarchal rules?

The Vocal Void as a body of work is set to be the journey in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean can do phenomenological descriptions, suspending not only their naïve ideas about what it means to be Latina in a white supremacist environment, but also what it means to be Latina. Throughout the research and through phenomenological descriptions, this thesis had me constantly reorientating myself within one colonial identity after another. The Vocal Void, in this thesis defined as a conceptual space in which its operation functions to silence and erase Afro-Indigenous femmes; but when engaged critically, an analysis of the Vocal Void releases us from one colonial box and also provides us with tools to break free from previous colonial boxes. This thesis is a constant investigation and then reorientation, a path to not only how we relate to other femmes and their stories, particularly ancestors, but also to ourselves and one another. a work that dives into the creation of the subject by investigating the processes by which coloniality determined who is human and who is not through racialization and gender. An ambition for my future as a consequence from the Vocal Void is to now learn how to think and produce our works without a dependency on the subject.

What I discovered through phenomenological descriptions (sometimes doing it so unknowingly) and thorough analysis of the development of race, gender, and what it means to be

human, was a constant turning away from colonial identity markers after understanding how they were made. Equipped with the knowledge of the mechanics of the mapping of the human through coloniality, I could move towards understanding the situated phenomenologies of Latina feminist and West Indian phenomenologies in such a way that I could fully articulate what I found to be useful but also problematic. Problematic in such a way that I did not find them to be as liberating as I had once thought or hoped. Even though, perhaps for instance Franz Fanon was able to push Maurice Merleau-Ponty (a founder of phenomenology) works far beyond what had been done, through the lens of a Black man from the Franco Caribbean in Europe. Even Fanon's stretching of phenomenology was not elastic enough to provide Women of Color from the Caribbean a place to articulate for themselves their perspectives. Through this stretching and pushing of these situated phenomenologies, I found that I was constantly questioning not only the philosophy and the methodology, but also what the findings were. There was a constant movement, girando de un posición al otro.

My first inspirations for theoretical and artistic production always beings as Puerto Rican in the Diaspora, and who has lived in various locations within the Diaspora; urban cities such as Chicago, rural areas in the southern United States, agricultural locations in the United Kingdom, colonial epicenter of Barcelona, and lastly, a digital network of diasporas. A kitchen table comprised not of wood and metal, but of code that creates social media or chat enabled platforms, in where Women of Color meet and exchange stories, recipes, and soul healing work together.

Re-Orientations

As a thesis, *The Vocal Void* is organized into four parts: Methodology, Historical References, Situated Phenomenologies, and Implementation of Methodology. Part One is a presentation of different frameworks and philosophies, titled “Methodologies”. Intersectionality as a framework is introduced first, establishing its definition and how one is to use it during their research and analysis, but also to show how I will be approaching the texts throughout the research for this thesis. I provide an example from my previous work in order to be clear about the manner in which intersectionality is used to analyze text and artistic production. Intersectionality allows for multi-axis approach to analysis, and I use it as a foundation in which the texts cited for research and philosophy are carried through.

The chapter demonstrates how intersectionality is also incorporated into phenomenology, creating a critical phenomenology, with the intended goal being that phenomenology is able to go beyond what it has done thus far when it is used by feminists, queer, Black, and Indigenous people from various national locations. As the editors of the book *50 Concepts for A Critical Phenomenology* state in their introduction “transformative descriptions”, “[marginalized writers] also expand our understanding of phenomenology’s potential far beyond its classical horizons. Our intellectual landscape has now been significantly shaped by disciplines that did not exist when phenomenology’s foundational texts were being written” (Weiss, xiii, 2019). The final portion of Methodologies shows how hermeneutics can be intergraded with intersectionality, creating intersectional hermeneutics; combined, a framework that is said to have a lack of clarity regarded its methodology is now given stability, and a method for readings works is now able to offer a multi-axis approach to art and texts with a framework that

begs for deeper insights. Together, intersectionality, phenomenology and hermeneutics creates for me as a researcher, theorist, and artist the capacity to always dig deeper into what I consume and create, for there is never a moment where I can no longer have a question or desire to stop moving forward. It becomes clear to me that the kind of investigation I am doing will always have another door that begs to be opened if I continue to utilize the methods that have been described here.

Part Two, titled “Historical References” serves to explain and expand the formation of race in Latin America and the Caribbean. By studying medieval Iberian history, the story of coloniality is situated in a timeline that predates the infamous journey by Christopher Columbus. I believe it is important to situate the invention of race through the practices that created the Spanish nation state identity. This historical reference of the creation of the Spanish state through their invention of race is placed alongside the presentation of the mapping of the human, or the cartography of Man. The invention of race and the mapping of the human are the premier devices of coloniality, and an investigation into the phenomenology of race and gender cannot be understood properly without the proper contextualizing information. This section also serves as a basis for understanding section three, the situated phenomenologies found in Latin America and the Caribbean, and ultimately what coloniality, decoloniality and decolonialism mean in relation to one another and throughout the thesis.

Part Three is “Situated Phenomenologies”, is a re-engagement with the phenomenological writings from Latin American and Afro-Caribbean writers, however this time I engage with the work far more critically, through the methodologies outlined previously. As someone who is Puerto Rican, an identity that holds several political, racial, and cultural layers such as Latine,

Caribbean, colony, free associated state, nation, etc., I chose the works of Latina and Caribbean writers. Puerto Rico is an island that speaks Spanish, the people are considered “Latino” within the Anglo imagination, but the island itself is located in the Caribbean, not in Latin America. These complexities and layers are discussed in this thesis, but I note this here as a point of reference as to why I chose the works that I have.

Firstly, I examine the works of prominent writers Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa and Maria Lugones. These writers are important (and the most visible) voices in what is cataloged as Latina feminist phenomenology- even if they themselves do not solely identify as such. Despite having read their works in the past and identifying with the script as a fellow “Latina”, I moved through the works through the methodology I outlined in the previous chapters, contextualizing their writings with the racial and gender politics of Latin American and Euro-American (Anglo) culture. This new engagement with the writers cemented for me a dispute I have with the concept of *Latinidad*, particularly when referencing the systems of racialization in place both in Latin America and in the diaspora, and how *Latinidad* is represented by a certain class of writer, artist, and woman. I find that *Latinidad* is not meant to include individuals such as myself, and despite being able to understand much of what is written, I still upon second reading, can point to how Latina feminist phenomenology cannot be accessible to all those who are categorized under the umbrella terms Latina. In these writings, I begin to draw the first portion of the vector space of erasure that becomes a prominent visual of this thesis as I move towards the works of Afro-Caribbean, West Indian writers.

It is necessary to discuss Franz Fanon if one is discussing the phenomenology of the colonized or the racialized. Fanon’s works are essential readings, even if what he does is a phenomenology unlike any other. Fanon’s creation of concepts such as the historico-racial schema give us

a new language within the discussion of being racialized and the process of de-humanization, which is a process that exists outside of many mainstream philosophical texts. However, while Fanon may be able to push the writings and models of the phenomenology forefathers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty beyond what they originally intended to do, Fanon falls prey to many of the same patriarchal and misogynistic mechanizations of society. Much in the same as I experienced with the Latina feminist writings, I am able to understand phenomenology through the lens of the racialized subject in Europe through his works, but the misogynistic approach to how Women of Color experience of racialization is not done so whilst also considering gender, and how patriarchy effects women whilst being racialized, too. Furthermore, the phenomenological writings that do come out of the Caribbean, are voiced predominantly by men; the voice of the Caribbean woman is erased. This creates the other half of the vector visual of silence and erasure of the Afro-Indigenous femme subject in phenomenology.

The magical approach to quantum in art production and mythopoetic phenomenology of Wilson Harris provides me with a portal to my imagination. Through Wilson's imaginative methods of reconnection with the past, I note how not only his approach to more harmonized with Indigenous ways of thinking about humans and their relationship to the external and spiritual world, and by extension many Black Caribbean woman artists in the Fine Art genre¹. The responsibility of the Harrisian artist is defined and has a certain magical task within the artists world. The role of the Harrisian artist is to bind the Caribbean back to itself through the trauma it has experienced from coloniality; this role is unlike any other outlined with regard to other phenomenological writing or production, and thus I find something new and exciting

¹ Harris's approach to artistic production parallels the artists that I researched for *La Sangre Llama*, including but not limited to, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Awilda Sterling-Duprey and Simone Leigh.

in desires for artists here. This is important particularly as I begin to decide what kind of art I would want to produce as the outcome of this research, as I did previously with *La Sangre Llama*.

It is also in this section that I investigate William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as the play and its characters Prospero, Caliban and Ariel are regularly used to anchor the West Indian philosophical genre. The characters of *The Tempest* are frequently metaphors used to discuss the Caribbean subject, but this is often only centered around the West Indian male subject. The themes I refer to most of *The Tempest* are of displacement, slavery, misogyny, and the non-human. As done previously, I use intersectional hermeneutics as the foundation of my reading and analysis, and in this I seek not only the main male character of the play in the Hispanic Caribbean, but I investigate how readers can find him in Puerto Rico specifically, since that is where my diasporic experience extends from. I also push beyond the common themes utilized when discussing *The Tempest* as it pertains to the Caribbean and post-colonialism and begin to consider what other silenced characters can provide as vessels for decolonial thinking specifically for Afro-Indigenous femmes in the Hispanic Caribbean.

This deeper investigation of other characters follows the aforementioned space dedicated to *The Tempest*. As part of the implementation of methodology, I utilize to my fullest capacity an intersectional hermeneutic approach to the characters that I deem more relevant to my thesis but also regarding the histories of individuals situated in the Hispanic Caribbean. Therefore, I do create a means in how we can engage with their stories that implements methods outlined in Part One, but also Part Three. In order for my work to be in dialogue with the Latina Feminist and West Indian phenomenology, I highlight how Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean can reorientate themselves through and out of coloniality, as

the other canons mean to do respectively; however, my focus allows for an open-ended ability for fluidity that does not serve coloniality by erasing Afro-Indigeneity. I do so by cross referencing a historical, spiritual figure from a small village in the mountains of Puerto Rico, against the silenced female character in *The Tempest*.

What occurs throughout the process of intersectional, hermeneutical, and phenomenological engagement with the texts for me is a constant re-orientation of how I am situated in the world. I use the concept of re-orientation as is used by Sara Ahmed and her work with queer phenomenology, particularly “...how bodies become straight up by ‘lining up’ with lines that are already given...how compulsory heterosexuality operates as a straightening device...” (Ahmed, 23, 2006) What began as a suspension of the natural attitude- to me an acceptance of white supremacist, misogynistic and heterosexual dominant society- resulted in an unraveling of naivete within this acceptance of domination. As demonstrated in Figure 1, there are constant turns that I took throughout the process of writing this thesis. Figure 1 becomes a cartographic project, in which Afro-Indigenous femmes can map movements through colonial identities and structures in order to be liberated from their constrictions. These movements are in part due to phenomenological descriptions, and the dismantling of what are fixed categorical placements under oppression structures.

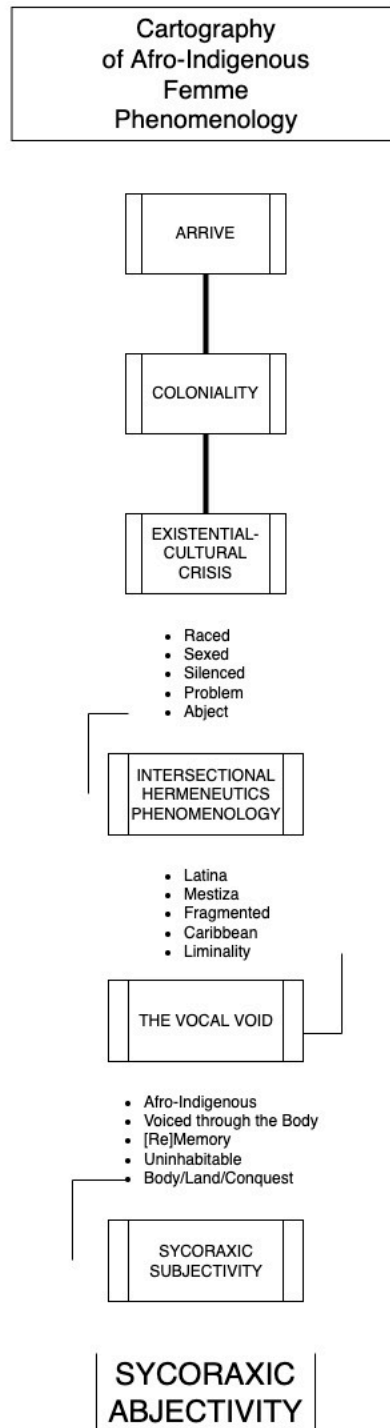


Figure 1, Cartography of Afro-Indigenous Femme-nomenclology, Courtesy of the Artist, 2022

Found within each of the groupings, are themes explored throughout the thesis. For example, Existential-Cultural Crisis includes “gendered” and “raced”, ideas that are discussed throughout the “Historical Reference” portion of the thesis. Post re-orientation, I use intersectional hermeneutics and phenomenology to engage with the phenomenology of people of color, which then in turn provokes another re-orientation away from “Latina”, for example. Katherine McKittrick’s book *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and The Cartographies of Struggle* (2006) takes Sylvia Wynter’s analysis of the invention of Human and opens the “uninhabitable” of the normal (in other words, the list of those who qualify to become Human in the Anthropocene era, as Casta demonstrates). McKittrick further states that geographical ‘encounters’ are essential to the analysis because space is socially constituted. Whilst Figure 1 is a map of re-orientations and turns away from colonial identities, it is also an open road map to a future that moves beyond the subject.

The concept of re-orientations: A Conversational Interlude

There is always the start. When we begin by looking at the desk, or the pack of cigarettes (Fanon) or anywhere, there is a start. We are orientated into the world. That’s the start where Ahmed points to. Also, in The Phenomenology of The Sub Proletariat, [the start is] the city in which people live, the buildings they face. The start, my start, is the society, it’s a big, big place, granted, but I start at the rip age of 30 realizing what kind of world I actually live in without actually meaning to; I was in a world of internalized coloniality, and I described the owning of this tacky

[Spicy Latina] shirt and came out of it and landed at the doorsteps of de-coloniality. So now I continuously use phenomenological methods with my understanding of intersectional hermeneutics to describe and understand the world as I move through different spaces (existential-cultural crisis, the vocal void) ... to re-orientate myself in the various levels of internalized coloniality, as it pertains to my being to just being through to actually existing. I am orientated through hard core socialization into white supremacy, into being 'a girl' into heterosexuality, etc.

I suspend my natural attitude of this society-that it is normal-and realize that being Latina is an orientation of a specific kind-then I resuspend what Latina means-and reorientate myself again- and continue to do so.

All these new orientations I land at are fine and well, but intersectional analysis pushes me to ask more questions about where I land, and what phenomenology does allow is for me to describe it to see if it is enough. Often it is not, which is why I landed at the existential-cultural crisis, but then Latina was not it, then I moved towards A Vocal Void, but that was just a portal to realizing there is a way to vocalize within the void, the Vocal

Void is a state of being of coloniality so I can use Sycoraxic Subjectivity as a phenomenological method to continue the project of decoloniality...

As a result of the previously mentioned cross referencing of historical figures and *The Tempest*, I complete another turn towards what I call Sycoraxic Subjectivity, the final marker in my investigation. Sycoraxic Subjectivity, a term which points to how Afro-Indigenous femmes in the Hispanic Caribbean can tell their own stories without the dependency of the legitimacy of the state, nation state identity projects and other structures built in place from coloniality. Simply put, if Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean cannot be heard through Latina Feminist phenomenology, or through West Indian phenomenology, it is because they exist within the Vocal Void. Through the constant reorientation movements by way of phenomenological description and intersectional hermeneutics, Sycoraxic Subjectivity becomes a portal for exploration. I demonstrate how Sycoraxic Subjectivity thinking is used in my own phenomenological writing as I, in tandem, produce art works that correspond to the writing. By beginning with what I created in *La Sangre Llama*, I demonstrate how Sycoraxic Subjectivity breaks through constricting colonial and post-colonial identities in order for Afro-Indigenous femme phenomenology can grasp onto possibility of a phenomenology for themselves. We move towards the unknown, with no new names for our subjectivity, and furthermore, questioning whether or not the subject must be claimed; there is liberation in the unknown and possibility, and I paved that for myself as a scholar and artist through this work.

Part One: Methodology

Chapter One

Intersectionality

“The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences. [sic] Moreover, ignoring difference within groups contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics [sic]. Feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling” (Crenshaw, 1242, 1991).

This quote demonstrates the beginnings of Kimberlé Crenshaw’s development of the framework, in the late 1980’s, for those who worked in the legal system, so they could analyze African American women’s experiences comprehensively. This framework titled Intersectionality would later cement its place firmly in the lexicon of academia, digital feminisms, and the praxis of the ‘global south’ and beyond. “I will center Black women in this analysis in order to contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with the single-axis analysis

that distorts these experiences. Not only will this juxtaposition reveal how Black women are theoretically erased, it will also illustrate how this framework imports its own theoretical limitations that undermine efforts to broaden feminist and antiracist analyses” (Crenshaw, 39, 1989). In order to prevent race, gender, ethnicity, etc. to be treated as mutually exclusive categories and analyzed solely on a single axis, Crenshaw constructed a framework in which Black women’s experiences, would be understood multilaterally. Crenshaw noted the tendency of studies to center the privileged minority groups or within how the cases of sex discrimination or race-based discrimination were handled. Those that held some form of privilege despite being a part of a minority group or hold minority status. “I want to suggest further that this single-axis framework erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group” (Crenshaw, 40, 1989).

In the footnotes of the seminal essay introducing intersectionality into our vocabulary, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color* (1991), Crenshaw notes “I consider intersectionality a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory. In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race and gender are essentially separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable” (Crenshaw, 1244, 1991). This leads to further understanding how intersectionality is an analytical tool, and how I will be employing it throughout this thesis. In order to fully accomplish a comprehensive analysis of history, the engagement of phenomenology within Caribbean and Latin contexts, intersectionality must be the bedrock of critical analysis. Conversely, it

also is the means to which I conceptualize new possibilities in locating Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity within a Hispanic Caribbean context.

The book *Intersectionality* (2016) by Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, provides readers with deeper and clearer demonstrations of how intersectionality is used as an analytical tool. It serves to remind us as researchers that axes of power and domination function simultaneously within a given society, “not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities” (Hill Collins and Bilge, 21, 2016). Intersectionality is not a subject that is studied, it is the framework in which a subject is analyzed through by focusing upon oppression social and legal systems. Within *Intersectionality*, the writers ask what it means to be critical and to be critical through intersectionality, and which the answer is fundamentally to criticize, reject or try to fix social problems that materialize in societies with social inequality.

Post-colonial and decoloniality are studies that are relevant to this thesis. Post-coloniality emerges as a theme within the Afro-Caribbean philosophy that is explored in Part Three. Decoloniality emerges as a final component to my approach, as a radical shift in thinking about structures and futures for those of marginalized identities, who look for something beyond the Neo-liberal politic that, for some, has proven insufficient. The work by Collins and Bilge’s on decolonization is particularly useful for me, when they state: “Within the specific historical setting of a desegregating and decolonizing world, being critical required a self-reflexivity of thought, feeling and action about one’s own practice, as well as openness to similar projects” (Hill Collins and Bilge, 103, 2016). The writers’ further state that such projects would describe the situations of post-colonialism and criticize the violent and unjust outcomes of it, but also “imagine alternatives, and/or propose viable action strategies for change” (Hill Collins and

Bilge 2016). This is how I will utilize intersectionality in this thesis, not only as I read the philosophy of Afro-Caribbean and Latine philosophers and feminists, but also how I begin to fill gaps I find in their works. These gaps are crucial for how I develop my own theoretical and artistic work in deconstructing what voids are found in current and popular literature regarding phenomenology.

Intersectional Analysis Example in Master's Thesis

Intersectionality as an analytical tool and heuristic device can vary from project to project. “Even though those who use intersectional frameworks all seem to be situated under the same big umbrella, using intersectionality as a heuristic device means that intersectionality can assume many different forms” (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016). Bearing this possible differentiation in mind, I will provide the following synopsis into how I have used intersectionality within my most recent past work. This example will demonstrate a connection of this thesis to *La Sangre Llama* and will also serve as a demonstration into how I will utilize intersectionality throughout this investigation.

My *La Sangre Llama* centered on colonial architecture as symbols of state power over colonized subjects, and how black women contemporaneously create art works in response to colonial architecture and landscapes, both country and urban. One of the methodological components of this previous research project was the expansion of a term I call the existential-cultural crisis, which is experienced by women of color in the diaspora. The existential-cultural crisis was a term I began to use in the development of my thesis for my final project during my undergraduate (*The Gonzo Museum of Ethnology*, 2013), and which I fully actualized and defined in *La Sangre Llama*. I maintain my original definition of the existential-cultural crisis as a “daily inability to live freely in an acceptance and understanding of oneself

within the dominant white supremacist, colonial and patriarchal society that is the Western world. Additionally, since they are women and/or femmes² they are unable to inhabit their worlds without ruptures or a thick sense of not-being-at-ease, which is a consequence of the remaining stain of colonialism on the flesh. This remaining residue is what prompts racialized misogyny upon the bodies of Women of Color, for not only must they be a Woman of Color, but they must also be so *in relation to* heterosexual white men and white women” (X, 9, 2019). In other words, Women of Color living in the diaspora do not have the autonomy to define themselves outside of the established ideas regarding their “Otherness” as defined by white supremacy. Inhabiting worlds, such as the diaspora in Western society, without ruptures means being free of racialized misogyny, which at present, I would argue, is not a possibility.

In order to contextualize the creation of the existential-cultural crisis, I began by providing a personal account of my own experience with race, gender, capitalism³, culture and xenophobia, this account presented a concrete example of how these axes of control and domination work to govern the mindset of a femme of color throughout their life in regard to their self-worth, agency and daily behaviors. “If I think back to my primary school education in the United States and my university experience in the United Kingdom, I can give examples of explicit institutionalized racism permeating into housing, healthcare, popular culture, and

² A note on the word ‘femme’: A gender identity in which someone (female, male or other) has an awareness of cultural standards of femininity and actively embodies a feminine appearance, role, or archetype. It is usually-- but not always-- associated with a gay or queer sexual identity/sexuality. It is usually more accentuated and intentional than a straight female gender identity or gender presentation and often challenges standards of femininity through exaggeration, parody, or transgression of gender norms.

³ I use the term capitalism to refer to the accessibility to the market women of color have, or in the example provided, do not have. The shift in the healthcare and beauty has shifted in recent years, making it easier for women of color to be able to provide themselves with adequate hair care for example. There is a discussion to be had as well with regard to the commodification of items associated with Otherness, which also correlates to the value of people of color so long as they can participate in capitalist systems. While I do not thoroughly engage with this topic within this thesis, there are connections to be made that can be expanded upon in other literature.

general access to products on the market. Racism, as much as misogyny and class, has affected my every movement, from personal relationships through to working as a professional in artistic fields” (X 2019). This examination also provided readers an insight into the mentality that begins to develop as a result of the crisis, even if the subject (in this case myself) does not realize it.

Providing an example of media representations of specifically Afro-Indigenous Latines third layer: it adds Afro-Indigenous Latines within the United States, “[sic] I was...treated as if I was an illegal immigrant that was imposing themselves within the society as a non-US citizen. I was not a part of the consciousness of America unless it was a negative representation, but more often than not we were just non-existent” (X,10, 2019). From here, an analysis of intra-communal racism and anti-blackness was presented. By intra-communal, I specifically mean within the Latine culture itself (as it is a settler colonial project). Latinidad encapsulates as much white supremacy and anti-blackness when compared to the United States. This is made clear when I note “If I looked to the Latin American media available in the USA at the time of my childhood, Indigenous and African Latinx’s were in no shape or form better represented at all. They were either slaves, mummies, or poor idiot drunks that were often in abusive relationships with their partners and with many children...there was no solace for me, [sic] racially speaking, as Latinidad as an ethnic marker was not created for Africans nor for Indigenous people” (X, 10-11, 2019). Thus, an account of how the lines of racism and colonial subjugation still continue, but through the regional and cultural contexts of the United States and Latin American dynamics.

The existential-cultural crisis I was experiencing was culminating into internalization of racialized misogyny “The goal [racialized misogyny] is to be understood and treated as white with

the same access to a quality of life that whiteness seemingly affords, and that can never be achieved in a white supremacist society [sic]" (X, 11, 2019). If one is read by the dominant white society as a person of color, whiteness as a social status, can never be achieved, because one is inevitably reminded that they are not white. Marianna Ortega in her book *In Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity and the Self* (2016) notes a key difference in Heideggerian description of Dasein and a Latina's experience. Ortega's analysis further expands the description of "The ruptures in her everyday experience, given her multiple social, cultural, and spatial locations, prompt her to become more reflective of her activities and her existence, what we may describe as a life of not being-at-ease. While all selves may experience not being-at-ease occasionally, multiplicitous selves at the margins experience it continuously" (Ortega, 60, 2016).

Colorism

The final layer to the existential- cultural crisis that I examined was colorism. Colorism was a term created by Alice Walker in her book *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983) and is used to describe prejudice or preference, specialized treatment of same-race people based solely on their color. Colorism is a tool of racism and white supremacy, and it occurs within the dynamics of various communities of color and between white and people of color. While the mechanics or terms differ from country to country, region to region, colorism's systemic function is the same, and its purpose is unwavering. "Wherein the darker your skin...the more systemic and more violent your treatment becomes. One's proximity to whiteness means that despite being a Person of Color or being mixed-race [white and non-white], there is an ability to be structurally better off and able to gain access, platforms,

wealth, and career opportunities that are not afforded to those of darker skin [complexions]” (X, 12, 2019).

In *La Sangre Llama*, I discussed what happens when my color deepens in the summer months and how I can track the upward spike in harassment in public spaces. In the thesis however, I contend that I myself do not experience colorism structurally, since I am not a person with dark skin. In all senses, I would be an individual that structurally benefits from colorism, despite not being a white passing individual. It is important to note that whilst colorism is a factor in the existential-cultural crisis, my personal experiences with discrimination (based on skin color alone) are not as such that I provide a personal account of structural colorism. However, colorism is always considered to ensure readers are reminded that it is indeed a factor when discussing racialized misogyny, in which the perspectives of those who are darker skinned must take the lead.

In *La Sangre Llama*, I continued to examine the historical and colonial context that places a Latine in this contemporary crisis; that is to say there is the presupposition of race and cultural difference (particularly in the diaspora). This racial and cultural difference is because of colonialism and within the context of the research of the Hispano-Luso world. The need for this examination was to provide the specific historical and social context for the Black womanhood from which the art works (discussed in Chapter Five) were created out of. It was necessary to be specific about the power dynamics at play and their cultural legacies. The analysis of casta systems as an outcome of racial miscegenation and how that affected the colonial societies, both in and out of Latin America, provided readers with an understanding of the power structure of society at that period. This analysis was mostly done through examination of the artworks, both ethnographic and anthropological, and works commissioned for those

in the higher echelons of society from the 17th-18th centuries. Moving through epochs, Modernism was examined with the same critical and sociological eye, a slight transformation in how Black womanhood was used in art works, albeit was less functional and ethnographic but still rooted in anti-black colonial narratives regarding Black women's bodies and sexuality. This example was provided by citing works from Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) and Eduard Manet's *Olympia* (1863).

The analysis of the existential-cultural crisis coupled with historical art examples I provided was accomplished with intersectionality as the heuristic device, even though I had not been explicit about its deployment when I wrote the chapter. Multiple lines of oppression worked jointly together in order to create the colonial project and have it maintained in the present day. "The aesthetics of empire are imprinted within the consciousness of the many who live in it. [sic] From the need to create justifications for slavery and genocide came lucrative art and racial categories, and thus a legacy of anti-black misogyny in society and culture, was born. This history leads us to today, in which the aftermath of colonialism is present upon my own skin, and I too carry this legacy as I cross borders. This colonial, white supremacist history, despite differences in language, culture and region lines come together to put Women/Femmes of Color in an existential, cultural crisis within their respective location" (X, 30-31, 2019).

Conclusion

In order to provide the basis for why there is an existential- cultural crisis, I needed to engage with the historical context of race and the creation of Black womanhood through the colonial gaze. In order to visually demonstrate its modus operandi, I provided readers with examples

through a critical engagement with Latin American art history. Through this engagement, I was able to create a timeline that returned us to the current moment in time; the descendants of New World colonized subjects live with the residue of the status of subjugation on the skin. The analysis was to also demonstrate a continuation of the development of not just the existential-cultural crisis, but also my use of intersectionality as a large component of my research and theoretical work to be produced. Intersectionality demonstrates there are multiple power structures at play, be it race, gender, ability, or class, etc. Intersectionality forces its users to acknowledge system barriers by bracketing social power structures that affect the material outcomes of people's lives.

Chapter Two

Phenomenology

As stated in the Introduction, I was very intrigued by phenomenology but hesitantly approached the methodology with respect to its capacity for understanding Blackness or Indigeneity, notably concerning the performance work of Black women artists. Within the foundational literature there appeared to be an inability to explore how regional and cultural contexts could affect the way we interpret or experience certain phenomena. Again, Marianna Ortega notes that Heidegger for example, does not account for the multiplicity of particular histories: “Heidegger discusses the importance of *Daesin* [her emphasis] being a historical being that interprets itself in specific environments, but he does not describe or engage with those environments” (Ortega, 56, 2016). However, there are various texts within Black/Indigenous/Latina studies that attempt themselves to use phenomenology as a means for discussing the experience of post-colonialism and race, specifically the particularity of performance as it pertains to Black and Indigenous bodies. I attempted to use phenomenology in my previous work and realized that within the time allotted for the investigation, I was unable to make full use of a phenomenology within my explorations of Black women’s embodiment and performance. Therefore, my exploration into phenomenology as a methodology for locating subjectivity continues within this thesis, as was part of the stated goal at its inception; to further explore Blackness and Indigeneity through a phenomenological lens, which also encompasses the cultural context of Latinidad and the Caribbean and locate Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity.

My previous workings of phenomenology entailed separating the Latina and Afro-Caribbean canons, surveying them independently of each other and making note of the various problems I perceived that caused me confusion or hesitation. The question at the forefront was how can phenomenology work in assessing specifically Black women's artistic production in terms of themes of race and gender? Moreover, how do researchers performing phenomenological practices regard particular histories of race, gender, diasporic displacement, and other themes. Afro-Caribbean philosophy by Frantz Fanon and Henry Pagent, for example, provided me a phenomenology that centered Blackness and the postcolonial condition in a Caribbean cultural context, albeit through a male orientated perspective. Latina phenomenology by Gloria Anzaldúa, further contextualized by Marianna Ortega in the book *In-Between*, outlined the not-being-at-ease within new borders and white Anglo dominant spaces and locations as seen through a mestiza's eyes. What became clear to me during my investigation, were gaps in the knowledge produced by Latina feminist phenomenology and Afro-Caribbean phenomenology (these epistemic gaps are to be analyzed critically in Chapter 6).

Intersectional Phenomenology

Firstly, we must begin with an understanding of how intersectionality and phenomenology work together to create a [critical] phenomenology that is able to address the concerns for Black/Indigenous femmes no matter the national border, but we also must consider these borders are not just physical, but cultural and racial, too. In this chapter I will develop a core understanding of the phenomenology I need in order to locate Afro-Indigenous subjectivity within a Hispanic Caribbean diasporic cultural context. We are beginning with an understanding of phenomenology that is not rooted or solely built in a specific phenomenologist's position from the philosophy's inception, or its subsequent immediate developments; in other words, it is not solely Husserlian, Sartrean, Heidegger's, etc., but it does rely on Crenshaw and

Collin's work. In the book *50 Concepts for A Critical Phenomenology* (2020), Duane H. Davis and Lisa Guenther both contributed essays that provide readers introductions for understanding this critical (intersectional) phenomenology. Then I will provide short introductions to more contextualized and located phenomenology by Black American, Latina and Indigenous writers so as to lay the foundation of their canons, but my own critical engagement with these texts is to be provided in following chapters.

In order to properly engage with the histories of the canons in a full way when appropriate further in this thesis, I want to lay bare their foundations and gauge how they are employed intersectionally. I do this so that I may have an appropriate framework to accomplish several goals within this thesis: a participation in a long standing, and also intricate discussion, about Latinidad, Caribbean identity and Indigeneity. The sole purpose of this undertaking is to make space for the difficult and nuanced dialogues of race, anti-blackness, and cultural displacement. Secondly is to fill epistemic gaps, particularly in regard to Latina and Afro-Caribbean phenomenological thought. What I mean by this is I will perform phenomenological practices in order to understand Afro-Indigenous femme experiences within a Hispanic Caribbean context.

In Chapter 5 I introduce Jamaican writer and philosopher Sylvia Wynter, who provides a systemic account of the Western world's creation of our contemporary knowledge system. This includes its formation of the concept Man, Human, and the colonized counterparts of the non-Human, Black and Indigenous peoples. In this system, Black and Indigenous are not human categories, and are often regarded as having no subjectivity precisely because they are not human because they were used as chattel. Along with the framework provided by Wynter,

I present Maria Lugones' essay *The Coloniality of Gender*, which explores the lack of subjectivity but specifically for Women of Color in Latin America. This lack of subjectivity is established through the discourses dominated by men concerning colonization, race, and sex. Lugones argues against male writers who have race positioned as having no biological basis but a social one, however, gender presents itself as inherently biological and is not a part of a social construction established during colonization.

These analysis' combined give me cause to believe that the Afro-Indigenous femme is an already politicized subject when it is born and thus faces their own horizon. The idea of an already politicized subject is explored in the article by David Mariott titled *Inventions of Existence: Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Sociogeny, and "the Damned" (2012)*, as they state "colonialism has not only immured native life but has immured the writing of history as well, and if the narratives, codes, genres, and genealogies of colonialism have tended to block the potentiality of the colonized, they seem equally to have blocked the affirmation of l'Histoire. Or perhaps, paradoxically, it is because the meaning of "my" destiny is not itself historical that it can never escape the concept of history that imprisons it, which is also to do with the way colonialism seized upon what were seen to be "inherited" differences to begin with" (Mariott, 46, 2012).

In phenomenological terms, I have spent my lifetime questioning this horizon that I am oriented towards. A horizon shaped by the coloniality of power. I am experimenting in order to understand this orientation, and perhaps turn myself towards the horizon in a way that I may be able to see, feel and experience wholly, clearly, legitimately. The focus upon the embodiment that is found within the work of feminist philosophy is established as part of the practice, but gender, like race, are not fixed but they are institutions, nonetheless. In order to

examine Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity, I cannot ethically exclude intersectionality, as I have already established as the foundation of this thesis because I use it as an analytic. However, how to merge intersectionality with a critical phenomenology is the task at hand. As I continuously reflect and build my methodology, I consider how because the Lugones' and Wynter's analysis of race, gender, and knowledge systems, with information supported by Zahavi and Marriott, demonstrate that the approach to my phenomenological methodology must be consciously intertwining with intersectionality.

As I arrived into the world, beginning to engage with my own horizon, I was already politicized. However, are we not all politicized, even those that are white, male, and heterosexual? Yes, but the established power dynamic is far different to my own. There is little chance that I could come to this philosophical project without the affect response of white supremacy as a horizon. "Phenomenology can be described as a struggle against this levelling self-understanding" (Zahavi, 40, 2019)

Bracketing: Intersectional versus Phenomenological

"...what we see is never given in isolation but is surrounded by and situated in a horizon that affects the meaning of what we see. This horizon encompasses more than simply the momentarily unseen aspects of the object in question. After all, we never encounter isolated objects, but only objects that are embedded within a larger context" (Zahavi, 11, 2019).

The term "bracket" appears both in intersectional and phenomenological analysis, however, their uses within their respective fields differ. According to Husserl, the suspension of the natural attitude is what allows an individual to bracket their assumptions in order to complete phenomenological method. The other is related to intersectional analysis and the bracketing

of different systems of oppression that an individual or class of peoples may experience such as race, gender, class, ability, etc. In order to be clear about what I am discussing throughout this thesis, I will refer to the bracketing occurring in intersectional analysis as intersectional bracketing, so as to not to confuse with phenomenological bracketing.

Bracketing in phenomenology is the intentional act of suspending beliefs one has of the natural world in order to properly analyze phenomena. The natural attitude, according to Husserl, are the beliefs or judgements that we already maintain, what is already taken for granted. In order to complete phenomenological reduction, we must suspend and disconnect from these natural attitudes of the everyday. As Lisa Magrí and Paddy McQueen outline in *Critical Phenomenology: An Introduction* (2023), “The epoché...refers to the suspension of one’s assent to a judgement, requires that one brackets any such assumptions in order to attend only to what is given in experience.” (Magrí & McQueen, 26, 2023). The authors also note that to bracket the natural attitude does not mean to detach ourselves from the everyday, but to unlink oneself from the deep concentration of the everyday. For Husserl, it is possible to be able to analyze a phenomena without introducing outside information to one’s analysis, and this is how I understand bracketing to function within phenomenology.

Regarding intersectional bracketing, a researcher must be able to identify, name and analyze all the possible forms of oppressive systems that an individual may experience at any one given time. This means to investigate how gender, race, class, ability and more, have profound effects on how one is able to navigate their society and live within it. Bracketing in this instance, focuses upon the various identification markers an individual or group has. From here, investigations then proceed to focus on their consequences and also how these markers interact with each other, forming an axis of oppression, and then the researcher moves towards

historical contexts and finding solutions to the problems. Conversely, I could state I am bracketing (detaching) preconceived, universalist (that is to say patriarchal and white supremacist, colonial logics) in the analysis in order to truly understand the experience of phenomena and person(s) who are the focus of the research.

In the stages of conceptualizing a final methodology, namely in how to do intersectional phenomenology, I had to consider the two main components separately but also how they work together. In the literature regarding critical or intersectional phenomenology, this was not always clear to me as a reader. Part of this process was to sit and have a conversation within myself about what came first, the chicken or the egg? What do we do first, intersectionality or phenomenology? How do we as philosophers and researchers create a dialogue between the two? The answer was never truly clear in the literature, or in the answers I received from other queer and/or Black phenomenologists. My internal conversation is demonstrated below, so that readers can understand questions, confusion, internal examination, and a final method.

The Internal:

The subject and its horizons are shaped by white male perspectives, and has been placed at the universalist figure, to which all other beings deviate from, as women is women in its relation and deviation from normatively of white maleness. For this I begin by borrowing from Fanon and Sartre on body alienation, the dismemberment from the racist gaze and how the body of color reacts to it (also touching upon the Merleau-Ponty and in how the body and objects is implicit). That said, I also consider Ortega's writing on the being in-between worlds and her own bodily relation to objects and how that affects our perception as people of color.

There are some things that Women of Color are never able to turn to, therefore there is no ability to perceive or engage. The answer to many questions regarding situations, my relationship to an object or participation in some kind of social interaction would be “I’m not white.” That is to say, ones being of color already eliminates their participation in this given “thing”, there’s an automatic exclusion, and automatic orientation away from what is a normative object or social interaction, there is already the knowledge that this “thing” is not for those of color because our orientations are already placed away as turning away from it. If during phenomenological bracketing, we are acknowledging one’s preconceptions about the experience you are about to have, the implicit knowledge that I am turned away from an object seems to be predetermined and far too entrenched in what I know of the object.

Conversely, I do not know the object because I have been barred from knowing it, either way, it could be argued that I am not able to do phenomenology correctly because I have decided that I cannot due to my attitude towards it. However, I would say that because of intersectional knowing, I know this object is not for me because of the social structure of the object, that I have never been orientated towards it, but I could move to do a phenomenology of the object but only after I realize that I have to shift my orientation towards it. Bracketing both intersectional and phenomenologically is important because both involve identifying one’s biases or beliefs that could influence one’s interpretation of the experience. A person, in phenomenology, is to temporarily set these assumptions aside by consciously deciding not to engage with them during the experience. From here, one moves to observe and describe. Returning to the “I’m brown” expression, it is another example of how femme bodies of color are already politicized before there is an ability or opportunity to do phenomenology; there is a presupposition of race, gender and more on the body, there is already an orientation on a specific horizon that is distinct to what Merleau-Ponty or Heidegger spoke of, therefore a

politicized body in this way cannot undertake a phenomenological position the same that MP did. This orientation could come into conflict with the methodology or the outcome of a phenomenological analysis if intersectional bracketing is not done before the phenomenological work.

Of course, intersectional bracketing and analysis could be done after the phenomenological one in order to get to the truth, which shows to me the importance of intersectional analysis in work that has to do with bodies of color. The “eureka” moment of “but I am orientated *this* way and intersectional analysis therefore demonstrates how I am *actually* affected and placed” means that in order to do this phenomenological analysis properly and wholly truthfully, I should take consideration that my orientation in a white supremacist world means that what I understand about my placement within it is not how I feel about myself or the world on the whole, therefore I must release that natural attitude of whiteness and colonial thinking (intersectionality) *then* move to the phenomenology.

Magrí and McQueen state that critical phenomenologists work to understand how power structures affect our perceptions. This is to say, that critical phenomenology “...uncovers the naturalization and normalization of female subordination, gender oppression, and radicalization...to improve the intelligibility of situated experience as well as to sustain collective practices of social critique” (Magrí & McQueen, 22, 2023). However, what is not clear to me is when do critical phenomenologists engage with intersectionality: does one research a phenomena intersectionally and then proceed to move to phenomenology? Does phenomenological analysis in fact take a researcher to a point in which intersectionality becomes relevant

and therefore can expand their phenomenology? Or perhaps intersectionality and phenomenology are in already a dialectic parallel. These are questions that I have not seen explicitly addressed, and although critical phenomenology is said to employ intersectional methods or be in dialogue with critical race theory or Queer studies, the issue of the two kinds of bracketing and how we employ each of them.

Maria Lugones' essay *The Coloniality of Gender* (2006) touches upon intersectionality as a methodology when she engages with the work of Anibal Quijano's essay *the Coloniality of Power* (2000). Lugones' aim is to observe how the work of Men of Color are unable to make space for the experience of women, despite the fact that the works may be able to speak to the issues of racism. Quijano's work on the power dynamics of white supremacy in Latin America, and the flow of his essay functions much like this thesis, in that it begins by discussing the invention of race, and the evolution of this invention into becoming understood as scientific and having a basis in the basic biology of humanity. The analysis provided demonstrates how race became part of a power structure that controlled labor, economics, resources, etc. Lugones notes that while Quijano is able to discern that race has no biological standing, in her interpretation of his analysis, sex on the other hand is biological and elaborated through gender and social categories. Furthermore, it is a debate that is taken amongst men in regards of control of sex, reproduction, and resources, yet it is not a debate that women themselves participate in.

Gender is another tool of control and domination introduced by the West through colonialism, which compounded the levels of oppression onto the new classified Women of Color in the New World. In short, what then is the methodology for a phenomenology through the

Afro-Indigenous Hispano-Caribbean femme subject? Does this research begin with intersectionality or phenomenology? Lugones' essay demonstrates what many other women writers of color do: A subject that begins as already politicized, racialized, gendered, and more. A subject who has been placed at a particular position within the horizon, and socialized into a natural attitude that is structured by race and gender as biological and political essentialism. This is an intersectional reading of a subject before they do any kind of phenomenology. In order to do a phenomenology of the Afro-Indigenous Hispano-Caribbean femme subject, they have to suspend the natural attitude which to me is the racism, the sexism and the patriarchal, for these are the systems that inform how we perceive.

Developing an Intersectional, Critical Phenomenology

In the essay *Critical Phenomenology*, Lisa Guenther states that "phenomenology is a philosophical practice of reflecting on the transcendental structures that make the lived experience of consciousness possible and meaningful. It begins by bracketing the natural attitude, or the naive assumption that the world exists apart from consciousness and 'reducing' an everyday experience of the world to the basic structures that constitute its meaning and coherence" (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman 2020). In order to attain a meticulous understanding of conditions or phenomena, this bracketing and reduction is necessary to locate and identify the essence of the phenomena discussed. She continues to state that classical phenomenology provides us with a language to discuss the "relationships without which we could not be who we are or understand what we experience" (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman, 11, 2020).

The ability to create a critical/intersectional phenomenology is dependent on theorists recognizing that a framework or methodology that purports to erase difference in order to reach

the 'human condition', will only provide a service to those who are Christian, male, heterosexual and able bodied. There is no such thing as a pure objectivity from which anybody can work from on an even playing field, as it were. In other words, social, physical, economic, racial and gendered factors are always at play and always have been. "The capacity of material, historical changes in the world to affect not just *what* I perceive but *how* perceive it... [there is a] rather complex reciprocity through which the world really can influence my capacity to perceive it" (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman, 13, 2020). This is where Guenther argues that classical phenomenology remains inadequate, in that there is a failure to properly account for how social and historical structures are not just dependent upon one another, but also how they shape our experiences and perceptions.

In other words, there are technologies behind our ways of seeing and the creation of our worlds, and if we do not question these technologies of making and perception, they will go unnoticed. "Structures, like patriarchy, white supremacy and heteronormativity permeate, organize, and reproduce the natural attitude in ways that go beyond any particular object of thought" (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman, 12, 2020). Put another way, to accomplish the phenomenological method, we must bracket the experience to understand it fully. I contend the proper framework for this bracketing, fundamentally, should be intersectionality included with more traditional bracketing methods. Bracketing is epoché, defined as a "process involved in blocking biases and assumptions in order to explain a phenomenon in terms of its own inherent system of meaning. This involves systematic steps to "set aside" various assumptions and beliefs about a phenomenon in order to examine how the phenomenon presents itself in the world of the participant." (Bracketing (Phenomenology)-Wikipedia, n/a, 2022) Intersectionality's version of epoché is bracketing how sex, gender, race, class, ability, ethnicity (for example) affect how we experience phenomena and the world. Therefore, our

bracketing through the use of intersectional analysis along with the more traditional bracketing of phenomena (epoché) would be the foundation of this critical phenomenology.

Duane H. Davis begins *The Phenomenological Method* emphasizing that the promise of his essay “describes intersectionality as the occasion for the redeployment of phenomenology. Thus, race, gender, and class and their intersection are not ancillary to phenomenology if it is to be relevant today for addressing the ongoing crises we face daily” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 3, 2020). Davis states the phenomenological method is not an attempt to free subjective biases to then unearth an objective truth; it gauges objectivity as just as biased as subjectivity, because phenomenology “seeks to give accounts of appearances as processes, the coming-to-appear” (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman, 4, 2020). This parallels what Guenther suggests herself, in where structures of domination, similar in their purpose (for example sexism), still result in various reactions from the differently positioned subjects. She continues to say there are different ways of seeing, and because power structures are not always clearly stable or visible, this results in some myriad ways of world making, an overlap and divergence, crucial to our understanding of intersectionality and phenomenology.

Davis’ reviews the phenomenological method as follows:

“The phenomenological method is an attempt to offer prescriptive descriptions of the world in which we live. It involves the transformation of the way we understand our world such that we can be astonished before it-the attempt to see our world as if for the first time, through unjaded eyes. This transformation is to be affected by suspending our habitual and theoretical presuppositions and thus allowing the world

to appear as it becomes what it is and as it matters to us” (Weiss, Murphy and Salaman 4, 2020).

Davis cites the metaphor Husserl uses of plate tectonics to give way to our suspension of ‘truths’. The visualization of the once stable ground we are so familiar with, shifting completely and violently below us, ripping the ground apart to show plates colliding and attempting to encroach upon each other, demonstrates that what we believe about our foundations are superficial at best and quickly prone to destruction. In order to reach a critical phenomenology, Davis tells us to recognize the differences amongst ourselves to allow space for the encroachment and overlap of difference so the intersections of our various markers (race, gender etc.) can be realized for what they are and their importance in discussions. This bracketing, or isolated and naming different technologies of control and domination, is able to situate itself well with phenomenology. For Davis, “phenomenology must be seen as a philosophy of difference rather than identity. [sic]...when our personal identity is disclosed to be intersectional, we can come to disclose our socio-political identities as the difference of differences. [sic]...this allows us to see our identities, personal and public, as intersectional phenomena...” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman 8, 2020).

For Guenther, critical phenomenology suspends presupposed notions of ‘reality’ in order to accurately characterize and locate networks of dominance and world making, what makes them possible and how they operate together and independently. This allows for new imaginings of future possibilities together with those of different locations or different made worlds, if you will. “It is a way of pulling up traces of a history that is not quite or no longer there-that has been rubbed out or cosigned to invisibility-but still shapes the emergence of

meaning” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 15, 2020). Therefore, with intersectionality, phenomenology now crosses into a new realm of being able to examine phenomena as it relates socially and historically, as a new critical praxis. To further the point and to return to the metaphor of tectonic plates, social and historical contexts overlap and necessarily so. In order for an intersectional phenomenology to fulfill its purpose, the encroachment of race, class, gender, ability and more, must happen. This is intersectional phenomenology as a practice. Davis cites Collins’ work on intersectionality, in which she states that race and gender as oppressive systems do not function mutually exclusive from one another, they often overlap. “Both are held separate yet interconnected” (Collins, 41, 2015).

Black and Indigenous Phenomenology

African American philosopher George Yancy in his essay *Confiscated Bodies* defines the concept (of the same title) as an apparatus to interpret phenomenological “disruptive and violative encounters endured by the black body across various racially saturated social spaces, often quotidian social spaces, where black bodies are encountered by or confronted by the white gaze” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 69, 2020). Yancy’s account of confiscated bodies outlines how specifically Black male bodies traverse through white dominated society and the consequences Black men face via the white gaze. He notes that the white gaze is presupposed, in similar fashion to Fanon’s interpretations of the gaze and Fanon’s moment of realization that he is in fact a Negro.

In a footnote amended since the original publishing of *Confiscated Bodies*, Yancy writes that his account is specific to Black *men*, and lacks the language outlining Black women’s experience, which is more thoroughly accomplished via the advent of intersectionality. Due to this,

I amend Yancy's bracketing of the Black man's experience of the white gaze. He states "the white gaze presupposes the larger historical accretion of white semiotic material and institutional power and hegemony. On this score, whiteness functions as what I call the transcendental norm, or that according to which black bodies or bodies of color are deemed "deviant," "different," "ersatz," "raced," and "marked" against the normative, unmarked background of whiteness" (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 69, 2020). Furthermore, and what lacks in Yancy's determinations, is that we are also sexed, gendered, and forced to comply with heteronormativity. As I stated in *La Sangre Llama*, "[sic] since they are women and/or femme, they are unable to inhabit their worlds without ruptures, or a thick sense of not-being-at-ease, for not only must they be a Woman of Color, but they must also be so *in relation to* hetero-sexual white men and white women" (X, 9, 2019). Intersectionality allows for this experience of gender and race to be understood as experience that occur simultaneously, particularly within the white gaze.

It is necessary for intersectional bracketing and phenomenological bracketing to be utilized in a dialectical method. These two forms of bracketing allow for an analysis through phenomenology that is intersectional and able to approach the subject of the white gaze. Particularly because these technologies of control are not new and born out of modern studies in liberal collegiate environments. They are historically situated in the Western world and have acted as apparatus of whiteness' metanarrative in governance, beauty, intelligence and more. "And characteristic of power, more generally, the metanarrative structure of whiteness attempts to obfuscate the fact that its origin is historically contingent and actively maintained as opposed to an ahistorical given" (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 13, 2020).

Race, gender, physical ability, class, and other systems of oppression are technologies of control and domination. They are inseparably presupposed socio-historical phenomena as outlined in the existential-cultural crisis. Particularly for femmes of color in the diaspora, they are told by society who they are, how they must look, behave both in public and private, and where they are allowed to enjoy public life and more. Phenomenology understood through a Latina perspective is in many ways inherently intersectional. Gloria Anzaldúa's work in *Borderlands* provided a new conceptual starting point for the analysis of the Latina experience, specifically for Chicanas and those living in and around the US-Mexican border. As stated previously, this particular phenomenology was later expanded upon by Marianna Ortega in the book *In-Between*. Ortega provides readers a synopsis of Latina phenomenology when she states:

“[sic] some of the defining characteristics for what constitutes what I am here calling Latina feminist phenomenology: (1) attention to the lived experience of Latinas/os in the United States, including those born here or in Latin America and the Caribbean; (2) emphasis on concrete, embodied everyday experience; (3) attention to the intersection or, as Lugones describes it, the intermeshedness of race, sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, ethnicity, and so on; (4) disclosure of the way in which the gendered or racialized (mestizaje/mulataje) aspect of Latina/o experience is covered up in traditional philosophical discussions that take white male experience as the norm; (5) attunement to historical and cultural processes that recognizes the heterogeneity of Latinas/os; and (6) critical deployment of experiential

knowledge in order to contest or reimagine established notions of Latinidad” (Ortega, 10, 2016).

