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TRACING THE LINEAGES OF DECOLONIAL THINKING THROUGH LATINX FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

From Gender to *Omeotlization*: Toward a Decolonial Ontology

Susana E. Matallana-Peláez

Foreign Language Department and Gender Studies Center, Universidad del Valle, CL. 13#100-00, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia
Corresponding author. Email: susana.matallana@correounivalle.edu.co

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Abstract
This article examines the treatment of gender and the woman question in the ongoing Latin American decolonial debate. More specifically, it traces how the Zapatistas and other indigenous movements as well as some of the main mestizo male voices in this debate have endeavored to frame these issues and the criticism they have received from María Lugones and other decolonial feminists. It then points to some of the limitations in Lugones's own approach, and in a final stream of discussion, it explores some of the ways in which these limitations might be surpassed within a decolonial framework that follows closely indigenous ontological thought.

"El mundo aparece como una omeyotización universal."[1]

María Lugones has stated that there can be no decolonization without a critical analysis of the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2015, 82). By setting this course, she has placed the issue of gender at the center of the decolonial debate. The Zapatistas, however, had placed the issue of women at the heart of their principles well before.[2] Like no other discussion in Latin America, gender and women are absolutely central to the decolonial debate. But, although they have been a part of it ever since Comandanta Ramona, Comandanta Susana, and Mayora Ana María first traveled the Altos of Chiapas asking indigenous women about their lives, the *woman question* or, more recently, the gender issue, has not always been at the heart of the discussion.[3] At times, women have been sidelined even by some of the most prominent voices in the movement. In the following pages, I will attempt to trace how the Zapatistas, other indigenous movements, and Aymara-Bolivian intellectual Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui have approached these issues, the contributions they have made to the debate, as well as some of the most challenging problems facing them. I will then examine how some of the main male mestizo voices in the current decolonial debate have endeavored to frame gender and the criticism they have received from decolonial mestizo feminists.

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Third, I will explore how Lugones addresses gender, and fourth, I will follow up on what I consider to be one of Lugones's most important propositions: the need for decolonialism to historicize patriarchy. Fifth, I will attempt to outline how gender itself might be surpassed within a decolonial framework that closely follows indigenous ontological thought.

A Rift from Chiapas Down Through the Andes

Indigenous movements throughout Latin America can be traced historically at the origin of decolonial thought. From the revolts of Tupac Amaru, Tupac Katari, and Bartolina Sisa in the Andes, or Jacinto Canek in Mayan lands during the sixteenth century, to those of Willka Pablo Zárate in Bolivia and Juan Banderas in Mexico during the republican period, Manuel Quintín Lame in Colombia during the twentieth century, and the Zapatistas of Chiapas in this century, indigenous movements have sought political as well as cultural autonomy. Many of these movements have advocated a return to traditional indigenous ways and an outright rejection of European colonial institutions and values. All have denounced Latin America's internal colonialism after the continent's so-called "independence" in the 1800s. More recently, as the debacle of modernity becomes more apparent every day, some have championed the need for a radical departure from Eurocentric ways of doing and thinking (see, for example, *Seguimos* 2015). Unfortunately, at times this has included the dismissal of gender and the status of women within indigenous communities as either dangerous feminist—and therefore colonial—fixations that divide communities unnecessarily along gender lines, or nonissues to be resolved through a return to so-called traditional culture. Although there is wide evidence that indigenous women and girls in Latin America experience significant violence within their own communities, indigenous movements have tended to downplay these difficulties while denouncing the no less real and growing external violence against women and girls—a tendency that, as we shall see later, obstructs the road to full decolonization (FIMI 2006; ONIC 2013; CEPAL 2014; Mesa de Trabajo 2015; Comisión 2017).

The Zapatistas have left an enduring mark on history: by including the gender demands of indigenous women in their political and ideological platform on the eve of their historic 1994 Declaration, they distanced themselves from all previous Latin American guerrilla groups and profoundly influenced other indigenous movements throughout the continent (EZLN 1994; Hernández 2007).[4] In the words of Aída Hernández Castillo, "they have contributed to the denaturalization of violence and the exclusion of women, putting the issue of rights on the debate table" in ways that can no longer be ignored (Hernández 2007, 77). At the same time, they created new tensions within their own organization and other indigenous movements as well. These new tensions, in turn, have given way to higher rates of violence against women that cannot be traced back solely to the very real and equally increasing external violence directed at indigenous women and girls. In fact, the rise in internal feminicides and other forms of gender violence drove the Zapatistas in 2012 to launch Frayba, an ongoing campaign against violence against women and feminicides in Chiapas (EZLN 2012). According to this campaign, feminicides went from 22 in 2010 to 97 in 2012: a 400% rise over the course of two years. Four years later, a second Alert against Gender Violence in Chiapas was launched (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres 2016). And in February 2019, the Frayba website reported yet another alarming rise in feminicidal violence (Frayba 2019).

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In addition to the growing gender violence, the silencing of women is perhaps the second most persistent gender-related problem among the Zapatistas and other indigenous movements. Even though it was Comandanta Ramona acting as the Zapatistas' spokesperson who opened in 1996 the first National Indigenous Congress in Mexico City,[5] and although it was Comandanta Esther who in 2001 addressed the Mexican Congress as the Zapatistas' representative in the Cocopa initiative,[6] Marisa Belausteguigoitia claims that the silencing of indigenous women's voices is a continuing problem within the Zapatista organization itself as well as within most other indigenous movements (Entrevista 2001). According to Belausteguigoitia, "the visibility of indigenous women is intermittent" with appearances and speeches by women taking place chiefly in a politically symbolic fashion at inaugural sessions (Entrevista 2001; Belausteguigoitia 2001, 45). Belausteguigoitia adds that indigenous women across the board are subject to multiple "processes of saturated ventriloquism" through which their male counterparts as well as mestizo feminists appropriate their voices (232). This sentiment is confirmed by indigenous feminist activists in other indigenous liberation movements, such as Susana Piñacué of the Nasa's Liberation of Mother Earth organization from Colombia. According to Piñacué, "the voice of woman . . . is still overshadowed by male leaders" and Nasa women have yet to "improve their role within and without their community, significantly reducing their present discrimination (among women themselves, and with men as well as the Other) by creating balanced conditions for their contribution and participation in the decisions and projects of the Nasa people" (Piñacué 2015, 320–21).[7] Further south, among the Mapuche of Chile, *werken* Olga Xaipe Antileo echoes a similar position.[8] According to Xaipe, despite the fact that in the past women among the Mapuche held important political and military roles, and despite there being publicly active and very vocal female *lonkos*, werken, and *machis* (Francisca Linconao or Juana Calfunao, for example), some of whom like the late Macarena Valdés or Nicolasa Quintreman have been murdered precisely because of their outspoken eco-activism, women among the Mapuche today are expected to remain largely quiet and submissive,[9] a fact Xaipe attributes to the "strong Westernization of our logics," which no longer determine roles based on the "spiritual force" of individuals as in the past, but according to whether they are men or women (Hernández and Contreras 2018).[10]

