Places of Resistance, Bodies of Assimilation: Spanish American History in Gloria Anzaldúa's Thought

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English Abstract

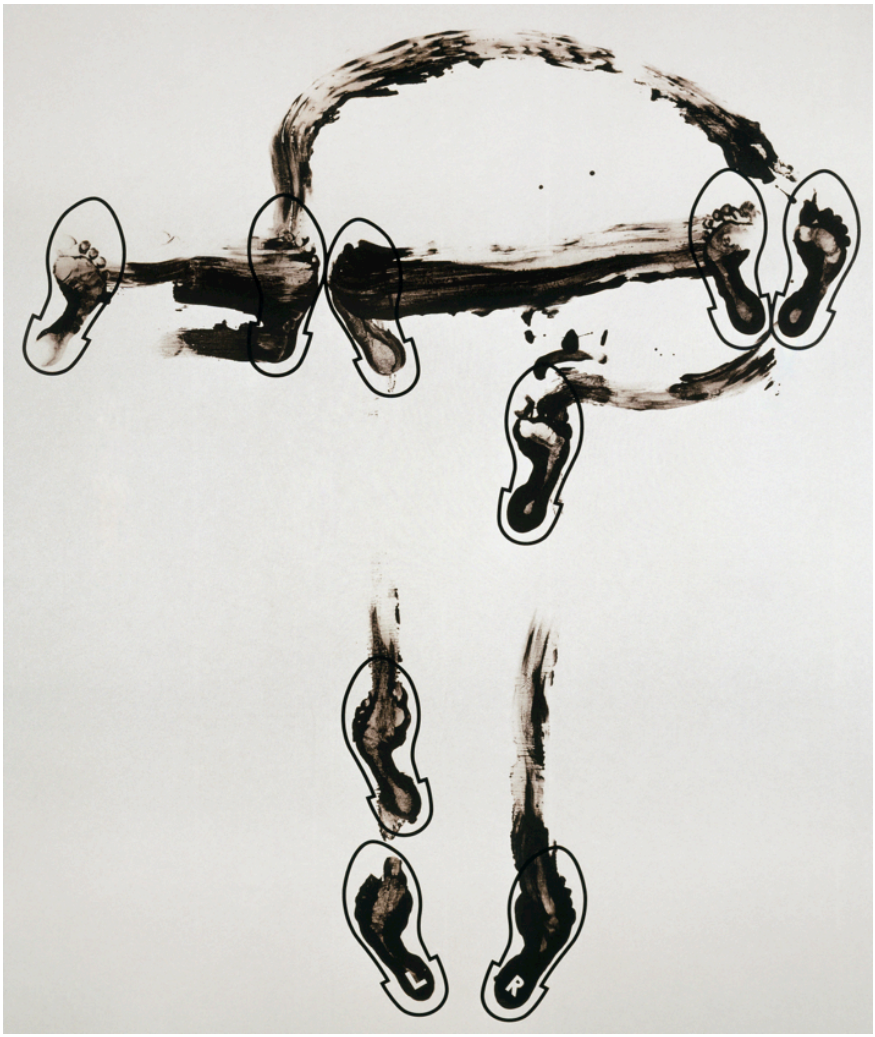
In this essay I will analyze how the historical narrative of space and time that characterized Spanish American thinkers was influential in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa through her interest in the work of Mexican intellectuals. I will pay attention to how issues of space, time, place, and location are crucial to articulate historical identities, and the problems intellectuals had in addressing political agency, and commonalities. I will start by explaining how the reception of the concept of modernity among Spanish American thinkers reflects particular concerns expressed through ideas of universal history and synthesis. The objective of this paper is to show how Anzaldúa followed this pattern, but, at the same time, completely transformed the possibilities of a spacialized history that led to a more inclusive idea of the nation.

Resumen en español

Este ensayo consiste en un análisis de cómo la narrativa histórica de pensadores de las ex-colonias españolas influyeron en las ideas de Gloria Anzaldúa, particularmente en el caso de México y el trabajo de José Vasconcelos y Octavio Paz. El enfoque está centrado en analizar cómo espacio, tiempo, lugar y locación son cruciales para articular identidades históricas y los problemas que los intelectuales tuvieron en definir cuestiones de agencia política y áreas de interés común. En la primera sección explicaré cómo la recepción del concepto de lo moderno en las ideas refleja en Hispanoamérica un interés en una historia sintética y universal. El objetivo de este ensayo es demostrar cómo Anzaldúa continúa y discontinúa a la vez este modelo, creando nuevas posibilidades de pensar en una historia centrada en cuestiones espaciales y no solamente temporales.

Resumo em português

Neste ensaio vou analisar como a narrativa histórica de espaço e tempo que caracterizava os pensadores da América espanhola foi influente no trabalho de Gloria Anzaldúa através de seu interesse no trabalho de intelectuais mexicanos. A abordagem é centrada na análise de como espaço, tempo, e lugar são fundamentais para articular identidades históricas, e os problemas que os intelectuais tinham pra definir questões de ação política e semelhanças. A primeira seção irá explicar como a recepção do conceito de modernidade na América espanhola reflete algumas preocupações particulares expressos em um interesse na história universal e de síntese. O objetivo deste trabalho é demonstrar como Anzaldúa seguiram esse padrão, mas, ao mesmo tempo, transformou completamente as possibilidades de uma história com base na compreensão do lugar que levou a uma idéia mais abrangente da nação.



To understand is easy; what is difficult is to think within its limits.
Jorge L. Borges

The history of many Spanish American countries is intimately connected with the development of a particular concept of modernity. This concept is linked to the replacement of the supremacy of physical place by a new notion of space/time.[1] The connection between these historical moments was in part a response to the problem of how to organize an environment that was perceived as dominated either by an indigenous population or by the Europeans who invaded it. In this way, the creole elite who were influenced by variations of Enlightenment ideas felt that they did not have a place of belonging, and that identities bound to location were exclusively related either

to the territories that existed before the Europeans, or those that emerged during the colonial era.[2] This complicated and extraordinary position, as Simón Bolívar himself acknowledged, meant that dislocation was a decisive aspect of processes of identity formation and historical narration for many Spanish Americans. It is for this reason that the modern project, as defined by the very Enlightenment ideas that many admired, was so crucial for the radical transformation of Spanish American nations.[3] Since they understood modernity as characterized by its emphasis on notions of time and progress, it seemed to them to obviate the supremacy of place and location, which was a part of the colonial culture. History and identity were, in turn, the reflection of this problem of associating time and space.[4]

In this essay, I will analyze how this historical narrative of space and time that characterized Spanish American thinkers was influential in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa through her interest in the writings of Mexican intellectuals. I will pay attention to how issues of space, time, place, and location are crucial to articulate historical identities, and the problems intellectuals had in addressing political agency, and commonalities. I will start by explaining how the reception of the concept of modernity among Spanish American thinkers reflects particular concerns expressed through ideas of universal history and synthesis. The objective of this paper is to show how Anzaldúa followed this pattern, but, at the same time, completely transformed the possibilities of a spacialized history that led to a more inclusive idea of the nation.

