PLACE-IN-BEING: A DECOLONIAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF PLACE IN CONVERSATION WITH PHILOSOPHIES OF THE AMERICAS

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Our experiences of place and emplacement are so fundamental to our everyday existence that most of us rarely dedicate much time to thinking about how place and emplacement impact the various aspects of our daily lives. In this work, I apply a decolonial lens to philosophy of place literature and argue that philosophical approaches to place should recognize and consider, what I term, the coloniality of space, the pluriversality of place, and place-in-being. The coloniality of space describes the pattern of valuing the concept of "space" over "place" in Western philosophical literature as motivated by projects of colonization. The Western philosophers that I discuss in my second chapter, value the concept of space over place since space is ascribed the characteristics of universality and limitless expansion. I note that this affinity towards space, and especially the erasure of place, is connected to coloniality and colonization. My third chapter argues in favor of critical phenomenologies of place, while my fourth chapter, in conversation with North American Indigenous philosophies, applies a decolonial lens to Western philosophical literature of place and defends what I call the pluriversality of place. The pluriversality of place conceptualizes the existence of multiple ways of theorizing place, as well as naming the experiences some might have of singular places manifesting in plural ways. Lastly, my fifth chapter draws on two

philosophies from the Americas, American pragmatism and Latina feminist border thought, to argue that place-in-being be recognized as one way of understanding the relationship between pluriversality of place and multiplicitous selfhood. Place-in-being is meant to describe the profound and unique relationships we can form with places, and how places can mediate certain affective dimensions of experience, such as intersubjectivity, temporality, vitality, ontological possibility, and the preservation of habit.

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For the Borderlands and all of my favorite Places

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This work takes a philosophical lens to the concept of place and experiences of emplacement. Several of my own experiences motivated my desire to explore this topic, but two moments stand out amongst the rest. The first occurred in 2017 when I was fortunate to attend the *Philosophy Across the Américas Conference: Thinking La Frontera* in McAllen, Texas—just a few minutes' drive from the United States-Mexico border. It was an excellent conference that featured papers on relations between the United States and Mexico, with a special focus on immigration, borders, borderlands, community, and activism. Among the philosophers discussed, Gloria Anzaldúa's work was heavily featured. On the last day of the conference, the event organizers arranged for us to visit the Old Hidalgo Pumphouse Museum. We were offered a tour of this historic site, which included a short walk around the outside area where we could see, firsthand, one section of the U.S.-Mexico border wall. This section of the wall was made of tall, red, metallic pillars, spaced about a quarter of a foot apart. As the desert landscape surrounded us on all sides, the area just past the wall was not notably different from the area right before. Taken out of the context of the history between the U.S. and Mexico, and how these land divisions were established, the exact placement of the wall seemed rather arbitrary.

For many of the conference attendees, myself included, this was our first time seeing, with our own eyes, what the border wall, as a man-made material structure, looks like. Most of the group members were of Latino/a descent, but only a handful of us were

raised in a border town. Despite having grown up in a different border city myself, and having crossed back and forth between the two countries many times, I had never seen, in person, what these man-made sections of the border wall look like. Where I was raised, the Rio Grande River (known in Mexico as el Río Bravo), designates the geographical barrier between the U.S. and Mexico.

Despite the 100°F heat, the metallic structure radiated a coldness that stuck with me. I wondered how many people had died trying to cross over. I later learned that the answer is approximately 7,000 according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection estimates. I was also in awe that the conference organizers arranged for us to visit this significant site. The previous academic conferences that I had attended never took us outside the bounds of universities and hotels. I thought it was wonderful that we were given the opportunity to physically visit a site that we had been discussing, in various ways, throughout the conference.

I believe that many of us had similar feelings, knowing that this was a unique opportunity. Reactions from the group ranged widely from verbal awes to quiet solemnness. At the same time, I was surprised by those that decided to spend their time taking pictures, especially "selfies," that were later posted on social media. Something about the specific act of taking selfies, at this place and time, seemed disrespectful—I felt embarrassed by proxy, as if the ghosts of those 7,000 were watching us, intellectuals who had spent the last few days philosophizing *la Frontera*, approach our visit in this way.

In one sense, this experience was amazing: a weekend full of theoretical discussion with scholars engaging in Latino/a philosophy on exactly the topics that interest me. In another sense, I was struck by how some attendees spent their visit to the

border wall. In reflecting upon this experience, I wonder if those attendees turned to selfies and social media, in order to ease discomfort by fleeing to abstraction. Taking pictures of and at the border, objectifying the wall itself, and staging it as a backdrop for their photos, perhaps generated a sense of removal and distance—in a sense, relocating one's attention from the immediate "here and now" to the imagined, theoretical, "over there:" a theoretical space where one does not have to immediately think about the full ethical, social, and political significance of the border wall. Such a practice of thinking in the imagined "over there," is reminiscent of those moments when western philosophers offer theoretical accounts of lived experiences without considering the impacts of the structures of race, gender, colonization, etc.,—structures that are pervasive and ever impacting the experiences of liminal subjects. Locating our attention in the imagined "over there," seems to dis-place us, and is akin to thinking "in space" rather than "in place." At the same time, maybe the turn to selfies was a response to not knowing how else to engage with place—especially this place. Although I am not interested in, nor qualified for, psychologizing my colleagues at the conference, I share this story in order to reflect upon how traditional Western philosophical methods do, or do not, call upon us to engage with place. Are there ways of engaging with place, or thinking philosophically about place, while in place, that do not evoke objectification, distance, and abstraction?

In addition, there is a second experience that motivated my desire to philosophically examine place and emplacement. This experience cannot be located in exactly one event, but rather encompasses the *here and now* of *when* I took on this project. In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic changed life as we know it. In an effort to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, many of us, those of us privileged and

fortunate enough to have a stable residence, quarantined in place. Schools were temporarily shut down, but quickly reopened in the virtual spaces of Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Webex by Cisco, which are just some of the major online videoconferencing platforms from which a new form of virtual gathering was in the making. Of course, such platforms were already in effect long before the COVID-19 pandemic, and certain workspaces and online schools were much more equipped to survive this new modality of being than others. But, the scale to which many of us were pushed to move online was relatively, astronomical. For those of us who felt the ethical imperative to, and could, take quarantined guidelines seriously, found ourselves attending school online, working online, gathering online, and hosting parties online, at an unprecedently frequency that most of us were not accustomed to. Wondrously creative alternatives to in-person events were set forth: dance clubs hosted Zoom dance parties, media streaming platforms created ways for friends and families to watch movies and television shows together in a socially distanced manner, judicial court hearings were conducted virtually, and large academic conferences were hosted on videoconferencing platforms. All of these new ways of engaging with other people within the multitude of virtual spaces, led me to wonder how these new modalities will impact our experiences of non-virtual emplacement. As the times continue to change, so might the ways in which we relate to place, experience our sense of emplacement, and interact with those that co-habit place with us. Does continuously inhabiting the virtual space, displace us further in the material world? Does it perhaps do the opposite: give us a deeper appreciation and gratitude for what is real and physical all around us? How to go about engaging with these questions, and the one that remains unanswered from my previous paragraph? One

starting point, I believe, includes providing different kinds of theoretical analyses regarding how some of us already do, or do not, experience place and emplacement. As I demonstrate in this work, I believe that the discipline of philosophy is equipped to provide these kinds of theoretical analyses.

In investigating how the history of Western philosophy has discussed the concepts of place and our experiences of emplacement, I found that much more philosophical scholarship has been devoted to the significance of *space* rather than place,[1] since space's universal, objective, and abstract character seems to align with Western philosophy's search for universal and objective Truths. Nonetheless, in recent years, a few philosophers have begun philosophically examining place and emplacement by way of the phenomenological method, which is a philosophical method committed to closely examining aspects of daily human experience that are often dismissed as unremarkable.[2] While these phenomenologists of place have opened new philosophical avenues for investigating place's relationship to lived experience, I have found that this growing body of literature has not considered how colonialism and its lasting effects (coloniality), have and will continue to impact lived experiences of emplacement. For this reason, my dissertation is also guided by the following questions: what does a decolonial critique of contemporary phenomenology of place scholarship reveal? What are non-Western phenomenological approaches to the study of place? What do these approaches reveal

[1] Edward Casey's *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1997), provides an incredibly detailed and insightful account of the tyranny of space in the history of Western philosophy.

[2] See for example: Casey 1993, 1998; Donohoe 2016, 2017; Malpas 1999, 2006, 2012; Seamon 2018; and Trigg 2013.

about place and emplacement that the traditional, Western, phenomenological method cannot let us see?

With all these questions at the forefront, in this dissertation I argue that philosophical approaches to place should continuously consider, what I term, *the coloniality of space*, *the pluriversality of place*, and *place-in-being*, in order to avoid reproducing the very abstraction that phenomenological attentions to place are trying to avoid when critiquing Western philosophy's love of space. Moreover, as learned from Indigenous writings on place, place should be understood not merely as a backdrop or stage upon which human activity operates, but as an *active participant* in the shaping of subjectivity. Understanding place as potentially multiple, and as an active participant in the construction of our subjectivities, helps recognize the agency of place, the agency of non-human persons that reside in places, and helps open possibilities for ethical reciprocal relationships between places and the persons (both human and non-human) that inhabit them.

To defend these claims, in the next chapter I explain the significance of recognizing and dismantling the *coloniality of space*. The first half of this chapter is historical, whereby I discuss what some ancient (Aristotle) and modern (Gassendi, Newton, Descartes) philosophers have written on the concepts of space and place. I find that these modern philosophers do not discuss place, as such, rather they only theorize the idea of space. I note that their use of the term "space" over "place" is not just semantic—this choice of term marks an important conceptual difference. In 16th century philosophical literature and beyond, the concept of place largely disappears, and scholarship on space reigns dominant. In the second half of this chapter, I argue that

European expansion, through projects of colonization that were implemented during that era and onwards, helps explain the erasure of the concept of place in favor of space. I argue that the modern philosophers' affinity for space coincides with a zeitgeist of expansion, universalization, and domination which explains places' disappearance. Space became synonymous with universality, uniformity, and the erasure of difference, whereas place represented specificity and the acknowledgment of difference. The reign of space that began in the modern era as coextensive with European expansion, particularly the colonization of the Americas and it's pervasiveness onwards, is what I describe in this chapter as *the coloniality of space*.

My third chapter continues this discussion by examining contemporary conversations about place that have emerged, largely as a response to the erasure of place in the modern period, within phenomenological literature. What can be described as "the phenomenology of place," is a growing body of literature set forth in the works of Edward Casey, Jeff Malpas, David Seamon, and others who have understood Martin Heidegger's, and especially Maurice Merleau-Ponty's, foundational comments on space and place as excellent starting points for a more extensive phenomenological treatment of place and emplacement. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the key works in phenomenology of place scholarship (with the exception of the phenomenology of architecture) and argue that remnants of the coloniality of space continue to haunt this literature. I argue that this is the case because, consistent with the phenomenological method, phenomenologists of place have bracketed, or left unconsidered, the impacts that structures like racism, sexism, heteronormativity, etc. have upon emplaced subjects. Disregarding the impacts and significance of these kinds of socially oppressive structures

has resulted in phenomenological investigations of place that describe experiences of emplacement from the vantage point of seemingly "universal" subjects, i.e., subjects not impacted by their gender, race, age, sexuality, etc. Yet, as Maria Lugones has argued, such seemingly "universal" subjects are a fiction, as everyone's lived experiences are, in varying degrees, mediated by their historically situated embodiment.[3] Thus, wherever such "universal" subjects are posited, I see the continual influence of the coloniality of space in phenomenological investigations of place. As a means for attempting to shed the influence of the coloniality of space, I contend that phenomenologists of place should consider taking up a shift in methodology towards *critical* phenomenologies of place. In the last section of this chapter, I describe Lisa Guenther's work on solitary confinement as one example of a critical phenomenology of place. I claim that Guenther's work shows how the coloniality of space permeates phenomenology of place scholarship, since Guenther's analysis shows that it is not the case that all subjects are emplaced in *places*, as the phenomenology of place wants to claim. Some subjects are emplaced in *spaces* that have been constructed, on colonized land, to detain incarcerated subjects which are, disproportionately, persons of color. Thus, unlike the modern period's understanding of space as a kind of "universal nothing-ness," in our contemporary prison-industrial complex, space is being intentionally constructed as a particular kind of torturous prison within prison facilities.

Having discussed one example of what critical phenomenologies of place can

[3] Here I am referring to Maria Lugones' articulation of "the modern subject," which she describes in her book, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2009), 130-31.

reveal, my fourth chapter conducts a critical phenomenology of the Chemawa Indian School located in Salem, Oregon. Yet, before doing so, the first third of this chapter discuss the works of Indigenous philosophers who have articulated non-Western understandings of place, emplacement, and relationships to land. A number of Indigenous philosophers have written on the concept of place, but, for too long, they have not been cited in Western philosophical conversations about place. In this chapter, I center Indigenous voices and argue that Western philosophers discussing the significance of place, should recognize the *pluriversality of place*. Pluriversality assumes the existence of multiple ontologies and epistemologies, and holds that only the existence of plural, or multiple, ontologies and epistemologies can be understood as universal.[4] In the same sense, I claim that even within Indigenous scholarship, there are multiple ways of theorizing place, and that Western philosophers should likewise avoid pursuing any kind of "universal" theory of place or emplacement, once again a move towards attempting to undo the influence of the coloniality of space. While in the second third of this chapter I examine the Chemawa Indian School through the lens of critical phenomenology, the last section of this chapter discusses how some students were able to "turn the power,"[5] and "take back" Chemawa, in order to uplift Indigenous youth and serve Indigenous resilience efforts.

My fifth chapter takes off where the previous chapter ended by further describing

[4] The term "pluriversality," was developed by Walter Mignolo in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011).

[5] The phrase, "turned the power," is not my own. This phrase has been used by Indigenous scholars examining resistance practices within Native American boarding schools.

the pluriversality of place while introducing, what I am calling, *place-in-being.* In this chapter, I draw on two currents within philosophies from the Americas: American pragmatism and Latina feminist border thought, as well as a semi-autobiographical novel called *The Tequila Worm* by Viola Canales. The philosophical works I draw on theorize the self in ways that recognize the importance of place. I first describe American pragmatist, John Dewey's work on selves as always impacted by, and impacting, the various environments we inhabit. I also explain how some feminist pragmatists have critiqued Dewey's account of selfhood as relying too much on individual agency without recognizing that structures of power limit the agency of marginalized subjects. To further contribute to this important consideration, I turn to the works of Gloria Anzaldúa, Maria Lugones, and Mariana Ortega, to describe their articulations of non-singular selfhood. In their works, I see the pluriversality of place as always already assumed even as it has not been acknowledged or theorized in feminist border thought. Following from their positing of place-based practices that are resistant towards the structures of coloniality, I propose that *place-in-being* be recognized as one way of understanding the relationship between pluriversality of place and multiplicitous selfhood which can help us more actively attend to place without replicating the coloniality of space.

CHAPTER II

THE COLONIALITY OF SPACE

Introduction

Although a number of contemporary philosophers have found a renewed interest in the concept of place, few have considered the relationship between the space-place debates in the History of Western Philosophy and coloniality. More specifically, none have yet to consider the roles that European expansion and, for example, the colonization of the Americas might have played in the erasure of place in favor of space within Western Philosophy.

In this chapter, I argue that we need to consider "the coloniality of space" in the History of Western Philosophy in order to more fully understand the philosophical significance of place. What I am calling "the coloniality of space" names the way in which the modern era's theorizations of space were coextensive with European expansion, particularly the colonization of the Americas, and how the pull towards space aligns with 'justifications' for the theft of land, the forceful assimilation of Indigenous peoples (in some cases), and the murdering and mass genocides of Indigenous peoples (in other cases)—injustices that continue to oppressively impact people of color today.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section recounts the relevant intellectual history of space and place within Western philosophy's modern period. In particular, I provide an overview of how and why the concept of space subsumed the notion of place during this time. Aside from Edward Casey's *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, almost all other contemporary philosophical scholarship on the

concept of place pass over this history in Western Philosophy's modern era. Thus, contemporary philosophical considerations of the concept of place have not yet considered the connections between places' erasure in the modern period and colonization. Even in *The Fate of Place*, Casey speculates that the modern era's pull towards space stems from the comfort one can garner from space's infinitude and, in a sense, limitless freedom, without considering the colonial motivations that drove the pull towards space as a concept over place.

My second section will interrogate Casey's speculation by essentially asking: if the modern era's fascination with space stems from a kind of comfort in space's infinitude, then for whom is this comfort? In response, I posit a concept I am calling the "coloniality of space" which captures what lies at the underside of supposing that the modern era's pull towards space was not connected to colonial projects and European expansion taking place at the time.

A Brief Overview of Western Philosophy's Turn to Space

There are at least two different approaches to contemporary philosophical work on place. One is the historical approach which aims to clarify what is meant by the terms space and place within different historical periods in Western Philosophy. As mentioned, Edward Casey's *The Fate of Place: An Intellectual History* provides the most substantive account of this intellectual history, though a few others have briefly discussed this history as well.[6] The second approach offers a phenomenology of place, or an investigation into

[6] see, for example, Malpas 2018, Donohoe 2014, and Evans 2015.

the essential structures of our experiences of emplacement. This second approach largely overlooks the various definitions of space and place that existed prior to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Drawing from these two philosophers, this second approach aims to provide new considerations regarding the essential structures of place and our experiences of emplacement.

Although these strands offer two different entry points into the philosophical study of place, they are nonetheless interconnected. The clearest connection comes from the phenomenology of place's reliance on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty—and in a few cases Edmund Husserl, as well—both in terms of expanding upon their theorizations of space and place and evoking their phenomenological methods. Yet, I see another less clear connection between the historical and phenomenological approaches to place. This connection is the unacknowledged history of colonialism, as connected to the establishment of racial categories and global capitalism beginning in the late 1400s, that coincided with philosophy's modern era (from Pierre Gassendi to René Descartes), and the way in which this colonial legacy has contributed to present day coloniality and has continued to influence western philosophy, including, I will claim, contemporary work in the phenomenology of place. To make this case, the rest of this section will provide a brief overview of the intellectual history of space and place in Western Philosophy's modern era. My aim here is to provide the necessary foundation for what I will describe, in the next section, as the coloniality of space.

According to Casey's *The Fate of Place*, prior to the History of Western Philosophy's medieval and modern eras we can find an interest in the philosophical concept of place stemming from Ancient Philosophers, with Aristotle being the last

among them to do so. Aristotle exemplifies his concern for place when he opens Book IV of his *Physics* with the claim, "A student of nature must have knowledge about *place* too, just as he must about the infinite."[7] Whereas "place" named the particular and the Earthly, "the infinite" is captured by the abstract and the Heavenly. Per Aristotle, both notions were owed equal treatment as philosophical concepts. However, post-Aristotle, beginning in the medieval period, this emphasis shifts: the abstract, the Heavenly, becomes more philosophically valued, while "place" is left in the wayside. But, first, how does Aristotle understand place?[8]

Aristotle held that the essence of place is provided by delimitation or it's containing quality. He argues that place must exist independent of the form or shape of what is being contained, and in this sense, place for Aristotle can be understood as a kind of vessel.[9] Yet, Aristotle maintains that the vessel model of place is not fully accurate, as vessels are moveable while places are not. Moreover, there seem to be places, or containers, that have infinitely changing contents, such as rivers. When a river flows, new water replaces the old. Here, Heraclitus can be taken literally when he says: "you could not step twice into the same river."[10] Nonetheless, Aristotle still wanted to claim that

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[7] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Physics: Books III and IV* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University, 1983), 20, emphasis in original.

[8] The accounts of space and place, as found in the history of Western philosophy, that I provide from here onward closely follow Edward Casey's account of this history in *The Fate of Place* (1997).