Jules Falques has argued that it is unlikely that laws alone will be able to transform the everyday lives of indigenous women (Falques 2001, 175). Although laws can dictate new behaviors, they cannot pick apart 500-year-old colonial logics nor their resulting accommodations. No one is more aware of the need to decolonize mentalities, practices, and mores than the Zapatistas, but if indigenous women are to be free of violence and to regain the kind of equality, respect, and centrality they were accorded in pre-contact America from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, it may be necessary to pick apart the *strong colonial logics* that determine roles based on whether individuals are men or women. In other words, it may be necessary to take apart Western sexual dimorphism and heterosexism. In the case of indigenous communities, this means remembering that heterosexism is not exactly an Amerindian *tradition*. In fact, it means remembering that hegemonic patriarchy, along with its attending sexual dimorphism and heterosexism, was quite foreign to the continent. If this exercise were to be systematically undertaken, indigenous communities might be able to avoid oversights like the one that prevented the Zapatistas from incorporating into the first (1993) Revolutionary Law of Women the right of women to inherit land even though this had been a highly sensitive issue well identified a year before by Comandanta Ramona, Comandanta Susana, and

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Mayora Ana María in their survey of the Altos of Chiapas (Padierna 2013, 140). It might also prevent the kind of reformulations that surrounded the second (1996) and latest version of the Revolutionary Law of Women dealing with the more private dimension of women's lives, which, under the influence of the Catholic Church, banned infidelity (Hernández 2001, 224–25). In the case of the Nasa (and other indigenous communities throughout Colombia), it might mean remembering that the name of the famous female chieftain known as La Gaitana was not so much the name of an individual woman as it was of a role performed by women in pre-contact New Granada (Matallana 2011). In the case of the Mapuche, it would mean remembering that neither Yanequén, nor Guacolda, nor Fresia went to war against the Spaniards out of love for their martyred *lonko* husbands (as popular Chilean history holds), but because as the remaining heads of extensive clan networks they were socially and politically expected to do so. In the end, it might mean avoiding what Lugones, citing Paula Allen Gunn, claims has taken place within many indigenous movements in Latin America, that is, "the patriarchal revisions of tribal life, biased or simply invented by patriarchs who are not Indians and Indians who have become patriarchs" (Gunn, cited in Lugones 2008, 90). Such an exercise, if carried out systematically, might ultimately nurture the seed Nasa feminist activist Vilma Almendra speaks of as the "seed that will in time overrun this patriarchal system through communal matriarchal transformations spun around a full life, limiting until we are able to defeat the separations that have been imposed on us as natural" (Almendra 2017, 288).[11]

Aymara-Bolivian feminist decolonial intellectual Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has done substantial revision work on precolonial Andean gender structures and the way in which they guaranteed indigenous women security, power, participation, and voice. Echoing María Rostworowski's foundational research, Rivera points to two key decisive elements: parallel kinship and the absence of a public/private space divide. Regarding parallel kinship, she argues that "the gender system in Andean societies . . . exhibited a dynamic and contentious equilibrium. . . . The relationship between genders rested on a bilateral kinship system which is at the root of the indigenous polis. . . this bilateral inheritance framework allowed daughters to inherit assets and rights through their maternal line (this includes, even today, land)" (Rivera 2010b, 205–06).[12] She then goes on to explain how parallel kinship prevented the formation of patricentral lineages, and thus the formation of patriarchy (Rivera 2010a, 183). In truth, parallel kinship explains a lot, for example, why so many legendary female chieftains throughout the continent took such a vested interest in fighting against and sometimes alongside the Spaniards. The story of *coya* Hatun Jauja, governor of the province of Huaylas in the Incan empire, is illustrative.[13] Coya Hatun Jauja, the second wife of Huayna Capac, had allied herself with Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro, offering him her sixteen-year-old daughter, Quispe Sisa, in marriage. The fifty-four-year-old conquistador took his young consort with him to the recently founded city of Lima. When Quiso Yupanqui, the general who commanded Manco Inca II's troops, lay siege to the city, Quispe Sisa sent word to her mother asking her for reinforcements. Hatun Jauja's troops were instrumental in breaking the siege and crushing the Cuzco revolt (Matallana 2013, 26). In parallel kinship, women—be they commoners or queens—cannot afford to hope to inherit from their fathers, brothers, or husbands. Since they can inherit only through their mothers, every woman—whether single or married—has at some point in her life a vested interest in accruing her own assets, not only in order to secure her livelihood, but also to pass them on to her female descendants. For coya Hatun Jauja, such a system provided the necessary incentive to

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ally herself with the enemies of her former invaders and reclaim what she had lost to the Incas. At the same time, these assets and the possibility of capitalizing on them provided women and their children lasting material stability and security. Furthermore, the fact that assets could be passed down a female line and accumulated from one generation of women to the next effectively limited the concentration of wealth in male hands, thereby controlling the power of patrilineages and the development of patriarchy. Throughout the continent, the rules of kinship that regulated family life regulated politics at large as well as interethnic relations (Rivera 2010a, 184). Consequently, there was no public/private dichotomy. Pre-contact indigenous women's *domestic* range of action was much wider than that of their European contemporaries. Women, for example, were important artificers in the processes of endo-acculturating foreigners (185). Marriage and adoption were two favored mechanisms for dealing with the Other, whether invader or immigrant:

> In the pre-Hispanic world, in which the hypothesis of cultural homology between different indigenous societies is highly plausible, otherness did not imply an absence of the human condition. Every foreigner or alien could be integrated at different levels of the strongest group's culture, going from being a foreigner to becoming a relative, to the point of sharing power and inheritance in the cultural assets of any given collectivity. Nevertheless, this was only possible through women who in this way limited the absolute autocratic dominion of one group over another. It is easy to see, however, how this egalitarian principle turned into authentic suicide in the face of the foreigners who arrived in the Andes in 1532. (Rivera 2010a, 185)[14]

Indeed, coya Hatun Jauja's strategy had worked for centuries and with many different groups of invaders. Sadly though, for the coya and her descendants, Hatun Jauja misread Spanish patriarchs and their intentions. Rivera argues that precolonial Andean women enjoyed a much more balanced distribution of power with their male counterparts and that the loss of voice they were to experience subsequently took hold only when the Spaniards forbade them from attending and participating in *cabildos* (Rivera 2010b, 205–06).[15] This is the true origin of indigenous women's so-called *tradition* of silence and submissiveness. As far as contemporary indigenous movements are concerned, cabildos as a colonial institution should be a major point of revision, having been adopted by most groups, particularly so in Colombia, as the quintessential political arena where community matters are settled. Even though women have now been admitted, Spanish colonial censorship of women's voices still hangs heavy in the air.