I will attempt to demonstrate that the Borderlands suggests an understanding of history based on the relevance of positionality and how it is related to knowing, which crucially resolves an issue that was always complex in the Spanish American tradition. Anzaldúa's acceptance of the heterogeneity of space, and of the identities that result from it, purged her analysis of the deterministic historical perspectives that were typical of Spanish American intellectuals. In order to analyze the idea of history that emerged from *La Frontera/Borderlands*, I will pay attention to the idea of the *amasijo*. This concept allowed for the development of a historical identity as a representation of a practice—kneading, which is required to be in place to experience location. I will conclude showing how the idea of a history of the *amasijo* is much more helpful than a history of *mestizaje*, and how it allows us to conceive a narrative of heterogeneity, multiplicity, and inclusion.

I Race, Time, Identity, Place in Spanish American Historical Narratives

The emphasis on the study of identity in defining modernity and historical narratives is an important characteristic of Spanish American thinkers. Many ideas of identity in Spanish American countries were not only contradictory, but also short-lived, always in the process of flux according to local needs and the changing meanings of Enlightenment and modernity. It is essential to note that the contradictions that are clear among Spanish American intellectuals are not all of their own creation. On the subject of time, place, and their relationship with historical identity, the problem was already in some of the sources they used. It is important to remember that the intellectual and

political movement of the Enlightenment "was produced and practiced simultaneously in Europe and America" (Quijano 1993, 141).

The reception of Enlightenment ideas in Spanish America helped to change the way in which a diverse population was understood since colonial times. As Magalí Carrera has mentioned, "Kant is thought to have first used the term "race" in the sense of biologically or physically distinct categories of human beings in 1764" (Carrera, 11). Moreover, it would be "later Enlightenment writers who further developed these pejorative explanations of black skin and argued for separateness of races based on biology, not nature" (Ibid, 12). While colonial authorities were concerned with diversity and classification, those who followed the Enlightenment believed by the first half of the nineteenth century that, over time, differences would be erased, and that humanity marched toward a path of ultimate homogeneity. If colonial society saw a future marked by increasing diversity, and one that demanded the creation of types to organize it, those who defended new European ideas saw in physical changes the end of heterogeneity. This meant, of course, that race was also defined by the population's ability to look/behave differently over time, and that the elimination of certain differences was a crucial marker of progress.

The reception of Romanticism in the first half of the nineteenth century led to a closer contact with German philosophy, particularly regarding ideas about race and nature. Alexander von Humboldt was a towering influence on the organization and classification of Spanish American space. His synthetizing work was also built "on ideas concerning science, form, and geography" derived from the work of Wolfgang von Goethe and Immanuel Kant (Jackson 2010, 5). In the 1840s, it was clear among Spanish American intellectuals that what they called "Enlightenment" (Ilustración) was not a coherent philosophical system, but a gathering of several national philosophies that had many common ideas.

Juan B. Alberdi, the author of the 1853 Argentine constitution, affirmed in 1842 that there was no philosophy of the nineteenth century, but "systems of philosophy", and these systems were also "a bit contradictory among themselves." The authors who had to be read by anyone seeking familiarity with these systems were "Fichte, Hegel, Stuart [Mill], Kant, Cousin, Jouffroy, a Leroux, etc." Alberdi concluded with the assertion that there were "philosophers but no philosophy; systems, but not science" (Alberdi 1838, 3). Philosophy was, then, at the service of civilization, which was the process of "achieving our goals", or what was called progress (Ibid, 6).

It is true, obviously, that the development of Enlightenment ideas in Argentina does not fit all Spanish American countries, but what is common is the type of books and journals that circulated among those who supported the study of European thought. In 1852, an article in *La Ilustración Mexicana*, for example, criticized the old philosophy and the way it was taught, no longer appropriate for the times of "Kant or Lavoisier" (Aedo 1952, 671). In 1862, the Peruvian Mateo Paz Soldán argued that, following Alexander von Humboldt and Kant, it was clear that there was a common

origin for all men, regardless the color of their skin (217). By 1882, the Uruguayan Ramón López Lomba would associate the history of science with an important corpus created by the works of "Kant, Herder, Hegel and Lotze in Germany; Spencer Bukle (sic), Flint, in England; as well as the writings of Turgot, Condorcet, and Auguste Comte in France" (260). Following Alberdi, it is important to note that French philosophy was dominant since the early nineteenth century because of its ability to synthetize [refundir] "the important philosophy of Scotland and Germany" (Alberdi 1838, 3). This gave these followers of the Enlightenment the certainty that, in reading philosophy coming from France, they were receiving the main ideas from other important sources of European thought.

In terms of history, the reception of European ideas revealed the relevance of historicism, a result of the influence that a mixture of Idealism and Romanticism had in Spanish America. Historicism, or "the view that the nature of the thing lies in its history," can be seen in the supremacy of temporal narration (Ankersmit 2012, 1-2). In the first half of the nineteenth century, this approach led to a universal narrative that helped to emphasize ideas of universality and unity, particularly through the influence of Idealism. Historicism was connected also with the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Johann Gottfried Herder. As Alex Zakaras states of this period, like "Herder before him, Humboldt's study of history led him to believe in the malleability and variety of human character and personality" (Zakaras 2011, 225). This was an important point, because it showed that individuals had the possibility for a form of emancipation and self-transformation that negated determinism and the supremacy of nature over the individual.[5] This also introduced a different element to the idea of progress that had circulated by the eighteenth century. Nature was not viewed in a mechanistic way, but as an organism that had a goal in its development. Historically, this was translated in the belief in design, or in a rational law that was responsible for the inevitable arrival of a certain future of perfection.