[9] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Physics*, 28.

[10] Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), section 402a.

rivers are places as they do carry some containing capacity that allows them to hold water, boats, and river creatures. This line of inquiry leads Aristotle to claim that a place is "the first unchangeable limit (*peras*) of that which surrounds."[11] The first unchangeable limit of a river is the river in its entirety. Even as rivers flow and its waters change, whole rivers are places as they are delimited by their banks and beds. Furthermore, that which surrounds our ever-transforming Earth is the air (sky), which itself is encased by the heavens. Through these examples it is clear that, for Aristotle, regardless of what is being 'held' it is the capacity for delimitation (also understood as: bounding, circumscribing, encasing, holding, etc.) that gives place its essential quality. What is interesting about Aristotle's account of place, is that because he considered place equally important to "the infinite," the capacity to delimit, contain, and bound, was likewise understood to be significant.

Yet, Aristotle's is one of the last accounts of place offered in the early History of Western Philosophy, because by the thirteenth century AD, during the medieval period, interest in place began to be superseded by an interest in space. This shift can also be understood as a transition from discussions of confining, limiting, and bounding, towards discussions of limitlessness, infinitude, and endless extension. However, this transition is not a mere shift in focus, but rather an upholding of space with a simultaneous devaluing of place. Largely informed by Christianity, the pull towards space was tied to reflections on the nature of God and what was said to be his creation (the universe). It was reasoned that "since God is omnipotent, he cannot be subject to any physical constraints, including

[11] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Physics*, 28.

those of spatial extent."[12] Thus, it followed that "divine ubiquity entails spatial infinity," and "that the physical universe itself must be unlimited if it is to be the setting for God's ubiquity as well as the result of His creation."[13] The marriage between Christianity and Philosophy at the time planted the seeds for the reign of space and the erasure of place that would come into full bloom during western Philosophy's modern era. Yet, what has gone unsaid within this intellectual history of space and place, is the way in which this Christian influence also motivated European man's own 'justification' for Earthly extension (e.g. conquests for gold and glory under the name of Christianity)—since, it was European men who understood themselves as most human, most "in the image of" God, and tasked with spreading Christianity around the globe, by force if necessary. In other words, with the growing solidification of a theoretical foundation for God's nature as limitless and infinitely extended in the universe, came the solidification of a more established *European sensibility* as likewise limitless and capable of extending unhindered within the Earthly, physical, realm. The letters Cristopher Columbus sent to Spain after 'discovering' the New World, exemplify this growing sensibility. In a letter to the nurse of Prince John, Columbus writes:

> Of the new heaven and earth which our Lord made…he made me the messenger, and showed me where it lay….by the divine will, I have placed under the dominion of the King and Queen, our sovereigns, another world, through which Spain, which

[12] Edward S. Casey, "Space," in *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, eds. Sebastian Luft and Soren Overgaard (London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 202.

[13] Edward S .Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997), 77.

was reckoned a poor country, has become the richest.[14]

Similarly, in the journals of his first voyage, Columbus states: "it was my wish to pass no island without taking possession of it."[15] Both of these quotes highlight the way in which Columbus understood himself as at once guided by God towards new lands and as authorized to take possession of them, regardless of prior inhabitants.

By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, within western Philosophy's early modern era, "the theological basis of infinite space…underwent [a] radical transformation."[16] This radical transformation is facilitated by a new conceptualization of physics whereby space is posited as "something self-sufficient and wholly independent of what is *in* space, including particular places."[17] Thus, by this point in philosophical history, place was fully erased. Pierre Gassendi (1592-1633) was one contributor to this turn. Gassendi's work makes a distinction between corporeal and spatial dimensionality, giving space the possibility of its own measurability independent of matter.[18] Here, Gassendi's vase example is helpful:

> For example, the length, width, and depth of some water contained in a vase would be corporeal; but the length, width, and depth that we would conceive as existing

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[14] Christopher Columbus, "Letter of Columbus to the Nurse of Prince John," in *The Northmen, Columbus and Cabot, 985-1503: The Voyages of the Northmen; The Voyages of Columbus and of John Cabot*, eds. Julius E. Olson and Edward G. Bourne (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 371-381; online facsimile edition at http://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-067/.

[15] Christopher Columbus, *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, ed. and trans. J. M. Cohen (Penguin Books, 1969), 99.

[16] Casey, "Space," 203.

[17] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 139, emphasis in original.

[18] Ibid.

> between the walls of the vase if the water and every other body were excluded from it would be spatial.[19]

Positing the dimensionality of space, its capacity to exist without matter or bodies of any kind, is where we see one of the first moves to fully abstract the concept of space. For Gassendi, space's dimensionality further highlights its measurability, which, according to Casey, suggests its "sheer homogeneity…as isometric and isotropic."[20] For Gassendi, space independent of matter, suggests the possibility of infinite space, the true existence of a spatial vacuum and limitless void.

Isaac Newton's *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, attributed some inspiration to Gassendi when he articulated two formulations of space: *absolute* and *relative*. Absolute space harbors the properties of self-sameness (homogeneity) and cannot be comprehended sensibly (i.e. via human senses)—it can only be understood intelligibly (i.e., rationality or mathematically).[21] In contrast, relative spaces are delimited areas of absolute space. There can exist many relative spaces within absolute space, and relative spaces themselves can contain other relative spaces, as well. In *Locative Social Media*, Leighton Evans provides the following example of Newtonian relative space:

> A university campus for example would be relative space, with discernible boundaries, and something that could be divided further to signify other spaces within that larger relative space e.g. a building, a lecture theatre, an office, a storage cupboard. The number of possible relative spaces is limitless, and these spaces can

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[19] Pierre Gassendi, *The Selected Works of Pierre Gassendi*, ed. and trans. Craig Brush (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp, 1972), 385.

[20] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 139-40.

[21] Leighton Evans, *Locative Social Media: Place in the Digital Age* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 7.

> overlap one another e.g. one has an office (a relative space) within a building (another relative space).[22]

Relative space, then, are mere "pockets" of vast absolute space within which human activity can occur. Yet, following Gassendi, Newton holds that absolute space exists "independently of human beings"[23] For Newton, the idea of relative space is where he comes closest to providing a notion of place. However, as was with Gassendi and soon to be shown Descartes, these modern thinkers continually subsumed place within the confines of space. Place had no ground from which to stand outside of an all-encompassing space.

Returning to his concept of absolute space, Newton maintained that absolute space should not be understood as a void or as empty. There is a *being* that exists in absolute space, though more accurately put, this being *is* absolute space: the Judeo-Christian God understood as existing infinitely everywhere. Newton claims that "God is space" and space is "God's sensorium"[24] To elaborate, Newton holds that God is eternal, infinite, and omnipresent: "[God] endures always and is present everywhere, and by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes duration and space."[25] Casey interprets Newton to be saying that the very existence of space is produced by the existence of God: "Indeed, it is God's substance that makes space both absolute and infinite: What else,

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 148.

[25] Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. I. Barnard Cohen and Anne Whitman (University of California Press, 1999), 941.

implies Newton, could bestow such powerful parameters on space?"[26] With Newton's absolute space we find both a more complete separation of space from matter and the prevalence of Christian influence. Quickly, I want to note here that the prevalence of Christianity within these philosophical debates is not at all surprising given the other historical events taking place at the time. For instance, in 1633 Galileo Galilei was given a life-long prison sentence for supporting Copernican heliocentrism which claims that the sun, not the Earth, lies at the center of the universe. By proceeding to publish his *Principia* in 1687, it is likely that Newton's conflation of God with absolute space was an attempt to avoid a similar fate.

Whether for this same reason or not, we similarly see both the dominance of space and homages to God within Rene Descartes' contributions to the space-place debate. However, Descartes' conception of God and space are notably different from Newton's. For one, Descartes contends that it is not possible for God to be absolute space because space is the same as matter and God is immaterial. Descartes' claim that space is equivalent to matter stems from his premise that space is extension, but extension only arises from the length, width, depth, shape, magnitude, etc., of materiality. Thus, for Descartes, only material bodies, things that carry extension, can exist in a space and space only arises from the extension of matter. According to Descartes, space and matter are not at all separate nor separable, which is also why he believed that there is no such thing as an inherently empty void.[27] Moreover, Descartes does hold that space infinitely

[26] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 148.

[27] Ibid., 151-153.

extends, but he understands the physical universe as that which extends infinitely. It was God, per Descartes, that created such an infinite physical universe, though from another heavenly, non-Earthly, non-physical, realm.[28]

Descartes' claim that space cannot be empty is important as we see an end to the separation between space and matter and a hopeful return to place. Descartes conceptualizes two kinds of places in his *Principles of Philosophy*. The first kind of places is "internal place," which is essentially the concept of volume. For instance, the inside of an empty box is its internal place. But, because internal place is relative to the parameters of a bounded body within space internal place is actually just extension, which makes it no different from space. In other words, the internal place of an empty box is no different than the air inside its length, width, depth, etc., relative to the location of the box within a space, which makes internal place no different from space. Descartes admits as much when he explicitly writes, "internal place is exactly the same as space"[29]

However, Descartes' second conception of place, external place, offers more hope for the recuperation of place over space. External place is the area "determined by the relationship between a given body and *other* bodies."[30] Given this distinction, for Descartes, whereas internal place (i.e., space) pertains to the size and shape of a body or object, external place names the gaps between at least two or more bodies or objects. Put another way, external place names the relations between various bodies and objects, and

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[28] Ibid., 154-155.

[29] René Descartes, *René Descartes: Principles of Philosophy: Translated, with Explanatory Notes*, trans. R.P. Miller (Springer Netherlands, 2012), 46.

[30] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 157, emphasis in original.

in naming the relations, external place is naming the *situation* of given objects and bodies. In Descartes' words, "when we say that a thing is in a certain place, we understand only that it is in a certain situation in relation to other things."[31]

Casey argues that the relational quality Descartes ascribes to external place is the closest Descartes comes to naming an intrinsic property of place itself—the first to arise in the modern era.[32] Yet, Casey makes the case that in Part II of the *Principles* Descartes actually reduces external place to internal place (and effectively space) when he claims that although external place should be taken as the area between two or more bodies, "external place is rightly taken to be the surface of the surrounding body."[33] If external place is the same as the surfaces of bodies and internal places is the volume of those bodies, then, Casey argues, "external place qua surface is in effect reduced to internal place, which depends precisely (and only) on size and shape, that is, the primary determinants of continuous magnitude."[34] In short, defining external place as the surface of surrounding bodies, means that place, once again, disappears. Casey describes the fate of place, by the end of Descartes' *Principles*, in the following way: "[i]n the end, there is no such single thing as 'place,' while there is preeminently a single universal 'space.'"[35]

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[31] Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 46.

[32] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 159.

[33] Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 46.

[34] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 159.

[35] Ibid., 161.

The modern era of philosophy leaves us with the following space/place distinction: "space was homogeneous, isotropic, isometric, and infinitely (or, at least, indefinitely) extended. Within the supremely indifferent and formal scene of space, local differences did not matter. Place itself did not matter."[36] In the same vein: "[f]or the modern self, all places are essentially the same: in the uniform, homogenous space of Euclidean-Newtonian grid, all places are essentially interchangeable."[37] Going further than Casey, my next section will argue that not only were all places essentially the same for the modern self, but that the Christian idea that underlie the turn to space also contributed to a European sensibility that hailed extension and expansion for Europe and European men. Cecil Rhodes, in 1897, captured this kind of sensibility when he wrote:

> [h]aving read the history of other countries…I saw that expansion was everything, and that the world's surface being limited, the great object of present humanity should be to take as much of the world as it possibly could.[38]

Although Rhodes' interpretation of history came about two hundred years after Descartes, his words still describe a *modus operandi* exhibited by European colonizers. In the next section, I will describe how this sensibility can be understood as an *ego conquiro*, a term coined by Enrique Dussel, and how this ego is coextensive with what I call the coloniality of space.

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[36] Edward S. Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Period of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," in *Senses of Place*, ed. S. Feld and K. Basso (School of American Research Press, 1997), 19-20.

[37] Quoted in Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 38.

[38] Qtd. in James Harvey Robinson and Charles A. Beard, *Readings in Modern European History*, vol. 2 (Boston; New York; Chicago; London; Atlanta; Dallas; Columbus; San Francisco: Ginn and Company, 1909), 336.

The Coloniality of Space as Coextensive with the Colonialities of Power and Being

In *The Fate of Place*, Casey offers one explanation for the modern era's pull towards space over place when he writes:

> …the very idea of place came to inhabit the underworld of the modern cultural and philosophical unconscious…But *why* did it happen? Why when place is all around us — there for everyone to see, right under our physical feet and before our conceptual eyes? Why when place serves as an abiding framework for all that we experience in space and time? Why in the face of its very obviousness and supportiveness was there such a flight to space? Why did its history become so hidden? **We can only supposed that infinite space…must have offered a special form of comfort, a reassuring presence…Such space, after all, offers an infinite amount of *Lebensraum*: if *this* world is unsatisfactory, then numberless others are in the offing**….At the same time, infinite space suggests the possibility of unlimited control: such space is not only measurable and predictable (hence mathematizable) but altogether "passable." Like the metaphysical dove invited by Kant at the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one imagines oneself cleaving the air of infinite space freely and without hindrance.[39]

Casey's hypothesis that the concept of space might have offered modern philosophers "a special form of comfort" makes sense when we consider the philosophical history of space and place independent of the important social and political events occurring at the time. However, what happens when we consider the social and political debates of the time alongside the philosophical considerations of space and place? This question is all the more interesting for the modern period, where the differences between what counts as "the philosophical" and "the social and political" were not as clear as they are today. Thus, how to make sense of Casey's hypothesis and its implications?

Sarah Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* uses the word "background" to describe that which is often hidden or generally left unconsidered

[39] Casey, *Fate of Place*, 337-338, emphasis added.

in philosophical analysis.[40] In the background of Casey's hypothesis lies the question: for whom does the concept of space provide comfort? For whom does a limitless freedom or an endless possibility for expansion provide a reassuring presence? Why do they need this comfort? Is this comfort only for those who find "*this* world unsatisfactory"? Whose worlds are we considering? Whose worlds are "in the offing?" This section of my chapter addresses this hidden "who" in order to show what else lies in the background of Casey's hypothesis so that we can open more doors for unpacking the significance of place.

One starting point for addressing these questions can be found by looking at the major social and political events of the time, particularly the rise of European expansion that was perpetuated through projects of colonization.[41] In agreement with Linda Alcoff, I believe that part of the importance of decolonial philosophy lies in efforts to trace colonial "influences, [and] to search them out, even where we might imagine them not to have much relevance."[42] By drawing on contemporary decolonial philosophy, this section will suggest that the disappearance of place that can be tracked from Gassendi to

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[40] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Duke University Press, 2006), 31.

[41] In *Fate of Place*, Casey mentions that Christian colonization and indoctrination contributed to the erasure of place during the modern philosophical era. He acknowledges that "the colonizing tendency of Christianity is echoed in the attempts of Galilean, Cartesian, and Newtonian physics to appropriate whole realms formerly cosigned to alchemy and 'natural philosophy'…"" (1977, p.77). However, the greater ramifications of the Christian colonial influence upon philosophical ideas, the construction of race and the subjections of peoples on colonial grounds as these notions relate to conversations of space and place, remain unexplored in Casey's work.

[42] Linda Martín Alcoff, "Philosophy, the Conquest, and the Meaning of Modernity A Commentary on 'Anti-Cartesian Meditations: On the Origin of the Philosophical Anti-Discourse of Modernity' by Enrique Dussel," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 11, no. 1 (2013): 58.

Descartes was perhaps the product of an *intentional erasure*, and not just—as Casey suggests—a kind of *unfortunate disregard*. The intentional erasure of place, I aim to show, is rooted in what I call the coloniality of space, which names the way in which the modern era's theorizations of space were coextensive with European expansion and the colonization of the Americas. In order to articulate the coloniality of space, I will proceed by summarizing relevant work on decolonial philosophy, especially the historical and philosophical significances of the coloniality of power and the coloniality of being.

The Coloniality of Power and the Ego Conquiro

Beginning with the works of Aníbal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, and Walter Mignolo, philosophers have taken on the task of articulating the colonial ideas that underlie much of Western Philosophy, especially those that coincide with the modern period and carry lasting influence today. Quijano was the first to coin the term "coloniality/modernity," which is a concept that points to the fact that coloniality and modernity were, from their inception, inseparable—or, "two sides of the same coin."[43] Modernity was born through colonialism while colonial projects were motivated by the push towards modernity. Coloniality is also sometimes referred to as the "underside," or the "dark side" of modernity, as it is modernity's forgotten—or, perhaps willfully erased—history.

Whereas colonialism "denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation," coloniality

[43] Lucy Mayblin, "Modernity/Coloniality," *Global Social Theory*, n.d., https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/colonialitymodernity/.

"refers to long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations."[44] In other words, colonialism names those very acts of invasion, conquest, theft of land, and exploitation of resources and, or the land's inhabitants, while coloniality encompasses the ideological notions that 'justified' colonialism and continue to impact the decedents of the colonized and the colonizers today. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres adds: "it [coloniality] is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience."[45] This is not to say that coloniality is the mere by-product of colonialism; coloniality also maintains the exploitative practices of colonialism and vice versa. One example of present day coloniality is found through what Rocío Zambrana calls "practices of indebtedness" whereby colonized nations and their peoples are, in a sense, held hostage by economic debt rather than military occupation. As Zambrana describes, this is currently the case with Puerto Rico in relation to the United States.[46] Further considering practices of coloniality, I contend that *how, when,* and *why*, in our contemporary society, a person can take up space or reside freely in a place is also

[44] Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (2007): 243.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Rocío Zambrana, "Colonial Debts," in *Una Proposición Modesta: Puerto Rico a Prueba, Iniciativa de Allora & Calzadilla* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2018).

heavily tied to the history of colonialism, particularly the colonialities of power, being, and space.

According to Quijano, the originary driving force for the colonization of the Americas was the coloniality of power. The coloniality of power is composed of two axes: 1) the dividing, sorting, and categorization of different humans under the idea of "race" and 2) "a new structure of control of labor" which we have since named global capitalism.[47]

Regarding the first axis, the imposition of racial categories, Quijano speculates that because the notion of race did not exist prior to the colonization of the Americas, the phenotypic differences noticed between European conquerors and the various Indigenous peoples of the Americas facilitated the invention of new social identities: the Spanish and Portuguese (both of which later became subsumed under the sole category of Europeans), Indians, blacks, and mestizos. From the start, these classifications were established as hierarchical, by Europeans, and these categories were also originally geographic, linking bodies to places, and marking the Americas, as land, and its inhabitants, as exploitable.[48] Post-1492, during the rise of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas, racial categories shifted from geographically based to skin-color based. Europeans became "white" while darker-skinned peoples became "black." And, those cast as black from Africa became the most exploited group. In short, the notion of race, originally a stratification determined geographically that later morphed into a classification of one's being (through skin

[47] Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," trans. Michael Ennis, *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-534.

[48] Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," 534.

color), was at once intentionally imposed and opportunistically evoked as a tool for the justification of domination and conquest. As Quijano puts it: "In America, the idea of race was a way of granting legitimacy to the relations of domination imposed by the conquest."[49]

Moreover, as Nelson Maldonado-Torres emphasizes, Christian ideas were also underpinning the establishment, maintenance, and explication of racial categorizations. The connection between race and humanity arose from conversations regarding whether or not the Native inhabitants of the Americas had souls. Determining what race one belonged too was actually a question regarding how much humanity one was born with, where one's humanity was determined by the possession of a soul. In a circular fashion, it was decided that "the 'lighter' one's skin is, the closer to full humanity one is, and vice versa."[50] Over a short amount of time, "as the conquerors took on the role of mapping the world they kept reproducing this vision of things. The whole world was practically seen in the lights of this logic. This is the beginning of 'global coloniality.'"[51] Thus, the premise that Indigenous peoples did not have souls is what led Europeans to distinguish themselves as superior—or, at the very least, it gave them the 'justification' they needed for the theft of land and the murder of those considered already 'soulless' and 'non-human.'[52]

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 244.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Especially in the Latin American context, some Indigenous peoples were not outright murdered, but rather forced to convert to Christianity or risk punishment or death.