In light of the aforementioned analysis, it is tempting to take up Falques's thesis regarding the limitations of laws in transforming the lives of women (and not just those of indigenous women) within patriarchy. After all, what are laws and rights in such a brutal, misogynistic, and exploitative system as patriarchy, if not compensatory mechanisms that can never really secure lasting structural stability, power, participation, or voice for women? Judith Bennett has warned us about the intractability of patriarchy, what she calls "patriarchal equilibrium" or the capacity of patriarchy to re-accommodate itself in the face of change (Bennett 2006). Considering that decolonization is a project that endeavors to do away with the oppressive legacies of colonialism—hegemonic patriarchy being one such legacy—and that "the conquest of the Americas was a gendered-collision" (Powers 2005), a collision between two very different gender systems, gender and gender structures emerge as a critical matter for decoloniality. Yet, just as with

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indigenous movements, male mestizo decolonialists have not always recognized the centrality of gender and *the woman question* to the decolonial debate.

Ruptures from Male Decolonial Academia

Aníbal Quijano, often regarded as the founding father of academic decolonialism, paid little attention to gender and women (Quijano 1988). Like most Marxists before him who dismissed these issues as capitalist contradictions that would go away with the advent of classless socialism, Quijano believed they would be resolved once the category of race was exposed for the colonial imposition that it is. Lugones has argued that in condensing the coloniality of power exclusively around race, racialization, and racial discrimination, he not only dodged gender and women, but failed to see the intersectionality among class, race, and gender as they apply to any given group or individual. As a result, she points out, he ended up accepting a colonial notion that had no place in precolonial thought and societies:

> Quijano presupposes a patriarchal and heterosexual understanding of the disputes for the control of sex, its resources and products. Quijano accepts the capitalist, Eurocentric, and global explanation of gender. This analytical framework, inasmuch as it is capitalist, Eurocentric, and global veils the ways in which non-white, colonized women were subordinated and disempowered. The patriarchal and heterosexual character of social relations can only be perceived as oppressive when the presuppositions of such a framework are exposed. (Lugones 2008, 78)

Enrique Dussel, one of the founders of the philosophy of liberation and currently an important voice among Latin American decolonialists, is one of the few male voices to have addressed the issue of women specifically.[16] For Dussel, the conflicts of power and discrimination against women are to be resolved in the public arena, the political stage par excellence (Dussel 2006). But Latin American feminists have been highly critical of his theory in this regard. Breny Mendoza, for example, charges him with the use of a totalizing concept of "the people" that takes little notice of the violence and discrimination exerted against women, particularly against women of color (Mendoza 2010, 30). She argues that this concept closely resembles the use of the concept of "the poor" in liberation theology (where Dussel conducted much of his early work), and that it likewise "operates as a hegemonic and undifferentiated concept that does not include the sufferings of women" (30). Although it is true that in its first phase (1970s), liberation theology did not pay much attention to the violence visited upon women and girls and that it unabashedly accepted Vatican dogma regarding sexual and reproductive rights, it is also true that during this phase it promoted forums and public discussions where, although there was no talk of gender, women began to speak about their lives. According to Hernández Castillo, in Oaxaca and Chiapas these forums became important because it was there that indigenous women became aware of gender discrimination (Hernández 2001, 209–10). In the 80s, groups of nuns as well as nongovernmental feminist organizations began to discuss gender and to promote gender-perspective initiatives (209–10). By the 90s, with the Zapatistas' public appearance, indigenous women began raising their voices in public. Liberation theology thus trained the women who made the Zapatista movement and contributed much to what the EZLN said with regard to women's rights. Mendoza, however, points at another and perhaps more important flaw in Dussel's approach to the issue of gender

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and women: she criticizes him for uncritically accepting the Eurocentric and colonial public/private divide that demarcates private space as a kind of prepolitical realm, thereby concealing from sight and theorization the domain where most aggressions against women and girls take place (Mendoza 2010, 31).

Ramón Grosfoguel is perhaps the most outspoken male decolonialist regarding gender and women, even stating that "feminism is not the exclusive responsibility of women" (Grosfoguel 2014, 11). Grosfoguel has criticized liberation theology's first phase for not discussing gender in connection with race and class (thereby reproducing patriarchalism) and applauded its second-generation thinkers for adopting an intersectional approach (Martínez and Grosfoguel 2013, 40). Although he has criticized Eurocentric feminism and spoken of the need to decolonize feminism, he has also attacked third-world fundamentalisms for rejecting feminism altogether (Lamus 2007, 326, 333–34). He has talked about both the need to abolish "the epistemic apartheid" that continues to disregard women's expertise as well as the need to rescue the knowledge that was lost in the "*epistemicide*" of the witch hunts on both sides of the Atlantic (Grosfoguel 2013, 35, 39, 50–51). In his work he has consistently voiced the need for decolonialism to discuss gender and patriarchy, stating that "there can be no decolonization without depatriarchalization" (Grosfoguel 2014, 13), and stressing the need for subaltern patriarchies to come to terms with their internal colonialism, particularly the process of the continent's patriarchalization (Lamus 2007, 328–34).

Most other male voices within the ongoing Latin American decolonial conversation, while calling for an epistemic revolution and a new conceptual architecture, have sidestepped the issues of gender and women (Lander 1993; Mignolo 2002; Escobar 2007; Mignolo 2007; De Sousa 2008; De Sousa and Meneses 2009; De Sousa 2010; Escobar 2014; Aparicio and Blaser 2015). In doing so, they have failed to make the connection between the two. Although they have correctly identified several colonial categories and hierarchical dichotomies, such as race and the nature/culture divide pervading imperial reason, they have failed to see gender as a major colonial conceptual imposition that must be debunked if decolonization is to take place. Like Quijano, in neglecting the intersectionality of class, race, and gender, they have failed to see the three-dimensional configuration of the conceptual deception at the heart of the coloniality of power. And just as Dussel overlooks the continuity that exists between the everyday power conflicts of private life and the macrophysics of colonial violence, they too have fallen short of apprehending the complete overlapping and interdependent systems of the colonial power Hydra. Feminist decolonialists have pointed to this limitation, Lugones chief among them.