For Anzaldúa, the concept of the *new mestiza* was her means of anchoring the borderland experience and the crossing of power, location, and identities. More accurately defined “The new mestiza is a self-inhabiting the borderlands, a self in-between the United States and Mexico, who experiences a lived struggle because she is split between cultures, races, languages, and genders, all tugging at her, pulling her to one side or the other, demanding alliances or setting down rules, continually pushing her to choose one or the other, to suffer from ‘an absolute despot duality’” (Ortega, 26, 2016). What Latina feminist phenomenology offers readers as evidenced by these example quotes, is the ability to get a place where we can begin the process of understanding of the immigrant experience in the diaspora, or more generally, a hyphenated embodiment and dislocation of identity within multiple power dynamics. There is, however, a need for temporality to be further explored as it pertains to an accurate positionality, Indigeneity, and movement.

Furthermore, whilst Anzaldúa’s *new mestiza* has a component of Indigeneity, temporality, and movement, that in it of itself is only a part of her Indigenous perspectives on phenomenology or temporality. What is Indigenous temporality and embodiment and how do we understand these concepts through an intersectional phenomenology? Writer Kyle Whyte⁴ explains, within a US context, settler colonialism as it pertains to collective consciousness and Indigenous thought. Firstly, he defines settler colonialism as “complex social processes in

⁴ Whyte bases the foundations of his philosophy in Anishinaabe philosophies of experience and time that privilege motion, diversity, and reciprocal responsibility as critical dimensions of our existence. Anishinaabe is an autonym used by indigenous communities of the Great Lakes region.

which at least one society seeks to move permanently onto the terrestrial, aquatic, and aerial places lived in by one or more other societies who already derive economic vitality, cultural flourishing, and political self-determination from the relationships they have established with the plants, animals, physical entities, and ecosystems of those places” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 57, 2020). This provides a context for understanding a strong aspect to Indigenous philosophy throughout all of the America’s, for America (be it North, South, or Caribbean) is fundamentally a settler colonial project. It is predicated on Indigenous genocide and chattel slavery of Indigenous African people. Settler colonialism fundamentally seeks to eradicate Indigenous ties to land, their specific history, language and knowledge along with their corporeal presence, to then use the labor of other Indigenous and displaced people and keep both trapped within its system. Therefore, in order to understand Indigenous philosophy, we must also be supremely cognizant of settler colonialism throughout the readings of all Latin, Caribbean and Black American Phenomenologies.

For Whyte, what is key to his own development of Indigenous philosophy and phenomenology, is the concept of collective continuance. Collective continuance “refers to an understanding of existence as living through diverse, constantly changing relationships with different species, ancestors, future generations, and spiritual and ecological beings (e.g., water). These relationships are infused with responsibilities. So, continuance refers to living through constant motion and diversity within a collective of responsibility-laden relationships” (Weiss, Murphy, and Salaman, 53, 2020). This connects to the Samoan writer Albert Wendt’s considerations on traditional culture. Wendt posits that culture, or more specifically tradition (rooted in Indigeneity that is pre-contact), is not static and nor is it persevered, suspended in a moment in time. What once existed before settler colonialism is no longer here, what we

must do is create a future that is based in our past but able to move forward with us collectively (Amirthanayagam, 207, 1982). This is also true in Taíno (Caribbean), in where tradition is also not regarded as static but in moving, or being carried, with people in the present. The future is to be built and the past is carried in the present; there is no essentialism in understanding and regarding tradition, culture, and their relationships to temporality. What once existed (pre-contact) is no longer with us in the same, pure way as it once was.

Therefore, what relates settler colonialism to Whyte's collective continuance, Wendt and the Taíno's consideration of time and tradition, is the capacity for Indigenous people to self-determine how to adjust their culture, traditions to changes that are acts of agency, retentions of memory and prevent harm en masse. Unlike Anzaldúa's use of Indigeneity, it is not about a romanticization of Indigenous culture and identity, a point which I will expand upon later, or an ability to move in and out of Indigeneity (positionality). In my opinion, it is the voicing of subjectivity using tools, be it philosophical or literal, to properly claim agency as an individual within one's collective culturally across a diaspora and connection of many forms of Indigeneity, not created out of a mold of European concepts such as preservation, but an Indigenous form of resilient existence.

Post-phenomenology

My engagement with Latina feminist phenomenology in *La Sangre Llama* was done via my own presuppositions of Latine as an ethnic and cultural marker. I arrived at the texts with my own experiences as a member of the Puerto Rican diaspora, a nation firstly colonized by Spain and generally considered to be a part of the Latine community, and therefore I believe the work was intended to also speak to me in a familiar manner, even though I am not Chicana or

Mexican descent. This assumption seemed reasonable since Latina feminist phenomenology discusses borders, culture, race, and gender, for example. While these themes were discussed at length and resonated, there was much within the canon that I could not relate to, and was in fact, as a reader of Afro-Indigenous descent, non-existent within the work. In order to fill epistemic gaps, I believe it is essential to re-engage with Latina feminist phenomenology by beginning with an understanding and recognition of Latin American history.

Engagement with these histories is necessitated in order to serve the theories of flesh women of color create. In the book *Rethinking Feminist Phenomenology: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives* (2018), Beata Stawarska outlines the relationship between feminism and phenomenology, where they overlap and also diverge. I also have demonstrated and argued for widening the scope and potential of phenomenology through an intersectional approach, to which I will not re-explain here. What Stawarska helps us as theorists to understand is that although there is an argument that a feminist (critical, intersectional) application to phenomenology transforms the philosophy so much that it no longer is 'pure' phenomenology; it arguably appears to become something else. If the classical phenomenology was not devised with sexual orientation, gender and racial differences and histories in mind, Stawarska notes that "[such] a lack of attention to gender could of course indicate a scholarly gap to be filled by new phenomenological studies that begin with a gendered as well as racialized (and shaped by class, nationality, and other significant markers of identity) conception of the embodied, socially modulated experience" (Cohen Shabot and Landry, 14, 2018).

Stawarska also cites the work of Johanna Oksala, who in short, argues for a 'postphenomenology' in where phenomenology meets with feminist theories in engaging subjectivity

through phenomenology in order to establish manners in which there is societal change (since ultimately, in Oksala's view, this is the goal of feminist theory). Stawarska ultimately argues for a phenomenology that is feminist, critical, and still tethered to its original roots when she states "I believe that in recovering (rather than swiftly moving past) phenomenology it is possible to locate elements of social critique (as well as of empirical engagement) already under way within the tradition itself" (Cohen Shabot and Landry, 17, 2018).

Conclusion

My journey in understanding phenomenology is principally executed by engaging with the works of Black American, Latin, Indigenous philosophers who have created new dimensions in phenomenology to understand their own experiences within their racialized bodies and specific, cultural contexts. The aim of this chapter was to provide for us an estimation of how intersectionality can affect phenomenological analysis. Also, to offer concise insight into how these writers from across various locations, both regional and cultural, engage with phenomenology in inherently intersectional ways, due to the bracketing of certain historical social structures. This is necessary if I am searching for a means of locating Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity within phenomenology that is able to address race, gender, and the existential-cultural crisis of the diaspora. It is needed is a framework that accurately operates, without depending on settler colonial designs that are romantic ideas that obscure our presupposed beliefs of the human condition, which essentially hurts or causes harm to certain people within the context of which I speak.

What happens when we do not bracket properly and leave space within the philosophy for other perspectives? The answer to this question lies within the examples provided here, and

to which I will further develop when appropriate. What occurs when we do not engage directly with the contexts from which we stand we lose the important ingredients that allow us to create a final recipe for what we need in order to understand the essence of our individual humanity. Thus, we are unable to engage properly with our respective communities and with the world; we are without knowledge of who we truly are.

Intersectional, critical phenomenology tells us we must engage with the social factors in order to bracket correctly and understand how phenomena relates to, and is a direct consequence of, social and historical dynamics. The experience of being a human directly relates to our material condition, one of which is race, as George Yancy demonstrates, particularly in relation to the white gaze. While Yancy's experience of the white gaze is demonstrated through the Black male gaze, without naming his analysis as such, it is an analysis of race and gender, but one that is not able to allot space for Black women and their experiences to be reflected. A deeper look into different gender lenses needs to be done in order to understand a variety of gendered experiences that occur simultaneously, particularly within the white gaze.

Borders, displacement, and cultural retention through our understanding of temporality are other social phenomena that are to be examined. Latina feminist phenomenology through Anzaldúa and Ortega offer a particular insight of the immigrant experience in the diaspora, hyphenated personification within lands that are new homes, but which reject none the less (being unease). Indigenous peoples displaced (either economically or historically via chattel slavery and settler colonialism) retain their cultures and relationships with the land in collecting their consciousness as a tool for agency and resistance.

In order to locate Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity that considers borders, race, displacement, culture and more as they relate to settler colonialism and decoloniality, requires conscious bracketing, both intersectional and phenomenological, of a myriad of socially oppressive systems and history of the Americas. Intersectional phenomenology requires a serious critical examination without holding back uneasy experiences; it is done so that those that are often left out of the margins of the marginalized can speak about their material realities in a holistic and honest way.

Chapter Three

Hermeneutics

Thus far, I have provided an understanding of intersectionality as a critical framework. I have also provided examples for how intersectionality can be used with phenomenology to create a critical, intersectional phenomenology with a specific means of bracketing in order for Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity to be properly explored (phenomenological practice serving Afro-Indigeneity). This was also thus related to my previous work, as to demonstrate an ongoing process of developing new methods for locating Afro-Indigenous subjectivity philosophically and artistically. In this chapter, I will review the hermeneutic circle then demonstrate the merging of intersectionality with hermeneutics, transforming the manner in which interpretation is completed. I will also cite Tiffany Lethabo King's writings in *The Black Shoals* (2019), in which she merges heuristic devices that center Blackness and Indigeneity as analytical tools. King's work provides insight to the possibilities of interpretation through Black and Native Studies, which are in conversation with my own thesis. Lastly, I will provide an example of the use of intersectional hermeneutics by re-visiting the artwork of Simone Leigh, an artist whose practice I researched during the writing of *La Sangre Llama*. I provide this example so readers will have an understanding how intersectional hermeneutics will be deployed within the thesis but also my way to research through artistic practice. Since intersectional hermeneutics as a framework has limited available scholarship, this chapter is an amalgamation of various works and theories that build to create a new hermeneutic circle that is capable of being a framework that stands on its own merits.

Hermeneutics is said to be the science of interpretation. Traditionally applied to the understanding of a text or work of literature, I use hermeneutics as a process of clarifying a work of

fine art, or in the development of my own artistic production. I will not focus on a specific author's deployment or development of hermeneutics, instead I choose to fully understand how hermeneutics is deployed via intersectionality. There is, however, a slight focus in Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics and its merging with intersectionality as used by Patricia Hill Collins. Therefore, a generalized understanding of hermeneutics will be reviewed first, and then specifically how writers employ intersectionality within the circle. Firstly, we begin with Scott Davidson's outline of the circle he provides in the book *Hermeneutics and Phenomenology by Paul Ricoeur*.

“Ricoeur's version of the hermeneutic circle, to recall, develops along the trajectory of three stages: (1) it begins with the pre-understanding of the reader; (2) passes through the explanation of the text; (3) and culminates with deeper understanding through the reader's act of appropriation. By leading to deeper self-understanding, the hermeneutic circle claims to overcome the trap of a vicious circle in which one would only come to understand the world in terms of what was already known at the outset. Instead, it follows the arc of a virtuous circle – or better, an ascending spiral – in which the detour through the text leads from an initial understanding at the beginning to a better understanding of oneself at the end.” (Davidson, 160, 2016)

In this particular essay, Davidson notes the first step is considered to be a pre-understanding or prejudice on the reader or audience's part. It should be understood as a literal pre-judgment; the history that a person brings with them as they consume a text or a work of art.

Davidson supports this definition by stating “the reader’s pre-understanding established the background set of expectations and operative knowledge that makes it possible for readers to approach the text” (Davidson, 162, 2016). Jean Grodin in the essay *What is the Hermeneutical Circle*, notes that this pre-understanding allows readers to be capable of interpreting a work and the act of understanding possible in the first place. We as readers or as an audience, come to a work with a pre-existing knowledge that enables us to at a minimum, have a budding understanding of what the work means as a whole. We move through and continue to interact with the work to develop a mature understanding of the work in it of itself.

This pre-understanding or foresight is what we as readers, viewers, pass through the text or artwork as we move through the work itself. In other words, in this second stage, we continuously sway back and forth through the work and our knowledge in order to start building our interpretation of what we are consuming. Our understandings of the world that we are situated within, passes through the work itself. As Heather Tan, Anne Wilson, and Ian Olver in the essay *Ricoeur’s Theory of Interpretation: An Instrument for Data Interpretation in Hermeneutic Phenomenology* wrote “[hermeneutics] suggests that understanding is not understanding of others but, instead, becomes a structure of being-in-the-world. This is closely connected to Heidegger’s hermeneutical circle in that the interpreter’s inner world meets the unique world of each text to create a new picture or understanding of a possible world in the consciousness of the interpreter” (Applied and Journal, 8, 2017). This process of swaying allows us as viewers the possibility of understanding ourselves, not some sort of alien entity that is outside of our grasp; a part of this goal is to understand a work but also to understand ourselves as individuals in unique situations and dynamics.

The third stage in the hermeneutic circle, as defined by Ricoeur, is appropriation. “By ‘appropriation’ I understand this: that the interpretation of text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject [the interpreter] who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself” (Ricoeur, 120, 1981). I myself have come to comprehend that in order to fully understand the text/art, one must then as a viewer, take the meaning of the text or artwork and make it their own. I believe the way in which one does this will vary, but none the less, appropriation must occur in order to fully recognize and actualize the meaning of the work in question. Fundamentally, the final by product of this activity is then a self-understanding of oneself. “This knowing oneself is the emerging of a new self-compared to the old self that existed prior to the encounter with the text, so to understand is not to project oneself into the text but, rather, to open up to an enlarged self, to incorporate into your world other possible worlds as portrayed by the text” (Davidson, 161, 2016). Furthermore, as Ricoeur puts it, interpretation “culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself” (Ricoeur, 158, 1991). This concludes the outline of a generalized version of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic circle, as outlined by Scott Davidson. What is not discussed here at length is the role of structuralism within the hermeneutic circle due to structuralism being replaced by intersectionality.

Intersectional Hermeneutics

In line with other philosophies and methodologies that imply constitutively subjectivity, hermeneutics as the science of interpretation, must also be intersectional in how it is deployed, particularly within this text and its subject matter. As stated previously, in Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, structuralism plays an important role. Structuralism is defined as “the methodology that implies elements of human culture must be understood by way of their relationship to a

broader, overarching system or structure. It works to uncover the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel" ("Structuralism," n.d.). Scott Davidson and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson both note that structuralism should be removed as a step within the hermeneutic circle and replaced with intersectionality in so that hermeneutics can open up a holistic discussion about the possibilities in the interpretation of a text or work of art; in other words, intersectionality can truly provide us with all the avenues of possible meaning. This is particularly so because of the criticisms against structuralism as not just ahistorical, and as Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson demonstrate, but structuralism operates as a single axis mode of interpretation. The following section provides a breakdown of what is intersectional hermeneutics and how it is deployed.

In my opinion, the essay *Hermeneutics of a Subtlety: Paul Riceour, Kara Walker, and Intersectional Hermeneutics* is the best and most concise writing regarding intersectional hermeneutics and its implementation, and furthermore in its interpretations of the artistic production of Black women specifically. Firstly, Scott Davidson and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson clearly address hermeneutics in its classical form. Here, in this essay, I will not regurgitate Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson's outlining of Ricoeur's hermeneutics as it is relatively the same explanation I have previously provided. Instead, we will begin from where they deliver an intersectional critique of hermeneutics.

For the writers, the primary and most conspicuous inadequacy in Ricoeur's hermeneutics is his implementation of structural analysis. Although it should be stated they make clear that the epoch in which Ricoeur was developing his philosophy, structuralism had warranted some

legitimacy. The writers argue structuralism only allows for a single axis potentiality in explanation; it is a one mode form of analysis. They contend that explanation must proceed in a multidimensional and multi-axis way. There can be many possibilities of interpretation of a text or body of work, therefore the suggestion is that the framework of interpretation or analysis must reflect and harbor these possibilities. “It follows that the limitations of structural analysis, as a mode of explanation, are not unique to it. Instead, it [structuralism] is saddled with the same limitations as any other single-layered approach to this complex phenomenon requires a multiaxis or multilayered analysis. And so the principle behind our criticism is quite simple: a complex phenomenon requires a multiaxis or multilayered analysis” (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson, 185, 2016).

Due to intersectionality being a framework that allows for an analysis among varying intersects or axis, Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson note that applying intersectionality into hermeneutics can therefore provide a far more robust investigation. They also address criticisms regarding intersectionality, namely that it is unclear what the methodology of intersectionality is and how intersectionality is accomplished as a study. They suggest that hermeneutics is a methodological orientation for intersectionality, whilst I have suggested that one does not study intersectionality, they study *through* intersectionality. Nonetheless, merging intersectionality and hermeneutics provides scholars and theorists a robust framework for interpretation of a text or an artwork as demonstrated in the following section.

The Black Shoals as Theoretical Example

In Tiffany Lethabo King’s book *The Black Shoals* (2019), she introduces her readers to the shores of Guinea in 1441 and describes the site as a palindrome; a site of formation of colonial

studies, Blackness, and Indigeneity, especially as 1492 approaches within the frame that she is creating for us. She reminds us that a shoal is a place where water meets and crashes into land, shallow, offshore, a consistent action in a fixed location but forever changing. To King, and others as she reports, the 1440's marks a non-linear out of sync timeline and location that displaces contemporary Black thought. This creates a shoaling effect; wherein we find constant movement and flows, disruption but also a space that "is in constant formation" (King, 8, 2019).

For King, the shoal encompasses land and water, the ever changing yet familiar point where Blackness and Indigeneity are in theoretical and historical dance with one another but all the while transforming the fixed notions of what these studies means and how Blackness and Indigeneity are fixed to specific analytics that prevent an evolution in thought. "I offer the space of the shoal as simultaneously land and sea to fracture this notion that Black diaspora studies is overdetermined by rootlessness and only metaphorized by water and to disrupt the idea that Indigenous studies is solely rooted and fixed in imaginaries of land as territory" (King, 4, 2019).

King's concept and use of shoals relates to intersectional hermeneutics in that "the shoal functions as a space of liminality...and location of suture between two hermeneutical frames that have been conventionally understood as sealed off from each other" (King, 4, 2019). What emerges is the understanding of how they relate and intersect, opening up new possibilities in knowledge production and interpretations. The shoal is another form of junction, an intersection of life, water, land, sand, and mass; it encompasses many variables and is

often overlooked for the simplicity of analysis and reduction and essentialism of Blackness and Indigeneity.

The study of Hispanic Caribbean Afro-Indigenous subjectivity requires the space for complexity and comparative narratives and study, we can do so if we keep in mind the possibilities found within such a framework as intersectional hermeneutics or the shoals; that is to say, a framework that is considering various histories, subjectivities, race and gendered dynamics within the location the study finds itself. My suggestion of this kind of analysis is not to look at its function as looking at multiple layers, but multiple line converging at one singular point; the lines are the various dynamics found within the matrix of domination, and the point is the individual subjectivity that is a consequence. These new forms of analytics must turn away from Western and colonial theoretical typographies such as structuralism, for as King notes, Blackness and Indigeneity must exceed the metaphors so often fixing these subjectivities into place. "A Black studies reading practice that attends to African diaspora studies as they unfold in the Caribbean and South America has the conceptual space to acknowledge philosophical, literary, and historical traditions that can attend to histories of both enslavement and colonialism" (King, 15, 2019).

A Case Study: A History of Domes as Resistance in Form and Material

In order to demonstrate how I utilize intersectional hermeneutics; I will provide a brief example mirroring what Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson provided us as a methodology. This means moving through Leigh's work with my own pre-understanding as an Afro-Indigenous femme and the cultural context (Latin American, Hispanic Caribbean) to which I bring with me when I view Leigh's work. This is done in order for readers to have a pre-understanding of their own in regard to how I will be researching the artistic production of Black women and

Caribbean artists in the research about art section of this thesis. It also demonstrates not only my past usage of the methodology, but also is in line with one of the goals of this thesis, which is to holistically understand and situate Afro-Indigenous femme artistic production by utilizing a phenomenological practice that incorporates intersectionality. The continued use of this framework from *La Sangre Llama* is a continued quest for discovering modes in which the material reality of our lives can be discussed and interpreted instead of silenced and erased.

“Our first interpretative clue will be drawn from an examination of the form of the artwork. [sic] Our second clue comes from the historical and cultural context that informs the choice of the material of [the artist’s] work”⁵ (Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson, 187, 2016). In keeping in line with this stated starting point, the sculptural work of Simone Leigh (b. 1968 United States) “toggles between abstraction and figuration” (Kennedy, n.d.). Often, her large-scale sculptures or vases incorporating women’s faces, are left without eyes. The figures are also frequently presented in the form of a dome, which is where I will begin and center my reading of her work.

The domed skirts found on Leigh’s sculpture mirror those worn by practitioners of Afro-Syncretic religions, for example, Candomblé or Santería. As someone from the Puerto Rican diaspora, I am also reminded of the skirts worn by women when they dance bomba, a folkloric musical and dance style that is Afro-Boricua. Afro-Syncretic religions found in the Caribbean

⁵ Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson firstly provide readers with a cursory examination of the initial reactions of the work “A Subtlety” by the African-American artist Kara Walker. They note the audience’s interaction with the sculpture, and also note the reactions from other Black women artists and critics of Walker’s work in the past. From here, they then begin to discuss their own interpretation of the work through intersectional hermeneutics. I am not beginning from possible misinterpretations of Simon Leigh’s work and responding with an interpretation born out of intersectional hermeneutics. I am starting precisely from encountering the work as is without the critique or interpretations of another.

and Latin America point us towards a retention of memory, culture, a relationship to our bodies and our understanding of corporeality and temporality that was supposed to be disrupted by settler colonialism and chattel slavery. Bomba dancing, for instance, is an example of resistance and release, an event for slaves to join together and release their frustrations, connect with other enslaved people and through the dance itself, and the women would tell stories and sometimes poke fun at the plantation mistresses. What purpose does the invocation of domed skirts serve, particularly in the realm of Black women's corporeality?

Candomblé, an Afro-Syncretic religion in Brazil, a sister to Santería in Cuba and Voodoo in Haiti, lives within the school of thought that Afro-religiosity is historically and culturally tied to anti-colonial resistance. The religions, their rituals and their dances are “fundamentally embodied acts of resistance, wherein the Africans form various ethnic groups and regions together created new forms of release as a subjugated collective” (X, 45, 2019). The Portuguese slavers did not prevent the enslaved Africans from gathering, performing songs and dance and religion for a time during the initial periods of the colonization of what we understand to be Brazil. In the late 18th Century, the Catholic church chose to outlaw the religion, which meant that Candomblé priests were then victims to the famous Inquisition. In the same way that Santería's practitioners masked their deities behind Catholic Saints, so did the practitioners of Candomblé, as the religion in Brazil was then effectively ‘underground’. Research into the history of the religion tells us in the 1970's, Candomblé was no longer illegal, and therefore individuals were able to gather and have their religious practice. This meant the Candomblé flourished once again (N/a 2019). Unfortunately, as I reported in *La Sangre Llama*, in late June 2019 in São Pedro da Aldeia, a Candomblé place of worship which served practitioners for 18 years, was vandalized, an act that is reportedly not uncommon.

This serves us as a reminder that Afro-Syncretic religion, and in this case specifically, the dress a person wears during ritual performance and dance, is fundamentally a vessel for resistance from white supremacy. As is illustrated by Montré Aza Missouri in her book *Black Magic Women and Narrative film* regarding the limbo from Trinidad & Tobago (another dance that is a form of corporeal resistance) is a dance that “offers a dislocation of the physically bonded self and frees the individual from a “uniform chain” that is the historical stigma of the Middle Passage” (Missouri, 31, 2015).

The domed figures mirroring the skirts and dresses worn by Black women in the diaspora, as is related to their Afro-Syncretic religious practices, born out of resistance from oppressive and dehumanizing enslavement, are coupled with the material raffia.

“Raffia, a palm indigenous to Africa and in only a few locations in Central and South America, are dried and used for weaving, ropes, buildings, textiles and more. They are also common in the creation of masks and clothing worn by dancers in ceremonies (“Raffia Palm” n.d.). For example, with a long stick protruding from the top, a tall figure made from raffia interacts with the large crowd formed around it. As the raffia covered figure moves about the large space and spins, creating almost a hurricane of shape and energy from the many individual pieces of raffia flowing in the wind, women in the crowd begin to dance closer and respond to the movements.” (X, 53, 2019)

This use of material signals us material to the theme in ways that centers the history of the Black diasporic experience and traditions. Embedded in the skirts are history, tradition, retention and most importantly agency. When viewing her work in full with the form and the historical context of the material in mind, as Leigh herself states in regards to Candomblé dress, “[there is] agency embodied in those skirts” (Kennedy, n.d.).

Returning to Davidson and del Guadalupe Davidson’s intersectional hermeneutics initial steps, form and the historical context of the material used, I interpret the totality of Leigh’s artistic practice as a space that consistently provides Black women with a story and history of their own. The process for Leigh begins as an auto-ethnographical point of entry, but maintains itself thematically within Black female subjectivity. This is accomplished through her visual vernacular that speaks to the African diaspora at large, by way of domed skirts of resistance molded from threads of temporal retention, for example. Starting from the cultural points of dress and spirituality of West Africa, moving towards the Middle Passage through to today, I am of the opinion that Leigh’s work provides Black women with the space to visualize their own trajectory, to create new culture based on traditions, and as she states “[center] their agency and their power to inhabit [those worlds] of their own creation.” (Museum, n.d., 2019)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an introduction into hermeneutics from a more generalized overview into its purpose and method. I provided an example of the intersectional hermeneutic circle and what the functions of the steps are. I argued a case for the merging

of intersectionality with hermeneutics, specifically for the holistic analysis of Black women's artistic production, which is a large component of this research project. Intersectionality as a framework merged with hermeneutics provides us with a methodology for interpretation the work of Afro/Indigenous writers and artists in a way that does not become ahistorical or erases the material reality of their existence as people creating within the shadow of racialized and gendered oppression. I argue for its relevance by providing the development of intersectional hermeneutics by Scott Davidson and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson and their work on this matter. By removing structuralism as a core concept within the hermeneutic circle and replacing it with intersectionality, scholars and theorists then have a vigorous framework to move within a text or artwork and discover a multitude of possibilities of not just its meaning, but knowledge of themselves as well.

The sculptural works of Black women figures by Simone Leigh are considered and provided as a case study to demonstrate how one can understand the work of Black women through this methodology. In the conclusion of the analysis on Leigh's work, I iterate that I interpret her practice (as a general overview) as a means for Black women to have a space to visualize their own trajectory and claim agency through figurations of their mirrored reflection but also through their histories embedded in the form and material of the sculptures. Although this example was rather brief, my goal was to demonstrate how one engages with artwork through intersectional hermeneutics. This is because within the artistic research component of this thesis, evidenced in a later chapter, I will be engaging with the artworks via intersectional hermeneutics.

Chapter Four

Decoloniality versus Post-Colonialism

“Work *through* phenomena. How does it appear to *you*?” is a point of departure artistically and theoretically in this thesis. I believe though, the first question should be ‘what is the phenomenon exactly?’ It is not an isolated, singular entity, because as intersectionality tells us, our experiences, and interpretations of the world as an outcome is due to the fact, we are faced with multiple dynamics that are social, political, racial, etc. If I am a ‘working through’ phenomenon, that for me insinuates a praxis or practice, and that leads me to the core of decoloniality. My suspicion is this project and research is not about postcolonialism, it is about decoloniality, focusing on how it is achieved or experienced through the example of artistic and philosophical practice. Then again, whilst many of the components are rooted in decoloniality, this particular work is completed for the academy. Consequently, it is not truly a work of decoloniality, not in full. I am not asking for the university to solve the issue of coloniality, but I am still present and working within its walls and criticizing the mechanisms of such institutions. Therefore, as a statement of self-reflexivity, this thesis cannot be seen as a true form of a decolonial exercise, in my opinion. What I aim to present in this chapter is an understanding of decoloniality and postcolonialism, to examine their differences, and through discursive form of writing, gain a comprehension on where my research, my own theory, and art works produced in the future, situate themselves specifically in regard to decoloniality.

Firstly, the reason why this comparative writing is a part of the methodology of this thesis, lies in its principle; decoloniality is a response to a very specific condition that is lived throughout many contexts. As Catherine E Walsh states in the book *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018):

“Decoloniality denotes ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing that began with, but also precede, the colonial enterprise and invasion. It implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought, structures that are clearly intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity. Moreover, it is indicative of the ongoing nature of struggles, constructions, and creations that continue to work within coloniality’s margins and fissures to affirm that which coloniality has attempted to negate. Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a static condition, an individual attribute, or a lineal point of arrival or enlightenment. Instead, decoloniality seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought.” (Mignolo and Walsh, 17, 2018)

If the theory and study (found within this thesis) is done *through me*, but not fully *about me*, then what decoloniality does is serve as the reminder that my work and reading is to be done *with* the people, subjects, texts, art works, struggles and practitioners that I interact with. As discussed in the previous chapter about Indigenous phenomenology, these are tools and modes of thinking that enable people to reach a level of self-determination and, metaphorically, pen an autobiography that does not lend itself to the dominant gaze or imperial tools

of locating agency. As First Nations activist Leanne Betasmosake Simpson states, “We cannot just think, write or imagine our way to a decolonized future. Answers on how to re-build and how to resurge are therefore derived from a web of consensual relationships that is infused with movement through lived experience and embodiment. Intellectual knowledge is not enough on its own. All kinds of knowledge are important and necessary in a communal and emergent balance” (Simpson, 16, 2014). This collection of varying tools, knowledge, skills, histories, and more gestures to us that decoloniality is a practice we must incorporate into the everyday in a multitude of ways. Decoloniality is what one lives, practices, and maintains as their individual (and collective) politic as it weaves through their spirituality and philosophy.

Although postcolonialism is a term and concept that many Black and Non-Black People of Color (and as of the writing of this chapter, the global response to Black death, both in and out of the United States via #BlackLivesMatter) utilize to express concisely their politics and how they relate to institutions. As of this chapter being completed in June 2020, institutions, brands, companies, police forces and more, are responding to this call of Black Lives Matter by suggesting they are working on de-colonizing themselves as structures. Meaning these various institutions, both educational and otherwise, are working in house, so to speak, to dismantle any racist issues that appear internally. Individuals in digital activist spheres are suggesting that if de-colonization is not at the forefront of your work, then you are doing social change incorrectly. Superficially, I agree with this attitude, but I do not think the act of de-colonization is not only fully understood, but enacted and therefore possible, in the manner that has been suggested. I say this because, as I see it, to de-colonize is tethered to postcolonialism in a manner of speaking. It is here today, that I wonder if we as a people (that work within the field of ‘activism’ or manifesting social change of any kind) understand what to de-

colonize means, or is it another word lost to capitalistic ventures of major art publications and the posting of black squares for social media?

“According to Hume (2008), postcoloniality is the body of work that attempts to break with colonial assumptions of Euro-North American political and cultural criticism—that is, the resistance of the imperial power by the subjects who are wronged by that power. Postcoloniality is caught within the Euro-North American matrix, while decoloniality is operating outside that matrix by emphasizing the locus of enunciation (De la Campa 2008). Postcoloniality originates from the Euro-North American English academic departments and its epistemic locus is counter-hegemonic by form and content. It is the Third World voice inside the Euro-North American empire. Postcoloniality has been concerned with ‘identifying the *locatedness* of European theoretical vocabulary as a way of challenging the easy and false universal claims made by that theory’ (Hume 2008: 395).” (Sithole, 35, 2014)

Decoloniality does indeed come out of the ‘south’, in which its context is one that positions the global politics and economic machine as a living colonial organism; a mutated form of the colonialism of the past, operating in the present. Institutions cannot be *postcolonial*, because that would suggest that colonialism ended. Institutions therefore cannot be saved from the very historical violence they perpetuate; they must be torn asunder and something else must

be created. While postcolonialism as a theory favors the study of aesthetic practices, culture, and discourse, particularly through the realm of text, decoloniality favors knowledge and power as tools of daily resistance that began the moment the fissure occurred. “The intention is not to write about, nor is it to develop a narrative by simply citing a plethora of authors, contexts, and texts. Rather, it is to think from and with standpoints, struggles, and practices, from and with praxical theorizings, conceptual theorizings, theoretical conceptualizings, and theory-building actionings” (Mignolo and Walsh, 20, 2018).

How do we visualize (as a praxis) and articulate postcolonialism and decoloniality? How do we know what action is postcolonial or decolonial? Moreover, for myself and this thesis, how do I differentiate between an action and artistic practice that is postcolonial or decolonial? These are new questions that have arisen out of maintaining a constant note about working *through* phenomena and what phenomena I am experiencing. Particularly, since a part of my own task is to create artistic work out of this theoretical research.

Walsh lays out bare for readers the mental process one must consider in order to arrive at an ability to carry out a decolonial praxis when she states:

“How to write, think, and act in ways that work to dismantle the structures of privilege and the modern/colonial matrices of power (of which privilege is part), how to assume decolonial praxis (including decolonial feminism) in practice, and how to help walk a decolonial for (i.e., a decolonial otherwise), are questions that underscore my decolonial and decolonizing intention and methodological-pedagogical- praxistical stance,

not only here but in all aspects of my relational being-becoming.”(Mignolo and Walsh, 21, 2018)

I am stressing here that decoloniality literally is an action, thought, philosophy, journal, the foundation of a relationship to theology, an understanding of one’s relationship to the global politic and more, that permeates through to every mental, physical, and economic action one takes or does not take. This can be complicated, uncomfortable, difficult, and painful. I also do not believe that it is accomplished overnight, of course. This is a lifelong journey of work with oneself, their community and their nation and their neighboring nations. As a reader of these words by Walsh, I am too, shifting my gaze inward and outward, as I have hoped to always have done, but far more cognizant with decoloniality as the name of my action and thought processes.

Walsh highlights the re-use of the name Abya Yala, a title used by the Kuna-Tule people, indigenous to Panama and Columbia of their land before invasion, as a new direction in the push for decoloniality in the 1990s in South America. She notes that three different groups, California-based South and Meso American Indian Information Center (saiic), the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (conaie), and lastly the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (onic), released a joint statement: “With the European invasion and subsequent process of colonization, our peoples became isolated and cut off from each other, breaking a level of development we had attained. Today, our peoples are developing forms of political, religious, cultural, and economic interchange and interrelationships—a continental cultural identity—, a civilization” (Mignolo and Walsh, 22, 2018). The re-declaration and re-naming of the land by Indigenous peoples demonstrates a disruption in contemporary and

continued coloniality by addressing Indigenous peoples land by a name that harks back to the removal of agency, and the imposition of settler colonialism, chattel slavery and genocide. It is similar to the use of Turtle Island for North America instead of United States and Canada.

This also points me to Frantz Fanon's writings on Africans, both in and out of the diaspora, people's relationship to land, as Blackness is tethered to Indigeneity.

“For a colonized people, the most essential value because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and, naturally, dignity. [sic] All he has ever seen on his land is that he can be arrested, beaten, and starved with impunity; and no sermonizer on morals, no priest has ever stepped in to bear the blows in his place.” (Fanon, 9, 1963)

How then, do we address land and name our relationship to it, particularly as displaced people in the Diaspora?

Example

If I were to look at Walsh's example and critically apply to my own work and positionality in the world, I would begin addressing my mother's home island as Borinquen, not Puerto Rico, as that is the name the Spanish conquerors used for the islands. Secondly, and this is something that I have begun to do in my own personal dialogues with others, specifically others in and or from the Caribbean, as not a “Latina” but as a Caribbean person, or diasporic Caribbean person specifically. This is an act of adjusting the relationship I have to the names of regions or cultural contexts, their colonial roots, and the implied status that I carry through them. Due

to the fact that *Latinidad* as a concept was never created to include Indigenous or African people and their children, how can I actually be a “Latine”?⁶

For me, to accurately pinpoint my Caribbean context, given there are various cultural dynamics occurring simultaneously in the region, I would need to cease referencing Cuba, Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico as Latine Caribbean. Latine responds to a specific geographical context that these islands are not a part of. There are indeed threads of familiarity, but fundamentally that is rooted in language as a result of settler colonialism. Other islands in the Caribbean speak a myriad of languages but are fundamentally Caribbean. The Latine implies a culture and lifestyle that disengages these three specific islands from the overall foundation of the Caribbean, which is Afro-Indigeneity. Therefore, I refer to them (again, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) as Hispanic Caribbean. I prefer this term to Spanish-speaking, as “Spanish” is commonly racialized in a way that I find confusing and obtuse.

Positioning myself as a part of the Hispanic *Caribbean* removes Latin America, and to a certain extent popular conceptions of *Latinidad*, from the center of my frame of reference. Thus, *Latinidad*’s overwhelming whiteness and dominance in the discourses that often hover around diasporic Hispanic Caribbean identity. All of what I have previously explained is to demonstrate how I must shift, not just how I refer to various Indigenous lands, but also how I reflect upon my own relationship to them and *within* them. If I remove *Latinidad* from the center, and instead focus the Caribbean and make linguistics a point of reference in my Car-

⁶ This is a question that will be further developed in the coming chapters. For now it is merely a general question that is posed and answered briefly for the sake of moving through the first stages of decoloniality.

ibbean context, I am no longer simply attempting to dismantle white Latines and their structures, or the more popular discourses regarding Latinidad. This is important; this action centers Blackness and Indigeneity in a way that readjusts how I think about my own privileges and location in the predominately Black region that is the Caribbean. This adjustment and framing of my relationship to the Caribbean, for me, is an action within many to come that is rooted in decoloniality.

Conclusion

I do not suggest this new framing is wholly fixed or immutable, I do believe the conversations we as a community in the Caribbean and its diaspora continuously have, both within our own immediate physical communities and in the digital spheres and forums, allow for new ideas and names to generate. There are many other theories related to Black Studies that work in opposition to some of the ideas I have placed here. My goal is to simply open up an avenue of exploration guided by a growing list of questions that relate to the popular ideas formed from the more well-established literature regarding Black, Indigenous and Latine subjectivity. The desired goal is to be in a consistent discursive mode of engagement with texts in order to come to my own conclusions and create my own theory.

Part Two: Historical References

Chapter Five

Sylvia Wynter: A Typography of the Invention of [Hu]Man

Sylvia Wynter's monumental essay *Unsettling: The Coloniality of Being* is in many ways, utilizing sociogeny to analyze the other side of the racial binary, the creation of whiteness (thus, the [Hu]Man) and the processes that must be internalized in order to believe in and maintain whiteness conceptually and ergo, systemically. Lastly, unlike other West Indian scholars, Wynter focuses less upon Britain as a point of theoretical and historical departure, and instead begins her analysis of the invention of the concept of Human in Iberian medieval history.

Within her analysis, Wynter interweaves religion, science, and philosophy in order to provide readers the comprehensive understanding of how whiteness became the determining and overrepresentation of humanity, too which exists today.; she provides a thorough examination of the foundation of racism and allows for readers to understand how exists today.

In the essay *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation--An Argument*, Jamaican essayist, philosopher, and Professor Sylvia Wynter moves through a historical timeline of the European invention of Man. Much attuned to my own efforts in the previous chapters outlining Iberian medieval history as it pertains to the development of race in our modern understanding, Wynter cites Iberia as the land of departure, Iberia as an analytical tool, the foundation for the movement in

European theological thought through to the evolution of the natural sciences and their relationships to colonial expansion. She cites Walter Mignolo, Fanon and coloniality, writing from the subject outside of Eurocentric philosophical frameworks.

She also utilizes *The Tempest* (1610–1611) by William Shakespeare within the same tradition of other Afro-Caribbean philosophers and the beginnings of the overrepresentation of Europeans as human and Africans and Indigenous people as Other. Within her analysis is an amalgamation of human development, theology, anti-blackness, and the sciences as they relate to the expansion of the idea of Man, the institutionalization and overrepresentation of whiteness as Human, and finally, its “Other”. This chapter will move through I what I believe to be the core concepts of Wynter’s epic, influential and important work, connecting the essay back to the need to understand Iberian history and the development of race as it relates to a nation state identity building in order to continue with colonial expansion (for which Wynter not only argues for, but also does herself). The essay itself, being almost one hundred pages, is a dense work in which I aim to provide a cursory overview, whilst also proposing a new reading with regards to phenomenology, but also my own previous analysis of the invention and systemic implementation of race.

De-Theology

“In order for the world of the laity, including that of the then ascendant modern European state, to escape their subordination to the world of the Church, it had been enabled to do so only on the basis of what Michel Foucault identifies as the “in-

vention of Man”: that is, by the Renaissance humanists’ epochal redescription of the human outside the terms of the then theocentric, “sinful by nature” conception/ “descriptive statement” of the human, on whose basis the hegemony of the Church/clergy over the lay world of Latin-Christian Europe had been supernaturally legitimated (Chorover 1979).” (Winter, 263, 2003)

“Wynter calls these different notions of the human “genres” of humanness. Each genre of the human features its own aspirations and ways of relating—which, taken together, make up what Wynter calls a culture’s “descriptive statement” (Serynada new enquiry).

In Part I, titled *The Janus Face of the Invention of “Man”: Laws of Nature and the Think ability of Natural, rather than Supernatural Causality versus the Dynamics of the Colonizer/Colonized Answer to the Question of Who/What We Are*, Wynter cites the processes of the invention of “Man” as the concept of the “Big Bang”. Howard Winnant, in *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparison* (1994) discusses the point to which he calls “The Emergence of Racial Time”, noting that “Classical social theory had an Enlightenment-based view of time, a perspective that understood the emergence of modernity in terms of the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie” (Winnant, 20, 1994). Winnant also cites Karl Marx, who communicated that the discovery of precious metals in the “Americas”, enslaved Africans used as commodities and the genocide and displacement of Indigenous people for their lands, all whilst European nations were in economic theaters of wars with each other to be the dominant nation, was a force that shaped our recent society was an inevitability. The caveat for Winnant regarding having

a racialized reality within the Western society, is that Marx's view is only slightly outdated considering new globalized dimensions to the intra-communal dynamics of race.

"Historical time could well be interpreted in terms of something like a racial *longue durée*: for has there not been an immense historical rupture represented by the rise of Europe, the onset of African enslavement, the conquista, and the subjugation of much of Asia?" (Winnant, 21, 1994). He goes on to define racial *longue durée* as the centuries in which the inscribing of race via phenotype signification on the bodies of the newly categories as Other through colonialism and genocide; this act in its totality also was a method of narration, presumably the narration and expression of whiteness. His final point that I wish to make significant is the aforementioned "Big Bang"; which still transcends and transforms our present world. This "Big Bang" still prevails as there is the overdetermined "construction of world 'civilization' as a product of the rise of Europe and the subjugation of the rest of us still defines the race concept" (Winnant, 21, 1994).

Winnant's framing of the processes of the advent of coloniality as the "Big Bang" is important to understand in order to situate the initial discourse of Wynter's essay. The "Big Bang" and all it encompassed, is what was needed in order to proceed with the process of what she calls "de-supernaturalizing" (Wynter, 263, 2003). The timeline Wynter utilizes is split into two components, the first begins during the Renaissance period to the 18th century and the second from the 18th century until the present moment. In the former, the battleground of "Man" was between God and its human subjects on Earth, the latter was race, in which the processes of discovery of "who or what we are" were to be replaced with race instead of God. In order to answer the question of "who or what we are", there was the necessitation

to implement a mode of de-secularization (from God's power) which in that needed a clear demarcation of difference. In layman's terms, as I understand it, race as the battleground for the understanding of what it means to be human, suggests is that in order to be free (to a certain extent) from God with justification, there needed to be an ability to play God (in a manner of speaking) on Earth. This central action is the point to wish I will focus upon in my interpretations of Wynter's essay as we continue to move through the timeline that she has created.

She points to scholarship being continuously developed within archaeo-astronomy studies, demonstrating that within small nomadic communities and within larger, more organized societies have all in some shape or form, charted their "descriptive statements" onto the cosmos to which were regular, stable points in their everyday lives. This action of prescription onto the cosmos, meant there was a creation of what it meant to be human to them as small groups or as stated earlier, large societies. This prescription then becomes legitimate within each society, and thus they judge each other (within their own groups primarily) within the set of criteria; thus, there is an essence to their human qualities, thereby becoming a fact of life. The eventual outcome of these processes leads to a commandment of obedience "necessitated [that] the individual and collective behaviors by means of which each such order and its mode of being human were brought into existence, produced, and stably reproduced...had still remained adaptive truths-for and, as such, ethno-astronomies, ethno-geographies" (Wynter, 271, 2003).

Speaking with regards to the Renaissance period, the following large passage demonstrates where Wynter's timeline begins to truly structure itself with regards to the Human:

“Hence the logic by which medieval Latin-Christian Europe’s “notion of the world” and “idea of order” would become one of degrees of spiritual perfection, at the same time as it would remain mapped onto the same “space of Otherness” principle of nonhomogeneity (Godzich 1986). With the result that on the basis of this projection, the medieval Latin-Christian subject’s sensory perception of a motionless earth would have “verified” for them not only the postulate of mankind’s justly condemned enslavement to the negative Adamic legacy, but, even more centrally, the “sinful by nature” descriptive statement of the human in whose terms they both experienced themselves as Christians, being thereby behaviorally impelled to seek redemption from their enslavement through the sacraments of the Church, as well as by adhering to its prohibitions, and to thereby strive to attain to its otherworldly goal—that of Divine Election for eternal salvation in the Augustinian *civitas dei* (the city of God).” (Wynter, 274, 2003)

However, there was a break, the Big Bang, in which a separation between Heaven and Earth began to take hold, what Wynter calls the superlunar and sublunar. This occurred when the Portuguese and the Spanish respectively took their voyages to locations deemed either too hot, or simply just a vast sea, either way, both outside of God’s jurisdiction. These voyages, Wynter alludes to be actions within the realm of self-transformation for Europe, itself beginning to develop nation state identities as evidenced in Chapter 3 with the advent of Spain

as an ethno-religious identity. Either way, the repositioning of the hegemonic power of the Church over its subjects, God and its creations, was underway. “From the viewpoint, therefore, of the category whose members had until then been compelled to think and work within the very theocentric paradigms that legitimated the dominance of the post-Gregorian Reform Church and its celibate clergy (the name clergy means, in Greek, the chosen) over the lay world—as these paradigms had been elaborated in the context of the then hegemonic Scholastic order of knowledge of medieval Europe” (Wynter, 275, 2003).

When Wynter states the clergy and the intelligentsia of this era “had to be accomplices in the production of a “politics of truth” that subordinated their own lay world and its perspective on reality to that of the Church and of the clergy” (Wynter, 276, 2003), I understand this to describe the new processes needed to be taken in order to create a new cosmology and relationship to said cosmos that were rather de-theological, even if still tethered to existing pillars of aforementioned human prescription to the cosmos. It is here we are introduced to Renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and his famed treatise titled *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, (1486). Wynter notes that Pico has reinterpreted the story of Genesis, that Adam was not sent to the Garden of Eden and have fallen from it after Eve’s first sin; but instead Adam nor Eve have fallen at all, for God not only shaped his subjects to be in some way an image after God’s self, including being the center of its own universe but also free to choose whom they wished to be. It seems to be there are two options, succumb to your emotions and be a beast, or be guided by your thoughts and become something beyond (alluding to the angels).

“...on the basis of this new conception, and of its related civic humanist reformulation, that Man was to be invented in its first form as the rational political subject of the state, as one

who displayed his reason by primarily adhering to the laws of the state—rather than, as before, in seeking to redeem himself from enslavement to Original Sin by primarily adhering to the prohibitions of the Church” (Wynter, 277, 2003). Some 20 years after Pico’s death, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) began to cement the development of what we know to be the heliocentric model in astronomy. A literal shift in Europe’s understanding of the Earth’s relationship to the Sun- thus its own relationship to God- and thereby in order to accept the decentralization of the Earth within the solar system, theology must shift as well. As explained earlier, any given society’s definition of human within their own respective culture was tightly tethered as an objective set of facts to their understanding of the cosmos; if one set of facts is to shift, the other must also follow. All these previously mentioned moments of knowledge production, whether religious, philosophical, or astronomical, all culminate, for Wynter, to be wherein the rupture of the Western hemisphere begins because the voyages taken by the Portuguese and Spanish were done so under these premises and anticipations about possibility.

“...in order to find both a space outside the terms of the medieval order’s “descriptive statement” and an alternative model on which to reinvent the matrix optimally Redeemed-in-the-Spirit Self of the Christian, the “subject of the church,” as that of the Rational Self of Man as political subject of the state. While it was the revalorization of natural man that was implicit in this overall return to the Greco-Roman and other pre-Christian thought, and models by Renaissance humanists such as Ficino and Pico, as Fernand Hallyn (1990) has proposed, that was

to make possible Copernicus's intellectual challenge to the ontological distinction between the supralunar and sublunar realms of the cosmos: to its foundational premise of a nonhomogeneity of substance between them." (Wynter, 277, 2003)

What is next assessed is the Spirit/Flesh code that was inscribed onto the cosmos as it relates to the Earth, as previously mentioned, a master code so to speak. This master code, initially projected onto the Heavens (purity) and the Earth (where Adam has fallen) was then applied to what I understand to be the then determined "known" geographies of the time (starting with Jerusalem and moving outward from this Biblical point). "This series of symbolically coded Spirit/Flesh representations mapped upon the "space of Otherness" of the physical cosmos had not only functioned to absolutize the theocentric descriptive statement of the human, its master code of symbolic life (the Spirit) and death (the Flesh), together with that statement's overall explanatory thesis of supernatural causation" (Wynter, 279, 2003). This master code also served as a means of controlling those that the society determined to be "ill", and via an exercise in essentialism, their "illness" was determined to be the manifestation of the consequence of Man's Original Sin, to which there was a mode of salvation by way of Baptism and the receiving of the Holy Sacrament.

What can be determined in the final passages of the first part of the essay, is that the Renaissance catapulted the European imagination back and forth between the terrestrial and the territorial, a reorientation and re-engagement of the mind to and from God back to the body and the question not of mortality but of birth and essentialism. Through these new interventions with Europe's relationship to God, the creation of a new hard scientific proof of the

positionality of the Earth and the Sun, came the new inscription onto mortal beings what it meant to be human as the countries began to build their national state identities, but also in relation to their ongoing de-theology via the new set of standards of being a Christian or Catholic being; that is to say this new invention of the Human was done so through not only de-centering God (via the de-centering the Earth within the cosmos) but also by de-theologizing the discourse on why as beings they existed, thus becoming political agents with a choice (given to them by God). As these new emergent discourses are being held, Spain and Portugal pushed their first boats into the sea to begin the colonial projects in the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

Their interactions with Indigenous people in these “new” lands, coupled with the aforementioned ideas about “illness” being prescribed onto unspecified but coded as disabled bodies, there was then a new descriptive statement about the consequence of Original Sin- again on disabled bodies (or minds) and vis a vis phenotype. I interpret what Wynter is then noting that since the Christians of Europe were unable to create an Other to the God, they determined to be the one true God as they are told by the gospel but were they themselves free determining political agents with autonomy (because God determined this to be so) then they must begin to create an Other to themselves. “The West would therefore remain unable, from then on, to conceive of an Other to what it calls human—an Other, therefore, to its correlated postulates of power, truth, freedom. All other modes of being human would instead have to be seen not as the alternative modes of being human that they are “out there,” but adaptively, as the lack of the West’s ontologically absolute self-description” (Wynter, 282, 2003). In other words, in order to accept their (Europeans) new descriptive statement as free political agents (those of logic), designed in this way by God, there needed to be an alternative-not

to God but to that of themselves; in line with Spain's ideas about religion as ethno-national identity emerging along with other religious and political wars throughout the continent, phenotype became the mode in which the sub-rational sub-human became the "Other" to the human.

The Invention of Man as a Political Agent

In Part Two of *Unsettling*, titled *The Las Casas/Sepúlveda Dispute and the Paradox of the Humanists' Invention/Overrepresentation of "Man": On the Coloniality of Secular Being, the Instituting of Human Others*, Wynter begins with a reiteration of the new thought of what Man/"who are we" as it pertained to the de-theology of philosophy and science:

"With this redescription, the medieval world's idea of order as based upon degrees of spiritual perfection/imperfection, an idea of order centered on the Church, was now to be replaced by a new one based upon degrees of rational perfection/imperfection. And this was to be the new "idea of order" on whose basis the coloniality of being, enacted by the dynamics of the relation between Man—overrepresented as the generic, ostensibly supracultural human—and its subjugated Human Others (i.e., Indians and Negroes), together with, as [Anibal] Quijano notes, the continuum of new categories of humans (i.e., mestizos and mulattos to which their human/subhuman value difference gave rise), was to be brought into existence as the foundational basis of modernity." (Wynter, 287-288, 2003)

In the book *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (2009), Thomas McCarthy moves through Immanuel Kant's writings on political philosophy, anthropology, and geography, all which were related to his ideas about the presence of race. McCarthy is also keen to understand how, or why, Kant was able to create such a systemic account of race prior to the immense scholarship we have at present, which he notes began in the late nineteenth century. According to McCarthy, Kant's writing, whilst deep within moral questions embedded in the fabric of political philosophy of his time, could not be married with his other thoughts regarding anthropology. McCarthy further notes that Kant moved through the structure of thought within anthropology: the practical, which was a narrow sense of the moral, but found within both was the pragmatic. Or to say best, he worked through anthropology pragmatically, finding that encompassed in both practical and moral, was the ability to view anthropology through a pragmatic lens which he separated from the physiological anthropology. The former, according to McCarthy, is man as free agents and what they should and can make of themselves. The latter is directly related to what nature makes of man. "But this is also the context required by the logic of Kant's reflections on human destiny, which renders highly problematic any attempt to sharply to separate the workings of nature—particularly as culturally formed — from those of freedom..." (McCarthy, 46, 2009).