The work of travelers was very important to define the historical identity of the new nations whose leaders aspired to turn them into civilized countries. But many of these travel narratives also inspired reflections on American space by intellectuals who had never set a foot in it. Remarkably, for a man writing about foreign places, Kant was not a traveler, nor did he feel the need to experience traveling as a precondition for proper descriptions.[6] According to Walter Mignolo, Kant lived "during a historical period in which Western thinking was moving from "barbarians in space" to "primitives in time" (Mignolo 2011, 335). This transition from space to time reflects the tension that many intellectuals in Spanish America felt by the 1840s. They were caught between the negative space of the present, and the historical forces that connected them to a future of emancipation and the arrival of universal history, an acceleration of experience caused by the advent of universal time. A speech given by Manuel Quiroga-Rosas, a friend of Domingo F. Sarmiento and co-editor of the newspaper *El Zonda*, is a good example of this attitude. In 1839, he affirmed that "peoples [los pueblos] were governed by a law that made them "*progress continuously*," regardless of their suffering. It is for this reason that he addressed his audience as "*a man of our time* [*hombre de nuestro*

tiempo]," unlike the barbaric men dominated by place and locality (Quiroga-Rosas 1839, 2). Very importantly, Quiroga-Rosas, like most liberal men in Spanish America, reflected on the association between space and heterogeneity, and time and unity.[7]

In the same way that the space of American nations was used to exemplify difference and heterogeneity, their independence revolutions were understood as an example of the arrival of universal time and history. The Haitian Revolution "was the crucible, the trial by fire for the ideals of the French Enlightenment. And every European who was part of the bourgeois reading public knew it" (Buck-Morss 2009, 42). Hegel was among those who knew about it, and he was another philosopher who wrote about people and places he did not know personally.[8] As Susan Buck-Morrs has demonstrated, history was essential to Hegel's project, and the practice of politics became "the instrument of this progress." Europe and its colonies were "history's dominant agent in the 'modern time,' justifying the colonizing project as the development of Reason in the world. The West was declared the historical avant-garde for all humanity progressing necessarily toward a common end" (Ibid, 116). America was defined as the place of the future.[9] Pursuing the same line of thought, Alberdi described the Spanish-American revolutions as a process that led to "universal benefits that contributed to the interest of the human genre [género humano]." It was also the result of a modern civilization and, as such, its consequences were "irrevocable" (Alberdi 1896, 654).

The emphasis on a historical narrative that made the present space disappear through time with the arrival of the future began to encounter critics by the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1865, the Chilean José Victorino Lastarria described the problem of reconciling space, time, and historical agency. In *La América*, he explained that it was easier to "imagine a system, make a particular element into a universal principle," than to "gather the facts," that explained a particular historical development. This was the origin of all the "beautiful theories" that popped up and were lost "in a season: the influence of race or weather, law of decadence, of returning to the past, of opposition, and of progress." According to Lastarria, there was nothing more ingenious than the ideas of "Vico, Herder, Saint-Simon, and Hegel," but it was evident that in spite of their brilliance, those "ambitious constructions rested on nothing" (Lastarria 1867, 89). This skepticism reveals the other side of the bubbling enthusiasm of the first half of the nineteenth century. The second half would be devoted to pessimistic narratives in which determinism was the main ingredient of historical development. By the 1870s, the biological narratives derived from diverse Darwinian narratives seemed to deprive history of human agency by affirming the rule of natural law, which made a nation's historical development even more difficult.

II The Roots of Anzaldúa's Historical View: Mexico, Mestizaje, and History

Lastarria made clear that the historical power to eliminate "details" to emphasize a conceptual commonality was a failure. The resistance of a place that persistently revealed a presence that should not be there, either geographically or physically,

constantly contradicted this historical narrative. For the purpose of this essay, we can distinguish two main approaches to the concepts of space and time originated in Spanish America and influential among Latinas/os in the United States; first, there was the spatial narrative of diversity and resistance; second, the temporal emphasis on the process of erasure of difference and assimilation into oneness. These two ideas are crucial to an analysis of Anzaldúa, and the way in which she was influenced by the historical tradition of Mexico. In order to analyze the evolution of these two influences, I will examine the idea of racial mixing, or *mestizaje*, and the new approaches to space related to the Avant-Gardes.

The idea of *mestizaje* was used in Spanish American republics as a way to understand modernity as a process of embodiment, and it had old roots. According to Rubén Medina, creole attempts to control heterogeneity through the praise of local beauty and worth were already obvious in colonial days. In 1604 the poem *Grandeza Mexicana*, by Bernardo de Balbuena and Carlos Singuenza y Góngora, "erased the figure of the Indian, and praised the Mexican landscape as the product of the Spanish culture that had created the most opulent and wealthy city" (Medina 2009, 104). The use of *mestizaje* in the context of Enlightenment ideas can be observed in 1856 in an appendix of the *Universal Dictionary of History and Geography*. One entry praises the mixing of Spanish men, "descendents of Pelayo", with the "Maxicatzines, Ixtlilxochitl, and Caltzonzins," since this process had given rise to "a heroic nation, whose glorious history" would bring together the times of "Alfonso the wise and the prudent Nezahualcoyotl." It was through this process that both conquerors and conquered had disappeared from "the world of the living," and from their "ashes, like a phoenix, the happy, religious, and opulent Hispanic Mexican race" was born ("Montserrate", 864). This mixing, as mentioned before, anchored a historical narrative that emphasized temporality and the emergence of unity over time.

The discussion of how to write a universal history based on *mestizaje* crossed a new milestone with José Vasconcelos's *The Cosmic Race*, published in 1925. This book is a continuation of the spiritualist anti-positivist movement that began in 1900 with the publication of *Ariel* by the Uruguayan José Rodó. This movement rejected the strict materialism of the Darwinian evolutionism of the last part of the previous century to argue in favor of a race that was characterized not only by its physical characteristics, but also by its unique sensibility. According to this account, "Latins" belonged to the Mediterranean world, the world of classical culture and the formation of civilized sensibility. Race was about the transmission of essential properties that could be shared by different races only through mixing. But this mixing was different to the one that implied that all the different individuals would merge to create a new and final being. The post-Darwinian mixing of Vasconcelos implied a selection that was not all-inclusive, but a careful result of separating desired elements and discarding those that were not needed.

Vasconcelos wrote about the logic of the Latin mixing through the historical evidence of this "race's" synthetic quality that needed to lead humanity to the end of all

known races, and the emergence of the final one, a bronze race that represented the final union of those selected ones that were relevant to the evolution of humankind. In this view, we can see the re-signification of the ideal of final unity through a biological and spiritual process. This spiritualism was also related to the Mexican revolution that began in 1910. In its aftermath the return to location implied a conscious effort to create a space of unity for all Mexicans. According to Luis E. Carranza, after the fall of the Díaz regime, "the artistic intelligentsia turned its gaze towards the social qualities of art and literature in an attempt to vindicate Mexico's national character after the Revolution." The main objective was to "find an aesthetic that believed or understood cultural aims of the Revolution in a style appropriate for the Mexican people" (Carranza 2010, 7).

Vasconcelos's universal history demonstrated that from a present of multiplicity, humankind was marching toward a future of unity among those groups that deserved to pass its characteristics on to the next generation. But unlike the blending that existed in the first half of the nineteenth century, this final one was done through careful aesthetic selection. Moreover, he continued with the idea that time intersected both body and place, which in his case resulted not only in the emergence of the final race, but in the location of this race in the tropics, traditionally represented as antipodal to civilization. *Mestizaje* allows him to show temporal transformation in the emergence of a new race, and the parallel transformation of the place that had always been represented as resistant to civilization.

