

LUGONES LEXICON

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Active Subjectivity

Lugones develops the notions of "active subjectivity" and the "active subject" first and most extensively within "Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker/ *Estrategias Tácticas de la Callejera*." For Lugones, the *active* subject is meant as an alternative model of the subject, one better equipped for the kinds of resistance Lugones spends most of *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* describing. It is important to note, however, that Lugones presents several other models of resistant subjectivity in this chapter (the "I → we," tactical strategist, and streetwalker), all of which I understand to variously highlight different attributes of Lugones's resistant subject. As I understand the chapter, Lugones presents the active subject as an alternative that specifically contrasts with two other models of the subject, namely, the "subject-agent-individual" (my term) of classical modernity and the "tactician" of Michel de Certeau's theory of oppression. In this entry, I therefore begin by describing Lugones's rejection of these two models of the subject in the hope that this will clarify and underscore the intervention Lugones makes with the term "active subject."

Under de Certeau's theoretical structure, the population of cities are divided between strategists (empowered city planners) and tacticians (the weak). Strategists look down on the city from above and view it (and in turn, organize and theorize it) according to invariant structures (211-212). The tacticians, on the other hand, are characterized by their street level view (understood as myopic); lacking a strategic vantage point, the tacticians' actions occur between bodies (207). The tactician lives in and among the structures designed by the strategist, but is unable to alter or transform these structures. Lugones's criticisms of de Certeau are derived from another chapter of her book, "Structure/Anti-structure and Agency under Oppression." In "Structure/Anti-structure," Lugones comes out against theorists of oppression that so over-determine the effects of oppression on oppressed subjects that it is actually impossible for the subjects to liberate themselves (53), whether or not the theorist had intended this consequence (54-55). Lugones sees the same impossibility for true resistance in de Certeau's conception of the strategist/tactician dichotomy. According to de Certeau, it is because tacticians lack sight from a distance that they can never gain an understanding of the city that is thorough enough to alter, transform, or abolish the strategists' structures (212). Ultimately, these tacticians are limited to mere activities of survival (207), and liberation is structurally barred for them.

Under the classical-modern model, the subject-agent-individual is considered successful when they singularly cognize some intention and then are able to bring that intention into fruition in the world. Since intentionality is always understood as coming from an individual, individual action is understood to be the source of responsibility, agency, and ultimately freedom. But as Lugones points out, this view lacks an understanding of the social and systemic institutions in place that effectively *allow* certain individuals to accomplish their aims. Since the oppressed would seem unable to effect their desired outcomes, the classical model reads them as either incompetent subject-agent-individuals or simply non-agential beings—i.e., amoral beings whose oppressions are legitimized (210-211).

Whereas de Certeau underestimates the oppressed tactician's ability to act effectively, classical-modernity overpromises agency to subjects, obscuring how institutional structures differentially back-up or inhibit agents. Since neither model of subjectivity allows for resistant possibility of oppressed peoples, Lugones introduces the *active* subject. The tactician's street-level, body-to-body orientation prevents strategic action (215) and theorizing (207, 210). But for the active subject, the street-level orientation enables a profound sensory depth and understanding of the social (218-219) that can be used for resistant sense making, i.e., street walker theorizing (222-226). And unlike the subject-agent-individual, whose actions derive solely from the subject's intentionality (208) and are backed up by institutional structures (219), for the active subject, the intentionality for action lies between subjects (208) that sense, move with, and back up each other (219).

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See Also:

Streetwalker Theorizing, "I → we"

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Agency

As is the case with her treatment of many traditional philosophical concepts, Lugones offers a radical revision of the concept of agency founded in relationality, and ontological and metaphysical pluralism. She introduces her reconception of agency, which she calls "active subjectivity," in the early pages of *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*.

From the start, Lugones makes clear that her form of agency is not Kant's rational autonomy. The liberal model of agency, for Lugones, is an illusion underwritten by the institutional backing of dominant groups: the autonomous agent, who 'pulls himself up by the bootstraps' is an illusion enabled by social and political institutions that privilege dominant groups. Those who are denied this institutional backing are thereby

disqualified from possessing liberal agency ("Tactical Strategies," 211). However, Lugones does not suggest that material conditions should be changed so as to support this liberal form of agency; for Lugones, liberal agency is not "desirable as a liberatory goal since it requires a univocity of meaning" ("From Within Germinative Stasis," 86). I take this 'univocity' to refer to the singularity of both experience and of the subject implied by the western model of agency, which I will explore in greater detail below.

In place of the liberal model of agency, Lugones proposes active subjectivity, which she explains "does not presuppose the individual subject and it does not presuppose collective intentionality of collectivities of the same. It is adumbrated to consciousness by a moving with people, by the difficulties as well as the concrete possibilities of such movings." ("Introduction," 6). Lugones's refashioning of agency as active subjectivity is thus not the ability of a single rational actor to formulate and pursue his own conception of the good, but rather the oft-impaired, multi-directional efforts of social beings moving within and against power structures.

Lugones' model of active subjectivity challenges both the singularity of the traditional autonomous subject and the unfettered agency he exercises. Toward the first point, Lugones introduces a loosely united relational subjectivity, represented by the "I --> we" ("Introduction," 6). The "we" in question need not be a uniform collective; here Lugones emphasizes both the multiplicity of the self, (such that there is no "I" understood as a cohesive and unified subjectivity) and the interdependency of multiplicitous individuals that is characteristic of their attempts at action, even when these attempts stand in opposition to one another. Like the liberal view of agency, Lugones' active subjectivity requires sociality; the sociality required for active subjectivity, however, contests the established hierarchies and social fragmentation of the dominant society ("Tactical Strategies," 215).

Second, Lugones recognizes that agency comes into contact with systems and logics of oppression, and therefore acknowledges that the achievements of agency will necessarily be impacted by those systems and logics. Indeed, "from the standpoint of liberalism, [active subjectivity] would look like an almost inconsequential or attenuated sense of agency" ("Introduction," 5). By contrast, Lugones' understanding of active subjectivity as a process of "resistant meaning-making" explicitly contests the assumed passivity of "the oppressed" and opens a broader account of what resistance looks like (ibid). The picture of resistance on Lugones' model is not one of discrete actions yielding clear victories; rather, it also encompasses the dispositions, thoughts, and glances that make critiques of oppression thinkable.

Yet, Lugones argues that the possibility for a powerful, if attenuated, active subjectivity lies in the multiplicity of the self and the plurality of worlds she inhabits. Such a conception of the self and of reality allows for the existence of multiple "worlds" and multiple selves that attend those "worlds". "Worlds" within which one is subjected to inescapable oppression may thus exist alongside other "worlds" where one can arrive at a consciousness capable of leading to liberation ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 55). Lugones reads the navigation of worlds through the process of practical reasoning, which, in certain worlds, is hampered by oppressive structures and these structures' construction of the self which one inhabits in that world. Other "worlds" offer an "open-endedness" that might allow for the formation of intentions and actions that critique the oppressive structures of another world ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 57).

One key mode of cultivating/maintaining active subjectivity in opposition to oppression, is memory ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 57). Lugones makes clear that some people are better positioned to recognize and hold onto the plurality of worlds and the multiplicity of the self: people who are oppressed along multiple axes of difference (specifically, women of color) tend to be more present to their shifting between "worlds" and selves, as this vigilance is necessary for survival in the "worlds" in which one is oppressed ("Playfulness," 77). There is also, however, the possibility of intense self-deception that can prevent one from appreciating the existence of "worlds" in which one is an oppressor, and the self which oppresses ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 58). The imposition of a unified model of reality and of the self, then, serves the interests of power which seeks to deny and cover over its own complicity in violence. Unearthing the "worlds" and selves that one denies in order to

avoid responsibility (or to avoid the depth of the violence one experiences as oppressed) thus becomes a critical project for the formation and maintenance of active subjectivity that can undermine structures of oppression.¹

Lugones' later work examines active subjectivity in a more isolated context ("From within Germinative Stasis"). Though she articulates a role of sociality here, too, Lugones' reading of Gloria Anzaldúa's work focuses on the state of intimate terrorism and the Coatlicue state, diving deeper into the relation between "inner and collective struggles" that "are 'moments' or 'sides' of the liberatory process" (ibid, 97). This reading gives us an even sharper look at some forms of existence as resistance: "Even though every move [the terrorized self] makes will have a status quo interpretation that reads her as an alien, an outlaw, reduced, her meaning co-opted in the direction of servility or incompetence, those interpretations do not hold her captive. She cannot act, but she is active, a serpent coiled" (ibid, 90). This internal work of becoming active, which we might also link to the above discussion of cultivating memories of oneself in other worlds, is part and parcel of the social work of active subjectivity.

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See Also:

worlds; pluralism; ontological multiplicity; I → We; limen; mirror; oppression; resisting ⇔ oppressing, cocooning, stasis, Coatlicue state; sociality

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¹ For part of Lugones' understanding of how white women might come to such a realization, see Lugones, "On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism," 73; for a critique, see Ortega, "Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant."

Borderlands

Lugones engages Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of borderlands, which refers broadly to as a space in between. Anzaldúa is referring to physical, psychological, sexual, and even spiritual space. Specific to Chicana/os, these borderlands become the spaces between Anglo and Mexican culture, but also the spaces between Mexican and indigenous culture. Additionally, mestiza consciousness is psychologically a third space. For Lugones, this mestiza consciousness, inhabiting the borderlands, is a process and not just an act of resisting intersecting oppressions (1992). Lugones labels Anzaldúa's conception of occupying a third space as having *triple* vision. The first vision involves an individual's ability to see forward, those that are not like her/him/their self. The second vision involves the individual's ability to see behind themselves, her/him/their own people. And because the individual is occupying this third space, she/he/they are also conscious of themselves in that space, the oppressors' gaze. In this in-between space, the self can see how they can be both oppressed and an oppressor. Occupying the borderlands facilitates this triple vision that helps us distinguish between what Anzaldúa calls "lo heredado, lo adquirido, lo impuesto," or what is "inherited, acquired, and imposed" (Lugones 1992, 34).