McCarthy continues to deliver an analysis on Kant's own ideas about the reason for race, citing that Kant had an idea that within our original ancestors (location on Earth not stated) was a "fund of four germs or seeds [Keime], each of which contained in potential one set of racial characteristics..." (McCarthy, 48, 2009). Thus, through these germs and in relation to geography and its accompanying climate, would then become the determining factor of the

creation of the races on Earth, which could never be undermined or undone. However, Kant's desire it is stated, was to provide a difference in races whilst remaining with the idea that there was still a foundational relationship between all of them that was determined by God. "Kant intended his account of racial diversity also to preserve the unity in difference of the human species, in line with the Biblical narrative of creation..." (McCarthy, 48, 2009). Kant's writings on the creation and the ideas about those that were now racialized as oppositional to European and white were not ideas that were radical for their time, often dependent upon geography and climate as a means of understanding not just the supposed animalistic pathology but also their worth and status in terms of the development of European colonies.

"Reflecting - often in distressing detail - the character of European contacts with non-Europeans, he represents Native Americans as too weak for hard labor and resistant to culture; Africans as accepting the culture of the slaves but not of free people; and both as incapable of creating for themselves an orderly civil society" (McCarthy, 50-51, 2009). McCarthy moves to explain to readers that it is important here (the above-mentioned point on reflection) to understand not the -why- Kant thought this way, but how these ideas moved from the natural description, and became part of the systemic natural history that was being written; because if Kant is to suggest that the races were planted, then germinated, race becomes a hard science that is then part of the world order of nature, which become the basis for a determinant judgement.

I provide this overview of Kant via McCarthy as I also engage with the writing of Paget Henry and his work on Wynter in *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (2000). Henry reminds us of the use of race in colonial projects as not only part of the emergent ideas connected to ethnographies-religious national identity. "This position of being outside the

Christian kingdom [all non-Europeans] determined their value as human beings and what could or could not be done to them by Christians... [the] rewriting of the identity of new-world peoples. It also had to be reshaped by the categories of the rational, politico-economic schema of salvation...The lower value of civil slaves justified their complete communication as disposable items on the labor market" (Henry, 131-133, 2000).

The need to examine an example such as Kant for myself, is to incorporate extra philosophical context of the time, to the ongoing European dialogue about what or who Man is. "Seeing that because the "ill" or "threat" was now that of finding oneself enslaved to one's passions, to the particularistic desires of one's human nature, salvation/redemption could only be found by the subject able to subdue his private interests in order to adhere to the laws of the politically absolute state, and thereby to the 'common good'" (Wynter, 288-289, 2003). This is to say that independently, these European countries, as they ventured westward and continued their colonial expansion projects, needed to maintain control and steadiness of their own respective colonies in order to keep any chance of becoming the leader in the growing global trade economy.

As such, Wynter discusses the opposing views of humanity, slavery and colonials through a cursory examination of Bartholomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda; the former (although once a land and slave owner turned 'advocate') arguing for the humanity of Indigenous people and the slavery of Africans instead, and the former stating "Those whose condition is such that their [Indigenous people of the Americas] function is the use of their bodies and nothing better can be expected of them, those, I say, are slaves of nature. It is better for them to be ruled thus" ("Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda- Wikipedia", n/a, 2022). This must be

framed with Wynter's assessment when she states "[this] clash as to whether the primary generic identity should continue to be that of Las Casas's theocentric Christian, or that of the newly invented Man of the humanists, as the rational (or ratiocentric) political subject of the state (the latter as the "descriptive statement" in whose terms Sepúlveda spoke) (Wynter, 288, 2003).

As such, Wynter, in the vein of Black, Caribbean and Negritude philosophical movements, examines the play *The Tempest*, by Shakespeare. She states her purpose in discussing *The Tempest* is due to the "mutation of ethics", a result of religious ethics and reasons of the state, culminating into a clash. Man, as the rational subject was invested through the process of othering a sensuous, other, and irrational Black and Indigenous subject. Tiffany Lethabo King writes "Western European men wrote and represented themselves [for example *The Tempest*] as conquerors of this era. This form of conquistador humanism and its view of the Native and Black Other- as a space of death- produced and sustained a genocidal violence and brutal system of enslavement that relegated Black people and indigenous people to the bottom ranks of the human order" (King, 16, 2019).

Whilst the character Prospero, represents the newly created ideal of Man: the conqueror and the political agent. Caliban represents the damned, who is the embodiment of the consequence of Natural Sin. Fatherless and alone on an island, he is a beast more than a man. Caliban's mother Sycorax is a voiceless specter, and as a deceased witch, she haunts the characters and the tale itself. King, in discussing Sycorax, states "This haunting presence, while lacking embodiment, voice, and conventional subject hood, has an other-worldly power in the play that classical literature and the Black literary tradition have overlooked" (King, 181, 2019). These assessments of Caliban's embodiment of the irrational sub-human, his mother's

womanhood marked by the unholiness as a witch, are clear allegories to the Other. "...the Human Other figures to the generic human embodied in Prospero [sic] made to embody the postulate of "significant ill" of enslavement to the lower, sensory aspects of "human nature." At the same time, the generic human bearer-figures of the politically rational are made to actualize the new, transumed formulation and its conception of freedom as having no longer mastery over Original Sin..." (Wynter, 290, 2003). Caliban, unlike other characters in the play who are able to self-actualize to a point where they achieve agency, are enslaved to their positions are irrational sub-human figures in Chapter 9.

Wynter's essay continues to document the various processes that lead to the non-secular identity of the Other, a place that would be occupied by Indigenous and African peoples:

"The non-Europeans that the West encountered as it expanded would classify the West as "abnormal" relative to their own experienced Norm of being human, in the Otherness slot of the gods or the ancestors...For the indigenous peoples of the New World, together with the mass enslaved peoples of Africa, were now to be reclassified as "irrational" because "savage" Indians, and as "subrational" Negroes, in the terms of a formula based on an a-Christian premise of a by-nature difference between Spaniards and Indians, and, by extrapolation, between Christian Europeans and Negroes." (Wynter, 292-296, 2003)

In support of the previous passage, Henry puts forward that Wynter summarizes that lower status placed upon Indigenous and African people made them easy to view as a commodity, serving towards the advancement of the European nation states, or as he puts it “disposable items on the labor market” (Henry, 133, 2000) and to what Saidiya Hartmann, along with King, describe as the fungibility of African people in the Americas, specifically. Henry pushes this idea further when he says, “it is the mythopoetic inscription of race in the liminal dynamics of the schema of early capitalism that gives power and social reality to race” (Henry, 133, 2000).

In comparing and contrasting the religious ideas questioning what the human is, morality in the age of conquest and economics, Wynter moved through the processes of the creation of race via Spanish and Portuguese conquest and demonstrated the hierarchies implemented in this new matrix of God-Human-Other-Animal. Indigenous and Africans were placed in-between Human and Animal, however, between these two groups (and what I assume are the offspring of the mixing of African, Indigenous and European and the extent to which the blood mixes and moves or withholds the ability to reach political agency (aka become Human). “... [The] indispensable function of the inscribing and instituting of the norm subject of the Spanish religio-political monarchical state as a “clean” and therefore rational subject (rather than, as before, a subject seeking to be spiritually redeemed), so it is to be with respect to the role of the Black Other in the construction of Europeans as racially “pure,” secular subjects” (Wynter, 310, 2003). Wynter follows this point with an outline of the new model of Human, how not only this schema is understood as biologically determined social status, in other words the servant Indigenous, the natural slave of the African, the poor thus lower status European, and finally (and for the first time very clearly delineated point of ableism) the Mad, are now locked into the new definition of Man.

Conclusion

“It can be seen in hindsight that the “space of Otherness” which had been projected both upon the heavens as well as upon organic life, had been a central function of the Godelier-type mechanisms by means of which, as humans, we keep our own authorship and agency opaque to ourselves, in that the respective codes that had been mapped upon them (i.e., that of Redeemed Spirit/Fallen Flesh, then that of rational nature [redeemed from irrationality] and irrational nature [enslaved to irrationality]) had both played a central analogical status-ordering and thereby system-maintaining role for their respective social systems: firstly, that of Latin-Christian Europe, followed by that of the monarchical (whether absolute or constitutionally limited) order of the landed-gentry West.” (Wynter, 315, 2003)

The purpose of this essay by Wynter is to provide the historical, scientific and religious context, in a thorough comprehensive manner, regarding the invention-and subsequent execution- of “The Human”. Conversely, it is also about the invention and the institutionalization of “The Other”. Despite the world having multiple regional and culturally specific cosmologies to which groups (and large establish societies) formed their understanding of what existence (who are we, why are we here) and this includes God, the institutionalization of these concepts via white supremacy, settler colonialism, genocide and coloniality is unparalleled. The revelation that the Sun does not in fact revolve around the Earth lead to the need to re-create

a new cosmology across Europe, which consequently was a de-theologizing of God and a push towards the question of who we are if not a creation directly from the hand of God (but in fact, a creation of God that occurred through natural biological processes and thus, political agents). These ideas coincided with the advent of European colonial expansion, principally Iberian in which the peninsula was undergoing religious and national identity formations.

This materialization of Western Man, to which projections of purity and logic were placed upon, became the universal to which all others were measured. This creation directs Wynter to compartmentalize these inventions into two models: Man1 and Man2. Man1, the theological model of Man, was transformed during the Renaissance (and cemented during the Enlightenment Period) into the secular and biological (also political and economic agent) of Man2.

This model, reiterates Wynter, was not only the newly cemented structure of European society, but now of their colonies the world over. This social and cultural matrix was, now, also becoming the foundation for what was to be determined to be the natural science, created and studied through “an objective set of facts”, however much they were derived from ethnoclass genesis’ belief of what it means to be a human. For example, phenotype as a direct consequence of climate, which is directly related to those from these regions living through the consequence of the Original Sin. “...Caucasoid physiognomy (as symbolic life, the name of what is good, the idea that some humans can be selected by Evolution) and the Negroid physiognomy (as symbolic death, the “name of what is evil,” the idea that some humans can be dysselected by Evolution...” (Wynter, 316, 2003).

Whilst Wynter moves through the next several pages to show to readers how this model of Human and the ability to access Humanity has slightly evolved- incorporating class in a clear way, post-colonial and the First, Second Third worlds as they relate to former colonial powers, but also within and without the diaspora, and more secular reformulations, I want to now move towards what I find most inspiring within Wynter's essay.

I believe this essay could be understood, in part, as a kind of phenomenological and the historical analysis of the racist. The caveat being, that this essay was written by a Black Jamaican woman *about* the structures that built racists and racism, so it is not a first-person account. Nonetheless, in order to understand racism, white supremacy, settler colonialism and capitalism, as it still pertains to the globe today (an argument Wynter makes that I agree with), I reiterate one should study medieval Iberian history to understand (contemporary) nation state identity building through concepts rooted in purity, religion and blood as these three concepts as Iberians (Catholics and other Christians throughout Europe) move through understanding themselves as a religious ethnoclass. Also, this assists in understanding how these societies, although shifting from theological to scientific, created systems in order to play God and master in some way, especially as they began to detach themselves from God (and themselves through emergent hard science) as the center.

“The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions” (Jacob, n/a, 2019). If this is the core to the process of phenomenology, then I would argue the projection and attachment of Human as a concept onto white

Europeans, and thusly the overrepresentation of white European man as the foundation of the human experience, to which all others stem from.

Colonial Beginnings: A cursory Historical Examination of Race

This chapter begins by examining the advent of race by an analysis of the invention of Spanish identity as it formed in opposition to the Iberian Jewish and Muslim citizens in the 14th and 15th centuries. I do not aim to provide a thorough retelling of this era, but in order to understand Latine as an ethnic and (misapplied) racial marker, and how it was designed, this account is important. It is necessary because provides the background that is needed to understand the various modes of whiteness that are at play in contemporary and global white supremacy; that is to say, that Anglo-centric discussions of racism and whiteness are a disservice to the density and vastness of colonial pasts. It is also preventing critical discussions of what it means to be Latine, and the relationship to Latinidad.

In keeping in line with Tiffany Lethabo King's use of shoals as a metaphorical and analytical point of departure for Black and Indigenous studies, I use medieval Iberian history and early Latin American/Caribbean history as a point of demarcation for the analysis of knowledge produced in the aforementioned regional locations. I bear in mind the way King uses the coast of Guinea in 1441 and noting "The coast of West Africa works not so much to displace the horrors and legacies of Indigenous genocide in the Americas as to insert the invention of Blackness as a crucial line of demarcation for the thinking and writing of the human as Man" (King, 19, 2019).

Medieval Iberia and early colonial development in New Spain are catalysts for understanding the Blackness and Indigeneity that emerges from these points of literal departures (Jews and Moors from Iberia, then Iberians themselves) and creations (Spaniards, Indios, Negros). King discusses other Caribbean writers such as Sylvia Winter, who in reorganizing location and temporal frames within their analysis, “push back the curtains and position Blackness, which was previously positioned just offstage, directly under the spotlight of the epic drama of conquest...According to Wynter, the invention of Blackness [sic] and Black lands as terra nulls (or torrid and inhabitable) are required to establish the terms of conquest” (King, 18, 2019).

From here, we continue building a layered, historical context via a cursory examination of the colonial history of New Spain, the advent of Latin America and the relevant aspects of the relationship between Spain and Anglo-America, and lastly Mexico and the United States. These examinations are necessitated for two reasons. First, isolating the cultural and racial context that helped mold the writings of the most prominent and popular writers within Latina feminist phenomenology category; namely Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherrie Moraga and Linda Maria Alcoff. These writers are chosen in particular because Chicane⁷ writers and theorists are again, the most prominent voices in Latina phenomenology, and from my experience their texts are readily available and accessible. Secondly, there will be a need for a reckoning with what is Latinidad today and how it is experienced, and in order to do so, its construction over time must be evaluated (these thorough critical engagements occur in Part 4). The purpose of this chapter is not just to examine the basic timeline of the invention of Latin America, but

⁷ Chicano or Chicana are terms used for Mexican Americans that reside within the border states of the southwest United States; it is also a cultural identity that was popularized during the Civil Rights era in the United States. The e is used instead of a or o, for the same reasons as are applied for Latine. For gender neutrality.

to provide me with information in order to better contextualize and situate feminist phenomenology as a product of its history. The knowledge gained outside of phenomenological practices is so that I can better fill epistemic, cultural, and social gaps between Latina and Afro-Caribbean phenomenology.

Early Iberian Technologies of Control

“If we are to think about race and identity not as things but as processes of living, a turn to Iberian colonialism is particularly helpful. One reason is that the first waves of colonialism inaugurated the global, racialized categories of humanity with which we are only too familiar today. We are forced to recognize that these divisions had a historical genesis and that their construction was party to the politics making the modern world and its illusions.” (Silverblatt, x, 2009)

In order to understand the processes of racialized embodiment in the present, as Irene Silverblatt states in the foreword to *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*, it is important to understand the context of the creation of race, and race-ism, as we recognize it today. For myself as a researcher in colonial histories, specifically of Latin America and the Caribbean, my journey commences precisely with kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula and their relationships to, in particular, the Jewish population (specifically in Castile and Aragon) and the Moors in the 14th century.

If we begin building our timeline starting in the period between 1391-1492, we know there had been a significant conversion to Catholicism from Judaism after the implementation of orders and decrees had been put in place, for example, segregation, the inability to retain Jewish markets, and red patches to be worn on clothing identifying oneself as a Jew, resulting in violence and religious prosecution of the Jewish population in the peninsula (Perez, 17, 2012). These are just some examples of a continuous building of tension between the Christians and Jews, as well there was equal tension between Christians and Muslims, on the peninsula.

Within this 100-year period, there was also the unification of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, a consequence of the marriage between Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon on October 19, 1469. What resulted was an emergence of Spain, not only as an infant nation, but also cultural identity.⁸ Whilst Queen Isabel specifically had attempted to end the violence and protect Jewish citizens, as⁹ there were prominent members of Spanish government who were practicing Jews.¹⁰ After many failed attempts and continuous violence and deaths, ultimately the crown issued the edict titled The Alhambra Decree, or the Edict of Expulsion, on March

⁸ Although "Spain" as an official unified kingdom would not occur until the Nueva Planta decrees of 1707–1716. Castile and Aragon were still regarded as two separate but unified kingdoms.

⁹ The Jewish citizens were seen by the monarchy as property of the state; therefore it was at a time in the best interest of the crown to protect Jewish citizens. As time progressed, and measures were taken such as the aforementioned red patches for identification and then later, segregation, ultimately none of these processes functioned as intended.

¹⁰ "But a few Jews also played a significant role at the apex of the financial structure. Under Ferdinand and Isabella, Abraham Seneor was treasurer of the Santa Hermandad, David Abulafia was in charge of supplies for the troops at Granada, and Isaac Abravanel administered the tax on sheep, the *servicio y montazgo*. The tax-farming company headed by the converso Luis de Alcalá, which included among its members Seneor, rabbi Mair Melamed, the Bien-veniste brothers and other Jews, played a prominent role in Castilian finance for some twenty years of this reign" (Kamen, 60, 2014).

31, 1492. Unable to escape violence, many Jews and Muslims opted to be *conversos*,¹¹ but one must bear in mind there was a mass conversion from Judaism or Islam to Christianity that had already occurred in the previous one hundred years; the conversos did so under fear for their lives and refusal to leave their homeland. This conversion under duress meant that those that converted forcibly versus volunteered conversion, were still seen as suspicious. Conversos did not escape anti-Semitism despite no longer being ‘practicing’ Jews, and those conversos that were converts from Islam were also victims to violence, and socially were never fully considered true Christians. It is important to note it had also been an established law, that intermarriages between Christians and Jews, or Christians and Muslims was forbidden.

“[Administrators in Spain] argued that blood carried stains, and that stains could determine character traits, intelligence, political rights, and economic possibilities. The notion of blood purity was first elaborated in Europe, where it was used to separate Old Christians from Spain’s New Christians—women and men of Jewish and Muslim origin whose ancestors had converted to Christianity. New Christians carried stained blood and, consequently, were perceived as a potential danger to social life.” (Silverblatt, xi, 2009)

¹¹ Conversos-New Christians, a term applied to those who had converted from Islam or Judaism to Christianity. Subsequently, those who were the descendants of conversos were also classified as such. This classification and its effects on Jewish citizen were long held; the reversal of the decree and citizenship of Jewish descendants of the expulsion by the Spanish Parliament in 2015-2019.

During the epoch of the expulsion of the Jews, there was a 10-year war over Granada between the Spanish crown and the Nasrid dynasty. The King of Granada, King Boabdil, conceded Emirate of Granada and the Alhambra Palace to the Kingdom of Castile on January 2, 1492. The Muslim population of Granada was subsequently compelled to convert to Christianity or become slaves or exiled. This injunction began in 1501, but by 1526 spread to the rest of Spain. These series of actions as a consequence of the joining of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, proved to be a forced to win war and create the fabric of Spanish identity, land and culture.

The expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Iberian society and lands occurred at the moment in which European countries were on the precipice of initiating their colonial projects in the Western hemisphere. What we understand is Spain itself was emerging as a unified nation under one identity and house, and was beginning to conceptualize a new, Spanish self with a set of socio-political and cultural boundaries and was no more a land with three religions. Although African Muslims were once rulers of their own kingdoms, and Jews who were once grandstanding citizens participating in public life, collectively they were no longer a segment of the fabric of Iberian identity.

Moreover, when discussing specifically Afro-Iberian history, or its erasure, we should note , as Nicolas R. Jones states in *Staging Habla de Negros: Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain*, this narrative “is not readily available for the eyes to detect regarding Peninsular Spanish ancestry, history, and space, acknowledging the marginalized and overlooked presence of black sub-Saharan Africans living in Iberia since their forcible and nonforcible arrival by medieval Islamic occupation forces from the Sudan and Ethiopia.” I would not be hesitant to say the moment of the Expulsion of the Jews and the takeover of al-

Andalus after the War of Granada, is when whiteness within the Spanish imagination can be determined to have begun; the creation of a singular identity in opposition to the “Other”.

These emergent technologies of control, enacted through concepts regarding stained blood, religious conversion, and position in social life, became the framework for how Spain thusly engaged with the Indigenous people in the Caribbean, South America and subsequently, the West Africans the Spanish crown enslaved after 1492. As Magali M. Carrera states in *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings*, ““Raza” connoted generational association with Jews and Moors and was used in Spain as a means to legitimize the discrimination and persecution of non-Christians and their descendants. In Spain and New Spain, the certification of *limpieza de sangre*, purity of blood, was required to obtain certain social and civil prerogatives” (Carrera, 10, 2003).

The Development of Colonial Technologies of Control and Domination: “Casta” in New Spain

“It is important that we frame the moment of contact between Europe and the Taíno people as a traumatic fissure in the islands’ story, and today is only one of many days when its people are mending it back together. This fissure forced upon the colonial subjects of the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas, in particular with Indigenous and African women, created the means in which we view these bodies even today. Used for labor, reproduction, entertainment, and fetishized sexual arousal, African and Indigenous women became the vessels in which violent patriarchal

ideas of submission and sexuality were carried through.” (X,
6, 2019)

I refer to this quote as it is my definition of *the rupture*, the fissure of Indigenous and Afro subjectivity as it relates the emergence of empire, chattel slavery and capitalism. What occurred after Christopher Columbus was encountered by the Taíno, became the means in which the evolution of Spanish identity against the “Other” truly formed. Considering the previous section of the Iberian processes of identity creation is analyzed, we continue forth in understanding how these processes became essential in domination and subsequently, the building of a national state identity. In this section, I will discuss how the casta system in New Spain became the tool in which the Spanish dominated Indigenous and African people. These processes were not only enacted in New Spain, but in other locations in which the Spanish had chosen to colonize, which includes various islands of the Caribbean. Due to New Spain being the epicenter of Spanish colonialism, thus where Mexico¹² as an independent nation emerged from, I believe it relevant to focus on this regional context.

The Spanish sought precious metals, gold and silver, above all else in their New World projects. Tulio Halperín Donghi reports in *The Contemporary History of Latin America*:

“Beginning roughly in 1500, the nucleus of Spanish settlement remained for two decades in the Antilles [Caribbean islands], where surface finds of gold produced an early mining boom using Indian labor. The next 20 years, 1520-40, saw the conquest of the Mexican and Peruvian highlands,

¹² Mexico serves as the point of focus because of the Chicana feminist phenomenology.

with their silver mines and dense Indian populations. These areas became the heartlands of the New World empire of Spain. The catastrophic decline of the Indian population caused by epidemics of European diseases put an end to gold production in the Antilles before mid-century, and the volume of silver from Mexico and Peru quickly surpassed gold from the Antilles..." (Donghi, 1, 1993)

In the 15th century, Europeans had already been dependent upon, albeit to a smaller extent, on the labor of enslaved Africans. The sharp and quick decline of Taínos in the Caribbean informed the Spanish in how they assessed the need for cheap labor in the whole of New Spain. Therefore, in and around 1502, the Spanish¹³ began to bring small amounts of enslaved Africans to begin working their mines and plantations. During the height of Spain's colonial power, New Spain encompassed what we know today as South America, but also far north into what is now most, if not all, of the United States' is western half, reaching upwards towards Canada (see figure below).

¹³ The Portuguese were also bringing enslaved Africans to their colonies as well to what is now Brazil. See *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (2000).



Figure 2, Map of Spanish Viceroyalty of New Spain, 1810

“All the trappings of the New World plantation system were well established, with the small number of wealthy mill-owners at the top of the hierarchy holding the most lands and the most slaves, followed by an intermediate layer of European planters who owned slaves and sugar fields but were too poor to actually be mill-owners in their own right. A poor European peasant population hardly existed, with only skilled administrative and mill operations opened to non-slave-owning whites. The lowest layer consisted of the mass of black slaves who made up the majority of the labor

forces as well as of the population as a whole. Thus well before the massive transplantation of Africans across the Atlantic, the American slave plantation system had been born.” (Klein, 20, 1986)

Although the numbers of Indigenous, African and Spaniards varied from territory to territory, the social and power dynamics were still reflective of one another. What now becomes relevant for the purposes of this thesis, is the notion of racial miscengation, or mixing amongst races. “That is, [sic] it has long been asserted that Spanish and Portuguese colonization tolerated racial miscegenation to a degree unimaginable in the British (and to a lesser extent) French worlds...” (). The near binary notions of race, that is to say Black African, Indio and Spaniard, were no longer sufficient, as the population of mixed raced people rapidly grew in the 17th and 18th centuries, along with the number of “Spaniards” who were born in these new lands; the settler colonial society needed to create a new system for the preservation and maintenance of social order. The maintenance of social order via race was important, for those that were Criollo, or Spanish but born in New Spain, were in fear of their lack of equality to those Spaniards born in Spain. This fear was compounded with living within a society in which the racial lines blurred, rendering their status and class as white people obsolete and indistinguishable from the imperial subjects they ruled over.

Like other scholars researching and discussing New Spain, I use casta paintings as a tool of reference for studying the systems of control under Spanish rule in colonial Latin America. Their importance lies in how these art works such as *Figure 2*, provide for us a visual tool for understanding how these governments were dependent upon the bodies of those they subjugated. This was done in order to not only build their own identity, but also begin creating

names for the liminal identities of mixed-race children, as it pertained to the emergent territories under their control. As Carrera explains:

“Both [portraiture and casta paintings] are embedded in the broader discourse of the colonial body—specifically, of the kinds, categories, or calidades of social bodies that constituted the disparate political and social territory of late colonial New Spain. The images must be seen as structured by a common set of ideas and beliefs about elite and non-elite status as contextualized in the lived experience of the people of late-colonial urban Mexico City. Put in another way, paralleling the reciprocal structure of the *libro de españoles* and the *libro de castas*, these elite portraits and casta paintings conceptually cross-reference each other and are inextricably bound to the specific colonial circumstance and discourses of late eighteenth-century New Spain.” (Carrera, 33, 2012)

The Spanish compartmentalized their lands and social systems well; New Spain was an extension of the Spanish kingdom given to those of noble status, wealth, and pure blood to maintain. For example, the Spanish segregated the Aztecs, who somewhat were able to maintain their own communities, although still under threat and subjugation. Lastly, the enslaved or indentured Africans, who were considered a part of the Spanish republic, as they were property of the crown. Although there were physical barriers that were completed through urban

planning and architectural design, there were still opportunities for a collision of people, culture and exchange due to open markets and religious conversions (Carrera, 35, 2012). Although early in the colonial history there was racial mixing between, specifically Spanish men and Indigenous women, resulting in what is considered 'mestizo', the children resulting in these relations were considered Spanish and legally were recognized as such. Returning to the point I stated earlier in the rendering of class and status indistinguishable, such legal recognition became arduous to attain. Thus, the Spaniards began to name those of Spanish and Indian unions as mestizo, the first step in maintaining the racial hierarchy.



Figure 3 Las Castas, artist unknown, 18th century, oil on canvas, 148 cm x 104 cm, Museo Nacional del Vicerreinato

Thus, this growing mixed population of mestizos, mulattos,¹⁴ and the mixtures propagated by their unions, etc., by the mid 18th century were then socially, economically, and legally unable

¹⁴ The growth of the mulatto (offspring of African and Spaniard) was slower and appeared in legal records at a later time due to the initial influx of mostly African men.

to be ignored (Carrera, 35, 2012). Consequently, they were relegated as the *society of castas*, la sociedad de castas. As a plethora of unions became evident, they presented to Criollos and Spaniards, a validation of the established indication of a distancing from Spanish blood; in other words, there was an entire section of New Spanish society with polluted, impure blood. There are, however, historical cases of individuals who have been able to contest their legal status as mestizo and prove their case as a legitimate heir, thus buying their way into whiteness by way of claiming *naturaleza*.¹⁵ “As labels, “castas” indicated membership in collective identities based on terms that denoted biological descent—sangre (blood) and origen (origin)— reinforced by a particular crianza (upbringing) and rooted in one or more lenguajes (languages or dialects) and geographical localities with particular characteristics linked to tierra (land) and clima (climate)”(Fisher and O’Hara, 81, 2009).

The casta paintings are a visual manifestation of the tradition the Enlightenment era practice of scientific organization, emerging as the classification of colonial humanity. The labels themselves exist within the “discourses about nature, society, and language and referred to social identities that were negotiable under certain circumstances” (Fisher and O’Hara, 81, 2009). Suffice to say the Spanish did not view Indigenous nor African people as humans in the same manner they viewed themselves, in other words as fully developed humans, therefore these scientific classifications were appropriate in understanding the social and natural order of colonial life.

These classifications were deployed in various manners. David Tavárez’s essay *Legally Indian: Inquisitorial Readings of Indigenous Identity in New Spain*, breaks down the various systems

¹⁵ See Ann Twinam *Purchasing Whiteness: Conversations on the Essence of Pardo-ness and Mulatto-ness at the End of Empire* (2009).

in place for reading an individual and their status in New Spanish society. Firstly, was the visual and what he notes to be the contextual reading of an individual one may see in passing, i.e. hair, phenotype, bone structure, manner of dress and the work one did (a laborer for example, would be racialized as *casta*). Although these are very simplistic readings, they were able to have very concrete affects in an individual's day to day. The second manner was "institutional readings and adjudications of ethnic identity...such institutional adjudications have produced records that suggest a permeability between categories—Indian and mestizo, or African and mulatto.." (Fisher and O'Hara, 813, 2009).

These two points are of interest to me because they are clearly displayed in Figure 1, in where the heterosexual couplings of various races are demonstrated, along with clear distinctions in color, dress and gender. As I addressed in *La Sangre Llama*, I am particularly struck by the framing of unions in where African women are presented. In other *casta* works of the time, Black women were often displayed in scenes of domestic violence against her partner, with a crying lighter skinned child tugging at her dress. "The interpretation of Black womanhood versus non-black women of color and white women was key to not only the abuse and enslavement of Black women but of black bodies as a whole" (X, 20, 2019). This is an example of the need to further de-humanize and project violence onto these racialized bodies as justification for their enslavement and non-human status, thus the continuation of chattel slavery.

Finally, the importance in developing an understanding of the structure of *casta*, not just within New Spain but within Latin America today as we will discuss, is the manner in which

class mobility, particularly how it manifests in the contemporary discourses of Latines, is tethered to race. Chasteen noted that throughout New Spain in the mid colonial period (17th-18th century), the sudden shortage of respectable livelihoods and work meant the social structure was beginning to dismantle (Donghi, 20, 1993). The pressure of the upper class and nobility was a large factor in the need for the creation of *casta*, as to make clearer the social and racial lines. If the nobility were able to maintain firmly their place and their incomes without worry of being disconnected from them, those that had either lost their fortunes or were attempting to create one, fell into an economic and social liminal space. "The result was increasing resentment among modestly well-off people who were unable to find a place at the level of their expectations" (Donghi, 20, 1993). This is an important factor for us to consider as we evaluate *Latinidad* and its philosophies and relationship to race in the contemporary as these histories provide the context for colorism, anti-blackness and the social order of *Latinidad*.

The Final Moments of Empire

Political unrest throughout continental Europe in the late 18th century, early 19th century, cannot be separated from the context in which we assess the fall of the Spanish empire, but we will only examine the most pertinent factors that I find the most relevant for the purposes of this investigation. The Spanish empire began to fraction in the beginning of the 19th century, when the Spanish American Wars of Independence¹⁶ (1808-1833) commenced, which coincided with the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) on the European continent. Napoleon Bonaparte, the French general, led a series of battles and questioned the need for royal heads of state throughout Europe. These French revolutionaries wanted to overthrow the kings of

¹⁶ "Spanish American" here means the Spanish empire in America, thus this term is not to be confused with the Spanish-American War, between Spain and the United States.

Europe and establish republics (Chasteen, 98, 2016). Bonaparte's method can be said to force countries, by brutal method, into nations built on liberty and equality and not royal birth-rights, and Spain was one of these nations.

Bonaparte captured the sitting king, and his son, of Spain, Carlos and Fernando VII. Bonaparte then placed his own brother as the acting King of Spain, to ensure he could maintain control over the country. The consequence of such a move led to political instability in the New World and a fracturing of allegiance between criollos and the head of state, and there were royalists who maintained their loyalty to the crown, and those that did not. Furthermore, when the King was reinstated in 1814, he then established absolute power over his subjects and made political moves that then alienated him from his once loyal subjects. Thus, the colonies began to favor a fully separation from Spain. "In sum, liberalism, whether coming from France or England, inspired all sides in the Napoleonic Wars. It was the impact of those wars, and their aftermath, in turn, that triggered Latin American" (Chasteen, 98, 2016).

Bonaparte desired for France to be the epicenter of politics, culture, and intellectual thought. "The actual term "Latin America" was coined in France under Napoleon III and played a role in his campaign to imply cultural kinship with France, transform France into a cultural and political leader of the area and install Maximilian as emperor of Mexico" ("Latin America - Wikipedia", n/a, 2022). Although in the end Bonaparte was defeated, the King was reinstated but the consequences of the wars reverberated throughout Latin America nonetheless, and Criollos thus began their crusade to full independence from Spain. For me it is important to note that "Latin" America, and Latinidad, emerged from a French political project, meant to reconfigure how Hispano-Luso colonies and territories relate back to Europe culturally and

politically. It is also important for me to contextualize this occurrence with the manner in which Criollos garnered support for independence from Spain. “The winning strategy for independence-minded [Criollos] was nativism. Nativism glorified an American identity defined by birthplace, something Creoles shared with the indigenous people, with those of mixed blood, even with the children of African slaves. Americanos was the nativist keyword” (Chasteen, 107-108, 2016).

By 1825, the end of the Spanish American Wars for independence were in their final act. “In the second of these [final] battles, Ayacucho, fought at an exhausting altitude of over ten thousand feet, the patriots captured the last Spanish viceroy in America. Everything after the battle of Ayacucho was essentially a mop-up operation. The long and bloody Spanish American wars for independence were finally over” (Chasteen, 115, 2016). What remained within Spanish colonial control in the Americas were Cuba and Puerto Rico, and to the Pacific the Spanish East Indies, consisting of Guam, Philippines, Taiwan, Celebes, and Maluku.

The Un-Whitening of a Fractured Empire

One of the most critical moments in the grand timeline of Latin American history, for the purposes of this paper, is the Spanish American War, in which Spain lost the last of its colonial territories both in the Americas and in the Pacific to the United States of America. This turning point of Spanish colonialism to U.S. imperialism is key for two reasons: first, it helps set the tone for a comparative study of Latin America, Hispanic Caribbean, and the rest of the Caribbean (evidenced in the next chapter). Secondly, it provides a context for the hyper-racialization of Latines within the United States today, a consequence of US imperialism but also developed out of the need to garner support socially from Americans to go to war with Spain.

The seed of the Spanish-American War can be determined to be Cuba's war for independence beginning in 1868. Cuba's fight for independence had several phases, the last of which culminated to become the Spanish-American War. The United States had not fully generated any interest in the Caribbean as a whole, but its trade with Cuba was directly affected and thus caught the attention of politicians and businessmen, who had begun to suffer losses in trade and sugar. The final catalyst was the sinking of the USS Maine off the coast of Cuba in April 1898. Our focus shall not be the various political nor economic factors leading to the war, but the propaganda machine created by the United States in response to the war. This is because the social reconfigurations of Spain and Latin America in the dominant Anglo-American imagination transformed Latine identity once again and has consequences in the present. This project of *un-whitening* Spaniards and Criollo's is what we shall examine.

“Earlier in the century and later, sometime after the Spanish-American War, Anglo-Americans tended to make distinctions between Spaniards from Spain or Spanish Creoles in the Americas and other Spanish-speaking peoples, but less so during the Spanish-American. Although there are many reasons to dispute the commonly used name for the war of, the irony is that Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and Spaniards were all being judged as sub civilized—given to various kinds of “cannibalism” and other distasteful behaviors unless under the guiding or chastising hand of U.S. intervention.” (Guzman, 144-145, 2005)

It is quite curious how the Spanish became un-white Europeans in the Anglo-American imagination. Earlier, I had noted the social rules and regulations regarding miscegenation were different in New Spain compared to the United States, the foundation for this un-whitening. Whilst both colonial projects depended on chattel slavery and the removal of Indigenous peoples in order to maintain more land, the outcomes were different

The United States had enacted the social and legal practice of the *one drop rule*, meaning that any person that had any African ancestry was legally Black, even if they did not appear Black, and this was no matter what their overall racial heritage was. The one drop rule, within the Anglo system of chattel slavery in which any child born of a Black woman was automatically a slave, ensured that the white and black population were distinct and separated; there were no liminal spaces for mixed race children born often to a Black mother from the assault of a plantation owner or overseer. This ensured a system of white domination, since the segregation of Indigenous people to reservations meant that Anglo Americans had land, free labor, and a maintenance of racial and social order. Although there were terms such as mulatto, quadroon and octoroon existed and were used, fundamentally, these individuals were always socially read as Black. Their mobility and work may have been dependent upon their appearance and heritage, but this is not to say they weren't still regarded as a slave, or after the American Civil War, they weren't still susceptible to anti-black violence.

Therefore, the early interpretations of New Spain and Spanish colonialism in the minds of Anglo-Americans was one of contamination and an over running of miscegenation. Moor-

ish presence in medieval Spain, along with Jews and Gypsy, painted Spaniards as an already degenerated nation that only further contaminated themselves, a consequence of their loose ideas regarding race mixing in their colonies. “Imperial vision cataloged hierarchically and simultaneously reduced the peoples and histories of contact in the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas into a set of interrelated types—Moor, Gypsy, and Indian—that stood for migration, expulsion, racial and cultural intermixing, and ineradicable stain” (Deguzaman, 73, 2006). Ironically, the principle of contaminated, impure blood that the Spanish created to justify the expulsion of the Moors and Jews, and further developed in their settler colonial project, was used against them at the fall of their empire hundreds of years later. The Spanish-American War only lasted for three months, with the defeat of Spain, and the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam and the Philippines. Although these islands had begun the path to independence themselves, they each lost any potential autonomy to freedom, with Puerto Rico and Guam still subject to American neo-colonialism in the present.

According to Maria DeGuzman, this un-white interpretation of Criollos and Spaniards can be framed as a “consolidation of Anglo-American identity”, a battle of hierarchy within whiteness in and of itself.¹⁷

¹⁷ This was a long-established tradition within the United States. Europeans from various nations had immigrated to America and were often treated as distinct from the more established and in power Anglo-Americans, who had considered themselves the purest of the white race. This occurred with Italians in the 19th century, who then romanticized the image of Christopher Columbus as the founder of America (when in fact Amerigo is the Italian for whom the continent is named after) in order to assimilate themselves into American society as a people with value and worth. This process of being outside of whiteness and then becoming white famously occurred with Irish immigrants. See *How the Irish Became White*.

“With regard to Spain, representations of Spain and Spaniards at the end of the nineteenth century in the United States were not merely a symptom or a consequence of being at war with a foreign power. These representations and the general concentration on “Spain” or “Spaniards” were at the center of the development of U.S. national identity as an Anglo-American imperial power. The closer the United States came to becoming Spain, as William Graham Sumner complained had happened less than a year after the war, the more the representations symptomatized an attempt to stratify Spain and Spaniards beneath and away from Anglo-Americans.” (Deguzmán, 142, 2006)

This strategy was important in the expansion of the growing American empire. The territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines were locations in which seldom white people were found. Together, there was an ability to frame the Spanish, these new territorial islands now under US control, and the Criollos as all sub-human themselves, despite their identity as white whilst a colonial power themselves. This new social reading within the Anglo imagination and politic, in my opinion, is the bedrock of why and how white Latines today are able to be understood as people of color who are disenfranchised because of their race within the United States.¹⁸ This is not to suggest that whiteness does not exist within Latinidad now in the present, it absolutely does. I provide this information

¹⁸ White Latines, or mestizos with close approximation are over represented in positions of power such as government and business. They also make up for much of the actors, university professors, writers and other high standing social positions in US society.

solely as added context in the formation of race; be it Africans, Indigenous, mixed-race peoples, and the different battles for the highest position of whiteness possible.

Conclusion

In 1925, Mexican scholar, philosopher and secretary of education José Vasconcelos published *La Raza Cósmica* (1925). The book, and its core concept, would go on to live in the popular Mexican and Chicane imagination for years to come. Its premise rested on the vision that those living within the former colonial Iberian territories would become the most prominent post-colonial force, as a unified peoples. In other words, “Latines”, although rooted principally in European desires for imperial and intellectual power, were fundamentally a people ‘mixed’ with many kinds of races; that is to say, Latine people should no longer be considered as subjects nor part of their former colonial masters. Due to their mixed essence, they would be able to one day transcend race, become a cosmic race created of many mixtures. This fantasy is not too different from other nation/state identity building attitudes, for example, Puerto Rico’s popular notion of “3 Razas: Taíno, Negro y Europeo” or Jamaica’s “Out of Many, One”. These ideals are meant to suggest there is an eradication of old-world divisions within former colonies, and what emerged were united, equal societies whose interests rested solely on an evolution beyond their colonial beginnings.

Although it is not true, and has yet to become evident within Mexico,¹⁹ Puerto Rico or other countries in Latin America, I mention *la raza cósmica* as the bridge that takes us

¹⁹ Anti Indigenous and Anti Black sentiments are still visible and powerful in Mexican society today. Afro Mexicans finally on consensus as of 2016 and the backlash to the success of Indigenous actress Yalitza Aparicio.

from deep within the trenches of the colonial condition to the present-day attempts at dismantling the chains that maintain our cultures within many of the same binds. Anti-blackness and the erasure of Afro-Latine existence is still prominent, the removal of Indigenous people from their lands is still occurring, and over all a majority of the people fleeing Latin America are Afro and/or Indigenous people who have been displaced by coups or drug wars. White Criollos still hold power, land, resources and money to this day in Latin America.

This function of this chapter was to provide a cursory timeline of the invention of race and its development as a technology of control and domination. By providing examples of how these technologies were interpreted and utilized in not just oppression, we can understand their relationship to nation state identity building. Contextualizing the tradition of race within the Iberian context in this manner allows for us as readers to understand how this interacts and comes into conflict with Anglo formations of race, both legally and socially. I contend that engagement with this histories is necessary in our commitment to understanding phenomenologies produced by Latinas or by Afro-Caribbean people. As Paula M. Moya maintains, when discussing the work of Chicana feminist and activist Cherríe Moraga, “by resituating [Moraga’s] work within the cultural and historical conditions from which it emerged... ‘a theory in the flesh’ gestures toward a realist theory of identity...the theoretical insights of women of color are necessary for understanding fundamental aspects of United States society” (Moya, 17, 2002). Although I am not discussing realist theory, I believe fundamentally in Moya’s point with regards to situating theory or philosophy within the cultural context which gave it shape. Moreover, I deem an understanding of these histories necessary in my own desire to formulate Afro-Indigenous phenomenology. As Omaris Zamora notes in her thesis *(Trance)formations of an*

AfroLatina: Embodied Archives of Blackness and Womanhood in Transnational Dominican Women's Narratives (2016), "...the knowledges that are created through lived experiences are central in the formation of a feminist theory of color. This is to say, that phenomenology is essential to our theorizations" (Zamora, 31, 2016).

Part Three: Situated Phenomenologies

Chapter Six

Latina Feminist Phenomenology: Theories in the Flesh

“A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience. We are the colored in a white feminist movement. We are the feminists among the people of our culture. We are often the lesbians among the straight. We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words.”

“Fear develops the proximity sense aspect of *la facultad*...It is anything that breaks into one’s everyday mode of perception, that causes a break in one’s defenses and resistance, anything that takes one from one’s habitual ground, causes the depths to open up, cause a shift in perception. This shift in perception deepens the way we see concrete objects and people; the sense become so acute and piercing that we can see through things, view events in depth, a piercing that reaches the underworld (the realm of the soul).” (Anzaldúa, 39, 1987)

In the 1980's, Chicana writers Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa introduced readers to new possibilities in philosophical explorations of identity and the self within a mestiza, queer and bi-lingual context that has stood to shape much of Latina feminist discourse to this day some 30 years later. These two authors specifically have shaped the Latina philosophical landscape, particularly in regard to Latina phenomenological practices. They have framed queer and ethnic discourses with their writings that have been both poetic and academic in their form, along with coalition efforts with other writers of color and Black women.²⁰ In my experience as a student and researcher, they are also the most accessible and visible with regards to Latina feminist philosophy. Therefore, in this section, I will largely examine Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) and Moraga's *Loving in the War Years* (1983), for these are the two primary books that have been the introduction to Latina feminist philosophical literature for myself and many others. I will also include supportive analysis by other Chicana and Latina writers such as Paula M. Moya, Mariana Ortega, and Elizabeth Martínez to deepen the engagement with the works. This section serves to introduce us to Latina feminist phenomenology, what shapes it, and the voices that gave it structure.

Before doing so, I think it is important to ensure there is an understanding of what qualifies as Latina feminist phenomenology. In the book *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* (2016), Mariana Ortega entails what she interprets as the crucial characteristics of Latina feminist phenomenology, to which I largely agree with, and they are as follows:

“(1) attention to the lived experience of Latinas/os in the United States, including those born here or in Latin America

²⁰ see *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981)

and the Caribbean; (2) emphasis on concrete, embodied everyday experience; (3) attention to the intersection or, as [Maria] Lugones describes it, the intermeshedness of race, sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, ethnicity, and so on; (4) disclosure of the way in which the gendered or racialized (mestizaje/mulataje) aspect of Latina/o experience is covered up in traditional philosophical discussions that take white male experience as the norm; (5) attunement to historical and cultural processes that recognizes the heterogeneity of Latinas/os; and (6) critical deployment of experiential knowledge in order to contest or reimagine established notions of Latinidad.” (Ortega, 10, 2016)

What Ortega provides in these 6 points speaks to the geopolitical, historical, and contemporary issues that directly link to those from Latin America. Although other Women of Color from other regions of the world could certainly pull from her points and apply to themselves, these are created out of a need for a specific analysis of Latin American experiences.

Gloria Anzaldúa

Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* is poetic as it travels time and space, Aztec mythology to American greed, English to Spanish, weaving its dialectical core through queerness, whiteness, Chicano culture, and crisis. Her expressions of fearing and fighting homophobia, misogyny and xenophobia converge on the pages, for she rarely compartmentalizes her battle against all of these social dynamics. She invites readers into her space in so that we can world travel with her, which is sometimes nostalgic and violent. While Anzaldúa does not limit her own personal analysis to one specific subject matter, I wish to engage with the chapter titled

Towards a New Consciousness, in which she concentrates on her proposal for the evolution and manifestation of Latina thought. Also, I choose this particular chapter for analysis because it has some relational qualities to my own concept of the existential-cultural crisis, to which I would argue these two are in some ways in conversation with one another, even if I had developed the term and theory before engaging with Anzaldúa's work.

Because I, a mestiza,
continually walk out of one culture
and into another,
because I am in all cultures at the same time,
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.
Estoy norteeda por todas las voces que me hablan
simultaneamente.

Anzaldúa opens the chapter with a poem titled *Una lucha de fronteras / A Struggle of Borders*. Here, we are introduced to her call for embracing ideas of mixture²¹ and ambiguity as a product of Mexican, or specifically Chicano, identity. Elizabeth Martínez writes in her book *De Colores Means All Of Us* (1998) notes that for Mexicans, indigenous, Spaniard and Portuguese, and Africans are accounted for as their three 'roots'. She reminds her readers that Chinese

²¹ With regards to gender, she also identifies herself to be a mixture of both man and woman on page 19 "There is something compelling about being both male and female, about having an entry into both worlds. Contrary to some psychiatric tenets, half and half's are not suffering from a confusion of sexual identity, or even from a confusion of gender. What we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other. It deems that human nature is limited and cannot evolve into something better. But I, like other queer people, am two in one body, both male and female. I am the embodiment of the hieroglyphs: the coming together of opposite qualities within." Although this would imply non-binary as a gender identity for herself, as far as I know, Anzaldúa remained to use woman and she as pronoun and descriptors of herself.

immigrants also had established a large presence since the 16th century. “Another *mestizaje*, or race-mixing, took place this time with Native Americans of various nations, pueblos and tribes living in what is now the Southwest—when Spanish and Mexican colonizers moved north. Later our Chicano ancestors acquired yet another domination through intermarriage with Anglos” (Martínez, 1, 1998).

Subsequently for Anzaldúa, there are clashes of voices within herself that arises from being *mestiza*, a constant battle of duality, multiplicity within her own psyche upon the stage that is the borderlands of Mexico and the United States. Although *mestizo* was the original name of the caste for a child born of a Spaniard and Indigenous person (and still is today), Anzaldúa provides for us her definition of the *new mestiza*:

“[sic] *la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the *mestiza* faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a darkskinned mother listen to?”
(Anzaldúa, 78, 1986)

My initial interpretation of Anzaldúa’s *new mestiza* is that those women who are inhabiting a mixed race²² subjectivity within this Mexican/Mexican American context, are floating in and out of Indigeneity but not inhabiting a flesh of color, but a mixed cultural context that stands

²² It is important to note that ‘mixed-race’ in this example specifically means between Indigenous and European. Although Anzaldúa alludes to African ancestors, it is not done so with any examples. It is just illusory.

against a power structure such as Anglo-American culture. Thus, existing within this liminal space, both culturally, ethnically, and physically, means an existence that teeters within an intangible space of confusion, ambiguity and a battle for answering the question of *who is one loyal to?*

A point I find important to focus upon is her observation of the dynamics between Indigeneity, Mexican culture, and Anglo-American culture, as they all collide within Chicana realities and subjectivities. Anzaldúa uses the word 'white' here to mean Anglo (although whiteness and Mexican are not mutually exclusive, a point I will expand upon later). Whiteness attacks Mexican culture, and Mexican and Anglo cultures attack Indigeneity; therefore, a constant attack on Indigeneity occurs from powerful intra-communal social dynamics (Mexican) and geopolitical dynamics (Anglo). This culminates into a sense of internalized racism which results in assimilation. This internal battle is what Anzaldúa names *el choque*, or a cultural collision (Anzaldúa, 78, 1986). "Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react" (Anzaldúa, 79, 1986).

In search for a new space to exist as one is, Anzaldúa assumes a new name and category for herself, utilizing Chicano culture and language as the foundation. She arrives at *new mestiza*, as mentioned previously, to which what is central but arguably not essential, is the inability to exist culturally and racially stable and fixed. "Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. La mestiza constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to

move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes” (Anzaldúa, 79, 1986).

Unsurprisingly, Anzaldúa references Jose Vasconcelos’ *la raza cosmica* in her articulations of *new mestiza*, since its premise relies upon the total fusion of races and cultures, in which like a phoenix, a race of strong diverse people rises from the ashes of a history of colonialism; in other words, a critical mestizaje. This consciousness, found within *new mestiza* herself, includes a breaking down of the structure that is subject-object duality, to which Anzaldúa classifies in binary terms with examples such as male female, white race, and colored race; these binaries and divisions, which amount to power dynamics, are subsequently *healed* through the articulations, existence and power of the *new mestiza* and her consciousness. Anzaldúa herself, it is important to note, rejects dualisms, hence her search for a manner in which to break them a part. As Mariana Ortega observes in *In-Between*, “Anzaldúa’s discussion of the new mestiza includes an appeal to identity, but not an identity that is easily categorized as oppositional” (Ortega, 24, 2016). Ortega also summarizes the goal of the *new mestiza* when she states:

“As a liminal subject that lives in nepantla²³ between cultures, races, languages, and genders—as a subject with various in-betweens—the new mestiza can question, mediate, translate, negotiate, and navigate these different locations and thus be able to form a critical stance. Such a critical stance allows for the possibility that the new mestiza will

²³ Npantla is defined by Anzaldúa as

become resistant. Commentators such as Lugones rightly point out that nepantla constitutes a theoretical space for resistance. Key to her ability to be critical and thus resistant and to her ability to transform herself is the new mestiza consciousness's tolerance for both contradiction and ambiguity." (Ortega, 27, 2916)

Ambiguity appears to me, a reader, as key to *new mestiza* consciousness: "This step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She [new mestiza] communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths...She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity" (Anzaldúa, 82, 1986). I believe I understand the need for ambiguity as I work to interpret the perspective in which Anzaldúa manifests her vision for Chicanas. I ask Anzaldúa's text 'what is the need, or, the purpose of ambiguity? What function does this serve?' If I look to casta paintings and the social order of New Spain, I see rigidity yet mobility in race, class and color. I see a history of individuals being able to move within and out of fixed static categories (via class), and although not directly named, I can see Anzaldúa referencing a sexuality and gender that exists beyond borders or boxes. "The mestizo and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is intricately woven together, and that we are spawned out of similar souls" (Anzaldúa, 85, 1986).