The second axis of the coloniality of power concerns the rise of global capitalism. Although early capitalism existed prior to the colonization of the Americas, it is through these conquests, along with the rise of the transatlantic slave trade, that we see the growth of capital as intertwined with global domination and subordination. Per Quijano, not only did production involve a capital-slave relation (including "slavery, serfdom, petty-commodity production, reciprocity, and wages"[53]), which involved the exploitation of those labeled less than human, this relation was "deliberately established and organized to produce commodities for the world market."[54] Thus, the first axis, the invention of race, and the second, the rise of global capitalism are inherently connected—as it was those labeled as "brown, black, or dark" (i.e., soul-less and not fully human) whom were determined to be exploitable.

From here, we could ask, what do these social and political, historically situated events have to do with the philosophical debates of the time? In response, I agree with Maldonado-Torres (and his predecessors) when he writes that "colonization and racialization are not only political and social events or structures. They also have metaphysical and ontological significance."[55] An example of this interconnection can be found by taking a closer look at the question about whether or not Indigenous peoples had souls, as raised by European colonizers.

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[53] Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," 535.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 260.

Shortly after the European 'discovery' of the Americas arose the philosophical, especially ethical question: "'Are Amerindians human beings?'"[56] With this question, not only were Europeans wondering about Indigenous peoples' connection to the Christian God, but they were also asking: "Are they Europeans, and therefore, are they rational?"[57] Colonizers concluded that—at the very least—if they were "not irrational, then at least they were brutish, wild, underdeveloped, and uncultured—because they did not have the culture of the center, [European]"[58]

Particularly in the context of the colonization of Latin America, casting Native peoples as 'uncivilized' provided an even greater ethical 'justification' for conquest, because even if they had a soul in the Christian sense, they were still seen as 'primitive' and in need of salvation. Thus, while the soul question was heavily debated—16th century Spanish philosopher, Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) is one example of someone who argued that Native peoples did in fact have souls—colonizers still 'justified' conquest by coding their God-given mission under the language of conversion and salvation (by forced assimilation or elimination, if necessary), and facilitating progress towards the advancement of civilization. A snapshot of the tautological arguments circulating at the time is captured by Spanish Renaissance philosopher Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's (1494–1573) words:

When the pagans are no more than pagans […] there is no just cause to punish them,

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[56] Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. A. Martinez and C. Morkovsky (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 3.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

> nor to attack them with arms: such that, if some cultured, civilized, and humane people are found in the New World, that do not adore idols, but instead the true God […] war would be unlawful.[59]

Given the philosophical debates of the time, Dussel has argued that 150 years prior to Descartes's articulation of the *ego cogito* "Hernán Cortés gave expression to an ideal of subjectivity that could be defined as the *ego conquiro.*"[60] Cortés' *ego conquiro*, understood as "I conquer, therefore I am," also understood as "the first modern 'will-to-power,'"[61] predated and persisted in the backdrop of Descartes' *ego cogito*, "I think therefore, I am."[62] Since the publication of Dussels' *Philosophy of Liberation* (1977), it has been widely accepted in decolonial thought that

> the significance of the Cartesian *cogito* for modern European identity has to be understood against the backdrop of an unquestioned ideal of self expressed in the notion of the *ego conquiro*. The certainty of the self as a conqueror, of its tasks and missions, preceded Descartes's certainty about the self as a thinking substance (*res cogitans*) and provided a way to interpret it.[63]

Moreover, Dussel locates the residual *ego conquiro* in Descartes' *ego cogito*, when Descartes' description of the body as pure machine, despite the ongoing debates about humanity of the Other, show no

> skin color or race (it is clear that Descartes thinks only from the basis of the white race), and nor obviously its sex (he equally thinks only on the basis of the male sex), and it is that of a European (he doesn't sketch nor does he refer to a colonial

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[59] Quoted in Dussel, "Anti-Cartesian Meditations," 23.

[60] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 244.

[61] Enrique Dussel, "Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism: The Semantic Slippage of the Concept of 'Europe,'" *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 471.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 244-45.

body, an Indian, an African slave, or an Asian).[64]

Maldonado-Torres clarifies that the precedence of the *ego conquiro* reveals two underlying assumptions in modern thought: 1) Descartes' "I think," can also be understood as claiming that "others do not think." And, 2) the proceeding "I'm" makes it "possible to locate the philosophical justification for the idea that 'others are not' or do not have being."[65] In other words, Descartes' most famous phrase can be re-written as: "'I think (others do not think, or do not think properly), therefore I am (others are-not, lack being, should not exist or are dispensable).'"[66] At the same time, decolonial theorists do not claim that these formulations were explicitly articulated, rather it makes the most sense to think about the *ego conquiro* as residing in the "background"—to call once more upon Ahmed's concept—of Descartes' *ego cogito* as well as in the background of modern philosophy. And, by residing in the background, the *ego conquiro*, along with the notions of race that were established by the coloniality of power, contributed to a developing European sensibility of the European man as most human (I am, others are not) and most entitled to the God-given Earth.

In bringing to light the coloniality of power and the *ego conquiro,* decolonial theorists have shown that it is a mistake to assume that what was happening historically, materially, and ideologically at any given time has no impact on philosophical works being produced. This notion is also demonstrated by the articulation of "the coloniality of

[64] Dussel, "Anti-Cartesian Meditations," 21.

[65] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 252.

[66] Ibid.

being," which shows the aftermath of the *ego conquiro* remaining unchallenged in the History of Western Philosophy when we move past Descartes and eventually onto the work of Heidegger.

The Coloniality of Being

The coloniality of being emerged as a critique of the colonial ideas that persisted in philosophical discourse past the modern era and into the 20th century. Heidegger's articulation of Being (*dasein*), in *Being and Time* (1927) is a pivotal moment in the History of Western Philosophy because he challenges the epistemological foundation of Descartes' *ego cogito*, and those that followed him in emphasizing the "'I THINK" in the "I think, therefore I am.'" Instead, Heidegger positions his philosophical foundation within the ontological: beginning, instead, with the "I AM.'"[67]

At the same time, so long as the *ego conquiro* and the underside of the Cartesian *cogito*—I think (others to not think)—remained unacknowledged and unchallenged, in the "background" as Ahmed would say, Heidegger's turn towards Being carries the coloniality of Being within *its* underside as well: I am (Others are not). The Others here are the colonized: those labeled "black" "Indian," "mestizo," etc. Nelson Maldonado-Torres has interpreted Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism* as articulating the subject that emerges from the coloniality of being, the colonized counterpart to Heidegger's *dasein*: the *damné.* Whereas Heidegger's *dasein* is marked by the ontological difference, a fundamental character of *dasein* whereby *dasein*

[67] Ibid.

distinguishes themselves as a Being in contrast to other beings, the *damné* are marked by a "sub-ontological or ontological colonial difference[:] (difference between Being and what lies below Being or that which is negatively marked as dispensable as well as a target of rape and murder)."[68]

Following Fanon, Maldonado-Torres claims that part of the decolonial project must include articulating the existential and phenomenological lived reality of the *damné.* For instance, per Fanon and Maldonado-Torres, one significant lived aspect of *damné* reality can be captured by the phrase "nearness of death." As Maldonado-Torres writes, the "nearness of death — in misery, lack of recognition, lynching, and imprisonment among so many other ways — characterizes the situation of the *damné*." (MT, 2007, 259). It is not difficult here to consider today's social justice movement, "Black Lives Matter," as one instance of naming exactly this lived reality. "Black Lives Matter" not only highlights the way in which the mainstream media and our nation's white society function as if black deaths do not matter, but is simultaneously a fight for black lives to be able to be-in-the-world safely, without the fear of being murdered for being black, whether that be during a casual jog down a residential neighborhood[69] or simply sleeping in one's own bed.[70]

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[68] Ibid., 254.

[69] This is in reference to the murder of Ahmaud Arbery. On February 23, 2020 Arbery was out for a casual jog in a residential neighborhood when two white men approach him, suspected him of robbery, and fired a shotgun at him. Arbery's murder has be called a modern-day lynching. See Yancy, "Ahmaud Arbery and the Ghosts of Lynchings Past," *New York Times*, May 12, 2020.

[70] This is in reference to the murders of Breonna Taylor and Dominique Clayton. On May 19, 2020, Clayton was shot in the back of the head by a police officer who entered her

Another important dimension of *damné* experience, which is due to the sub-ontological difference, is that the *damné* is at all times "either invisible or excessively visible."[71] On the one hand, the *damné* is cast as invisible whenever they are read as, or assumed to be, irrational or unintelligible. Gloria Anzaldúa's "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers" is one of many examples of works that aptly describe this lived reality of invisibility. In her letter, speaking as a Chicana women in the 1980s, Anzaldúa urges women of color to continue writing despite the very real material, psychological, and social challenges they face. And, despite, most importantly, the way in which the white, mainstream, literary and academic communities view their writings as incoherent. She writes,

> Our speech, too, is inaudible. We speak in tongues like the outcast and the insane. Because white eyes do not want to know us, they do not bother to learn our language, the language which reflects us, our culture, our spirit.[72]

The lack of knowing, or wanting to know that Anzaldúa is describing here, is precisely the lack of *seeing,* or being seen, the permanence of being invisible for the *damné*. At the same time, in the context of the West, to be dubbed irrational and unintelligible is

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home while she slept on bed. Similarly, on March 13, 2020, police officers entered Taylor's private residence under a no-knock warrant and discharged their weapons at her. The officers had entered the wrong residence while the suspect they sought was already in custody. See Richard A. Oppel, Derrick Bryson Taylor, and Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, "What to Know About Breonna Taylor's Death," *New York Times*, April 26, 2021, and Chase Browning, "Seeking Justice For Dominique Clayton," *RVA Magazine*, Oct. 29, 2019.

[71] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 256.

[72] Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherri Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 4th ed. (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 163.

essentially to be stripped of or never be conceived as being fully human. Thus, "[w]hat is invisible about the person of color is its very humanity." As the *damné* is the colonized underside of *dasein*, "invisibility and dehumanization are the primary expressions of the coloniality of Being."[73]

On the other hand, the hyper-visibility of the *damné* can be described in a multitude of ways, but one concrete example can be found in W. E. B. Du Bois' opening paragraph to *The Souls of Black Folk*. In this opening chapter, Du Bois recounts aspects of his experiences as a black man living in New England during the early 1900s, and in the following opening paragraph, he describes a particular type of encounter he seemed to have experienced more than once between himself and a white New Englander. Du Bois writes,

> Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question:….They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.[74]

This telling passage exemplifies one manifestation of the hyper-visibility of the *damné*, as it was the color of his skin that provoked such an exchange. Interestingly, this passage not only showcases a *damné's* reality of hyper-visibility, it also reveals an interconnection between subjectivity and place. Had this encounter not occurred within early 1900s New England, and instead during this same time but within the South, it is

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[73] Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Being," 257.

[74] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk," reprinted in *The W. E.B. Du Bois Reader*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 101.

not hard to imagine that perhaps Du Bois would not have been approached "in a half-hesitant sort of way" being eyed "curiously or compassionately" but rather potentially combatively or disdainfully. What I am suggesting here is that, in considering the existential and phenomenological lived realities of the *damné* and by extension the coloniality of being, place and location also matter. Disregarding place for the coloniality of being, is to homogenize geographic location and reproduce the coloniality of space.

The Coloniality of Space

The coloniality of power names the way in which the invention of race and the rise of global capitalism were created, and perpetuated, by the rise of coloniality/modernity. The coloniality of being names the way in which the coloniality of power produced those who can be understood as Being (*dasein*: those that fit the Cartesian "I am") and those who were, and still are, excluded (the *damné:* the Others who are not). Here, I argue that intertwined with the coloniality of being, which includes Cortés *ego conquiro*, is the coloniality of space which names the way in which the characterization of space as unbounded limitless extension, was not merely a stand-alone philosophical concept, but also an essential character trait of the modern subject. I claim that the underside of the modern conception of space is the concept of place, or the opposite of unbounded limitless extension: particularity and locality (to borrow Brian Burkhart's phrase).[75]

[75] In *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures* (2019), Brian Burkhart uses the term locality as a juxtaposition to Western Philosophy's pull towards dislocality and displacement. My following chapters will say much more Burkhart's work.

However, the coloniality of space only makes sense as inherently connected to the coloniality of being (which itself is inseparable from the coloniality of power). This is the case because the modern subjects that were rooted in the *ego conquiro* understood themselves as entitled to all of the land, places, and space that their God was said to have created for them. Essentially this also meant that, for the *ego conquiro*, all places and lands were homogenized as *their* space, which is why, as Casey puts it, "[f]or the modern self, *all places are essentially the same.*"[76] And, to say that all places are essentially the same is to subsume all places into space, i.e., to eradicate place. Ramon Grosfoguel articulates this point in the following way:

> All of the attributes of this "Christian God" came to be located in the "subject," the ego. In order to be able to claim the possibility of a knowledge beyond time and space, from the eyes of God, it was fundamental to dissociate the subject from all bodies and territories; that is, to empty the subject of all spatial or temporal determinations.[77]

Consequently, given that the *ego conquiro* is disconnected from his land, where his land is Europe, "'Europe' takes the form in Western philosophical discourses of the place that is *no place*, both because it is invisible and universal, and as such, unrecognizable, and because it is surreptitiously proposed as the *utopus*, or ideal condition to which all ought to aspire."[78] Here, it becomes clear that the disappearance of place was imbedded in the structure of coloniality/modernity.

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[76] Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 38, emphasis in original.

[77] Ramón Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms: Decolonial Pluri-versalism from Aimé Césaire to the Zapatistas," *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 3 (2012): 88.

[78] Maldonado-Torres, "Postimperial Reflections on Crisis, Knowledge, and Utopia" 278.

Since coloniality is understood as those lasting impacts of colonialism, especially how the *damné* are impacted today, then one could ask: what are the contemporary effects of the coloniality of space? Or, what is the significance of the coloniality of space today? In response, the following chapters of my dissertation will show that when, where, and how subjects, both *dasein and damné*, can reside in a place continues to be affected by the colonialities of power, being, and space. Taking Maldonado-Torres' decolonial project of articulating the existential and phenomenological lived realities of the *damné* further, the following chapters of this dissertation will respond to these questions, with a focus on how these lived realities are impacted in relation to place.

Conclusion

In providing an overview of the turn towards space in the History of Philosophy's modern era, I aimed to show what resided in the "background" of Casey's hypothesis that the concept of space, over place, might have provided a kind of comfort and reassuring limitless freedom. In the background of his hypothesis lies, I argue, the coloniality of space as a motivating force for the turn to space. The coloniality of space names the way in which the pull towards space was co-extensive with European expansion and colonization. This co-extension was part of a growing European sensibility that assumed the European man possessed the most "humanity" (i.e., the most rational and closest to the image of God) and, for this reason, the one most entitled to taking the land the Judeo-Christian God was said to have created.

In the next chapter, I will show that the coloniality of space and its effects remain in the background of contemporary phenomenology place scholarship. After providing a

critical summary of the phenomenology of place, I will make a case for why contemporary philosophical work on place would benefit from adopting a *critical* phenomenology methodology that pays close attention to existing relations of coloniality.

CHAPTER III

TOWARDS A CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF PLACE

Introduction

Following the turn to space and the erasure of place that was established during the History of Western Philosophy's modern period, 20th century phenomenologists Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty opened doors for place's reemergence. Phenomenology paved a way for the return of place since it is clear that "that which surrounds us" plays a key role in shaping our lived experiences. For instance, Heidegger's concept, "Dasein," in the original German translates to "there-being," which highlights the fact that being is fundamentally tied to emplacement. Human subjects cannot "be" without some*where* to be. At the same time, the "being" that is always "there (in the world)" is not continuously understood as residing *in any particular there*. Dasein is posited as always already being in the world, but in Heidegger's exposition of Dasein, there is little discussion about the various locations that Dasein could inhabit within the world. In other words, Heidegger's Dasein is a being that is always there, but the "there" remains general.

Merleau-Ponty's work on embodied spatiality and depth, pays more attention to the particularities that exist in space and how different locations affect embodied experiences of emplacement. For example, his chapter on space in the *Phenomenology of Perception* discusses what he describes as the "certain style" of Paris:

> in my journey through Paris—the cafés, people's faces, the poplars along the quays, the bends of the Seine—stands out against the city's whole being, and merely confirms that there is a certain style or a certain significance which Paris possesses.…The perception of space is not a particular class of 'states of

> consciousness' or acts. Its modalities are always an expression of the total life of the subject, the energy with which he tends towards a future through his body and his world.[79]

Merleau-Ponty's travels through Paris reveal the city's particular "style," but his perception of Paris is intertwined with his own subjectivity (including memories, anxieties, affective states, etc.). According to Merleau-Ponty, particular locations (places) matter, and one's lived experiences shape the ways in which one comes to experience, what they understand as, the particular "style" of a place.

Beginning in the 1980s and continuing to present day, contemporary phenomenologists like Edward Casey, Jeff Malpas, David Seamon, and others have understood Heidegger's, and especially Merleau-Ponty's, foundational comments on space and place as excellent starting points for a more extensive phenomenological treatment of place and emplacement. Yet, because these phenomenologists of place rely on classical phenomenology—which requires the "setting aside" or bracketing of the historically contingent social and political structures that impact subjectivity, including the history of colonialism and the continual impacts of coloniality—in this chapter, I argue that phenomenological work on place cannot do justice to the concept of place unless it shifts its methodological focus to critical phenomenology, which does take these structures into account.

I will argue in defense of critical phenomenologies of place because in bracketing structures like racism, sexism, heteronormativity, etc., the places that are typically investigated with a classical phenomenological lens tend to be places that can be

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[79] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 327-330.

examined from a seemingly "neutral," or apolitical, standpoint (places that, at a quick glance, do not *seem* to be affected by structures like racism, sexism, etc.). Some examples of seemingly "neutral places" include airports, university campuses, public parks and streets, private homes, etc. Although these places might appear largely unaffected by the effects of racism, sexism, etc., I would argue that no place truly is. In the United States, a public sidewalk in a suburban white neighborhood might not guarantee a sense of mundane security for a black man as it might for a white man, as countless white Americans have called the police on fellow black citizens for merely existing in—casually walking, jogging, strolling, etc.—what they arrogantly perceive as *their* sidewalk. For contemporary phenomenologists of place, it is perhaps because these places appear "neutral" to *them*, that they are interested in selecting such places for phenomenological investigation.

However, in examining these "neutral places," contemporary phenomenologists of place have only considered emplacement from the position of what seems to be "neutral subjects"—subjects that are seemingly "universal" and unimpacted by their gender, race, age, sexuality, etc. But, failing to account for the gendered, racialized, heteronormative, etc., aspects of lived emplacement, reproduces what Maria Lugones calls "the modern subject"—a more accurate name for what I was just calling a "neutral subject." Lugones' modern subject names the way in which many Western philosophers often describe subjects as if they are genderless, ageless, race-less, culture-less, and disembodied. Yet, as Lugones rightfully argues, the modern subject is a fiction, as everyone's lived experiences are, in varying degrees, mediated by their historically situated embodiment. Consequently, while the modern subject masquerades as

"everyone," this kind of subject, in actuality, reveals itself to represent white Anglo-European middle-class men, perhaps middle aged, and self-conceptualized as purely rational.[80] I maintain that the reproduction of the modern subject in the phenomenology of place that is a result of its tendency to investigate emplacement by starting with seemingly "neutral places," is a consequence of the unchallenged coloniality of being that was discussed in my previous chapter.