As a framework of analysis, borderlands can be used to theorize about intersecting identities of people who occupy the areas surrounding human-made physical borders, but also conceptual margins of identity formation and contestation. For example, scholarship focusing on the lived experiences of people who live near both sides of the US/Mexico border can usefully draw from borderlands theory to inform analysis of the physical, psychological, and spiritual spaces influenced by the in-between-ness the physical border represents. Additionally, people who migrate to other places, whether it be to a neighboring country or to a country across the globe, can inhabit metaphorical borderlands. The concept of borderlands is not to be constrained to a physical sense because there are peoples whom have never migrated but maintain borderlands experiences due to external factors. For example, the ChicanX experience of never having left their land but being dispossessed of land ownership can be perceived as a borderlands experience where they were made exiles on their own land as a result of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. ChicanX have been otherized as foreigners and immigrants so much so, that even ChicanX historians advance narratives of ChicanX culture as immigrant culture (Gaspar de Alba 2014, 22-23). Additionally, some people might identify with borderlands experiences due to their race and or religious identities which might position them in spaces between dominant identities. Lugones aptly interprets Anzaldúa's borderlands as "a work creating theoretical space for resistance" which "depends on this creation of a new identity, a new world of sense, in the borders" (Lugones 1992, 31;33).

Inhabiting the borderlands means rejecting dualistic thinking for Lugones and Anzaldúa. Summarizing Anzaldúa's conceptualization of borderlands, Lugones says:

la mestiza is captive of more than one collectivity, and her dilemma is which collectivity to listen to. She crosses from one collectivity to the other and decides to stake herself in the *border* between the two, where she can take a critical stance and take stock of her plural personality (Lugones 1992, 34).

Another way to interpret the concept of borderlands is to think of inhabiting borders as places of stasis and reflection. Stasis, Lugones argues, is both a metaphor for resistance or oppression (1998, p 50). Writing about motion and stasis, Lugones situates stasis as "the in-between, the roads, the borders, the margins" (1998, p. 49). Lugones highlights this "plurality of the new mestiza is anchored in the *borders*, in that space where critique, rupture, and hybridization take place" (1992, 35).

To better understand the multiple ways in which Anzaldúa deploys the concept, it is useful to return to her text. Anzaldúa writes,

[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. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'" (Anzaldúa 2012, p 25).

Lugones draws from Anzaldúa's concept of the borderlands to develop and extend a similar concept of the limen/liminality/liminal space.

Lugones writes “the limen is the place where one becomes most fully aware of one’s multiplicity” (2003, 59). For her, the limen is similar to Anzaldúa’s borderlands in that it is a space in between. Inhabiting the limen means occupying “a gap ‘between and betwixt’ universes of sense that construe social life and persons differently, an interstice from where one can most clearly stand critically toward different structures” (2003, 59). In her article on “Complex Communication,” Lugones recognizes the borderlands as a foundational form of the limen that ground the ability to resist oppression (2006, 81). She later calls the borderlands a limen (2006, 82). Anzaldúa, Lugones writes, is an intercultural interlocutor who presents a desire for complex communication (2006, 81).

Lugones’ concept of the limen does not presuppose the ability to communicate clearly or transparently (2006, 83). Like the concept of the borderlands, which asserts the existence of multiple borders, Lugones discloses there is no one limen accessible by all. The limen is a transitory space where individuals can recognize difference in each other and know that they might not come to understand each other’s different ways of resisting oppression. Lugones writes “[r]ather, the different journeys that we have taken to liminal sites have constituted each limen as a different way of life, not reducible to the other resistant, contestatory ways of life” (2006, 83).

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See Also:

Border, Border-Dweller, Mestizaje, Hybridity, Mestiza Consciousness, Triple Vision, Mestiza Consciousness

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Coloniality

Colonialism and colonization feature significantly in María Lugones’ philosophical corpus, yet interestingly, Lugones has never defined “coloniality” explicitly. Briefly speaking, we can take coloniality to mean “*the process of active reduction of people, the dehumanization that fits them for the classification, the process of subjectification, the attempt to turn the colonized into less than human beings*” (“Toward a Decolonial Feminism” 745). Coloniality as a process thus indicates the ability of an object, and idea, or a political/cultural structure to fulfill colonizing subjects’ colonial intention and to create a colonial regime. More importantly, Lugones engages with the work of

Anibal Quijano and Walter Dignolo to complicate their thoughts on coloniality of power and theorize “coloniality of gender.” In this entry, I first analyze coloniality by looking at its different manifestations, including boomerang perception and linguistic colonization. I later dedicate a section to coloniality of gender and colonial heterosexuality.

Coloniality, as Lugones perceives it, distorts and damages one’s agency and sense of self. In “Boomerang Perception and the Colonizing Gaze” (chapter 7 in *Pilgrimages / Peregrinajes*), Lugones describes how colonial oppressors see themselves as superior and original, while colonized subjects are seen as the mirrored image of the original copy, hence fake, inferior, and distorted (156). This colonial understanding of colonized people’s subjectivity also shapes the way the latter regard themselves, as quite frequently the colonized “obsess over the oppressors’ perception of their subjectivity” (156). To resist colonial gaze, the colonized subjects rely on shared traditions, cultures and language to form an “authentic” identity, which can end up creating a toxic nationalism that excludes those who do not easily fit into the nationalist and idealistic vision of identity (156-159). And in this way, the colonized themselves can internalize the colonialist logic and oppress other people of color (or some such). Neither remaining colonized nor being nationalistic can offer individuals a healthy sense of agency. And this is how the coloniality of oppressive gazing hurts and diminishes the subjectivity of the colonized.

Aside from boomerang perception, Lugones locates another form of coloniality in language; specifically, she is interested in lexicography and translation. As she says in “Wicked Caló: A Matter of Authority in Improper words,” oftentimes we think lexicographers, or those who compile and edit dictionary, are innocent agents who are just attempting to provide “objective” meanings to words (247). This act of offering a stable and fixed definition actually “ossifies a word’s relationship to some language and geography that has been given a privileged status” (249); in other words, the stable definition of a word often appeals to the colonizer, who holds the power to rewrite or erase the history of oppressions behind a word. The coloniality of words and their dominant meaning in turn shape our consciousness, making us pursue the delusion of “objective” meanings of words. Additionally, translation is another location where coloniality is embodied. In “Problems of Translation in Postcolonial Thinking,” Lugones emphasizes how colonial logic imagines linguistic realms as separate, and meanings cannot naturally flow across different languages. To solve this problem, the colonial culture sees languages as based on “the logic of equivalence” (7), which implies that everything is translatable and that all concepts in different cultures can find their equivalents in English. This false universalism valorizes Western conceptual frameworks, turning them into colonial agents that force Western ideas upon others.

To theorize how Western culture colonizes local systems of social relations, Lugones develops the concept of the coloniality of gender. Unlike the coloniality of power in which race is viewed as the primary nexus of colonialization (or some such), the coloniality of gender sees gender and sexuality as inseparable from race, class, and other intersections. Put differently, colonial system intermesh race, class, gender, and sexuality, so that the colonizer can regulate colonized bodies and use their labor to accumulate capital. This is why Lugones writes that “coloniality does not just refer to racial classification. It is an encompassing phenomenon, since it is one of the axes of the system of power and as such it permeates all control of sexual access, collective authority, labor, subjectivity/intersubjectivity and the production of knowledge from within these intersubjective relations” (“Heterosexuality and the Colonial Modern Gender System” 191). Colonial femininity and masculinity explain why many Indigenous societies in Africa and Latin America lost their complementary gender systems and have high rates of women being abused, raped, and murdered. A reference to secondary literature here would be good.

Related to the coloniality of gender is the coloniality of heterosexuality. In “El Pasar Discontinuo de la Cachapera / Tortillera del Barrio a la Barra al Moveimiento,” Lugones writes, “The idea of nation brings the logic of the colonizer inside Latino life. The logic of modernity that ‘unifies’ the disparate elements that faces the colonizer oppositionally prevents them from creating disruptions of traditions in their encounters with domination” (173). This passage illuminates that the attempt of Latinx culture to move beyond the colonial imagining of them as primitive societies may only end up reproducing the Anglo-American logic of heterosexuality. Homosexual relationships are regarded as an obstacle to modernity that needs to be removed,

and for the mainstream Latinx culture, homosexual people cannot pass as “authentic” or “legitimate” Latino or Latina. Even when la cachapera/tortillera seeks solidarity in the contemporary U.S. Lesbian Movement, her presence would only be despised because the Movement is constructed as a white and racist space. The coloniality of heterosexuality therefore excludes la cachapera/tortillera from both her home patriarchal culture and the racist homosexual community in the U.S. For Lugones, the way out of the colonial logic of heterosexuality is not to repeat dominators’ homogeneous traditions that constitute only a certain group of people as “people.” Instead, a hybrid and pluralist culture can lead to a resistant logic to the coloniality of heterosexuality.

For many, Western colonization, its exploitation of slaves and dispossession of Indigenous peoples may be just a historical event; however, the toxic legacy of colonization has become a structure that shapes the way we understand our subjectivity, our relationships with others and the languages we use. Such is how coloniality works: it creates a colonial and homogenous realm that diminishes or eliminates our opportunities to know a multiplicitous self and to perceive different forms of gender roles and relations.