Ambiguity and mixed identity (sans any dualities or fixed rigid racial categories) are also necessitated for Anzaldúa's theory since she uses Vascelos' *la raza cosmica* as a part of her

base. "I am visible-see this Indian face-yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't... By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty. As a people we have resisted and we have taken expedient positions, but we have never been allowed to develop unencumbered-we have never been allowed to be fully ourselves." (Anzaldúa, 86, 1986).

When there is an acceptance for ambiguity or fluidity, I understand there is a theoretical ability to move forward from a colonial past, an oppressive present and thus evolve towards a decolonized and liberated future. Particularly poignant for me is how Anzaldúa addresses Chicano and Mexican men whilst she discusses sexism and homophobia. For Anzaldúa, the root cause of homophobia and sexism found in her countrymen is colonialism; the aftershocks of which consequences in patriarchy, or *machismo*, as an "adaptation to oppression and poverty" (Anzaldúa, 87, 1986), which results in hierarchies in the new social fabric of not just Mexican life, but Mexican life in relation to Anglo-American domination. She calls for an internal reckoning within Mexican and Chicano men, to search within and act upon creating their own liberation which is not at the expense of women, especially those of which whom are queer. In this effort, Anzaldúa lays out the hierarchies, and thus provides us with an example of how *machismo* is effectively a domino effect of intra-communal oppression (i.e. Gringo [white American] to Chicano man, Chicano man to Chicana woman [queer or otherwise]).

"It is imperative that mestizas support each other in changing the sexist elements in the Mexican-Indian culture. As long as woman is put down, the Indian and the Black in all

of us is put down. The struggle of the mestiza is above all a feminist one. As long as *los hombres* [the men] think they have to *chingar mujeres* [fuck women] and each other to be men, as long as men are taught that they are superior and therefore culturally favored over *la mujer* [the woman], as long as to be a *vieja* [old woman] is a thing of derision, there can be no real healing of our psyches." (Anzaldúa, 84, 1986)

Within this passage, it is clear to me that Anzaldúa's *new mestiza* is dependent upon ambiguity, born culturally from the race-mixing as a colonial consequence. It is also important to contextualize this alongside with the legacy of national state identity building efforts. In this short passage, there is no Black or Indigenous woman that exists independently and alongside of the *new mestiza*. I have come to the opinion that ambiguity, as a project of sorts, serves to eradicate the dualisms that Anzaldúa so clearly rejects. Ortega refers to this methodology as a *mestizaje of multiplicity* when she asserts "This mestizaje of multiplicity and oneness captures both one's existential sense of being a continuous self as well as the recognition and importance of one's various social identities. This mestizaje points to alternative visions of self that go beyond the traditional, unified epistemic subject as well as beyond phenomenological views of subjectivity" (Ortega, 55, 2016). I interpret therefore, ambiguity and multiplicity as efforts to become great equalizers between individuals with shared colonial pasts in hopes of creating solidarity and building stronger community ties, regardless of race, gender, sexuality or even class. If there is ambiguity and multiplicity, then there can be access to common grounds that

allow for coalition building amongst various groups of people in the efforts for social equality.

Heridas

“The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition” (Anzaldúa, 3, 1986).

The final point of analysis I wish to focus upon from Anzaldúa’s *Borderland/La Fronteras*, is her development of the idea of an open wound. Turning back within the pages of *Fronteras*, she opens her book with the concept of *una herida abierta* (an open wound), which is the Mexican-American border. Through her poetic analysis, Anzaldúa explores geo-politics and connects the political to the personal; what we see are the material consequences of decisions made by governments through trade, economic systems (capitalism) and race. Anzaldúa here has planted Anglo white supremacy as it relates to Mexican cul-

ture and dynamics. “The Gringo, locked into the fiction of white superiority, seized complete political power, stripping Indians and Mexicans of their land while their feet were still rooted in it” (Anzaldúa, 7, 1986).

She begins by creating and expanding upon a historical timeline of events that commence at Indigenous South American contact with Spanish conquistadors. She moves through those chaotic hundreds of years and focusing particularly on what happened to the *Indio* (the Indian) much in the way I, too, provided historical context with regards to race, and the creation of “Latine” identity. She also takes us to the moment in which the border moved as a consequence of the Mexican-American War, when Chicanos became Chicane and Mexicans became Mexican. Martínez also provides her readers with a similar timeline, with her reasons being “The collective memory of every Latino people includes direct or indirect (neo)-colonialism, primarily by Spain or Portugal and later by the United States” (Martínez, 3, 1998).

It appears to me as the most clearly recent wound, which shapes most the US-Mexican economic and cultural relationship, which is said to be the reason for the movement of so many people out of Mexico. Thus, a chain of reactions for Anzaldúa is as follows: a Mexican woman is at the mercy of men at home, coyotes (smugglers), Chicanos on the other side of the border, and lastly, Anglo men and women. A constant displacement occurs, passed down from generation to generation through a myriad of colonial evolutions that sustains themselves overtime. This wound, this collision of the third and first worlds, is what Anzaldúa brings, or better yet, lives through daily. As Ortega observes,

“...namely, that the self in the borderlands, or the self that world-travels, constantly experiences ruptures in her everyday experiences that lead to a more thematic or reflective orientation toward activities” (Ortega, 50, 2016).

This portion of Anzaldúa’s writing is as much about land rights and colonialism as it is about psychological displacement and existentialist sentiments that arise from it. Ortega discusses not-being-at-ease as it resonates deeply with Anzaldúa’s shifting in and out of lands, either through her own physical movements or as the aftermath of warring countries. For Indigenous people in the Americas, their land is no longer their own. They are constant witnesses to violence done upon it, are victims to the violence themselves, a non-citizen on their land, both socially, economically, and legally. Ortega’s analysis of not-being-at-ease reminds us of the active psychological warfare and existentialism taking place for Anzaldúa and other women in similar situations, moving from one physical and cultural world to the next. “The ruptures in her everyday existence, given her multiple social, cultural, and spatial locations, prompt her to become more reflective of her activities and her existence, what we may describe as a life of not being-at-ease. While all selves may experience not being-at-ease occasionally, multiplicitous selves at the margins experience it continuously” (Ortega, 60, 2016).

When one is inhabiting the experience of the multiplicitous self, Ortega comments that there is a practice of transformation as it aims to result in liberation by the collective²⁴. In order to achieve this liberation, there must be an attentiveness to the heterogenous

²⁴ She cites Maria Lugones in this analysis via Lugones “world traveling” theory.

histories that are passed down from generation to generation as these collectives of multiplicitous selves move from world to world. There is a constant action of criticality in these movements and self-reflections; this awareness is essential for the *new mestiza* to maintain her own agency within her ambiguity, relationships to land and to herself (*la facultdad*²⁵). Anzaldúa's concept of *la facultad* is the ability to capture the depth of the world and the soul by breaking the habitual modes of seeing reality and perceiving consciousness. Survival of traveling within worlds and shifting political and geographical landscapes means to not succumb to the socially dominant power structures; "Perhaps by surviving, multiplicitous selves are already performing an act of resistance" (Ortega, 127, 2016). Without these critical practices, self-reflections and a constant of acknowledgement and engagement with histories and land, *new mestiza* does not exist. Anzaldúa closes this opening chapter with a summary of these movements between worlds:

"Those who make it past the checking points of the Border Patrol find themselves in the midst of 150 years of racism in Chicano barrios in the Southwest and in big northern cities. Living in a no-man's-borderland, caught between being treated as criminal and being able to eat, between resistance and deportation, the illegal refugees are some of the poorest and the most exploited of any people in the U.S. It is illegal for Mexicans to work without green cards. But big farming combines, farm bosses and smugglers who bring them in make money off the "wetbacks" labor-they don't have to pay federal minimum

wages, or ensure adequate housing or sanitary conditions.”

(Anzaldúa, 12, 1986)

Conclusion

Anzaldúa’s work opened many new avenues in Latina feminist discourse through phenomenological practices, even though she did not specifically state she was doing so. Her descriptive practices and in particular, *la facultad*, functions much like phenomenological bracketing, are perhaps why Anzaldúa is referenced for Latina Phenomenology. This short summary of two chapters of *Borderlands/La Frontera* was to provide insight into the foundational texts of Latina feminist philosophical thought. Through world traveling, not-being-at-ease, *la facultad* and lastly, *new mestiza consciousness*, and finally relationships the psyche must land, we have a basic understanding of the aftershocks of colonialism through innovative theory. These multiplicitous theories and realities exist within many Latinas, and this chapter provided an understanding of how it can be understood, particularly for Chicanas.

Fronteras allows the reader to understand the many ways in which Anzaldúa is ‘othered’ in various physical, geographical, sexual, and ethnic power dynamics. It resists the call for assimilation into dominant social environments and hierarchies that many others fall prey to. “The *new mestiza* that I have in mind is the one that keeps the multiple histories alive and does not try to reconcile them so as to assimilate” (Ortega, 131, 2016). The *new mestiza* absorbs the ghosts of ancestors on her land and becomes all of them at once, becoming a hub of ambiguity that is fixed in her resolve to always acknowledge not just ancestry,

but also culture and her own form of womanity. These actions, the constant and intentional allowance of cultural memory to live through her, are acts of resistance. She also makes a concise point to invite her male counter parts to participate in the journey to liberation out of the shadow of colonialism and its current manifestations vis a vis American Imperial and economic domination. Anzaldúa poignantly ends her book with a poem that leads the subject (and the reader) towards a vision of the future:

“Yes, in a few years or centuries
la Raza will rise up, tongue intact
carrying the best of all the cultures.
That sleeping serpent,
rebellion-(r)evolucion, will spring up.
Like old skin will fall the slave ways of
obedience, acceptance, silence.
Like serpent lightning we'll move, tittle woman.
You'll see” (Anzaldúa, 203, 1986).

Cherríe Moraga

“According to Moraga, a ‘theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives- our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings- all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity’ (Bridge xxiv.) It attempts to describe ‘the ways in which Third World women derive a feminist political theory specifically their [their] racial/cultural background and experience. (Bridge xxiv).” (Moya, 50, 2002)

Cherríe Moraga, a contemporary of Anzaldúa’s, is another Chicana feminist that has cemented herself within Latina philosophical and feminist literature. She worked with Anzaldúa creating *This Bridge Called My Back* with other Black and Women writers of color in the 1980’s. She has written many books that serve as archives of the Chicana feminist and lesbian experience. Her works such as *Loving in the War Years* (1983) and *Native Country of the Heart* (2019) were written from a point of departure from her childhood, creating a literary lineage of auto-ethnographic works and Latina philosophy as canon. Her writing style is not too different from Anzaldúa, moving from Spanish to English (mostly the latter), with poetic interventions in between essays of her early childhood and adult experiences.

In reading her works such as *Loving in the War Years*, and aiming to providing an analysis of her works, I interpret Moraga’s writings through Anzaldúa’s multiplicity, not being at ease and critical mestizaje as frameworks. I do this, not to conduct any kind of comparative analysis, but to show the discursive qualities of Latina feminist philosophy as we move from author to

author. The writers did in fact work together as colleagues, but also their writings were, in many ways, in conversation with one another as they were created independently. Moraga famously is quoted for articulating “theories of the flesh” and within that flesh, is a series of multiple selves that converge and tear apart within an individual. This is one of the strongest components of Latina feminist phenomenology, and therefore multiplicity, not being at ease and critical mestizaje are integral to an analysis of Moraga’s work. I will primarily focus upon various excerpts from Moraga’s *Loving in the War Years* and use supportive analysis by Victoria Bolf and Paula M Moya, both of whom have furthered developed Moraga’s text within different contexts, such as revisiting mestizaje and also realist theory.

“Where do I belong?”

Moraga’s experience is filtered through being gay, a woman and a white Chicana. Although all of these points are discussed simultaneously, I think they’re always in a fixed state; that is to say, being a gay white Chicana is what places Moraga in a perpetual state of not-being-at-ease. I can only claim this as a suggestion because in her writings, she often circles back to being mixed race; it seemingly serves as the launch pad for her anxieties, but that is only an interpretation of the readings that show us her relationship to herself culturally and racially within mestizaje. Moraga’s mother is a Mexican woman of color and Moraga’s father is an Anglo-American man.

Moraga herself was not born with features or a color favoring her mother; that is to say, that if we look at Moraga through an understanding of the color and features that tell us if someone is “Mexican” or not, she is read by society as a monoracial²⁶ white American woman. Furthermore, her placement racially is devoid of the histories of Latinidad and whiteness within that context. Latinidad, as a white supremacist settler colonial project, which means there are white Latines, is not something Moraga discusses in her own analysis of what it means to be Latine. As she states in *Native of the Country Heart*, “Mexican could mean pretty much anyone brown or sort of brown or somehow “foreign” in an English-speaking world. It didn’t mean Black. Black was ‘American’ and had its own relationship to ‘them’ (white people), which, as a child, I hardly understood” (Moraga, 39, 2019).

If we were to understand race in American society via Moraga’s point of view, we would be of the idea that there are Black people only in the US, Mexicans as their own race, and white people (also only in the US). The reality that there is no such thing as Mexican race, need not factor into her analysis. Her method of understanding Latinidad and specifically Mexican/Chicana identity and race, is actually understood through a US centric lens on race, which as established earlier, has attempted to unwhiten white Latines/Criollos in the US imagination, accuracy or reality be damned. “According to the logic of what the anthropologist Marvin Harris calls hypo-descent, Moraga is Mexican, and therefore nonwhite. The empirical fact that there is no “Mexican” race, that “Mexican” denotes a nationality and not a race, and that some Mexicans are phenotypically “white” seems to have little bearing on the ethnic/racial classification of Mexican- origin people in the United States” (Moya, 52, 2002). Hence, if

²⁶ Monoracial is the term used to define an individual who is born of parents of the same race, i.e. 2 Black parents, 2 white parents, 2 Indigenous parents.

you're white, you're Anglo and must be from the US, and you're Black and only exist in the US.

Given that Moraga's work encapsulates multiplicity and not-being-at-ease within her *mestizaje*, we cannot split apart the themes and categorize them in any way that suggests they are mutually exclusive from one another. There is intersectional bracketing of course, examples being [gay] [mixed] [woman] [class] [white] [brown] [third world] [Anglo] etc., but I aim to remind that intersectional bracketing is not the same as separation, and these brackets mentioned as examples are what in fact intersectionality allows for and requires of us as theorists. I will move through her work and touch upon various themes at once.

Assimilation

I wish to begin with a series of quotes from Moraga's book *Loving in the War Years* (1983), from the section titled *Like a White Sheep I Followed*. In the following lines, we can see how Moraga came to understand race, color, and her own fluidity within these categories, as they interacted with herself, her immediate and extended family members, and what that meant within a wider context such as Anglo and Chicane communities.

“When I was growing up, I looked forward to the days when I hoped my skin would toast to match my cousins, their skin turning pure black in the creases. I never could catch up, but my skin did turn smooth like theirs, oily brown- like my mamá's, holding depth, density, the possibility of infinite provision. Mi abuela

raised the darkest cousins herself, she never wanting us the way she molded and managed them...

And in terms of rearing her three light-skinned brown haired children, we in fact did not have to fear, like my cousins, racial discrimination. On the surface of things we could pass as long as we made no point of our Chicano heritage...

Moraga takes us through the beginnings of being aware of how color and features (that is to say, facial features that “tell” of us of someones race) inform us individually racially, socially and culturally and how these are all tethered to class mobility. These dynamics also begin to inform Moraga about how she can move through the world with regards to her sexuality. Paula M. L. Moya in her book *Learning From Experience* (2002) posits that Moraga provides for readers an assessment of her oppression as it developed throughout her life that allowed for her (Moraga) to begin coalitions and movements for and with other radical women of color. Moya also makes clear what are the 5 pillars of Moraga’s theoretical framework that is born out of *Loving in the War Years*, which summarized are as follows: 1) family dynamics is the foundation of socialization 2) emotional investment is where one’s theory should be based 3) there is always a relationship between ones location and personal experience 4) produced knowledge starts from the body 5) the formation of political consciousness is centered around struggle (Moya, 49, 2002).

Moraga notes that early in her adolescent development of identity, she could see groups forming all around her, and she asked herself where did she stand? This question is not too different from Anzaldúa in asking about where one’s loyalties lie, a fair child to a dark mother,

a dark Indian that exists somewhere within. Moraga, however, was pushed by her mother specifically, to stay on the side to which she appears, that is to say Anglo white. “Before I knew a word of race relations, I knew the images of ‘colored women’ on our small black-and-white TV. I was especially drawn to those ‘tragic mulatta’ stories that struck me as kind of like me. And those dark-haired passing-for-white ladies who suffered the secret of their race in silence didn’t really look too different on the TV screen from my mestiza mom, dressed to the nines and mixing cocktails for the party” (Moraga, 40, 2019).

Moraga was socialized by her mother to mainly identify, outside of the family and in part within it as Anglo since she in fact, as Moraga’s friends noted, could choose to not be Chicana. This was because she was read and received by the external dominate society as an Anglo white woman. Moraga followed this lead by her mother, because it would not only allow Moraga to receive access to better education and opportunities but, as Moraga states “I gradually became Anglocized because I thought it was the only option available to be toward gaining autonomy as a person without being sexually stigmatized” (Moraga, 99, 1983).

Moraga’s first choice (politically) was to deny her sexuality and her Chicanidad, as they were related to one another as a kind of deviancy and undesired quality within American society. This is made clear when she compares herself to her brother as she recalls his reaction to her political awareness as an adult, in what seems to be how she shaped her understanding of her ethnicity/race and sexuality: “If I were to build my womanhood on this self-evident truth, it is the love of the Chicana, the love of myself as a Chicana I had to embrace, no white man...To be a woman fully necessitated my claiming the race of my mother. My brother’s sex was white. Mine, brown” (Moraga, 94, 1983). I interpret this understanding of sex(uality),

race and ethnicity as yes, connected and intertwined but also constantly relative to one another in Moraga's opinion as a play of dynamics. This dynamic in it of itself is not complicated to take at face value through an intersectional analysis, nor through the concept of multiplicity, but it is *how* Moraga ties them together that can be problematic and difficult to understand.

"We cannot forget the disparity in the experience of a multiplicitous self that occupies dominate social locations and that of a multiplicitous self who is at the margins and is oppressed" (Ortega, 71, 2016). If we were to accept multiplicity as a phenomenological practice that we can analyze through, then there in lie the multiple locations that Moraga is finding herself raced, sexed, cultured. It is here that I note how Moraga also decides to understand her claiming of her sexuality as it relates to race when she states "It is important to say that fearing recriminations from my father never functioned for me as an obstacle in my political work. Had I been born of a Chicano father, I sometimes think I never would have been able to write a line or participate in a demonstration, having to repress all questioning in order that the ultimate question of my sexuality would never emerge" (Moraga, 113, 1983).

It appears to me that here, Moraga deems her Anglo whiteness as the liberator for her sexuality and access to various spaces (education, class, and upward mobility as was promised to her and she ultimately received). Moraga needs for herself to understand her lesbianism through her bodily experience of longing and desire which manifests physically, and her Chicanidad culturally, even though she is more Anglo racially. This is because Moraga's white presenting racial reality has allowed for her the choice in this matter, unlike with her sexuality, which is not a choice. Compulsive heterosexuality was not successful even though she at-

tempted to have relationships with men. Since, in Moraga's point of view, Mexican and Chicane culture is machista and patriarchal, she was taught she must put men first. That is to say, it is known that in Mexican and Chicane culture, to be a lesbian is to be a traitor to her race. Therefore, since her sexual freedom is directly tied to her Anglo-whiteness, her ability to be politically engaged as a lesbian (which also doubles as a political choice), is allowed through her father's whiteness being passed to her.

"Given the urgency of her need to come to terms with her sexual identity, Moraga became, as if by default 'white' (Moya, 52, 2006). It is also at this moment in which Moya also points out that Moraga had still tied race and sexuality in a way that was counterproductive to her own hopes within creating theories of identity. "As long as Moraga avoided examining how the various social categories that constituted her social location intersected with, and were determined by, each other, she could conceive of her sexuality in isolation from her race" (Moya, 53, 2016). I however disagree with this. It appears to me that Moraga was very much of the opinion that her sexuality, and her being able to be a lesbian freely without familial consequence was in part due to her whiteness, and that it only became an issue when monoracial white women within the United States (particularly during the liberation movements of the 1970's) were continuously excluding the women of color that Moraga had seen some affinity with. For Moraga, her own proximity to women of color was enough to realize there was an issue of race within the Women's movement, and she recognized the need to go beyond what was being offered to her at that moment.

The problematics of Mixed raced multiplicity

“The racialized trouble of Moraga’s ‘work’ is marked by a double, but willfully maintained, misrecognition: of the biological fiction of whiteness as dispensable to the *mestiza* category; and of the *mestiza* as non-fiction, as a transcendent signifier rather than a discursively impelled brown rival to her white appearances” (Bolf, 2016). Although Moraga’s theories are great examples of what it means to not-be-at-ease and embodied multiplicity, her work does not come without its problems. It is difficult to analyze and or interpret Moraga’s work without discussing the problematics of its articulations. Moraga’s work encourages an examination of mixed-race identity, that between Mexican and Anglo, white and brown, etc, but there is something almost violent about how we as readers are examining and understanding Mexican identity through her lens.

I think it is important to note that while Moraga negated her Chicana identity while she negated her lesbian sexuality, she sought to reclaim both for herself through political action; that is to say, for Moraga as I understand it, to be Chicana is a political decision. To be a lesbian, is also a political decision even though it is primarily a physical and emotional one. They both work against cultural and imperial hegemony of whiteness, which also utilizes compulsory heterosexuality and heterosexism as a tool. This is also why she notably does not like the term bi-racial or bisexual, for example. It does not make a choice, it is too ambivalent, and I think there is a relationship here to why she chooses to view ‘reclaiming a brownness’ or a Chicanidad, as a political decision she *can* make. In the book *Indígena as Scribe: The (W)rite to Remember* (2011) Moraga declares “I have always hated the terms ‘biracial’ and ‘bisexual’. They are passive terms, without political bite. They don’t choose. They don’t make a decision. They are a declaration not of identity, but of biology, of sexual practice. They say nothing about where one really stands” (Moraga, 87, 2011). If within Moraga’s world of multiplicity,

not-being-at-ease within mestizaje and the journey of sexuality, there is one constant, it is choice.

However, Moraga is not ignorant to her spacial and racial locations as they relate to class and sexuality, even though much for literature provides us with her development of her identity. In the proceeding long passages, we can bear witness to her coming out and reclamations as it were.

“During the late [19]60’s and early 70’s, I was not an active part of La Causa. I never managed to get myself to walk in the marches in East Los Angeles (I merely watched from the sidelines); I never went to one meeting of MECHA on campus. No soy tonta. I would have been murdered en El Movement—light-skinned, unable to speak Spanish well enough to hang; miserably attracted to women and fighting it; and constantly questioning all authority, including men’s. I felt I did not belong there. Maybe I had really come to believe that ‘Chicanos’ were ‘different,’ not ‘like us,’ as my mother would say. But I fully knew that there was a part of me that was a part of that movement, but it seemed that part would have to go unexpressed until the time I could be a Chicano and the woman I had to be, too” (Moraga, 113, 1983).

This passage shows us the inner battle that Moraga was experiencing as she was politically coming of age; in her embracing of her Angloness, she viewed Chicanos of color, those that are always living within a specific location of othered racialized embodied experiences through the white gaze. What must have made this more difficult for Moraga was that her mother was who pushed her to this place and to this point of view, even though her mother herself was a Mexican woman of color, poor and uneducated. In Moraga’s essay titled *La*

Guera (1979) she admits her internalized racism and classism when she firstly says she experiences a “huge disparity between what I was born into and what I was to grow up to become” (Moraga, 28, 1979).

What Moraga’s work teaches us is that multiplicity, particularly found within mixed race experiences, can lead individuals down a path of having to choose within the binaries that Western settler colonialism created (man, woman, black, white, etc.). Her Angloness, which she used for education and class mobility, has come into conflict with what she deems is her ‘brownness’, which is what she attempts to reclaim for herself (for Moraga, being white means, one cannot be Mexican even though the two are not mutually exclusive).

“But at the age of twenty-seven, it is frightening to acknowledge that I have internalized a racism and classism, where the object of oppression is not only someone outside of my skin, but the someone inside my skin. In fact, to a large degree, the real battle with such oppression, for all of us, begins under the skin. I have had to confront the fact that much of what I value about being Chicana, about my family, has been subverted by anglo culture and my own cooperation with it” (Moraga, 30, 1979).

Moraga’s work and its development appears to provide for us a timeline of a white woman, who is part Mexican and Anglo, a lesbian, someone who has moved through the economic, social and academic ladder, and has been able to develop a ‘theory of the flesh’ that does in fact ask difficult questions about sexuality, race, color and more at a juncture in America’s grapple with what it means to be an equal society. What it provides for me as a reader, some 40 years after the writings were created, is an archive of the foundation of discussions of Latinidad that we as the zeitgeist are currently having. There are caveats and problems to be

addressed but none the less, it is the point in which many of us depart within the contemporary Latinidad discourse. We must truly dig deep within ourselves, unearth how we understand and internalize our formations of race and culture, and how that affects our abilities to access certain spaces and gain certain platforms, and how all of these facets are connected to color, class, race, language, and features.

“I have had to look critically at my claim to color, at a time when, among white feminist ranks, it is a "politically correct" (and sometimes peripherally advantageous) assertion to make. I must acknowledge the fact that, physically, I have had a choice about making that claim, in contrast to women who have not had such a choice, and have been abused for their color. I must reckon with the fact that for most of my life, by virtue of the very fact that I am white-looking, I identified with and aspired toward white values, and that I rode the wave of that Southern Californian privilege as far as conscience would let me” (Moraga, 33-34, 1979).

Understanding a Different New Mestiza

Moraga’s work is difficult to understand at face value given that Latinidad, and the various nationalities found under the umbrella, is not a static racial category. The work can also be difficult to digest because sexuality is understood and accepted within queer theory to be a spectrum. Moraga, however, builds her identities in opposition to fixed categories. This is not to suggest that an intersectional approach is not a viable option for a broader understanding of the themes found in Moraga’s work, but the conflict arises within my own interpretation precisely when I *do* apply it. There are several conflicts within the bedrock of her work that I do not think I can deviate from my interpretations of Moraga’s struggle to understand herself as she experiences multiplicity, i.e., white presenting Chicana lesbian.

Moraga's chronicles her understanding of her race as brown, but she is white appearing, and therefore she believes she can and must make a choice about which race she will be (by be I mean embody). "In other words, Moraga's inconsistencies are partially a result of her attention to different aspects of her identity, such as race and sex...But crucially, they are a result of her intensifying articulation of *indigenismo*, which is in some ways a closing off of certain aspects of her identity, such as her whiteness. For [sic] Moraga, racial or ethnic mixture is figured as loss of particularity rather than an expansion" (Bolf, 84, 2013).

Her path to choosing a race begins with her Mexican mother, a woman of color, socializing her white child to embrace her whiteness first. The embracing of whiteness includes a disassociation from other children of color (such as cousins or school mates) in order to enter a society that includes better schools and university. Therefore, the upward climb on social economic ladder. This is evident in the quote when Moraga recounts to readers how she viewed those Chicanas of color during the student movements and how they "would have murdered her." The disassociation and internalized racism mean that to view those of color, is to fixate upon them via the white gaze; its consequences include an inscription of violence upon bodies of color.

Moraga also begins to understand that she is a lesbian, her attachments and desires for women are repulsive in the eyes the dominant Anglo society and in the Mexican one (and she fears, her mother's eyes). In these cultural spaces, lesbianism is also a deviancy; Moraga is experiencing these multiple dynamics that are othered. I am led to believe that Moraga ties her othered sexuality to her othered racial background (the brown woman within her, her sex is brown). However, in that prison of lesbianism, whiteness is what frees her, and she is able

to reclaim her sexuality that she repressed. Whiteness has given her financial and some social stability, and now sexual liberation and a community of other women. She evidences this, as quoted earlier, when she uses her whiteness to protect herself and her lover when faced with the police. However, because she is the daughter of a brown woman, I believe perhaps that she, in some way, resents the ability to achieve a reclamation of her sexuality, because she is daughter of a *man* who affords her the space, via whiteness, to be a lesbian. Whether she resents what other actions she or her family took, I do not know. There is something about the feeling of animosity to the very whiteness that served as liberator (and all its security and privileges) when it also suppresses and violent attacks those whose skin does not allow for a choice of race to be made. “For Moraga, the choice is directly linked to privilege and affirmation of the status quo; there is no redemption in identifying as Anglo” (Bolf, 86, 2013).

Bolf’s analysis does not suggest to me, that this lack of redemption exists because there are those that cannot escape the racialized embodiment of their existence as darker people of color. It is because Moraga cannot escape her racialized whiteness and this is all the more apparent when she *chooses* to not be accepted as just a white Anglo woman. “‘You get to choose.’ Now I want to shove those words right back into his face. You call this a choice! To constantly push up against a wall of resistance from your own people or to fall away nameless into the mainstream of this country, running with our common blood? But I have betrayed my people” (Moraga, 96-96, 1983).

What I read is a phenomena that I myself have encountered myself in either professional or social settings: an internalization of the experiences of those which they are in proximity to,²⁷

²⁷ By experiences I mostly am referencing racism and colorism here with regard to Moraga specifically.

and then speak of these experiences as if it were a first-hand experience. “Moraga defines herself as an oxymoronic representative of “a colored kind of white people’, a statement that would seem to acknowledge the inherent instability of racialized designations” (Allaston, 277, 2002). Moraga experiences whiteness, not an embodiment of otherness of color; I mean to say she does not experience racism herself; she is witness to it being experienced by those around her. This is what it means to be white-passing. Therefore, if the ‘white-passing’ identity is noted to be a difference amongst peers when discussing perhaps racial power dynamics and hierarchies, thus faced with the reality these racist experiences are not their own, a conflict begins. As evidence with Moraga’s thoughts about being told she has a choice, the lashing out begins, the projection of their own insecurities via the need to acknowledge they have choice, has been wrapped up in what is often called ‘trauma envy’; the last pillar of Moraga’s theorizations is that political consciousness arises out of *struggle*. “It signals a crisis of authenticity directly related to the fact that Moraga had an Anglo father and thus may be regarded by herself and others as not Chicana enough” (Allaston, 281, 2002). If Moraga does not experience racism, then she is not Chicana, and if she is not Chicana, then she is just white, and that is not enough for her. “...in the persistent ways that brown skin becomes synonymous with depth and richness, while pale skin—like hers [sic]— is something worse than neutral or absent; it is ‘beige’, ‘vampiric’, or ‘weak-kneed’” (Bolf, 86, 2016).

“But what does this passing back to dark(er) Chicaneness imply for that category? To transcend whiteness and become brown, Moraga must make a stand on one side of each binarized link in a chain of discretely imagined racialized (white-brown/mestiza), cultural (Anglo-Chicano), gendered (male- female), and sexualized (heterosexual-lesbian) entities, thus fulfilling her contention that ‘To be a woman fully necessitated my claiming the race of my mother. My brother’s sex was white. Mine, brown’ But Moraga fails to extrapolate from her

knowledge of her rehearsed whitenesses, or from her learned lesbianism, that putting on a brown persona confirms that guise as similarly provisional and discursively modulated” (Allaston, 277, 2002).

This quote supports how we understand why and where individuals may feel as if they need to be loyal to something or someone, or that Chicanidad means one must suffer racism; the experience of the other, in the white gaze, cannot be separated from suffering and violence. Even though there is multiplicity in *mestizaje*, the categories have to be fixed in order for Moraga to fluctuate and make her choice to a reclamation of a color she has admitted to never being able to embody. I relate Allaston’s quote directly with a passage from Bolf:

“Yet both of these [African and European racial categories] hearken back to colonial conceptions of race and colonial-era mixtures. In Moraga’s figuration, contemporary Chicana/os have separate ‘racial memories’ from contemporary African-Americans and Asian-Americans, and as we saw above (and Europeans may not have any ‘racial memories [sic]’) Yet if Moraga can critique the original Chicano nationalism’s selective use of Aztec and indigenous culture to support a patriarchal structure, then why must we remain faithful to Chicano nationalism’s figuration of racial *mestizaje*? Which is the ‘racial memory’ of Latinas/os of African descent: indigenous American or African? Is there no European racial memory? And why doesn’t it play a part in the *mestiza’s* racial memory?” (Bolf, 80-81, 2016).

The identity building project *la raza cosmica* dictates how Moraga is able to claim a color and space within Mexican and Chicane identity after processing her internalized racism and colorism. *La Raza Cosmica* by virtue, necessitates erasure and thrives off ambiguity, and as it is used in Anzaldúa's creation of the *new mestiza* consciousness, it is needing to be both a fixed condition and also open for multiplicity in order for Moraga to be initially in opposition to it, but also welcomed by it. Therefore, there can be no Blackness or Indigeneity, nor can there be whiteness, it must be a mixture of Indigeneity first, struggling against whiteness, and only something that barely points to any form of Blackness.

Conclusion

When Moraga chronicles her own journey in motherhood, she details the difficulty in finding a school for her son that is appropriate for him, particularly socially as a Latino. She notes a conversation she has with him when he tells her he refers to himself as Black because in the school, to be non-white means to be Black. She calls the school and begins the process of taking him out of the school, not to take him away from Blackness, but to place him within Latinidad via a school she found whose pupils are mostly Latine children. This new school was underfunded and in less than standard conditions, Moraga finds herself humbled as she removes her son from this new school, because in her eyes, to stay Latino (amongst your peers as one grows and socializes with the world around them) is to be poor. Here, in this passage, I see how for Moraga, as she understands the fundamentals of Latinidad, is the air of essentialism with regard to race, and a total erasure of classism and poverty when one is a part of visibly racialized communities. Moraga herself was the white child of a woman of color, she does not have the knowledge of what it means to be the mother (of color) to a child (of color).

These intra-familial dynamics matter, as this is the principle for the development of Moraga's theories, as evidenced by the aforementioned pillars stated by Moya. Moraga, like Anzaldúa, does not make space for Blackness within Latine communities either, for Blackness, like Indigeneity, is a proven part of Latine's racial makeup. I believe that Moraga's lens is thusly clouded by the whiteness she was ushered into accepting for the privileges of positive social outcomes and access it garners. Furthermore, despite her multiple and various efforts attempting to wrestle it out of her consciousness, perhaps out of guilt, she has been unable to; this is the centrality of her battle of her own multiplicity, a final example I provide is through her attempts to literally breed and socialize it out of her life. When one views themselves and their culture solely through the white gaze, there is never an anchoring or grounding to be found nor achieved, only trauma envy.

"...with what Moraga sees as a dilution of Indigenous roots—particularly when this heritage is readable on the body in the form of dark skin and 'indio' features...For Moraga, it seems, be(com)ing Chicano/a is more easily achieved when one has dark skin, speaks Spanish, and has first-hand experience of 'barrio' life. While these things do of course contribute to a political consciousness and to identification with the Chicano Movement, it seems curious to ignore the generation who does not have this experience, but whose parents come from it. It fetishizes some aspects of Mexican American experience and ignore other. [Sic] The fetishization of indigenous-looking, Spanish-speaking aspects of Chicano identities continued [sic]. Moraga, [is] now the mother of a boy whose father she chose for his 'dark beauty'..." (Bolf, 78, 2016).

Maria Lugones

As noted at the beginning of this chapter section, I mentioned what Mariana Ortega offers us as the six pillars of what she (and I agree) constitutes as Latina feminist phenomenology.²⁸ These pillars have been foundational in the readings and interpretations of Anzaldúa and Moraga's work thus far, along with the supportive analysis by Moya and Bolf, for example. The final philosophical production within Latina feminist phenomenology I will examine will be the writings of Argentinian writer Maria Lugones.

Lugones' work in many ways operates a tool for cross comparative analysis, a heuristic device for Latina feminist phenomenology, particularly in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinations: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions* (2003). The book *Speaking Face to Face: The Visionary Philosophy of María Lugones* (2019), provides an expanded analysis from a diverse set of writers and theorists connecting with her philosophy. Her writings have the sensation of encompassing nothing Anzaldúa and Moraga's theories and ideas including multiplicity, mestizaje, theory of color and not-being-at-ease. Her writing on plurality has a direct conversation with *new mestiza* and the multiplicity within one, both referencing the aforementioned writers respectively. Lugones work is we can utilize to reference and conclude our journey into understanding the specificity of Latina feminist phenomenology.

Core concepts of Lugones' work I wish to examine specifically are her notions of 'world' and 'world traveling'. This concept is not just physical but also temporal, cultural, and spiritual, taking us back to Anzaldúa's methods of creating and located the self through the difficult terrain of the borderlands. 'World traveling', in and out of flesh and blood and spatial location

²⁸ note the page the pillars are quoted on.

relates back to Moraga's traveling through Anglo whiteness back to a point of 'reclamation' of brown mestiza. I will also examine Lugones' criticisms of intersectionality and her response as it manifests in the concept of intermeshedness. These ideas all circle back to the political and the personal, how that leads us as theorists of color, to coalition efforts through the work of critical phenomenology.

Lugones' theories on 'world' and 'world' travel are established as methods of phenomenological practices in the opinion of Ortega, as she connects Lugones and Heidegger together within the chapters of *In-Between*. Lugones develops her ideas of 'world' in relation to the question of playfulness. She expands on what she considers a 'world', how she travels to and from, how she can be within two of them (or more) at any one given time. The first portion of the analysis of Lugones' work will be dedicated to understanding what 'worlds' are and are not, so then we can understand how she determines travelling to and from 'worlds'. From there, I will examine Lugones' engagement with intersectionality, her call for intermeshedness, and the responses to her critique of intersectionality. My aim is simply to interpret and report simply from her perspective to which then later I can revisit and apply to my own practice as I have done with Anzaldúa and Moraga. This is also particularly relevant with Lugones, since her work, like Anzaldúa, has relation to my writings on the existential-cultural crisis.

Women of Color: 'Worlds' of their own

Firstly, Lugones contextualizes her theory by being region specific when tells her readers that within the United States, Women of Color automatically practice 'world' travelling. This is due

to the nature of being outsiders within the dominant white supremacist settler society²⁹. In Lugones' opinion, Anglo 'worlds' are hostile therefore, the traveling is a necessitated practice. Lugones, a believer in coalitions, heeds that Women of Color must travel to each other's 'worlds', an act of solidarity and resistance, but also to fortify as a larger group against domination. For Lugones, this transforms "Women of Color" as a name or identifying (racial and perhaps biological) term into a project of coalition and therefore a deeper understanding of 'world' traveling itself. She also states plainly that Women of Color are not a homogenized group and thusly since it is aimed for coalitions, this work simply cannot be done through wishful thinking. I understand this explanation to mean there is work to be done with neighbors, families, communities and connecting with people who are totally out of one's own 'worlds' orbit. Initially, Lugones states "To the extent that Women of Color names a coalition, it is a coalition in formation against significant and complex odds that, though familiar, keep standing in our way" (Lugones, 209, 2003). It is important to explain, however, Lugones use of Women of Color defined as a project of coalition, and a term powered by politics, is not novel in the time of her writing *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, as its original meaning was already established by Black Feminists in 1977. In the lead up to the National Women's Conference, organized by white woman who had created a 200-page document and only reserved 3 pages for 'minority women', Black women created the group "Black Women's Agenda" as a response and an opportunity to adequately be represented and address problems affecting their communities. However, this action created a response amongst non-black women, as Loretta Ross narrates, candidly:

"then all the rest of the 'minority' women of color wanted to be included in the 'Black Women's Agenda.' Okay? Well, [the Black

²⁹ 'White supremacist settler colonial' is my own expansion or interpretation of what Lugones means by dominant society.

women] agreed...but you could no longer call it the 'Black Women's Agenda.' And it was in those negotiations in Houston [that] the term "women of color" was created. Okay? And they didn't see it as a biological designation—you're born Asian, you're born Black, you're born African American, whatever—but it is a solidarity definition, a commitment to work in collaboration with other oppressed women of color who have been 'minoritized.'"

I include this because it's important to note the original established meaning of the term, and also move to Lugones' citation of Black queer writer Audre Lorde. Specifically, Lorde's "non-dominant differences", that is to say, mutual differences between individuals/groups. Lugones herself chooses to focus on these non-dominant differences and she justifies this choice when she states:

"This epistemological shift to non-dominant differences is crucial to our possibilities. To the extent that we are "created different" by the logic of domination, the techniques of producing difference include divide and conquer, segregation, fragmentation, instilling mistrust toward each other for having been pitted against each other by economies of domination, instilling in us the distinction between the real and the fake." (Lugones, 209, 2003)

This moves us towards understanding of the construction of Women of Color, how as a social group they are affected by domination and thus, viewed through the white gaze. This gaze, however, can also be internalized (meaning we believe what the white, dominant gaze says about us, even if we did not initially believe it to be true). Therefore, how we view not only ourselves but other women in other groups can mirror what the white, dominant gaze has told us (in one group) about another. Therefore, “the coalition requires that we conceive identification anew. The independence of women of color from each other performed by social fragmentation leaves us unwittingly colluding with the logic of oppression” (Lugones, 212, 2003). Suffice to say, that I interpret Lugones’ understanding and meaning of Women of Color as a group that are subject to the power and domination of otherness via white supremacy. To the extent race and color factor into this, she is not explicit at this point.

Moving forward, there was a specific quality that prompted Lugones to conceptualize ‘worlds’, that was playfulness. The idea of playfulness and what that means is not what I wish to focus upon, in as much as ‘worlds’ and traveling. To start with, a ‘world’ must presently be inhabited by “some flesh and blood people” (Lugones 216-217). She states that for this exact reason, it cannot be a utopia, whether that is because of a time or its inhabitants, she does not state. However, she follows this up with there may be those who are deceased or have met in another ‘world’ and are now in a different one, i.e., imagination. Whether or not she is specifically discussing ancestors or ancestral veneration, spirits and Indigenous practices that are undertaken to communicate with spirits and ancestors, is also not specified. This also does not identify ‘world’ traveling within the realm of mental health, in the case of schizophrenia, for example.

Suffice to say Lugones' definitions of 'worlds' shift but not in opposition to what the previous possibility is. In the following long excerpt, we can see how she flows through the potentials as she finishes one and immediately lands upon a new meaning.

"A "world" in my sense may be an actual society, given its dominant culture's description and construction of life, including a construction of the relationships of production, of gender, race, etc. But a "world" can also be such a society given a nondominant, a resistant construction, or it can be such a society or a society given an idiosyncratic construction. As we will see, it is problematic to say that these are all constructions of the same society. But they are different "worlds."

A "world" need not be a construction of a whole society. It may be a construction of a tiny portion of a particular society. It may be inhabited by just a few people. Some "worlds" are bigger than others".

"A "world" may be incomplete. Things in it may not be altogether constructed or some things may be constructed negatively (they are not what 'they' are in some other 'world')." (Lugones, 217-218, 2003)

There can be a 'world' that is non-utopian and operational, despite being incompletely formed, or there can be a 'world' that is (fully) traditional. Her example of this is the Mexican immigrant experience in the United States, because once one moves from the Mexican side of the border to the United States, one is "Hispanic" and to be "Hispanic" is to live within an

Anglo construction of being (culture, race). This is also in connection with the fact that “Hispanics” are varied, and as a community still have debates as to who is and isn’t Hispanic³⁰. “Such a traditional construction, in the face of a racist, ethnocentric, money-centered Anglo construction of northern New Mexican life, is highly unstable because Anglos have the means for imperialist destruction of traditional Hispano “worlds” (Lugones, 213, 2003). To me, I also interpret within phenomenological terms, ‘worlds’ to be much like the horizon we as individuals and collectives, face.

The former provides an uninterrupted pathway into the ability to inhabit worlds we do not understand, or even realize that we are inhabiting; that is to say that we are in a ‘world’ in which we have we are being constructed within it and have no understanding of our construction within it. Moreover, we can be moving from one ‘world’ to the other, sometimes intentionally or not, or inhabit more than one at the same time. As stated earlier, for Lugones, this ‘world’ traveling is a phenomena that occurs for Women of Color in the United States, since they are by virtue of being women and of color, outsiders of the mainstream American society. For Lugones, it is an unavoidable aspect to the experience of Women of Color. “One can be at the same time in a “world” that constructs one as stereotypically Latina, for example, and in a “world” that constructs one as simply Latina. Being stereotypically Latina and being simply Latina are different simultaneous constructions of persons who are part of different “worlds” (Lugones, 214, 2003). Although she is attempting to create a language and an understanding of an experience (Latina, outsider, suppressed, for example) she recognizes there

³⁰ Although Hispanic is a linguistic marker, meaning a person(s) are Hispanic if they are from a country whose national language is Spanish, therefore should be easy to contextualize. Hispanic does not denote race, solely what language a person speaks.

are problematic in that ontological in its construction. “Though I would think that any account of identity that could not be true to this experience of outsiders to the mainstream would be faulty, even if ontologically unproblematic. Its ease would constrain, erase, or deem aberrant experience that has within its significant insights into nonimperialistic understanding between people” (Lugones, 221, 2003).

The final note of interest to me, since the language and concepts used relate closely to the existential-cultural crisis, is when one *is* aware of their ‘world’ traveling. “Those of us who are “world”-travelers have the distinct experience of being different in different “worlds” and of having the capacity to remember other “worlds” and ourselves in them” (Lugones, 221, 2003). We are aware, in some instances, that in one ‘world’ we can be someone we understand as we are situated there, a being of our own construction, but shift into another ‘world’ where we are in discomfort because of the unknowing of the constructed one(self) in a way that we do not understand.

The act of traveling is when we shift from one being to another, be it purposeful or not. We may never realize (or are in fact very conscious³¹) that we have travelled to a different ‘world’ and have become a different person in it. Lugones closes this explanation of traveling by making it clear one does not act, as if on stage: “Rather, one is someone who has that personality or character or uses space and language in that particular way” (Lugones, 222, 2003). Ortega herself connects this traveling to multiplicity, in that the multiplicitous self is a being with several social identities, therefore able to be (as Lugones states) in many ‘worlds’ at once. In view of the fact that the self is ‘world’ traveling, there is a liminal space between ‘worlds’,

³¹ There seems to be a relation to the phenomena and normal occurrence of code switching.

meaning that the multiplicitous self is a being-between-worlds. Ortega tells us that the oppressive social conditions highlight this sensation of being in-between, to which I suggest it is arguable we can do so if we understand intersectionality.

Lugones, Intersectionality and Intermeshedness

The final component of Lugones' work I will examine is her criticisms of intersectionality, which sparked her approach to what she determined to be a decolonial feminism via intermeshedness as a replacement for intersectionality. Her criticisms of intersectionality are necessary to examine, as intersectionality is the bedrock of this thesis on the whole. It also serves to understand the dynamics of Black feminist philosophy, Women of Color philosophy and the erasure that can occur when examining the dynamics between the two canons. This is not to say they are mutually exclusive, but an examination between the two must be completed. In searching for the Afro-Indigenous subjectivity within Latina feminist phenomenology, I have found there is a gap, and this comparative analysis between Lugones, intersectionality and intermeshedness is an excellent example of the problems, but also, possible solutions.

Lugones responds to intersectionality in the essay *Radical Multiculturalism and Women of Color Feminisms* (2014), Lugones begins her analysis by reminding readers of the very real consequences of maintaining what she determines to be logics of oppression within the guise of creating logics of resistance. Lugones does recount how white bourgeoisie feminism of the 20th century maintained logics of oppression by circumventing any discussion or space for Women of Color to be seen. Her analysis is crucial to her writings on the coloniality of gender, as evidenced in the following passage:

“Colonialism in early and late modernity was constituted both by a Eurocentrist conception of knowledge and culture and by the racialization of labor, of heterosexuality, and of gender.³ In the development of twentieth century feminisms, this connection between gender, class, heterosexuality as racialized was not made explicit. That feminism centered its struggle and its ways of knowing and theorizing against a characterization of women as fragile, weak in both body and mind, secluded in the private, and sexually passive. But it did not bring to consciousness that those characteristics only constructed white bourgeois womanhood. Indeed, beginning from that characterization, white bourgeois feminists theorized white womanhood as if all women were white.” (Lugones, 69, 2014)

Understanding that women of color had responded to this white bourgeois feminism by creating theory and actions of their own, Lugones attempts to address the efforts women of color have made to unmask white feminism, but she finds these efforts to in actuality be “colluding with the oppression of Women of Color and as serving Western Hegemony” (Lugones, 72, 2014). She begins by assessing intersectionality, in which Lugones states that the framework treats race and gender as legitimate separate categories of oppression.

For Lugones, ‘woman’ as a gender within the colonial project of the Americas, was not assigned to Indigenous and Black people. She notes there is a different history with regards to gender formation for white women and non-white women; that is to say, that women have

always been white, and that non-white 'woman' was developed after. That is to say, only through colonial processes, could the non-white subjects move from animal to female, from female to a different kind of woman. "If the very meaning of 'woman' excludes women of color, then 'violence against women' will be understood solely in the terms that affect white bourgeois women" (Lugones, 74, 2014). For clarity, she repeats the point far more succinctly in the following pages when she states, "Rather females racialized as non-white are not of the same gender as white females" (Lugones, 74, 2014). Her criticisms against intersectionality, which she carries through the idea of logics of oppression, is that intersectionality does two things: firstly, it utilizes the language and violence of oppression as an established foundation for how we create resistance. Secondly, intersectionality situates race and gender as fixed categories separate from one another.

In the following passage, Lugones expands upon why she believes that naming the categories and keeping them as separate from one another is not enough to build logics of resistance:

"No conceptual critique of the essentialism characteristic of categorial thinking will erase the need to recognize the categories as real. The categories and categorial thinking are tools of oppression. Oppression cannot be erased conceptually. It is not a mistake to presuppose categories of oppression in understanding intersectionality. It is indeed necessary. For the phenomenon that is being explained is precisely the ignoring of multiplicity through categorial seeing that cannot countenance those who live at the intersection of more than one category of oppression." (Lugones, 75, 2014)

For Lugones, intersectionality does not locate sufficiently what is often lost within feminist work, the oppression, and voices of Women of Color. In the opinion of Lugones, intersectionality does not focus on the violence suffered intra-racially and intra-communally, and lastly, intersectionality accepts fundamental “presuppositions of race and gender oppression.” (Lugones, 75, 2014). Ortega remarks that Lugones also tasks issue with intersectionality being applied outside of its original context, which is in direct relation to antidiscrimination laws and the legal system has a whole. Lugones moves towards an application of the concept of intermeshedness instead of intersectionality, in that there is a merging of the various social identities, and therefore not mutually exclusive, since that is how, in her analysis, intersectionality does just that.

Intermeshedness, as Ortega notes, works in tandem with multiplicitous selves which is continuously found in Latina phenomenology. Lugones relies on intermeshedness starting with the defense that relying on the logics and the language of the oppressor does not allow for us (Women of Color I would presume) to be able to move forward away from it, either theoretically or physically away from an oppressive society. For Lugones, intersectionality has theorists trapped in the logics of oppressors, and in the tradition of Latina feminist phenomenology, the multiplicitous self knows that it is a decentered self. “That is, none of this self’s identities is a priori central or most important—there is not one primary identity that negates, undermines, or makes irrelevant other identities” (Ortega, 74, 2016). Lugones answer to intersectionality, intermeshedness, aims to create a framework where Women of Color do not fall prey to oppressive logics or erasure. Ortega brings her readers back to Anzaldúa and the *new mestiza*’s multiplicity when she states that “this self must negotiate such identities while

being between worlds and being-in-worlds. As a self in process or in the making, the multiplicitous self is continually engaged in these negotiations, which include sometimes having to strategically deploy certain identities in certain worlds. This ability to negotiate different identities in different contexts grants the self a flexibility that opposes the fixity of traditional conceptions of selfhood” (Ortega, 74, 2016). However, these ideas and interpretations of intersectionality have been met with criticism and questions of its legitimacy and its readings.

K. Bailey Thomas, in her essay titled *Intersectionality and Epistemic Erasure: A Caution to Decolonial Feminism* (2020) observes that while Lugones works towards a decolonial feminism, her criticisms of intersectionality are done so through a potent erasure of Black feminist thought. Bailey engages directly with the essay *Radical Multicultural Feminisms and Women of Color Feminisms* as well and begins with what she states to be a misinterpretation of Crenshaw’s use of “intersect”. “I will note here that by conflating the usage of “intersect” and “interconnect,” Lugones is already committing a grave error in her interpretation of Crenshaw’s theorizing. What Lugones previously described is the notion of “interconnection,” which is when identities coincide fluidly and contribute to the full legibility of a person. The intersection that Crenshaw theorizes is not a place of liveliness or multiplicity, but a site of erasure” (Bailey, 510, 2020).