To make this case, my first section will describe the differences between classical and critical phenomenology. My second section will summarize the key points found within contemporary phenomenology of place scholarship and highlight important moments when the historical, colonial, social, and political aspects of lived emplacement were clearly covered over and their significance disregarded. In calling attention to these moments, and demonstrating the significance of their disregard, I will show why the phenomenology of place needs to be critical in methodology, and prioritize phenomenological investigations into places that do not "seem neutral," if it truly wants to do justice to the concept of place and our experiences of emplacement. My last section will draw on the work of Lisa Guenther to argue that critical phenomenologies of place would benefit from starting with places that are known to be affected by structures like racism and sexism. Rather than avoid such places in our analysis, we should center them and their intricacies. Such places include what I will call "sites of coloniality." Sites of coloniality are specific places, or types of places, in which the effects of colonialism and coloniality are unmistakably present. These kinds of places were specifically constructed

[80] Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 130-31.

to reproduce coloniality or came into existence because of coloniality. Some examples include Native American Boarding Schools, I.C.E. Detention Centers, the U.S.-Mexico Border Wall, Supermax Prisons and Solitary Confinement Cells, and more. The general trend of not including sites of coloniality in phenomenology of place scholarship is, I argue, a residual effect of the coloniality of space.

From Classical to Critical Phenomenology

What was once simply called "phenomenology," or the "phenomenological method," has come to be understood as classical phenomenology, especially to those paving the way for a new kind of phenomenology: critical phenomenology. Classical Phenomenology was set forth by Edmund Husserl, beginning with his 1913 text, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. After Husserl, philosophers like Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, and more, not only drew inspiration from Husserl's original phenomenological method but also contributed to the growth and expansion of this methodology in new and interesting ways.

In a general sense, phenomenology is the study of our experiences of "phenomena." Whereas the Cartesian tradition sought to investigate phenomena from an "outside," rational, third-person perspective, Husserlian phenomenology maintained that because our attention to worldly phenomena is always already fundamentally intertwined with our own conscious experience of being-in-the world—which means that our living body can never escape, step out of, or be removed from our consciousness—our studies of phenomena cannot achieve a pure Cartesian third-person point of view. From this

starting point, Husserl argued that the study of phenomena "can best be carried out in the first person singular."[81]

At the same time, to investigate a phenomenon casually, in an everyday sense, is to approach the phenomenon with a natural attitude. Our natural attitude encompasses all of our presuppositions, everything we have come to know about a particular phenomenon or experience of a phenomenon, including what we have come to know by our "different modes of sensuous perception" such as seeing, hearing, touching, etc.[82] The natural attitude also names our metaphysical and ontological presuppositions, or our "habitual biases and theoretical biases."[83] Husserl held that in order to conduct a phenomenological investigation, one must suspend the natural attitude by bracketing all of these preconceived biases, and adopt the phenomenological attitude. The practice of suspending or bracketing is what Husserl called the epochē.

Through the epochē, a phenomenologist can begin to see the phenomenological and eidetic reductions of a given phenomenon. The use of the word reduction here is similar to the sense of reduction used in cooking. Reduction is the practice of boiling a liquid (e.g., soup, sauce, wine, etc.) in order to remove the excess water and intensify the essential flavors of the liquid.[84] Similarly, via the epochē, a phenomenologist attempts to

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[81] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (Routledge, 2012), 51.

[82] Ibid., 51.

[83] Duane H. Davis, "The Phenomenological Method," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Northwestern Univ. Press, 2020), 5.

[84] Example from Ibid., 5.

reduce an experience to its foundational qualities in order to uncover the essential structures of the experience of a given phenomenon.

A few decades after the inception of classical phenomenology, some phenomenologists, particularly those concerned with Western Philosophy's general disregard for the impacts of the oppressive structures of patriarchy, racism, and heterosexism, began seriously questioning classical phenomenology's commitment to bracketing the "contingent historical and social structures [that] also shape our experience, not just empirically or in a piecemeal fashion, but in what we might call a quasi-transcendental way."[85, 86] Through interdisciplinary discussions with broadly feminist, Black, Latino/a, and queer philosophy, as well as critical theory, phenomenologists began to incorporate these interdisciplinary discussion into their works and begin unpacking how these structures greatly impact various aspects of lived experience, not just in terms of personal identity, but in deeply embodied, temporal, and spacial ways.

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[85] Lisa Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Northwestern Univ. Press, 2020), 10.

[86] There are notable differences between the phenomenological methods put forth by the phenomenologists that came after Husserl, such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre. At the same time, contemporary trends in Western Philosophy have contributed to the canonization of a "classical phenomenological method," and this shared method is what we see present in scholarship coming from the phenomenology of place. Because the philosophical focus of contemporary phenomenology of place scholarship rests in examining the concept of place rather than the methodological differences between various phenomenologists, I am likewise working with Casey's, Malpas', Trigg's, etc. interpretations of classical phenomenology, rather than delving into the differences between Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, etc.

For this reason, a new kind of phenomenology arose, critical phenomenology, which takes seriously first person lived experience without ignoring or suspending, the historical, social, and political structures that impact everyday being even though "[t]here is nothing necessary or permanent about these structures." These structures might not even "operate in stable, consistent ways across all contexts."[87] Yet, because these contingent structures have notable impacts on lived experience—as demonstrated by the works of Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, Iris Marion Young, Talia Mae Bettcher, Gayle Salamon, Lewis Gordon, Sara Ahmed, George Yancy, Bonnie Mann, Lisa Guenther, Linda Alcoff, Alia Al-Saji, and more—phenomenological accounts of lived experience remain incomplete when the impacts of these structures are bracketed.

In what follows, I summarize the most foundational claims found in the phenomenology of place. Contemporary phenomenology of place is classical in methodology. However, I contend that in order to truly articulate the full significance of place, phenomenology of place needs to adopt a critical methodology. In fact, I argued that we cannot do justice to place, if we continue to bracket the gendered, racial, heteronormative, cultural, etc., dimensions of lived emplacement. For this reason, as I summarize the key aspects of the phenomenology of place, by drawing on the works of various critical phenomenologist, I will bring to light how the bracketing dimension underserves place's full potential.

[87] Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," 12.

Revealing the Modern Subject in the Phenomenology of Place

Although place scholarship is quite broad and can be found not just in philosophy but in a variety of fields like geography, literature, architecture, etc., what I am calling "the phenomenology of place," is still relatively new with only a handful of philosophers taking this approach to the study of place. Inspired by Merleau-Ponty's writing on spatiality, Edward Casey's 1993 text, *Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, was the first to provide an in-depth phenomenological investigation of place. Over the years, others like Jeff Malpas and David Seamon have contributed to the project as well. Given how new the phenomenology of place is, no established canon of this branch of phenomenology has been recognized in broader philosophical scholarship. For this reason, in this section I take on the task of providing an overview of the main ideas, themes, and claims that can be found in the phenomenology of place. My overview will include the ideas set forth by scholars explicitly claiming to conduct phenomenologies of place, and also those who do so implicitly by using Heidegger's or Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological descriptions of spatiality as entry points to fruitful analyses of place. However, throughout my overview, I call attention to those moments in which it is clear to me that a critical intervention is necessary in order to do justice to the full significance of place. I aim to show, by the end of this section, why critical phenomenologies of place are necessary.

The Essential Quality of Place as Reliant on Human Activity

Although the phenomenological method has been used to articulate essential structures of experience, when it comes to the phenomenology of place, philosophers like

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, did not try to explain what place is independent of human or animal activity. Instead, "one of the features that defines phenomenology's treatment of place is a commitment to the belief that lived spatiality is not a container that can be measured in objective terms, but an expression of our being-in-the-world."[88] Place is taken not as a definable concept on its own, but rather only discovered, uncovered, and revealed through our human experiences of emplacement.

One of the earliest extensive works on the phenomenology of place is found in geographer Edward Relph's 1976 text, *Place and Placelessness*. Relph describes his project as "an examination of one phenomenon of the lived-world—place," with the intention of articulating "the diversity and intensity of our experiences of place."[89] This text also offers one of the first explanations of the essence of place:

> The basic meaning of place, its essence, does not therefore come from locations, nor from the trivial functions that places serve, nor from the community that occupies it, nor from superficial and mundane experiences—though these are all common and perhaps necessary aspects of places. The essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centers of human existence.[90]

What I believe Relph is saying here is that places only exist as such, because of their essential connection to human experience. Drawing inspiration from Heidegger, Relph concludes that the essence of place is intrinsically linked to human experience; in his view, human beings are necessary for the existence of place(s) and place(s) are necessary for the existence of human beings. A predecessor of Relph, David Seamon, expresses a

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[88] Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (Ohio University Press, 2013), 4.

[89] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (SAGE Publishing Ltd, 2008), "Preface."

[90] Ibid., 43.

similar commitment when he says, "I define place as *any environmental locus that gathers human experiences, actions, and meanings spatially and temporally*."[91] For Seamon, places act like a kind of stage or backdrop for human activity and meaning making.

The gathering quality of place is echoed in the philosophical treatment of place by Edward Casey. Similar to Seamon, Casey argues that places gather, and hold, time and space—or, at least, the possibilities for time to occur in space. Moreover, places can also gather culture, history, and personal experiences: "Think only of what it means to go back to a place you know, finding it full of memories and expectations, old things and new things, the familiar and the strange, and much more besides."[92] In short,

> Place is the generatrix for the collection, as well as the recollection, of all that occurs in the lives of sentient beings, and even for the trajectories of inanimate things. Its power consists in gathering these lives and things, each with its own space and time, into one arena of common engagement.[93]

Casey does not provide much detail regarding place's capacity to gather inanimate objects, but in his phenomenological accounts of place it is clear that when he describes place's ability to gather objects, those objects nonetheless arrive and leave by human interaction. For example, libraries are places that, at minimum, gather books, but also other objects like desks, chairs, reading couches, computers, etc. And, all of these objects leave and arrive as a result of human activity. This might seem like a mundane point, but

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[91] David Seamon, "Merleau-Ponty, Lived Body, and Place," in *Situatedness and Place*, eds. T. Hünefeldt and A. Schlitte (Springer, 2018), 43, emphasis in original.

[92] Casey, "How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Period of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," 24.

[93] Ibid., 26.

what I want to clarify is that for Casey, as well as Relph and Seamon, places don't seem to carry any essence or significance independent of a relationship with human beings.

In the phenomenology of place, if place only finds its force through human beings, then place is not considered to have agency in its own right. The claim that human beings constitute places and the idea that places do not have agency, is central to understanding important differences between the phenomenology of place and various Indigenous philosophies. Indigenous scholars like Vine Deloria Jr. (Oglala Lakota), Daniel Wildcat (Muscogee), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), Margaret Kovach (Cree), and more have described various Indigenous commitments to the idea that land and place have agency. Equally important, however, is the fact that the phenomenologists of place do not seem to understand themselves, and their ideas of place, as positioned from a Western standpoint, which facilitates the erasure of Indigenous philosophies and contributes to the reproduction of the colonialities of being and space. My next chapter further discuss various Indigenous commitments to the ideas that land and place have agency.

It is also interesting that the phenomenology of place brackets the social and political aspects of human interaction in its discussion of the gathering quality of place. I call this interesting because exploring these bracketed dimensions seems like a natural entry way for further exploring the full significance of place. In fact, choosing not to bracket the impacts of these structures, reveals how the gathering quality of place can radically alter what place looks like for subjugated peoples. For instance, if humans facilitate the gathering quality of places, we can wonder not just what is gathered where, but also who gathers (or is gathered) where and why. Considering just one of numerous

examples, Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* argues that the mass incarceration of people of color, we could say the gathering of these persons within prisons across the United States, is the New Jim Crow.

At present, there are over 2 million incarcerated persons in the United States. Alexander argues that as a result of the nation's history of colonialism, slavery, and racism, the United States

> imprisons a larger percentage of its black population than South Africa did at the height of apartheid. In Washington, DC, our nation's capital, it is estimated that three out of four young black men (and nearly all those in the poorest neighborhoods) can expect to serve time in prison….The only country in the world that even comes close to the American rate of incarceration is Russia, and no other country in the world incarcerates such an astonishing percentage of its racial or ethnic minorities.[94]

Not only are people of color much more likely to face incarceration, serving a prison sentence dramatically and negatively impacts how one can be-in-the-world after release. Most urgently, those released from prison must find a place to live and face an array of obstacles in the process. Convicted felons are not allowed to apply for public housing assistance, and it is legal to deny a housing application on the basis of a criminal record. It is also legal to reject a housing application on the bases of an arrest only, regardless of a conviction.[95]

Moreover, stable housing also necessitates economic stability and those who have served prison time also face challenging obstacles in acquiring employment—not to mention that fact that many job applications ask applicants to provide a reliable mailing

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[94] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness -10th Anniversary Edition* (New Press, 2010), 8-9.

[95] Ibid., 182-186.

address. “Nearly every state allows private employers to discriminate on the basis of past criminal convictions. In fact, employers in most states can deny jobs to people who were arrested but never convicted of any crime.”[96] Those wanting to be self employed as a barber, manicurist, gardener, etc., can be legally denied professional licenses “on the grounds of past arrests or convictions, even if their offenses have nothing at all to do with their ability to perform well in their chosen profession.”[97] Ultimately, as Alexander argues, “[t]he system of mass incarceration is based on the prison label, not the prison time.”[98] It is a system that

> locks people not only behind actual bars in actual prisons, but also behind virtual bars and virtual walls—walls that are invisible to the naked eye but function nearly as effectively as Jim Crow Laws once did at locking people of color into a permanent second-class citizenship….Once released from prison, people enter a hidden underworld of legalized discrimination and permanent social exclusion.[99]

In other words, the system of mass incarceration and the prison-industrial complex, the rapid expansion of the U.S. prison system which contributes to the exponential growth of our inmate populations, radically changes the landscape of place for those who reenter society upon their release. Those released enter an “underworld” and must navigate a labyrinth of discrimination at every turn, even just to attain basic survival needs. For this reason, U.S. federal prisons can be understood as just one site of coloniality as they were born through, and maintained by, racism. With the continuing expansion of the prison industrial complex we see that the gathering quality of place is not always apolitical, and

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[96] Ibid., 186.

[97] Ibid., 187.

[98] Ibid., 17.

[99] Ibid., 15.

that it can be intentionally used against colonized bodies. Ignoring the ways in which the gathering quality of place can reproduce coloniality, erases those affected by sites of coloniality and contributes to the perpetuations of the colonialities of being and space.

The Body-Place Structure of Emplacement

Given the foundational premise that place finds its primary force in human activity, phenomenologists of place direct most of their energy towards articulating the essential structures of human emplacement, rather than the essential qualities of place, as such. Phenomenologists of place maintain that the most important aspect of emplacement is the fact that we, as humans, cannot know place without our body. Like a vehicle without an engine or an engine without a vehicle, investigating emplacement without considering embodiment can only take us so far (or, not very far at all). Casey succinctly captures this point when he writes: "there is no place without body and no body without place."[100] To give a name to this aspect of emplacement, Casey uses the term body-place, or the body-place structure. In Casey's articulation of the body-place structure, it is once again reiterated that place finds no life-force without living bodies—presumably human bodies as he makes no mention of non-human emplacement. For Casey, the body-place structure not only names the way in which we can know place through our body, but also without bodies there are no places.

[100] Casey uses this phrase throughout several of his texts such as: "Between Geography and Philosophy," 684; "Body, Self, and Landscape," 406; "Place and Situation," 20, here he uses 'body'; "Moving Over the Edge: Borders, Boundaries, and Bodies," 15; *Getting Back*, 104. In all of these, the emphasis is his.

David Seamon uses the term "place-ballet" to capture a similar notion about emplacement. Seamon argues that "time-space routines," what he calls the habitual on-goings that occur in different locations, and "body-ballets," or the individual activities of persons, come together with physical environments to form "place-ballets." The concept of the place-ballet, similar to Casey's conception of the body-place, rests on the notion that without human activity, there is no place.[101]

Likewise, Jeff Malpas does not claim that place can be understood as an entity that exists independently of human subjects, but rather as "a structure comprising spatiality and temporality, subjectivity and objectivity, self and other."[102] For Malpas, place brings together physical location, time, and human subjects (similar to the previously discussed gathering quality of place), but is also what facilitates, or allows for, human subjectivity to arise. Place, for Malpas, isn't just a location for agents to gather, but also is the necessary catalyst for subjectivity. In this way, for Malpas, place "is integral to the very structure and possibility of experience."[103] Although Malpas' examination of place seems to credit place more agency and power than other phenomenologists of place, his articulation of place still maintains that human bodies are essential to the existence of places.

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[101] David Seamon, "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballets," in *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, eds. Anne Buttimer and David Seamon (Routledge, 1980), 159.

[102] Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Routledge, 2018), 163.

[103] Ibid., 32, emphasis in original.

Although embodiment is central to the phenomenology of place, this scholarship rarely discusses differences in experiences of embodiment and how the social and political structures that shape these differences might impact emplacement. For example, a recurring setting in Casey's *Getting Back into Place*, is his own home. Casey describes the mundane acts of sitting in his living room, getting up to answer the phone, standing near his bookshelf, etc., to describe various phenomenological experiences of the "here" and the "there." Casey's recounting of these experiences sufficiently describe the phenomenological moments he aims to articulate, but throughout the book, there is no mention of how these experiences might be different, say, if he were unhoused. Casey acknowledges these absences when he writes: "[w]e should think of culture, ethnicity, gender, class, etc., as finishing dimensions of a place beyond its exact location in geographic space and chronometric time."[104] Yet, as others have observed as well, "Casey very briefly notes these 'dimensions of place' only a few times in his work."[105] The same holds true for Seamon and Malpas. Eric Prietro makes a similar claim about Malpas' work when he writes the following: "the social dimension of place remains on the horizon of [Malpas'] concerns, rarely becoming a central focus of attention."[106]

Choosing not to consider the socially and politically constructed dimensions of lived emplacement is a disservice to the phenomenological study of place for at least two

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[104] Casey, *Getting Back*, xxv.

[105] Lara M. Mitias, "The Place of the Body in the Phenomenology of Place: Edward Casey and Nishida Kitarō," in Philosophies of Place, eds. Peter D. Hershock and Roger T. Ames (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 305.

[106] Eric Prietro, *Literature, Geography, and the Postmodern Poetics of Place* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 30.

reasons. For one, this methodological choice contributes to the reproduction of what Lugones calls the "modern subject:" a subject that is presumed gender-less, race-less, etc. Reproducing the modern subject erases the experiences of those most harmed by the oppressive structures of sexism, racism, heteronormativity, and classism, such as women, people of color, queer persons, etc. A second, although related, consequence of ignoring these social dimensions of place, is the loss of the valuable insights that could be uncovered if place were examined in a multidimensional way. One example that shows the philosophical benefit that can arise from examining place from a multidimensional lens is found in the following analysis of George Yancy's phenomenological account of his experience in an elevator.

In the second chapter of *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America* Yancy provides a powerful exposition of his experience, as a black man, entering an elevator that was already occupied by a white woman. Yancy recounts:

> Well-dressed, I enter an elevator where a white woman waits to reach her floor. She 'sees' my Black body, though not the same one I have seen reflected back to me from the mirror on any number of occasions. Buying into the myth that one's dress says something about the person, one might think that the markers of my dress (suit and tie) should ease her tension.… Her body shifts nervously and her heart beats more quickly as she clutches her purse more closely to her. She feels anxiety in the pit of her stomach. Her perception of time in the elevator may feel like an eternity. The space within the elevator is surrounded from all sides with my Black presence. It is as if I have become omnipresent within that space, ready to attack from all sides. Like choking black smoke, my Blackness permeates the enclosed space of the elevator. Her palms become clammy.[107]

As the woman is affected by Yancy's presence, he too is affected:

> …it is through her gaze that I become hypervigilant of my own embodied spatiality. On previous occasions, particularly when alone, I have moved my body within the

[107] George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 20-21.