Lugones: Gender at the Center

Lugones questions the explanatory power of gender and criticizes Quijano for assuming gender as a given, ahistorical, acultural category. In positioning gender, heterosexualism, and the violence and discrimination against women at the heart of the decolonial conversation, Lugones appeals to the historical and anthropological research of Irene Silverblatt, Carolyn Dean, Sylvia Marcos, Oyeronke Oyewumi, as well as the writings of Paula Gunn and Leslie Marmon Silko, among others (Lugones 2011, 111). These authors have consistently argued that gender was not a hierarchical organizing criterion in Native American or African societies before contact. According to them, Native Americans and Africans gave precedence to age and kinship over biological sex differences as social structuring principles (Gunn 1986; Oyewumi 1997/2017). Along with

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Grosfoguel and many other decolonial feminists, Lugones underlines the need to revise patriarchalization for the all-encompassing historical colonial process it was and still is (Lugones 2008; Espinosa-Miñoso 2010; Mendoza 2010; Galindo 2013). At the same time, she raises a crucial question for Latin American decolonialism:

> I am also interested in investigating the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality in a way that enables me to understand the indifference that men, but, more important to our struggles, men who have been racialized as inferior, exhibit to the systematic violences inflicted upon women of color. I want to understand the construction of this indifference so as to make it unavoidably recognizable by those claiming to be involved in liberatory struggles. . . . The indifference is found both at the level of everyday living and at the level of theorizing both oppression and liberation. (Lugones 2007, 188)

Lugones theorizes this "indifference" as itself a product of patriarchalization as a historical process, whereby colonized men under the influence of a patriarchal mindset colluded in the double subordination that colonization represented for women of color (200). Such collusion, Lugones argues, must be acknowledged and resisted if full decolonization is ever to take place:

> Feminists of color have made clear what is revealed in terms of violence, domination, and exploitation once the epistemological perspective focuses on the intersection of these categories [class, race, gender]. But that has not seemed sufficient to arouse in those men who have been themselves targets of violent domination and exploitation any recognition of their complicity or collaboration with the violent domination of women of color. In particular theorizing global domination continues to proceed as if no betrayals or collaboration of this sort need to be acknowledged and resisted. (188)

Mendoza goes even further and invites Latin American men to imagine what the dissolution of such a pact among men of the colony would look like (Mendoza 2010, 29).[17] Thus Lugones and feminist decolonialists assert that there can be no decolonization without depatriarchalization. This means putting the revision of the concept of gender and the issues of discrimination and violence against women and LGBT people at the center of the decolonial agenda. Ultimately, it means historicizing patriarchalization and heterosexualism as part of the process of colonization and the coloniality of power. Decolonization cannot afford not to. As in no other discussion before in Latin America, gender and women are absolutely central to the decolonial debate.

Historicizing Patriarchy and Heterosexualism

Regarding the history of patriarchalization in the Americas, there is now extensive scholarship revealing the breadth and scope of such a process (Leacock and Leacock 1980; D'Anglure 1986; Rostworowski 1986; Silverblatt 1987; Gutiérrez 1991; Roscoe 1991; Marcos 1992; Roscoe 1992; Trexler 1995; Marcos 1996; Perdue 1998; Joyce 2000; Klein 2001a, 2001b; Looper 2001; Horswell 2005; Powers 2005; D'Anglure 2006; Barr 2007; Graubart 2007; Marcos 2011; Sigal 2011; Sousa 2017). In terms of the subjugation of indigenous women after contact, studies lay bare a few basic historical and now widely accepted facts. Sixteenth-century Amerindian households were much wider, more net-like basic social units than sixteenth-century European households, based

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on shared, communal living arrangements rather than patrifiliation, where the Euro-patriarchal divide between public and private space did not operate. This continuity between public and private space was guaranteed thanks to the fact that kinship had developed into a political art. Two kinship systems predominated throughout the continent: matrilineality and ambilineality (matrilateral and patrilateral). In both systems, women as heads of lineages (whether matrilineal or matrilateral) enjoyed significant economic, political, social, cultural, and symbolic power. Amerindian pre-conquest male household heads did not legally represent the members of their domestic units, women being equally accountable with men in the eyes of society; sex was regarded as one of the principal pleasures in earthly life and a right for both men and women; until the arrival of Europeans, Amerindian societies did not make any distinctions between violence against women and violence against any other members of their communities. Violence against women had not been naturalized. This was achieved in Europe only through the mass feminicides of the witch hunts, although it is rooted in Judeo-Christian thought in which sex, women, and nature are fundamentally evil.

Decolonialism has yet to understand the extensive range of action and empowerment that women in the Americas enjoyed before the European conquest, and how it was slowly eroded under colonial rule. It should also understand, as Lugones points out, that colonized men took an active part in colonized women's disempowerment, and that colonized women were, as a result, doubly disempowered: first by Europeans, and then by colonized men. But it is also critical to understand, as anthropologist Peggy Sanday's dynamic approach to the study of indigenous gender systems before and after colonialism clearly shows, that colonized men's collusion with colonial power took place in an effort to compensate for the kind of disempowerment they were subjected to by colonizers. In fact, Sanday argues that anytime and anywhere a group of men is disempowered by another group of men—be it sixteenth-century America or any twenty-first-century ghettoized community—disempowered men seeking to regain lost power will reposition themselves along a hierarchical axis in relation to women in their communities (Sanday 1981). Sanday's argument reinforces and adds clarity to Lugones's thesis regarding the collusion of colonized men with colonial power: the gender verticalization[18] of the Americas was a product of the dynamics of colonization. As such, it was chiseled off the power structures of the colonizers. This implied assimilating the categories and hierarchical dichotomies undergirding those structures. It also implied accepting and naturalizing violence—physical, economic, emotional, sexual, and symbolic—against women. A passage from Bishop De Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* shows how such a shift became evident even for the likes of one such as De Landa early on in the conquest: "With the same ease men with children left their women, without fear of another taking them . . . now seeing the Spanish kill theirs over that, they [the Mayans] have begun to mistreat and even kill their own" (De Landa 1574/1986, 41–43).[19]