Thomas also notes that since for Lugones, the term woman does not actually include women of color, using the term ‘women’ within intersectionality does not actually apply to Women of Color; in the theoretical world of Lugones, ‘women’ only applies to white women, since ‘women’ or the singular ‘woman’ is a term that is a tool of coloniality. Therefore, as a colonial tool and term, coupled with the fact that Crenshaw (in Lugones’ view) never makes explicit these colonial distinctions, Women of Color is an empty epistemic term. In the footnotes of

this essay, Thomas continues finalizes her point when she states “Because Lugones holds the position that “woman” is a colonial construct, she argues that it can refer only to white women. “Woman of color,” therefore, is a nonsensical term as it refers to a collective of people not registered in colonial/categorical logics” (Thomas, 522, 2020).

It is clear that Lugones believed that by treating race and gender (for example) as fixed categories and as mutually exclusive, that Crenshaw is validating the categories and supports their existence despite being colonial logics. “Moreover, if Crenshaw believes the categories of “gender” and “race” to be real, then Lugones claims that Crenshaw has authenticated colonial logics that are used to subjugate nondominant, nonwhite subjects” (Thomas, 511, 2020). Lugones therefore treats intersectionality as a matter of pure theory, unable to be put into practice, or move forward any on the ground coalitional efforts that drive for actual change because of the validation of gender and race. This is not to say that Lugones’ does not find some value in intersectionality; she stated that naming structures and making visible what is erased is a radical move.

However, Lugones’ believed that it is only a concept that works on paper because race and gender should not be seen as valid categories of identity. Thomas responds in two-fold: firstly, that intersectionality does not uphold oppressive logics, but works to highlight the structures that are dominant in a society by various groups. Secondly, intersectionality does not create identities in the ‘intersecting point’, on the contrary, the point highlights a multidimensional social erased point. Rather they are providing a descriptive (as opposed to normative) claim focused on addressing epistemic structures that allow for the erasure of subjects. Categorical

logics are oppressive logics with fallacious backgrounding, but they are nevertheless a societal reality. Thus, the point of intersectionality is to reveal and magnify the particular types of silences and omissions that result from the categories” (Thomas, 512-513, 2020).

Before moving to Thomas’ readings of Lugones’ theoretical replacement of intersectionality with intermeshedness, I think it is important we fully understand how intersectionality is supposed to operate compared to Lugones’ reading of said operation. “Intersectional theory(should) focus on socially marginalized identities. As an act of epistemic resistance, people utilize intersectional frameworks once they are shown the violence of colonial logics—that is, the idea that race and gender are separable categories (Bailey, 515, 2020). Lugones clearly states that intersectionality operates within logics of oppression, therefore any physical and material resistance against this systems cannot occur. However, as is evidence in the methodology of this thesis, intersectionality is compatible with other methods of investigation and resistance, both literal and theoretical. “As an act of intersectional resistance, Crenshaw is trying to resolve the issue of epistemic erasure and to ensure that subjects are made socially legible. Intersectionality does not leave us at the intersection but enables us to move from being objects to being subjects” (Thomas, 515, 2020). It is important to note that in framing intermeshedness as a decolonial framework, intersectionality is rendered as anti-decolonial, because it colludes with white feminism in erasing those of color. However, in agreeance with Thomas, the argument to be made is that intermeshedness does not offer anything new or wholly different to what intersectionality already does.

As a final note, we must notice what the goals of each writer are, both Crenshaw and Lugones, as which Thomas reports clearly as “although they were both concerned with harmful epis-

temic frameworks, they theorized two different effects of these hegemonic structures; Lugones was concerned with colonial logics and Crenshaw was theorizing epistemic silencing” (Thomas, 520, 2020). I agree with Thomas in that effectively intermeshedness and intersectionality both serve the same purpose. Intersectionality is not a theory about creating an identity, as Lugones misinterprets, but locating the silenced or erased identity such as Black Woman. Intermeshedness, though, does the same work as intersectionality, that is to say making visible that which is invisible, but is different because for Lugones because she believes that it operates through decoloniality; to state plainly, intersectionality legitimizes colonial logic, and decoloniality’s purpose is against colonial logics. To return to Ortega’s explanation of intermeshedness, “We need to consider specific issues connected to the intersection or intermeshedness of gender, race, sexuality, class, politics, ability, and so on, and how such social locations inform the way we *are* in the worlds” (Ortega, 69, 2020).

Nevertheless, through attempting to describe intermeshedness, Ortega and Lugones both rely on the system that intersectionality is built upon. The core of the analysis Thomas has with regards to Lugones critique and subsequent move to intermeshedness, is that “[the moves] implies that we are actively trying to displace a methodology that aims to critique epistemic frameworks and make marginalized subjects visible. To extract a concept from Black feminism, only to erase the bodies of the Black women who have put it forth, is an act of epistemic violence of the highest degree. By misrepresenting intersectionality and putting the onus on Crenshaw for its “failure,” Lugones has effectively woven colonial logics within her decolonial theory” (Thomas, 521, 2020). I support this framing of Thomas’ breakdown, for Lugones, like the other Latina writers in this chapter, have created a theory that while does provide salient ideas regarding race, gender, location, class and more, consistently

erases and removes Black subjectivity, and also by extension Indigenous subjectivity, from their frameworks.

Through an overt reliance on *mestizaje*, or mixing (which is also what intermeshedness purports to be), the action of focusing on particular kinds of mixing, has a tendency to be at the expense of Black and Indigenous thought. To be clear, and similarly to what I observed in analyzing Anzaldúa's writing, there is no space for subjectivity that is Latine and Black and Indigenous. The dismissal towards Black American feminist thought also leads to an inability for use it for any kind of coalition work because, in my own opinion, it doesn't treat Black and/or Indigenous subjectivity (within Latin America) as something that is living today.

Conclusion

Lugones conceptions of 'world', 'world-traveling' creates a theoretical highway for me in so to understanding the existential-cultural crisis as a vast theoretical location that encompasses multiple diasporas. 'World-traveling' allows for multiplicity to exist, to center that which is often rendered invisible, and for complications of identity to be explored without hesitation. These complications are what we as Black and Indigenous people, Latine or otherwise, aim to study and understand; we are able to have an analysis and an ability for coalition efforts that affect material change. An understanding and application of 'worlds' is valuable for my development of the existential-cultural crisis as a concept, because it legitimizes that one is often thrust into a 'world', or being read by others within another 'world' one may not have realized; it very much relates to Frantz Fanon's own interpretation and use of phenomenology. Mark De Young notes that "Fanon takes on the task of describing the interiority of one whose interiority has been negated or denied. In his case, the phenomenological reduction, the

bracketing operation which forms the occasion for this description, was not something he performed willingly; it was thrust upon him from the outside” (De Young, 6-7,2016).

Nonetheless, Lugones’ texts and concepts are practical tools for an expansive molding of Latina feminist phenomenology, her misinterpretations and misuse of intersectionality’s goal and purpose are necessary to critique in order to move to her use of intermeshedness and ideas about Women of Color as a coalitional group. It is plain that while Lugones moves towards expanding concepts about decolonial theory and a use of logics of resistance instead, in my own opinion, she does so at the expense of Black feminist thought and a complete erasure of Indigenous subjectivity in the guise of Women of Color coalitional efforts.

It is important to be able to understand her works as a valuable resource for building a decolonial praxis, we must also note that it can be understood and interpreted as anti-black, since much of Lugones’ language and theory depends on the erasure of Black feminist thought. We must also ask questions about how her use of decoloniality interacts with Indigenous subjectivity within Latin America, something I had not seen addressed. In conclusion, Lugones’ ‘world’ and ‘world-traveling’ are in dialogues with the *new mestiza* from Anzaldúa and the embracing of mestizaje by Moraga. Concepts that aim to transform our ability to create an understanding of the self against multiple systems of domination.

A philosophy for Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispano-Caribbean and Latin America finds itself within the field of phenomenology specifically due to Latina feminist phenomenology operating under the umbrella of Latinidad and mestizaje, which forbids any kind of spec-

ificity and complexity of anti-blackness and settler colonialism on Indigenous lands. The erasure within Latina feminist phenomenology is followed by Afro-Caribbean phenomenology which not only has yet to fully incorporate literature from the Hispanic Caribbean but also is dominated by male voices.

Chapter Seven

Afro-Caribbean Phenomenology: Repeating Negrituds

Latina feminist phenomenology attempts to open a Pandora's box containing a multitude of ambivalences woven with multiplicity and mestizaje thought. However, Indigeneity within these texts is said to have been romanticized and Blackness, in my opinion, was invisible. Conversely, as Henry Pagent notes in his introduction to *Caliban's Reason*, the Calibanization of Africans in the Caribbean runs through philosophy in the region. These allegorical workings, however, can also assist in erasure of Amerindian presence in philosophical literature. In this proceeding engagement with Afro-Caribbean philosophy, I bear in mind the framework Tiffany Lethabo King utilized in her book *The Black Shoals*, as the means in which I begin to transform my readings and internalizations of phenomenology of all forms, both Latina and Afro-Caribbean; that my engagement with the literature is never static and yet I aim to remain constant, critical, and receptive.

Franz Fanon is understood as a staple in Afro-Caribbean philosophical discourse, in particular his use of a phenomenological basis to discuss what it means being a Black colonized subject. For instance, Fanon's point of departure as *Man of Color* aids us in seeing phenomenologically. This analysis is supported with added dimensions from Henry Pagent, whose work in *Caliban's Reason* collated the most foundational material in Afro-Caribbean philosophy.

In his study of Afro-Caribbean philosophy, Pagent creates three sections, focusing upon the spiritually based initial forays into what Pagent considers a distinct philosophical tradition (founding texts), the post-colonial actions through public discourse, and finally the historicist

and poeticism practices. Although I have not based my examination of Afro-Caribbean phenomenology solely upon all the writers that he cites in *Caliban's Reason*, I have however analyzed the works selected that are arguably within these categories of the history of Caribbean phenomenological thought in general. My intention, much like that with Latina feminist philosophy, is to understand the core premise of the canon and present it in such a way that allows for my own ability to not only internalize and contextualize the literature, in order to apply (or not) for when I begin my own theoretical and critical attempts at phenomenology.

Supportive analysis by Hispanic Caribbean writers Alberto Benitez Rojo, Mayra Santos-Febres and Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel are also included, to help facilitate a holistic approach to Caribbean literature beyond what *Caliban's Reason* offers. A merging of these writers finds us fixed in rather liminal spaces; a shoal, to borrow from King, that re-emerges through fractal thought and culture. This analysis and its methods are done so to bring me closer to a bridge, or dock, in which the triple negation of Afro-Indigenous subjectivity (Black, Latine or Hispanic, and immigrant), specifically within the Hispanic Caribbean context, can be generated anew.

Another aspect of Afro-Caribbean philosophy that is pertinent to this thesis is the use of *The Tempest* (1610-1611). As Henry states in the introduction to his book, Caliban was the perfect allegory as he was written as a child-like beast, native to an island and under the rule of the character of Prospero. The dynamic between Caliban and Prospero consisted of Caliban providing labor under duress and to which then Prospero provides Caliban with language. "But even with this revelation of purpose, Caliban will only experience a small measure of humanization. That is, in spite of the gift of language, Caliban remains too heavily mired in nature for its uplifting powers of reason and civilization. So ran one of the most enduring

narratives of Caribbean identity to emerge from European literature and philosophy” (Henry, 5, 2003).

Although further developed in Chapter Ten, the following pages pave the way for filling the gaps between Latina Feminist Phenomenology and Afro-Caribbean Phenomenology. Prior to and throughout engaging these texts, I compiled a list of questions and issues I wanted to assess in order to complete the purpose of the thesis. They are as follows:

- How does Caliban relate or not relate to the Hispanic Caribbean
- How does the essay address or miss the mark there?
- How does Caliban as an allegory and location give space for the Hispanic Caribbean language as a barrier amongst linguistic barriers- language as tied to nation state identity versus the cultural ties that are more present but often ignored
- How Caliban is a useful tool-what king intervenes with however when it comes to Black and Indigenous readings of Sycorax and her voicelessness?
- What is the void that Henry speaks of?
- How this leads me to the vocal void?
- What is the vocal void?

This chapter begins by focusing upon Frantz Fanon, arguably the foundational Afro-Caribbean (or generally Black) phenomenological writer. He provided readers with sociogeny and an analysis of what happens to the mental health of an individual that has internalized racism, be it systemic and institutional within primarily white spaces or internal and intracommunal (such as Black majority locations like the Caribbean itself). Regarding this thesis, Fanon has provided a clearer and more concrete blueprint for a phenomenology of The Other, despite

the issues regarding women that remain unresolved for me, in particular the assessment and the lack of care given to Black women and women of color from the Caribbean (his own specificity).

The final component within this concluding chapter on afro Caribbean Phenomenology will be an analysis on *The Tempest*, the dynamic between Caliban and Prospero, but also the most silent character of Sycorax. Sycorax represents the silenced woman, and the category of being that is considered the most abject. Although these characters have been mentioned previously within my writings, I venture to take a closer look at the play and the post-colonial writings that emerged from it within the Caribbean. This includes not just an analysis via the Anglo and Franco phone west Indies, but also cross comparative analytical attempts that aim to bring in the Hispanic Caribbean. This analysis includes Black and Indigenous feminist perspectives, specifically on Sycorax as it compares to the Calibanization of (specifically) the Black (and in King's work) Indigenous subject.

Black Skin, White Masks

Frantz Fanon's pivotal book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) gave way to a new understanding and engagement with psychoanalytic racism; this is to say a body of work that focused on the racialized embodiment that is born from a [post] colonial existence, and he does so through his own reworking of traditional European philosophy and sciences. As Paget Henry notes in his foundational book *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (2000), "the disenfranchising of African philosophy establish philosophy in the tradition as exclusively European. In short, recognized philosophy in the early phases of the Caribbean tradition of thought was exclusively European in identity and sociopolitical in orientation"

(Henry, 69, 2000). This context created the scenario in which Fanon would seek to liberate the Afro-Caribbean from the shackles of erasure via white supremacy, in order to be able to analyze and engage with oneself, philosophically speaking, from a departure that was not whiteness (something Black and Indigenous people can never be). Furthermore, again as Henry tells us about Fanon's desire to extract the Afro-Caribbean from a white supremacist universe, Fanon's sought to address "the mis-representations of the tradition that had been internalized" (Henry, 69, 2000).

In my own previous engagement with Fanon in *La Sangre Llama*, I applied an intersectional analysis of his own development of racialized embodiment via phenomenology. It has always been apparent for me throughout the years of re-reading Fanon's work, the problematics of his treatment of gender. "Although Fanon has been able to address race and oppression saliently through a phenomenological lens in which care and nuance is key, when it comes to Black *women*, his regard for their actions and choices born out of living through racism are drawn from the very colonial ideals that Fanon himself speaks against" (X, 35, 2019).

Fanon's development of a Black phenomenological practice is crucial to my own expansion of the existential-cultural crisis, but as I have stated previously, Fanon's work suffers from not only an erasure of women's subjectivity but also a near refusal to make space for an empathetic understanding of women of color as they themselves attempt to survive racist and misogynist oppression. In this chapter, I will revisit my previous analysis on Fanon but through a further a deeper intersectional analysis, which includes citing Black feminism and Lugones' coloniality of gender. I will focus upon the chapters of *Black Skin, White Masks* titled *The Lived Experience of the Black Man* first, focusing on the development of a Black phenomenology.

Then, I will move to the chapter *The Woman of Color and the White Man* analyzing Fanon's treatment of gender as it relates to race.

Articulating the Lived Experience

One of the chilling and most notorious moments in *Black Skin, White Masks* is found within the first line of Chapter Five, in which Fanon accounts for the first time he is faced with the awareness of another's perception of his Blackness. "Look! A Negro!" (Fanon, 89, 1952). It is here that the subject (in this case, Fanon) sees what Blackness incites in the white viewer, a fear, and through the white gaze, the Black subject begins to tear, hyper aware of his own body now; the body is torn asunder in the white imagination. Miguel Morrissey expands this moment in his essay titled *Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Masks and the Social Sickness of Racism* (2018) when he notes:

"One becomes disoriented, and one has to evaluate one's own "bodily schema." Most importantly, one sees their own body as an object, free floating in space, a separation between self and world. This hyper-awareness of one's body produces traumatic effects. It produces a self-objectification, where one feels oneself as an object, and the more this is repeated the more objectification seems an acceptable thing...In being forced to confirm his own bodily presence, Fanon is forced to ask himself, 'Am I really here?' Yes, one sees oneself as present, yet one concurrently feels empty of the qualifications to experience being

through others. One is stripped of everything but a bodily schema.” (Morrissey, n/a, 2018)

Fanon continues to articulate that the image of the body is in the third person, to which I understand as the following processes: One’s (Fanon’s man of color) image of oneself > the self as seen through the white gaze presented back to One > One’s new understanding of One’s self, as man of color but a fractured articulation by the dominant white gaze. The body image for the colonized, which is a conscious perception of our body’s appearance and aesthetic, is bombarded with negative messaging from white supremacy and other oppressive structures. The consequences of which are people of color having psychological distress and a deformed body image. The psychological distress of this body image manifests itself as alienation, self-hatred, shame, and a dysphoric relationship to their bodies. The body schema, the subconscious perception of one’s body (proportions, spatial awareness) which helps us interact with the physical world around us. Essentially, he argues the body schema for racialized individuals is particular for racialized people as a direct consequence of white supremacy.

In order to contextualize the particularities of this kind of body schema, Fanon moves to isolate the factors that inform the psyche of the colonized. “Beneath the body schema I had created a historical-racial schema. The data I used were provided not by “remnants of feelings and notions of the tactile, versatile, kinesthetic, or visual nature” but by the Other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories. I thought I was being asked to construct a physiological self, to balance space and localize sensations, when all the time they were clamoring for more” (Fanon, 91, 1952).

What I find most poignant about these quotes is the idea of the triple negation, viewing oneself in a third perspective, which is the result of seeing how one's own body being torn asunder. It is the dynamic of being caught within the white gaze, in its dominance, in its history and its present form of power (post-colonial). As I stated in *La Sangre Llama*, "Thus, bodies racialized as oppositional to whiteness within Latin America and the Caribbean bear the mark of colonialism on the flesh. The countries and islands exist and are maintained within an ever-expanding aftermath of occupation. These specific bodies are torn asunder within the imagination of the contemporary world" (X, 6, 2019). Which coincides with Fanon's body and historical-racial schema when he says "I was responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors. I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features[sic]...My body was returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning on this white winter's day" (Fanon, 92-93, 1952).

Fanon's methodology for his conceptions around race and the colonial subject stems from the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre but is also said to be influenced by Hegelian theory of intersubjectivity. These writers and their works were first accessible to Fanon in his early academic career, as he began to develop ideas around Blackness as it relates to European throughout growing post-colonial struggles.

In short, what is at the core of these moments is the objectification since what racism does to its victim is to objectify it. In the book *Fanon: A Critical Reader* (1996), Richard Schmidt outlines for us the potential issues or questions that arise from a discussion on objectification and what the word means. He begins by positing:

“If by “objectification” we mean taking someone as a (quasi-) grammatical object, it needs to be argued that that is an injury to human beings. It is plausible that one is injured by being made the object of a “look,” but not by being made the object of love, of a gift, of concentrated and thoughtful attention. It is not clear that those are injuries. If, on the other hand, “objectification” is taken to mean “making a person into a thing/” it is not obvious that one can objectify another. Persons are not things as long as they are alive. One becomes an object – a dead body – when one dies. Hence it is not immediately clear what “objectification” could mean.” (Gordon, White and Sharpley-Whiting, 36, 1996).

For Schmidt, objectification is not merely an act of altering a person into a thing or a removal of any sort of freedom one may have in society. Objectification is a systemic removal of “human relationships” that are supported by economic practices (Gordon, White and Sharpley-Whiting, 36, 1996). Central to Fanon’s unraveling about the dynamics of racism are the various cogs that create a flow: ridicule, distrust, infantilization, exclusion and others are noted by Schmidt as well, as the devices that create system oppression. For example, we are faced with ridicule, distrust, and violence (through Fanon’s perspective) when the child exclaims the slur, Fanon moves through phases of emotional responses, until finally:

“ ‘Look, a Negro! *Maman*, a Negro!’

‘Shh! You’ll make him angry. Don’t pay attention to him, monsieur, he doesn’t realize you’re just as civilized as we are.’”

...The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is wicked, the Negro is ugly [sic] The Negro is trembling with cold, the cold that chills the bones, the lovely little boy is trembling because he thinks the Negro is trembling with rage, the little white boy runs to his mother’s arms: ‘*Maman*, the Negro’s going to eat me’ “(Fanon, 93, 1952).

In this example, Fanon runs through the gauntlet of the colonial gaze, of being seen and perceived as the monstrous Black man, and he responds vividly with a trembling that demonstrates being stripped of a sense of humanity and being racialized. This quivering is being responded to with a trembling of fear; the actions and responses create a heightened situation of negation and distrust. “In Fanon’s analysis, the body schema collapses. The ‘genuine dialectic’ between body and world no longer functions as before: he can no longer coordinate his locomotion out of habit, because of the atmosphere around him and because of his encounters with ‘the Other, the white man.’ He needs to attend to his body, to think about how to move it when reaching out for a cigar in the desk” (Zeiler, 9, 2012).

Kris Sealey demonstrates in his essay *Being-in-Itself, Being-For-Itself, and Being-For-Others* (2021) how Fanon taps into the role the Colonial Matrix of Power creates the sensation of depersonalization when the colonial subject is being gazed upon. Sealey notes how Sartre’s phenomenology, his being-for-itself and being-for-others still lacks an understanding of coloniality. The world that the colonized encounters, is a world structured and determined and

for the colonizer. As discussed previously, the Colonial Matrix of Power and Wynter's analysis of the Mapping the [Hu]Man dictates that Indigenous and African people are outside of the cartography of humanity. Fanon moves his readers towards understanding that his subjectivity is experienced not as a sensation of inferiority but that of not existing at all. Consequently, "what this means is that the lived experience of the colonized calls on phenomenology to generate a fourth conceptual framework alongside being-for-itself, being-for-others, and being-in-itself. The feeling of nonexistence proposed by Fanon points to a zone of nonbeing. Out of this zone, the racialized and colonized consciousness navigates its being-for-others, and it is upon this colonial negation that the racialized other is barred from all participation" (Sealey, 34, 2020).

These two passages bring me to the work of Saidiya V. Hartman and her book *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (1997) when she states: "The constitution of blackness as an abject and degraded condition and the fascination with the other's enjoyment went hand in hand. [sic] Moreover, in this case, the figurative capacities of blackness and the fungibility of the commodity are directly linked. The fungibility of the commodity, specifically its abstractness and immateriality, enabled the black body ...to serve as the vehicle of white self-exploration, renunciation, and enjoyment" (Hartman, 22-26, 1997). I cite Hartman because here she is providing an understanding of the foundation and the actions of the constant removal of the humanity of Black people within the white gaze, and Fanon's account is through the perspective of the human being stripped of humanity of the same dominating gaze.

In the book *Fanon, Phenomenology, and Psychology*, Jean Khafra offers a further development on objectification and phenomenology in Fanon's works. Firstly, Khafra offers an interpretation of the words in *Black Skin, White Masks* as a kind of phenomenology of the colonized consciousness, whilst noting that this phenomenology falls within the Hegelian sense, determining there is movement between history (in a broad sense of the word) and also the more intimate history of the individual. This movement continues from the history of the individual to shaping a means to dealing with the issue of alienation or Othering. Fanon, as Khafra notes, changes from a more scientific analytic point of view of "we", to which is of the psychiatrist and philosopher, to a subjective voice of "I" and finally the objective "he", that which is colonized. "He was particularly aware of the inherent complexity of this voice, attempting to describe objectively what could only be perceived from the inside, the subjective experience of being objectified" (Khafra, 49, 2022).

Mark DeYoung provides another point of analysis with this larger passage from his essay *Non-being and Thingness: A Fanonmenological Essay on Ontology* (1996):

"Fanon takes on the task of describing the interiority of one whose interiority has been negated or denied. In his case, the phenomenological reduction, the bracketing operation which forms the occasion for this description, was not something he performed willingly; it was thrust upon him from the outside. Rather than making a reduction, that is, Fanon instead experiences being reduced. Fanon's account of black experience back to this initial and initiating epoché. Here, Fanon did not abstract

from his experience to make a description, but rather was abstracted from the realm of beings [thought] capable of having experience. Seeing himself pointed out as a 'thing' causes a crisis—because how is it possible to experience what it is like to be a thing?—that he nevertheless did experience. In a sense almost literally beside himself, then, Fanon passes an objective external gaze over himself while at the same time articulating the internal experience of being reduced to thingness. Of course, the very performance of describing this experience contradicts the ascription of thingness; but it will also become clear this act of negation marks the start of a long and painful process rather than a resolution.” (deYoung, 7, 1999)

It should be noted that although Fanon was aware of, and directly engaging with, the lectures and writings of phenomenologists and took much of the philosophy towards the development of his own work, he himself was not a pure phenomenologist. It is suggested by writers in such anthologies as *Fanon, Phenomenology, and Psychology* (2022) through a phenomenological approach, he was able to unearth the lived experience of Black people in a manner that for its time was new and revolutionary in its own manner. Fanon demonstrates this himself when he states “And in one sense, if I had to define myself I would say I am in expectation; I am investigating my surrounds; I am interpreting everything on the basis of my findings. I have become a sensor” (Fanon, 99, 1952).

Athena V. Colman first notes that Fanon describes the being Black in the world as being another object amongst objects, unlike Merleau-Ponty's more traditional phenomenological assessment that marks the site of subjectivity specifically by differentiating the subject's experience of being-in-the-world from the mere existence of other things (Laubscher, Hook and Desai, 133, 2022). Fanon's account of being Black in France, a Black male colonial subject in the master's world on the master's soil, suggests that the lived experience of Black people is marked by *thing-hood* i.e., objecthood. At this point in Fanon's analysis, he moves towards the historico-racial schema, to compensate for what the proposed universality of the corporeal schema lacks.

The historico-racial schema is Fanon's method to move push through Merleau-Ponty's corporeal schema, and to create a means in which we as readers can understand what occurs when the Black subject meets the white subject in the West. "The point here is that Fanon's rereading of phenomenology...opens up the question of structuring schemas, which structure our subjectivity, and our connections to others. In the situation of colonization, constitutive elements of the Black subject's experience are given, through oppression, as the very denial of subjectivity, through which they are nonetheless constituted. In other words, the subjectivity of a colonized person is constituted through the denial of that subjectivity" (Laubscher, Hook, and Desai, 133, 2022).

The previous passage is a demonstration of how Fanon began to diverge from traditional phenomenology and commenced an evolution or substitutions of established terms; for Fanon, the corporeal schema, as outlined and already defined, cannot be used to account for the experience of the Black subject since it exists as a *thing* and not being-in-the-world. This begins when Fanon declares that it is not inferiority that he experiences, but in fact, nonbeing.

Fanon states that Blackness cannot be understood within a Black nation like his homeland of Martinique. The body image for Merleau-Ponty was not the same for Fanon because Merleau-Ponty relied on a “universal”-his global grasp is not *in* space (Colman’s emphasis) like an object, but *of* space as a subject. I understand this to mean that because of not having been a colonized subject, Merleau-Ponty was able to experience dimensions of his subjectivity as a global – or as often is read as a universal and as Colman argues Merleau-Ponty’s corporeal schema was his body image (Laubscher, Hook and Desai, 133, 2022). As Fanon states in *The Lived Experience of the Black Man*, “...but any ontology is made impossible in a colonized and acculturated society...Ontology does not allow us to understand that being of the black, since it ignores the lived experience (Fanon, 90, 1952).

Fanon, in a manner that seems to cradle Black readers in the arms of an elder, warm and serious, tells us “From time to time you feel like giving up. Expressing the real is an arduous job. But when you take it into your head to express existence, you will very likely encounter nothing but the nonexistent” (Fanon, 116, 1952). Here, we are reminded that whilst we are feeling our humanity in every moment, there will be attempts by others to take it away from us, and before we even may realize that the stripping of humanity is occurring, it may have already occurred.

Fanon ends this chapter with an exclamation of refusal to accept the ruptured state of his own perception of himself via the white gaze and coloniality but also knowing that the gaze and reduction to that which has no humanity, has maimed him. He looks to the sky, emotional and says that he begins to weep, finding himself placed between “Nothingness and Infinity”

(Fanon, 119, 1952). Which, I argue, is a moment of complete humanity, his own individual mode of being.

Women of Color

Fanon focuses on the psychological mechanisms and coping strategies of those that experience racism in *Black Skin, White Masks*, considering his background as a trained psychiatrist. It could be argued that his attempts to get to the heart of the experience are as objective and clinical as possible within in the text. In the chapter *The Women of Color and The White Man*, Fanon states that the chapter is devoted to determining to what extent “authentic love remains impossible as long as this feeling of inferiority [sic] has not been purged” (Fanon, 25, 1952). By inferiority, I understand Fanon to mean the inferiority Black and other People of Color are socialized into feeling within the structure of white supremacy.

Fanon wants to be able to ascertain whether, within the power dynamics of post-colonial societies and romantic relationships, if there can be actual love between Women of Color and white men. In order to do so he conducts his analysis through the book *I Am A Martinican Woman* (1948), written by Mayotte Capécia whilst also referencing several other psychologists and scientific papers contemporary of the time. Due to the popularity of the book within certain social circles (Fanon is not very specific about said circles), he feels the book is appropriate for analysis, despite his own bewilderment of why such a book was written to begin with. Whilst I would not deny that literature, like any other art form, should be critiqued, Fanon’s interpretation of the popularity “in certain circles” (Fanon, 25, 1952) prompts him to project what Caribbean Women of Color, as a group, want and desire and how they achieve such via the book itself. Fanon’s analysis of Women of Color is fused with a single author’s

story, and subsequently the book becomes the principal metric for which Fanon attempts to discuss Black women and Women of Color. I wish to demonstrate how Fanon's analysis is littered with misogyny, which in my opinion, prevents him from being to contextualize the text properly; because intersectionality has demonstrated the manner in which the dynamics of white supremacy are racialized as much as they are gendered (intersectional power dynamics), my objective here is to extend Fanon's approach to Women of Color and demonstrate where intersectionality provides for us a richer understanding of women's situations and choices.

"For us, there is no doubt whatsoever that *I Am A Martinican Woman* is a third-rate book, advocating unhealthy behavior" (Fanon, 25, 1952). Upon reading the initial opinions of Fanon with regard to the literature, I immediately thought there was a pretext that was missing: preferences, desires or tastes are socially determined. Standards are not fixed, and they are culturally informed phenomena. I would go further to say that there is no essentialism in preferences, particularly of the romantic kind. What is in style changes throughout the seasons, and that has some affect in how we seek out romantic partners. Therefore, reading "Mayotte loves a white man unconditionally... And when she asks herself whether he is handsome or ugly, she writes: 'All I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, a pale complexion and I loved him.' If we reword these same terms, it is not difficult to come with: 'I loved him because he had blue eyes, blond hair, and a pale complexion'" (Fanon, 25, 1952). I do wonder where in Fanon's analysis is there space to discuss the conditions in which certain choices are made with, say, love and status? I extend this question specifically to the women subjects, who as a class have historically been silenced and controlled. As Rey Chow observes early in her essay

The Politics of Admittance; Female Sexual Agency, Miscegenation, and the Formation of Community in Franz Fanon (1999), Fanon provides his readers with a depiction of women by means of speaking for them and also by portrayal “by refusing the woman of color any of the kind of emotional ambivalence that is copiously endowed upon the psyche of the black man...” (Chow, 43, 1999).

The chapter titled *The Woman of Color and the White Man* utilizes *I Am A Martinican*, which is assumed to be autobiographical, as an object for heuristic work. Therefore, we learn about the desires and fantasies of this Woman of Color filtered through Fanon’s interpretations, never actually through the Capécia herself or through the words of other Women of Color or Black women from Martinique. This is to say that I understand Fanon’s consumption of the literature by Capécia as if it is implicitly understood to be wholly nonfiction and true, and I believe, applicable to all Martinican women. Fanon states that Capécia is striving for lactification, that she is striving to whiten the race (this is the same as blanquimiento as discussed previously). “...every woman in Martinique knows this, says this, and reiterates it (Fanon, 29-30, 1952).

Capécia seemingly begins her tale discussing the starry-eyed fantasies about being a part of the neighborhood where the more affluent and not pure white Martinican’s resided. There is a note about how one can achieve a social kind of whiteness if they are wealthy enough, again, tethering race to class. Fanon further reports that in Martinique, there is a way to escape some sort of social turmoil by way of gaining whiteness, and that is done through your ability to move into the higher classes. However, the character in *I Am A Martinican* moves through spaces, attempting to gain some sort of access into the higher social classes, she cannot due to her being a Woman of Color. Fanon does not report to us whether Capécia has

informed her readers of the race nor the color of the members of the social groups in which she is attempting to become a part of a point that I would believe to be rather important. Either way, it is here that I wish to intervene Fanon's interpretation with work by Hortense Spillers, and specifically her essay *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe* (1987).

"Her facticity was the starting point for her resentment. We shall see why love is out of bounds for the Mayotte Capécia's of this world. Instead of allowing them to fulfill their infantile fantasies, the other should help them over these fantasies...Apparently for her, Black and White represent the two poles of this world, poles in perpetual conflict: a genuinely Manichean notion of the world" (Fanon, 27, 1952).

"The captive body, then, brings into focus a gathering of social realities as well as a metaphor for *value* so thoroughly interwoven in their literal and figurative emphases that distinctions between them are virtually useless. Even though the captive flesh/body has been 'liberated,' and no one need pretend that even the quotation marks do not *matter*, dominant symbolic activity, the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in the originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation so that it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, shows movement, as the human subject is 'murdered' over and over again

by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise" (Spillers, 68, 1987).

I believe with these two passages we can begin to understand how white supremacy affects people of color who live under its weight physically, spiritually, and psychologically when we³² internalize it. However, what is striking is the lack of care, or at least a thorough contextualization of what it means to be gendered within the white supremacist legacy of domination and control through Fanon's reading of Capécia's work. In the Chapter titled the *Man of Color and the White Woman*, Fanon is able to discuss with clarity, the hypersexuality of Black men and the consequences of a union between Black men and white women. Furthermore, his projection of the words and the psychology found within *I am A Martinican* upon all Women of Color.

It is at this juncture in Fanon's text that I ask of its methodology, if there is any critical engagement with Caribbean society and the options available for women with regards to being free agents in determining their lives for themselves? What kind of choices are women able to make that allow them safety, comfort, and autonomy? These are choices they must make whilst navigating an anti-black and patriarchal society. I do not think that being colorist (as is Capécia when she attempts to have lighter skinned or white men as lovers versus darker skinned Black men) is the answer nor the method to any kind of salvation from white supremacy and racism. However, I think that Fanon does not do any work that questions or attempts to dismantle misogyny in order to examine the complete situation Capécia finds herself in.

³² I find it pressing to note that people of color are not the only ones that can internalize the ideas of white supremacy; white people who act out implicit biases against people of color have also internalized white supremacy, even if they do not themselves believe to be racist.

Also, it is very obvious that *Black Skin, White Masks* is focused on heterosexual conditions in which women can only survive via in their marital connections, in this case a lighter skinned affluent man, double that if it were a white man that actually would marry a Woman of Color, and this is missing completely in Fanon's consideration. Through Fanon's analysis, we understand racism and anti-blackness and how that affects the subjectivity of colonized people, but the analysis culminates at any patriarchal structures.

"We regret that Mayotte Capécia has told us nothing about her dreams. The contact with her unconscious would have helped matters" (Fanon, 28, 1952). Tensions begin to build in Fanon's breakdown in the pages following this quote, away from the heart of the matter and towards something else; however difficult it is for me to fully understand where Fanon lands with this evaluation, I cannot see how it is to do with Women of Color. The practice should be centering Women who are racialized (or colored), and an understanding of what could be the means to attaining a phenomenological account of an experience within this gendered and racial category (*I Am A Martinican*). If we move back a few pages, Fanon writes an admittance, that there is difficulty as a phenomenologist to understand his own questions. "My beloved will support me energetically in assuming my virility whereas the need to earn the admiration of love of others will weave a valorizing web over my vision of the world. In understanding phenomena of this order the analyst and the phenomenologist have a tough job" (Fanon, 24, 1952). If Fanon attempted to create a phenomenological account in some way, of what it means to be a Women of Color in the Caribbean and her subjectivity, he was limited in his scope; in the manner in which Fanon was able to realize that traditional phenomenology and its terms were insufficient for the lived experiences of the Black man, he failed to realize

his interventions were not sufficient for the lived experience of Women of Color and Black women.

I ask of the work, what are the strategies that Fanon is using for the epoché? He does not say. Either way, he moves to say that since Capécia cannot blacken the world around her³³ she will whiten it instead. If we are attempting to understand Capécia through Fanon's interpretations, then we clearly can follow her self-hatred and how it manifests in her choices that create the situation in which she can escape the curse of 'color' that the society placed upon her. However, Fanon offers us no deeper analysis into the bounds of what white supremacy has already created for Black women and Women of Color within coloniality. In Fanon's attempts to unravelling the issue of love within a wholly unbalanced dynamic, it is here as a reader, that I can see how he repeats the same logic of oppression upon Black women and Women of Color.

"All these frenzied women of color, frantic for a white man, are waiting. And one of these days they will catch themselves not wanting to look back, while dreaming of 'a wonderful night, a wonderful lover, a white man.' Perhaps they too one day will realize that 'white men don't marry black women.' But that's the risk they have accepted; what they need is whiteness at any cost. Why? Nothing could be simpler. Here is a story" (Fanon, 31, 1952). Fanon then tells a short story in which a white man, a mulatto and a black man are each asked what they want most in the world by Saint Peter. While the white man states he wants money, and the mulatto wants glory, the black man answers unassumingly that he's just carrying the bags. Here is a clear example of the dynamic of racism and colorism within the social structure of

³³ She attempts to throw ink at a white man in order to whiten him, but her childish endeavor is unsuccessful, so it is determined from here, she makes the mental point to whiten herself.

Western society as it is determined by white supremacy. The hierarchy of race, how those manifests through color and how that affects class and economy. Nevertheless, that white supremacy and post-coloniality still affect the readings of desirability on the body (as I understand through the previous Spillers quote).

This is not the analysis provided to us by Fanon, however. There is no mention of white supremacy and desirability, the internalization of racism and how that informs what people (men, women) deem desirable in a partner, and furthermore how women are or are not able to make choices that are not informed by a misogynistic society. In a footnote, Fanon attempts to further explore Capécia's explosion of glee when she finds out she has a white woman as an ancestor. "But relations between a white woman and a black man automatically become a romantic affair. It is a gift and not a rape...And Mayotte Capécia is right: it is an honor to be the daughter of a white woman. It shows she wasn't born on the wrong side of the blanket, as is the case for so many of the white Creoles' kids in Martinique" (Fanon 28-29, 1952).

It is in this moment, where an example of tearing the bodies of Black women into fragments, into the various colonial ideas of not just miscegenation but also of pathology. It reads to me as if that not only does Fanon render the Black women's body as the means in which race is either salvaged or eradicated, but also the fault of their own assault or rape by the very men that have deemed them *unrapeable*, in order to maintain the fungibility of black bodies. It is also on these pages where Fanon states that "In a word, the race must be whitened.; every woman in Martinique knows this, says this, and reiterates it. Whiten the race, save the race...Every time we have wanted to analyze certain kinds of behavior, we have come up

against some nauseating phenomena” (Fanon, 30, 1952). I would agree, however, in this case, when Women of Color want to discuss what it means to be racialized and gendered, we must contend with a race first analysis from which prevents men from being able to contextualize themselves within their gender as it connects to their race. It is also true within feminist spaces that race has been difficult to navigate through gender first analysis. Intersectionality again, is meant to allow us to create discourses that open up the possibilities to analysis. Even if the analysis provided by Fanon appears so, there is no determining of the dynamics that does not posit Women of Color and Black women in a way that allows for their own voice to be centered; it is always Man first.

Chow’s breakdown of Fanon and the Woman of Color makes clear to readers the problematic of Fanon’s opinions regarding Women of Color and not only their own potential interpretations of his work, but also of Women of Color are automatically read in such a way that contributes to colonial ideas about their pathology, as demonstrated in this following passage:

“This is the problem of the sexuality of the woman of color, the legitimation and delegitimation of which is crucial to the concept of a postcolonial national community. The predominant impression given by the passages just quoted is that women of color are all alike: in spite of the differences in pigmentation between the Negress and the mulatto, for instance, they share a common, “nauseating” trait —the desire to become white— that can be generalized in the form of “every woman.” In an account of black subjecthood that is premised on the irreducible (racial) difference between black and white people, thus,

Fanon's descriptions of the women of color are paradoxically marked by their non-differentiation, their projection (onto femininity) of qualities of indistinguishability and universality" (Chow, 39, 1999).

This is to say that the very way Europeans held Black women as carriers, of either disease or any other negative connotation created during the height of the Enlightenment, Fanon appears to me to follow the same logics, even if he is determined to undermine colonial logic. "The issue is knowing whether the black man can overcome his feeling of abasement and expunge the compulsive characteristic that resembles so much that of the phobic. There is an affective exacerbation in the black man, a rage at feeling diminished, and an inadequacy in human communication that confine him to an unbearable insularity" (Fanon, 33, 1952).

What occurs in throughout *The Woman of Color and The White Man* is a race first analysis of a specific relationship, created within the dynamic of post-colonial societies in where dependency of race, color and class as part of the analytics converge. Not unlike many instances I myself have experienced in discussions of not just personal romantic relationships, but of "liberation" from the white supremacy in general, there is an onus of responsibility placed upon women and femmes within the structure of heterosexuality that is not done so upon men³⁴. Any choice a woman or femme makes outside of the benefit of men is a betrayal, and therefore they are not to receive the same sort of care. I must ask of Fanon and his race first analysis: When are Black women and Women of Color (particularly the Caribbean ones, as this is his focus) offered, given (however much I dislike using such passivity) or are simply *able*

³⁴ This is similar to the work by Moraga when discussing homosexuality and the burden to maintain La Raza.

to reclaim a space for anger too? Without a gaze? When are they finally free from being the bearers of the responsibility of racialized misogyny that they themselves did not even create? “While the black man is sympathetically and empathetically portrayed as filled with existential angst, [sic] the choices and actions of the woman of color are rather associated with efficiency, with determination, with confidence, even with “candor”— qualities which, however, become signs of her dishonor, her natural degeneracy. And it is as if, because of these qualities, the woman of color is unworthy of the careful analytic attention that is so painstakingly bestowed on her male counterpart” (Chow, 43, 1999).

It is argued that Fanon’s engagement with Capécia is not a damnation upon all Black women or Women of Color, but upon those that have internalized white supremacy so much, that they cannot themselves live within their color with any kind of pride nor agency that prevents them from being at the mercy of whiteness. I move to agree that internalized racism will have one making very strange and harmful choices upon one’s own body³⁵, but nor do I believe in the choices of the character of Mayotte Capécia, that is to say colorism or self-hatred. “A more appropriate and plausible critique of Fanon’s gender politics with respect to Mayotte Capécia lies ultimately in his *not* exploring her sexism, specifically her antiblack woman phobia, her intraracial gendered relations” (Denean Sharpley-Whiting, 73, 1999).

Conclusion

Fanon’s chapter titled *The Lived Experience of the Black Man* is born out of traditional phenomenology, a philosophy that arguably sets the stage for an articulation of Black subjectivity in Europe; to precisely use Fanon’s own context, a Black Caribbean man in France, forced to

³⁵ I have spoken about this in *La Sangre Llama*.

bear witness no longer being a man and instead becomes being a thing amongst other things within a space, done so through the dominant white gaze. Fanon begins his journey of this phenomena within the traditions of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, swimming through a discussion of corporeal schema towards existentialism and being-for-others. Fanon states that one can only understand what it means to be a colonized subject through this dominant gaze. To Fanon, to be racialized as Black, as dictated by coloniality, can only occur when the Black man is out of his own home territory and within the borders of countries in which white people are most visibly in control, particularly socially. I understood that for Fanon, to be living within a predominant Black nation, one understands their Blackness in a different way (I would argue that he did not make this distinguishing completely clear), but when confronted with the white gaze, Fanon states that ones being-for-others is fully experienced. Fanon tells readers that in the white world, the Black subject has difficulty locating the body schema, the first phenomenological term Fanon introduces in the aforementioned chapter.

We witness Fanon articulate how it is difficult for him to articulate his body schema within the world of whiteness. Fanon knows he can stretch out his arm to attain a cigarette, then to the matches therefore to light the cigarette and that this knowledge is implicit for him. There is a dialectic between the world and his own body. "A slow construction of my self as a body in a spatial and temporal world-such seems to be the schema" (Fanon, 91, 1952). However, Fanon demonstrates the dialectic between his body and the world through the context of the corporeal schema phenomenologists have previously conceptually established begins to deteriorate quickly within the white gaze. Fanon begins explaining this by stating that the not only is it difficult for the Man of Color to clarify his body schema, but the image that the Black subject has of himself through the white gaze is one of negation; the image one therefore has of

themselves- as a colonized subject- is an image created in the moment they view themselves through the gaze of the colonizer; racism returns the gaze to the colonized subject, thus it is a view in the third person.

The insufficient nature of the body schema demarcates where Fanon began to move away from traditional methods of phenomenology and embarked on his journey to build a varied scholarship in order to understand his own subjectivity within the dominant white gaze. I am of the opinion he maintained phenomenology as a cornerstone to his work but created a dialogue for it to evolve for Black subjectivity specifically. Fanon demonstrates the insufficient nature within body schema as a concept to support him as he found himself to be the product of the Western imagination: a culmination of horror stories that shaped him in the eyes of the child on the train. This incident on the train left Fanon understanding that his body, his skin was perceived as a curse, and thus he named and isolated for himself a historical-racial schema. The historical-racial schema is not sensory, it is, in Fanon's words and emphasis, the historicity that attacks the body in a myriad of ways and in many places, which then leads to the body schema falling away and leaving us with the epidermal racial schema.

"I was responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors. I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features. Disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other, the white man, who had no scruples about imprisoning me, I transported myself on that particular day far [sic] from myself, and gave myself up as an object" (Fanon, 92, 1952). Fanon expresses for readers that once the Black man finds himself in confrontation with the white gaze, multiple layers of established self-actualizations the individual had regarding themselves, disintegrate. The Black subject, through what I establish here as the Colonial Matrix of Power, is no longer able to participate in the dialectic between

his own body and things found in a space; coloniality dictates (in this example through the gaze and historicity informing that gaze) that the black subject has no subjectivity for it is another thing amongst things within a given space. Thus, I return to Fanon's statement that it is not inferiority that he experiences, it is not existing:

“What this means is that the lived experience of the colonized calls on phenomenology to generate a fourth conceptual framework alongside being-for-itself, being-for-others, and being-in-itself. The feeling of nonexistence proposed by Fanon points to a zone of nonbeing. Out of this zone, the racialized and colonized consciousness navigates its being-for-others, and it is upon this colonial negation that the racialized other is barred from all participation. Framed as such, the colonized black encounters something heavier than shame...Torn asunder in a zone of nonbeing, Fanon doesn't encounter his being-for-others, because his freedom (his being-for-itself) is permanently stalled in the context of colonial violence.” (Sealey, 34, 2020)

Is it a question of whether or not Fanon deploys phenomenology and its method such as bracketing correctly, delivering phenomenological account regarding Black subjectivity? Or is it that phenomenology had yet been able to have a space for contemplation upon the lives of those subjugated within coloniality to understand themselves outside of the dominant gaze

as another object amongst objects? In other words, we can perhaps ask: how can phenomenology function for Black subjects who are classed outside of the map of Human as another object within space- existing in the uninhabitable? “That is to say, in using the phenomenological method critically, we are called to be vigilant of certain unwarranted assumptions we might make about what it means to be human and about the breadth of experiences available to the condition of being human. Given that this vigilance is undermined when we become blind to the plurality of ways in which encounters with power determine the meaning of “being human,” a critical phenomenology inevitably calls for an intersectional phenomenology” (Sealey, 36, 2020).

I once again return to Fanon’s opinion that within his home territory of a Black nation, he did not have to experience his being-for-others, and he knew he was black, and he was able to discuss his blackness with others within the African diaspora- those from other islands in the Caribbean and on occasion African Americans. When he is confronted with the fearful white gaze on the train, is the moment in which he is forced to let go of all his presuppositions about 20th century racial relations outside of his country. He suddenly no longer knows the world he has entered; he described his body being returned to him, broken, and spread apart:

“It [the white world] demanded that a man behave like a man. It demanded of me that I behave like a black man—or at least like a Negro. I hailed the world, and the world amputated my enthusiasm...I arrive slowly in the world; sudden emergencies are no longer my habit. I crawl along. The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am fixed. Once Their microtomes are sharpened, the White objectively cut sections of

my reality. I have been betrayed. I sense, I see in this white gaze that it's the arrival not of a new man, but of a new type of man, a new specie. A Negro, in fact!" (Fanon, 94-95, 1952).

Fanon's arrival in France and the accompanying confrontation of the white gaze, meant his presuppositions were viscerally breaking down within him as he sat on the train and realized that he is not a man amongst men, his body schema has multiplicities beneath it that he must uncover and name. I do believe he practices bracketing, but in doing so also is able to not only articulate the essence of being Black colonial subject in Europe, but also demonstrates the necessity to push phenomenological concepts more for this category of study. Fanon's bracketing was not a choice, but in fact a necessity in order to understand his being-for-others, his inability to understand why the child was fearful and what racism was and did to his own mind.

A far more robust and critical, intersectional phenomenology is precisely what I believe is needed in Fanon's analysis when he discussed *Women of Color*. His judgements regarding the choices Caribbean Women of Color make (particularly concerning who they choose as partners or husbands) within their respective island societies is in my opinion, firmly rooted in a patriarchal perspective. An intersectional analysis is lacking in how Fanon approaches the reasons for the kinds of choices women are left to make within the confines of a system that leaves them with little to no choice for health and safety that does not require connection to a man in some capacity. The analysis of women is a moment is where Fanon, however much he seems to be able to articulate the possibilities of delinking oneself from racism, does not

apply the same pressure to the systems of patriarchy or misogynistic social dynamics. However much I may disagree with internalized racism, classism, or colorism that he cites in Capécia's work, I can still recognize the complexity of the choices made by the literary characters Fanon chose to use as a reference for the state of mind of Caribbean Women of Color.

As I stated previously, his own analysis derives from heterosexual sexual and romantic conditions in which women can only survive via in their marital status or general social connections to men, be they lighter skinned men of color or white men. This left the characters in Capécia's novel, and according to Fanon, by extension the Women of Color of the Caribbean, little to no options. Through these conflicts, I can further map out the space in which Caribbean Women of Color are silenced or erased. I contend that Fanon's methodology, in which he did not bracket his misogyny, supports patriarchal conditions for Women of Color whilst I believe what he was trying to do, was in fact, isolate and move towards eradication of internalized racism within Women of Color. Fanon does so by relying in what I believe are essentialist tropes about Women of Color and Black women. What was necessary was a vigorous analysis that began with arriving to the proverbial table of women's lives and allowing for the same kind of vulnerability he applied to Black men, be applied to the lives of the women he sought to examine. The mechanics of the kind of phenomenology that Fanon cites, are heteronormative. "Ultimately, from feminist and queer perspectives, heteronormative ontological, epistemological, and ethical commitments realize and sustain legacies of heterosexist domination. Insofar as such commitments are said to underlie phenomenological projects, the criticisms elucidate a prescriptive project at the heart of the phenomenological canon" (Burke, 163, 2020).

Chapter Eight

Caribbean Mythopoeticism

Pagent Henry observes the multiplicity of Afro-Caribbean thought throughout the region, in which he further notes the binaries that are created. He provides examples of these binaries such as spiritual versus matter, premodern versus modern, race and class, and also, poeticism and historicism. These binaries are found within the overall philosophy that emerges of the Afro-Caribbean context; however, these dichotomies create an internal problem within Afro-Caribbean discourse. The disjointed internal nature of Caribbean philosophy fits well as an analogy for the Caribbean itself; a repeating island, a region of liminality yet these are a collection of sister islands, a culture of memory repeated over and over despite temporality and language, a drum that is beaten almost to the exact same beat as the skirts respond to its call, only raised slightly differently with a single flick of the wrist.