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See also:

oppression, double vision, Tortillera/ Cachapera, Home/ Homeplace and Impurity

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Dichotomy

The word dichotomy is never defined by Lugones. The word also does not appear in the index of her collection *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. The word is, however, present throughout the book. Lugones does provide many examples of different dichotomies. Perhaps a synonymous word is binary. In laypeople's terms, dichotomy refers to duality or dualistic conceptualizations. Throughout the text, Lugones is constantly pushing back against these binaries and highlights the dangers of dichotomous conceptualizations of the self. For example, Lugones relies on the logic of curdling to disrupt binary notions of the self which fragment an individual's totality into pieces as conceived by their 'dominator's fantasies' (p. 127). She advocates for a reconceptualization of the self as multiplicitous and inhabiting different worlds of sense because she views fragmentation as a form of domination. Lugones argues that a refusal to abandon an imagination of split-separation, which positions the subject as a simple, fragmented, and abstract being, can prevent us from theorizing coalition with others (p. 128).

I believe Lugones' clearest, and most important, example of dichotomies in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* is that of purity and impurity. And I think the adoption of dichotomies is the adoption of absolutist beliefs or conceptualizations of the world as unified. One is either pure or impure. White or black. But where white is the measure of access. Hence one key element of dichotomies for Lugones is how it hierarchizes along with how it divides. (or some such) Lugones argues that clean separation is impossible. She says,

[s]o as soon as I entertain the thought, I realize that separation into clean, tidy things and beings is not possible for me because it would be the death of myself as multiplicitous and a death of community with my own. I understand my split or fragmented possibilities in horror. I understand then that whenever I desire separation, I risk survival by confusing split separation with separation from domination, that is, separation among curdled beings who curdle away their fragmentation, their subordination. I can appreciate then, that the logic of split-separation and the logic of curdle-separation repel each other, that the curdled do not germinate in split-separation (p. 134).

Only after reading this passage many times and thinking about dichotomies did I come to appreciate Lugones' argument against dual personalities and her adoption of curdling to overcome the purity/impurity dichotomy and fragmentation of the multiplicitous self.

I've struggled with Lugones' rejection of Mexican/American dual personality for months. However, I think I finally understand she's arguing the term does not curdle away fragmentation. Furthermore, I think there are few spaces where I am read as both Mexican and American. The problem extends beyond claiming to be both. The problem is that the dichotomy remains and leaves out conceptualizations of a multiplicitous self in more than one world. I am not just Mexican. I am not just American. I do not just inhabit this in-between identity of Mexican and American. I am a daughter, a sister, a friend, a scholar, a feminist. Above all, a maker of meaning. Sometimes, I am all those things at once. Sometimes I embody a couple of those roles and identities at once. Never do I feel like I am just one of those in the worlds I travel through.

In re-reading Lugones' "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," I have come to appreciate her rejection of categorial logics on acknowledging difference but retaining a performance of purity. Lugones addresses the hierarchy between the human and non-human as "the central dichotomy of colonial modernity" (2010, 743). In this article, Lugones highlights that colonization is an invention aimed at reducing indigenous peoples and non-whites to less than human. This subjectification is internalized as a normative social structure. Categorial logics are threatening in that recognitions of difference that draw on categories of coloniality, including gender and race, does not escape the insistence of the self as flat –instead of thick –in having divisible identities (2010, 748). Lugones argues that the logics of difference, multiplicity, and coalition are necessary to reject categorial logics at the point of difference. She says "[t]he emphasis is on maintaining multiplicity at the point of reduction –not in maintaining a hybrid 'product,' which hides the colonial difference –in the tense workings of more than one logic, not to be synthesized but transcended" (2010, 755).

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See Also: Limen, Dual Personality, Split-Separation, Curdled-Separation, Fragmentation, Purity/Impurity, Boomerang Perception

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Geography

Geography refers to the social arrangement of space and the systems of meanings generated and maintained in and throughout these arrangements. For Lugones, subjectivity and identity are intimately connected to geography and movement: "Sometimes it is not how far one moves but how one moves, within what complexities and against what simplifications of histories, geographies, and meanings" (*Pilgrimages*, 3). The subject comes to know herself and makes meaning according to the geographical limitations or possibilities of her movements. Lugones' appeals to geography can be broken down into three major sections: Social Construction of Space, *La Geografía Discontinua*, and Geographical Memory and History.

Social Construction of Space - Meaning and Identity

In Lugones' introduction to *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, she prompts the reader to "visualize, remember, and sense a map that has been drawn by power in its many guises and directions..." (8). As the reader imagines themselves moving throughout this map, they can sense "...the geography looking for signs of power and of limitations, reductions, erasures, and functionalist constructions" (9). Geographies are determined by borders, territories, checkpoints, roads, fences, and highways. They are the natural and artificial physicality of the world superimposed with human meaning and signification. Moreover, insofar as they dictate where one can/cannot go and does/does not belong, geographies contain and reveal relations of power. The multiplicitous subject, therefore, must constantly negotiate her relationship to herself and others according to the fragmentation and discontinuity that she undergoes as she moves through different geographies and worlds of sense. Lugones argues, however, that the multiplicitous subject can traverse spaces and geographies in a way that resists this contestation and offers the possibility of creating new worlds of sense.

La Geografía Discontinua: Fragmentation and Resistance

In Lugones' chapter on "The Discontinuous Passing of the *Cachapera/Tortillera* from the Barrio to the Bar to the Movement," she deals with the notion of "*la geografía discontinua*" (the geographic discontinuity) to describe the experience of Latinx homoerotic subject (specifically the Latina/Lesbian), caught between Latino nationalism and the contemporary US Lesbian Movement.

Lugones begins by claiming that "the geographical memory of Latino homoerotic subject is sharply discontinuous" (169). The Latina/Lesbian does not belong in either the confines of Latino nationalism or the domain of the US Lesbian Movement. Their borders keep her out because neither domain crosses or encounters the other. Both operate through a logic of purity, under the guise of unity: "The logic of modernity, of unity, takes a characteristic turn in the geographical setting of boundaries of the Lesbian Movement...The "unification" is

produced by avoiding border encounters. All encounters are within the geographical limits of master territories" (176). Insofar as she is denied from existing fully within the limits of either geography, as both "Latina" and "Lesbian," the Latina/Lesbian is a fragmented self. When she moves through either, her meaning is made by others, thereby marking her geography as discontinuous: "The Latina/Lesbian move within a movement that lacks a sense of geography and becomes aware of territoriality only when it stops outside the nations both imagined and real, a fierce sense of geography in resistance to colonization..." (175).

In Chapter ten of *Pilgrimages*, "Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker," Lugones theorizes the resistance of *la callejera* (the streetwalker) as a generative, spatial resistance: "The streetwalker theorist keeps both logics in interpretation but valorizes the logic of resistance as she inhabits differentiated geographies carrying with others contestatory meanings to praxical completion" (218). Lugones also offers "hangouts" as concrete spaces of resistance "within geographies sieged by and in defiance of logics and structures of domination" (221). Geography, therefore, refers to the boundaries and configuration of power relations at the social or collective level that can be created or contested as individual subjects move through geographies carrying or making new meanings.

Geographical Memory and History

In order to theorize spatial resistance through geography, Lugones also ties geography to memory and history. In the "Discontinuous Passing" chapter, Lugones quotes Eladia Blázquez, an Argentinian tango singer and composer:

La geografía de mi barrio llevo en mí. Será por eso que del todo no me fui. (*I carry the geography of my barrio within me. Maybe that's why I have not left it altogether*) (169).

Geography is lived as embodied and carried through memory and history. In this way, even though geography sets boundaries for the sake of control, it can also be reclaimed as contesting the logic of domination. In her essay, "Wicked Caló: A Matter of the Authority of Improper Words," Lugones interrogates the hegemonic commitments in dictionary building and provides two contestatory dictionaries that capture "linguistic revolt and resistance" (246). Her reflection on *El Libro de Caló/Pachuco Slang Dictionary* reveals a methodology "from within the geography and its intersubjective conceptualization as a contested territory. The strategy is to show up the world one is to deal with, live in, negotiate, appreciate if one is to participate in communication to show it up in its territoriality..." (259-260). *El Libro* demonstrates the ways in which geography can be taken up as a resistant, situated memory and history of a people.

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See also:

hangout(s), fragmentation (logic of), world, world-traveling, callejera, tortillera/cachapera, streetwalker theorizing, oppressing ⇔ resisting, intention/intentionality, home/homeplace, tactical strategies, active subjectivity, complex communication.

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Hangouts

Hanging out is to spatial politics what active subjectivity is to motivational structure: an open-ended, intersubjective transgression of dominant worlds of sense ("Tactical Strategies," 221). That is, the space of the hangout and the practice of hanging out upend traditional conceptions of space through the resistance of the multiplicitous self. The materiality of the hangout is important: Lugones "mean[s] to take up an everyday practice of resistant inhabitation of space" and explore the meaning-making that it effects (ibid, 234, n.15). Hanging out takes place in the concrete world of the streetwalker, a position which Lugones contrasts with that of the disembodied city planner who views the streets from nowhere. In so doing, Lugones reiterates her critique of disembodied theorizing.

The hangout's initial position on the street is significant for its politics. Lugones explains that hangouts are open to those "at odds with 'home'" for any number of reasons (ibid, 209, see note). Being positioned in opposition to 'home' (by being expelled, evicted, needing to flee, etc.), makes one vulnerable to the circle of "home-shelter-street-police station/jail/insane asylum-cemetery" (ibid). This dominant spatial politics is governed by a sharp division between public and private spheres, whereby those who find themselves "at odds with 'home'" can be thrust out of the private sphere and into the highly policed realm of the public. While "home" supposedly offers refuge from the violence and regulation of the street, the experience of those "at odds with 'home'" exposes the violence at work in the private sphere. Neither sphere is inherently safe and each operates under controlling logics. The practice of hanging out responds by rejecting the division between public and private spheres through the creation of spaces of resistant intimacy.