Studies reveal that heterosexualism was equally foreign to the continent. In fact, sixteenth-century Amerindian sexuality was a far cry from sixteenth-century European sexuality. Amerindian sexuality admitted more than two genders. Third-gender people were fully integrated into society and often held in high esteem as they represented an ideal of human wholeness and completeness that frequently went hand in hand with important social responsibilities and their corresponding appointments (D'Anglure 1986; Roscoe 1991; Marcos 1992; Roscoe 1992; Trexler 1995; Marcus 1996; Joyce 2000; Looper 2001; Horswell 2005; D'Anglure 2006; Marcos 2011; Sigal 2011). The strident, yet systematically ignored or misrepresented evidence until the 1980s is substantial: in

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precolonial America, military leaders, rulers, priests, shamans, diplomats, and even gods, routinely cross-dressed. A short sample of the vignettes arising out of the historical record provides a clear idea of the continental extension and complexity of such a cultural universe (D'Anglure 1986; Olivier 1986; Roscoe 1991; 1992; Trexler 1995; Sigal 2003; Horswell 2005; D'Anglure 2006; Sigal 2011). In the Americas, warriors, partially or completely dressed as women, were not uncommon: early in the conquest of Mexico, for example, Nuño de Guzmán described a notably brave Cuitzeo warrior dressed as a woman during the campaign against the Tarascans (western Mexican central mesa) whom he later burnt at the stake for "indulging into prostitution" (cited in Olivier 1986, 51). At times, these individuals were not only military leaders, but priests and shamans as well. During the conquest of what was to be called Nueva Granada, fray Pedro Simón reported a Panche (southern Magdalena River valley) shaman ("hechicero") or *acaima* leading his troops against the Spaniards dressed in the garb of a Spanish woman (Simón 1892/1981, iv). Although Simón understood this title to be one of highest authority among the Panche, he failed to understand the Panche connection among power, authority, religion, and transvestism. In Peru, Pedro Cieza de León (a keener observer) didn't grasp this train of thought either, although he recorded similar cross-dressing among Yunga priests (Sigal 2003; 2011). The association, however, persisted. Up north, Mayan rulers (both men and women) cross-dressed as they officiated (Sigal 2003; 2011). And north of that, the Zunis of western New Mexico sent a transvestite diplomat named We'wha to represent them in Washington during the 1880s (Roscoe 1991). Farther north, Inuit children were often raised with mixed-gender identities. Upon reaching puberty, they could choose to alter or retain such identities (D'Anglure 2006, 29–62). In Tikal and Palenque, the third-gendered maize god presided over the central and dominant pyramid, flanked in a triadic ensemble by two smaller pyramids dedicated to masculine- and feminine-gendered gods (Looper 2001). In the Nahua codices, the principle of all creation, the god of gods, Ometeotl, was portrayed in both masculine and feminine gender apparel (León-Portilla 2006, 110, 152, 386).[20]

The evidence reveals ritual as well as secular practices of transvestism and same-sex sexuality. The everyday pottery objects of the Nahua in the central Mexican valley, the Mochica and Chimú in coastal Perú, and the terracotta figures of the Tumaco-Tolita cultural complex along the Ecuadorian and Colombian Pacific coast indicate that same-sex sexuality was not only a ritual, but a common practice throughout the continent (Larco 1965; Mathieu 2003; Bouchard and Usselmann 2003), so common that Spanish missionaries drafted confessional manuals with long questionnaires aimed at weeding out an altogether very different sexuality. When read against the grain, the very questions hint at an eroticism that Christianity can hardly fathom:

> Tell me my son . . . When you were drunk, out of your senses, did you fall into the abominable sin of sodomy with another man? How many times? Have you done something improper or dirty with yourself or another man? (*Confesionario Mayor en Lengua Mexicana y Castellana*. Fray Alonso de Molina [1565], cited in Marcos 1992 163)
>
> Are you a married woman, a widow, a virgin, or have you lost your virginity? Have you sinned with another woman? Have you kissed another woman? Have you sinned with your sister? . . . Have you sinned with a woman using both parts? Have you sinned with a woman while lying on four legs like an animal? Or did you place her in such a position wishing to sin with her? How many times? Many times? . . . Have you sinned with another woman as man and

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> woman? How many times? (*Manual de administrar los santos sacramentos a los españoles y naturales de esta provincia de Michoacán*. Ángel Serra. [1731], cited in Marcos 1993, 163–64)[21]

Although historians and anthropologists like D'Anglure, Roscoe, Marcos, Trexler, Joyce, Looper, Horswell, and Sigal have now extensively explored what Guilhem Olivier deemed in 1986 to be the "significant geography and abundant documentation" of "the problem of American homosexuality" that cannot be "reduced to depraved mores" and must be looked into anew, decolonialists for the most part have taken little notice (Olivier 1986, 58), a mistake if full decolonization is to take place. As with the issue of women, they have failed here again to make the connection between the call for an epistemic revolution and the need to revise the concepts of gender and heterosexualism. Lugones has argued that decolonialists have not paid attention to gender because of a masculinist bias; Marcos points to Christianity, which despises and dismisses sexuality (Marcos 1992; Lugones 2015). Either way, decolonialism cannot afford not to look into gender and sexuality: in the last thirty years, developments in ethnohistory, native studies, and queer history have consistently pointed to a continent-wide sexual culture informed by a unique conceptual architecture that, as Marcos points out, truly endeavored to embody thought (Marcos 2011). Understanding this unique intellectual architecture may, however, require revising not only gender, but the concept of body and self.

Omeotlization

Miguel León Portilla was perhaps the first to call attention to the crucial importance of fluid duality as a core concept in Mesoamerican thought. Pointing to the centrality of Ometeoltl in the philosophical tradition of the Nahua, he wrote: "el mundo aparece como una omeyotización universal" (León-Portilla 2006, 387). Since then, the ubiquity of such a concept throughout the entire continent has been validated by research. Matthew Looper, for instance, reports that same-sex sexuality and ritual transvestism were dominant creation metaphors among the Maya (Looper 2001, 195); Bernard D'Anglure writes that the Inuit literally "fabricated a third sex" (D'Anglure 2006, 61); Cecilia Klein claims that in pre-Columbian America the creative principle was androgynous (Klein 2001b, 148); Michael Horswell speaks of "third-gendered subjectivities" in the Andes (Horswell 2005); and Will Roscoe holds that third-gender was a normative status among Native North Americans (Roscoe 1992, 13). The cosmogenetic narratives mapped onto the pyramids in Tikal and Palenque speak to a creative triad that acknowledged three distinct and active principles—the masculine, the feminine, and the androgyne—with the latter occupying a fundamental and central position. For decolonialism, it is important to recover not only the symbolic signification that such a trilogy encloses, but also its conceptual possibilities.