The Guyanese writer, Wilson Harris, provides a body of work that is far more poeticism than it is historicism. Harris was a storyteller, a poet and an essayist and is framed by Henry as being foundational in Afro-Caribbean philosophy. Some of Harris' fictional works were also influenced by his reading of quantum theory, specifically Nick Herbert's 1985 publication *Quantum Reality*. In this chapter, I will examine two of Harris' texts, his engagement with quantum theory, his mythopoetic phenomenology, and masks. This also includes contextualizing Harris' work with his peers, such as Fanon as is related to the scope of this thesis.

Creole and Quantum

In Henry's essay *Wilson Harris: A Quantum Tribute* (2018), Henry reminds readers of one of the more critical components of Harris' writings, that being Harris' ability to provide both accounts of the external and internal of the world at once; this is to say, in simple terms, Harris' work was simultaneously discussing the aftermath of colonialism and coloniality whilst also allowing readers to penetrate with him the spiritual and more metaphysical aspects of such themes. Whilst perhaps Fanon was far more focused on the psychological trauma and turned towards tangible liberation movements, Harris seemingly desired for Caribbean people to turn inward towards the spiritual in order to achieve liberation. Henry observes that other writers have made either connections to Heidegger or Hegel and Harris' work, drawing connections between the being for others or conversely an existence of doubles, but furthermore the Hegelian dialectic. For Henry, none of these connections are necessary to contextualize Harris' work as philosophical, for Harris is a producer of work that is fundamentally creole. Creole as in its being an intersection of multiple influences converging at a singular point towards expression.

In the essay *Creoleness: At the crossroads of a Civilization*, Harris provides insight to his own familial and personal history. He takes his audience to British Guiana, now Guyana, and gives his readers a short tour throughout the variety of ethnical and racial backgrounds that make up his creole-ness. Harris does make it understood firstly, there are other definitions and understandings of what creole can mean, depending on who is using the term and from where they come from. He acknowledges the term that has often been referred to in this particular research, in which Creole is meant to describe the population of those of Spanish blood born

on colonial soil. However, for Harris, creole encompasses the mixture of Amerindian, European and African descent, and for this mixture of impure blood, Harris' childhood was riddled with the term being hurled at him as a pejorative. Through his creole-ness, he understood there was a power differential between himself and others, and thus he began to experience the internalization of being a pariah of sorts. "The tragedy was in reinforcing a fixation with protest, a suppression of profoundest creativity to throw bridges across chasms...for without complex revisionary bridges between art and science conscience is paralyzed by dogma..." (Harris, 228, 1999). For Harris, the internalized suppression of coloniality prevented a flowing imagination amongst people. As I understand it, Harris describes somewhat of a self-deprecating self-defeating circle.

Harris describes this power dynamic, which arguably is a level within coloniality amongst his countrymen, as mafia. This mafia is not related to the popular cinematic or literary notions of Italian gangsters (or their American counterparts), Harris utilizes the term in order to create a point of departure for discussing social and intra-familial dynamics that maintain a sense of authoritarianism; these dynamics inevitably move their way through individuals and into their artistic productions.

"Although one may argue that fashions in the arts may incline toward rebellious extremes, nevertheless they are underpinned, it seems to me, by the logic of consensus or conditioned, short-term responses to reality in consumer societies, the logic of materialism; a logic that sustains, however unwittingly, an invariant code or fate.

The body politic grafts into itself considerable skills in the sophisticated manipulation of bias and prejudice, even within those who protest against the rule of things. Such protest is fated to be conditioned by the very thing it targets” (Harris, 228, 1999).

Harris’ definition and use of creole is not unfamiliar to me; however, it can be difficult to forecast his next steps with the term and the dynamic. The multiplicity of identity, race and culture found within his version of creole is not difficult to connect with the works of Latina feminist philosophers. As noted, Ortega, Anzaldúa and Moraga all discuss the complexities of post-colonial identities, race, class, and gender throughout their works. Harris utilizes an allegorical approach, using the example of the Haitian deity Legba, and how Legba himself is a product of creolization in Haiti. Born from Africa and its traditional and conservative Africanness in the New World, Legba, Harris states, is also born “to confused legacies of slave-owning French landlords...with revolutionary, counterrevolutionary politics in France and the rise of Napoleonic dictatorship” (Harris, 232, 1999). It appears to me that through this retelling and contextualization of Legba within the framework of creole and imagination (tradition) there is something to be understood about the appropriation of culture so that it may move in a certain direction (a sort of hermeneutic process carried out by the enslaved. This also reminds me of Saidiya Hartman’s work in *Scenes of Subjection*, in which she introduces redress. I offer the citation of this longer passage from Hartman in order to provide the lens in which I engage with Harris’ work when she says “of concern here [Memory and History] are the ways memory acts in the service of redress rather than an inventory of memory...these traces of memory function in a manner akin to a phantom limb, in that what is felt is no longer there. It is a sentient recollection of connectedness experienced at the site of rupture, where

the very consciousness of disconnectedness acts as a mode of testimony and memory...”
(Hartman, 73-74, 1997).

Harris does not believe in scientific re-appropriations of the past, for he believes that makes said past and its practices passive. The past for Harris, as I understand it, is visceral and its own entity. Subsequently, a clinical appropriation of the past or tradition is a means to exploiting its ability for transformative possibilities. I use the term clinical in order to draw comparisons to Fanons use of psychoanalysis within in own philosophy. Be that was it may, Harris tells readers, we as people do in fact need some kind of tool, he says narrative, to help us in navigation and “brings home to us in genuine stages of creativity [sic] the simultaneity of the past, the present, and the future in the unfinished genesis of the imagination” (Harris, 233, 1999).

Creole is about multiplicity, and in my search for some kind of commonality between Afro-Caribbean and Latina feminist phenomenology, I did find the reoccurrence of multi-layered meanings and experiences that stem from the individual into the familial into the social sphere of creativity and also subjugation. However, Harris’ work begins to take a very distinct turn from his Latina feminist counter parts as he searches through the complexities of science to make sense of things, or at the very least, provide him with the basis for sense making. For Anzaldúa, an appropriation of mestiza was useful in creating a new state of consciousness for those Latinas living in or on either side of the border and borderlands. For Harris, he seeks to “address an involuntary ground of association which is native to the arts of humanity” (Harris, 235, 1997). Harris searches for *something* that also allows the subject to understand themselves in the New World, but instead of classical re-appropriation, he focuses on gifts he calls

extra human, gifts of which are consisting of quantum oceans, landscapes, riverscapes “which imply minuscule linkages between being and nonbeing, psyche and pebble or leaf or wood...” (Harris, 235, 1999).

The creolization of Legba, stands to represent a big bang of culture and tradition found within the whole of the New World. This creolization, this mixture that has created specific subjectivities and whole cultures, and as Harris notes, complex linkages. As I interpret Harris’ words, they call me to consider the return to tradition, but not in a manner that is undertaken superficially and with a disregard for its actual potential. As noted in *La Sangre Llama*, the return to spirituality and tradition allows for new possibilities in navigating a cruel modern world.

The phantom limb that Hartman speaks of is what was lost during the rupture of coloniality; the re-membering can be done through what Harris describes as throwing a bridge across these worlds. Worlds created to meet the all-consuming demands of materiality, destruction and consumerism that have used people as chattel and created ghosts out of others, and also an unreal world entombed. This is where Harris leads his readers to the act of quantum thinking, as demonstrated by saying “The quantum imagination, in my view, may be curiously visualized as a revisionary epic which seeks to reclaim extra human faculties in incandescent equations between being and nonbeing. The subtle, complex rhythms of nonbeing, the intricate fibre and dimensionalities of space, have been so blocked away that living landscapes become theaters of brute conquest, media to be exploited and manipulated” (Harris, 179, 1999).

Mythopoetic Phenomenology and Quantum Theory

Pagent Henry focuses upon the quantum mechanical reading of consciousness that Harris employs. Henry does this whilst also noting how other authors have compared Harris' approach to consciousness to either Heidegger or Hegel. Henry contests that neither Hegel nor Heidegger are necessary in order to understand Harris' work for "...Harris's philosophical approach to consciousness is indeed phenomenological. However, it is not the conceptual phenomenology of Heidegger or Hegel. Rather it is an imaginistic, mythopoetic phenomenology in which Harris's dazzling ability with images takes precedence over conceptual representations of the moment of consciousness..." (Henry, 92, 2002).

There is also a connection between Harris' work and what is called the four-world model of existence, which has its roots in traditional African religions. This is not to be confused with any geopolitical framing of a fourth-world country, or Guillermo Gómez-Peña's concept of a fourth-world. Gómez-Peña's definition of the fourth-world describes "a conceptual place where the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas meet with the deterritorialized peoples, the immigrants, and the exiles" (Gómez-Peña, 6, 1996). The fourth-world model in Harrisian terms posits there is a fourth-world of consciousness, that which is distinguished from the physical natural world, the social world made of human interaction, and the internal world of the human ego (self-reflexivity). The fourth-world, the spiritual, is the foundation of the former three, thus the more important; for Harris, consciousness has a means of interacting with the worlds of nature, society, and the self. As Harris writes in his essay about the painter Aubrey Williams and his paintings inspired by Timehri markings on rocks found in Guyana. A play on an Amerindian word, regarding Timehri Harris pushes his readers to consider the relationship amongst time, how play on language between Indigenous and Amerindian and the

materials of nature themselves. "Timehri rock therefore occupies space as a garment in nature, or creation, upon living time. The mark of the hand, therefore, the hand of God upon rock, is a confirmation of our intercourse with living time. The mark is mysterious. It hints at a language or text that existed before human discourse. Yet it engages with human discourse to enrich the language of the imagination...Or we may deepen the imagery to imply the genesis of carving, carven wood that becomes a garment upon naked consciousness, living consciousness, even as Timehri rock is a garment upon living time" (Harris, 213, 2013).

From the former passage, one can understand how Pagent observes that Harris discomfort in focusing upon the passive actions of forces that shape consciousness or their role in the production of knowledge. It is from here, one can begin to contextualize quantum theory with Harris' work. "Quantum mechanics allows the calculation of properties and behavior of physical systems. It is typically applied to microscopic systems: molecules, atoms and sub-atomic particles" (Quantum. Wikipedia, n/a, 2022). Within the theory of quantum, properties are not defined until particles interact with one another as part of the physical universe. If we return to the various worlds, namely nature, society and self, the manner in which Harris describes these worlds is done through a quantum reading. If the laws in quantum mean that there is no certainty, only predictably, then I can understand to an extent the quantum mechanics of Harris' ideas of consciousness. That is to say, a prominent feature of quantum mechanics is there is no certainty or hard outcome out of an experiment, there are only probabilities of what will occur, or what the answer will be. The more I observe or attempt to measure an object, the more it will change. However, the more observe within close proximity, the better of an understanding I will have, even if fundamentally, the answer is it still a probability, and there is more than one answer or outcome.

In her book *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Sara Ahmed notes “things are shaped by their proximity to other things, whereby this proximity itself is inherited in the sense that it is the condition of our arrival into the world” (Ahmed, 124, 2006). As such, the worlds of nature, self and society are treated by Harris as individual quantum levels, each with their own laws and yet are connected through consciousness. Despite these connections, there are parts of them that are hidden on other specific levels but can be observed and seen, that is to say, what one level observes as a rose it is just a rose, but it is also a particle³⁶. Henry notes that Harris uses allegory and imagery as a means of translating these ideas, that he approaches consciousness through a very careful threading together of the archetypal traces and images of itself that consciousness leaves behind as it penetrates or temporarily interrupts the accustomed order of life on other quantum planes. His work is filled with detailed portrayals of such eruptions of consciousness on the quantum planes of ego, society, and nature. Harris himself discusses symbolizations and how they are re-appropriated (as discussed earlier) and for Harris they are not just a mere coincidence of any kind, but one of many outcomes a people (culture, social group) produce as a result of their wider relationship within consciousness. This passage from *Creoleness: At the crossroads of a Civilization* helps me to understand quantum through Harris’ view better when he says:

“That involuntary ground reaches subconsciously, unconsciously, through the humanization of nature that we set up into ruling models in our places of learning and in the humani-

³⁶ Henry’s example states that a rose is a rose is a rose in the ego level. However, from the perspective of the ego, the rose is a particle is a wave. He further states that starting from the ego, we see a table, but from the quantum perspective the table becomes a tree which then becomes a forest. The forest is not seen from the perspective of consciousness but is still connected to what we do see in the consciousness level.

ties, the universities, reaches through such models into nature(s) which, I repeat, are extra human even as they (such natures) bear on humankind, even as they bring gifts to humankind. Such gifts are akin to quantum fire of soul (anima mundi), quantum oceans, quantum landscapes, quantum riverscapes, which imply minuscule linkages between being and nonbeing, psyche and pebble or leaf or wood or cloud or tide or rock” (Harris, 179, 1999).

How might this kind of writing and image production within quantum become phenomenological? I turn to Henry’s analysis of Harris’ work to fully understand how Harris aims to mend the fractures and ruptures, the phantom limbs taken as a result of coloniality, through quantum connections. These are the connections that are denied a meaningful engagement in everyday realism. Establishing said meaningful engagement, for Harris, is done so through the archetypal life and imagery. This is why Harris utilizes poetics. I believe that the mixture of prose, poetry and fiction provide a space for Harris to go beyond the ordinary, or maybe the mundane of the everyday. Guillermo Juan Para, in his essay *Wilson Harris and Nowhere Poetics*, delivers an extension argument regarding the use of poetics in Harris’ work in the following passage: “Harris imbues that multiple English-a mestizo English if you will- with abrupt excursions into narratives that seem to venture far afield...It is these narrative excursions that make up the play [of his work] and it is their disruptions that constitute the epic quality of the book. Harris also asks his readers to let go of any hope for a secure, continuous narrative. In return, he offers us the pleasures of exile and invisibility, the ‘counter-intuitive’ revelations that poetry has always offered in the flash of song’s instantaneous awareness” (Parra, 275, 2004). I believe that Harris’ use of poetics allows for him to be able to write his narratives in

such a way that for him provides an ability for his characters and reader, and by extensions artists he aims to inspire, to think and see beyond this earthly world.

Firstly, Harris' phenomenology is not a traditional form of the philosophy. As with the other philosophers and writers analyzed within this thesis, Harris takes on phenomenology and reshapes many aspects of it. "If by phenomenology we mean a reflective description of the activities of consciousness following the bracketing of the natural attitude by some ego displacing technique, then Harris's method can be described as phenomenological. It reflects on consciousness and employs two techniques for bracketing the natural attitude of the everyday ego. The first is what I shall call a de-intentionalized reduction; and the second is the technique of quantum reading or reading creative images from the mythopoetic perspective of consciousness" (Henry, 106, 2013). De-intentionalized reduction is what Pagent states is his way of conceptualizing Harris' conversion of trauma or voids into gateways for further awareness. As a practice, I understand that one can apply mindfulness exercises along with their artistic production. For example, meditation and active connection with nature would be activities that an artist does as part of their artistic production of visual or literary works.

Harris' work is a culmination of quantum readings of consciousness and Western phenomenology. What is required of readers of Harris's work is a deep discursive engagement with all that ties our world together (the ego, society, and nature). Beginning with the concept of de-intentionalized reduction, this is meant to signify how Harris utilizes voids, traumas, and fissures (de-intentionalized states) that become gateways. "In other words, the digesting of voids that immobilize ego genesis becomes a methodological device when they are conceptualized as gateways" (Henry, 106, 2013). My understanding is that Henry sees the voids and

traumas as de-intentionalized states because these experiences prevent a development of the ego, to which I am interpreting as the ego understood in phenomenology. When these voids are conceptualized as gateways, they can become a means of transformation and growth. Further in Henry's interpretation, as one engages with these gateways or portals, it becomes necessary to change one's attitude toward the inherited world of the ego, by which one should change their perspective. Although it is not phenomenological bracketing, the action required to shift perspective is similar, and Henry suggests a bracketing of the ego in order to use the de-intentionalized states as a means of personal transformation.

Henry explains for readers what he has termed de-intentionalized states by moving through what I interpret to be the effect of trauma on the subject, which in this case is specifically the Afro-Caribbean subject. The self builds walls for protection or understanding of a phenomena which is pre-reflective, but it is also dependent upon the social stimuli. In other words, the ego has inherited a structure that allows it to carry out actions, which is needed in order to function in the everyday. However, if this enclosure is far too difficult, then the ego can cut itself off to other spiritual, perhaps even transcendental facets of life (as I interpret Henry's meaning). This closing then becomes what I translate to be a disassociation, like Fanon's zone of non-being. Harris calls this straightjacketing or claustrophobic state, regardless of name, the void tricks the mind into thinking that it is moving through the world in a healthy manner. This void or disassociation is what I connect to perhaps internalized oppression, in which it can also lead to nonrecognition to maintain the illusion of unity or self-sufficiency. This is an existence of inauthenticity. Henry states there are three reasons for this: "first, the ego's refusal to recognize the resistance of consciousness; second, the one-sidedness that these self-enclosures require; and third, the ego's blindness to what its illusions must exclude...These

splits can result in situations of internal nonrecognition, banishment, or protracted struggle to maintain the illusion of unity..." (Henry, 98, 2012).

The void is therefore an inauthentic state of being, but as stated earlier the voids are also the result of social conditions. Harris then moves towards what happens when the ego is "shaken out of its spiritual ignorance" (Henry, 98, 2012). Although Henry nor Harris state exactly how the ego is shaken, but the ego no longer is compliant in its own subjugation, it no longer decides to be asleep.

It is here where we can understand de-intentionalized states of being. "Conscious disturbs the ego by voiding or de-intentionalizing an area of its self-activity, preventing it from completing its pre-reflective goal of closure. The ego now experiences itself as partially grounded, blocked, and hence unable to be. It is now in the Harrisian void or abyss. The conception of a de-intentionalized state is the best philosophical translation I can make of Harris's void. It can be viewed as a state in which the ego's intentional coding has been superseded by consciousness thus making prereflective activity extremely difficult" (Henry, 99, 2012).

As one is moving through these gateways into different worlds, one must change their attitude of their inherited world, according to Henry, the ego specifically. This is, in turn, a kind of bracketing similar to that undertaken by phenomenologists, by which a suspension of the previous understandings must be cast aside in order to move through the gateway. Henry notes this kind of "bracketing" the ego, similar to how phenomenologists suspend certain assumptions, one can proceed with describing the activities of consciousness. Consciousness, for Henry as I understand it, means the subjective experience or awareness that individuals

have of themselves and the world around them. In my understanding, these other reductions arrive at destinations, and are not useful as gateways in order to travel through worlds, which is what is required for Harris.

Regarding the quantum reading of creative images, “in quantum readings, we make or establish connections between planes of existence or between binary opposites on the same planes, that are suppressed by the everyday attitude” (Henry, 107, 2013). Within consciousness and ego, the creative images carry codes and meanings, and the textuality of both consciousness and ego are found within these images. There are ruptured or obscured threads between the mythopoetic ego and creative images. Mythopoetic as in mythmaking, what cultural anthropologists regard as what humans used to do to ascribe meaning to an event. Instead of reading the event through a pragmatic lens, humans often thought of events as the actions as the consequence of some kind of higher power or being. In my understanding, the creative images that are fashioned may stand alone and apart from one another, but they are meant to be joined and relay to one another and the person a new ability to understand or perhaps even view the world. Therefore, beginning with consciousness, a quantum reading is able to tether together the broken or obscured threads or find new ones between creative images.

Harris creates new characters or connections from mixture of perhaps an intellectual and creative Big Bang. This is central to what Henry calls Harrisian phenomenology: “...cross cultural connections thrown up by a different mythopoetic logic of consciousness, which is connecting these images in ways that are different from those made by the ego. This is the logic that

counters the logic of the ego and helps the Harrisian phenomenologist, in conjunction with the de-intentionalized reduction, to bracket the everyday world” (Henry, 107, 2013).

When discussing Harrisian phenomenology and the role of the artist, I begin to understand how I can utilize these methods for myself. If the Caribbean artist is always encountering the aftermath of coloniality, the phantom limbs from rupture as Hartman calls it, are in Harrisian terms voids in the consciousness. These voids also are sites for artists to explore. Therefore, as I understand it, Harrisian artists are to break apart the very binds that tether the ego to these traumas by a voided consciousness. If I am to understand the role of the artist, then I would venture to say there is a call to return to what can be described also as Native metaphysics. “Indigenous decolonization is structural, psychological, ethical, but also metaphysical. In this sense, liberation relies on a transformed experience and comprehension of oneself in relation to a greater reality” (Avalos, 82, 2021). The unsettling of the remnants of settler colonialism must lead to a different kind of relationship on had with nature, society, and consciousness. The goal is to change how one engages with their world(s) but not in a manner of political or social vanity. The change, the new structures begin within and then extend outward.

It is with this concept of Harrisian phenomenology or the Harrisian artist that I can understand better how his work tends to my own needs and search for articulating a framework for Afro-Indigenous femme phenomenology, or even at most, understanding it completely. There is a void, I exist within that void, and the void is the sum of ruptures and tears in time and place and instead replaced with race, gender, and their roles. This is a sanitized phrasing, however,

as I move through Harris' work, I remain on the precipice of understanding its relation to my own.

Conclusion

Harris' literary style mixes a poetic delivery of existential, racial dread and questioning of the postcolonial, Caribbean subject. Harris also exists within a vector space of cultural and racial liminality, South American, West Indian, Caribbean, Latin America, creole living next door to criollo, etc. The poetic delivery allows for Harris to creatively explore the complex relationships between the layers of multiplicity that he experiences due to being a postcolonial Caribbean and Latin American subject, but also in his trying to connect nature, society, and consciousness. His work and methodology remind me, not of his Afro-Caribbean literary contemporaries, but of the Afro-Caribbean woman visual artists in recent times who touch upon the body, memory, and Afro-syncretic spirituality as explorative projects in mending the spirit, a spirit who is encountering the aftershock of coloniality through artistic means of expression. I make this connection because Harris promoted the kinds of actions and ways of thinking focus upon the spiritual and sensual; instead of centering the kind of work that depends on the nation state to make a space for change for the people, Harris asks us to reach back and practice a way of thinking creatively, outside of our normal daily preoccupations.

Harris' notion of voids, this kind of state of existence when one is living in a daily reverberation of coloniality, resonates with me as a theorist and artist. "We've ignored the mythopoetic ways of treating our voids whether their origins were in acts of consciousness or of colonizers. Instead, we followed the paths of consolidation, resistance, and compensatory action. These are inauthentic moves, which can only result in the premature exhaustion of creativity"

(Henry, 108, 2013). Instead of getting lost in the daily grind of existence, the loss of joy or ability to heal under capitalism and its exhaustion, we should move towards our internal processes and find the path towards connection with the world. What Harris wants is for individuals to live authentically, to not be subject to its own silencing or capture.

If racism captures the spirit of the Caribbean subject, ruptures its capacity to self-love and self-articulate and even furthermore, its sense of being, the person is not able to live a full life. This much is evident, and Harris wishes for us to go deep within our consciousness and find methods for healing that do not rely on what has already proven to provide not a singular moment of solace. For myself, I can view this hope of Harris to guide me far from the rampant consumerist, capitalistic nature of U.S. culture, that informs me that working myself to death within debt will actually provide me with the sensation of freedom and liberty for me and for all, that items and status and luxury are the routes to happiness as I do my part to maintain the economy. Instead of struggling to surpass the goalposts that racism, sexism, and other systems that create the matrix of domination, the matrix that has us subjected to existing in that void, we can use the void to re-establish relationships. Firstly, with ourselves on an individual level, but also how we relate to other external factors that can in fact have us moving towards an authentic way of being.

Harris' use of quantum and phenomenology could arguably be more difficult to decipher as a concrete methodology, since quantum suggests that the reading or interrogation of something will change under the very same interrogation; we can never fully know the outcome or the data that we wish to collect. However, is phenomenology not in it of itself, quantum in a way? If we do not what is at the end of a phenomenological reading, and we are not able to

reasonably predict what will be the end result, and phenomenology as I see it, provides an ever-expansive space for analysis.

Chapter Nine

The Tempest: An Interlude

The opening scene of *The Tempest* encompasses a ship caught in a storm off the coast of an unnamed island. The magician who rules over this island is Prospero and his daughter Miranda. As the play progresses, we learn that Prospero was banished from his kingdom (Milan), but that in his exile upon the island, he has been able to dominate the spirit Ariel, and the beast Caliban, the only characters that are native to the island. There are multiple male characters in the play including sailors, lords, and butlers whose presence are integral to the progression to the narrative, particularly that of Ferdinand, whom Miranda finds and both characters fall in love. There is also the absent yet significant character of Sycorax, the mother of Caliban. Prospero's mission is to maintain dominion over the island, including his daughter, the natives and, subsequently, the men who have been shipwrecked- but in the end he primarily wishes to be in his kingdom with his title of Duke of Milan. The plot of *The Tempest* is not what I wish to focus upon, nevertheless the interpretive potentials of the main characters. Whilst a post-colonial and feminist analysis of *The Tempest* is not novel, Pagent Henry's *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (2003), Roberto Fernández Retamar's *Caliban and Other Essays* (1989), and Aime Cesaire's play *Une Tempête* (1969), a reworking of the original play through a post-colonial lens. Retamar notes that the first (supposed) writer to make the connection between those from the Caribbean and Caliban was the poet George Lamming from Barbados in 1960 (Retamar, 26, 1989). Some examples of the feminist literature include *Caliban's Daughter: The Tempest and the Teapot* (1991) by Michelle Cliff, *Caliban versus Miranda: Race and Gender Conflicts in Postcolonial Rewritings of The Tempest* (2002) by Jyotsna G. Singh and Irene Lara's *Beyond Caliban's Curses: The Decolonial Feminist Literacy of Sycorax* (2007).

It is estimated that Shakespeare wrote the play around 1622, and it was first published in 1623. The Elizabethan Era was both an era for the promotion of the arts and culture in England, but also when British colonialism was at its inception. The characters are archetypal in the ways that elucidate the ability for a post-colonial reading and deconstruction of the colonial subject through the literature. Prospero as colonizer, Miranda as an incomplete form of human, and Caliban as the subhuman. There is also what Wynter calls classarchy, through which readers can isolate the various levels of either respectability such as Ariel, the other native who is an air spirit that does Prospero's bidding. Other characters include the sailors, drunk and of lower standing to some capacity (within Prospero's construction) and finally, there is the silent but ever present Sycorax. The Algerian woman who was banished from her lands (for reasons never stated) and who then gave birth to Caliban. With these characters, there is ample space for deconstruction of the emergent white supremacist thought that would be the foundation for the colonial project.

Sycorax has been a specific character that Black and Indigenous feminist scholars have focused upon regarding the way "The Other" woman voice is silenced, the native does not have the ability to speak, thus narrate for herself with autonomy. Whilst Sycorax is not a character that is seen nor heard, within the play, she is nonetheless an antagonist, with her backstory being told through the lens of the colonizing Prospero. Paget Henry notes that for Wynter, through her development of black feminism, "...it [Black and Indigenous readings of Sycorax] is a discourse that attempts to vocalize the silences and erasures sexual secondarization imposed on black women in addition to their negrification and proletarianization." (Henry, 176, 2011)

Locating Caliban in the Hispanic Caribbean and its Philosophy

Whilst Caribbean philosophy, particularly that of West Indian in cultural origin, utilizes *The Tempest* in earnest, there maintains an uncertainty about the ability to locate Caliban within the Hispanic Caribbean. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, in his essay *Searching for Caliban In The Hispanic Caribbean* (2004) aims to accomplish this very task; by using the Hispanic Caribbean as a heuristic in a similar manner Yolanda Martinez San-Miguel undertakes in her essay *Spanish Caribbean: A Heuristic for Colonial Caribbean Studies* (2016). Maldonado-Torres analyzes the cultural and racial dynamics of the Caribbean by isolating groups, accomplished most clearly through linguistics, for example Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone. After this initial categorization, he notes the internal questions about belonging and identity that become apparent within post-colonial discourses in the region.

What proves useful in employing Martinez-San Miguel's essay alongside Maldonado-Torres', lies in how she is specific with utilizing the Hispanic Caribbean as a heuristic. Martinez-San Miguel's states that the "Spanish [Hispanic] Caribbean was represented as a distinct geopolitical, historical, and cultural region in the narratives of colonial functionaries. [sic] Therefore, in colonial Caribbean studies, the notion of the Spanish Caribbean does not function as such in texts produced before the seventeenth century" (Martinez-San Miguel, 70, 2016). Considering this absence, the reasons Caliban does not appear as clearly in Hispanic Caribbean post-colonial studies to the same degree as it does in the rest of the West Indies can be partially understood. Arguably, another clearer reason can be perhaps that Shakespeare being British means that *The Tempest* and other British literary works are far more present because of British colonialism and the lingering remnants found throughout the Anglophone Caribbean. Whilst Paget Henry does acknowledge philosophy from the Hispanic Caribbean, along with

Dutch Caribbean perspectives, are absent in *Caliban's Reason*, he states the reason is not an exclusion based in the legitimacy of the material, but in his own "linguistic limitations and the patterns of cultural balkanization" (Henry, 274, 2006), that he believes to exist within the region. However rich and diverse the multiple cultures that inhabit the region, a collation of these experiences would benefit the philosophy produced between neighbors. In the spirit of *The Repeating Island*, Benitez-Rojas' words create the catalyst to move through Caribbean knowledge and cultural production:

"To experience this exploration has been instructive as well as surprising to me, since within the sociocultural fluidity that the Caribbean archipelago presents, within its historiographic turbulence and its ethnological and linguistic clamor, within its generalized instability of vertigo and hurricane, one can sense the features of an island that 'repeats' itself, unfolding and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and lands of the earth, while at the same time it inspires multidisciplinary maps of unexpected designs...where every repetition is a practice that necessarily entails a difference and a step toward nothingness...however, in the midst of this irreversible change, Nature can produce a figure as complex, as highly organized and as intense as the one that the human eye catches when it sees a quivering hummingbird drinking from a flower" (Benítez-Rojo, 3, 1992).

Post-Independence from European countries culminated in different outcomes for white and Black populations across the region. Although white Criollos of the Hispanic Caribbean were still in part able to identify with Spain, perhaps more so with other countries in Latin America, the same dynamic of identifying was not occurring within the consciousness of the Black populations of the islands, according to Maldonado-Torres. As he states, "Their [Black Caribbean people] blackness served as a marker of exclusion from the French and from Latin American

nations” (Maldonado-Torres, 113, 2004). In other words, having been forcibly removed from their lands, split from their cultures and communities, and although having created new identity amongst themselves, there would always be the mark of The Other placed upon Afro-Caribbean people. Maldonado-Torres does suggest expanding an identification with Caliban as a philosophical project to those of the Hispanic Caribbean is argued as an insurmountable task since the Black population is not, in his words, systemically present when compared to the Anglo or Francophone Caribbean. However, this very point allows for scholars to contextualize the political and racial landscape of the Hispanic Caribbean thoroughly in order to realize Caliban’s presence, despite the erasure that Maldonado-Torres speaks of. The need for legitimacy through the state is often a necessary one, however, legitimacy or not, there is still sufficient ability for an identification with Caliban. Despite the Hispanic Caribbean having populations of Black people be represented on a smaller scale, the histories, and the populations themselves serve as evidence that quantity does not negate ability.

Colonialism’s modus operandi, enacted upon the psyche of enslaved Africans, is precisely what makes *The Tempest* and the character of Caliban rich for allegorical use amongst post-colonial scholars. “The memory of slavery and servitude under Prospero created challenges to this posture. The memory of slavery and the very fact of having been brought to a new place where they were taught the language of Prospero, made Caliban being interested first and foremost in the question of identity, memory, the creation and recreation of meaning, and the projection of alternatives for the future” (Maldonado-Torres, 119, 2004). Settler colonialism and chattel slavery, the theft of both land, bodies, culture and language and the continued denial of legitimacy and autonomy by the state, provide us with sufficient evidence that Caliban does indeed exist within Puerto Rico.

The Puerto Rican Caliban

Maldonado-Torres uses Puerto Rico and the country's ongoing debate regarding statehood, independence, or the current status as territory (colony) as an example concerning how to continually search for Caliban within the Hispanic Caribbean. With this analysis he provides, a Puerto Rican version of Caliban is also found in North America through migration and the creation of a Puerto Rican diaspora. A Puerto Rican Caliban arises from a differing schools of philosophical tradition compared to their West Indian counterparts, yet both canons had to battle for legitimacy amidst Euro-centricity.

Whilst the metric that Martínez-San Miguel uses are the colonial temporalities of the region, in other words, dates that apply to independence movements pertaining to the different islands, I find it relevant to begin an analysis on Puerto Rico which focuses on the early nineteenth century governance of the island. The Decree of Graces in 1815 which as a reminder, served to give land to individuals from Spain, who also brought servants and slaves to the island as property. In this analysis provided in *El país de cuatro pisos*, Gonzalez interprets the decree as a technology of further conquest and whitening of the island, to better reflect and enforce a European nation state criollo identity, writer Jay Kinsbruner in the book *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (1996) does not. While Kinsbruner does not explicitly state his opinion on the decree, he does note racism against free people of color and slaves was maintained by the new white immigrants from Spain. Regardless, the influx of white immigrants to the island changed the racial landscape amongst the Black and Indigenous people. Thus, a new typology of racial classification begins on an island where the society is situating itself firmly within the dynamic of coloniality.

I argue that Caliban is present on the island, and Prospero has been on the sidelines. This new influx of white Spaniards to the island thus places Prospero on the island along with Caliban, and thus the dynamic of oppressor and oppressed becomes cemented.

“The Spanish Caribbean distinguishes itself very clearly from the Anglo-, French, and Dutch Caribbean in another aspect: the role the nineteenth-century played in the historicopolitical experiences and symbolical representations of the region” (Martinez-San Miguel, 71, 2016). Multiple social explosions were occurring around Puerto Rico: there was *The Haitian Revolution* in 1804 and the abolition of slavery in the French colonies in 1848, the Anglo-Caribbean saw the commencement of the end of the slave trade in 1807, and the British abolition of slavery in 1834 and 1863 for the Dutch Caribbean. As such, after these successive instances of abolition in the region, slavery was no longer primary system of labor, leading to indentured Asians (both South and East) being imported and dispersed throughout the West Indies (primarily throughout the Anglo-Caribbean) which deepened the racial and cultural complexity of the region and as Martinez-San Miguel states “the articulation of creole and indigenous discourses” (Martinez-San Miguel, 71, 2016). Equally important to note is the series of Bolivarian wars for Independence occurring across South America, in which the Spanish crown was increasingly losing its grip on its colonies; Spanish colonialism was nearing its end. However, despite the loosening grip of the Spanish crown on its territories, powerful and established families and the social and racial order of the society was still intact.

An appointed governor of Puerto Rico at a point in time within these pivotal shifts was Joan Prim y Prats. As acting captain-general (governor) of the island, he created the most infamous Decree against the African race in 1848, only one year after he was delegated to office. Bando

Contra La Raza Negra [Decree Against the African Race] was a repressive and punitive decree that made no distinction between free Africans, People of Color, and slaves. “Upon learning of the destructive activities of ex-slaves recently liberated by the French in Martinique and Guadeloupe and considering the ‘ferocious stupidity of the African race,’ Governor Prim determined to lessen the possibility of similar uprisings in Puerto Rico. All crimes committed by people of the African race, be they free or slave, would hence forth be judged by a military court” (Krinnsbruner, 42, 1996). This is to say, Prim y Prats attempted to wholly change and inscript a new set of rules and ideas about race into the pre-established slave codes of Puerto Rico, another layer in the colonial condition of Puerto Rican people of color. Whilst coloniality evolves on the island, it does not ever cease to exist.

50 years after Prim y Prats was removed from his position, the succeeding wave of colonialism began with accumulation of the island by the United States after the Spanish American War; this was in effect a new and different experience of coloniality. As writer Miguel Machado in his article titled *The Moral Argument for an Independent Puerto Rico* (2020) states, “Puerto Rico would not achieve some semblance of autonomy until 1897, when Spain recognized the colony’s right to self-government in a “Spanish Charter of Autonomy” (Machado, n/a, 2020). However, this autonomy would be short-lived: months later, the United States claimed ownership of the island as a spoil of the Spanish-American War.

If Puerto Rico’s timeline of coloniality, from initial conquer to the end of the Spanish-American War, was insufficient to justify a use of Caliban to discuss the condition of Black and Indigenous peoples, then certainly the change in masters, from Spanish to American, would function. The justification lies in the growing imperial pursuits of the United States at the end of

the 19th century in the Caribbean and Asia. If the Indigenous people were practically exterminated, left with little land, language and custom, and the same for the Africans brought to the island as slaves; both groups now found themselves in throes of a second sense of colonization and a new language of domination to learn. This of course occurred with the influx of powerful and land-owning Spaniards transplanted to the island. If anything, Black and Indigenous people of Puerto Rico have constantly experienced subjugation within the colonial condition of the island.

If Maldonado-Torres' proposition that the Black people of the Hispanic Caribbean are not entirely represented, then a potential question could be is it possible to find Caliban within the paradigms of the West Indian and Calibanesque framework within the Hispanic Caribbean. Since Caliban is not a device that extends itself to the white criollos or white elite of the Caribbean overall, then how does one apply this thought to islands in which the Black and Indigenous people are not allowed to be present?

The United States' control has had adverse effects on the ways in which Puerto Ricans identify with regards to the United States as a governing body and this extends to how Puerto Ricans identify to themselves. This difficulty in self-recognition occurs despite retaining many of the original social dynamics established before the takeover. For example, racially categorizing through phenotype and shades versus any resemblance to one drop rule or blood quantum as is standard practice in the United States. The refusal to make English language the primary language of local governments and within the society itself. However, there are moments such as the creation of contingent 'citizenship', but the caveat is citizenship with limited rights and yet still subject to military drafts.

Operation Bootstrap, a series of projects and policies began in May 1947, which altered the economic landscape from agriculture to industrial as “...it emphasized industrialization as the development strategy most likely to create jobs as quickly and effectively as was needed to have significant impact on peoples’ economic conditions. As part of this strategy, [Operation Bootstrap] advocated shifting toward an export-based economy in which the bulk of the island’s production was aimed at the American market instead of the comparatively tiny local market” (Ordover, n/a, 2014). Operation Bootstrap not only intertwined Puerto Rico’s economy and options within the United States’ own economic policies and landscape, it also effectively cut off Puerto Rico’s ability to create relationships with its neighbors on its own accord.

The final project within Operation Bootstrap I wish to mention is the forced sterilization of one third of Puerto Rican women, which occurred between 1930-1970. The sterilization project, designed by the Eugenics Board (created and implemented by the United States government) “...was intended to ‘catalyze economic growth,’ and respond to ‘depression-era unemployment.’ Both U.S. government funds and contributions from private individuals supported the initiative” (Krase, n/a, 2014). Although Caliban was to be the character in which this historical outline of Puerto Rican subjection under two colonial masters is understood, the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women is part of what begins the connection to Sycorax, Caliban’s mother, to Afro-Indigenous femmes on the island. Although Sycorax is Caliban’s mother, as an audience we are unable to experience how she mothered. That is not to say within the universe of *The Tempest*, under Prospero’s erasure, she did not have the ability or a significant amount of time to be a mother, but as readers, we are not given a history of what she was like as a mother. It is here where I deem Sycorax to be un-mothered, having the opportunity

taken from her. Sycorax is denied consent at every turn in the story that is told to us about her, therefore I do not believe it is out of the ordinary to consider her being un-mothered to have been done against her will in some way, too.

Throughout this project, women in Puerto Rico were offered what was supposedly 'birth control' but were uninformed that tubal ligation was a procedure with permanence. Since this project was advertised as an offering, many would come seeking assistance but instead "facilities reported refusing admittance to women with who had given birth two or more times if they did not 'consent' to *la operación* [hysterectomy]" (Ordover, n/a, 2014). Additionally, Puerto Rican women were used as test subjects for birth control pills since this kind of medical testing was not permissible within the continental United States at the time. Puerto Rican women are documented as receiving large doses of this medicine, its contemporary form being regarded as what we understand to be "The Pill". Since the women were ingesting more than what is now considered to be sufficient, the women were experiencing various side effects including headaches, dizziness, and death by pulmonary tuberculosis, and were blamed for these consequences. Racism and sexism informed the medical community deciding that these conditions were because the women did not have the capacity to follow instructions properly, thus adequately take care of themselves.

Maldonado-Torres suggests pro-statehood Puerto Rican's are more invested in sharing the proverbial table with Prospero (the colonizer) instead of any kind of potential emancipation via the connection to Caliban (the colonized). This is to say, that in Maldonado-Torres' opinion, pro-statehood Puerto Rican's want a slice of the American pie, the political and economic and social status that statehood could provide. The push for statehood within this analysis is not

to build better and stronger coalitions with other people of color in America, by contrast, the hope is a detachment of imperial and colonial status imposed by 'commonwealth' status, a seat at the table of whiteness. However, that racism and cultural nationalism put a limit to the sort of identification that the advocates of radical statehood expect from Puerto Ricans. The viability of this political formula greatly depends on the redefinition of Puerto Rican cultural nationalism. "One thing is clear though: combatting racism and cultural nationalism can only lead to an expansion of the field of democracy and social justice in the island. The new socio-political imaginary may pave the way to thinking about new political options regarding the colonial condition" (Maldonado-Torres, 188, 2004).

Early in *The Tempest*, the audience is witness to Prospero's power as a sorcerer, in which the opening scene is a ship as it wrecks due to his magic. However, it is in Act I Scene II, in which we meet Caliban, and we are introduced to the character through his enslavement; Caliban is not merely a servant to both Prospero and Miranda, but he is outright called a slave by Prospero. We also see the clear delineations between how Caliban and Ariel, the air spirit, are ranked within a hierarchy on the island, despite both being natives as such. It is here where one can begin to understand how anti-blackness or colorism also large parts in the formation of the nation state identity and cultural/racial formations are.

"(to Miranda) Awake, dear heart awake, thou hast slept well,

Awake.

Miranda (waking) The strangeness of your story put

Heaviness in me.

Prospero Shake it off. Come on,

We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never

Yields³¹⁹ us kind³²⁰ answer.

Miranda 'Tis a villain, sir,

I do not love to look on.

Prospero But as 'tis

We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,

Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices

That profit us. What ho! slave! Caliban!

Thou earth, thou! Speak.

Caliban (within) There's wood enough

within.

Prospero Come forth, I say, there's other business for thee.

Come thou tortoise! When?

enter Ariel as a water nymph

(to Ariel) Fine apparition. My quaint Ariel,

Hark in thine ear."

I move towards analyzing Puerto Rico and the cultural/racial dynamics as they connect to questions of statehood, and then applying what I determine towards the difficulty in locating Caliban within this white criollo/American dynamic. There begs a question regarding the legitimacy of the state in relation to one's own social reality; despite being Black, racialized as Black, treated as Black, under nation state identity and mestizaje, is this a social reality if it is negated on paper? In the book *Tuning out Blackness* (2005), Yeidy M. Rivero notes what I have previously discussed about nation state identity building in the Caribbean and Latin American regions, but also specifically notes the relationship between Cuba and Puerto Rico, and the growing relationship to Blackness each island had in the early 20th century. Although mestizaje

in these two islands meant a blending of Afro-Indigenous-European culture, nevertheless the societies still positioned Spanish culture at the top, creating a hierarchy, not a blending with no visible difference in treatment. In the contemporary media of the time, Black Puerto Ricans were not referred to as Puerto Ricans, but in fact, *caribeños/as*. This framing of removes Black Puerto Ricans as part of the nation state identity, in what I interpret as anti-black societal move; by associating Black Puerto Ricans with the other predominately Black islands in the Caribbean as if to say that Blackness is something negative. "...Puerto Rico's media representations of blackness articulated hegemonic racial discourses across both Puerto Rico's and Cuba's colonized and neocolonized sociocultural spaces" (Rivero, 24, 2005).

What perhaps is not present within this analysis in a clear manner is the ways that Hispano/Latin Americans are hyper racialized despite the clear various categories regarding race and color on top of the racial and color order. If Black people in Hispanophone Caribbean are not as systemically represented as Maldonado-Torres suggests, then that would have something to do with how people are raced in this culture that varies from the Anglophone Caribbean, for example, especially when people cross the border. It needs to be stated that the hyper-racialization occurs prominently within discourses that center experiences within the United States. Puerto Rico itself is not a location that determines a singular race, but that is not made as clearly in this analysis, considering hyper-racialization and ethnicity as people move from country to country. The forced invisibility of Black Puerto Ricans only cements for me the ability to indeed find Caliban and specifically Sycorax in the Hispanic Caribbean. For despite Caliban and Sycorax being amongst the first inhabitants of the island and knowing the land and how to survive on the island, Prospero's presence on the island is much the same of settler colonialism; although Caliban is treated in inhumane ways, he is still needed by

Propsero in order for Prospero to be powerful, much in the way that whiteness is facilitated by creating an Other in Black and Indigenous peoples.

To critically examine a potential reason for Maldonado-Torres' argument regarding the lack of clear, systemically present Africans in the Hispanic Caribbean, I cite Den Tandt, who references the Black Puerto Rican artist Daniel Lind-Ramos and the letter he penned to *El Nuevo Día* newspaper after the 1996 exhibition titled *Paréntesis: Ocho artistas negros contemporáneos*, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lind-Ramos is quoted as stating "in our country we are constantly being reminded of our negritud (with all that implies), but to say publicly that are [black] is 'disapproved of'". I interpret Lind-Ramos' words to mean for Puerto Ricans to identify in a manner that specifically names and centers their race instead of their ethnicity, is suggested by the wider and whiter Puerto Rican society, to be an act of internalizing the United States' dominating discourse and application of race within the national and cultural context to which, to them, the island does not apply. This is to plainly state that in Puerto Rico, one is not raced, they are just Puerto Rican, because Puerto Rico is a society held together through mestizaje. Whilst it could be argued that this is an appropriate manner to combat another component of American cultural imperialism, Lind-Ramos' preceding quote provides firsthand evidence that it just not the case. Particularly when contextualized against the backdrop of ongoing nativism post-independence from Spain that occurred throughout Latin America as explained in the previous chapters.

In the essay *All That is Black Melts into Air: Negritud and Nation in Puerto Rico* (1999), Catherine Den Tandt discusses the complexities of Puerto Rican racial identity and history. Den Tandt begins her essay by citing the poem "Copla mulata" by Luis Lloréns Torres, in which the

poet not only attempts to celebrate a mixed raced utopia found in Puerto Rico, but also live out what she says is a pornographic colonial fantasy about mixed race (African and European) women specifically. "...to bracket race and mestizaje within a dehumanizing and degrading negrista poem is a perfectly commensurate with the goals of white, Europhile nationalism..." (Edmondson, 77, 1999). Den Tandt's broader point is this is one of the many examples of Latin American and Caribbean countries clinging to whiteness, within the established hierarchy within the confines of their respective societies. Social, economic, and cultural maintenance of whiteness is executed whilst obfuscating the material reality of racism, more precisely, anti-blackness.

It is true however, that the ways in which Hispanic Caribbean has been able to cling to the colonial spirit remains, and through the examination of how philosophy as it relates to the society is made clear when Maldonado-Torres states:

"The power differential between the Hispanic Caribbean positivism and Afro Caribbean philosophy in the Caribbean clearly demonstrates that philosophy in the Caribbean cannot be characterized in its entirety as Calibanist. The post-colonial countries in the Hispanic Caribbean had seen the rise of what was in its majority a white elite whose drive for local control put them somewhat in between the old colonial powers and the communities of poor, dispossessed, and racialized peoples. They were neither Prospero nor Caliban" (Maldonado-Torres, 110, 2004).

Maldonado-Torres point regarding education in the Caribbean, as each island relates to one another is a matter that is concrete. There is an argument presented that the region needs to

create programs that would promote a sense of cultural unity, one that goes beyond the present scope and that would be more clearly outlined with actual economic and cultural outcomes that are in many ways tangible. This new praxis would extend itself to influencing the philosophy produced by the region. Via this new wave of education, theoretically there is an opening for the Hispanic Caribbean to be able to locate Caliban within itself, perhaps outside of the Hispanic Caribbean's customary means of philosophical production.

The positivists tended to reduce education to the learning of techniques of modernization and took for granted the sense of identity based on language. They were for the most part focused on the task of nation-state identity building. The education needed to support the idea of a unified Caribbean state, in contrast, would have to teach subjects to recognize bonds of identity beyond language. The idea would consist in furthering the view in the Caribbean that people share Caliban's condition, even though they may have originally served different Prosperos. Here we find an important element in the effective decolonization of popular culture, an activity which is no less than a collective responsibility (Maldonado-Torres, 117, 2004).

This former passage demonstrates a framework that has the potential to bridge the philosophy across the region, one that does not include nativism nor whitewashed nation-state identity tactics from the past. "The prevalence of white criollismo is also noticeable in discourses on indignity in the Spanish Caribbean in which Indio and India are often used to refer to a fictive ethnicity that is considered native at the expense of blackness" (Martínez-San Miguel, 77, 2016). The point I wish to stress is unity cannot occur through historical modes of erasure that remain active in the present. This point is supported in part by Benitez-Rojo through his

examination of the poem “Los ríos” by Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, found in Guillén’s book *El era zoo* (1967).

The entire text in Spanish and its translation in English:

He aquí la jaula de las culebras.

Enroscados en sí mismos,

duermen los ríos, los sagrados ríos.

El Mississippi, con sus negros,

El Amazonas con sus indios.

Son como los zunchos poderosos

de unos camiones gigantescos.

Riendo, los niños les arrojan

verdes islotes vivos,

selvas pintadas de papagayos,

canoas tripuladas

y otros ríos.

Los grandes ríos despiertan,

se descenroscan lentamente,

engullen todo, se hinchan, a poco más revientan

y vuelvan a quedar dormidos.

This is the snake cage.

Coiled up on themselves,

the rivers sleep, the sacred rivers.

The Mississippi with its Negroes,
The Amazon with its Indians.
They are like the powerful springs
on some gigantic trucks.
The great rivers awaken,
slowly uncoil themselves,
devour everything, swell up, almost burst
and go back to sleep.

Benitez-Rojo unravels the poem to a moment in which we as readers and Caribbeanists alike, can begin to see where we can start to find Caliban within the Hispanic Caribbean tradition, even if the poem originally was not meant to do so. In a serendipitous manner, the poem is in dialogue with West Indian philosophical tradition, as it is interpreted by Benitez-Rojo through his own critical analysis. First, Benitez-Rojo notes that the poem is ambivalent, particularly compared to other poems by Guillén, who is known for penning poetry of resistance of the working class. *Los ríos* is stated to be a poem about plantation economy, specifically the sugar production, of the Caribbean, but abstracted in its delivery, nonetheless.

For Benitez-Rojo, he isolates the four voices within the text being Indios, Negros, children and the absent yet narrating great white father, as he calls it. The Great White Father, our narrator, is the means in which the reader, or critic as in the case of Benitez-Rojo, is to be able to examine the power dynamics found within the text. Benitez-Rojo also focuses on the cage that is present, as it is allegorical for institutions, be it schools, literal zoos, settler colonialism or chattel slavery. The poem utilizes the image of the cage, to which on one side we find the

white father and within the cage, the snake. What also bears mentioning is the act of creating parallels between the Amazon and Mississippi Rivers, not only to Indio's and Africans, but also to snakes, and how snakes and rivers form, or do not conform, to stability and fixed configurations. "Moreover, we can read the snakes from the outset as ambiguous and unstable animals, circular when asleep and straight when 'they awaken' and 'unwind themselves'...the rivers/snakes are both circular and straight, neither circular nor straight..." (Benitez-Rojo, 134, 1992).

For Benitez-Rojo, there is a consistent sense of musicality in the delivery of the text, as each character is not necessarily in harmony with the next, but their voices nonetheless create a singular melody, and I understand this to be because each character has a voice present within the poem. Thus, Benitez-Rojo begins his analysis on power through this observation of the poem, which then leads him to apply Prospero and Caliban respectively to these positions to demonstrate the power imbalance and play between these two dynamics. First, he notes that the Great White Father voice is in a manner, absent, yet present in that it is the narrator, but unnamed in comparison to the Indios and Africans as they are attached to the rivers/snake. He states that the Great White Father's voice "makes itself present (resonates) quite powerfully it is presumed absence, as it was the Europeans who 'discovered', conquered, baptized, and colonized the Indians of America, and it was they, too, who initiated the transoceanic trade in Africans, whom they enslaved, renamed, and taught to speak their language" (Benitez-Rojo, 135, 1992). Whether or not we as readers of the poem focus on any of the voices, be it the children or the Great White Father, we as literary spectators are witness an unrolling of the dynamics of power: whether we are discussing children in institutions, animals in cages, indentured servants or slaves, Benitez-Rojo notes that these are groups which are technically objects of power. The Great White Father's positionality is then that of the zookeeper, with

zoo's being institutions themselves meant to be locations in where the study of nature, the development of the natural sciences (both of animals and sub-humans as evidenced with human zoos) "...to be read and annotated by those who have seized the power and held it" (Benitez-Rojo, 135, 1992).