Hangouts are therefore dependent on a politics, rather than a specific location. As a disruption of dominant spatial logics, and the public/private split in particular, a "hangout" can crop up "even in well-defined institutional spaces, troubling and subverting their logics, their intent" (ibid, 224). Think here of a group of individuals openly breastfeeding infants in a government hearing.

Lugones understands hanging out as specifically resistant and thereby differentiates the practice from other, arrogant forms of travel: "hanging out cannot be assimilated to the various nomadisms that rehearse the romance of travel, where privileged visitors destabilize other peoples' spaces without attention to the power relations that construe the spatial occupation" (ibid, 234, n.18). (See "world"-traveling.) The hangout is not a space outside of politics, but rather one in which politics is actively navigated and contested, rather than left uncontested.

Hangouts, unsurprisingly, are spaces of multiplicity which reach across the multiple worlds of sense inhabited by their participants. There is thus room in a hangout for multiple selves to coincide without being forced into a single world. For Lugones, the resistant space of the hangout enables a playful and generous orientation in an intersubjective context: "Hanging out is always a hanging out with/among others in an openness and intensity of attention, of interest, sensorially mindful in each other's direction" (ibid, 220).

The practice of hanging out, then, opens up a venue uniquely hospitable to complex communication. For Lugones, "[h]anging out permits one to learn, to listen, to transmit information, to participate in communicative creations, to gauge possibilities, to have a sense of the directions of intentionality, to gain social depth" (ibid, 209). Lugones' description of the hangout thus seems well in line with her concept of the limen, though perhaps the hangout offers a concrete and material instantiation of liminality.

We can also identify hangouts in some of Lugones' later work. Lugones explicitly refers to the hangouts built around "tango dancing in the torta style": "it hones your intelligence in movement, in gestural communication within a spatiality that remakes/rejects the suffocating, closed, bound, dumb, normed spatiality of oppressions. One gets practice in bodily comportment as one cruises, moving from hangout to hangout, throwing out (life)lines, taking some things out of the mix and reading in others" ("Milongueando Macha," 57). The spatial dimensions of the hangout here encompass the embodiment of the dance and the extent to which those dancing and those watching disturb any reading of the dance in heterosexualist terms. If those dancing take on the "smooth, symmetrical, mirrored, role reversal call and response" that characterizes the "torta style" in the context of a traditional environment, moreover, the hangout enacts a further disruption of spatial norms ("Milongueando Macha," 55).

An implicit hangout might be found in Lugones' analyses of language. In her examination of *El Libro de Caló/Pachuco Slang Dictionary*, Lugones argues for the intensely resistant capabilities of this vernacular which not only defies dominant linguistic practices but further refuses any concretization of definitions ("Wicked Caló," 261). Engaging in such resistant language practices in a public space hostile to them (an English classroom, a courtroom, an upper-class white neighborhood), then, would seem to be an instantiation of the hangout. The written form of resistant language practices, as seen in both *El Libro de Caló* and in Lugones' work as a translator, might be a kind of literary hangout, disrupting the dominant space in a cultural imaginary.

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See also:

home, limen, active subjectivity, streetwalker theorizing, spatiality, tactical strategies, multiplicity, self, concrete, complex communication, cocooning, "world"-traveling

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Identity

"Identity" is a very complicated concept throughout María Lugones' corpus.² In her book *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, Lugones mainly speaks of *identification*, which is when a subject is categorized in a manner that may or may not fulfill their own vision of themselves. In other texts, such as "Reading the Nondiasporic form within Diasporas" (2014) and "Hispaneando y Lesbiano: On Sarah Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics*" (1990), Lugones speaks of how identities can be fragmented parts of the self that are not allowed to be unified into a multiplicitous being. Identity can also be a thing that prohibits people from effectively engaging in coalition with each other, and fractures communities.³ For example, identity politics that become too essentialist have the potential effect of gatekeeping, which then leads to fractured communities that may not enable community members to engage with coalition with each other. Since this lexicon cannot fully encompass Lugones' notion of identity, it will focus mainly on how identity operates in terms of identity politics and coalition.

Instead of being an explicit topic covered throughout her work, the theme of identity is one that is incidental to other terms in Lugones' work— the primary ones being "home," "'world'/'world'-traveling", "self," and "fragmentation". While this entry will not go into each of these topics in depth, it is of import to note that identity is an intersecting aspect in all of these areas. In each of Lugones' pieces, she explores how means/methods of resistance (and the act of resistance itself) can either prohibit or nourish the multiplicity of the subject. Aiming for the goal of a multiplicitous self seems that it would also imply a multiplicitous identity— that is, the "self" that is projected to others. By this I mean that it does not seem enough for the subject to merely recognize themselves as multiplicitous, but they would also seek to have others recognize them as multiplicitous as well. In *Pilgrimages*, Lugones speaks more on the topic of identification, which is the act of someone signifying something about a person or object, but she does not specifically define what identity is.⁴

At the very least, identity seems to be colloquially interpreted as that which people attribute to a subject, and respectively, that which a subject attributes to themselves. Here is where the potential linkage to the concept of self can be seen, as Lugones stresses the importance of ensuring subjects are not enforced into a fragmentation of their self, but a multiplicitous self. The multiplicitous self would be the expression of an identity that is multiple and allows the subject to fully express their multiple existential experiences and inhabited situations.⁵ Therefore, it would seem that the notion of identity is affiliated— in some respects— to the notion of a self and how that self internalizes their own being and how others internalize it. That identity, whether multiplicitous, curdled, or fragmented⁶ (as Lugones discusses in Chapter Six) is composed of the aspects of resistance subjects impose, the lessons gained from "world"-traveling, and exploration of the self.

² As a native English speaker, I have only read the works that she has published in English, so I want to be clear that my lexicon entry will only cover the works of María Lugones that have been published in English by Lugones by herself or with another co-author.

³ Lugones, María. "Reading the Nondiasporic form within Diasporas." *Hypatia* vol. 29, no.1 (2014): 18-19.

⁴ Lugones, María. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp. 51; 58; 73-74.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 78; 118.

⁶ "Curdled" refers to an multiplicitous identity that is mixed in such a way that the different aspects that compose it would not be easily picked apart. However, these identities do not smoothly combine into one being and can impose an internal sense

Besides the aforementioned concepts, Lugones spends much of her time in *Pilgrimages* disputing the idea of a unified self. When she talks about multiplicity, Lugones repeatedly notes that any idea of a unified self is misleading and is a concept of oppression.⁷ While this may initially seem odd, Lugones' concept of identity heavily relies on whether a being is able to express their multiplicitous self, or not. In Chapter Three of her text she notes: "When I do not see plurality stressed in the very structure of a theory, I know I need to do lots of acrobatics... to have this theory speak to me without allowing the theory to distort me *in my complexity*."⁸ Lugones is very concerned about fragmentation of identity, and thus, the distortion of a person's true being. Therefore, the identity that they are forced to outwardly display or inhabit is often not one that accounts for their complexities that come with being multiplicitous beings.

Another aspect of identity that Lugones covers in "Reading the Nondiasporic from Diasporas" and "Boomerang Perception" in *Pilgrimages* notes that identity also plays a political role for the subject. She discusses how identity politics can lead to one "being without a homeplace," which is an important idea when she talks about "ghostly subjectivity".⁹ She states that "ghostly subjectivity" is "a state of estrangement of self in-between two perceptions, neither of which allows a person to identify and position themselves in the world."¹⁰ This shows the reader that identity can also be something that is a source of confusion for the subject. Instead of being a source of empowerment and communal identity, some identities can lead subjects to be restricted from certain spaces. Identity also allows for the "gatekeeping" that Lugones discusses in "Reading the Nondiasporic from Diasporas" and in "Boomerang Perception." This gatekeeping is done on the premise that some individuals are not "real x", with x being an identity group such as Blacks, Muslims, women, etc. An example could be that a Muslim woman is not seen as a "real Muslim" unless she wears a hijab and conforms her dress to a hegemonic standard. The main issue here, and one that Lugones continually struggles with in her work, is that the difference between identity and multiplicity and whether or not both liberative and open in terms of who can claim it, and the ability to claim that thing autonomously.

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See Also:

home, world/world-traveling, self, fragmentation, and multiplicity/plurality

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of friction. "Fractured" refers to an identity that is openly disjointed and is very resistant to unification. For further reading regarding these terms, consult Chapter Six of *Pilgrimages*, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation".

⁷ Ibid. pp. 54; 58-59.

⁸ Ibid. pp. 74.

⁹ Lugones, Maria. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp. 154.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 155.

Intentionality

The formation of intentions and the exercise of practical reason link Lugones' theory of resistant agency (active subjectivity) with her epistemological pluralism. In her analysis of the problem of resistance under Marxian and radical feminist views of oppression, Lugones draws the readers' attention to the constraints that such theories place on those they subjugate. Not only is the oppressor theorized so formidably as to limit resistant action, but the very possibility of oppositional thinking is nullified in certain worlds ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 57). The multiplicity of worlds, however, offers Lugones a way around this problem.