Vasconcelos' attempt to develop a *mestizaje* that, while it originated in biological changes was also spiritual, and immaterial, which, in turn, created quite a controversy. By the 1950s the mestizo had assumed a new configuration. The biological/universal narrative that historicized the mestizo was replaced by the history of particulars, of the local elements that configured an individual's identity and was in part influenced by the introduction of phenomenology and Heidegger through the work of several Spanish philosophers. The avant-garde movements that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century were very important in providing a new context for the discussion of these ideas. In Argentina, for example, writers like Jorge Luis Borges developed themes related to the complex interaction between space and time, and their effect on the constitution of identity.

In Mexico, Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, published in 1950, opened a new way to discuss nation, place, time, and historical identity. *Mestizaje* at this time was abandoned in favor of avant-gardes' interest in primitivism, indigenous and African cultures, non-linear time, and a desire to break the association between time, space, and rationality. This process provoked a renewed interest in the experience of Spanish American places, particularly Mexico. Paz was influenced by this shift and in his writings about Mexico he used abundant and eclectic sources. Regarding time, Nietzsche's notion of a temporality, which is more commonly related to cyclical change than to a linear progression, is clearly evident in Paz's treatment of modernity, as is his interest in the European avant-gardes and the role of the Primitive in Western culture. It also reflects the impact of physics, including the mixing of relativity theory, Bergsonism, and

phenomenological conceptions of time, a type of thinking that renewed an interest in science among many intellectuals.

In this context, the process of linear time and synthesis that structured the ideas of *mestizaje* became less important than the coexistence of difference in location. Mexico became a place of multiplicity, but the universal space inhabited by humans was now in the past, in the lost place that anchored our notions of unity and wholeness. This universal existential condition was expressed in Mexico through the experience of solitude, described as the rupture in genealogical continuity and vertical organization, something that was typical of most Latin American avant-gardes.

This concern about the limitations of linear time and its lack of supremacy over spatial considerations is clear in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, which explains why racialized bodies are not used to indicate temporal changes. The indigenous population coexisted with the mestizos, and with those of European origin. Universality is not represented by the transformation of a body over time, but by the acknowledgement of our existential origin. Paz's claim is that "we are all orphans," and this condition is the principle of a universal history that also allowed particulars. The way in which we experience this orphanhood is particular and related to the events and places in which this experience took place. There is not a *mestizo* race, but a Mexican experience, defined by its origins in a bad father and a "fucked" mother.[10] Personal and national identity became the same, since it is through the experience of being in place that the individual learns about him/herself.

Paz's process of identity formation is personal, and related to the details of experience. His historical narrative is part of a process of uncovering, of digging up the clues that can reveal our identity in place. This is the space of the Labyrinth, a location that is common to many Spanish American writers who belonged to the avant-gardes. Place becomes paramount, since our physical environment conceals clues as to who we are. Place, geography, are now conceptual, and a collection of symbols that must be deciphered. As the author states, the "geography of Mexico spreads out in a pyramidal form as if there existed a secret but evident relation between natural space and symbolic geometry and between the latter and what I have called our invisible history" (Paz 1985, 293).

The revelation of Mexico is, as for most Spanish American intellectuals, related to binary elements, in this case the Mesoamerican notion of time, based on repetition and myth, and Western linear time, based on dislocation, disruption, and universal history. In analyzing the Mesoamerican way of thinking, rhythm has a crucial importance, as it had for most avant-garde intellectuals, and partly related to the work of Henri Bergson. In this conception, the time of the Indigenous people of Mexico was mythical, and, as such, was "impregnated with the particulars of our lives: it is as long as eternity or as short as a breath, ominous or propitious, fecund or sterile." In it life and time "coalesce to form a single whole, an indivisible unity." In contrast, linear time was not "an

immediate apprehension of the flow of reality" but, instead, a "rationalization of its passing" (Ibid, 209-210).

Vasconcelos's and Paz's concerns about how to develop a historical identity that reflects both the local and the universal was very influential in the Chicano movement. It was not so much because of the latter's concerns about modernity, as it was about an understanding of identity intersected with similar problems of race, gender, and geography. This connection resulted in the adoption of the idea of *mestizaje* to confront a history written to praise the racial purity of the Anglos. In the same way, the notion of an identity that was based on both myth and history also had a profound effect in the United States, where Paz became well known in the 1960s. It was also at this time that a "mestizo sensibility" took hold "north of the Rio Grande" (Stavans 2011, 12).

III Gloria Anzaldúa, *Mestizaje*, and the Space of the Borderlands

In the world of geohistorical identities, Gloria Anzaldúa's territory was framed in the borders of two nations, Mexico and the United States. In Spanish America this border also represented the existence of two opposed civilizations that informed the historical narratives of Vasconcelos and Paz. The emergence of a Western frontier in the United States in 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War, meant the existence of a territory identified with a multiplicity of meanings, from those inherited from Colonial Mexico to those associated with a land of opportunity in the United States. This frontier put in contact the American West, the Chicano Southwest, and Mexico's El Norte. According to John Escobedo, these three frontiers were always "closely intertwined with one another, endlessly converging and regenerating conflictive histories, traditions, and identities." But for all this confluence there was a constant element, connected "with the effective use and manipulation of the myth of origin" (Escobedo 2011, 178).

It is this common attempt to explain national origins in which the work of Anzaldúa, Vasconcelos, and Paz converge. The experience of spatial multiplicity framed their historical narrative and concerns, but, at the same time, they all dealt with the problems that assimilating space to time had for the formation of an identity. A place of origin had to be part of mythology, and history was related to a return to universality and the possibility of a future. The "reconstruction of Aztlán during the Chicano/a civil rights movement;" and "the future emergence of the Cosmic Race" are both part of the mythologies related with representing the reality of people living in the borders (Ibid) Also, in the 1960s there was in the United States an interest in a pan-Latin identity that made the work of Spanish American intellectuals such as Vasconcelos particularly important.[11]

Manifest Destiny implied an identity that was related to the existence of a privileged group that possessed the capacity to own and transform places. Nearly a century later, Chicana/o scholars challenged this view of the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon people. They offered an approach that replaced the idea of the frontier with that "of a

conflict-laden border territory, which redefined the western designation of this frontier space to that of a "southwestern borderland" (Escobedo 2011,180). The negation of the racialized space created by Manifest Destiny resulted "in the construction of a unique relationship between Chicano/as and the actual physical border region, an intimate bond that began to rehabilitate the image of the Mexican subject by celebrating the cultural heritage and regional folklore rooted in the southwestern Borderlands" (Ibid). This reconciliation between place and individual is the starting point of Anzaldúa's work, and like Spanish American intellectuals before her, she had to address the complexity of this Chicano identity through its intersections with notions of place, space, race, and temporality. Particularly important for this tradition, as we saw, was the way in which historical narration could represent particularity and universality.