This is perhaps better evinced by the Zuni creation myth. According to Roscoe, Kolhamana, the tutelary third-gender primordial god, appeared to the Zunis because until then, they had been unable to make distinctions without breaking into separate groups (Roscoe 1991, 156–57). Since Kolhamana was at the same time both a complete man and a complete woman (and not a half-man or a half-woman, as imperial reason deemed for a long time), he was able to successfully mediate cultural as well as social differences within Zuni society, avoiding thereby further partitioning. A similar idea is echoed farther north by a Diné (Navajo) account that speaks of a juncture in Diné

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ethnogenesis when men and women decided to live on opposite sides of the river of life. As a result, the river began to dry, there was drought and famine, but Nadleehi, the third-gendered mediator, negotiated differences between them by providing both with sex, thereby ensuring the eternal flow of life (Roscoe 1992, 41). Among indigenous cultures, so-called "myths" are and have always been first and foremost roadmaps—philosophical roadmaps, that is. In his study of Nahua thought, León-Portilla points to the importance of the concept of *ollin*—movement—in connection with the conceptual scaffolding of Ometeotl (León-Portilla 2006, 386). León-Portilla tells us that Ometeotl went by many names: he was Ometecuhtli or Lord Two, the Lord who sired everything into existence; he was also Omecihuatl or Lady Two, the Lady who gave birth to everything; and he was also known as Ipalnemohuani, the one through which everything came into existence. As Lord and Lady, Ometeotl embodied the idea of duality, but because *ollin* was also a core idea at the heart of the conceptual complex that is Ometeotl, the god embodied a very specific conceptualization of duality: fluid, flowing duality without which nothing, not even thought, could come into existence. In the conceptualization of the Zuni and Diné third-gendered mediators, Kolhamana and Nadleehi ("the one who is always changing" [Roscoe 1992, 45]), we find the same idea: from an Amerindian perspective, duality must be resolved by allowing for movement. That is why Ometeotl bears the title of Ipalnemohuani, because without movement, duality is utterly sterile. The Diné account, however, provides additional precision: Nadleehi mediates between men and women by having sexual intercourse with both. As we shall see, this train of thought introduces not only gender and sexuality to movement and continuity, but the very definition of being.

Lugones and Marcos have both argued that in pre-Columbian America neither sex nor gender were tributary to the anatomical and sexual dimorphism of imperial reason. Lugones writes that Mesoamericans understood sex and sexuality along a fluid dualism (Lugones 2011, 111). Marcos traces such fluidity to Nahua conceptions of the body (Marcos 2011, 99–103), and she is not the only one to do so. Many have argued that in precolonial, indigenous thought systems, the body was conceived as fundamentally "unstable," which explains why there was little if any gender essentialization (López-Austin 1980; Marcos 2011; Sigal 2011; Viveiros 2011; Sousa 2017). I argue that the body (if we can speak of such a concept in Amerindian thought) was not so much conceptualized as "unstable" as it was conceived as a transformational reality. In fact, when Christian missionaries went about the Americas peddling their spiritual wares, what transpired was not exactly the idea of soul (of which the natives already had a rich and complex idea), but the concept of body as a detached, sealed, perishable, and sinful entity. In the Americas, prior to the arrival of Europeans, skin was not considered a hermetic barrier that sealed off the body from the exterior world (Marcos 2011, 100). Nor was the self conceived as a floating, autistic, world-tight monad. This is perhaps the single, most important difference in the conceptualization of body and self between the so-called New World and the Old World. Before the monadization of the Americas by imperial reason, body and self throughout the continent were conceived as essentially porous and permeable, in constant interaction and intercourse with their surroundings. As such, they were also conceptualized as fundamentally divisible and multiple. This explains why throughout the continent's ethnohistorical and anthropological literature, informants report all kinds of exchange—be they solid, liquid, gaseous, immaterial, or simply energetic—taking place between the self and its environment.

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Jorge Klor de Alva reports that in 1570, in New Spain, a Franciscan confessor, after hearing countless confessions from natives that made little sense to his own sense of self, declared that "the natives had uncluttered, parallel lives" (Klor de Alva 1988, 49). For most Spanish confessors, the Indians' personal accounts seemed contrived, but Klor de Alva argues that this was an error of appreciation because in reality Spain's policy of enforced confession was up against an invisible, yet no less formidable barrier—a very different concept of self: "With the introduction of Christianity, two contrasting ways of making up and representing the self were pitted against each other" (50). The Indians' very different sense of self, Klor de Alva goes on to argue, was based on "a physical and conceptual continuity with others, with the body, and beyond the body, with the world" (66). The friar's gloss therefore was not totally off-target. Whether the natives had parallel lives and what that means is of course a matter of debate. But however the friar understood what he was told during confession, what he did hear correctly was the "S" in the individual and personal narrative—the hum of plurality ingrained at the heart of the Mesoamerican concept of self. To the enforcement officers of the new regime of self-formation who had been transplanted across the Atlantic, this undertone must have sounded the alarm; after all, they were not altogether unfamiliar with this larger, wider, more encompassing, expanded and expansive sense of self. The Holy Church had only recently succeeded in eradicating such a conceptualization of the self from Europe after centuries of brutal persecution. In the Americas, however, the self still transited regularly between realms that imperial reason was now opposing and disjoining. Missionaries, priests, and confessors were up against nothing less than an altogether different ontology. In fact, they faced an ontology and an epistemology that posited an axiomatic continuum among all forms of life as the basis of its conceptual architecture.