Take her example of playfulness: in the elitist white academy, Lugones is understood as serious and intense, but in another setting, she is playful ("Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling," 93). In the former world, the problem is not merely that Lugones' actions cannot be understood as playful; rather, the self that she is in the oppressive world is constructed in such a way that "being playful" is not an intention she can effectively set and actualize. Even if she retains the memory of her playfulness in other worlds, the strictures of the oppressive world may still impede her ability to effect those other-worldly intentions ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 57). Despite her differential abilities in different worlds, Lugones' memory of who she is in other worlds offers her a certain epistemic insight to the oppression she faces, leading to the possibility of cultivating a critical stance. The importance of resistant intention-setting, therefore, seems to lie less in its capacity to bring about certain actions (as this would seem to rely on a more traditional, liberal model of agency) but rather in the cultivation of the capacity to recognize oppression as non-totalizing.

Lugones' non-totalizing depiction of oppression makes room for resistance, which she argues must be intersubjective. The formation of resistant intentions, on Lugones' account, involves a move from individual to collective subjectivity; that is, a move toward "more dispersed, more complex, multiple, interactive, uncertain, and necessarily engaged understanding of the social...lying *between rather than in subjects*, subjects that are neither monolithically nor monologically understood" ("Tactical Strategies," 208). Her understanding of socially formulated intentions lying "between" subjects seems to refer both to those constructed among different bodies in the same world and the different selves animated by a particular body across various worlds (ibid, 209). The sociality of resistant intentions comes into full view in discussion of "tactical strategies": unlike the birds-eye blueprints to the detached strategist, the tactical strategist is embedded in the world, located on the street with senses open to others and their worlds (ibid, 219). Resistant intentions can only be formed from this position: they require intersubjectivity (not necessarily for confirmation, but for discussion and response) and "sensorial attentiveness" (ibid, 220).

Just as resistant intentions in Lugones' account cannot be understood as residing within one coherent subject, the sociality of intention-setting further means that "intentions cannot be assumed to be always lying within one world of sense, but as possibly lying in between worlds of sense, worlds of sense that are enmeshed with each other, even though they may be ideologized as distinct" ("Tactical Strategies," 209). Returning to our earlier example, the cultivation of playfulness might originate in multiple, intermeshed worlds Lugones inhabits, and understood differently in each. Intending between worlds takes the active subject to the limen, "where one becomes most fully aware of one's multiplicity" ("Structure/Anti-Structure," 59). The playfulness of which she is capable among Latinx lesbians might be of a different sort from the playfulness that she exercises among Argentines of differing genders and sexualities. Actively intending playfulness might, then, draw on both these worlds of sense and not be reducible to either. The other inhabitants of these worlds, moreover, will be central to the development of playful intentions, as they help create the conditions under which the self's playfulness can emerge.

See also:

I → We, Oppressing ⇔ Resisting, agency/active subjectivity, tactic/strategy, streetwalker theorizing, “world”-traveling, multiplicity, ontological pluralism, limen

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I → we

In "Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker" Lugones formally introduces her use of the construction "I → we" while discussing a problem that arises in the process of writing. She feels that using the first person "I" is arrogant, conveying precisely the late-modern, individualistic agency that she critiques in the chapter. On the other hand, the third-person pronoun would seem to obscure the lived interpersonal and dialogic quality of the reader/writer encounter. Grappling with this bind, Lugones offers the alternative "I-we" which captures for her the "semisolitary" quality of being on the lookout for company and collectivity. The "I" in "I-we" is thus always understood as in relation to, leaning toward, or seeking out the "we." Lugones goes on to characterize this aspiration towards the "we" as a *movement toward* it and only then introduces "I → we." The arrow makes visual the "I" as in the midst of a transition. Neither displacing the "I" or presumptuously claiming the "we," with "I → we" Lugones signals a political commitment toward increased collectivity (226-227).

But the collectivity that "I → we" moves towards is not simply the aggregate of many "I"s coming together. Lugones specifies the arrow of "I → we" additionally signals "disbursed intentionality" (227). So the movement from the "I" to the "we" is also a movement away from agency as we know it, the "I" classically understood as an autonomous subject. This is a reference to the critique late-modern subjectivity and agency that she advances earlier in the chapter. Under this classical model, an agent is considered successful when they singularly cognize some intention and then are able to bring that intention into fruition in the world. Lugones points out that this view lacks any understanding of the social and systemic institutions in place that effectively *allow* the individual to accomplish their aims. Since the oppressed would seem unable to effect their desired

outcomes, the classical model reads them as non-agential, and ultimately amoral beings—essentially legitimizing their oppression (210-211). So included in the “I → we” is a movement away from a socially dislocated subjectivity, the “I” classically conceived, and towards *intersubjectivity*, the collective sense making required for resistance (216).

In fact, Lugones explicitly attributes the quality of active resistance to her construction of the “I → we,” calling it the “looking-to-dismantle” quality (227). Throughout the chapter, Lugones thematizes this movement toward collective resistance as an “alternative sociality,” a sociality in which subjects collectively engage in tactical-strategic practices of resistance. Resisters in this alternative sociality are sensitive to signs and meanings within multiple and intermeshed worlds of sense which may be invisible to the oppressor. Likewise, they understand intentionality as not belonging to autonomous agents in the dominant world’s logic but as emerging between individuals occupying many worlds which may be unintelligible under the dominant world’s logic (208, 221-222). In this way, “I → we” is as much about leaving behind an oppressive conception of the “I” as it is about opening up new possibilities for the “we.”

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See Also:

Streetwalker Theorizing, Active Subjectivity, Hangouts,

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Loving/Arrogant Perception

The concepts of loving and arrogant perception are explored in particular depth in Lugones’ “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception.” In this essay, Lugones explains that loving and arrogant perception as introduced by Marilyn Frye in “In and Out of Harm’s Way: Arrogance and Love” enable her to articulate significant experiences and phenomena in her own life. Lugones expands on these concepts in order to investigate the ways in which loving and arrogant perception can be further characterized through identification, subjecthood, playfulness, and “world”-traveling.

The arrogant perceiver is one who grafts the substance of the those perceived as servile others onto herself; this grafting constitutes an attitude toward the other that is characterized by a lack of recognition of the other as a subject. While Frye’s account focuses on offering a description of the ways in which men arrogantly perceive women, Lugones stresses that white/Anglo men are not the only arrogant perceivers. In particular, Lugones exemplifies arrogant perception through two examples of women as arrogant perceivers: the white woman as the arrogant perceiver of women of color, and Lugones herself as the arrogant perceiver of her

mother. She remarks on the similarity between the failure on her part specifically to love and identify with her mother and the failure on the part of the white woman to love and identify across racial and cultural boundaries. Lugones struggled with fostering love toward her mother because she lacked the desire for identification with her mother — because Lugones perceived her mother as inherently servile, she did not want to identify with her mother and therefore could not love her. Similarly, the white/Angla woman, in perceiving women of color to be servile and lacking in subjecthood, cannot come to love or identify with women of color and are, too, arrogant perceivers. The arrogant perceiver fails to recognize the other as a subject, and this lack of knowledge and identification allows one to perceive the other arrogantly, to be “really alone in the other’s presence because the other is only dimly present to one.” (97)

Loving perception, in contrast to arrogant perception, is necessary in perceiving the other and thus allowing mutually confirmation of one another’s subjecthood. Lugones’ account of subjecthood necessitates identification with and the traveling to the “world” of the other; indeed, she writes, “I am incomplete and unreal without other women. I am profoundly dependent on others without having to be their subordinate, their slave, their servant.” (83) To perceive lovingly is precisely what allows for intelligibility among and the possibility of being understood by one another. Without engagement in this type of perception, Lugones writes, “we do not make sense, we are not solid, visible, integrated; we are lacking.” (86) Loving perception is an attitude and orientation of the self toward others, of which “world”-traveling is an essential component. Lugones writes that by learning to travel to each other’s “worlds,” we learn to love each other. Lugones came to love her mother by traveling to her mother’s “world” and allowing herself to identify with her mother. In traveling to her mother’s “world,” she was able to see herself from the perspective of her mother within that world. For Lugones, to travel lovingly to certain “worlds” comprises loving at least some of those which inhabit that world; in traveling to another’s “world” we are choosing to perceive and enable the other to be a subject. The willingness to know and identify in a way that enables the other *to be* a subject creates the interdependency among one another that allows for cross-cultural and cross-racial loving necessary for the kind of intersubjective meaning-building Lugones urges for coalition.

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See also:

Playfulness, “World”-Traveling, “World”, Boomerang Perception, Double Vision, Identity, Coalition

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Multiplicity/Plurality

The way in which María Lugones describes multiplicity in her work shows itself in two phases.¹¹ In her early work, Lugones goes through great lengths to describe the multiplicitous self, detailing how it is an act of resistance, and describing her theory of “world”-traveling and how it allows for people to view themselves as multiplicitous in different spaces. In her book *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, multiplicity is a continuously developing concept that appears to be intrinsic to her notion of resistance in women of color feminisms (along with identity formation in Latinx feminism). It specifically re-appears when she applies in the concept of “world-traveling” to identity formation regarding the mestizaje, which are discussed in the “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception” and “Hard-to-Handle Anger” in *Pilgrimages*.¹²

The idea of the multiplicitous subject seems to be Lugones’ way of rejecting the idea that there is any unified subject or consciousness. In her concept of “world”-traveling, Lugones states that “world”-traveling “[...] reveals the possibility and complexity of a pluralistic feminism, a feminism that affirms plurality in each of us and among us as richness and as central to feminist ontology and epistemology”.¹³ Essentially what Lugones argues is that by “world”-traveling, a subject is able to explore the various manifestations of her identity and consciousness by entering the various “worlds” (or phenomenological perspectives of others). This traveling allows for the subject to experience the various epistemological, ontological and metaphysical standpoints that their overlapping identities allow them to occupy in the world. It is when one is “at ease in a ‘world’” that they are able to see their multiplicitous identities interact with the phenomena around them.¹⁴ It is in these worlds that people come to understand the various positionalities they hold in the multiple facets of their lives. By “world”-traveling, subjects are able to the different relationships they have to other “worlds” and the people that inhabit those “worlds”. A prime locus to observe multiplicity is to observe the lime and its inhabitants. In this space the subject can see their multiplicity of consciousness that relates to one’s multiplus identities, and observe how their different worlds react and act together or against each other.¹⁵ In the limen, we are able to see where we both oppress/ are oppressors and resist/are resistant— this allows for a multiplicity of existential experiences and consciousness formation.