Historically, the narration of the Chicano borderland was related to the existence of Aztlán, the place where indigenous populations that were located in what is today Northern Mexico migrated to found the capital of the Aztec empire. In July of 1969 Alberto Baltazar Urista read at the first National Chicano Liberation Youth Conference his poem "Epic Poem of Aztlán", which was received with such a great enthusiasm that it ended up becoming the preamble for *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*. Urista's poem provided a historical narration that returned to the problem of dislocation and provided the central connection with the Chichimec history, the return home, a topic that was also important for Paz. This reconstruction of Chicano roots made it possible to claim origins in a territory that was then part of the United States. As in the case of Spanish America, writing a historical narrative started with asserting a belonging to a place transformed by time, regardless of its present character. Genealogy thereby opens up the discussion of identity.

Aztlán "provided Chicano/as with a malleable historical narrative to tailor a specific genealogy, that highlighted a cultural heritage, that retrieved a pre-Columbian indigenous identity and folklore, and that began to construct a specific Chicano/a political identity" (Ibid). But a genealogical project of origin has been almost always associated in the narrative of universal history to the father's will to create a "family," something that, as Paz explained, was not possible in Spanish America. Moreover, the problems of how to represent origins without the burden of supporting the creation of a patriarchal order was particularly difficult for Chicana feminists who had to formulate critiques of male supremacy while, at the same time, supporting the historical relevance of "La Raza." This explains why, while "facing ostracism from the very community they were part of, Chicana feminists developed a body of discourse drawing a rigid boundary between Chicana and Anglo feminisms. Efforts to clarify distinctions between the two were an important part of the development of Chicana feminist identity" (Dicochea 2004, 83). On one side, the criticism of the role of patriarchy was, "according to traditionalists, destructive to the culture," which explains why "Chicanas who identified as feminists were often considered vendidas or *agabachadas* (Anglicized) within La Raza." At the same time, the racism that they "experienced within the Anglo feminist movement furthered the discussion of fundamental differences between Chicana and Anglo feminist communities" (Ibid).

Gloria Anzaldúa clearly perceived this problem, and the difficulty of creating a narrative of origins that would be more inclusive. She was keenly aware that the politics of identity had to start from a place of origin that allowed belonging, and this is one of the persuasive arguments of *La Frontera/Borderlands*. Her transition from Vasconcelos's "por mi raza hablará mi espíritu," to "por la mujer de mi raza hablará mi espíritu," seems to make clear that she is not interested in the domination of a place, the supremacy of men over nature, or the politics of impregnation (1999, 99). While Vasconcelos implied the power of males to procreate as part of the creation of the cosmic race, Anzaldúa makes clear that the spirit talks through women. It is for this reason that her idea of origins is not related to the history of men. The places of origin for Vasconcelos and for Chicanos were presented as historical, real locations of the past, Atlántida and Aztlán. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, though, together with this return to the past, identity is related to a place that is always in a flux, always demonstrating the impossibility of its constitution. Ironically, it is a borderline that resists precise limitations; it is a place, but also the suggestion of other places with no precise location in a map.

The constitution of women as essential to the conformation of an identity, and the location of new forms of understanding are one of Anzaldúa's most important contributions to the Spanish American tradition that she follows. But Anzaldúa anticipates another way to understand historical identity in her resolution of Paz's failed attempt to bring gender into the analysis of history. She notices that origins are not only related to the failures of the father (closeness), and the ineptitude of the mother (openness). A national history has to start with the restitution of women as creators and not mere passive receptacles of men's will. This historical understanding creates a territory where many identities intersect and interact, providing a new possibility to understand present events. In the pastiche narration of Anzaldúa there is, as in Spanish America, a disordering of "the foundational protocol of the before and after," a creation that does not connect to the triumph of temporality (Richard 1993, 159).

This view of the border in part explains why for Anzaldúa identity cannot be based on linage or genealogy only. If, for Paz, what explained the character and the problems of Mexicans was the absence of a father and the presence of a passive and "fucked" mother, for Anzaldúa the continuity comes from a woman, and one who possessed the power to create, to originate something new. While the father implies genealogical continuity and the supremacy of linear time, the mother implies renewal and belonging to place. In Paz, the historical configuration of gender in Mexico explained the repetition, and the re-creation of the past; in Anzaldúa the female represents creation, possibility, and openness to the world, not to men, as it was the case for Paz. Anzaldúa recognized the sexual violence that characterized origins for Paz, but in her work this does not become the cause of repetition. She does not understand rape and violence against women as the only practice that defines identity.

The interaction between place and individuals is described through the *amasijo* that characterized the Borderlands, a process of conscious creation that can be chaotic, sometimes violent, but, ultimately, creative. She is not interested in providing only a place of origin that follows the linear determinations of genealogy, but also the creation of a space that would help us to think differently about our location and origins. The beginning is not found in time, but in place. It is for this reason that la Chicana is "caught between *los intersticios*, the spaces between the different worlds she inhabits" (Anzaldúa 1999, 20). But, as was the case in Spanish America, this space indicates intentionality of resistance, and not of assimilation. I see in the *amasijo* something very different from the process of biological *mestizaje* she takes from Vasconcelos, though often it is difficult to distinguish them. In the biological tradition of the cosmic race, the mixing of races is the result of genetic exclusion, the process of selection and the transmission and loss of traits over time. In the amasijo there is no such waste. Everything becomes part of the mix, even those things that from the point of view of nature should not be together.

The *amasijo* is about the struggle to bring things to unity, sometimes with uncertain results.[12] In Spanish this word emphasizes the difficult process that is needed to bring heterogeneous things together, and it is not the result of assimilation, but of struggle and resistance. The whole of the *amasijo* is one that distinctively shows the presence of the different parts that make it—i.e. parts that cannot blend completely. While in *mestizaje* creation happens in the context of the limitations imposed by nature over time, the *amasijo* is about the possibility to conceive unity even in an environment characterized by heterogeneity. This process indicates in its narration an emphasis on the importance of the location in which the clash of diverse historical forces happen. The dilemma of the *mestiza* is not defined only by what to be, but also where to be, very much as the Spanish American intellectuals who informed Anzaldúa were proposing.

> The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision .... At some point on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react (Ibid, 101).

One learns in place, or through placing, a process that helps to develop a particular form of consciousness. Learning consists in accepting ambiguity, but while the ambiguity of place is clear and understandable, the ambiguity of the *new mestiza* is not. She has a "tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view" (Ibid, 101-102). However, it seems odd that in explaining ambiguity Anzaldúa uses a word like "Indian," which in its simplification of diversity offers very little ambiguity. We might be tempted to assume that she is not

referring to race, but if we follow this argument we should question the use of the same word "Indian" to identify hundreds of different cultures with different practices and ideas. It is obvious that Anzaldúa is trying to transform the idea of *mestizaje* as a way to challenge conceptions of nation, class, gender, and sexuality, but I propose that we should question how effective this gambit ultimately is for her own interests in intersectionality.