> space of the elevator in a noncalculating fashion, paying no particular attention to my bodily comportment, the movement of my hands, my eyes, the position of my feet. I did not calculate the distance between my arm, hand, and my fingers in relationship to the buttons indicating the various floors. On such occasions, my "being- in" the space of the elevator is familiar; my bodily movements, my stance, are indicative of what it means to inhabit a space of familiarity. In short, it is a space within which I am meaningfully absorbed in the habitual everydayness of riding elevators.… Under these circumstances, I become calculative. I perceive the elevator as an object that represents a challenge to me, as something standing over and against me. What was previously a familiar space in the elevator, which I inhabited as an uncomplicated modality of my meaningful bodily comportment, has all of a sudden become "a something" that is threatening; my everyday mode of "being- in" has become a mode of being-trapped-in.… My movements become and remain stilted. I dare not move suddenly. The apparent racial neutrality of the space within the elevator (when I am standing alone) has become an axiological plenum, one filled with white normativity.[108]

Yancy's articulation of his experience contributes much to the phenomenological consideration of emplacement. For one, in this example, Yancy alludes to his own multidimensional experience of place. For him, there exists the empty elevator, a place that does not require any calculated bodily movements. The empty elevator does not give rise to racially-induced anxiety, such a space does not cause him to become hypervigilant of his every move. That same elevator inhabited by the white woman he describes is a very different place. The inhabited elevator generates fear, in both of its inhabitants. Both seem to become hyper-aware of their bodies, both are uncomfortable and project unease.

Why did the inhabited elevator bring forth these embodied responses, and what does this multidimensional elevator reveal? Yancy speculates that his black body, no matter how professionally dressed, in conjunction with "the racist portrayals of African Americans in the media, the effects of racist media on those viewing it, and the past and

[108] Ibid., 32, emphasis in original.

present circulating myth that the Black body is criminal and dangerous by nature,"[109] is what induces fear in the white woman—a fear evidence by her subtle nervous shifting, and the way she clenches her purse. The white woman's noticeable fear, in turn, generates a nervousness and hyper-vigilance in him.

In his analysis, Yancy focuses largely on the way in which their racial differences impact the woman and himself. What I find interesting in this recounting is the way in which place, in this case the inhabited elevator, causes him to become anxious about how his blackness is provoking fear in the white woman. Race, in this example, is all that he can focus on, a focus that is, of course, utterly justified given the ways in which racial injustice operates in our society. At the same time, there is also a gendered dimension to this example that warrants further consideration.

In this example, we cannot know what the white woman in the elevator is thinking. On the one hand, it is reasonable to say that the white woman in this example might have been fearful of Yancy because he is black. On the other hand, it might *also* be true that the woman was fearful of the fact that he is a man. It is possible that this white woman projects unease whenever an unknown male body inhabits an elevator with her. The act of clenching her purse, no doubt, could have been a subtle attempt at keeping it close to her, an outward betrayal of her internal racist assumption that Yancy would want to snatch it. At the same time, the act of clenching her purse could have *instead* been, or could have *also* been, a subconscious attempt at creating some kind of barrier between herself and Yancy, perhaps because he is black, or perhaps because he is a man, or

[109] Ibid., 24.

perhaps because he is a black man. In short, this interaction between the woman and Yancy, shows the difficulties in trying to separate racism and the history of sexual violence. Both are overlaid in this scene, and attempts to pull them apart, or examine them "separately" could not do justice to the phenomena taking place.

Considering the lived place of the elevator in this multidimensional way, highlights an oscillation between what is revealed and obscured regarding the effects of racial injustice in our society that causes a multitude of tensions between black men and white woman, and the permanence of gendered violence that causes some women to continually fear men. This oscillation reveals and obscures how all of these things could be true at the same time: the woman is fearful of his blackness, Yancy is fearful of the white woman's reaction to his blackness (i.e., Yancy is fearful of her white-ness in conjunction with her reaction to his entrance), and the woman is fearful of his male-ness, and, or, his black male-ness. The microcosm of the confined elevator, this multidimensional place, puts on display the complex permeance of racism and gendered violence, in the larger macrocosm of our society. In this example, the place of the elevator is not a mere insignificant backdrop, it is more like an active enzyme catalyzing our ability to garner certain insights regarding how race and gender are operating in our society.

Another example that exemplifies a similar phenomenon pertaining to what can be revealed and obscured when examining lived place in a multidimensional way is the everyday occurrence of street harassment. In "Street Harassment: The Language of Sexual Terrorism," Elizabeth Arveda Kissling argues that street harassment—instances where women are followed or "cat called" by men—is a form of social control and is just

one example of how gender affects women's experiences of walking in public. In relation to emplacement, street harassment functions to enforce spatial boundaries, "reminding" women that the public and its streets "belong" to men. Since men are rarely punished for such behavior, street harassment reinforces the idea that it is acceptable for men to openly and aggressively pursue women, while women are expected to ignore the advances and practice self-restraint in the face of these verbal and unsettling assaults.[110] Street harassment is rarely harmless and casual; it often provokes fear in women, affecting not just where or when women choose to walk, but also how. Women might try to avoid street harassment by walking more quickly, keeping a "low profile," or being careful to avoid eye contact with potential harassers.

At the same time, there exists a very different side to street harassment that, nonetheless, shows how such harassment pertains to control. In her book, *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination*, Lynn Phillips interviews thirty young women, all from the United States but of various backgrounds, on their experiences of femininity and sexuality. Early in the book, Phillips includes the following scenario as a common example she has heard in her classroom:

> The classroom is buzzing with animated conversation about women's experience of street harassment. I am teaching an introductory course in Psychology and Women, and the students, almost all undergraduate women, are discussing the objectification and anxiety they feel when men make comments about their body, their attire, or their mood. Without exception, the comments are about how terrible that feels. After extended discussion, a male student comments that he too has been whistled at by females on the street, and he, for one, has always taken it as a compliment. 'Don't women really see it that way too?' Discomfort fills the room—women students squirm, some nod their heads with embarrassment. Yes, some women acknowledge reluctantly, even if they're not proud of it, sometimes it does

[110] Elizabeth Arveda Kissling "Street Harassment: The Language of Sexual Terrorism," *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 4 (1991): 454.

> feel good. Finally a woman names an important distinction: 'It may feel good for both of us. I can even find it a turn-on. But as a man, you never have to wonder if that 'compliment' is going to lead to you getting into trouble. As a man, you can play up the compliment or reject their attention. But you don't have the anxiety of making sure you don't either lead them on, getting you into trouble, or get them pissed off, getting you into trouble. Women always have to straddle that fine line. . . . Still, though, I guess I'd have to admit . . . there is something exciting about *flirting with danger*—and about *straddling those fine lines*.'[111]

It is interesting that some of the women in her class admit that, on some level, they enjoy the sexual attention that street harassment brings them. But, why do some young women, though reluctantly, acknowledge that these kinds of moments, on some level, feel good? Later in the book, Phillips clarifies what she thinks is going on. Some of the interviews that Phillips conducts showcase a very different, yet still problematic, side to street harassment. Some young women seem to view street harassment as a kind of litmus test for their attractiveness, in the eyes of men. For this reason, the good feeling that these women might experience is better described as "mix feelings." As Phillips explains:

> …many of the participants found pleasure in the attention they received through flirting and sexualized comments or behaviors from unknown men on the street. They often interpreted the attention as a sign of their success as pleasing, sexually desirable women. Most of the participants revealed that they continued to find such experiences exciting, flattering, and reassuring, at least some of the time. Indeed, Tonya acknowledged that if she felt she looked good but men on the street did not make comments, 'it makes me feel really bad about myself for that day, at least until I get another catcall.' Jeanne noted that men's comments may be 'really gross,' but they also made her feel sexy and powerful.[112]

Phillips' analysis indicates that whether or not a women holds these kinds of mixed feelings about street harassment, the bottom-line is the same: streets are places where

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[111] Lynn Phillips, *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination* (New York University Press, 2000), 2-3, emphasis in the original.

[112] Ibid., 96-97.

some men exert control over women. Even if a woman cat calls a man, his potential enjoyment of such an event, as the women in the above quote explains, is not straddled by the same kind of potential for imminent danger. For women, it is not possible to enjoy being cat called without simultaneously experiencing some degree of a fear response, since our society does not do enough to hold men adequately accountable for sexual violence and assault.

For the phenomenology of place, the body-place structure is the most foundational aspect of emplacement. Although phenomenologists of place recognize that experiences of emplacement can be affected by our contemporary social and political structures, their silence beyond occasional mentions, does not begin to capture the wide array of emplacement experiences, nor the multi-dimensional aspects of place at work in the wide array of emplaced experiences. Moreover, bracketing the social and political, does not reveal the ways in which some places—perhaps many places—become vectors for the reproduction of oppressive social structures. The following two subsections will say more on this latter point.

The Here-There Structure of Emplacement

Due to the body-place structure, at every moment of our lives, we are always already located somewhere. Necessarily, we are always located within a "here."[113] Dylan Trigg's *The Memory of Place* puts it this way: "At all times, we find ourselves located in

[113] Perhaps when we die and eventually decompose, we no longer have a "here." Yet, it's interesting that when someone dies, their grave is described as their "eternal resting spot." And, many seem to believe that the spirits of the long dead sometimes inhabit various "heres:" certain houses, museums, hospitals, etc. that are said to be haunted.

a particular place, specific to the bodily subject experiencing that place. We are forever in the here, and it is from that here that our experiences take place."[114] To be emplaced is to be located in a here, even when we do not know anything about the here we are located in (such as when we are lost). Yet, where there is a here there is always a there—a somewhere else our body could inhabit—and the here is what opens and closes possibilities for various theres. In describing this essential quality of emplaced experience, Casey names this second foundational dyad of emplacement the here-there structure.[115]

The here-there has two features: the split relation and the tensional arc. The split relation describes how the here-there is at once a coherent union (all "heres" accompany all possible "theres"), but also a division (here and there are two points on a line that never overlap). In other words, when we perceive ourselves as emplaced in a "here," we know that somewhere else is a "there," but we cannot be both here and there at the same time. Thus, the here-there phenomena of emplacement can be described as a split dyad. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that "heres" and "theres" carry an "all or nothing" character for the phenomenology of place. Casey's explication of the near-far structure will account for the continuity, or the gradients that can exist, between various heres and theres.

The second feature of the here-there dyad is the tensional arc which captures how the distance between what makes here "here" and there "there" is sometimes experienced

[114] Trigg, *The Memory of Place*, 4, emphasis in original.

[115] Casey, *Getting Back*, 55.

with differing intensities. Sometimes the tension between the here and the there is minimal—usually when we know exactly where we are located and are familiar with the locations surround us. When the tension between the here and there is small "the here seems continuous with the there."[116] Other times, we experience the tension between the here and there as great, such as when the literal distance to a there is large and, or, unfamiliar to us.

Casey also describes how tensional arcs between heres and theres can be experienced interpersonally, such as when we cannot understand the viewpoint or experience of another person. In these cases, we can be physically located in the same here as other people but, for various reasons, experience each other as if we are far away.[117] Casey does not devote much time to the possibilities of interpersonal tensional arcs that can arise in any given location, and this gap leads me to wonder: under what conditions do such interpersonal tensional arcs arise? What kinds of locations provoke these tensions? Also, who's "here" sets conditions for another to be read as "over there"? Recalling the previously mentioned elevator example, an interpersonal tensional arc seemed to be at play in that situation. In Yancy's example, himself and the white woman shared the elevator space, their "heres" and "theres" were physically close, but, their fear and mistrust of each other, seemed to cause them to experience the interpersonal tensional arc between them as large. I speculate that they experienced a large gap in their interpersonal tensional arc because they rode the elevator silently and guarded, fearful of

[116] Ibid., 56.

[117] Ibid., 54.

sudden movements, seemingly anticipating violence, of any kind, from either party. Yancy's body and appearance seemed to cause the white women fear, and the white women's fear, caused Yancy to become fearful of his own movements. They were next to each other, but they could not communicate openly. On the interpersonal plane, they were miles apart. The elevator example shows how complex histories of racism and violence against women are two conditions that impacted the possibilities for proximity regarding the interpersonal tensional arc between Yancy and the white woman. Similarly, I don't think it is a stretch to claim that all sociopolitical conditions that have caused the subjection of different peoples have set the conditions for how we might experience interpersonal tensional arcs between ourselves and others.

A quick look at the 2016 United States presidential election also shows how interpersonal tensional arcs can become highly political and dangerous for some bodies more than others. During this election, Donald Trump popularized phrases like "build a wall" (in reference to the U.S.-Mexico border) and "send them back" (short for "send immigrants back to where they came from"). The movement to "build a wall," was not just literal but also metaphorical, with Trump supporters calling for a stronger divide between both "here," (the United States) and "there" (Mexico) via the construction of an actual wall, as well as between "us" (Trump supporters) and "them" (typically referring to undocumented persons, but also black and brown citizens). In other words, according to Trump supporters, immigrants and undocumented persons are, in a sense, "out of place," i.e., they do not belong "here" and should be sent over "there." Sarah Ahmed's discussion of space and immigration is relevant here as she describes how immigrants and persons of color are often perceived as "out of place." While, "[t]hose who are 'in

place,'" or those who understand themselves as such, "must also arrive; they must get 'here,' but their arrival is more easily forgotten, or is not even noticed."[118] Or, their once arrival is willfully ignored, such is the case with the colonization of the Americas. Many K-12 history textbooks still claim that Christopher Columbus "discovered America," as if this land were empty and ready for the taking. As we know, for thousands of years this land has been populated by the Indigenous people of North America, and white settlers have only just invaded approximately 500 years ago. Ironically, the same Trump supporters who shout "send them back" are themselves non-Native decedents of once immigrants or of the ancestors who, relatively recently, stole this land. In these ways, the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath, demonstrate how interpersonal tensional arcs between "heres" and "theres" can carry significant political weight.

In a similar way, Neil Vallelly's "'The Place was not a Place:' A Critical Phenomenology of Forced Displacement," from *The Phenomenology of Real and Virtual Places* (2019)—perhaps the first and only to date, explicitly critical phenomenology of place—challenges the phenomenology of place's assumption that every person is included in the "we," of the phenomenology of place's assertion that "we are always in a here." In particular, Vallelly asks, "[d]oes [the here] include refugees and the forcibly displaced?" Vallelly argues that in order to move between "heres," and "theres," one's "here," must be a stable and secure location. In our modern society, such security is established through legal and economic avenues, and, thus "[w]ithout this secure connection, being-in-the-world means being displaced." For this reason, Vallelly

[118] Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 10-11.

contends that the phenomenology of place, as it currently stands, cannot account for displaced subjects, particularly those who have been forcibly displaced. Moreover, the assumption of an all-encompassing "we," reflects, to some degree, a "privileged understanding of the relationship between place and subjectivity."[119]

At the same time, there are more ways in which the phenomenology of place can use a critical edge, in order to decenter a privileged standpoint and avoid further reproducing the colonialities of being and space. A close look at the third and final dyad of emplacement, the near-far structure, will demonstrate these other ways.

The Near-Far Structure

The third foundational dyad of emplacement is the near-far structure. Whereas "heres" and "theres" are understood as complete wholes (i.e., at any given time I know when I am "here" and what it would mean to be "there") the near-far names those gradients between heres and theres. As I progress from my here and move towards a given there, I move near-er to an intended there and farther from other theres. Whereas both the here-there and the near-far contain a spatial dimension, the near-far also has an additional temporal dimension. When we are far from an intended "there," we don't just consider the spacial distance between our here and the intended there, but also how much time it would take to relocate ourselves "over there" (e.g., the walking, running, driving, fly, etc., times of arrival).

[119] Neil Vallelly, "'The Place was not a Place:' A Critical Phenomenology of Forced Displacement," in *The Phenomenology of Real and Virtual Places* (Routledge, 2018), 208.

What is known to be near and far are not just known epistemologically (via calculated distance and measurements) but also experientially: getting near-er to something can be felt as an "intensification" whereas getting farther can be felt as "de-intensification."[120] Moreover, experiential intensification or de-intensification is known through the body: the excitement, anticipation, disappointment, urgency etc., that one might experience as they move closer or away from various destinations. Considering the embodied dimensions of the near-far structure, it is also the case that that which "is near to us is within our reach."[121]

Via emplacement, we can experience our ability to reach in two ways: actual and potential. Actual reach includes that which is within our grasp: "things that are ready-to-hand, now present, in earshot, unambiguously visible, etc."[122] Sometimes actual reach is made possible through physical distance (e.g., when I enter my kitchen, the water faucet is within my actual reach), and sometimes physical distance is not the primary factor of actual reach (e.g., because I own a cell phone, speaking to my brother who lives 3000 miles away, is within my actual reach). Potential reach is more ambiguous, as it names the realm of possibilities for future reach—not that which is "immediately attainable" but all that "we could reach."[123]

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[120] Casey, *Getting Back*, 57.

[121] Ibid., 59, emphasis in original.

[122] Ibid., 59.

[123] Ibid., 59, emphasis in original.

Here, again, by choosing to bracket both bodily difference and the lived effects of oppressive social and political structures, the phenomenology of place proceeds to assume that every person experiences a continuity between the here and there via the near-far structure in the same ways. Yet, Iris Marion Young's "Throwing Like a Girl" challenges this assumption. Starting with the premise that "[e]very human existence is defined by its situation," Young's work shows that "the particular existence of the female person is no less defined by the historical, cultural, social, and economic limits of her situation."[124] Expanding upon the work of Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir, Young describes the ways in which men and women move and take up space differently—not just because of innate physiological differences, but also because of differences imposed by historical, cultural, and social structures.[125]

In "Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality," Young illustrates a number of compelling examples that showcase how women and men relate to space differently. She cites the way in which, in general, the masculine stride tends to be longer, and how men tend to swing their arms out more when they walk. Moreover, women tend to keep their limbs closer to their bodies and shrink rather than expand into space. From these examples and observations,

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[124] Iris Marion Young, "Throwing like a Girl," in *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 29, emphasis in original.

[125] Here, I thank Dr. Erin Mckenna for pointing out that some innate biological difference between men and women do affect how one takes up space, independent of historical, cultural, and social structures. Mckenna offered the example of horse riding: sometimes female horse riders need to sit differently on a horse than a male would, due to difference in pelvic structure.

Young names three modalities that capture feminine existence in relation to space, though I will only focus on the first two as they are the most relevant here[126].

The first modality pertains to the body's tendency to expand into space. Young observes that the surrounding space "that is physically available to the feminine body is frequently of greater radius than the space that she uses and inhabits." It is as if the feminine body constructs "an existential enclosure between herself and the space surrounding her." This is exemplified when women tend not to "reach, stretch, bend, lean, or stride to the full limits of their physical capacities."[127] This first modality of the bodily relation to emplacement can be understood as a corollary to the phenomenology of place's explication of actual and potential reach within space. Whereas the phenomenology of place does not question one's ability to utilize reaching capabilities or does not wonder how some bodies might be more inclined to reach father out or not, Young's account highlights the way in which gendered bodies differently relate to the act of reaching. Considering the near-far structure of the phenomenology of place, Young's work also shows that for the feminine body, that which is near is significantly farther than for the masculine body. In other words, the masculine body is taught to perceive that which is farther as nearer, and vice versa for the feminine body. However, this point is more clearly explicated in Young's second modality of feminine comportment in space.