So, while Benitez-Rojo states that *Los ríos* is a poem woven from poetic and theoretical abstractions, it maintains a sense of concretion, to which the writer elaborates upon by then naming Prospero and Caliban, since at the core of the work is the discourse of power and subjugation, but also language. The Great White Father is Prospero, and he exists outside of the poem (within the poem the image of the cage), and lastly the Others are the snakes. In the following passage, Benitez-Rojo describes this version of Caliban as articulated through the imagery of the snakes:

"[Despite being outside of the cage the Great White Father/Prospero] was still *there*, putting himself forward from his position of power as scientific language, knowledge, center, origin, etc. Of course, he is actually a usurper, an imposter, a mask; he is, in short, the Other Father...But one has to conclude that Caliban here is not a coherent entity or a stable pole opposing itself dialectically to Prospero's; he is, rather, as we saw, a paradox containing its own ending. Caliban is the impossible knot that a linear serpent makes when combined with another, circular one; he is the ambivalent, deterritorialized being who would like to be in the place that Prospero occupies outside the poem- a place that he has begun to comprehend through his process of domestication, colonization, and dependency-" (Benitez-Rojo, 137, 1992).

Accompanying this text by Benitez-Rojo, I provide another point of view from Roberto Fernández Retamar and his book *Caliban: apuntes sobre la cultura en nuestra América* (19??) when he writes:

“The confusion lies in the root itself, because as descendants of numerous Indian, African, and European communities, we have only a few languages with which to understand one another: those of the colonizers. While other colonials or ex-colonials in metropolitan centers speak among themselves in their own language, we Latin Americans continue to use the languages of our colonizers. These are the *linguas francas* capable of going beyond the frontiers that neither the aboriginal nor Creole languages succeed in crossing. Right now as we are discussing, as I am discussing with those colonizers, how else can I do it except in one of their languages, which is now also our language, and with so many of their conceptual tools, which are now also our conceptual tools?” (Retamar, 8, 1989)

Conclusion

In the search for Caliban in the Hispanic Caribbean, Nelson-Maldonado seemingly has very little difficulty finding Caliban, although playfully one could write that it would just be Caliban, with a different Prospero, as he notes. This is seemingly simple enough; however, he elaborates how multiple languages plays a large part of the analysis. Evidenced not only through the importance of language in the play *The Tempest* itself, but also in an over creation and maintenance of Pan-Caribbean culture and philosophy that traverses through the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, Creole, etc. islands within the region. “...teach subjects

[branches of study] to recognize bonds of identity beyond language. The idea would consist in furthering the review in the Caribbean that people share Caliban's condition, even though they may have originally served different Prosperos" (Nelson-Maldonado, 117, 2004). Again, contextualized with Benitez-Rojo, this kind of line of thinking flows well, evidenced when Benitez-Rojo suggests that America (North, Central, South and the Caribbean) is the grand zoo in it of itself. The New World was a creation only possible through domination, each nation and island small are smaller exhibitions with their own languages, geographical layouts and masters but together they form a new apparatus of domination and control-a grand zoo. "[Sic] it is a never-ending dialogue of differences that curves back over itself as a perpetual symphony or as a paradoxical figure of power relations" (Benitez-Rojo, 138, 1992).

Whilst Anglo and Francophone philosophers may have taken the lead in unraveling the colonially of Prospero, and the decolonization of Caliban as an allegory within their philosophy, I find evidence and works of those working within other parts of the Caribbean that also have found their own Calibanistic mode of deconstruction of the colonial question. Whilst Paget Henry also stated that the Hispanic Caribbean philosophy is necessary for a pan Caribbean analysis through Caliban's Reason, he did not use any of the writings that I have cited here. Nelson-Maldonado worked to find the Hispanic Caribbean within the framework that Henry provided in his analysis. I am of the opinion that whilst Caliban is a useful allegory, however Caliban does not provide for me the space to vocalize as much as there are similarities or moments in his story that I may resonate with, the silencing of Sycorax is far more suitable, and speaks to the erasure of women in the Hispanic Caribbean.

Part Four: Implementation of Methodology

Chapter Ten

Sycorax: The Portal to Afro-Indigenous Femme Subjectivity

Sycorax in this introductory exercise will serve as the gateway to Afro-Indigenous femme phenomenology, that in which Latina feminist phenomenology and Afro-Caribbean philosophy will arrive at the shoal (to use Tiffany Lethabo King's metaphor and heuristic) of their convergences; crashing and merging into each other. Sycorax is a great allegorical representation of The Vocal Void, a gateway not only towards new interpretations of her function as a character within postcolonial discourse, but possibilities for Afro-Indigenous femme phenomenology specifically. There are various character traits that build Sycorax for the readers of *The Tempest* which have direct relationships with what became the foundation of colonialism, specifically coloniality of knowledge and of Being. I define The Vocal Void as a conceptual and social dynamic in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean are unvoiced. This dynamic occurs within the fields of philosophy and phenomenology in general.

Accumulated in a list are the traits of Sycorax that I have extracted and determine to be the most pertinent to this investigation:

African/Indigenous woman

Exile without nation

Criminality

Haunting Spector

Witch

[Un]mother

Beast as an essentialist trait

That who is blamed for the misfortune of colonizers

Lack of corporeality and agency/autonomy

[Un]voiced

Third space

I wish to examine Sycorax through the perspective of Afro-Indigenous feminism. This could be understood or interpreted as 'third space' which Martha Nandorfy discusses in the essay *Border Thinking and Feminist Solidarity in the Fourth World* (2004-2006), or by extension perhaps as Mexican performance artist and poet Guillermo Gomez-Peña's 'fourth world' space. However, context (established) aside, I refer to this location (theoretical) as the quantum space (out of settler time) of Afro-Indigeneity. I also refer to anthropological text on Amerindian thoughts regarding memory and precarious bodies. I regard these writings as relative to Sycorax since she offers a new venture into de-colonial literature and allegorical developments regarding *The Tempest* but in a manner that can be far more subversive than the traditional route taken that focuses on the character of Miranda. Feminist writings on Miranda often do not push the analysis beyond the condition of a white female. If Black women and Women of

Color are gendered only within the framework coloniality provides, they are in fact *ungen*dered. This is to say feminist analysis that is not intersectional does not therefore take into how Miranda's position vastly differs from Sycorax, and the multiple experiences that differ for the multiple kinds of women, in the play and in life today. Miranda, whilst still subject to her father's will and control, is still given a character arc and development. She is able to fall in love for herself and eventually marry as she wishes, despite knowing her father may not allow her to. Sycorax, however, is forever cemented as the unwedded mother, with no voice, no ability to tell her story. The power dynamics between whiteness and settler colonialism and exilic experience, specifically of color, is explicit between the two characters.

Readings about *The Tempest* within the context of postcolonial Caribbean literature has a propensity to focus upon Caliban and his use of Prospero's language. Even in feminist readings of the play, Miranda is a natural focus, the white daughter of Prospero, the girl without agency, dependent upon the arrangements and connections she has to the other men surrounding her, her life and future controlled by her father and only made acceptable through the marriage proposal of another man. Furthermore, she is the savior and the vessel of kindness towards the half beast half human Caliban, for which her benevolence has her teach him to read, but also, and more attuned to the more modern stereotypes and white anxiety, almost raped by Caliban. Miranda exemplifies the state of female virtue and victimization in a male dominated society, therefore readings through and about her are not at all surprising. Even women of color have attempted to identify with Miranda as a means of furthering the discourse regarding the potentials to be created through subversive readings and interpretations of the play. Also, there are attempts to feminize Caliban vis a vis a Calibana methodology of the reorientation governing the sexual and racial politics of the play. A popular example of

this includes artist and writer Coco Fusco, whilst although a Black Latina, utilizing Miranda and a feminized version of Caliban through feminist frameworks via 'daughters of Caliban' like tradition.

However, Sycorax, both as a character or a potential nexus of feminist or decolonial interpretations, is not utilized as such. I agree with Sylvia Wynter when she claims that taking up the position of Caliban (and I would argue furthermore that of Miranda) moves us as philosophers or artists, to take up a position of womanhood or an understanding of humanity that cannot be detached from white supremacist ideas of Being or of what it means to be Human, or directly, not Man. As Wynter suggests, due to conquest and genocide, any attempts to gender blackness or indigeneity through Miranda or Caliban only continue to serve the establish paradigms that keep these aforementioned identities outside of the category of what it means to be human or Being, as it is established through western traditions. Like an Anzaldua's use of 'new mestiza', any 'new Miranda' or 'new Calibana' (my own examples of how I interpret the intentions behind these new paradigms) would only be subsumed by the politic of the national state identity projects that already serve hegemonic Eurocentric frameworks.

Thus, what is to be discussed is not just race and gender, but geopolitical contexts that shape and mold experiences in context of which phenomenological practices act, and a return to Indigenous temporality and spatial theory as it collides with how the body (in its physical form) is rendered. As I noted previously, the analysis must continue to be done through intersectionality. Black and Indigenous femme's bodies are constituent to the formation of the Americas, their bodies as sites of ruptures and fissures, and their voices are erased and subsumed into the vacuums of time and space. The linear thought processes that gave way to the settler colonialism and the formation of man (as demonstrated by Wynter) equated the

silences and erasure of the Afro-Indigenous femme voice, particularly those of the Hispanic Caribbean.

“Occupying Sycorax's position overturns the order of man and refuses the aesthetics, orders, and structures of the violence of conquest” (King, 183, 2019). Taking up Sycorax’s positionality is an action that includes taking up the third space, or perhaps even Guillermo Gomez Peña’s ‘fourth world’. The concept of the third space emanated from decolonial feminist theory and is a space of alternative knowledge production, storytelling, and resistance against colonial legacies and the ongoing effects of colonization. Whilst the work of Paget Henry served to provide readers an understanding of Afro-Caribbean philosophy and how Caliban’s voice and thought manifested throughout the region, he notes that the Hispano and Dutch speaking Caribbean philosophies were not a part of his research. There is also, contemporaneously, discourse regarding the split between the islands via language and disconnection that occurs through national and ethnic identification when it pertains primarily though spoken language. Moreover, even though there are Hispanic Caribbean and even Latin American writers that have already used Caliban as a means of understanding the post-colonial subjectivity, there is still the gap I noticed in my previous research. As Abena Busia observes in *Silencing Sycorax* (1989-1990) the symbolic laryngectomy is applied to Indigenous and Black women consistently in colonial literature, much like the observations Mary Ann Gosser Esquilín made in the essay *Nans negras: The Silenced Women in Rosario Ferré and Olga Nona* (2002) regarding the silencing of Black Puerto Rican women in literature. There is a precision applied to the erasure and silencing of Afro-Indigenous women, and to reiterate, I mean this particularly with regards to Hispanic Caribbean women. To remind myself and readers of my work, ‘the self is a trick of memory’, and Sycorax cannot stay voiceless or silenced if focus on how the self is a trick of

memory, through the return of the traditional Indigenous and Black thought that has transcended Eurocentric measurements of temporality and culture.

Returning to Busia's thoughts on Sycorax, there is a drive to return the reader to the kinds of alternatives that Black and Indigenous women's bodies can tell; narratives that are not necessarily a speech act, as Busia posits when she says, "In unmasking the dispossession of the silences of fiction and the fictions of silence, we (re)construct self-understanding" (Busia, 104, 1989-1990). Since the Caribbean is the space and or the location in which assisted in the development of modernity due to the violent fissure that occurred there via colonial conquest and genocide, it is these bodies that have fallen prey that create the bodies of power that is Europe and the rest of the Americas.

Sycorax, as King notes, has island subjectivity. My understanding of island subjectivity begins with King's observations on Sycorax's presence: as an island subject or subjectivity, Sycorax transforms the mainland territory or space of the Americas into another island territory. I contextualize King's idea by referencing Katherine McKittick's writing on uninhabitable. The uninhabitable references the new world, and specifically locations in which indigenous people do in fact exist, but within the imagination of the colonist, the lands and the racial space of Blackness or Indigeneity are non-human, therefore, uninhabitable by Man (codified as white). Be that as it may, Indigenous lands and Africa as a continent were inhabited, but to maintain the foundations of coloniality, transformations of geography along with the human, both racially and sexually, were necessitated. Again, white settler colonialism needed to create an Other to legitimize their whiteness and colonial projects. "To transform the uninhabitable into the inhabitable, and make this transformation profitable, the land must become a site of ra-

cial-sexual regulation, a geography that maps ‘a normal way of life’ through measuring different degrees of inhabitability. This geographic transformation...does not fully erase the category of ‘uninhabitable,’ but rather re-presents it through spatial processes as a sign of social difference” (McKittrick, 131, 2006).

Therefore, Sycorax’s body, whether it is materialized in the text or not, like my body, and like the bodies of my people, are also able to destroy these nexuses of power in as much as they made them possible. This can be achievable by subverting the means in which I, alongside others, engage with Sycorax’s positionality. It is not about creating her voice, or imagining the silhouette of her body, but moving through her silence and lack of corporeality. I propose this movement through the silence is how we begin to actively listen for her memory. Reaching through the fog of coloniality and retaining what we grasp to remind ourselves of what we are outside of the dominance of Prospero’s narrative of what it means to be Black, Native and never truly dead and absent.

Witch, Algerian, The African/Indigenous Femme

Firstly, I will analyze the terrain and lack of nation in order to begin the process of Afro-Indigenous femme readings of Sycorax, beginning with positioning myself through what George Mentore in the essay *Of Vital Spirit and Precarious Bodies in Amerindian Societies* (2018) when he notes “indigenous resistance of being, it would have to do so in rupture of the very terms by which the historical “truths” of the Caribbean have so far been configured— at least by dominant western intellectual thought” (Mentore, 55,2018). Also, I contextualize Mentore’s quote with King when she states “[sic] Indigenous and Black women’s bodies make the Americas, North America, and Canada possible...Through recognizing the Caribbean basin and its

islands as geological forms or shoals themselves, an island epistemology breaks through the surface and is brought to bear on the epistemologies and cartographies that have produced what we now know as the United States and Canada” (King, 196, 2019).

If, as King suggests, the bodies of Black and Indigenous femmes are what enabled the centers of power and coloniality, then it is through an auto-recognition (or perhaps auto-regenerative framework) of their Black and Indigenous “Self” that can dismantle said centers, without a reliance on white supremacist tools to do so. In the essay *The Topology of Being and the Geopolitics of Knowledge* (2004), Maldonado-Torres compares the works of Heidegger and Levinas, and particularly their efforts to root and situate themselves within Europe, especially Levinas’s as he aims to subvert anti-Semitism and prove roots found within Europe that connect Athens to Jerusalem. However, Maldonado-Torres reminds his readers that what each philosopher forgets is the system of violence that is coloniality as developed by Europe via settler colonialism and imperialism outside of Europe in what he calls “forgetfulness of damnation” (Maldonado-Torres, 36, 2004). He also notes “Decolonization is about the creation of a new symbolic and material order that takes the full spectrum of human history, its achievements, and its failures, into view. This side of history is what neither Heidegger nor Levinas could see—or did not want to see. Their search for European roots blinded them to this kind of decolonial geopolitics” (Maldonado-Torres, 38, 2004).

I seek not to root Sycorax within any system whose purpose is to define her within violent systems of domination, but instead to root her within the Caribbean, accomplished through Amerindian and Afro-Syncretic pedagogies. As Irene Lara suggests in her essay *Beyond Caliban’s Curses: The Decolonial literacy of Sycorax* (2007), “For example, learning such a literacy also entails reflecting on the ways that one may have internalized a fear, distrust, and even

loathing of “the” dark female witch/healer and her spiritual knowledge and ways of knowing. Furthermore, I propose that the literacy of Sycorax is the literacy of healing such discursive distortions and fears of the interrelated racialized concepts of the female sex, spirituality, and sexuality so that signified by Caliban’s language of cursing” (Lara, 82, 2007).

Silencing of Afro-Puerto Rican women in literature is not an anomaly by any stretch of the imagination. Jose Luis Gonzalez’s published an essay titled *El país de cuatro pisos (The Four Storeyed Country)* (1980) which embarked on a journey through time that gave way to the understanding of a more accurate understanding of the racial and cultural history of Puerto Rico. It is one that subverts the popular nation state identity project of a nation made of creolization of the Taíno, African and above all, Spanish blood. The analogy that likens Puerto Rico to a storeyed house posits that the racial and economic constructs within the island are built systemically. “These have interacted and come into conflict since Puerto Rico was inserted into the vortex of the Western world’s historical and racial constructs.”, says Gosser Esquilín as she herself cites Gonzalez in addressing the erasure of Blackness in Puerto Rico (Gosser Esquilín, 50, 2002).

An important component of racialized misogyny is silencing, which is carried out through the social order of a society in order to maintain the illusions of the nation state identity and the insurance of its maintenance. The silencing of Black and Indigenous femmes in post-colonial societies is the means in which the state retains the veneer of racialized advancement. This is true in Puerto Rico (like many other Caribbean islands) in which national identity comes before race, individuals are Puerto Rican first, raced second, gender being (arguably) last, even if the experiences within the society are oppressive. I frame the social markers independently,

however as I have established previously, we experience these identifiers simultaneously, as intersectionality demonstrates. This is not to say, however, that in certain situations, the systems are not always recognized as occurring simultaneously. The continual negation of Black and Indigenous femme voices is necessary, much like in *The Tempest* as in our contemporary world.

“Often in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, black women appear as out-of-the-ordinary figures capable of averting [sic] a of a national identity...Although our debt to the descendants of African slaves is great, they are but a ‘performative’ moment...They may be silenced and ‘invisible,’ but their contribution to our understanding of the plot in particular and Puerto Rican history in general is akin to the quasi-invisible and strong Afro-Caribbean presence in the first floor of the nation/house that Gonzalez discusses in his essay. The neglect or sidestepping of these characters and the racism they confront is especially poignant when those descendants of Africans being discussed are women” (Gosser Esquilín, 51, 2002).

I have come to understand how post-colonial societies, and their projects of identity building, it is necessary to not only turn to naivitis, but to then push the social imagination forcefully beyond the step of reckoning with the past of coloniality. This means that racialized misogyny is a system that must be denied as part of the cultural dynamics for control, but the state and those who are supporters of this social order, are quick to vehemently deny. I remind readers of the denial of Blackness in order to give the illusion of oneness, reminiscent of ‘there is only one race, the human race’ as a silencing tool. If post-colonial societies deny Black and Indigenous femmes their voice, then they are unable to dismantle the very powers at be that have subjected them to being the building blocks of the society in which they reside.

Furthermore, if Black and Indigenous femmes are silent, then the state has more ability to utilize their bodies and lives for capital. As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the racialized misogyny and denial of bodily autonomy to Puerto Rican women under a regime of forced sterilization gestures towards the state's need to silence and remove these women from being able to participate in their society as fully citizen. This is to say, the state needs Black and Indigenous femmes exhausted from exploitation and silent in their place in society. As McKittrick remarks "...the *place* (authors emphasis) of black women is deemed unrecognizable because their ontological existence is both denied and deniable as a result of the regimes of colonialism, racism-sexism, trans-atlantic slavery, European intellectual systems, patriarchy, white femininity, and white feminism" (McKittrick, 133, 2006).

According to Gonzalez, Afro-Boricua women are the first floor of Puerto Rico, and likewise Black and Indigenous Boricuas are the first true Puerto Ricans. Sycorax, a native and yet displaced, silenced African, is the basement; representative of the Caribbean, she is essential to the development of the plot of *The Tempest*. This representation and thus development is analogous much in the way Black and Indigenous femmes' bodies are essential to the development of the centers of colonial powers within the colonies and their European counterparts. What Gosser Esquilin does in her essay is to examine the dynamics of Puerto Rican history and society through two works of literature *The House on the Lagoon* (Rosario Ferré) and *El manuscrito de Miramar* (Olga Nolla) both of which still examine the problematics of misogynoir, but also are texts that do not solely rely on the contours of Black women's bodies, but instead attempt to give them a voice within the texts themselves. However, it is difficult to articulate any kind of Afro-Boricua subjectivity since the works were written by white

women. As Busia suggests in *Silencing Sycorax*, "The problematic, for the purpose of interpreting or decoding the master's text, arises from the place of black women as receptors of two paradigms of alienation and otherness within this dominant discourse: that of femaleness and that of blackness. Both factors are the major metaphors of strangeness within colonial discourse. The latter is obvious in its reference, though not always in the implications of its applications. The former, the question of gender, is much more submerged, as much as the discussion of woman is, when conducted in the language of the master" (Busia, 84, 1989-1990).

The silencing of Afro-Indigenous Caribbean femmes in the Hispanic Caribbean can be likened to what Busia states about Sycorax when she discusses the consistent silencing of Black women in post-colonial literature. The two essays are dialectical, evidenced by what Gosser Esquilin states about Afro Puerto Rican women, and supported further when Busia pronounces the following:

"It is crucial that her [Sycorax] absence takes the form of voicelessness- voicelessness in a discourse in which sexuality and access to language together form part of the discourse of access to power. However, this voicelessness is often a deliberate unvoicing, rather than any intrinsic absence of speech on the part of the women...The persistence of this symbolic laryngectomy is pervasive. Beginning with the dawn of empire, and central to representation in colonial literature, we can follow it as a major trope in novels of decolonization. Even in cases where there are revisionist workings of the tropes of the colonial novel, the

voicelessness of the black remains a constant” (Busia, 87-90, 1989-1990).

For all those African and Latin American women writers have attempted to understand, or perhaps even create frameworks to locate Sycorax’s voice, or make attempts to listen for Sycorax’s language, we as writers, readers and artists are still imagining what this decolonial manner of speaking can be. Lara notes that she attempts to speak *through* Sycorax by creating a framework that seeks to listen for her voice instead of positioning herself (Lara) alongside Caliban, and thus making herself one of Caliban’s women. Lara pushes her idea further by clearly stating that she is not trying to speak as Sycorax either, but instead as a relative or kin to those in similar positions of Sycorax: raced, gendered, witched, and displaced (both as African and Indigenous) within the geographic boundaries of the Americas. As Lara notes earlier in the essay with regards to Caliban and the lack of relationship to his mother, “The colonial refusal to recognize matrilineality and female property rights, and native sovereignty in general, sets Caliban and the Calibans thereafter on a path away from the indigenous, racialized mother, perhaps unconsciously associating her lack of economic, political power with her knowledge made defunct” (Lara, 85, 2007).

This act of racialized misogyny through the stripping of autonomy and voice, is necessary for control over the state and the inhabitants in order to maintain national state identity in the aftermath of settler colonialism. The cartographic realities of both the human and the land necessitate for Indigenous genocide and Black fungibility in order to create and maintain accumulation. Land and capital depend on the domination and subordination of the newly coded Other, and to maintain in the present day, we must be made to believe that the other

is no longer a signifier in the world today, in order to avoid dealing with the reality of who creates what and who runs what. Although I am not using any kind of economic lens (arguably a Marxist lens) as my theoretical foundation in my own work, I can still say with confidence that, if colonialism was dependent upon chattel slavery, subjugation, and genocide, what we call the post-colonial requires many of the same initial mechanisms but with the veneer of its disavowal. Although this seems to be a contradiction, Mignolo notes “Domination precedes accumulation, and accumulation secures domination, but domination requires a cultural model built through rhetorical narratives on the wonders of modernity, of progress, of development, of growth, of technological innovations, etc., while hiding and enacting, within all the wonders, the logic of coloniality” (Mignolo, 441, 2021).

Amerindian Practices of Re-Memory

If we are to keep in mind the unvoicing of Sycorax, a deliberate act of punishment against femmes who embody the fears of men: witch, woman, black, native, deformed- then we can make the connection to how Caliban, fatherless, nationless, slave, half-beast and also deformed, is given more value in a manner of speaking, comparatively to his mother. This is determined by him being able to have *a voice* within the text. Caliban only has some semblance of humanity due to his ability to learn, with assistance from Miranda, the language of Prospero, since language and its written form was one of the means in which Europeans determined what created an inferior race or people during the inception of colonialism in the West. Although Caliban is not necessarily fully morally redeemable, or ever achieving of full human status, particularly since he attempted to rape Miranda and fill his nation (island) with many Calibans, his maleness coupled with his self-actualization via language, has him in an elevated position compared to his mother within the text. Returning to Sycorax, Busia states

that this literary mechanism within colonial and post-colonial literature renders it impossible to find African and Indigenous (Native) women's voices, and of course by extension, Sycorax. To return to a previous point, racialized misogyny, and denial of bodily autonomy through silence much in like the colonial condition of Puerto Rican women and forced sterilization, gestures towards the state's need to silence and remove these women from being able to participate in their society as fully citizen. Sycorax's death while holding the status of mother provides a web for establishing connection.

It is here that I can say we are witness to land, body, and voice under conquest. "The unvoicing of the black woman is literal, and her essence projected only as a void. In the colonial novel, the colonized male encounters not himself but his anthesis; the colonized woman only encounters erasure. She hears her own voice in silent spaces" (Busia, 95, 1989-1990). A resistance against the coloniality of Being, carried through Indigeneity and Blackness, would be enacted outside of the prescribed ideas and pillars of the aforementioned dominant and established pillars of power. Therefore, I wish to compare two lines of thought beginning with Busia when she states that the moment in which Black or Indigenous femmes "achieves or threatens to achieve a genuine subjectivity in the story, that is a critical awareness and initiative apart from that of the narrator, the whole edifice is threatened with collapse. Thus in any discourse which accepts speech as the signifier of viable subjectivities, native women can never be permitted to speak, for 'any challenge to the prevailing order of fantasy is a political struggle'" (Busia, 99-100, 1989-1990). Busia continues to note that there are other modes of actively listening to Black and Indigenous femme proverbial voices, and she suggests reading narratives through bodies and dress; this is to say, one accepts the body "as a legitimate text which can be used to inscribe itself out of multiple conscriptions" (Busia, 100, 1989-1990).

Reading the body as a text redirected me to the work by Mentore and the Amerindian concepts he frames as *Affect and Will, Sociality and Memory* within his essay. Discussing the uncertainty of the legibility of the body, he tells readers “It should be argued that this derives not from knowledge about the transformation condition of corporality, but rather from an absolute assuredness that the body serves as the assemblage point for vitality, affect, intent, and the formation of self. Uncertainty about bodily form appears distinct because of the unpredictability of these various aspects of embodiment. Here the effects upon embodied subjectivity from the contingent world demands that the heavy work of dealing with human well-beings falls, not upon the casual force of the world, but rather upon the making and remaking of the self” (Mentore, 65, 2018).

Although Sycorax does not have a physical presence in the play, there is a way in which we can listen and view her beyond what was provided to readers. The unvoicing done to her and her lack of embodiment do not suggest, keeping in line with Mentore and Busia, a lack of memory, affect or perhaps even legacy (referring to Lara and thinking of Afro and Indigenous femmes as kin to that of Sycorax). I find this of particular note considering that Black and Indigenous women were placed outside of the mapping of the human, as discussed in previous chapters. Therefore, the dehumanization of Sycorax by framing her as a witch, parallels the spirituality and practices of Afro and Indigenous peoples as seen through the colonial gaze. There is also the particular obsession with how *often* Prospero must speak about Sycorax, its consistency as claimed by Prospero himself in the following passage, to which I understand as colonial desire and sexuality.

“Prospero. O, was she so? I must

Once in a month recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch Sycorax..."

The colonial gaze, obsession, desire and unvoicing are part of the imagination but also are reflected in the manner in which settler colonialism inevitably played out throughout the Americas. The colonial subject, victim to the colonality of power and the colonality of Being, is a trick of memory of that past, present, future in which these timelines also run parallel and or perpendicular to that of culture, society, and determinations of the self-created with autonomy. I move then to view the contours and shape of Sycorax's body and the tone and depth of her voice through what is to be said an island subjectivity, one in which is connected to Amerindian concepts regarding how bodies (and garments) "can also display the very human qualities of conscious intentionality and agency" (Mentore, 66, 2018).

Time nor corporality are mitigating factors when determining what Sycorax's body nor voice should look or sound like, nor whether it existed or not, or even furthermore, her alleged but never specified crime. Although merely a literary character written by a British man, her void is palpable, much like the erasure Afro-Indigenous femmes in the Caribbean and Latin America are faced with now. However, self-determination and identification are persistent through feminist actions of resistance, which we can learn from the void that Shakespeare left Sycorax in. Need a sentence/phrase here to transition into the quote -- "It is from this amalgam of spirit and body that the conjoined power-intent-affect of being proceeds to craft the self-image for the individual. [Sic] It is caring others who manage the representation of the self. In this scenario, the other succeeds as the moral custodian and caretaker of self-image. At least

as it is understood as suffuse very, Amerindian subjectivity can therefore be said to the accumulation of recalled images, which the self remembers of itself while in the custody of others” (Mentore, 66, 2018).

The lineage of kin of Sycorax reminds me of the story of La Samaritana and the mythology created that named her as a healer, witch, a woman of color but sometimes represented as fair-skinned, a fraud and yet a saint. Julia Vázquez, born in 1893 in Puerto Rico, was regarded as a medicine woman, nicknamed by the locals as *La Niñita* (meaning The Little Girl in Spanish) rose to fame when she was a young woman. I am personally interested in this story because she was from and worked in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, the very location where my own ancestors have had their roots planted for over one hundred years. In her epoch, Puerto Rico was undergoing drastic changes as a result of the United States take over in 1898, economically and culturally the island was shifting. The loss of established economies including coffee and sugar rendered most of the workers jobless and in even more dire situations than years previous. “To La Samaritana (Vázquez) and those around her, the new economic and political orders brought some improvements, especially in infrastructure and public health, and also new forms of marginalization, proletarianization, and militancy” (Román, 115, 2007).

La Samaritana attracted people across the color, religion, and class lines, and from other various villages throughout the island. She is noted to have mostly attracted the rural poor farmers, those that are often called *jíbaros*. She resonated with them in various ways, one of which was her illiteracy and her status as working class, once having a job in a tobacco factory, in other words, she was certainly one of their own. Her healing practices and methods were not outside of an established tradition. What made La Samaritana different, as I understand it, was two-fold: firstly, she treated her patients with *aqua fluizada* (footnote this), and although

that was a practice more known and used by Spiritists, she managed to make her minimal therapy through the deployment of water.

Still, the second aspect to her popularity was what Román documents as an effort to redeploy affliction, rather than to completely extinguish it. In the economy of affliction, “La Samaritana revealed that when it came to healing, there was a plurality of understandings at work” (Román, 117, 2007). Through the healing that she provided, there came with it a value system that accompanied her healing, and while Román does not go into explicit detail, he states there was an intervention that favored the spiritual and moral rejuvenation of the society overall, not just via her patients. This is evident to me when I consider the pilgrimage taken by hundreds of people from across Puerto Rico to San Lorenzo, all in hopes of being touched by La Samaritana. In what is documented as difficult economic and social strife for Puerto Ricans during the time La Samaritana’s growing popularity, it is understandable that the people were in search of something that would give them hope- but also anchor them in their cultural identity and familiar practices outside of the over encompassing American influence. La Samaritana focused on the healing capacities of spirituality and a return to the cultural versus an acceptance of American styled modernity, a route that is noted to be something Women of Color actively choose to do versus their male counterparts.

However, her critics deployed sexuality, race, color, public health policies and class against her in order to delegitimize her practice. For context, Román states that La Samaritana embodied several intersections which included being of a lower class and a woman of color, whose popularity came to be a few years after a pervasive and strong anti-prostitution campaign in Puerto Rico, which affected around 1,000 poor and non-white women in police raids. The next

steps detractors sought to take was to maintain the anti-sex workers stance, since they were largely considered a group of women who were a health risk and connect their deviancy and sexuality to La Samaritana. In doing so, her critics were able to suggest she was the source of the spread of the very illness she supposedly sought to eradicate. Furthermore, her color was useful in the maintenance of anti-blackness and colonial ideas regarding Africans and Indigenous people all together, and by extension I would wager, miscegenation. “The unhealthful libidinous of black women and mulattoes was a truism of nineteenth-century arts and thought. Since the 1880’s, letrados [sic] (men of law that gained their power during Spanish colonialism) had blamed the island’s backward and unsanitary condition on blacks, whom they likened to parasites, on anemic ‘white’ peasant women, and on miscegenation” (Román, 118, 2007).

Conservative Spiritists believed in reincarnation and the universality of whiteness to be found in the soul of humans; La Samaritana’s presence and healing work brought these ideas into question and destabilized the hierarchies established on the island and within the religion. Román cites a woman named Agustina Guffain (a writer) who proclaimed herself that all souls are white “but dark skin remained evidence of things not seen [sic] ‘broad features and thick loops...could never accommodate the delicate modulations of a distinguished Spirit” (Román, 124, 2007). If souls are white, but there is the stain of features and skin color/tone that deviate from whiteness then the jump to differentiating between a proper Spiritist and spirit-monger was easy for critics and conservative public officials to maintain, particularly since anti-blackness and white supremacy was the driving force behind the creation of the island to begin with. Looking at this through the lens of shoaling, we can understand how this operated within the continental United States and throughout Latin America, too. “That construction [spirit-monger] rested partly on a theory of racial differences that relegated black bodies and

the spirits they incarnated to the lower levels of evolution” (Román, 125, 2007). Still, this racialized misogyny was not to be the reason for why ultimately La Samaritana retreated from public life and put an end to the curing en masse she was known for; she married a local tobacco worker and became a mother, reminding the community that her priority in life was always to be a wife and a mother before healer.

Re-Memory

La Samaritana’s life and work as a healer interests me for the narrative I have provided thus far, and it is through her story that I find a possibility of beginning to understand what Sycorax’s kin may look like, the sort of healing they may do, and the legacies they leave behind in their wake, which opens a new dimension to the possibilities of Sycoraxic memory and heritage in the Caribbean. The conclusion to La Samaritana’s story in Román’s chapter regarding her departure from public life and the work that she was doing leads me to the new dimension of Afro-Indigenous subjectivity in the Sycoraxic vein.

Firstly, Román notes “Although this was a woman whose speech carried an unusual authority, she was also a medium who spoke with a masculine voice. A respectable man lent her legitimacy and framed her pronouncements. Her messages and actions, moreover, were restricted for the most part to healing and moral instruction, two activities often assigned to women in the dominant division of labor” (Román, 128, 2007). La Samaritana’s voice undergoes a process of ungendering, an unwoman female in Eurocentric terms. It is not male, she is not placed from one sex binary to the other, but her voice becomes masculine because it cannot be a woman’s. For acceptance or proximity to legitimacy, I contend that La Samaritana voice, that of a female of color, must be ungendered, and rendered towards the masculine in such a

society. This is so because Black and Indigenous women are not gendered as women [read, white] on the scale of Humanity, or by Eurocentric colonial metrics of measuring the Human and by proxy, gender. From my understanding of the text regarding La Samaritana, this process occurs once her activities become popularized and she gains notoriety. What's more, she is only granted a kind of woman's legitimacy through the connection of marriage to a man—he gives her own subjectivity and/or narration depth and sound.

“By staking a position alongside Caliban, one is more likely to be “recognized” and therefore interpellated into a patriarchal nation-state framework that promises certain opportunities and privileges to its abiding citizens, including protection. Remembering Sycorax, a woman without an audible voice, an exile without a nation, and an accused witch to top it off, is a threat to the patriarchal social imaginary” (Lara, 90, 2007). Lara highlights the problematic nature with feminists taking up a position alongside Caliban versus Sycorax, in which to her, the former allows for certain benefits that a positionality with Sycorax could never afford.

This voicing and narration are not unlike how Prospero (and other male characters) are Sycorax's narrator, however I recognize the contexts are different, but I maintain the action is still about a woman's connection to men in order to narrate and validate their existence or their work. The master and the slave binary become a masculinist frame through which Sycorax is only ever encountered through the mediated experiences of men and/or men adjacent figures, never on her own terms. La Samaritana's legitimacy occurs when she becomes married and begins to do the domestic labor that is assigned to women.

“Although the crowds disappeared, the threat that La Samaritana represented did not. La Samaritana had a way of inspiring imitators and launching traditions. The memory of her ministry posed dangers of its own. Perhaps for this reason, La Samaritana’s name was mentioned for decades as new campaigns to wipe out superstition were launched. It is as if critics haunted by the past found it necessary to conduct regular exorcism to rid Puerto Rico of its backward spirits” (Román, 129, 2007). This explanation of La Samaritana’s exodus from public life and her legacy in the community rears me once again to an exchange between Prospero and Ariel, in which Prospero interrogates the spirit of air insomuch that Ariel must recount not only why he is within the service of Prospero but also the way he must be grateful to Prospero. The parallels between the quote above regarding La Samaritana’s aftermath and the following exchange between Prospero and Ariel, for me are circumstances of the ungenerated-healer-witch-of color-femme with a legacy carried on in a manner that is not wholly of her own making.

“ Prospero. This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child
And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave,
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,
By help of her more potent ministers
And in her most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain

A dozen years; within which space she died
And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groans
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island—
Save for the son that she did litter here,
A freckled whelp hag-born—not honour'd with
A human shape.

Ariel. Yes, Caliban her son.” (Shakespeare, 31-32, accessed 2022)

Legacies and memories of those who are unvoiced and ungendered are perceptions that connect to Amerindian philosophies regarding the memory of the dead within the bodies of the living. In what Mentore describes as suffuse memory, the subjectivity of some Amerindian societies entails an accumulation of recollected images of the dead, which in turn suggests the self (of the deceased) remembers itself through this custodial relationship with the living. I have noted that for myself and my own work, I interpret suffuse memory as the equation for Sycorax or Sycoraxic memory and/or kin, which resonates with my work in the past. I juxtapose here the practice of re-membering by Black women artists and Mentore’s words on presentation:

“Through a return to Afro-Indigenous cultural markers and performance, part of the goal has been to use this new visual language, and these artists and their works have demonstrated the myriad of ways to do so. These works provided me with an understanding of how Black women artists, despite the difference in geographical regions or ethnic backgrounds, the ways a diasporic community can turn to its past and remember” (X, 57, 2019).

“...the care of the self here belongs to others. It is caring others who manage the presentation of the self. In this scenario, the other succeeds as the moral custodian and care-taker of self-image” (Mentore, 66, 2018).

Moreover, Mentore suggests that in these Amerindian cultures, the self is created through a collective and actively collected subjectivity. This collected subjectivity would explain how the image of the Self not only resides in the memories of others, but also how the Self becomes the subject, as opposed to the body as object. This matters in that the body and garments are vessels for which true energy of the spirit constitutes the Self. With regards to narration, tradition, and autonomy of an authentic cultural self, by which I mean a conception of self that comes through processes of decoloniality, these garments are symbolic. Garments can be vessels of articulation of self-hood, particularly when done so through said processes of decoloniality (whichever they may be). Be it performance, dance, ritual, ceremony, meetings, or healing, when worn with intention they are modes of retaining and documenting history; in some instances, garments are worn with the intention of who Black and Indigenous peoples are despite ongoing coloniality. There is also the ability and the necessity for these garments to evolve with the culture they seek to represent, even if the situation in question is traditional. The garments, the people and the culture evolve together. “To mask or clothe the corpse with the life of a living performance continues, then, the social existence of the deceased beyond the end of its lived reality” (Mentore, 71, 2018).

Returning to memory and temporality, I believe, therefore, we can understand how it is that Sycorax and her kin live beyond the colonial metrics of time through the memory of Afro-Indigeneity and the formation of the Self always in the process of being-out-of-settler time.

Mark Rifkin's book *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (2017) is what I cite to refer to this colonial metric of temporality, a framework in which he eloquently outlines within the first chapter. "Rather than approaching time as an abstract, homogeneous measure of universal movement along a singular axis, we can think of it as plural, less as a temporality than temporalities. From this perspective, there is no singular unfolding of time, but, instead, varied temporal formations that have their own rhythms—patterns of consistency and transformation that emerge immanently out of the multifaceted and shifting sets of relationships that constitute those formations and out of the interactions among those formations" (Rifkin, 2, 2017). Rifkin tells us that settler time denies Indigenous people temporal sovereignty, much in how Michael Hanchard notes in his chapter titled *Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora* found in *Alternative Modernities* (2001), when describing the relationship Africans and the African diaspora's relationship to time. Both Rifkin and Hanchard suggest the power dynamic found between settler colonial states, as in the case with the Americas, the differences and delineations between the subordinate and the oppressor become the measure in which groups of people can live and move through their daily lives. To make it clear, I compare the two following passages from both Rifkin and Hanchard.

"Time, when linked to relations of dominance and subordination, is another social construct that marks inequality between various social groups" (Hanchard, 281, 2001).

"...U.S. settler colonialism produces its own temporal formation, with its own particular ways of apprehending time, and the state's policies, mappings, and imperatives generate the frame of reference..." (Rifkin, 2, 2017)

Within Taíno culture and conceptions of temporality and memory, the past is carried with the living, like what was discussed with the anthropological assessments of Amerindian societies and suffuse memory. The future is to be built by the collective whilst maintaining a drive to live in the present as is established as part of Indigenous subjectivities. This relates to Oceanic Indigenous subjectivity as Wendt describes. “Our dead are woven into our souls like the hypnotic music of home flutes; we can never escape them. If we let them, they can help us illuminate ourselves to one another. They can be the source of newfound pride, self-respect and wisdom” (Wendt, 203, 1982). Wendt also describes how the idea of preservation, specifically the preservation of culture, is largely a Western concept, foreign to Oceanic thought, and I add this extends also to Taíno. These Afro and Indigenous framings of temporality are now to be specifically related to the Caribbean basin and what I previously framed as a traumatic fissure in the narrative and histories of the Taíno people when they first encountered European colonialists. King asserts the Taíno/Arawak and Black diasporic analysis of *The Tempest* posit the Caribbean as the initial space of encounter between the characters in the play.

“While the two communities tussle with each other over the radicalization (or representation) of Caliban, and therefore of Sycorax, as Indigenous, Black, or Mestizo, some semblance of consensus emerges about the where of the epic narrative of the inaugural events of New World discovery. As several Black studies scholars have argued, the story of modernity and the New World begins in the basin of the Caribbean. The violent rupture that created the time, space, and people of the Caribbean also created the Americas, including Canada.” (King, 196, 2019)

King also wrote about the cartography of the Human, citing such sources as Wynter and the development of Man1, and King does so through an analysis of mapmaking in the New World. These cartographic projects and projections enabled the creation of the British (and I would argue Spanish and Portuguese if we also cite casta paintings) subject as a cartographic human that embedded itself within the landscape. These actions are of course done through the extermination of Indigenous societies and further developed through Black fungibility. “In other words, the mapping of Blackness and Indigeneity is an attempt to spatially fix and capture forms of Black fugitively and Indigenous resistance that elude the British and present an existential threat throughout the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.” (King, 85, 2019) This quote brings me back to Rifkin when he observes that state policy creates boundaries and lines on the land, so to speak, in order to control and designate the relationships of people within the chosen spaces.

Therefore, not only are Black and Indigenous people subject to the colonial measure of time (their entire lives controlled by masters and overseers, the state, and lastly the highest body of government), but also spatially within either their own lands or the displaced lands they were forced to live on. “This *being-colonized* emerges when power and thinking become exclusionary... To be sure, *being-colonized* is [the result of] the very product of modernity/coloniality in its intimate relation with the coloniality of power, the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of being itself” (Maldonado-Torres, 39, 2004).

However much I believe that *being-colonized* is the case for many people still living within post-colonial societies, particularly by virtue of living within the matrix of domination³⁷, I also

³⁷ This is to say individuals who are People of Color, LGBTQ, disabled, etc. Individuals who are outliers of what is considered by the dominant society to be normative.

believe in the capacity of Black and Indigenous resistance to being-in-settler time, thereby being able to fashion, remap and transcend the colonialities of power, knowledge and of Being (what it means to be Human). Wynter asks her readers to think beyond speaking for or over the silenced native woman, she suggests that we ask how the silence functions. “It is an issue which calls for a second self-assertion able to respond to the new metaphysical imperative, not now of altering nature, but of altering our systems of meanings, and their privileged texts, and, therefore, of abolishing [sic] ascriptions of ‘race’ and ‘wealth’...” (Wynter, 365, 1990)

Sycoraxian legacies and memories are thriving within the living like La Samaritana in Puerto Rico. The ungendered silenced femme, dark and dangerous, embodying the fears of men and yet still the basis of the narrative and yet able to transcend through time and space and influence the those that are still present. Where does the Sycoraxian lineage lead to? Not to any one island, since Sycorax and her kin repeat themselves and live a kaleidoscopic experience throughout the Caribbean. There is a fractality to her legacy that can be seen and felt throughout the region.

Liminality relates to culture and ritual, shifting nature of culture as a response to the being colonized. Victor Turner’s reflective writings when regarding liminality as a response— moment when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape. It is a phase in the life of a subject where contradictions and instabilities haunt the subject- this brings me to *Matter and Memory* (1896) by Henri Bergson, ‘there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our sense we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience, enacting a dialectic in which past experience gives coherence and meaning to what we sense while being guided by encounters and possibilities

in the present. But we have yet to know or visualize the concrete counters of the future” (Bergson, n/a, 1896).

Conclusion

I depart from this port of thought, literature and decolonial foundation towards the space that I have termed the Vocal Void. The Vocal Void serves as the shoal and space where Hispanic Caribbean philosophy emerges to present a phenomenology all on its own, and specifically to unearth the voices of Afro-Indigenous femmes whose voices are rarely heard within this discourse. A space whose heredity I trace back through historical figures such as La Samaritana, whose ancestry is understood as the African and Indigenous “first Puerto Ricans”, and yet her intangible ancestry is found in Sycorax.

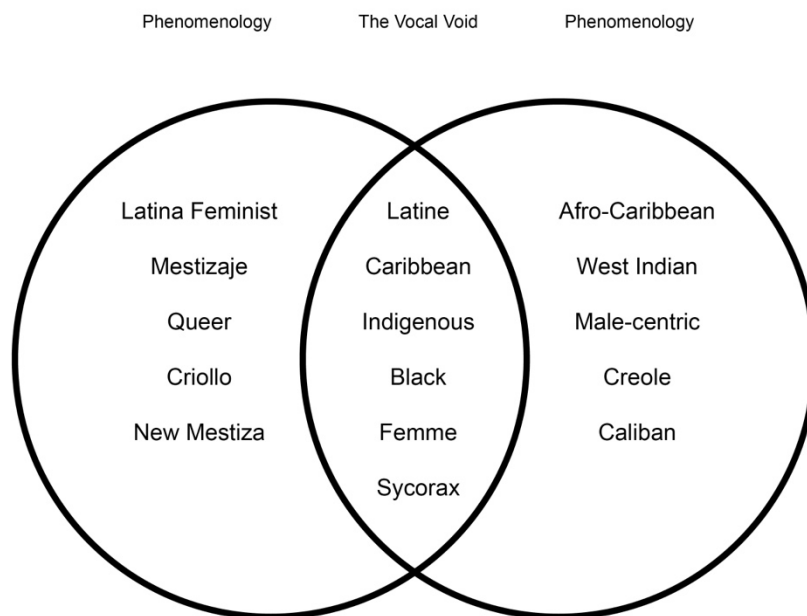


Figure 4, *Vector Spaces and The Vocal Void*, Artist Marcia X

At present, the frameworks, phenomenologies and histories of writers from Latin America and the Caribbean span across the gender, sexuality, and racial lines. Each context presents itself both as a portal to discovery of new ways in understanding oneself- whilst also operating as a divide in a manner of speaking. The shoal metaphor as a heuristic and framework is appropriate when contextualizing these varied philosophies and histories. In Figure 2, I illustrate the overlapping canons, identities, histories as presented through philosophy. The Vocal Void is not presented visually in this manner to suggest that it is specifically born out of Latina Feminist Philosophy or Anglo and Francophone Phenomenology, but kin to both canons that has the potential to present itself as part of the ongoing discussions of subjectivity, independent and somewhat removed from the established discourse. It is from this space of philosophical liminality in which I transfer my writing voice and style towards a freer form of expression and consequently, art making.

Chapter Eleven

Re-membering as Practice and Performance

Vejigante-Mask making and Performance

I turn to Wilson Harris, and his quantum engagements consciousness, and what we as artists within the Harrisian tradition may be able to do when he says “We arrive in New World epic when we experience or re-imagine the earthquake of conquest as if conquest is native to our very bones. we are involved in an orchestration of imageries divine and human, creator and creature, Death and complex liberation from death-dealing regimes that embrace humanity in many areas of the globe. This desire for liberation is instinctive to ancient epic but it needs to be grasped differently, realized differently, it needs re-visionary capacities in our own age” (Harris, 182, 1999). Performance as ritual, acts of resistance and re-memory, are a means for gaining one’s voice in the Vocal Void.

I do not have the traditional materials to make the mask I want to wear. It requires carving coconut. I use gauze, flour, water, glue, air dry clay. I sit beneath the shade on a roof, which is made of found materials on the street: a few plastic poles, string, and textile from a sports store. The sun and its heat batters me, nonetheless. I cut the gauze, dip it into the water and flour mix, and begin to layer the pieces one by one over a round shaped bowl large enough to cover my entire face. The gauze dries quickly in the dry heat, I work fast so as to ensure it is structurally sound. When I finish, I begin to play with the clay, I add another layer of substance to my fingers. There was only caked flour around my cuticles, but now that initial layer is covered with bits of watered clay. I mold the eye shapes based off the memory of the masks from Loiza, Puerto Rico. I determine they’re not thick enough. And reshape them until I feel satisfied. I set the eyes aside and begin to batter the clay in preparation to make a mouth. It’s

large and should go from one side of the mask to the other, and I am unsure if I have enough clay. I don't know whose mouth this is that I am making, but I work towards making its shape. The lips should be big enough to house the teeth that I will make as well. Long buck teeth.

The face is in pieces. It is wet in its liminal state of creation. I move all the pieces around my table so they can dry evenly in the sun. My skin smells, it is part my own natural odor, and that smell skin releases when it's being cooked under the daylight. I am silent as a I work and move. After each piece of clay or gauze has dried and set, I glue them together, a puzzle, a face that has made itself. I insert the spikes, made of bamboo and the mask is almost complete. Picking colors that remind me of water spirits, the acrylic paint also bakes under the sun and its sweet smell permeates my senses since there is no breeze to take it away from me. I face the large, blue, and yellow mask, with its bright red buck grin. It is now complete. It cannot be boxed nor fit into a bag. I must carry it through the streets of Ciutat Vella, Barcelona to the destination. I roam the smaller arteries of the city until I hit the main vein down towards the sea and the ports. I venture towards the Columbus Monument.

I am now on the steps of the colossal Columbus monument in Barcelona, Spain. Behind me is a bas-relief of Taínos, their faces are warped in fear; they are running from Columbus and his men, as they have just stepped on the shores of my homeland, Puerto Rico. Large sculptures of lions are perched on either side of me; they're each mounted by children, smiling, and laughing as their parents take their photograph. In the bas-relief, the women, men, and children are running away from the Spanish as Columbus kneels in praise of his 'discovery'. What is often left unspoken, is the clash, the rupture in time and culture for Taino's when Columbus arrived. What is often unheard is an Afro-Indigenous voice from Puerto Rico itself; it is erased

in nation state identity building, lost to history as characters of a grand myth. Post-independence identity needed to be formed by the ruling classes, and thus began the popularization of mixing, or *mestizaje* in the Caribbean and Latin America. Its premise rested on the vision that those living within the former colonial Iberian territories would become the most prominent post-colonial force, as a unified peoples. In other words, “Latines”, although rooted principally in European desires for imperial and intellectual power, were fundamentally a people ‘mixed’ with many kinds of races; that is to say, Latine people should no longer be considered as subjects nor part of their former colonial masters. Due to their mixed essence, they would be able to one day transcend race, become a cosmic race created of many mixtures. This fantasy is not too different from other nation/state identity building attitudes, for example, Puerto Rico’s popular notion of “3 Razas: Taíno, Negro y Europeo” or Jamaica’s “Out of Many, One”. These ideals are meant to suggest there is an eradication of old-world divisions within former colonies, and what emerged were united, equal societies and subject positions whose interests rested solely on an evolution beyond their colonial beginnings.

Although it is not true, and has yet to become evident within Mexico, Puerto Rico, or other countries in Latin America, these nation state identity projects function as the bridge that takes us from deep within the trenches of the colonial condition to the present-day attempts at dismantling the chains that maintain our cultures within many of the same binds; these are also contemporary archives that are built of resistance but also towards re-memory. Anti-blackness and the erasure of Afro-Latine existence is still prominent, the removal of Indigenous people from their lands is still occurring, and over all a majority of the people fleeing Latin America are Afro and/or Indigenous people who have been displaced by coups or drug wars. White Criollos still hold power, land, resources, and money to this day in Latin America.