It is here that the idea of multiplicity becomes something more than a simple existential goal— Lugones notes, “The task of remembering one’s self is a difficult liberatory task”.¹⁶ It is at this moment, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, that Lugones shifts from a mere discussion of theory, to the importance of identity exploration in the politics of resistance. If one does not recognize their multiplicity in the world they are currently occupying, then Lugones claims that this is an act of oppression given that this forces the subject into a sense of self-deception.¹⁷

In addition to the term “multiplicity,” Lugones also discusses the idea of “plurality” in her text as well. She uses it in almost the exact same areas of the text as multiplicity— often referring to it as “multiplicity/plurality.” However, due to the limited textual references, it is hard to determine whether Lugones would agree that they can be interchanged synonymously. In Chapter Three of *Pilgrimages* Lugones claims, “When I do not see plurality stressed in the very structure of a theory, I know I need to do lots of acrobatics... to have this theory speak to me

¹¹ As a native English speaker, I have only read the works that she has published in English, so I want to be clear that my lexicon entry will only cover the works of María Lugones that have been published in English by Lugones by herself or with another co-author.

¹² Lugones, Maria. *Pilgrimages Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, pp.73; 126.

¹³ Ibid. pp. 77.

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 90.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 59.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

without allowing the theory to distort me *in my complexity*.¹⁸ Here, it seems that Lugones is making the epistemic shift to distinguish pluralism as a component of a liberatory structure— be that feminism, coalitional politics, etc. — and multiplicity is a metaphysical being that one inhabits in a pluralist structure that allows them to freely world travel and engage with the world and phenomena that occupy their world and other “worlds”.

The concept of multiplicity also arises in several of Lugones’ later works although at this point it’s not as explicit. Three works that show this evolution in Lugones’ thought process— in chronological order— are: “Hispaneando y Lesbiano: On Sarah Hoagland’s *Lesbian Ethics*” (1990), “Multicultural Cognition” (1995), and “Radical Multiculturalism and Women of Color Feminisms” (2014). In “Hispaneando,” Lugones writes about the difficulties of being both a Latina and also a lesbian. This is due to the Latinx community being hostile towards non-heterosexual people, and the lesbian community not being inclusive of lesbians of color.¹⁹ She states, “I can only accept trying both possibilities. Trying both possibilities permits me to keep both selves alive, even if not integrated [...] These two possibilities are then, when exclusive of each other, separate deaths of my self.”²⁰ In this quote Lugones demonstrates that a multiplicitous self is one that is able to encompass multiple identities (without restraint) in order for her very being to survive and flourish. The two “possibilities” she mentions— being either a Latina or a lesbian— represent society’s restrictions that prevent her from expressing herself as a multiplicitous being.

Likewise in “Multicultural Cognition,” she and Joshua Price note that, “From the dominant culture’s standpoint, full personhood can be gained through assimilation.”²¹ The assimilation that is required here necessitates that subjects conform themselves to the desires of the dominant culture. They are no longer allowed to be playful, which as Lugones discusses in *Pilgrimages*, is needed for a being to be multiplicitous. When people are allowed to be playful, they are able to show parts of themselves that are intrinsic to their identity and may not be appreciated by mainstream society (or the dominant culture). Finally, in “Radical Multiculturalism and Women of Color Feminisms,” Lugones critiques Kimberlé Crenshaw’s theory under the claim that it “colludes with white feminism...and fragments identities.”²² While the claims of this argument against intersectionality will not be discussed here, it is important to note that Lugones sees the categorical logics that intersectionality identifies as fragmenting people. This is similar to the concept of separation that she discusses in Chapter Six of *Pilgrimages*— separation prevents people from viewing themselves as multiplicitous, and instead, fractions their identity (as Lugones discussed in “Hispaneando”). From this short exploration into a selection of work from María Lugones, it can be suggested that multiplicity occurs on four philosophical levels— ontological, epistemological, social, and in the self.

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See Also:

curdling, intersectionality, world and/or world-traveling, identity, self, oppressing ↔ resisting

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¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 74.

¹⁹ Lugones, María. “Hispaneando y Lesbiano: On Sarah Hoagland’s *Lesbian Ethics*.” *Hypatia* vol.5, no.3 (Fall 1990): 139-140.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 138

²¹ Lugones, María and Joshua Price. “Multicultural Cognition.” *Phoebe*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1995, pp. 24.

²² “Radical Multiculturalism and Women of Color Feminisms.” *Journal for Culture and Religious Theory* vol.13, no.1 (2014): 74.

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Oppressing ⇔ Resisting

The dichotomy of oppressing ⇔ resisting in María Lugones' corpus²³ is an intricate ontological and epistemological mode Lugones uses in her discussions of coalition, multiplicity, and intersectionality. In her book *Pilgrimages* Lugones begins to parse through this tension in the second chapter, "Structure/Anti-structure and Agency under Oppression", where she describes the sort of tension that the subject experiences while they are searching for ontological liberty. This tension of oppression and resistance is felt when the individual is performing the epistemic labor that needs to be processed, in both themselves and outside structures, in order to receive a sense of ontological liberation. This liberation is the ability of a subject to construct their material being from their own perspectives and not as a result of outside perspectives. While this is an interesting aspect of the dichotomy expressed between oppressing and resisting, this lexicon will focus specifically on the epistemological work that Lugones is doing in collaboration with Joshua Price as they examine cognitive practices that are both liberatory and oppressive. In order to do this, three works will be examined in length: "Dominant Culture," "Multicultural Cognition," and "Faith in Unity."

In "Dominant Culture" we see Lugones and Price discuss the monoculturalism that is obtained through a dominant culture "that informs the institutions of that society."²⁴ The dominant culture is installed through a process of domination and involves both the erasure and absorption of other cultures. It is important to note in this piece that monoculturalism is a political activity, which seems to necessitate that the resistance needed against it would also be a political act.²⁵ The epistemic shift towards multiculturalism, which is the subject of both "Multicultural Cognition" and "Faith Unity," involves a breakdown of the logic that is imposed by the dominant culture. The cognitive practices that uphold monoculturalism— according to Lugones and Price— are "learned and changeable", which seems to imply that while the subject seeks to deconstruct these logics, there is in return an escalation of these oppressive tactics.²⁶ Mariana Ortega notes that Lugones acknowledges that selves are not just in one aspect of this dichotomy, and the multiple resistances and oppressive activities that we engage in form this tension— this push and pull— which is indicative of Lugones' goal towards theorizing a multiplicitous self.²⁷ Likewise, subjects are also in a constant flux of being oppressed by epistemic practices and resisting these practices by employing cognitive practices of their own.

²³ As a native English speaker, I have only read the works that she has published in English, so I want to be clear that my lexicon entry will only cover the works of María Lugones that have been published in English by Lugones by herself or with another co-author.

²⁴ Lugones, Maria and Joshua Price. "Dominant Culture: El Deseo por un Alma Pobre (The Desire for an Impoverished Soul)." *Multiculturalism from the Margins: Non-Dominant Voices on Difference and Diversity*, 2003, 104.

²⁵ Ibid. 105.

²⁶ Lugones, Maria and Joshua Price. "Faith in Unity." *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader*, 2009, 93.

²⁷ Ortega, Mariana. *In-between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self*. Suny Press, 2016., 106-109.

The epistemic activity at work here is very interesting in that it implies a constant effort of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of epistemic structures that guide liberatory practices. This is explicitly seen “Multicultural Cognition” when Lugones and Price discuss the need for humility and understanding the uncertainty that arises when working through first order issues in order to treat the second and third order problems that arise in liberatory practices.²⁸ In the case of this article, epistemic activity is the work to establish cognitive practices to support multiculturalism.²⁹ This idea seems to be further complicated by the idea of “world”-traveling that Lugones invokes in the fourth chapter of *Pilgrimages*, “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception”, where she speaks of the limen (or the space between worlds) and the ability of the subject to see themselves in various modes of oppression and resistance.³⁰ So as the subject is engaging in “world”-traveling, there seems to be a move from the epistemological structures to the ontological and phenomenological effects of these epistemic structures. While this topic is not discussed in detail in this space, in order to look holistically at Lugones’ work, it is important to note that the cognitive practices (and by proxy the oppressing ⇔ resisting dichotomy that Lugones is working through) serve the purpose of naming and working through the epistemic structures that enforce this dichotomy. It is only then that the subject can fully appreciate the liberatory practices that lie within this tension.

One other area where Lugones discusses the oppressing ⇔ dichotomy is in her essay “From within a Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity and Resistant Agency”.

“I want to mark this insight in my own words. Oppression is not to be understood as an accomplished fact. To understand it as accomplished renders resistance impossible.

Rather, the relation is oppressing ⇔ being oppressed, both in gerund, both ongoing.

Resisting meets oppressing enduringly. It is the active subject resisting ⇔ oppressing that is the protagonist of our own creations.”³¹

Reading this section allows the reader to see that this dichotomy is a continuous push and pull—oppression cannot be completed, and so the subject is constantly engaging in a mode of resistance. When the subject is resisting, they seek to be multiplicitous and see reality as multiple.³² This is similar to a statement Lugones made in *Pilgrimages*:

“The tension of being oppressed ⇔ resisting— oppression ‘places’ one *inside* the *processes* of production of multiple realities. It is from within these processes that the practice of shifting to different constructions, different spatialities, is created. One inhabits the realities as spatially, historically, and thus materially different: different in possibilities, in the connections among people, and in the relation to power”.³³

This shows that just as the subject moves through different structures, and creates different realities, they are constantly following this oppressing/oppression ⇔ resisting dichotomy.