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[126] The third modality that I do not focus on here pertains to how the feminine body experiences herself as "positioned in space," as object, rather than as subject moving freely through space (Young, "Throwing like a Girl," 41, emphasis in original).

[127] Young, "Throwing like a Girl," 40.

The second modality regards the distinction between the "here" and the "yonder." Young's use of the "yonder," is akin to the phenomenology of place's use of the "there." According to Young, for masculine existence there is a continuity between the "here" and the "yonder." However, for feminine existence that continuity is severed. Put another way, rather than always experiencing the gradients between the near and the far, the feminine body experiences notable breaks in the continuity that the near and far is supposed to provide. However, it is not that she experiences these breaks conceptually, she experiences them in an embodied way: she knows that, as Young puts it, "'someone' could move within [the 'yonder'], but not I."[128]

In choosing to bracket the impacts of bodily difference and the lived effects of oppressive social and political structures, the phenomenology of place has yet to do justice to the full significance of place. In order to fully explicate the structures of emplacement, we must attend to those aspects of embodiment and lived experience that co-construct when and how different persons are capable of residing in a place. Even though what defines "contemporary social and political structures" are historically situated and might change over time, attending to the "here" and "now" of emplacement is, nonetheless, a worthwhile pursuit. I contend that a critical phenomenology of place can catalyze this kind of project. At the same time, there is a second way in which a critical phenomenology can help further uncover the significance of place: namely, by beginning phenomenological investigations of place with a particular place or kind of place. The next section will clarify this second approach.

[128] Ibid., 41.

Guenther's Critical Phenomenology of Solitary Confinement

Regarding Casey's articulation of the near-far structure, he also describes how depth holds near-ness and far-ness together. To explain this point, Casey draws on Merleau-Ponty's description of *primordial depth* (though Casey prefers the term "primal depth"). For Merleau-Ponty, *objectified depth* refers to the calculable or mathematically determined distance between two points.[129] In contrast, primal depth is known existentially and is a "pre-objective standard of distances and sizes."[130] Whereas objectified depth is calculated by a determined mathematical standard, primal depth is a kind of "common measurement," learned though our being-in-the-world. Fundamentally, primal depth is affective, embodied, and, per Casey, serves as the "connective tissue" for our senses of near and far.[131] In other words, depth is the glue that holds near-ness and far-ness together.

In functioning as a connective tissue for our senses of near and far, "[p]rimal depth, at once constituted and discovered by the body, yields places."[132] Primal depth gives rise to place because it is what orients us in space and helps us make sense of the kind of location we are in. In this way, primal depth, along with embodiment and the here-there and near-far structures, is the last piece of the puzzle for emplacement. Primal

[129] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 310.

[130] Ibid., 311.

[131] Casey, *Getting Back*, 69.

[132] Ibid., 70.

depth preconditions orientation and gives us place by allowing us to move through and between distinguished locations. Aside from describing depth as the connective tissue for our sense of near and far and its role in yielding place, Casey does not further discuss the significance of depth for emplacement—including what it might mean to be extremely limited in spatial depth; and, what the lack of available depth means for our experiences of place.

Though she doesn't explicitly claim to be a phenomenologist of place, I see Lisa Guenther's critical phenomenology of solitary confinement as powerfully contributing to the discussion of depth and emplacement. In *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives*, Lisa Guenther similarly draws on Merleau-Ponty's discussion of depth in order to make sense of the unhinged reality that some supermax solitary confinement prisoners experience. In the United States, prison cells designed to keep inmates in isolation are not called solitary confinement cells, their official labels, which vary by state, are: Special Housing Units (SHU), Security Housing Units, Special Management Units, Intensive Management Units, and Behavioral Management Units. But, "[t]o the people who inhabit them, they are the SHU (pronounced "shoe"), the Box, the Hole, the Bing, or the Block."[133] A typical SHU cell is "60 to 80 square feet, with a cot, a toilet, a sink, a narrow slit for a window, and sometimes a small molded desk bolted to the wall."

[133] JeanCasella, *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices of Solitary Confinement* (New York and London: The New Press, 2016), 7.

Moreover, those held in the SHU "are typically taken out of their cells for only 1 hour on weekdays for recreation or a shower, or, in some systems, once a week for 5 hours."[134]

In 1993, psychiatrist Stuart Grassian interviewed inmates being held in California's Pelican Bay State Prison's SHU, and found that many of them experienced psychiatric symptoms associated with prolonged solitary confinement. What has come to be called "SHU Syndrome" includes the following symptoms: hyperresponsivity to external stimuli; perceptual distortions, illusions, and hallucinations; panic attacks; difficulties with thinking, concentration, and memory; intrusive obsessional thoughts; and overt paranoia.[135] In her own investigation into the accounts of some who have experienced solitary confinement, Lisa Guenther describe SHU syndrome in the following way:

> Deprived of meaningful human interaction, otherwise healthy prisoners become unhinged. They see things that do not exist, and they fail to see things that do. Their sense of their own bodies—even the fundamental capacity to feel pain and to distinguish their own pain from that of others—erodes to the point where they are no longer sure if they are being harmed or are harming themselves.[136]

What is it about solitary confinement that can cause one's reality to become unhinged in these ways? Why do some solitary confinement inmates experience SHU syndrome? Like Casey, Guenther draws on Merleau-Ponty's work on depth to begin to make sense of what can be phenomenologically uncovered about this particular kind of torturous

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[134] David H. Cloud, et al, "Public Health and Solitary Confinement in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 1 (2015): 18-26.

[135] Stuart Grassian, "Psychiatric Effects of Solitary Confinement," *Journal of Law and Policy* 22 (2006): 335– 36.

[136] Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2013*)*, xi.

emplacement. Guenther argues that those placed in solitary confinement are not just extremely limited in their spatial depth, but are also grossly deprived of, what she calls, intercorporeal depth.

Guenther argues that when we go about the in world, in our daily life, we often encounter others for whom our shared perspectives overlap. Others, in a sense, 'verify' that what we are seeing is actually there. Occasional insight into the perspectives of others, even if subtle and indirect, keep our world stable and trusted. Moreover, others don't just verify that reality is as it appears, they also 'complete' it. As Guenther writes,

> [t]he overlapping of my own perspective with the perspectives of others literally fills out the dimensionality of my own perception. Confined to my own visual perspective, I can only see one side of a spatial object at a time; and yet the sense of a spatial object involves the potentiality to be seen from multiple perspectives.[137]

The 'feedback' from others, the array of perspectives that other emplaced and embodied subjects provide for us, is the experience of intercorporeal depth. Intercorporeal depth is a kind of "social depth" and, Guenther states,

> social and perceptual depth is precisely what is blocked for the prisoner in supermax confinement: the spontaneous overlapping of perspectives with others, and the anonymity of belonging to a shared world in which one's own unique perceptual perspective is only one among many, where one is a participant in the plurality of a social world.[138]

Thus, emplacement isn't just coupled with the experience of primal depth, emplacement with others, emplacement in a shared world, provides our necessary experiences of intercorporeal depth. And, depriving one of this kind of social depth, as in the cases of prolonged solitary confinement, can cause drastic psychological damage. The forced

[137] Ibid., 178.

[138] Ibid., 179.

denial of intercorporeal depth is one reason that solitary confinement is not simply an extreme form of punishment it is, more accurately, a form of inhuman inhumane? torture.

By starting with the particular place of solitary confinement, Guenther is not only led to revisit Merleau-Ponty's work on depth and argue for the necessity of intercorporeal depth, but also to consider how intercorporeal depth, perhaps in conjunction with primal depth, is what gives rise to place. Guenther argues that supermax solitary confinement

> is a space that—through its extreme and rigid limitations and its liquidation of intercorporeal depth—destroys the boundaries that constitute a meaningful sense of place.…[The supermax] unit is measurable in feet or in 'paces'—six by nine, eight by twelve—and yet the subjective experience of this space can never be expressed in terms of length and width; it can only be conveyed as the blocked experience of foreclosed depth that their occupants are forced to undergo in solitude.[139]

In describing the solitary cell as a 'space' with no meaningful sense of place, Guenther is describing a kind of location that other phenomenologists of place have yet to consider. The closest that place-based literature has come to describing such locations is perhaps what French anthropologist, Marc Augé, has called "non-places." Non-places are locations frequently inhabited by subjects, that have no individual, significant, identity or meaning aside from their established functions. Some non-places include hotel rooms, airports, and shopping malls. Each of these places are not only deprived of significant meaning, they are also transient locations that render humans anonymous. Entering and inhabiting these places gives one a sense of "solitary individuality." Rarely does one develop long-standing social relations when inside an airport or hotel room (unless one is

[139] Ibid., 186-187, emphasis in original.

employed at these locations).[140] Because all of these locations render anonymity and the only significant meaning they carry is their utility in serving their established purpose, place-scholars are reluctant to call these sites places, and instead have named them "non-places."

Yet, the solitary individuality one finds in an airport is drastically different from the solitude of a SHU cell. Choosing to spend a three-hour layover by one's self, in an airport surrounded by numerous people and all kinds of stimuli, is nothing like the forced solitude SHU inmates experience 23 hours at a time. For this reason, there is no such thing as "airport or hotel syndrome." Calling solitary confinement cells "non-places" does not capture the tortuous lack of incorporeal depth that is vacuumed from these locations. Although the phenomenology of place wants to direct its full attention to the concept of place, it makes the most sense to call the solitary confinement cell, as Guenther does, a space. And,

> [t]he irony is that—tragically, absurdly—the supermax prisoner is one of the only living beings whose experience of space matches the account of objective grid space given by Cartesian rationalists (or liberal individualists, for that matter). Nonincarcerated subjects are free to invest in the fictions of objectivity, autonomy, self-sufficiency, and individuality, all the while relying on their embodied experience of affective and intercorporeal depth to sustain a meaningful sense of Being-in-the-world. Only incarcerated subjects are forced to actually exist in such fictions or be broken by them.[141]

By relying on seemingly "neutral places," the coloniality of space permeates phenomenology of place scholarship by obscuring the fact that some subjects (i.e., incarcerated solitary confinement inmates) are forced to live in spaces that carry no

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[140] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, (Verso, 1995), 78-79.

[141] Guenther, *Solitary Confinement*, 187.

meaningful sense of place. Guenther's analysis shows that it is not the case that all subjects are emplaced in *places*, as the phenomenology of place wants to claim, some subjects are emplaced in *spaces* that have been constructed, on colonized land, to detain incarcerated subjects which are, disproportionately, persons of color.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I brought attention to some of the ways in which contemporary phenomenology of place scholarship has not considered the impacts that socially constructed power structures have upon emplaced subjects. I argued that phenomenology of place scholars should consider a shift in methodology towards *critical* phenomenologies of place. My last section reads Lisa Guenther's work as one example of a critical phenomenology of place.

The following chapter continues this discussion by focusing on some of the place-based concepts put forth by contemporary, North American, Indigenous philosophers. Indigenous philosophers have a long history of philosophically valuing place without necessitating that the existence of place be dependent upon human interaction. In other words, for many Indigenous philosophers, place is understood to have power and agency, in its own right. In the next chapter, I also use the critical phenomenological method to call attention to the history and significance of the Chemawa Indian Boarding School, located in Salem, OR. In doing so, I pay particular attention to some of the student-led resistance efforts that took place there. By examining Chemawa through a critical phenomenological lens, I articulate a different way of understanding our relations to place and experience of emplacement that I call "the pluriversality of place."

CHAPTER IV

THE PLURIVERSALITY OF PLACE AND A CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE CHEMAWA BOARDING SCHOOL IN CONVERSATION WITH INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES OF PLACE

Beyond the loss of language, the loss of daily ritual practice, and beyond 'Dead Baby poetry,' what the Native American has not lost is a sense of place
-V.F. Cordova[142]

Introduction

In my previous two chapters, I aimed to show what has remained in "the underside" of Western philosophy's relationships to space and place. By "the underside" I am referring—similarly to Quijano's use of the term that I cited in my first chapter—to that which has not been considered regarding western philosophers' affinity for the concept of space and disregard for place. In my first chapter, I argued that the historical disregard for place found in western philosophical scholarship was, and is, tied to colonization and coloniality, and not just, as some have argued, a kind of comfort or reassurance that the universalizing character of space provides. In my second chapter, I discuss one branch of philosophical literature where place has been given a new voice: the phenomenological explorations of place. Yet, because phenomenologists of place do not consider the colonial history that motivated place's erasure, nor the relationship between coloniality and space (the coloniality of space), this body of work has not

[142] V. F. Cordova, *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova* (University of Arizona Press, 2007), 200.

sufficiently shed the pull towards abstraction that supports space's dominance in the West. In phenomenology of place scholarship, the coloniality of space manifests as an articulation of emplacement from the standpoint of a *fictional* subject (what Lugones calls the "modern subject") that is seemingly unaffected by oppressive social structures (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.). Ignoring the way in which these structures are imbedded in experiences of emplacement is problematic because this approach perpetuates the kind of abstraction, universalization, and erasure of difference that phenomenologists of place have been trying to undo. Furthermore, this approach produces weaker accounts of lived emplacement as it contributes to the erasure of marginalized voices, especially the experiences of subjects that are most harmed by the hierarchical nature of these structures (e.g. women, persons of color, working class people, etc.). In short, my previous chapter aimed to show that the inheritance of the coloniality of space (the pull towards abstraction and universalization) is what has remained in the underside of phenomenology of place scholarship. I also ended that chapter by arguing that a shift in methodology towards a *critical* phenomenology of place can provide viable avenues for considering emplacement without reproducing the coloniality of space.

The promise of critical phenomenology is that it does not attempt to bracket the complex social and political structures that, if included in conversations of place would result in more robust, less abstract, analyses of lived emplacement. Moreover, a critical phenomenological approach to place opens doors for productive conversations between phenomenologists of place and philosophers working within other philosophical traditions, such as the Americanist tradition broadly construed (including Indigenous,

Latino/a, Pragmatist, etc.). Of most pressing importance, I claim in this chapter, is the need for sustained dialogue between phenomenologists of place and Indigenous philosophers articulating non-Western place-based concepts. A number of Indigenous philosophers have put forth place-based concepts without reproducing abstraction, universalization, or the erasure of difference, yet, for too long, their voices have been excluded from Western philosophical conversations of place. And, more often than not, when Indigenous cultures are cited in phenomenological considerations of place, their knowledge systems are romanticized, or the impacts of coloniality and colonialism upon Indigenous populations are not considered. The following excerpt from Edward Casey's *Getting Back into Place* is one example of this trend within phenomenology of place scholarship:

> A special report issued in 1980 stated that while the Navajo 'often visited the Indian Health Service Hospitals for counseling, the only real solution [for their ills] would be the resumption of their original way of life.' In this way of life, place was paramount. Can we, in the postmodern period, recapture and relive some significant vestige of an original way of life, one that is as attuned to place as the modern era has been to time?[143]

There are at least three things about this excerpt that deserve attention. For one, Casey's use of "we" here is general: he seems to be wondering how everyone, Indigenous and settler, can return to an "original way of life" in which place matters. However, this all-inclusive "we" obscures the fact that Western colonization of the Americas motivated Indigenous genocide and the theft of Indigenous land. In other words, this formulation does not acknowledge that Western settler society is the reason for Indigenous ills and the reason for modern day disconnects from place. Second, framing Indigenous

[143] Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 39.

understandings of place in terms of an "original way of life," implies a singular "authentic" Indigenous relation to place which not only obscures difference and diversity across various Indigenous communities, but also imagines an Indigenous connection to place that is somehow ahistorical or outside of time. Third, although related to the previous points, because contemporary Indigenous philosophers have put forth place-based concepts that Western philosophers have yet to engage with, Indigenous philosophers do not need to recapture "an original way of life"—they need to be heard, here and now. In other words, Western philosophers of place should not rest on hopes for a "return" to "an original way of life" but rather instigate meaningful conversations with Indigenous philosophers that can give rise to new theorizations of place that do not perpetuate coloniality.

At present, there is a growing body of work that sets forth productive dialogue between phenomenologists and Indigenous philosophers, most of which discuss how phenomenology, particularly Western environmental phenomenology, has been complicit in replicating colonizing practices.[144] My intent for this chapter is to contribute to these discussions by advocating for critical phenomenologies of place that center Indigenous voices. Towards this end, I argue that philosophers discussing the significance of place, especially those from the West, should recognize the *pluriversality of place*. Pluriversality assumes the existence of multiple ontologies and epistemologies, and claims that only the existence of plural, or multiple, ontologies and epistemologies can be

[144] For instance, see Guernsey (2020), Welch (2019), Burkhart (2019), and Wilshire (2000).

understood as universal.[145] Given that even within Indigenous scholarship, there are multiple ways of theorizing place, Western philosophers should likewise avoid pursuing any kind of "universal" theory of place or emplacement. Rather, following the lead of Erin Mckenna and Scott Pratt in *American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to Present*, I argue that philosophers should embrace the value of difference,[146] and likewise understand the concept of place as pluriversal.

My first section aims to describe the pluriversality of place by outlining a few different Indigenous discussions of place and land. I do so by articulating three shared ontological commitments found within Indigenous cosmologies that support the argument that Indigenous approaches to place are notably distinct from Western approaches. My second section utilizes the critical phenomenological method to explore the complex history of the Chemawa Indian School located in Salem, Oregon. Beginning with the school's early history, I describe how the school's founding mission and the assimilationist policies enforced there demonstrate one logical and concrete result of Western philosophy's commitment to producing, and reproducing, the coloniality of space. My third section describes how the school's pupils managed to "turn the power,"[147] and "take back" Chemawa, in different ways, in order to uplift Indigenous

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[145] The term "pluriversality," was developed by Walter Mignolo in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Duke University Press Books, 2011).

[146] Erin McKenna and Scott Pratt, *American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to Present* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015), xiv, 6-7.

[147] The phrase, "turned the power" is not my own. This phrase is often used by Indigenous scholars examining resistance practices within Native American boarding schools.

youth and serve Indigenous resilience efforts. By utilizing the critical phenomenological method in conversation with Indigenous philosophers, this last section aims to demonstrate the value and significance of the pluriversality of place and how this multidimensionality of place seemed to aid some students in remaining resistant towards the structures of coloniality at a local level.

Place as Pluriversal and Indigenous Philosophical Discussions of Place

In the Indigenous philosophical tradition, there is a long history of valuing place and centering relations to land. In *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion,* Oglala Lakota[148] philosopher Vine Deloria Jr., tells us that "American Indians hold their lands—*places*—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind."[149] Even the term "Indigenous" is fundamentally place-based, as Muscogee[150] philosopher Daniel Wildcat writes: "[s]tated simply, *indigenous* means 'to be of a place.'"[151] Yet, per Wildcat, being of a place in the Indigenous sense is not promised through the happenstance of being born in a particular location. Being

[148] The majority of the Oglala population live on the land that is now called South Dakota.

[149] Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of* Religion, (Fulcrum Publishing, 2003) 62, emphasis added.

[150] Prior to European invasion, the Muscogee (Creek) peoples resided in different area across what is now known as the Southeastern United States. Today, the Muscogee Nation is a federally recognized tribe in Oklahoma, although Muscogee people also live in other states, such as California, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Alabama, and Texas.

[151] Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Resources, 2001), 31.