This ontology, in turn, went hand in hand with a very specific kind of ethos. In speaking of the Tupinamba of Brazil, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro coincides with Klor de Alva in affirming that for the indigenous people of the Americas there were no "unbridgeable ontological barriers" with other life forms (Viveiros 2011, 30). Viveiros adds, however, that this ontology was at the same time accompanied by a radical sense of "essential ontological incompleteness: the incompleteness of sociality, and in general, of humanity" (47). As a result, he explains, the Amerindian self craved alterity, to the point that the acquisition or "capture" of alterity informed a unique kind of Amerindian ethos and epistemology that, in contrast to imperial reason, privileged relational affinity over substantial identity (47). It is this sense of ontological continuity at the root of the Amerindian self, and its accompanying sense of essential ontological incompleteness, that explain why, prior to contact, natives in the Americas envisioned the pursuit of completeness or pan-complementarity as a perfectly plausible, indeed legitimate, and even desirable endeavor.[22]

Among the many ways in which this pan-complementarity was pursued, sexuality was considered an ideal avenue. Much as in Tantra, in the Americas, sexual intercourse was considered first and foremost an exchange: an exchange in secretions, discharges, fluids, properties, and energies. Likewise, sexual intercourse was considered a unique opportunity for the reunification and reabsorption of what had originally been dispersed through creation. This conception of sex as an exchange explains why, for example, Lakota warriors visited *winktes* before going to battle: through this intimate connection they hoped to increase their masculinity, fighting ability, and courage (Roscoe 1992, 9).[23] It also explains why they avoided raping women in war: the belief in the possibility of contamination with feminine properties that could decrease or limit

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their warring skills was a powerful deterrent against such a practice. Ultimately, it explains why throughout precolonial America third-gendered individuals were held in high esteem and believed to have above average intelligence and skills: since they were credited with the capacity for the embodiment of complete maleness and femaleness, they were regarded as an ideal and more achieved version of humanity than regular men or women. In Europe, this ideal of a fuller, more integrated and balanced humanity had been discarded very early on for a more restrictive, single-model humanity, as Thomas Laqueur has now convincingly shown (Laqueur 1992).[24] But in the Americas, this ideal was considered not only attainable, but fully legitimate and desirable, so desirable that Inuit parents often socialized their children as mixed-gendered individuals, and people in positions of leadership and authority, be they military leaders, priests, priestesses, medicine-men, medicine-women, diplomats, or rulers, went to great lengths to embody it.

León-Portilla and Marcos have pointed to the importance of fluid balance or homeorhesis in Nahua thought: "[M]ore than homeostasis, the Nahua idea of balance was that of homeorhesis (from rhèo, flux), a balance of conjunctions in flux. For the Nahua, finding oneself amidst opposing poles required the permanent negotiation of the movement and plasticity of the opposing poles as they continually transformed in never ending flow" (Marcos 2011, 56).The concept of homeorhesis as an ideal that privileges balanced transformation over stable and fixed states was an Amerindian concept present throughout the continent before contact and Christianization. It is at the core of the conceptualization of Ometeotl and the idea of omeotlization that León-Portilla later coined in his study of the primordial Nahua god (León-Portilla 2006, 387). It can again be found in the account of Nadleehi, the third-gendered mediator of the Diné people who, in an effort to guarantee the flow of life, endeavored to ensure and secure movement and fluidity between the two most conspicuous embodiments of humanity by having sex with both. In order to fully understand the conceptualization of Nadleehi, it is important to remember that Roscoe has argued that third-gender in North America was not so much a state of being as it was a way for indigenous cultures to distance themselves from sexual and gender polarity: "The berdache was not only—and sometimes not at all—a sexual role . . . Same sex sexuality was part of the cultural expectations for their role, but not an imposition" (Roscoe 1992, 9). D'Anglure's description of Inuit social flexibility clearly illustrates this point. According to D'Anglure, the Inuit frequently socialized children in mixed-gendered roles and capabilities; this process, however, was generally interrupted at the onset of puberty and reproductive maturity, but individuals were free to resume their cross-gendered socialization later in life. They were also free not to. In fact, D'Anglure reports a couple—man and woman—who were both cross-gendered as children, later married, and remained so for the rest of their lives (D'Anglure 1986, 66). We can only surmise the kind of rich, complex, and diverse subjectivities such social engineering gave way to.

Homeorhesis, or to use León-Portilla's term, *omeotlization*—the privileging of balanced movement and transformation over the fixation of states of being as a way of achieving viable and long-lasting cosmic and social equilibrium—underpinned sexual and gender architecture in the Americas. As a fundamental postulate, omeotlization allowed for sexual and gender continuity, which in turn forestalled social fragmentation along gender lines. The Americas' intellectual inclination toward motility, transformation, and equilibrium enabled it to circumvent the pitfalls of anatomical dimorphism that imperial reason would later implant in the continent, as Lugones has pointed out. This fluidity of thought, however, was anchored in the very conceptualization of

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body, self, and being that prevailed throughout the continent. Amerindian ontology was a transformational ontology. In fact, the possibility that existed in many Amerindian cultures of dreaming up one's own gender is intelligible only if body and self are understood as fundamentally transformational. Viveiros reminds us that in the Americas, "humanity was a condition, not a nature" (Viveiros 2011, 30). The separation between humans and other forms of life (including the divine) "was not an unbridgeable ontological barrier, but something to be overcome (30). Body and self were considered susceptible to transmutation and self-actualization. This was conceivable because body and self existed in a bio-continuum that rejected any kind of discontinuity between life forms. Such a postulate gave rise to a fundamental orientation that Viveiros calls an "opening to the Other" or craving of alterity, which, in turn, informed an ethos of complementarity (16). This complementarity, as Marcos has pointed out, cannot be reduced to binary complementarity between man and woman (Marcos 2018, 96). It is a much more expansive conceptualization of complementarity, a kind of pan-complementarity that conceives balanced interconnection and interaction with all forms of life as plausible and desirable. Ultimately, the sense of radical urgency that Louise Burkhart and Marcos point to in Nahua ethics—the belief in a collective and individual responsibility to sustain and participate in the achievement of cosmic fluid balance or omeotlization in order to avoid a final cataclysm—rests on pan-complementarity and can be found throughout the continent prior to contact (Burkhart 1989, 79; Marcos 1996, 99).

Although gender and women have been part of the ongoing decolonial conversation ever since Comandana Ramona, Comandanta Susana, and Mayora Ana María first took to the hills of Altos de Chiapas asking women about their lives, they have not always received the same kind of attention from all the participants in the decolonial debate. Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Ramón Grosfoguel, and María Lugones, however, have stressed the absolute centrality of these issues to the decolonial project, emphasizing the need to denaturalize and historicize both gender and patriarchy. The historization of gender and patriarchy in the American continent reveals that hegemonic patriarchy and its attendant heterosexualism were foreign to the continent before 1492, and that prior to European conquest, the continent enjoyed a unique sexuality supported by a unique intellectual architecture that Miguel León-Portillo explains using the Nahua core concept of *omeyotización* or omeotlization. This intellectual framework in turn reveals a very different and sophisticated idea of gender, itself resting on a singular concept of body and self. This ontology and its concurrent ethos of pan-complementarity were supplanted by Christianity and a conceptual apparatus that introduced discontinuity among humans and between humans and all other forms of life. It was this intellectual contraption that paved the way for colonization. If decolonialism is to build a proper house with something other than the master's tools (Lorde 1983), if it is to move beyond the racist, sexist, classist, and ecocidal pitfalls of imperial reason, it must be bold and reclaim an ontology that is part of the continent's intellectual legacy. As we contemplate the devastation wrought by imperial reason upon the world, as we watch imperial reason staggering at the edge of its discontinuities, we would do well to recover an ontology that is perhaps better suited to deal with the kind of challenges we face today.