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See Also:

intersectionality, multiplicity, infra-politics, oppression, impurity

²⁸ Lugones, Maria and Joshua Price. “Multicultural Cognition.” *Phoebe*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1995, 32.

²⁹ Ibid. 28.

³⁰ Lugones, Maria. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp. 11-12.

³¹ Lugones, María. “From within a Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity and Resistant Agency” *EntreMundos/AmongWords: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 90.

³² Ibid. pp. 90.

³³ Lugones, Maria. “Introduction” *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp. 17.

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Oppression

For Lugones, the logic of oppression is always present in her work even if the concept is not explicitly mentioned. In *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, which bears the plurality of the concept in the title, Lugones draws on Marx, Aristotle, and Turner to discuss oppression in the context of structure/anti-structure and comes to understand oppression as inescapable. She discusses a desideratum of oppression theory that could be liberatory (Lugones, 2003, “Structure/Anti-Structure,” 55). This seemingly contradictory view of oppression as inescapable but potentially liberatory is resolved by Lugones’ multiplicitous self in liminality or the limen. “The experience of victims of ethnocentric racism of moving across realities, of being different in each, and of reasoning practically differently in each, can be understood as liminal,” Lugones says, “To do so is to understand its liberatory potential because, when the limen is understood as a social state, it contains both the multiplicity of the self and the possibility of structural critique” (2003, “Structure/Anti-Structure,” 61). Lugones critiques conceptualizations of agency as seeking institutional backing which is unavailable for the oppressed (see *Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker*, p 211). Lugones also situates oppression in the logics of purity and separation. The desire to simplify the world into dichotomies of purity/impurity, male/female, white/black, etc, stems from the dominant culture’s obsession with fragmenting the ‘other.’ Lugones would argue that oppression is the denial of full? personhood and active subjectivity for people of color. In adopting Western notions of rationality and the world as being one-dimensional, monoculturalism rejects the complexity of multiple worlds of sense. In response, Lugones conceptualizes the multiplicitous self and world-traveling.

For Lugones, oppression, in its broadest sense, is never totalizing. She creates the concept of oppressing ⇔ resisting to highlight the give and take of how individuals move back and forth between resisting oppression

and also engage in oppressing others. In her later work, Lugones argues that oppression is located in colonialism, the colonality of power, the colonality of gender. Lugones sees the latter as categories of oppression and tries to tease out the differences between intermeshing and intersecting oppressions (Radical Multiculturalism, p 75-76). Lugones writes that

[t]he logic of domination imposes a categorial conception of what is in fact a fusion or intermeshing of oppressions. The site of oppression can be understood as a superimposition of intersecting or interlocking and intermeshing or fused oppressions. The intersecting hides the fusion. That is, the intersecting hides the inseparability of oppressions (Radical Multiculturalism, p 76).

Lugones adds that “the interlocking or intersecting of oppressions is a mechanism of control, reduction, immobilization, [and] disconnection” (Radical Multiculturalism, p. 76). She is concerned with the categorial logics that simplify the multiplicitious beings who are made invisible, for example, those at the intersection of black and female. Lugones reminds us, in this piece, that black women do not possess the same gender as white women. Black women do not have femininity. This is because Western notions of femininity are inscribed with the assumption that 20th Century feminisms equated femininity with white bourgeois womanhood (Radical Multiculturalism, p 70). Therefore, in this fusion of gender and race, Lugones says, women of color “resist as different race-gender fusions than white women” in great multiplicity (Radical Multiculturalism, p. 76).

Thus, it seems that for Lugones, the recognition of the intersection of oppression(s) is necessary but that non-dominant differences that lie at the intersections cannot be diminished. Lorde’s non-dominant differences are fusions of the intersection of categorial gender oppressions and race oppressions. Lugones writes,

[i]t is because each fusion is lived and understood relationally and one can appreciate whether or not the relation is conceived in categorial terms or in terms of fusion. Since the fusion is a resistance to multiple oppressions, one can also appreciate the ways in which others have conceived, given cultural form to, theorized, expressed, embodied, their resistance to multiple oppressions.

Lugones suggests “all resistance understands and responds to oppression” and that individuals may act in ways that embrace both the logics of resistance and oppression. She writes “[b]oth readings [oppressive or resistant] may coexist and one person may read the acts both ways and, importantly, intend the act to be read both ways” (2003, “Introduction”, 13). This oppressing ⇔ resisting process exists both at the level of individual and collective social movements of intentions (2003, “Introduction,” 15).

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See Also:

Oppressed Subjectivity, Oppressing ⇔ Resisting, Intersecting Oppression, Intermeshed Oppression

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Playfulness

In "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," María Lugones recounts a time in which she found herself to be in "a state of profound confusion" over whether or not she possessed the attribute of playfulness. Initially, in the attempt to articulate an explanation for her confusion, Lugones considered the possibility of "worlds" she inhabited in which she did not feel at ease, and that this lack of ease in certain "worlds" compared to others was responsible for the possibility of simultaneously having and not having the attribute of playfulness; within the "worlds" where she was at ease, she would have this attribute, and within the "worlds" where she was not at ease, she would lack it. With this as a possible explanation, Lugones was left wondering what exactly she herself meant by some of these terms. This articulation, for Lugones, raised questions that led her to examine and develop the concepts of "world," "world"-travel, and the multiplicitous self. Following a discussion of these concepts in the chapter, Lugones returns to the question of whether or not she possesses the attribute of playfulness.

In her preliminary examination of the concepts of play and playfulness, Lugones consults accounts of play outlined by Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* and Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*. In both of these accounts, play is centered around agon, contest, and battle; those who engage in play in this sense concern themselves with scenarios which necessarily result in winners and losers. Role-playing, in particular, exemplifies these attributes of agonistic play. The players in a role-playing game, Lugones writes, maintain a fixed conception of self which imbues them with a sense of self-importance dependent on their *own* competence and merits. Play in this agonistic sense involves a sense of uncertainty and risk, but only with regard to who will win and who will lose, which necessitates hostility between players. In these accounts, the attribute of playfulness is derivative of this notion of play, and "does not turn an activity into play, but rather presupposes an activity that is play." (94) Huizinga interprets Western civilization itself as play. An attempt at "world" traveling with this agonistic sense of playfulness can only result in conquest, domination, and destruction as the traveler reduces and erases components of other "worlds" to meet their own sense of order and dominant logic. As Lugones writes, "the agonistic traveler is a conqueror, an imperialist." (94)

Lugones rejects these agonistic accounts of play as inadequate for an understanding of the attribute of playfulness in regard to her self and experience. She writes that "the agonistic attitude [...] is not a healthy, loving attitude to have in traveling across 'worlds.'" (95) In contrast to these agonistic accounts, Lugones posits her own idea of play: the loving attitude necessary for "world"-traveling and boundary crossing. Playfulness here does not presuppose an activity of play that is of a particular form and with its own rules, as in the agonistic account, but rather constitutes an attitude that "carries [players] through the activity [and] turns the activity into play." (95) Playfulness here also involves a sense of uncertainty, but rather than an uncertainty centered around winning and losing, the uncertainty is an openness to surprise. There is a distinct lack of concern for competence and self-importance, as such an openness requires the playful to allow for and embrace self-construction and reconstruction of "worlds" and sense. In play, "finding ambiguity and double edges [are] a source of wisdom and delight." (96) It is this sense of playfulness and this attitude of play that Lugones writes is an openness to surprise and that "inclines us to 'world'-travel in the direction of deep coalition" (98).

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See also:

"World", "World"-Traveling, Identity, Self, Plurality/Multiplicity, Loving/Arrogant Perception, Coloniality

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Transformation

If we see the subjugated as not exhausted by intermeshed oppressions but as resilient and determined to change the oppressive structures, then, as María Lugones writes in *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes*, we see “at least two realities: one of them has the logic of resistance and transformation; the other has the logic of oppression” (12). Within this context, Lugones locates the act of transformation in the limen—a borderland, an in-between space where one fully inhabits one’s multiplicitous self by confronting different oppressions; yet where she is never exhausted by domination (“On Complex Communication” 12). Transformation in this sense cannot be understood in its own term, but has to be inserted in a network of Lugones’ lexicon to fully embody its meaning. Interestingly, Lugones uses transformation in both positive and negative senses. In relation to concepts such as anger, curdling, the Coatlique state, and complex communication, transformation suggests a process of fully inhabiting the limen and oneself, and of traveling across spaces to others’ worlds. A negative usage of the term suggests the act of colonizing and regulating one’s culture. In this essay, I first elucidate different aspects of positive transformation by interpreting it in relation to the concepts of anger, curdling, and Coatlique; I later dedicate a small section of the essay to explaining negative transformation.

Central to one’s transformation is anger. For Lugones, to be angry is to assess an official world of sense and reject its demands and exclusions (*Pilgrimages* 110). Anger transforms fear and makes one become a more “assertive, resistant person” who is “clear-headed, no nonsense, going to the core of the racist matter, immovable, determined” (*Pilgrimages* 112). Yet transformation induced by anger is more than personality change, it also makes one move “within, across, and apart from official worlds of sense” to understand how one becomes angry (117). Here, anger-transformation becomes a verb, which implies traveling across different worlds of sense to look for social change and listen to other oppressed peoples’ angry voices.