Indigenous to a place designates *an ongoing relationship* between humans, non-humans, and all of the inhabitants that are relationally tied to that place. Although there are various Indigenous cosmologies, many North American Indigenous philosophers share some foundational, ontological, commitments. Three that I describe in this chapter are: 1) the recognition of agency in both humans and non-human entities (e.g. lands, places, animals, natural forces, etc.), 2) the valuing of ethical relations among communities of agents, and 3) an understanding of lands and places as epistemological authorities.[152]

Before elaborating on these commitments, I first need to clarify the different uses of the terms "space," "place," and "land" at work in this chapter. In the Western philosophical canon, and as discussed in my previous chapters, the term "space" is akin to the concepts of universalization and the erasure of difference. The term "place," as set forth by Edward Casey and other phenomenologists of place (e.g., Jeff Malpas, David Seamon, Dylan Trigg, etc.), is meant to capture a sense of the opposite: the local, the particular, and the recognition and valuing of difference. In the Western cannon, the term

[152] Although this exact formulation is my own, I am not the first to describe multiple commonalities between Indigenous philosophers. For instance, in *Dehumanization and the Metaphysics of Genocide: A New Theory for Genocide Prevention*, Lauren Eichler likewise articulated three Indigenous commitments, though she uses the term "principles," that share some similarities to the ones I describe in this chapter. The Indigenous principles she articulates specify that: "1) there is a diversity of creations, 2) everything is related, and 3) the universe is alive and must be approached in a personal manner" (191). Although her second and third points share the most similarity with my first and second, we draw on different Indigenous scholars in order to defend different claims. Whereas the principles she articulates show why "ecocide is a far more direct and egregious crime" within Indigenous cosmologies than it is within Western ontologies (190), my articulation of three Indigenous commitments aim to demonstrate the pluriversality of place.

"land," as conceptually distinct from space or place, is not assigned significant philosophical weight.

In contrast, Indigenous philosophers assign notable philosophical weight to the terms "place" and "land," but the term "space" does not hold the same kind of philosophical significance that it does in the Western canon. This difference is largely due to the fact that Indigenous philosophy is ontologically committed to generating theory from within the local and the particular. Thus, focusing on "space" *as* universal and absolute, would be incongruent with the Indigenous cosmologies that I reference throughout this chapter. However, in some instances, Indigenous philosophers use the terms "space" and "place" interchangeably, especially when critiquing Western Philosophers' focus on "time," as a philosophical concept, rather than location (space/place).[153]

Moreover, some Indigenous philosophers have offered understandings of place, that are notably different from Western conceptions of place. In *Power and Place*, Deloria and Wildcat, describe place as "the site where dynamic processes of interaction occur—where processes between other living beings or other-than-human persons occur."[154] Although phenomenologists of place might not disagree with the idea that place is a site where dynamic processes occur, the recognition of non-human agents, and the significance of their involvement in the construction and maintenance of place, marks one important difference between Indigenous and Western conceptions of place.

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[153] Vine Deloria Jr.'s work shows many examples of this. For instance, see *God is Red* (1973), *Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (1979), and *Power and Place* (2001).

[154] Deloria Jr. and Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, 144.

Another notable difference between Indigenous and phenomenological approaches to place lies in the philosophical weight Indigenous cosmologies ascribe to land as an agent and land-specific relations. Pratt's article on Deloria's agent ontology, further clarifies the significance of the term "land" in Deloria and Wildcat's work:

> From one angle, land and sustaining environments are simply a necessary condition for the existence of any particular beings on earth. From another angle, land, rivers, ecosystems, even farm fields, hills, and mountain ranges are also persons in their own right in interaction with other persons, human and otherwise.[155]

Thus, the term "land," in the Indigenous sense, can carry a dual meaning. On the one hand, land is at once the stage upon which places as sites of dynamic processes can occur. On the other hand, specific lands, or specific geographic locations, can be understood as agents (i.e., persons), independent of, but always in relation with, the human and non-human agents that operate on and within these sites.

In what follows, I draw on different Indigenous philosophers to explicate Indigenous shared commitments to non-human agency, ethical relations, and lands as epistemic authorities, and how these commitments support Indigenous conceptions of place that are conceptually distinct from Western philosophical literature. In so doing, I intend to show how the concept of place can be understood as pluriversal, primary due to the differences in ontological commitments between the Indigenous and Western traditions, as well as how certain places can be or become pluriversal. By positing the pluriversality of place, I hope to open lines of communication between Indigenous philosophers of place and phenomenologists of place that can guide us towards

[155] Scott Pratt, "Persons in Place: The Agent Ontology of Vine Deloria, Jr.," *Newsletter on Indigenous Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2006): 7.

philosophical discussions of place that are anti-colonial rather than complicit in the coloniality of space.

As suggested earlier, one of the most philosophically significant differences between the Western philosophical canon and Indigenous philosophies lies in the status of non-human agency. For instance, Vanessa Watts, in "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Among Humans and Non-Humans," discusses non-human agency as articulated within the Anishinaabe cosmology. Stemming from the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples,[156] Watts describes how the agency of all animate beings is derived from the land—a concept she calls "place-thought." According to Watts, "Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts."[157] Rather than assume the in-animacy of the land, Anishinaabe cosmology posits that the land is an animate agent and that other beings obtain agency through their relations with the land.

Although Watts discuss non-human agency as stemming from one particular Indigenous cosmology, the explicit theorization of non-human agency in Indigenous scholarship is not a common practice. As Rosiek, Snyder, and Pratt observe,

> [i]n Indigenous studies scholarship, non-human agency is taken as a given and so is less frequently introduced as a general concept. Instead, there is more emphasis on the formation of relations with particular other-than-human agents. This is a

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[156] The Anishinaabe peoples are geographically located within the places now called the United States and Canada. In regard to the United States, many Anishinaabe people live in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. In Canada, Anishinaabe peoples live in Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba. The Haudenosaunee peoples populate the area now called Brantford, Ontario. However, some Haudenosaunee peoples also live in the Montreal area.

[157] Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Among Humans and Non-Humans," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 21.

> reflection, in part, of the fact that there is no one 'Indigenous' cosmology or metaphysics.[158]

Even though many Indigenous scholars assume the existence of non-human agency in their work, Indigenous scholars more often theorize non-human agency as coupled with the valuing of ethical relations among all local agents, rather than as a stand-alone concept.

For instance, in his book, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence,* Gregory Cajete (Tewa)[159], claims that "the Lakota aphorism 'mitakuye oyasin' (we are all related) is shared by all Indigenous people,"[160] and the "we" in this aphorism is inclusive of both human and non-human creatures and entities. Similarly, Choctaw[161] scholar Laurelyn Whitt describes what she calls a "relation of belonging" between all agents, human and otherwise, as "ontologically basic" for many Indigenous peoples. She writes, "[t]he land and living entities which make it up are not apart from, but a part, of the people. Nor is 'the environment' something outside of, or surrounding a people."[162]

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[158] Jerry Lee Rosiek, Jimmy Sydner, and Scott Pratt, "The New Materialisms and Indigenous Theories of Non-Human Agency: Making the Case for Respectful Anti-Colonial Engagement," *Qualitative Inquiry* vol. 26, no. 3-4 (2020): 337.

[159] The Tewa people are an ethnic group of the Pueblo Native Americans whose homelands have been historically near the Rio Grande river in the state we now call New Mexico.

[160] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fé, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 178.

[161] The Choctaw peoples historically have resided in what we now call the Southeastern United States, in and around what we now call the state of Alabama.

[162] Laurelyn Whitt, *Science, Colonialism, and Indigenous Peoples: The Cultural Politics of Law and Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43.

The relation of belonging does not just name the fact that the existences of animate beings like humans, animals, plants, rocks, etc. are intertwined, but it specifies *a particular kind of relationship*: one that is not founded upon domination or possession. Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg[163] scholar, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, contrasts the Indigenous relation of belonging to the capitalist-orientation of the West, when she writes:

> Indigenous bodies don't relate to the land by possessing or owning it or having control over it. We relate to land through connection—generative, affirmative, complex, overlapping, and nonlinear *relationship*.[164]

Per Simpson, this relational connection to land includes a connection to everything else that constitutes the land as well, including non-human animals, rocks, plants, etc. Yet, these relationships are not grounded in domination, ownership, or possession. Rather, these relationships provoke questions like: "what is my responsibility to the other residents of this land or place?" as opposed to "how can I make this mine?" In these ways, Indigenous discussions of relation always carry an ethical weight.

Some Indigenous philosophers have also explained, not only how lands and places are regarded as agents, but also how lands and places are often recognized as epistemological authorities. Margaret Kovach of Cree and Saulteaux[165] ancestry describes

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[163] The homelands of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg peoples is located in and around what we now call southern Ontario, Canada.

[164] Leanne Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 43, emphasis in original.

[165] The Saulteaux peoples are a tribal branch of the Ojibwe peoples, whose traditional homelands are located within British Columbia, Canada.

how Plains Cree epistemology is derived from relationships to place.[166] Citing Blackfoot scholar, Narcisse Blood, Kovach describe how places are understood as alive and thinking; places are "imbued with spirit and are our teachers."[167] The knowledge found in particular places teach one how they should relate to a particular place and how to participate in the pre-existing kinship relations that sustain that location and its inhabitants. In this way, Indigenous knowledge is locally based, arising from within a specific area. As Kovach writes, "our knowledges cannot be universalized because they arise from our experience with our places."[168]

The work of Arapaho scholar, Michael Marker, likewise describes an Indigenous understanding of the epistemic potential of land that can only be found relationally, by the act of "being in places*."*[169] Writing on the coastal Salish peoples who reside on the border of Washington and British Columbia, Marker utilizes recorded narratives to explain how, for coastal Salish cultures "[n]ot only are spirit powers known to reside in certain specific places on the landscape, but the methodology for learning about powerful forms of consciousness and visions cannot be extracted from the 'being in places' where the powers exist."[170] He describes the transference of knowledge between person and

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[166] Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 57.

[167] Ibid., 61.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Michael Marker, "There Is No Place of Nature; There Is Only the Nature of Place: Animate Landscapes as Methodology for Inquiry in the Coast Salish Territory," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 31, no. 6 (2018): 456.

[170] Ibid.

place as an exchange between "two sentiences: the mind of the place, and the human mind that is convening and opening to it."[171]

In *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures*, Brian Burkhart (a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) echoes similar claims, and contributes to this discussion by describing Indigenous "localized epistemology." In a sense, approaching specific places and lands as agents and teachers, means engaging in localized epistemology, which stands in contrast to the largely Western practice of delocalized epistemology. Burkhart argues that Western philosophy is dominated by delocalized epistemology because Western epistemologists seek abstracted truths that can be said to exist across all places and times. Classic philosophical questions like "What is knowledge?", "What is time?", and "What is morality?" tend to share the characteristic of abstraction and, for this reason, delocalization. Particularly, when Western philosophers hypothesize certain Truths (with a capital "T") in response to these kinds of questions—Truths that are meant to remain valid across all time and place—they engage in delocalized epistemology because they must also fabricate a continuity across all time and place that underlies these Truths. Burkhart explains:

> If knowledge requires truth over all places and times, over all localities, then knowledge must manufacture continuity over localities, which requires knowledge and even being to be removed from locality, to float free from the land. In Western epistemic practices, human rationality attempts to abstract a core of delocalized truth that is continuous across all localities.[172]

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land*, 118.

In most Western epistemic practice, seeking the common denominators of knowledge—theories and hypothesis that should work across various places and times—often means rejecting that which does not fit, rejecting anything that jeopardizes the continuity of Truth. That which jeopardizes the continuity of Truth is marked as "anomalous." Yet, this demand for continuity and the separation between the consistent (that which "fits" the theory or hypothesis) and the anomalous (that which does not "fit"), "is manufactured through delocality."[173]

Burkhart nonetheless notes that not all Western philosophers practice delocalized epistemology. Alfred Whitehead's claim that our knowledge of nature is "an experience of activity (or passage)" and the process of knowing is an event, in *The Concept of Nature* (1919), is one example.[174] Burkhart does not mention this, but I would also argue that many philosophers from the American Philosophical tradition, especially the classical pragmatists like William James, John Dewey, Jane Addams, engaged in localized epistemology. Other philosophers whose work is also read within the American tradition—those like Anna Julia Cooper, Gloria Anzaldua, and Mary Parker Follet, though not strict pragmatists—I would claim also exhibit localized epistemology. Scott Pratt's book, *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy*, argues that the American Philosophical tradition has a long history of exchanging ideas with Indigenous Philosophers. For this reason, it's less surprising that those in the Americanist tradition strived to posit more localized, as opposed to delocalized, epistemic claims. Erin

[173] Ibid.

[174] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature: The Tarner Lectures Delivered in Trinity College* (Echo Library, 2016), 186.

Mckenna and Pratt's book, *American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to Present*, and Albert Spencer's *American Pragmatism: An Introduction,* also provide a comprehensive history of the American Philosophical tradition, and further discuss the intellectual exchanges that have occurred between Indigenous and American (western) philosophers.

By considering three shared commitments in Indigenous philosophies—the existence of non-human agency, the valuing of ethical relations, and an understanding of lands as epistemic agents—I hoped to show how North American Indigenous considerations of place are notably distinct from the Western philosophical considerations outlined in my previous chapter. Even as scholarship within both philosophical traditions might not disagree on a rudimentary definition of place as "the site where dynamic processes of interaction occur,"[175] the ontological differences in these traditions point to the existence of pluriversality regarding place. This pluriversality results in different approaches to place and emplacement, including differences in what motivates one's investigation into place, who is included in these discussions, and the question of whether philosophical considerations of place have an ethical dimension. While for Indigenous scholars the importance of place inherently has an ethical weight, for phenomenologists of place the desire to give a philosophical voice to place was motivated by the dominance of space, as a philosophical concept, in the Western philosophical canon. Yet, as I aim to show in my following two sections, the question of place, especially pertaining to settler disconnection from place as motivated by colonizing practices, has always been an ethical one. In the following section, I examine

[175] Deloria and Wildcat, *Power and Place*, 144.

the establishment and history of the Chemawa Indian Boarding School that is still in operation near Salem, Oregon. My discussion of Chemawa's early days demonstrates one logical and concrete result of settler disconnect from place, as motivated by settler colonial aims. At the same time, Chemawa's later days seems to show instances where students were attuned to the pluriversality of place, and even used this aspect of emplacement to aid resistance efforts at different points in Chemawa's history.

The Chemawa Boarding School and Life at Chemawa from 1879 to 1950s

In this section, I discuss the Chemawa Indian Boarding School that is still in operation today near Salem, Oregon. I have decided to include an analysis of this particular place for a few reasons. For one, by examining the values, principles, and reasoning that motivated the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools, like Chemawa, I aim to show one logical and concrete result of the coloniality of space that structures EuroAmerican settler's relationship to place and land. Although I could have analyzed a number of different places, including any of the hundreds of Native American boarding schools that operated in the United States from 1879 to present, as a graduate student living in Eugene, Oregon, I felt it was prudent that I consider a place that is local to my current situation in this place and time. Chemawa also holds a unique place in Indigenous boarding school history because it was the second to open in the United States, the first to open in the Pacific Northwest, and is the oldest Native boarding school still in operation today. The following analysis draws on historical records and firsthand accounts to provide an overview of the assimilationist policies and practices that motivated Chemawa's opening and operation from 1879 to the 1950s. This section ends

by discussing different ways that Indigenous students "took back" Chemawa and "turned the power" starting from around the 1960s to present, and how internal student-activism elucidates the resistant potential of place-based subjectivity.

Boarding School Assimilationist Policies and Practices

By the late 1800s, colonial invasion caused approximately 95% reduction in the indigenous population of the area now known as the United States. In *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*, Jeffrey Ostler explains that present day Native American population estimates are contentious:

> …there are questions about who is being counted. Some of the sources for the southern nations, for example, make it clear whether or not enslaved people are included in population figures, but this is not always the case. Similarly, in situations of extensive intermarriage between Indians and non-Indians, it is often impossible to tell whether estimates include people of mixed ancestry, some of whom might identify, for example, as mixedblood, French, or white.[176]

Thus, we cannot say for absolute certain how many indigenous persons have lost their life at the hands of colonial invasion, but we do know from historical record that a significant percentage have.[177]

For many of the surviving Native populations, starting in the late 1800s, the United States government approved initiatives to assimilate Native Americans into white

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[176] Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (Yale Univ. Press, 2019), 397.

[177] The second appendix of Ostler's *Surviving Genocide*, "Appendix 2: Population Estimates by Nation," shows population estimates of various Native nations at different time periods.

society via the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools for Native children.[178] Two schools were approved for opening in opposite coasts between 1879-1880: the Carlisle Industrial School located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Forest Grove Industrial School located in Forest Grove, Oregon. The Forest Grove Industrial School was housed at Pacific University for about five years until its relocation to an area about six miles north of Salem, Oregon. Soon after, the school was renamed the Chemawa Industrial Indian Training School.[179] Both schools were founded upon Henry Richard Pratt's philosophy of assimilation which is best summarized by his intent to "Kill the Indian, save the man" in every Native student.[180] Otherwise put by U.S. Indian Commission William A. Jones in 1903, the goal of Native boarding education was to "exterminate the Indian but develop a man."[181] Whereas Carlisle's doors were permanently closed in 1912, Chemawa remains open today.

Before moving on, I want to say more about the history of the land upon which the Chemawa Industrial Indian Training School was built. In a sense, the story of this land exists within the colonial underside of Chemawa's history—specifics about how Chemawa came to be built there, what existed there prior, and especially *who* existed

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[178] Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (City Lights Publishers, 2004), 12.

[179] SuAnn M. Reddick, "The Evolution of Chemawa Indian School: From Red River to Salem, 1825-1885," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2000): 444.

[180] Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," in *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260-271.

[181] Qtd. in Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man*, 14.

there prior, is only superficially discussed in historical accounts of this schools inception. As mentioned, this school was built on a plot of land, north of what is now called the city of Salem, Oregon, locatable by the coordinates 45.00004°N 122.984712°W. This area lies with the Willamette Valley where the Ahantchuyuk tribe, one of the thirteen major tribes of the Kalapuya peoples, thrived prior to colonial invasion.[182]

The city that we call Salem today was resettled[183] by a Methodist missionary in 1841, near a Kalapuyan village called Tchimikiti. As word of Oregon's abundant land spread, more white settlers resettled into the area. In its early years, the Kalapuyans and white resettlers lived without conflict, until 1846 when the Battle Creek Incident occurred. During this conflict, the Oregon Rangers (volunteer militia) charged a group of Kalapuyans on suspicions of horse theft. In 1856, the US government initiated the removal of the Kalapuyans people, and forced them to relocate to the Grand Ronde Reservation—an area about 18 miles east of what is now called Lincoln City, Oregon.[184]

Shortly after 1885, two circumstances led to the construction of the Chemawa Indian School upon Kalapuya land. The first is that "the U.S. government offered $20,000 for the construction of school buildings if another party

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[182] "Kalapuya: Native Americans of the Willamette Valley, Oregon," *LCC Library*, https://libraryguides.lanecc.edu/kalapuya.

[183] According to the *Oregon Encyclopedia* "The terms resettlement and resettler refer to non-Indigenous residents who came to Oregon from about 1840 to 1859. Resettlement describes the non-Indigenous displacement of Native people and counters the mistaken idea that Oregon had no settled people prior to migration on the Oregon Trail," https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/glossary/Resettlement.

[184] "City of Salem," *Oregon Encyclopedia*, https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/salem_city_of/#.YRLtDdNKjhY

would donate land for the school." Second, "a group of citizens from Salem eager to attract federal money to jump-start the local economy donated 171 acres of land just north of town, the site of present-day Chemawa."[185]

Over the last one hundred and forty years, Chemawa has cultivated a complex history that at one time remained true to Pratt's mission, but now rightfully rejects it. The school's name, "Chemawa," happens to reflect its complicated history. In 1930, the school released the following statement that explains the various theories regarding the school's name:

> It is said that the word "Chemawa" is from the Calapooia language meaning "a place where no one lives." And again it is claimed that the name is from the Chemeketa tribe of Indians and means "Happy Home." There has also been advanced the theory that the name was taken from the Chinook language and that originally the name was "Chewawa," the "che" meaning new and "wawa" talk or language—in other words, "new education." In the course of time it is suggested that somebody blundered and the first "w" in "Chewawa" got changed to an "m," thus making the name "Chemawa," as at present known to all.[186]

Although it is easy to think about Chemawa's history in terms of two distinct moments—the colonial "then" and the enlightened "now"—the ambiguity surrounding the school's name foreshadows the pluriversality that would come to exist in this location throughout various points in time.