Unlike the experience of the Borderlands, the process of *mestizaje* is, as in the case of Vasconcelos, related to a synthetic view that is connected with the understanding of Enlightenment and temporal evolution in Spanish America. The most significant difference is that "la raza cósmica" is in a process of becoming, while the new *mestiza* is already constituted. This crucial change in temporality is explained by the emergence of a real place that is not the mythical tropics, but the reality of the border. The existence of a place of ambiguity and difference allows for the constitution of a new consciousness and a new biological type. The latter is the most troubling aspect of Anzaldúa's work. It is difficult to explain statements in which she speaks of Vasconcelos fifth race as "the confluence of two or more genetic streams," with chromosomes constantly "crossing over," and creating a being that was part of a "more malleable species with a rich gene pool" (Ibid, 87).

Some critics have decided to balance this pseudo-science with other aspects of the *mestiza*, trying to keep Anzaldúa's ideas away from Vasconcelos. But we might ask if the explanation of a new race formed by a more diverse genetic pool is not simply an adaptation of Vasconcelos description of the cosmic race, i.e. a race that arises via a process of "astute mendelianism." Such a notion was used at the time in which *The Cosmic Race* was written to introduce a notion of design and selection that allowed self-creation.[13] Vasconcelos was right when he saw the connections between the ideology of imperialism in the United States and its alleged justification by recourse to scientific laws, so he tried to answer this ideology with a new biological narrative based on mendelianism. Anzaldúa, in turn, follows this pattern. She knows that a completely cultural explanation for the new *mestiza* will not be enough to contradict the historical narrative of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the reality of imperialism, so she also needed to ground history in the material emergence of a new biological and material reality. Following the model of Vasconcelos, Anzaldúa equates the oppression of external imperialism with the internal invisibility of those who had been born in the United States as the result of this same imperialist design.

It is important to pay close attention to the tradition in which Anzaldúa placed her work in order to understand how she intended to restore a sense of history to those who had none. She used a narrative of material existence and of concrete historical development, which is what seems to have attracted her to Vasconcelos's idea of *mestizaje*. According to her, "mestizos, women of color, working-class, and gay people" claimed a "multicultural education as a centerpiece of the mestiza nation." This claim was inspired by Vasconcelos, "a Mexican philosopher," that had "envisioned a mestizo nation, a cosmic race, a fifth race embracing the four major races of the world." It is the

realization of this material evolution that allowed a historical narration, and through it a way to change "how students and teachers think and read" by "de-constructing Euro-Anglo ways of knowing." Once historical existence cannot be denied, an opening also emerges "to create texts that reflect the needs of the world community of women and people of color; and to show how lived experience is connected to political struggles and art making" (Ibid, 205).

Her praise of Vasconcelos's idea of *mestizaje* seems to contradict the previous statement, in the way in which she skirted the true oppressive nature of this concept. We cannot attribute this omission to ignorance, of course, but perhaps to her recognition that Vasconcelos's *mestizaje* provided a good example of how to develop a historical identity that took into account the narrative of ascendant time in the imperialist culture of the United States. In order to think historically about her identity she needed to destroy the present space to reveal the real one inhabited by a historically constituted race that included her. So, while Vasconcelos destroyed the present place to project an assimilated one onto the future, Anzaldúa does the opposite. Her negation of the racial reality of the present in the United States implies a future of diversity and multiplicity.

Anzaldúa's sense of continuity and discontinuity is linked to the concerns of the Spanish American tradition she knows, which explains her somewhat contradictory use of *mestizaje*. This concept, as she presumably knew, can represent a form of racial transformation over time that is somewhat essentialist and based in biology. Vasconcelos thought that imagining an assimilated race allowed one to think about a different place, and vice versa. Anzaldúa also seemed to believe that in revealing the presence of those who had been invisible we could turn a place into a zone that required a different history and identity. This would explain Anzaldúa's neglect of Vasconcelos's violent racism against populations of African ancestry, who were destined to self-extinction in his mind. It is difficult to justify her overlooking of his statements that imply not only the capacity of self-creation for those who would end up as part of the Cosmic Race, but also the capacity of self-destruction for those who will not choose to procreate, such as, for Vasconcelos, the "ugly" black race. According to *The Cosmic Race*, the

> Indian, by grafting onto the related race, would take the jump of millions of years that separate Atlantis from our times, and in a few decades of aesthetic eugenics, the Black might disappear, together with the types that a free instinct of beauty may go on signaling as fundamentally recessive and underserving, for that reason, of perpetuation. In this manner, a selection of taste would take effect, much more efficient than the brutal Darwinist selection, which is valid, if at all, only for the inferior species, but no longer for man (Vasconcelos 1997, 32).

Thus, what *mestizaje* did was to contemporize people, to allow them to participate in the universal history of humanity with a protagonist role and with a clear justification for their existence.

History seems to be for Anzaldúa both a temporal practice determined simultaneously by the formation of *mestizo* bodies and the narrative of the *amasijo*, which privileges a constant process, and practice of trying to put diverse elements together. The narration of the Borderlands reproduces the experience of a place that resists unity. Historical *mestizaje*, on the contrary, connects to time, blood, and vertical evolution in a temporal sense. It is not a coincidence, then, that this process is almost always related to genealogy, blood, and biology. The references to evolutionism in Anzaldúa serve the purpose of providing a historical role for those people who were historically marginalized. She mentions, for example, that the "mestizo and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is intricately woven together, and that we are spawned out of similar souls" (Anzaldúa 1999, 107). As we saw in Vasconcelos, there is the material evolution that resulted from years of mixing and blending of difference, and together with the latter there is also a soul, an immaterial property shared by all humans.

Anzaldúa also needed to provide a notion of timely development associated with a fundamental role in history for the *mestiza* nation. It is for this reason that the *mestiza* is a result of evolution across time, of a historical progression that expresses a different way of understanding the world. This approach, as we saw in Vasconcelos, is a quite problematic view of history, since it ends up in biological essentialism and is a limited view regarding how this process of conformation could be more inclusive. But, interestingly, Anzaldúa introduces another element that comes from the Spanish American tradition, the use of space to conform a particular historical dimension of the nation. In her case, though, space will not be a problem, but a solution.