Transformation as a verb also emphasizes a collective becoming, which is Lugones’ hopeful but challenging call for action. Her theorizing of collective transformation is illustrated in “Purity, Impurity, and Separation,” where she introduces the concept of curdling. As Lugones demonstrates, individuals are simultaneously separated and interrelated; our interrelations defy a categorical understanding of each other (which is a toxic legacy of colonialism) and help us discover our own becoming in each other’s presence and world—a collective becoming which she calls “curdling.” Lugones thus writes, “We not only create ourselves and each other through curdling but also announce ourselves to each other through this art, our curdled expression” (145). Undeniably, this hopeful vision of collective transformation is difficult because it is tempting and convenient to see our worlds and lives as split from one another and sometimes conflicting. Yet it is exactly for this reason that Lugones calls for a collective transformation that entails moving across spaces and regards our worlds as intermeshed.

In addition to anger and curdling, another powerful expression of transformation can be found in “From Within Germinative Stasis: from within Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency.” In this essay, Lugones’ highlights the concept of the Coatlique state as both stasis and transformation. As a Serpent Goddess, Coatlique represents

sexual drive, creativity, and fundamental energy and life (Germinative Stasis 92). In this state, one does not necessarily have a Western sense of agency—individualistic, moralistic, and free of oppressions”—yet one’s subjectivity is still active, registering a desire and determination to create, communicate, and transform. In the state of stasis, of not being able to act upon others, an individual of the Coatlique state “appears multiplicitous: at once terrorized and resistant; at once paralyzed in stasis and brooding her own liberation” (Germinative Stasis 90). Lugones compares this state of stasis/transformation to a cocoon, as she writes, “Like in a cocoon, the changes are not directed outward, at least not toward those domains permeated by the logics of dominations” (86).

The brooding of stasis, transformation, and cocooning is also a collective one through which one is transported to others’ consciousnesses. Collectively, those who are in Coatlique state, though oppressed, experience the ongoing process of transforming themselves and one another. This is why Lugones believes that self-transformation is inseparable from the transformation of one’s community (*Pilgrimages* 186). Both separate and together, the oppressed receive different possibilities while participating in a collective transformation and meaning-making. Lugones’ positive and complex rendering of transformation therefore speaks to the logic of resistance and collective creation; her negative notion of transformation, however, speaks to the logics of coloniality and oppression that I would like to discuss in the next paragraph.

In her discussion of decolonial feminism, Lugones dwells upon negative transformation, which I take to suggest colonizing a culture and converting its people to Christianity. The negative process of transformation is detrimental to the colonized “one’s sense of self, intersubjective relations, and relation to the spirit world, to land, to the very fabric of one’s conception of reality, identity, social, ecological, and cosmological organization” (“Toward a Decolonial Feminism 745). The negative notion of “transformation” does not just mean to “civilize” and Christianize, but it also imposes the coloniality of race and gender on non-Western cultures. In other words, colonialism as a process and structure creates and regulates the binary of gender roles and racial hierarchy in colonized societies. It is not to say that colonized societies did not have different social roles or hierarchy before, but colonial transformation projects Western expectations of gender and categories of race onto colonized societies, hence re-structuring these societies into racist and sexist ones.

Transformation in Lugones’ philosophical corpus can be a conflicting term: it embodies meaning-making, resistance, world-traveling, and deep communication, but it also indicates violent civilization and colonialism. Despite its conflicting meanings, one should remember that Lugones might want us to associate positive transformation with collectivity that expands the scope and scale of self-transformation into a cross-cultural and cross-racial one.

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See also:

anger, Coatlique, world-traveling, complex communication, and limen

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Trickster

The trickster and the fool, as Lugones notes, "are significant characters in many nondominant or outsider cultures," (92) and can intentionally animate oppressive constructions as a form curdling behavior that constitutes a practice of festive resistance. The image of the trickster or fool is most explicitly referenced in "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception." In this piece, the concept is one of many considerations in Lugones' exploration of the attribute of playfulness and the ways in which she comes to characterize herself as someone who is both playful and not playful.

The trickster is one who enacts the animation of the stereotypical construction of an identity within a given world as a strategy of resistance. In "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," Lugones describes the way in which Latinas are often stereotypically characterized in Anglo "worlds" as intense. She examines this stereotype specifically within her discussion of the attribute of playfulness, as it is this construction of herself within Anglo "worlds" that leads her to question whether or not she is indeed a playful person. Friends of hers from "faraway" who know her well assure her that she is playful, while the people around her consider her to be an utterly serious person. In addition to this "serious Latina" stereotype, she considers in "Purity, Impurity, and Separation" the stereotype of the rural Mexican/American. The Anglo imagines, in the arrogating attitude of ethnocentric racism, Mexican/Americans as "men and women of simple minds, given to violence, drink and hard work, accustomed to hardship and poverty" (135). This kind of stereotypical construction reduces the target of arrogant perception to a caricature that more easily allows for their dehumanization and subjugation. As is made clear in these examples, the stereotyping operates in a way that often results in the targets of ethnocentric racism to enact these stereotypes "in an unwillful parody of themselves" (134).

While the projection of the stereotypical construction is inescapable in particular "worlds," however, a possibility for resistance lies in the act of *intentionally* inhabiting the construction, of taking-up and animating the stereotype *so as to imbue one's self with ambiguity*. If a Latina, in understanding and appreciating her own ambiguous double image, chooses to describe herself as "intense," the arrogant perceiver of the Anglo "world" cannot be sure whether she is intense in a stereotypical or genuine sense; the Latina becomes the trickster— "an ambiguous being, a two-imaged self" (92). This ambiguity is threatening to the arrogant perceiver in that it calls into question the monological understanding that characterizes the attempt at reductive and categorial judgment by means of arrogant perception for the sake of convenience, control, and domination. As Lugones writes, "if it is ambiguous it is threatening because it is creative, changing, defiant of norms meant to subdue it" (144). The trickster moreover comes to possess a self-knowledge of which the arrogant perceiver is unaware, and that

“announces” herself to ambiguous others. (74) In this regard, engaging in trickery constitutes a survival-rich strategy that exemplifies the curdling behavior Lugones urges in resistant praxis.

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See also:

“World”, “World”-Traveling, Identity, Self, Plurality/Multiplicity, Curdling, Impurity

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“World”

“World,” for María Lugones, suggests a spatio-temporality that provides a construction of the social. “World” is never a singular and closed entity but is porous, heterogeneous, and constantly changing and developing. María Lugones conceptualizes the heterogeneity of worlds against the Anglo-American envisioning of a single, atomic and homogenous world. Because the white, Anglo-American world offers only one normative form of sociality, it does not create a spatio-temporality where people of different races and sexualities can thrive. The concept of world acknowledges the multiplicity of social forms and the different selves they enable. To name a different world does not mean to name a different culture because the difference between worlds cannot be explained away in terms of cultures and norms. Below, I identify and elaborate four characteristics of a “world” to distinguish it from a “culture” and to give it a concrete form.

As Lugones elucidates in *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, a world is inhabited by physical human beings as well as imaginary ones (86). It dictates a form of sociality—the way people interact, treat, communicate and love one another. It describes and constructs life and relationships based on the understanding of reality contained within that world. A world can mean either a complete society or an incomplete portion of it. This first characteristic of world makes it similar to a culture. However, the following three characteristics mark a clear line between a world and a culture.

Second, a world is not closed and autonomous. In contrast, it is interrelated with other worlds both materially and semantically, and it is constantly shaped by that interrelation. Materially, a world is not completely self-sufficient but needs to rely on other worlds—their labor, resources and time—to fulfill its material needs. Semantically, a world relies on its relationships with other worlds to acquire its full meaning. To put it differently, the meaning of a world is most critically seen and fully interpreted when it is situated in relation to other worlds.

The third characteristic—connected to the second one—speaks to the power relations between different worlds (88-89). Because different worlds are related to each other materially and semantically, their relationship is seldom egalitarian: a world may arrogate other worlds’ substance while simultaneously stigmatizing them, and

the other worlds can only keep offering the dominant world their substance while remaining oppressed and stigmatized. The relations between different worlds thus create a second order of meaning, one that speaks to the politics of domination and resistance between worlds. Because the power relations between different worlds register domination and hierarchy, resistance and oppressions, the disappearance of any world is always a political issue.

The fourth characteristic continues the issue of power relations and reveals the difficulty of communication between worlds. Communication is difficult not because the worlds have different cultures but because the power relations between different worlds fragment the social ground for mutual understanding, solidarity, and resistance. To solve this problem, Lugones proposes the idea of complex communication. In "On Complex Communication," she encourages the oppressed subject to travel into the liminal or in-between space where she can fully see and inhabit herself. Moving to the limen also means recognizing multiple selves and realities of other oppressed subjects. Only by acknowledging multiple selves, oppressions, and histories can we truly communicate with each other or see ourselves as inhabiting multiple worlds at once.

These four characteristics of Lugones's conception of world show that world is not just a cultural entity but a historical, political, social and epistemic one. To recall the beginning of this entry, a world is a spatio-temporality that provides a (alternative) construction of the social. This spatio-temporality is not just a social manifestation, but is also embodied by individuals. An individual, due to her multiple identities, can carry and embody multiple worlds simultaneously. Traveling into and out of different worlds, she navigates these different spatio-temporalities with different selves—different socio-political identities and different epistemic agency. These different selves do not create a fragmented individual because they can remember one another in different spaces and temporalities, keeping an individual a coherent and multiplicitous being. Yet fashioning one's own pluralist being is not enough; ultimately, Lugones asks us to communicate across worlds and embrace the liminal space in which we can fully articulate the complexity of our and others' subjectivity.

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See also:

"world"-traveling, motion, coalition, plurality, multiplicity, and complex communication

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