Erasure via mythmaking: Taino's do not exist anymore, there is hardly anything left of its culture or memory, and African influence is found mostly in music and in the food. The existential-cultural crisis now becomes a deeper question; am I actually even a Latina? What is Latinidad, despite its status against US American dominance, settler colonial dominance that perpetuated the same Indigenous genocide and enslaved Africans? This I knew, in many ways, conceptually to be true prior to this investigation, but the existential-cultural crisis is a gateway to continuously ask questions of my orientation. My orientation not only as a Latina, or diasporic Puerto Rican, or femme, but also what it means to be a Puerto Rican who is classed as Latina, and often falling under to discussions of immigration despite Puerto Ricans being legally classed as American citizens. I may be a Latina, but I am not part of the imagination of Latinidad, let alone valid and worthy female Latinidad within the community itself. Indigenous and African peoples within *those* borders are on the periphery of society, too. As I witnessed the onslaught of hatred towards an up-and-coming Indigenous Mexican actress in 2018-2019, shown to the world across social media, I remember that there is the multiplicity of the Latina experience in the United States and elsewhere, and also the multiplicity of the Indigenous and African experience of those within Latin America, too. Dominant Afro-Caribbean studies leave us behind, too, for our manner of speaking a Caribbean Spanish and all its implications has yet to accent studies of Caliban; from here, I find myself in the Vocal Void.

Vocal Void- a conceptual/philosophical/social space/dynamic in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispano-Caribbean are unvoiced, and for the purposes of specificity to this research, within the field of phenomenology and philosophy in general. The Vocal Void occurs because Latina feminist phenomenology operates under the umbrella of Latinidad and mes-

tizaje, which forbids any kind of specificity and complexity of anti-blackness and settler colonialism on Indigenous lands. This is followed by Afro-Caribbean phenomenology which not only has yet to include literature from the Hispano-Caribbean but also is dominated by male voices.



Figure 5, Untitled #3, Image Courtesy of artist, 2021

“It is in these places of the modern/colonial city where the damnés’ dreams, actions, prophetic imaginations, and yearnings rub raw against the material conditions of the coloniality of capitalism” (Taylor-Garcia, 19, 2018).

It strikes me that the emotion of fear is necessitated for this artistic interpretation, perhaps to show these people were infantile and in need of salvation? Fear is the chemical that provides joy to the colonizer, and in the past, I would note that bodies of color are sites of violence within the gaze of the colonizer. A flesh of color creates the foundation for the construction of whiteness, which in turn denies the humanity of the spirit inhabiting said flesh of color. The Indigenous is denied the ability to articulate for itself; it is now a captive body forever within this monument. I know sudden rage. I move through the space between the bas-relief and the stairs, as I turn away from the statue, the other tourists, viewers are in front of me and this makeshift stage. Traffic from all sides is moving like blood cells through a vein, the sun is hot, and I find myself both placing my mask on, and also watching for police. This mask, made of the memory of enslaved Africans and the last of the Taino in Puerto Rico, a result of celebration of life despite genocide and slavery; mask-making, wearing, performance as ritual is an act of re-memory.



Figure 6, Untitled #5, Image Courtesy of Artist, 2021

“The experience of having one’s humanity constantly questioned or outright negated can allow one to see the colonality of the semiotic structure that one inhabits” (Taylor-Garcia, 24, 2018).

I become acutely aware of who is and is not around me. My mask only allows me to have 15% of my vision, I am vigilant of police. I know that my papers aren’t good enough, I could be deported. I am wearing a large colorful mask with protruding spikes, a white dress with a large, flowing skirt and an electric blue scarf. I am performing for myself and my camera.

There is no money to be made. I am hyperaware. I am hyperaware of both what my mask, my body and my silent performative protest means, but also accurately aware of the state and the potential punishments. I dance anyways. I extend my arms downward and grasp the cloth and begin to move my arms sharply so as to punctuate a beat with the large flowing skirt. In my mind, I can hear the beats of the drum over and over, I try to drown myself in another space, one that is filled with music. I dance despite knowing there's a potential negative outcome. One of the potential intentions for a monument

"In phenomenological terms, the damnés neighborhood is the physical background from which residents face the world as well an object of consciousness to which residents are orientated...Situating consciousness is necessarily embodied, historical, cultural, and sensitive. The relationship between one's raced, gendered, and classed embodiment and the collection of buildings in which one lives has an inherently social character. A perception of the building and of the self is necessarily shaped by the social situation in which the person exists" (Taylor-Garcia, 22, 2018).

My body begins to feel like it is vibrating from my nerves being electrocuted with fear and awareness. I am reminded of when I first performed in the courtyard where reportedly Columbus met with the King and Queen upon his first return from his supposed discovery. A security guard watches me closely, his slight movements follow me as I approach the stairs, I squat, I hold cowrie shells in my hand, I am still as I squat. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui invokes the oppressive need for fear when she states, "Humiliation and disorder go hand in hand...the

image of an Indian diminished in front of his equals maps a psychological itinerary of domination. The condition of social diminishing, the attitude of 'bending one's back' or 'lowering oneself,' summarizes the moral background for colonial misery" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 21, 2020).

For a moment I am lost on the stairs in my own mind, but I know that I can't be away in my suspension of fear for too long; I am never truly fully away in the moment of just being. I can still feel his eyes sharply on my body; I am under constant surveillance. I make myself visible on a stage of coloniality. I bring with me objects that are meant to induce the work of Orishas, and my body takes the place of ancestors who were bought back to be shown. Re-remembering is a spiritual practice, a construction of the Self outside of white supremacy is not only a return to what elders and ancestors have done before, but also to infuse the practices with how they can serve me today. This stage of coloniality is now in control by the actor and not the directors, but it is only for a moment; I had stepped out of settler time but then stepped back in. I have traveled, I know there are moments where I can be somewhere else and "fuck up the timeline". Cuscanqui explains the potential of these kind of moments by evoking "... an inversion of historical time, the insurgency of a past and a future, which might culminate in catastrophe or renewal...experience a change in consciousness, in identities and forms of knowing, and in modes of conceiving the political" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2, 2020).

The security does not come to me, does not stop me, but he lets me know that I am watched. I finish my performance, I exhale, I breath and breath and breath and know there is another opportunity to move to another site of colonial violence and do the moments all over again. Walking through the city and breathing its air is the set-up to each act, each step provides another moment of contemplation. The performance is a ritual, with its own ebb and flow, of peace, rupture, suture, and the cycle repeats. It moves from being a mere thought of how to

situate oneself in a colonial city—how to confront the colonial city-how to deal with the colonial city in terms of abjection. The process may never truly end. According to Cuscanqui, what I am experiencing is unique yet familiar to others, what I am practicing, has been practiced before, the practices of resistance repeat themselves as coloniality repeats itself. “The themes return but the disjunctures and outcomes are different; the rebellion returns, but it is not the same. It is like a spiral movement. Historical memory is reactivated and at the same time reelaborated and resignified in subsequent cries and cycles of rebellion. It is evident that in a colonial situation, that which goes unsaid contains the most meaning; words make more than they reveal, and symbols take center stage” (Rivera Cusicanqui, 6, 2020). For a moment, there is an intervention on the abjectivity on my own personal level, and it is in my own control. I do not lean into the abjection as a symbol to represent this body, I want to liberate the body and heal it. When the people and collectives approach these monuments, tear them down, stand on their grounds, or graffiti them as has been popular these last few years, the intervention beckons the spiraling of time, and the act(s) becomes a wider practice of rebellion and suturing on a larger communal level.



Figure 7, La Sangre Llama, Plaça del Rei, 2019

As I attempt to take control of the narrative, I am still imbued with fear and knowing of the multiple illegalities I navigate. I am still, also, however flushed with the rush of adrenaline because at least perhaps, one moment I crossed some kind of boundary that I am not wholly certain of, and one that I can definitely understand. My existence and sitting on those stairs could not be enough to get me dragged out but knowing that had I moved one way too sharp, one sound too loud, it could have been. From here, I shift my consciousness again, I reorientate myself once more out of the Vocal Void and into Sycoraxic Subjectivity.

Art Making and Sycoraxic Subjectivity

Sycoraxic subjectivity- this term has been developed in the spirit of the works by South American feminist philosophers but mostly Afro-Caribbean phenomenologists. Utilizing Shakespeare's, The Tempest through its role as an allegory for the colonized, displaced and subjected to slavery in post-colonial literature and philosophy, I push past the main characters and focus upon the voiceless specter, Sycorax. Sycorax, Caliban's mother, banished from her native Algiers whilst pregnant, gives birth to a half beast on this unnamed island, is said to be an evil witch. We as audience, only know her story through the perspective of the European male character, Prospero; despite being mentioned often throughout the play, the audience does not get to hear Sycorax provide her own personal narrative, for her story is at the mercy of Prospero. Sycoraxic Subjectivity aims to create a conceptual space in which Indigenous, Black, displaced femmes aim to delink or extricate themselves from coloniality through actions of resistance that are often associated with Afro-Indigenous womanhood. Sycoraxic Subjectivity encompasses decoloniality, feminism, Black quantum thought and Afro-Syncretic spiritual practices through an intentional de-centering of the colonial, Eurocentric values in how we practice feminism and engage with ourselves and our communities.

Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic-Caribbean, evade captivity by the dominance of mestizaje through various actions despite their invisibility like Sycorax. In order to break from the confines of Christianity and the systems of dominance it supports, Afro-Syncretic religion is not only a return to home, but also the creation of a new kind of homely world. In this, I continue to reference Gomez-Peña's Fourth World, a conceptual place where the displaced, the diaspora, the Indigenous and others meet. "The members of the Fourth World live between and across various cultures, communities, and

countries. And our identities are constantly being reshaped by this kaleidoscopic experiences. The artists [sic] who inhabit the Fourth World have a very important role: to elaborate the new set of myths, metaphors, and symbols that will locate us within all of these fluctuating cartographies” (Gómez-Peña, 7, 1996).

Through Sycorax Subjectivity, I continuously work towards being able to create a literary and artistic space in which I can create works that speak to what has often been erased and ignored in the Afro-Indigenous Hispanic-Caribbean experience. This provides others with the tools to (re)focus their ways of knowing but also knowledge and artistic production, giving them a power over the narration of their lived experience, an archive of resistance.

“As people reflect on the buildings from different places in the world they take different positions toward the buildings, and each person is in turn also positioned in the world. These different positions towards the buildings come not only from individualist, disembodied situation...Their relationship to the buildings and the world are specifically situated” (Taylor-Garcia, 22, 2018)

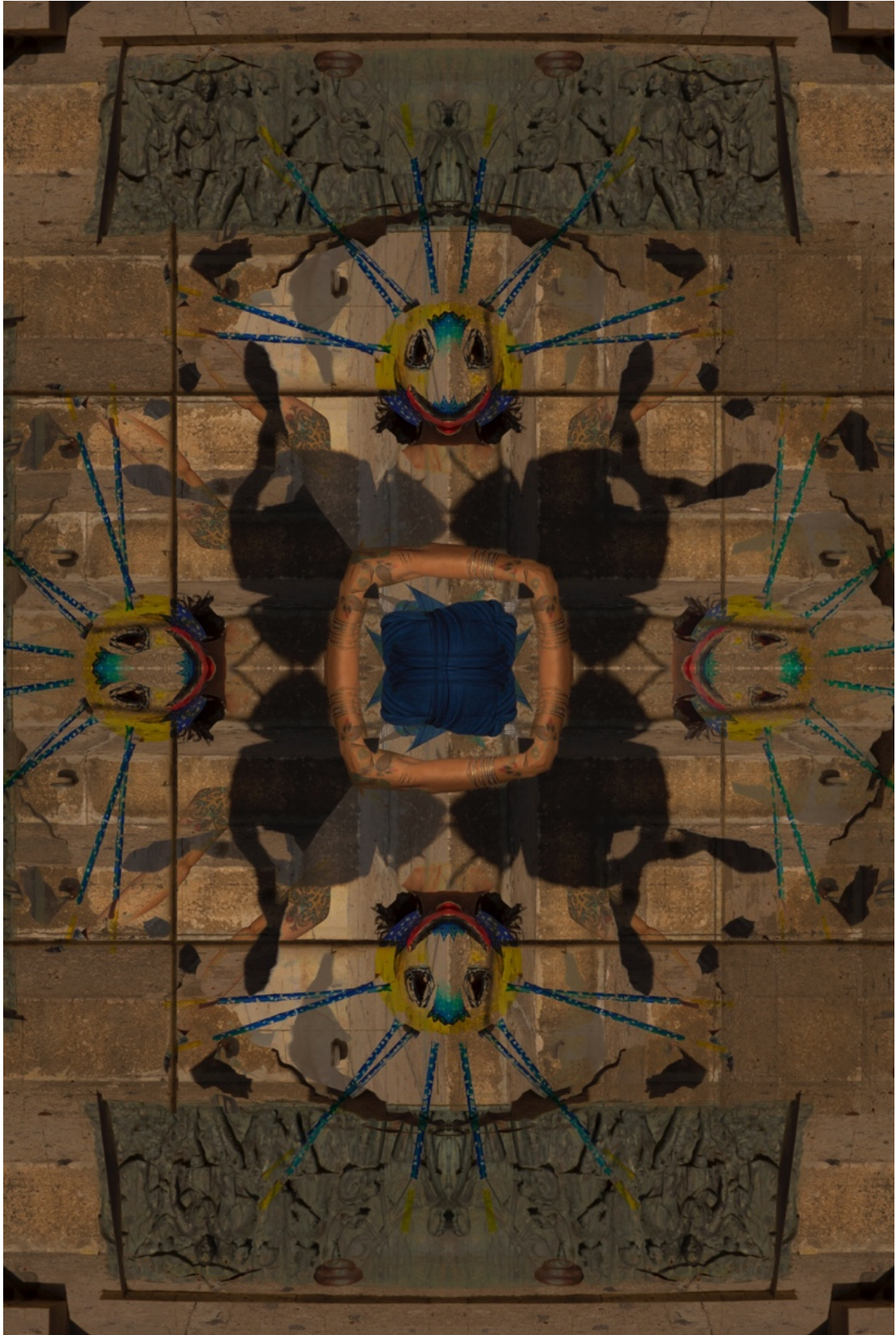


Figure 8, Untitled #6, Image Courtesy of Artist, 2021

The Columbus monument serves to remind viewers that the myths of Columbus's grand discovery are true, in that he brought salvation, he ushered a new era of discovery and riches and the dawn of creating civilization in an empty, vast land. The uninhabitable. I believe in the connections between settler colonialism and patriarchy in the notion of land + body as conquest riches. Insofar as patriarchy is in its form we recognize today, the ownership of bodies, particularly in regard to reproduction, as part of the riches gained in conquest, as I and many others are still reeling from the overturning of Roe Vs. Wade against the historical landscape of sterilization of Puerto Rican women by the United States during the era of Operation Bootstrap; we are not in control of our bodies nor of our lands. Despite the slippage of control and the continued status as abject bodies, we as a collective are active in interrogating the systems that structured to dominate. what this performance is/does—why it is important in our contemporary context/moment.

The original performances, created in 2019, were avenues to explore my own orientation in a colonial city, but to also describe the process of the awareness of coloniality in colonial sites and at the monuments throughout urban landscapes (see Figure 6). My intentions were to confront the monuments and the sites, with a body and cultural consciousness that was once feeling as if it were ruptured, was now actively being sutured whole through these performances that were also ritual. This suturing was possible by the confrontations, by the fear, through a meditation of awareness and intention within and in-between the sites. As the aforementioned philosophical concepts move on from one orientation to the next, so do the performances and the images produced. It is important to continue to interrogate, to return to tradition while we learn how to allow it to transform into a ritual or movement or way of being that is suitable for us now. The goal is not necessarily to return to what is no longer

there, but to be able to establish ways of moving forward, into whatever world we create for ourselves.

Conclusion

Confrontations

“We are turned towards things. Such things make an impression upon us. We perceive them as things insofar as they are near to us, insofar as we share a residence with them. Perception hence involves orientation; what is perceived depends on where we are located, which gives us a certain take on things” (Ahmed, 27, 2006). I arrived into this world, orientated into a white supremacist society as an Other within its contemporary form of coloniality. I was ‘Latina’ within the Anglo-dominant society and therefore my flesh, body, sexuality, and legitimacy was imbued with whatever Latina means to those who use it. This identifying marker renders one transparent through gendered, racialized, and sexual coding; it meant certain exceptions and regulations about how I moved through the world, and how I am to be moved by dominating structures. How I dress, how I express sensuality and sexuality, who I can be with and for what purpose, and what those relations mean for my own social, racial, and economic mobility. When realizing that I was within this structure that had me believing certain ‘essential’ traits about myself, the internalization of racialized misogyny, I began to question what this all meant for me. I had to move through my own memories about race, gender, and sexuality in order to understand why I made the choices that I had, and whether or not they were real, a kind of colonial disassociation.

Phenomenology is the philosophical methodology that allowed me to contextualize what I was doing, for example, naming the existential-cultural crisis. In order to arrive at the Existential-Cultural Crisis’s concrete definition, I had to suspend the preconceived notions about myself, and although it was not done so traditionally, I believe it was a bracketing of sorts. The phenomena of being ‘Latina’ was seen anew by me, and from there I was able to name what

I felt, and then understand how to move forward critically disengaging what I previously believed about myself and the society in which I found myself in. My orientation began to change.

During this intensive interrogation through phenomenology, venturing towards the works of Chicana/Latina Feminist writers and Afro-Caribbean writers, I soon realized that the Existential-Cultural Crisis was, however, not the final destination for my own analysis. The Vocal Void emerged from these canons, a space in where Afro-Indigenous femme voices from the Hispanic Caribbean, straddling the Latina and Caribbean identity, culture and also diaspora was still in need of a deeper engagement. Latina is far too large of an umbrella term to totally envelope the multiplicity of the experience, and to be from the Caribbean is an experience different enough from the more visible Chicana/Borderland experience that is often the main scope of Latina feminist literature. Afro-Caribbean literature, dominated by heterosexual male voices, leaves little space for femmes to discuss queer sexuality and racialized misogyny, and other violence enacted by the continuous coloniality of islands such as Puerto Rico by the United States; there is more to the separation from the Hispano to Anglo Caribbean than just language; the political preoccupations and style of literary delivery are also an issue.

I land as Latina, and after a suspension of my preconceived notion of what Latina means, particularly within the dominant Anglo society, I arrive at a rejection of the term and false prescribed essentialism and determine what the Existential-Cultural Crisis really is. I move away from Latina and focus upon being "Puerto Rican", a colonial subject in many ways to its dominant U.S. master and even still, "Puerto Rican", and what that word means, is also in many ways a product of the similar mechanics of mestizaje, within the common nation state identity

building that many post-colonial countries took on as a project. So, arriving out of the orientation of Latina, I am Puerto Rican; what happens when I suspend Puerto Rican? When I interrogate what we are supposed to know and understand about our positions as people from the Caribbean? Hispano? Mestizo?

Afro-Indigeneity, when viewed through lens of the Puerto Rican imagination, is mythological; it is a footnote in many ways. Indigenous is not a part of the census; it is not recognized as a legal component to Puerto Rican identity, either by Puerto Rico or the United States if one is specifically discussing a Puerto Rican person. It is a contested identity, maintained through customs and beliefs within members of the Puerto Rican community. How am I to continue to reach through my experiences and the body through phenomenology and actually arrive at a destination that I can understand? I know that phenomenology is useful in its ability to allow a person to constantly interrogate and explore, but the Vocal Void is inhabited by very real people; I am not the only person who knows that Latina, or mestiza (mixed person) from the Caribbean or Puerto Rico is enough of a signifier. There surely must be more to say about this space that I believe to occupy.

What I have discovered throughout this process is that if we are to suspend the natural attitude, we must also question the politic of the natural attitude. Does the politic of the natural attitude look different for Merleau-Ponty and Fanon and myself? I would wager to say yes, we exist in different worlds and have different experiences and reflections upon the societies that we live in, perhaps this is a given. What is a nation of freedom and prosperity for one is a nation of suppression and regulation for me; we experience different worlds within the world. This is how I also understand the work Gómez-Peña does in *New World Border*, where he begins to describe how he moves through the United States and finds himself venturing to

different micro-utopias, in where communities (specifically communities of color, a complete melting pot of ethnicity, language, color and religion) operate like “Third World micro-republics than like communities that are part of some ‘western democracy.’ Today, the phrase ‘western democracy’ seems hollow and quaint” (Gómez-Peña, 1, 1996).

So, what is the politic of the natural attitude that I am suspending? Aside from Husserl’s framing of the natural attitude, the objects, and attitudes of the everyday and their effect on our being-in-the-world, it shifts from person to person. For Ortega, she notes that her natural attitude as a Latina is different from someone who is from the United States, particularly when eating cake with a spoon instead of a fork, for example. In this natural attitude, we are naive in our interactions with objects and the world around us. For Ortega it is normal to use a spoon; for her Anglo counterparts, it is normal to use a fork to eat a cake; but within cultural dynamics and particularly social power being an immigrant Latina in the U.S., suddenly the spoon is an abnormality. Phenomenology, in my framework, calls a suspension of a residual, colonial naïveté, a suspension of white supremacist, misogynistic hetero-centric notions of being-in-the-world as a ‘natural order’ of things, the normality of using a fork versus using a spoon. The residual, colonial naïveté has been set as the only set of morals, values, and systems one should have in place; there are many different kinds of societies in which there are varying sets of norms and values, this I understand. In this accepting of the colonial naïveté, however there is also a lost sense of self, that void I speak of. Phenomenology calls for a journey towards new ways of being- there is a freedom in the unknown, though, through the constant interrogation, questioning, and descriptions. Antonio Viegó in his book *Dead Subjects: Towards a Politics of Loss in Latino Studies* (2007) discusses loss amongst racialized subjects in the following passage:

“What kinds of social, material, and psychical losses can a human subject stand to endure in the world? What if answering this question, or even entertaining a response, required one to understand that a more fundamental question of loss persists for ethnic-racialized subjects? Before contemplating such a huge and ridiculous question, we are challenged to understand that, as ethnic-racialized subjects, we have already lost, have been made to lose, that is, by a kind of generous racist exemption, an interpretation of human subjectivity that takes into account the primordial loss endured by all human speaking organisms who must at some point choose language in order to express needs” (Viego, 224-225, 2007).

I find that I am totally aligned with Viego when he pushes for readers to consider the ethnic-racialized subject as one who has experienced a loss, as I want for myself and for my readers to consider the ethnic-racialized and gendered subject, the disposed and exiled subject- the one who lives in a void, the loss of a self-curated subjectivity. However, Viego approaches his subjects in a manner reminiscent of Fanon in that he wonders what kind of effects his questioning could have for psychiatry and psychology centered on ethnic and Hispanic subjects, and my approach is tailored towards how we understand the lived experiences of people who are within the void (see *La Samaritana*) and also the different stories a body can tell, beyond voice and language. These are subjects that are forced to be straight, as Ahmed suggests, and ethnic-racialized persons are compelled into fitting into these racialized boxes in order to be read as an object- an incomprehensible subject within the dominating society. I maintain a movement towards pushing beyond the subject, considering Wynter’s question of what it means to be human. A question of this matter is also posed by Viego when he posits “One might...suggest that the ethnic-racialized subject’s unconscious is not so much out of reach as it is nowhere to be found, because language as a structure is thought to never have effects on

this subject in the first place, compelling the question of whether we can even use the term *subject* to describe them..." (Viego, 24-25, 2007)

Returning to Figure 1, the *Cartography of Afro-Indigenous Femme Phenomenology* (shown on the following page) from the Hispanic Caribbean, pushes me to think past colonial identities, the idea that I must give into the *necessity* of capturing the subject, can arguably be understood as a of consumption of the subject; we can only relate to gendered bodies of color through consumption as though they are objects, and this consumption is also in how one relates to oneself (see the Spicey Latina shirt). Through conversation with Professor Qrescent Mali Mason, a Black Feminist phenomenologist, I wrote for myself, as part of mapping this confrontation, that we (Afro-Indigenous femmes) do not *need* to reclaim the subject and provide subjectivity with a new title. Since within the current system of organizing knowledge production (born out of colonialism and Natural Sciences/Enlightenment) Afro-Indigenous femmes never fit within its straightened lines. We can, however, continue to mold phenomenological practices as tools for moving through the Fourth World, and specifically for me, in how I continue to approach artistic production. In Figure 9, (see page 305) I provide a similar map to Figure 1; however, I focus on artistic research and production. *Cartography of Afro-Indigenous Femme Phenomenology: Artistic Research* showcases the artistic process that paralleled the theoretical research and production as the thesis progressed. Within this thesis, one is witness to my consistent turning away from colonial identities, thus following Viego's question and aligning it with Professor Mason's push for me to consider a reclamation of the subject, both of are valid. Are we actively doing critical phenomenology or not?

Leisha Jones, in her essay *Women and Abjection: Margins of Difference, Bodies of Art* (2007), opens her text with the sentence “The body speaks. Not just through its coded and territorialized outsides, but through its gleaming gut, chimera of bump and ooze” (Jones, 6, 2007). The body also speaks through the residuals of coloniality marked upon the flesh, and although Jones soon notes about the social abject, the sexual taboos, criminality, and what I read as disability, I circle back to the theme of the kinds of stories bodies can tell. Although Sycorax has no body, no muscles that propel sound through her throat and out of her mouth, she is still the force with which the narrative is driven. The abject is repelled by the status quo, however, it maintains its presence- sooner or later the abject will confront that which is categorized as worthy and human. Jones states something similar when she writes “abject beings are pushed beyond the margins of subjecthood, but they may also push back, challenging the stability of readable and enforceable norms” (Jones, 8, 2007). I can follow where Jones takes the reader, in and around the contours of the abject’s body, noting how it moves in and out of spaces and is categorized one way or another, what she calls sometimes-subject, and this reading is dependent upon the situation and thus how that body is read in particular contexts, how it moves through time. The abject is never fixed; when we move, we exist outside of the categories, and thus time for us is experienced differently, too. How we read our own bodies and how we move through temporality is different to that of the “Human”.

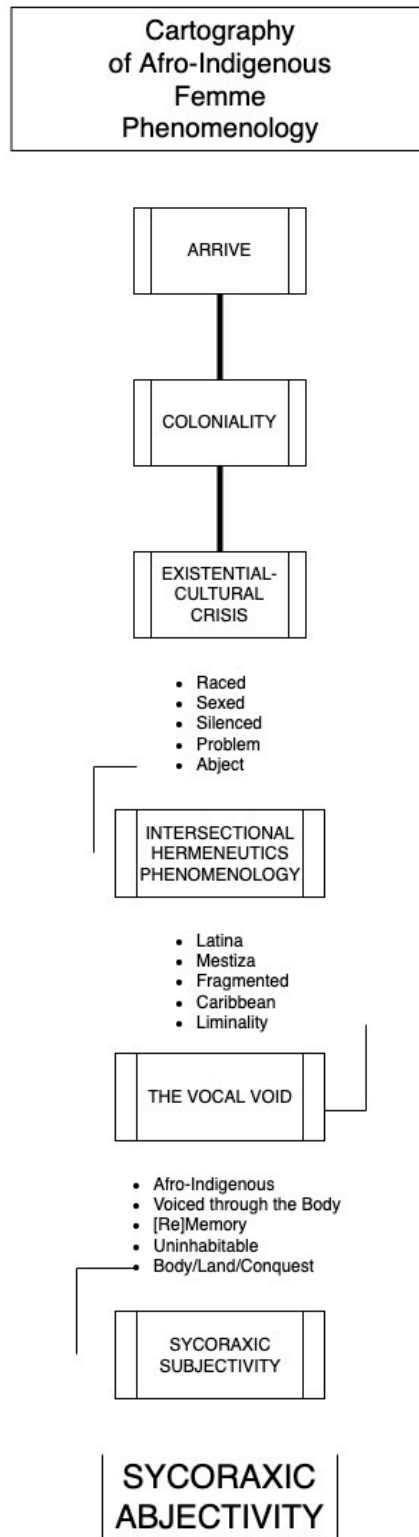


Figure 1, Cartography of Afro-Indigenous femme phenomenology

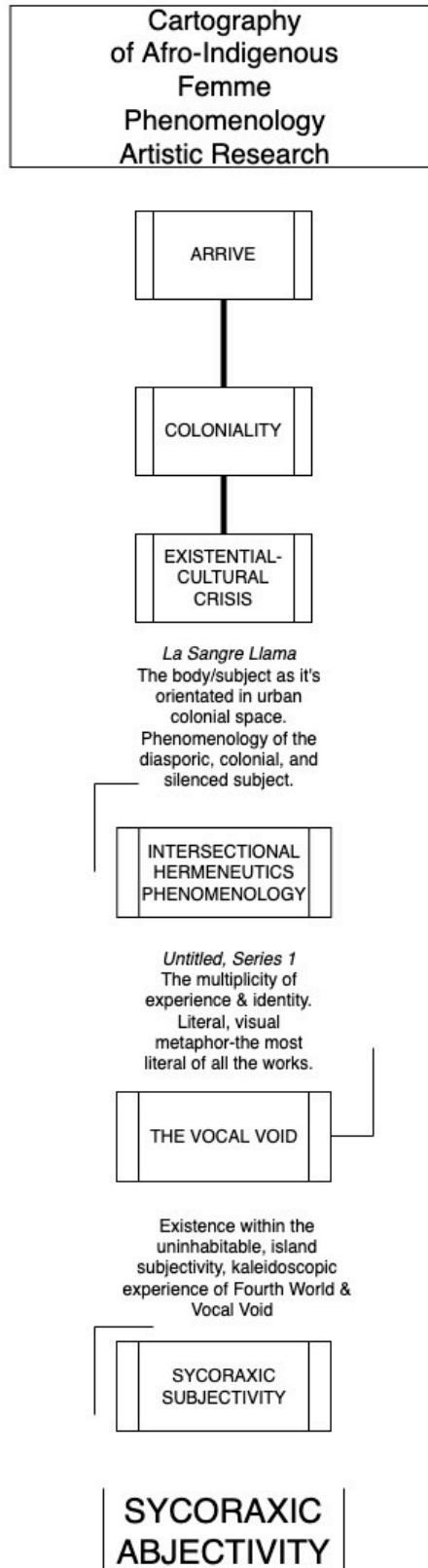


Figure 9, Cartography of Afro-Indigenous Femme Phenomenology: Artistic Research

Sycoraxic Abjectivity

The next step for confrontation and implementation of intersectional hermeneutics and phenomenology, is not a continued reclamation of the subject, as is inferred with Sycoraxic Subjectivity, but movement within the Fourth World; I am re-orientated towards Sycoraxic Abjectivity- a new level for Afro-Indigenous Femme phenomenology (Femme-nomenology). Although Sycoraxic Subjectivity is a useful outcome as the success of this research, the product of the cartography of Afro-Indigenous femme explorations (Figure 1) of established phenomenological literature by People of Color, I am in a [space] that is not the end, but the [beginning]. I play with the visualization of the words to show how I view spaces, and the perceived beginnings and potentials for expansion, i.e. [subjectless]. Abjectivity is where I believe this work does not [end] but now starts anew.

Sycoraxic Abjectivity- state of consciousness (or a political and philosophical action) in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean reject the subject (or subjectivity) that is the make-up of established colonial identifiers. This includes the nation-state identity in which white supremacy benefits, gender and sexual normative behavior and ideals, and homogeneous political and ethnic practices in which their material realities are reduced or erased. As a praxis, one rejects the recognition of umbrella terms such as Latino and participation in the political and cultural projects that reinforce such generalized terms. Furthermore, a constant interrogation of Latinidad and its roots in coloniality, an acceptance of the limitations of language, and intersectional investigations of race, nation, sex, gender, and other factors of the matrix of power are undertaken.

Alberto Sandóval-Sánchez discusses the Latino gay male body that lives with AIDS and its embodiment of the abject. Nevertheless, like myself, Sandóval-Sánchez also sees the potential of the [abject] subject when he says “the abject Latino gay subject in this liminal zone of abjection is capable of transgressing borders and hence of making possible a certain subversion and emancipation. In this way, the abject other is dangerous because he or she challenges the fragile limits of the order of things and social hierarchies” (Sandóval-Sánchez, 317, 2005). Through Sandóval-Sánchez and Professor Mason, I return to Gómez-Peña’s vision of the Fourth World.

Is the Fourth World an abject realm? I would say yes. For Gómez-Peña the Indigenous and the Diasporas are critical to his definition, therefore there is some space for the subject. Out of the voids, we create new myths; we own and re-member our traditions and they guide us through the fluidity of our cartographic projects of philosophy, liberation, survival, and world-building. Then I must ask, what is Fourth World thinking? I do not think it is solely border-thinking but as a school of thought Fourth World thinking stands alongside it, since it is far more kaleidoscopic and fractal. I believe that Fourth World thinking is not about reclaiming the subject but breaking free from being trapped by a subjectivity. There is fluidity of language, of experience, of race and gender, but this fluidity is not the same as erasure; intersectionality here acts as a failsafe against committing the error of erasure. This is also what the abject is teaching me as I move to fully understand Sycoraxic Abjectivity.

Abjectivity in artistic production has been explored by the likes of (not limited to) Kiki Smith, French artist Orlan, and Ana Mendieta. The Abject Female, or the Monstrous Female, a female which lacks, remains in the deep recesses of my art school contextual studies lecture memo-

ries. A theme often explored by feminist artists, particularly in the 1980's, it is not an untouched theme in terms of artistic production. How do these artists confront the abjection of their own bodies? Much like the investigation of Latina Feminist and Afro-Caribbean phenomenology, a great amount of the works of feminist artists and the abject are centered on white bodies. Admittedly, how do I reconcile creating a body of art works that stages the Afro-Indigenous femme's body as a site of fear and disgust? Is the purpose of some of the established artists to reclaim the slur of abject? Perhaps, and I ask these questions as a means of working through my artistic practice, for who, what and why am I making a work?

If I were to look at the practice of the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta (b. 1948) and examine the photographs *Untitled, Glass on Body Imprints, 1972*, how I engage and read them seems to be very different to how Leticia Alvarado reads them in her essay *Women and abjection: margins of difference, bodies of art* (2007), and subsequently contextualizing the works within the discourse of the abject. *Untitled, Glass on Body Imprints* is a series of 13 photographs in where Mendieta's face is pressed firmly against glass, firmly and violently at times. Her lips are stretched as far as they can be, the flesh seemingly about to tear from the tension. Her eyes and brows wincing against the pressure, and her cheeks creating unnatural facial contours. In two of the photographs, both within the center of the montage, Mendieta faces the camera head on: in the top photograph, it appears to me only her lips are against the glass, exaggerating the size of her lips slightly, and in the bottom photograph Mendieta's nose and lips are both pressed, and their forms and size are also exaggerated. Her features are flatter, wider, and larger.

In referencing Butler and working through her framework, the abject body includes women, and particularly bodies from the global south, as socially abject. Through Butler's framing, we can reference the unwhitening of Criollos within the Anglo-American society, as discussed previously in Chapter Five, as the |abject| in process- the white Criollo becomes |brown| Latine in the US. According to Alvarado, "we can read Mendieta's portrait as a purposely hyper-racialized façade that draws on popular notions of what being a person of color in the United States looks like...Mendieta invokes blackness, but the performance component of the piece, which the photographs document in vignettes, also allows her to comment on the process of racialization" (Alvarado, 36, 2018). This explanation I can understand, because I know what the process of racialization is, particularly in the US of Latinidad. The problematics, however, continue for me in the reading of Mendieta's supposed rendering of blackness in her photographs, which is presumably done through the exaggeration of her lips and the flattening of her nose, in which she becomes 'black', if I follow Alvarado's framing of Mendieta's work. Mendieta is able to become black by showing the fluidity of being racially read in different contexts, or because she has undergone a process of unwhitening and browning, so to speak. Alvarado does speak however to the gaze of domination and whiteness, the violence of that gaze upon a body, "one reliant on the external gaze for recognition and actualization" (Alvarado, 36, 2018).

Whilst there is an argument in regard to how Latinas are undervalued, fetishized, and controlled within the dominance of Anglo-Euro American society, there are problems in framing white supremacy as a US phenomenon; white supremacy is found in other geographical, ethnic, and cultural locations, and therefore I will contend there is another important question that must also be asked. Where are the voices, works, and archive of the Afro-Indigenous femmes within Latin America and the Caribbean that are always raced, without question in

anti-black and anti-Indigenous societies, who have been unable to move out of castes and the colonial residue on the flesh? These kinds of questions were not lost on Mendieta herself, as she too, was attuned to the kinds of erasure that can be committed when she says:

The colonization of the Americas in which the natural inhabitants where [sic] submitted to a violent system of inhuman exploitation which cost the lives of thousands of them including the extinction of whole cultures and people (i.e.: the Antilles) are [sic] evidence of this type of colonization. In the xx century however its [sic] incorporated a new type of colonization. No longer will open brutal violence be implemented. Colonization and neo-colonization will be disguised by modern tecnic [sic], to paraphrase the leading ideologists from the great colonizing Potencies: "to elevate the underdeveloped people to a higher standard of living." In the past as well as in our own century in order to facilitate the expropriation of the natural richness of a territory and/or use the people as labor, the process which has been and still is very much implemented is DECULTURATION. Its purpose being to uproot the culture of the people to be exploited (Clearwater, 21-23, 1993).

Through the framework of intersectional hermeneutics, while I may understand how the writer is framing Mendieta's work as a Cuban refugee in the US, who as a white Latina underwent a process of racialization and thus was caught in the cross-fires of the society's racial identity created through the one drop rule. Mendieta's 'play' with racialization functions more as a commentary on white Anglo US society, and not necessarily the processes of race for Latinas as a whole. While Mendieta's practice utilized much of the Indigenous and African underpinnings of Cuban culture... the earth carvings of the female goddess forms that reminds me of the Taíno cacique stone carvings... the blood and ritual of Santería... Mendieta's exposure to these practices is found within her social class and standing in pre-Castro Cuba. The

daughter of upper-class members of Cuban society and a student of private schools, it is said that Mendieta learned of the African practices through the servants of the Mendieta household. Mendieta's solidarity with Women of Color artists and those of the Global South is clear, but the problematics of her 'becoming' brown still persist when there is 'being brown/black' no matter where you go.

I turn to Mendieta's art practice and politic, if only briefly, to demonstrate the difficulty I have with the questions regarding Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispano-Caribbean, particularly in the realms of artistic and philosophical production, erasure. I find the focus on Mendieta's use of Black Atlantic traditions to be a part of the process of mythopoetic-like artistic expression of the Harrisian kind, but I fail to see how her practice shows fully the processes of racialization of Women of Color. The hyperracialized façade Alvarado discusses may be true, but it is only a façade. Within the reading of Alvarado, it is said that Mendieta's works force Latinidad to reckon with its prietud- its Blackness and its Indigeneity, however Afro-Indigenous people have done so through survival in Latin American and Caribbean societies. Alvarado also states that Mendieta's works have us push past the boundary of Anzaldúa's *new mestiza*, but can we push past that which was not going to suit us categorically nor politically?

Michelle Cliff, in her essay *Object into Subject: Some Thoughts on the Work of Black Women Artists* (1987) offers a counterbalanced argument to what Alvarado suggests, albeit Cliff's discussion is not specifically regarding Mendieta. Cliff discusses the objectification of Black and white women- how colonialism impacted patriarchal hierarchies of women and our awareness of such a schema, and how Black women artists have been the ones tasked with the analysis of objectification. "...to become the *subject* commenting on the meaning of the object, or to become the subject rejecting the object and revealing the *real* experience of being"

(Cliff, 144, 1987). Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean and Latin America, are far beyond any category that offers the possibility of expansion or movement, for we have moved through the abyss of the abject already.

Sycoraxic Abjectivity is not where I wish for the subject to reclaim objection or show it on any kind of stage, but I think it is where a portal of potential begins to open for me.

Conclusion

How can Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean use phenomenology without relying on literature that erases their blackness, indigeneity, or relegates them to silent corners of patriarchal systems? I posed these questions to not only interrogate phenomenology theoretically but also artistically; how does the work of breaking open new walls through an investigation in phenomenology help me in my own understanding of art and in how I produce art? I wanted to explore the prospect that there was a way to push open more possibilities for Afro-Indigenous femmes through phenomenology by working with a new kind of framework.

By merging intersectionality, hermeneutics, and phenomenology as a framework, there was an opportunity to interrogate the literatures of the Latina Feminist and Afro-Caribbean phenomenology and philosophies. Intersectional hermeneutics and phenomenology require me to fully absorb the information, push my engagement and my comfort. Chicana centered Latina feminist works suggest Latinas can relate to writing about experiencing racialized misogyny as they cross borders and find themselves in Anglo dominant spaces. This includes undergoing a process of racialization that feels alien and foreign to them. My contention, which still holds true, is where is the work for the Latinas who are experiencing the violence of racism

within their own borders and as they cross them, not only into the Anglo world but also within their own Hispanic communities? Or those who do not experience the fluidity of race and have an approximation to whiteness, thus saved by their connections to Anglo whiteness? Also, those from the Hispanic Caribbean, who are framed as Latina -largely of Afro-Indigenous descent- are still subject to many of the same colonial, patriarchal systems in their island's communities. If internalized racism is a mental illness created out of the restrictions of a racist social order, then shouldn't the society rid itself of the colonial restrictions and cultivate a society in which femmes do not need to rely on their heterosexual relationships to men of a higher class in order to have their basic needs met?

Intersectional hermeneutics and phenomenology, as a framework, allows for theorists to push phenomenology and philosophy further; by asking about race, color, nation, sexuality, and other factors that make up the matrix of domination and coloniality, we cannot take systems of power for granted in our analysis. I initially wondered if phenomenology was suitable for me as an Afro-Indigenous femme from the Hispanic Caribbean, to use theoretically as the basis for artistic production. I had decided that it was not and looked to other writers for inspiration and guidance. Through intersectional hermeneutical analysis for this thesis, I found their works had many qualities that were useful, yes, but I also found myself disillusioned at the praxis and conclusions of the some of the works.

I sought to participate in the phenomenological and philosophical dialogues of Latine and Caribbean contemporaries, this was done through my being very intentional about who I chose to cite. I was also deliberate in how I center the experience of Afro-Indigenous femme subjectivity, especially those that are in liminal spaces of nation, state, and ethnic identification. The

nation, state, and ethnic identification points are important to discuss and analyze, considering how the cultural and political makeup of the writers had deep effects on how they arrived at their philosophies and therefore their conclusions. For example, the literary traditions that emerged from Latin America often used magical realism, whereas in the Anglo-Caribbean we find historicism and poeticism. I found it necessary to fully examine the creation and development of race, of the colonial concept and mapping of the Human as it occurred at the dawn of the creation of the Spanish state and identity and used this history as a key to the mapping of the Human, the development of settler colonial projects and the colonial identities that were a result of domination. The racialization and ungendering of Afro and Indigenous peoples, the hierarchies that came as a result within these colonial countries pre- and post-Independence are a part of a broken timeline that have me arrive at a moments of reorientations out of colonial identities.

However, once I deployed the Anglo-Caribbean philosophical allegory of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and -instead of focusing on the male characters- I addressed Sycorax as the portal in which we examine the lives of Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispanic Caribbean, I found my way to Afro-Indigenous subjectivity. Using Sycorax and the creation of Sycoraxic Subjectivity addressed both the Afro-Caribbean and Latina Feminist philosophical traditions, both in new terminology and the ingredients that sustain it. The framework is a new kind of consciousness for those Afro-Indigenous femmes that are from a "Latin" context on Caribbean islands, and unable to relate to the border or mestiza thinking in coping with coloniality. These are femmes who are silenced, erased, disregarded and yet their narratives controlled by the white, settler colonial master, both male and female. Throughout the journey, I was able to arrive at a Sycoraxic Subjectivity as a framework for Afro-Indigenous femmes to see how, in

fact, there are possibilities for phenomenology to be useful for our subjectivity. I succeeded in finding what I set out to accomplish.

Unsurprisingly, there is a horizon beyond Sycorax Subjectivity; my methodological choices have shown me there are more questions to be explored and answered. My work does not end with Sycorax Subjectivity, because Sycorax Subjectivity also requires of us to rethink the subject and a need or desire for its reclamation. In other words, is the subject another colonial box or identity? The constant interrogative possibilities afforded to us through intersectional hermeneutics and phenomenology are to continue.

Glossary

Afro- Afro is a prefix used in order to denote someone from the African diaspora; most commonly in the Western Hemisphere, as is the majority of the subject matter in this research.

Anti-blackness- Behaviors, attitudes and practices of people and institutions that work to dehumanize black people in order to maintain white supremacy. Amherst college

Antillean- Those are in or from the Antilles

Antilles- The Antilles is an archipelago bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the south and west, the Gulf of Mexico to the northwest, and the Atlantic Ocean to the north and east. The Antillean islands are divided into two smaller groupings: the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles.

Arawak- A group of indigenous people in several islands of the Caribbean

Black - The capitalization of the B in Black is to refer to specific people who are raced as Black within the western hemisphere.

black- Black with a lowercase is to differentiate between a general description and those who live as Black people. See the definition for Black.

Caribbean- The Caribbean is a region of the Americas that comprises the Caribbean Sea, its surrounding coasts, and its islands. The region lies southeast of the Gulf of Mexico and of the North American mainland, east of Central America, and north of South America.

Caribeñe-A person in or from the Caribbean region. See the definition of Latine for clarification on the use of the letter 'e'.

Colonial matrix of power [CMP]- control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural resources); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education, and formation of subjectivity).

Coloniality-The coloniality of power is a concept interrelating the practices and legacies of European colonialism in social orders and forms of knowledge, advanced in postcolonial studies, decoloniality, and Latin American subaltern studies, most prominently by Anibal Quijano. It identifies and describes the living legacy of colonialism in contemporary societies in the form of social discrimination that outlived formal colonialism and became integrated in succeeding social orders. The concept identifies the racial, political and social hierarchical orders imposed by European colonialism in Latin America that prescribed value to certain peoples/societies while disenfranchising others. ("Coloniality- Wikipedia", n/a, 2022)

Colorism- prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. Coined by Alice walker

Creole- Despite having multiple meanings, in this thesis it signifies the merging of cultures in the West Indies, to which the outcome can be as a racial identity or a language.

Criollo- a person who is of solely European descent but born in the Western Hemisphere. In this research it is used to be very specific about the children of colonizers and settlers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Decolonized- Decolonization is the undoing of colonialism, the latter being the process whereby a nation establishes and maintains its domination of foreign territories (often overseas territories). ("Decolonization - Wikipedia", n/a, 2022)

Decoloniality- Decoloniality refers to the logic, metaphysics, ontology and matrix of power created by the massive processes and aftermath of colonization and settler-colonialism. This matrix and its lasting effects and structures is called "coloniality." More plainly said, decoloniality is a way for us to re-learn the knowledge that has been pushed aside, forgotten, buried, or discredited by the forces of modernity, settler-colonialism, and racial capitalism. ("What Is Decoloniality?", n/a, 2022)

Diaspora- A diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographic locale. Historically, the word diaspora was used to refer to the mass dispersion of a population from its indigenous territories, specifically the dispersion of Jews.

Existential-cultural crisis- a daily inability to live freely in an acceptance and understanding of oneself within the dominant white supremacist, colonial and patriarchal society that is the Western world. Additionally, since they are women and/or femmes⁵, they are unable to inhabit their worlds without ruptures, or a thick sense of not-being-at-ease, for not only must they be a Woman of Color, but they must also be so in relation to hetero-sexual white men and white women.

Femme- Lesbian whose appearance and behavior are seen as traditionally feminine. The term also extends to queer people who present in a more feminine style.

Fourth-world – a conceptual place where the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas meet with the deterritorialized peoples, the immigrants, and the exiles; it occupies portions of all the previous worlds. (Gómez-Peña, 6, 1996)

Hispanic-an individual or group of people who are from or are decedents of people from a Spanish speaking country.

Hispano/Anglo/Franco/Luso- terms that note the primary language of a country or a region. I.e. Hispano (Hispanic) Meaning a country whose dominant language is Spanish/Castellano. Franco-French, Luso-Portuguese. It does not denote a racial marker, solely a linguistic one

Indigenous- an individual or group of people native to the land in which they live; within this research I use Indigenous to refer to the original peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

Intersectionality- a framework for assess power and domination. “I consider intersectionality a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory. In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race, and gender are essentially separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable.” Crenshaw

Island subjectivity- term first seen in *The Black Shoals*. Sycorax’s presence, as an island subject or subjectivity, transforms the mainland territory or space of Canada [and the Americas] into another island territory. I also reference Katherine McKittrick’s writing on uninhabitable when she says “the populations who occupy the ‘nonexistent’ are *living* in what has been previously conceptualized as the unlivable and unimaginable. If identity and place are mutually constructed, the uninhabitable spatializes a human Other category of the unimaginable/native/black... the uninhabitable creates an opening for a geographic transformation that is underscored by racial and sexual differences. To transform the uninhabitable into the inhabitable, and make this transformation profitable, the land must become a site of racial-sexual regulation, a geography that maps ‘a normal way of life’ through measuring different degrees of inhabitability. This geographic transformation...does not fully erase the category of ‘uninhabitable,’ but rather re-presents it through spatial processes as a sign of social difference.” (McKrittick, 130-131, 2006)

La facultad- instant sensing . . . a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning . . . an acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols. (Anzaldúa, 38, 1987)

Latin America- Latin America is the portion of the Americas comprising countries and regions where Romance languages—languages that derived from Latin—such as Spanish, French and Portuguese are predominantly spoken. The term is used for those places once ruled under the Spanish, French, and Portuguese empires.

Latine-Latino/as the termed used to denote any person(s) who are from/decedents from people who are from Latin America. The use of the letter 'e' is a contemporary development of creating gender neutral terms in Spanish; the initial common use of Latinx, whilst still popular, is often determined buy users to be difficult to use when speaking Spanish, as 'x' does not flow as good as 'e'. Therefore, Latine is my preferred word to use when describing all people in and from Latin America.

Latinidad- The encompassing term for the commonality of the culture of Latin America.

New mestiza- kind of border woman who is able to negotiate between different cultures and cross over from one to the other and therefore has a perspective of all those different worlds that someone who is monocultural cannot have. Gloria Anzaldúa

Quantum space of Afro-Indigeneity- utilizing the Black Futurism Quantum chart that takes us through quantum and how these ideas are actually established in African spirituality- here, how both of these are present within the research of this paper.

Racially read[ing]- a phenomena in western society where one's phenotype, hair, facial features and more provide the context to what race (and ethnicity) they are.

Radicalized misogyny- Misogyny that targets specifically women of color and Black women

Sycorax Subjectivity- this term has been developed in the spirit of the works by South American feminist philosophers but mostly afro Caribbean phenomenologists. Utilizing *The Tempest* as the foundation via allegory and deconstruction, Sycorax Subjectivity aims to create a conceptual space in which Indigenous, Black, displaced femmes who aim to delink or extricate themselves from colonially through actions of resistance that are often associated with Afro-Indigenous womanhood. Sycorax Subjectivity encompasses decoloniality, feminism, Black quantum thought and Afro-Syncretic spiritual practices.

Symbolic laryngectomy- where everything fundamental is left unsaid and dependent upon interpretation; neither the African woman's voice nor her story are ever heard or officially recognized. In the body of the tale itself, this is the only account of her story; it is never validated and is recorded only by [a man]. (Busia, 104, 1989-1990)

Taino- The term widely used to refer to the indigenous people of Puerto Rico.

Uninhabitable- I use McKittrick's analysis: "In the Middle Ages the New World, like Southern Africa, was convincingly *physically uninhabitable* to Europeans...The uninhabitable landmasses were initially disembodied by European cartographers and explorers. In nam-

ing them 'terra nullius/lands of no one' and mapping them as 'peopleless' voids, the uninhabitable was abstracted by cartographic translations of where and who can constitute the terms of normal hybridity." (McKrittick, 125, 129, 2006)

The Vocal Void- a conceptual/philosophical/social space/dynamic in which Afro-Indigenous femmes from the Hispano-Caribbean are unvoiced, and for the purposes of specificity to this research, within the field of phenomenology and philosophy in general. The Vocal Void occurs because Latina feminist phenomenology operates under the umbrella of Latinidad and mestizaje, which forbids any kind of specificity and complexity of anti-blackness and settler colonialism on Indigenous lands. This is followed by Afro-Caribbean phenomenology which not only has yet to include literature from the Hispano-Caribbean but also is dominated by male voices.

West Indian- People who are in or from the West Indies. The West Indies are a subregion of North America, surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea that includes 13 independent island countries and 18 dependencies and other territories in three major archipelagos: the Greater Antilles, the Lesser Antilles, and the Lucayan Archipelago. After the first of the voyages of Christopher Columbus to the Americas, Europeans began to use the term West Indies to distinguish this region from both the original "Indies" (i.e. India) and the East Indies of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

White-passing- a person of color who can be read by their immediate society as a white person. Furthermore, this person can choose to distance themselves from their families and social groups of color and live within white society.

Women of Color- Women of Color is the term used to denote women who are non-white. It is a general term, however, not to be used or confused for a specific race or racialized experience.

Worlds- definition pending and is being made constantly and always, worlds are the infinite expanding as we return to the past in the present and wait for the future to touch us (the past)

Xenophobia-dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries.

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