A history based on a spatialized notion of identity drastically departed from the limits of *la mestiza*. It is clear that her use of Vasconcelos responds to necessity, and not to her defense of the former's classification of superior and inferior races, which she carefully hides. She wanted her project to have a historical account, but she was not able to get rid of the exclusionary identities that a historical narration of developing identities in time presented. While her treatment of race can be as contradictory as the ideas on which it is based, her development of a spatial identity transformed what she had received. Her notion of the Borderlands is a much more important contribution to the Spanish American intellectual tradition than her renewal of the idea of *mestizaje*. Anzaldúa's implied conception of a spatial history, unlike *mestizaje*, fits very well with intersectionality, since it "enables a more dynamic understanding of how environments as relational spaces have been produced and reshaped over time through movements of 'people, plants, goods, and information.'"[14]

Anzaldúa's account, unlike Vasconcelos's, can transcend the mistakes of its science through the other side that originates the new *mestiza* consciousness as the "consciousness of the Borderlands" (1999, 83). This way to understand the world is "a source of intense pain," and its "energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (Ibid, 102). The

problem of dualistic thinking that was very much related to Vasconcelos's generation was linked to overcoming the duality of spiritualism/materialism, but Anzaldúa's changed this to address the problem of subject-object and the need to uproot "dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness," ideas that were part of the beginning of a long struggle (Ibid, 102).

IV Borderlands and Mestizas, an Inconvenient Pairing

The borderland offers a way to relate to a world that opens up possibility, suggestion, and uncertainty, and as such represents, at the same time, a resistance to become something concrete. This space in flux is connected to the failure of demarcation, a border that is constantly overflown and incapable of conforming to a stable and final subject. There is nothing like a border to affirm difference, but also there is nothing like a failed border to question the reality of this limit. Anzaldúa's Borderlands fail to contain its inhabitants, but, at the same time, succeed in opening new spaces. An uncontained space affirms the impossibility of demarcation, which is one of the important ideas that conflicted with the notion of identity in Spanish America. As discussed above, this in part explains why Paz realized that his study of Mexican identity needed to return to place and experience.

In Anzaldúa, the problem is not only based on the essentialism of color pigmentation, but on the meaning of how dark skin is created and reproduced in a given location. This problem also forces us to ask important questions, such as, do I feel discrimination because of my color, or does my color become meaningful only in certain places? Do certain places indicate that my color is a problem, or does my color disrupt the meaning of a place? Anzaldúa did something that the Spanish American tradition she followed was not able to do in addressing these questions. In referring back to place, she depicts identities that do not have finality. Identity reveals the possibilities of being in place, which is the reason that the Borderlands represent a different way of knowing.

Anzaldúa's lack of engagement with the problems of a *mestiza* identity in historical terms cannot be attributed to a mistake. In her embracing of *mestizaje* as a way to confront the naturalization of the idea of racial purity, the ahistoricity of certain peoples, and imperialism, she is perpetuating some of the same problems experienced by Spanish American thinkers, including Vasconcelos. But her attempt to create a history based on the emergence of *la mestiza* is supplemented by a spatial notion of history that in one sense follows the preoccupations of Paz. However, in her case, this creative exercise has more success. Identity is spatial and is grounded in the particularities of space. This is the respect in which Anzaldúa contributed to Spanish America's attempt to articulate an inclusive identity through locality. This inclusionary identity, though, is contradicted by the concept of *mestiza* and its historical implications. Josefina Saldaña-Portillo's criticism of Anzaldúa's *mestizaje* as leading to the "exclusion and, indeed, erasure of contemporary indigenous subjectivity and practices on both sides of the border" is accurate and helpful (Saldaña-Portillo 2003, 282). Her call for a

"transnational and comparative model of Latina/o studies," is a compelling case to leave behind the use of notions like *mestizaje*.

Such a project makes a case for the creation of conceptual areas that allow us to reflect on networks originated around themes such as neocolonialism, globalization, labor, migration, comparative racialization, Latina/o gender and sexuality, and cultural production. The resulting identities intersect a larger space than that defined by nations. This is related to a Marxist analysis of the active production of "'Latina/o' identities—identities produced as a consequence of the constantly renovating and ever-expanding force of US-based capitalism in its hegemonic area, the Americas" (Ibid, 506). Economic and imperialist policies created a space that transcended national divisions. Saldaña-Portillo makes a call "for a totality critique that moves beyond the nation as a unit of analysis precisely because 'Latina/o' identities begin their formation not in the US but in Spanish America, as an effect of US intervention and compulsory neoliberalism" (Ibid, 282).

As Saldaña-Portillo reminds us, the use of the term *mestiza* is also related to concepts that do not allow for the development of an identity that is truly inclusive. On the contrary, this idea relates to biological finality—a *mestizo* body is viewed as unable to return to a previous form of purity. This is an idea that suggests that purity is something real when in fact it is not, especially when considering the biological terms to which the idea is connected. There are no individuals who are pure, but there are purified spaces, i.e. locations in which inclusivity does not exist and that thereby create a fictional place of origin. Purity can only be experienced in a place that is pure, and this creates the assumption of pure identities.[15] This is precisely what the Borderlands dispute. There is no notion of purity if we do not live in a pure space.

Historically, as we have seen in the tradition into which Anzaldúa placed aspects of her work, the *mestiza* is part of a duality that originates in bodies and can be understood as both pure and impure. The implications of the concept of *mestizaje* are connected to the attainment of finality, a destined end of unity that challenges separation and difference. The body of the *mestiza* addressed by Anzaldúa is the result of a temporal process of *mestizaje*, but, at the same time, her notion of the borderlands is a choice to turn a place into a space of inclusion and recognition.[16] It is for this reason that even if the history of the mestiza fails, her interpretation of history as an "amasijo," a complex process of dealing with heterogeneity and historical identity in location, remains helpful.

Anzaldúa's historicizing of the borderlands suggests a narrative that does not follow a linear progression. It is a process of kneading that explains disruption, continuity, assimilation, resistance and that sustains the possibility of becoming. However, in this history of becoming there is no final result, only a narrative of the practice of resistance that makes a mere synthesis of time less relevant, and that eliminates the possibility of the replacement of one element by another. In this sense, her work is extremely important for understanding the problem of historical narration

among groups that have been marginalized by universal narratives. In addition, this is particularly important now when many recent constitutions of Spanish American historical narratives are more concerned about location than in processes of *mestizaje*.

A spatial conception of historical identity is much closer to Anzaldúa's borderlands, since, as Anibal Quijano notes, it "cannot be defined in ontological terms, is a complex history of production of new historical meanings that depart from legitimate and multiple heritages of rationality. It is the utopia of a new association between reason and liberation" (Quijano 1993, 155). This perspective, as Alejandro Vallega explained in his analysis of Quijano, is curious because "one must move from the real to the mythic in order to engage Latin American reality" (Vallega 2012, 244). But if we put this idea within the context of an *amasijo*, as a struggle between the need to become something and the resistance to becoming something that is fixed by/in place, we can begin to understand processes of writing historical narratives that refer to heterogeneity and diversity. History must be a reflection of the meaning of being in place, of practices of resistance, and of a lack of finality.