Notes

1 "The world reveals itself as a universal *omeotlization*." León-Portilla 2006, 387; my translation.

2 EZLN 1993. The following is a translation of the ten laws that make up the Zapatista's Revolutionary Law of Women: 1. Women, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, have the right to

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participate in the revolutionary struggle in any way that they desire and capacity determines; 2. Women have the right to work and receive a just salary; 3. Women have the right to decide the number of children they have and care for; 4. Women have the right to participate in the matters of the community and to be in charge if they are free and democratically elected; 5. Women and their children have the right to primary attention in their health and nutrition; 6. Women have the right to education; 7. Women have the right to choose their partner and are not obliged to enter into marriage; 8. Women have the right to be free of violence from both relatives and strangers. Rape and attempted rape will be severely punished; 9. Women will be able to occupy positions of leadership in the organization and hold military rank in the revolutionary armed forces; 10. Women will have all the rights and obligations that the revolutionary laws and regulations give.

3 The 1993 Revolutionary Law of Women was the result of a wide survey undertaken by Comandanta Ramona, Comandanta Susana, and Mayora Ana María a year earlier among indigenous women living in the Altos of Chiapas. The "woman question" or "*la cuestión de la mujer*" was dubbed as such by the Zapatistas themselves (Padierna 2013, 134).

4 EZLN 1993 was published on December 31, 1993, a day before the announcement of EZLN 1994. It was dubbed "*el primer levantamiento zapatista*" or "the first Zapatista uprising" (Hernández 2007, 75–76).

5 The Congreso Nacional Indígena (CNI) founded on October 12, 1996 at the behest of the Zapatistas brings together all native peoples in Mexico. Since its establishment it has met five times.

6 The Cocopa or Comisión para la Concordia y Pacificación (Commission for Concord and Peace) was set up to draft a constitutional reform based on the peace agreements reached in San Andrés in February 1996 between the Mexican government and the Zapatistas. The initial draft was accepted by the Zapatistas in November 1996, but later modified by the Mexican government. As a result, the Zapatistas have since then suspended all negotiations.

7 "[En esta encrucijada, la mujer tiene la oportunidad de] mejorar su papel dentro y fuera de la comunidad, reduciendo, significativamente, la actual discriminación (entre ellas, con ellos y con el Otro) que sufre y creando unas condiciones más equilibradas para su contribución y participación en las decisiones y proyectos del pueblo nasa."

8 From Mapudungun, *werken* or messenger. *Werkens* are traditional figures of authority among the Mapuche, who may act as spokespersons, brokers, negotiators, or arbitrators.

9 *Machis* are traditional healers or shamans among the Mapuche; *lonkos* are Mapuche chieftains in times of peace (from Mapudungun *lonko* or head).

10 Interestingly, Mapudungun does not normally make use of gender markers.

11 "[Pero es solo un inicio valioso y valiente que todas y todos debemos cuidar, alimentar y proteger como] semilla viva que deberá desbordar este sistema patriarcal, con transformaciones comunitarias matriarcales hiladas a la vida plena, limitando hasta derrotar las separaciones que nos fueron impuestas como naturales."

12 "El sistema de género en las sociedades andinas…exhibe un equilibrio dinámico y contencioso…Esta relación entre los géneros se funda(ba) en un sistema de filiación y parentesco bilateral que está en la base de la polis indígena…el esquema bilateral de herencia permitía a las hijas heredar bienes y derechos por línea maternal (esto incluye, aún hoy, la tierra)."

13 *Coya*, Quechua for queen. The term was also used sometimes to designate female provincial governors known as *capullanas* (the Spaniards later called them *mandonas* or bossy women).

14 "En el mundo prehispánico, donde la hipótesis de una homología cultural entre las diversas sociedades indígenas parece bastante plausible, la otredad no significaba ausencia de la condición humana. Todo ajeno o extraño podía integrarse, a diversos niveles, a la cultura del grupo más fuerte, al pasar de la condición de extraño a la de pariente, incluso hasta el punto de compartir el poder y la herencia de los bienes culturales de una colectividad dada. Sin embargo, esto solo era posible a través de las mujeres, que de este modo se convertían en un freno al dominio autocrático absoluto de un grupo sobre otro. Resulta fácil vislumbrar, sin embargo, cómo esta concepción igualitaria se convirtió en un auténtico suicidio a la hora de enfrentar a otros extraños llegados en 1532 a los Andes."

15 *Cabildo*: town hall.

16 Dussel became a major voice in decoloniality through his groundwork in the philosophy of liberation where he coined nowadays key decolonial concepts such as *Eurocentrism*.

17 "¿Cómo se imaginan los hombres latinoamericanos la disolución de ese pacto entre hombres de la colonia?"

18 For lack of a better word in English, I am borrowing one from Spanish.

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19 "Con la misma facilidad dejaban los hombres con hijos a sus mujeres, sin temor de que otro las tomase por mujeres . . . ahora, en vista de que los españoles, sobre eso matan a las suyas, empiezan a maltratarlas y aún matarlas."
20 *Ometeotl* literally means dual god (from the Nahua *ome*—two—and *teotl*—god).
21 Note that women were asked these questions as they lay in their deathbeds!
22 I want to distinguish here between the binary concept of *complementarity* (that is, complementarity between man and woman) and the nonbinary idea of *pan-* (or cosmic) *complementarity* at the core of Amerindian thought. I will come back to this idea later.
23 *Winkte*: third-gendered individual among the Lakota.
24 A remnant of such an ideal can still be traced in Socrates's description of a primordial being who was at the same time man and woman in Plato's *Symposium*.

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Susana E. Matallana-Peláez is Full Professor at the Universidad del Valle, in Cali, Colombia. She holds a PhD in gender studies from Rutgers University. Her areas of interest and research are ecofeminism, gender systems, indigenous women's colonial history, Amerindian thought systems, and decolonialism. She currently teaches English literature at the undergraduate level in the Foreign Language Department and gender and decolonialism in the Gender Studies and Research Center's doctoral program. She has presented papers at conferences both home and abroad, and published articles in various journals, as well as two books. She is also a recipient of two Fulbright scholarships. E-mail: susana.matallana@correounivalle.edu.co

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