Curiously, while the use of "la mestiza" has gained popularity among some Latina feminists, in Latin America the opposite is true.[17] The totalizing mestizo identity, with its intentionality of finality, has been abandoned for afro-identities, and pan-indigenous movements. Such movements have created political projects that put location at the center of historical development, these being the constitution of a diasporic area, or the fight for land restitution to reconstruct ancient places. Perhaps the nature of this discussion and the historical narration of these identities can help the future development of historical scholarship in the same way that her notion of the Borderlands has helped to redefine ideas on colonialism and border thinking.[18] History is at a crossroads in terms of constituting a narrative of inclusivity that leaves behind past concerns about notions of supremacy and finality. Anzaldúa's understanding of place and consciousness are necessary for conceiving new ways in which we can avoid the dangers of the past, and open new ways for understanding the functions of historical narratives.

Notes

I would like to express my gratitude to Andrea Pitts, Ella Schmidt, and the two anonymous reviewers that helped me to revise this essay and improved it to get it in its present form.

[1] See: Novoa, 2010.

[2] My understanding of modernity follows the work of the modernity/coloniality research program. According to Arturo Escobar this approach can be understood in the following way: "The conceptualization of modernity/coloniality is grounded in a series of

operations that distinguish it from established theories of modernity. Succinctly put, these include the following: (1) an emphasis on locating the origins of modernity with the Conquest of America and the control of the Atlantic after 1492, rather than in the most commonly accepted landmarks such as the Enlightenment or the end of the eighteenth century;4 (2) a persistent attention to colonialism and the making of the capitalist world system as constitutive of modernity; this includes a determination not to overlook the economy and its concomitant forms of exploitation; (3) consequently, the adoption of a world perspective in the explanation of modernity, in lieu of a view of modernity as an intra-European phenomenon; (4) the identification of the domination of others outside the European core as a necessary dimension of modernity, with the concomitant subalternization of the knowledge and cultures of these other groups; (5) a conception of eurocentrism as the knowledge form of modernity/coloniality—a hegemonic representation and mode of knowing that claims universality for itself, and that relies on 'a confusion between abstract universality and the concrete world hegemony derived from Europe's position as center'" (Escobar 2007, 184). Also, see: Dussel, 1996; Tuma, 2000; Mignolo, 2000.

[3] My use of "Spanish American" intellectuals and not "Latin American" ones is connected with the origin of the use of the ideas of mestizaje and latinism. Brazil or the French and Dutch ex-colonies did not develop an interest in these ideas in forming a modern culture. "If for José Vasconcelos, in his attempt to interpret Spanish American cultures, it was first necessary to emphasize that the "Pugna de latinidad contra sajonismo ha llegado a ser, sigue siendo nuestra época; pugna de instituciones, de propósitos y de ideales", for Gilberto Freyre and Mário de Andrade that question did not arise, since the two Brazilian writers did not associate themselves with any idea of Latinity from which they could have derived a notion of Brazilian culture, in the way that Vasconcelos did in order to understand Mexican culture. We shall see later that even the Lusophile Gilberto Freyre does not link Portuguese culture to the Latin spirit" (Melo 2013, 307).

[4] This association is intrinsically related to the paradigm of rationality/modernity that is at the center of decoloniality. Aníbal Quijano explained that at the core of this project "is the instrumentalisation of the reasons for power, of colonial power in the first place, which produced distorted paradigms of knowledge and spoiled the liberating promises of modernity. The alternative, then, is clear: the destruction of the coloniality of world power. First of all, epistemological decolonization, as decoloniality, is needed to clear the way for new intercultural communication, for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality. Nothing is less rational, finally, than the pretension that the specific cosmic vision of a particular ethnie should be taken as universal rationality, even if such an ethnie is called Western Europe because this is actually pretend to impose a provincialism as universalism" (Quijano 2007, 178).

[5] In order to see the influence of Herder in Alberdi, for example, see: Krumpel 2004.

[6] Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, for example, explains that in the emphasis on universality, reason, and ideas that is common in the work that analyzes Kant's philosophy, there is a complete disregard for his writings on race and geography, an

area that is hardly peripheral in his work. Eze explains that for Kant "the geographical distribution of the races is a fact, and the differences among them are permanent, fixed, and transcendent of environmental factors; the differences, he argued, are founded in an immutable natural germ (*Keime*)." (Eze 2001, 103).

[7] Emphasis in the original. From now on the use of emphasis is part of the original text if not indicated otherwise.

[8] On Hegel and Race , see: Bernasconi, 2000.

[9] See: Bosteels, Bruno, 2009.

[10] Paz's gender ideas are problematic at best. The role of women in the process of mestizaje is for him related to the openness of the feminine. Claudio Lomnitz-Adler is correct in writing that Paz's treatment of women "meant to (a) incommunicative, self-effaced, objects of lonely male veneration and [b] intrinsically "open"—and therefore intrinsically inferior—beings. It is clear that in this account women are not subjects of Mexican culture; they are only represented objects. Already here we can conclude that Paz is in fact detailing a particular male ideology and calling it 'national culture'" (Lomnitz-Adler, 258).

[11] See: Sommers, 1991.

[12] In the north of Mexico "amasijo" means bread, or the portion of mixed flour that is used to make bread. This is different from its use in other countries. In Argentina, for example, over time this word became a synonym for being beat up.

[13] It is important to remember that there was not a clear understanding of inheritance in the second half of the nineteenth century, and only after Mendel's ideas were revived by Hugo de Vries and Carl Correns by the 1900's a path opened to understand discontinuity in inheritance.

[14] Rangan, Haripriya, Judith Carney, and Tim Denham. "Environmental history of botanical exchanges in the Indian Ocean World." Environment and History 18, no. 3 (2012), 313.

[15] See: Robert Bernasconi, 2012.

[16] The relevance of Anzaldúa's understanding of space continues to this day. Lately, for example, there has been an engagement of her ideas with those addressed in Empire by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Curiously, the way in which these authors refer to the concept of love is not that different to how this same context was used by Vasconcelos to explain the reconciliation of different subjectivities. Also, see: Soja 1999; Quijano 1992; Mignolo 2007.

[17] María Lugones is a good example of the use of this concept of mestiza among Latina Feminists. See: Lugones 1992. The main problem with her conception is how she associates the impurity of the *mestiza* with resistance, disregarding that when Anzaldúa follows Vasconcelos and his biological analysis, *mestizaje* does not mean resistance at all, but assimilation. In the evolutionary and biological context in which "raza mestiza" is placed, only assimilation can exist since the failure of this process would end in a lack of successful reproduction. Interestingly, those who defended racist ideas in the United States during the period when Vasconcelos was writing defended precisely the impossibility of biological assimilation among different races to justify the need to keep the separation of bodies. Vasconcelos, and also Anzaldúa, argued against

this idea showing that, in fact, racial assimilation was possible, and that purity was not the way in which races evolved over time. See: Lugones, 1994.

[18] See: Aparicio & Blaser, 2008.

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