Of course, the motivation behind opening Chemawa, and all off-reservation boarding schools, was precisely to assimilate by attempting to dissolve all communal, cultural, and tribal differences, including any ties to place and land, in Native children. This 'transformation process' was envisioned as a total erasure of distinct Native

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[185] Melissa Parkhurst, *To Win the Indian Heart: Music at Chemawa Indian School*, (Oregon State University Press, 2014), 29.

[186] Reddick, "The Evolution of Chemawa Indian School," 445.

identities and construction of an idealized 'universal' American citizen that favors individuality and ego-centrism over communal living. In 1888, John Oberly stated this intent in the following excerpt from the "Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:"

> "[The Native] must be taken out of the reservation through the door of the general allotment act. And he must be imbued with the exalting egotism of American civilization, so that he will say 'I' instead of 'we,' and 'This is mine,' instead of 'this is ours.'[187]

Oberly's declaration showcases how drastically assimilationists wanted to transform these children's worldview, and towards this end, Chemawa's daily operations were modeled after military practices and its curriculum heavily emphasized Christian values—two value systems that were understood as quintessentially "American."

Upon arrival, each student passed through the school entrance that was marked by a distinct archway. The entrances to nearly all Native boarding schools across the nation were marked by a similar archway. The archway symbolized "the transition from 'uncivilized' space to 'civilized' space." Each student "essentially passed from one life to another, entering a difficult and traumatizing time that, for many, marked numerous difficult and traumatizing years."[188] Once inside, a student's appearance was the first to be changed: they were required to wear military style uniforms, boys wore pants and girls wore skirts, and the boys hair was cut short. Alumni, Teresa (Coos/Siletz), who attended

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[187] John H. Oberly, "Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs," in *U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Washington, D.C., 1888. lxxxix.

[188] Margaret Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. T. Lomawaima (eds.), *Away from home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences 1879-2000* (Phoenix, Arizona: The Heard Museum, 2000), 24.

Chemawa from 1927-1932 beginning at the age of 9, described her experience with the uniforms in the following way:

> Let me tell you, we wore uniforms. We were identical. We look like little prison uniforms. It was kinda like your mattress ticking. If you've seen a mattress way back in the 1920s and even 1910 it was striped and coarse. That's what our dresses were. They had no style. They were just cut. The sleeves were not even inset, it was just one piece. We wore high top shoes. We wore long stockings. Everything was regulated. We all looked alike.[189]

Chemawa's student body was composed of Indigenous children from all over the nation. The implementation of a uniform policy was one way that administrators tried to dissolve tribal differences or alliances among the children. For the same reason, the English language was the only permitted language at Chemawa. The following statement found in the 1868 *Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* explains the assimilationist logic behind enforcing the English language policy:

> their barbarous dialects should be blotted out and the English language substituted.... The object of greatest solicitude should be to break down the prejudices of tribe among the Indians; to blot out the boundary lines which divide them into distinct nations, and fuse them into one homogenous mass. Uniformity of language will do this - nothing else will.[190]

We know from first-hand accounts that the English language policy was widely and strictly enforced, sometimes by the use of corporal punishment. Teresa (Coos/Siletz) has the following to say about this aspect of Chemawa boarding school life:

> I lived in [a town] and went to Chemawa from there. I did not go from a reservation which a lot of the students did, which made a big difference also in how the children were treated…The children that came from the reservation were mostly close to full blood if not always full blood, they came with their language, they came with their customs, their clothing, their life styles, their long hair, even their food stuffs

[189] Sonciray Bonnell, *Chemawa Indian Boarding School: The First One Hundred Years, 1880 to 1980* (Universal-Publishers, 1997), 49.

[190] N.G. Taylor, et. al., "Report to the President by the Indian Pease Commission, January 7, 1868," 86.

> they brought. Sometimes family tried to send them things and that was taken away from them. When I think back then and now, as to what happened to some of the kids then, I think they were rather mistreated in that fashion. I don't think that was unusual. I think it happened in all the boarding schools. Trying to take the Indian out of them, clean out the Indian. Make them mainstream into the white world. They didn't want to live in the white world. They wanted to go back to the reservation. They were forbidden to use their language. They got punished if they used it.[191]

Fellow alumni, Russell Jim of the Yakama Nation, recalls the impact that these practices had on his and his sister's lives as Chemawa students in the 1940s:

> I found out later on that it wasn't an education institute it was an assimilation institute. They…tried to discipline everybody when they'd find us speaking our language, they'd beat us, spanked us, spanked our hands. Tell us 'no, no, no, bad.' They did that to my sister so bad that eventually throughout the rest of her life she could understand every word of Indian I spoke, we spoke to her, but she couldn't repeat one sentence without getting into a trauma. That's how bad they beat her.[192]

Disciplinary practices were not exclusively used to enforce the English language policy. Like many off-reservation boarding schools, the daily lives of Chemawa students were controlled by military style regimens: their days were planned by the minute and harsh punishments were administered for failed attempts at running away—what administrators referred to as attempted "desertions."[193]

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[191] Bonnell, *Chemawa Indian Boarding School*, 52.

[192] This testimony is found in Matthew Streib's 2016 article, "Yakama Nation Member Recalls Forced Assimilation at Oregon Boarding School." Streib published Russell Jim's first-hand account in audio form, which I transcribed for this chapter. The original audio can be found here: https://www.knkx.org/post/yakama-nation-member-recalls-forced-assimilation-oregon-boarding-school.

[193] Carolyn J. Marr, "Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest," https://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr.html.

Significant Sites: Classrooms and Vocational Buildings

In 1940, Lawny L. Reyes (Sin-Aikat), and his sister, Luana, were sent to Chemawa after their parents divorced. Although the court granted custody to their father, the judge decided that neither parent could properly care for the children and ordered they be sent to Chemawa—an arrival story all too familiar at Chemawa. The following is Lawny Reyes' recounting of his impressions of the school:

> At Chemawa, I could see that almost everything was different. There were no pine trees like we had back home. The trees that stood at random about the campus were maple, walnut, birch, tall fir, and cedar. The main dormitory buildings and large mess hall were made of dark red brick. These buildings were surrounded by lawns and connected by a crisscrossing of concrete sidewalks.
>
> I found out later that there were more than seventy buildings in Chemawa. Several, like the hospital, auditorium, and classrooms, were east of the railroad tracks. The store, post office, and railroad station were also on the east side of the campus. All the dormitories and the mess hall were west of the railroad tracks. The buildings where many of the trades were taught were located to the south, near the football field and track. These buildings were large and housed a variety of machines and equipment that were used by the older students as they learned different trades. South of the campus was a graveyard. There were nearly 300 markers there. This was the final resting place for students of many tribes who did not return to their homelands.…Years later, I would realize that the layout and landscaping of Chemawa resembled small New England universities.[194]

Like most of the Native boarding schools, Chemawa students followed a "half and half" system that consisted of a traditional academic education in the morning and vocational training in the afternoon. In the classroom, students were taught "U.S. history, geography, language, arithmetic, reading, writing and spelling"—unsurprisingly, the history and

[194] Lawny L. Reyes, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy: Learning to Be Indian*, (University of Washington Press, 2013), 99-100.

geography courses were exclusively taught from the settler point of view.[195] Lawny Reyes wrote the following about his academic training at Chemawa:

> I noticed that the great Indian leaders like Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph, and Geronimo were not mentioned. All the heroes were white, and they were people like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson. General Custer, who was trained at a place called West Point to kill Indians, proved able to defeat only women, children, and elders of the Lakota and Cheyenne. He was considered a hero even in defeat. Crazy Horse and Gall, who were defending their people and homeland against the invaders, were considered savages. I thought white people had strange ways of choosing heroes.
>
> Lewis and Clark were written about and recognized as heroes. Yet the only person in the Lewis and Clark party who knew where they were was Sacajawea, a sixteen-year-old Shoshone with her baby, Baptiste. She was rarely mentioned in any of the books I read. I reflected years later that it was interesting that Lewis and Clark thought they were breaking new ground. They probably were not aware that the nearly invisible trails they followed to reach the West Coast had been well traveled by countless Indians of many tribes. These trails were used continuously for centuries before Lewis and Clark made their trek into the 'wilderness.'[196]

Not only were Indigenous heroes excluded from this history, but the textbooks assigned in these courses also depicted Native peoples as savage, cruel, wild, etc.,[197] in efforts to facilitate internalized racism in Native children towards themselves and their families.

Outside of the classroom, and in various industrial training buildings, young men were expected to take up one of several trades which included "carpentry, blacksmithing, animal husbandry, baking and shop." Young women were expected to take up traditional

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[195] Marr, "Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest,"

[196] Reyes, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy*, 120-121.

[197] Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 73-75.

domestic tasks including cooking and sewing.[198] The gendered division of labor and education reflected European ideals of manhood and womanhood. These schools were not just trying to produce assimilated American citizens, they were trying to create what was seen as the ideal American man and woman.

Moreover, it was claimed that the vocational skills taught at Chemawa were meant to help the children secure employment in settler society post-graduation. Yet, there were distinct racist and classist dimensions to the vocations that the children were allowed to take up. The vocational options at Chemawa were inspired by "preconceived notions of the capabilities and needs of Native Americans" and "ran counter to developments in mainstream America."[199] In other words, the assimilation of the Native Americans, did not mean an equal chance of prosperity in white society. These children were victims of an assimilationist agenda that was fundamentally racist from various angles.

The Presence and Significance of Pluriversality at Chemawa

Illuminating a different side to Chemawa school life, in this section, I discuss ways in which Chemawa students and alumni "took back" or "turned the power," from within, in order to serve Indigenous, rather than settler, ends. While some acts of resistance were unknown to school administrators, some of these acts were more explicit

[198] Marr, "Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest."

[199] K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 153-154.

and public. In what follows, I describe instances in which student resistance efforts transformed Chemawa from an assimilationist school into a pluriversal place throughout different moments in history.

In his memoir, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy*, Lawny L. Reyes describes how his participation in weekly "coffee breaks" produced some of the most impactful memories he has from his school days. "Coffee breaks" were unsanctioned retreats to the school's surrounding forest were Reyes and his friends would brew coffee over an open fire and teach one another about their various cultures and homelands. These escapes helped Reyes cultivate a feeling of belonging and connection, not just with his classmates, but with his own Indigenous culture and ancestors, as well.

On the day of their first "coffee break," Reyes recounts their decision to meet in the forest:

> I was pleased by the density of the woods. The fir trees were tall, and once we were deep into the woods, it gave us a feeling of privacy. The feeling reminded me of home, when I had gone into the forest to escape and think. As I walked with my friends, I thought about my grandfather, White Grizzly Bear. It seemed his presence was near every time I was deep in the woods. I felt more at home in Chemawa with these thoughts.[200]

Logistically, it makes sense that Reyes and his friends decided to meet in the school's surrounding forest: the dense greenery offered them seclusion—perfect for unauthorized gatherings. Moreover, the forest appeared to them as a space with the potential for creating a totally different kind of place within the Chemawa campus. For Reyes and his friends, their "coffee break" ritual transformed Chemawa into a pluriversal place for the rest of their school days.

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[200] Reyes, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy*, 107-108.

As weeks passed and word spread amongst the students, "[t]he number of coffee drinkers grew to more than a dozen."[201] With more student involvement, more opportunities for fostering ethical relations among the children of various tribes grew. At times the students taught each other tribal-specific dances and songs, such as the Wolf Dance and the Eagle Dance—both of which, the students would come to learn, were performed differently within different tribes.[202]

On rare occasions when students received mail packages from home, students would exchange some of their goods and feast in the forest. They would take these opportunities to teach each other about the kinds of foods their homelands provided and how various foods were prepared and stored. Although the children came from various tribes, cultivating a place where they could freely share their histories, dances, music, and food, strengthened their relationships and solidarity. As Reyes' describes,

> We found that the sharing and eating of traditional food was the next best thing to being home. Warm feelings of family, friends, and the People as a whole crossed our minds as we ate. The food satisfied more than our physical cravings. It gave us the strength to endure. Sharing helped us realize that we all had something in common.[203]

Beyond music, dance, and food, the students also used "coffee breaks" to set the record straight regarding the devastating effects that colonial invasion was having upon them and their people back home. For instance, whereas in the classroom, the children were taught history from the settler point of view, in the forest "[w]e younger boys conducted

[201] Ibid., 108.

[202] Ibid., 111.

[203] Ibid., 114.

our own history courses at our coffee breaks, covering the greatness of Indian leaders, Indian warriors, and Indian ways."[204]

In one sense, the forest was a classroom—one that was created and run by the students themselves. In another sense, the forest was also their teacher—not one that resembles any kind of "authoritarian," but one that was itself in flux, creating opportunities for the children to learn new things and exchange knowledges they were not allowed to discuss within earshot of school administrators. The role of the forest, itself, in the "coffee break" ritual showcases, not only the duality of land, but also the kind of epistemic authority the land carried in offering them opportunities for knowledge exchange at that time and place. For instance, the surrounding environment prompted the students to talk about their tribes' mutual respect for non-human animals. Reyes' recounting of these conversations alludes to a general acceptance of non-human agency amongst the students, though they didn't use those terms. For example, Reyes writes:

> [w]e also talked about the animals that lived in our homelands. We all had respect for rattlesnakes. Animals that preyed on others—such as bear, cougar, wolf, and coyote— fascinated us. We all knew that the grizzly was the most dangerous. We had seen eagles and hawks capture prey back home, and we admired them. Some students from Montana and the Dakotas told about the buffalo, pronghorn antelope, and wolves that lived in their homelands. It was clear that we loved animals as much as we loved people. We believed that animals were people also, another type of people. I remembered my mother telling me that the Sin-Aikst regarded the other beings as equal to people and always felt a deep respect for them.[205]

The students' general agreement that animals were people of a different type, echoes the previously cited Indigenous understandings of non-human agency.

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[204] Ibid., 121.

[205] Ibid., 111.

At the same time, routine "coffee breaks" allowed the children to just *be* children. Reyes' describes how he and his friends would sometimes play "war games" in the forest. They would use sticks and garbage lids as makeshift weapons, and ventured deeper into the woods to seek new and exciting hiding spots. These games also challenged them to create ethical codes regarding what was fair play and what was not.[206] As Reyes' writes, "[s]ometimes anger and bad feelings resulted. We learned how to deal with pain."[207] Per Reyes' account, it seems that even the games they played offered opportunities for a hands-on education, particularly regarding communal conflict resolution.

The protective forest also offered some of the students a safe place to emotionally process what they were experiencing—especially when it came to their struggles with loneliness and homesickness. As Reyes' reflects,

> [s]ometimes I witnessed the loneliness of friends and other boys at Chemawa, but they did not talk out loud about their feelings. They did not share their innermost feelings with anyone. Years of deprivation had toughened them.… The only time I heard words of loneliness was when we gathered on Saturdays for our coffee breaks in the woods. After we had exhausted the topics of various Indian ways and experiences, someone would talk about the people he missed. Our carefree and happy attitudes were set aside as we sat quietly and thought about loved ones and home.[208]

Unlike many of his peers, Reyes arrived at Chemawa not knowing much about his Indigenous ancestry. Although his mother was of the Sin-Aikst peoples, Reyes' was raised in settler society. Yet, to the credit of routine "coffee breaks," Chemawa had the

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[206] Ibid., 112-1113.

[207] Ibid., 113.

[208] Ibid., 113-114.

opposite effect on Reyes' than its founding assimilationists intended. The "coffee breaks," as a place-generated resistance practice, exposed him to various Indigenous histories, values, and ideals: "[i]t was during these times that I learned about other Indians and their ways of living.…These experiences helped me develop for the first time the feeling of being an Indian."[209] In short, it was through the creation of a whole new kind of place within the existent site of coloniality—or, through the pluriversalizing of Chemawa as a place—that Reyes and his friends were able to collectively counter-act, or resist, some of the assimilationist principles and practices that they were subjected to.

Student led resistance efforts that further contributed to Chemawa's pluriversality continued into the 1960s and 1970s, though in different forms. Around this time social movements like the Pan-Indian and Red Power movements, opened more doors for "turning the power" at various Native boarding schools, Chemawa included. For example, students rallied to make changes to the school dress code: male students fought for the right to grow their hair long,[210] while female students advocated for the right to wear pants instead of skirts.[211]

Students also organized official clubs that celebrated their Native cultures, marking another era of student-led resistance at Chemawa. In 1965, the Indian Heritage Club was established, and its aim was to teach both Chemawa students and the public about traditional Indigenous ways of life. On occasion, club members organized outings

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[209] Ibid., 112.

[210] Gene Leitka and Eugene Leitka, "Search for Identity Creates Problems for Indian Students," *Journal of American Indian Education* 11, no. 1 (1971): 7.

[211] "Student Council Report," in the *Chemawa American*, vol 67.

to Salem and set up displays or gave presentations that showcased Indigenous items and outfits, in an effort to combat stereotypes and biases against Indigenous peoples. After one such presentation to a class of fourth graders, one Chemawa student ambassador left "amazed at some of the strange concepts and ideas that these students had about Indian people."[212]

Throughout these years, some students used the school newspaper, *The Chemawa American*, to publish articles and creative pieces arguing for curriculum reform. For instance, Mildrad Quaempts, 1972 article, "Save Our Dying Languages," argued for the establishment of an Indigenous language program, in an effort to save Indigenous languages from extinction.[213] A few years earlier, in 1969, Navajo student Larry Earl Lewis' article, "Eskimos Don't Live in Igloos," recounted his experience questioning the assumptions he carried of his Alaskan peers. Lewis' article advocated for internal community building among students based on ideals of genuine curiosity and cultural humility towards one another.[214] From the ground-up, and with minimal to no assistance from school administration, Chemawa students sought ways to re-write the rules and ethical codes that stemmed from the school's assimilationist agenda. These students not only attempted to modify official school policy and social expectations, but also the

[212] Sharon Valarde, "Chemawa Students Are Good Ambassadors," *Chemawa American* 61, no. 1 (November 1964): 1.

[213] Mildrad Quaempts, "Save Our Dying Languages," *Chemawa American*, vol 71.

[214] Larry Earl Lewis, "Eskimos Don't Live in Igloos," *Chemawa American* 65, no 5 (March 1969): 3.

unconscious biases they carried against each other in efforts to foster stronger ethical relations towards one another.

First-hand accounts of student-led resistance shows examples of how pluriversality of place was cultivated and maintained at Chemawa throughout different points in history. The most prominent example of this phenomenon is found in Reyes' and his friends' "coffee break" ritual. I claim that Reyes' and his friends fostered pluriversality while at Chemawa because their escapades into the forest allowed them to retreat from not just the watchful eyes of Chemawa administration, but also the colonizing practices they were subject to on a daily basis, together, carving out a protective place within a place. For Reyes and his friends, the forest edge, although still within Chemawa proper, became a metaphysical border between the colonial and the anti-colonial. Routinely crossing this metaphysical border allowed the students to enlighten and assist each other in the cultivation of a new kind of subjectivity, one that helped them not just survive their time at Chemawa but actively combat the school's mission. In other words, it was through the "coffee breaks" —through the collective fostering of pluriversality—that Chemawa managed to "fail" these students. Or, rather, their creation of a place in which they could cultivate this kind of subjectivity, is what helped them prevail in being students and children, despite the school's mission.

Over the next thirty years, Indigenous student and community activism slowly help Chemawa progress from a site of explicit coloniality that serves settler ends, to a place that is striving to uplift Indigenous youth. As of 2020, the school's official "Academic and Residential Life Handbook," includes an acknowledgement of the school's past and what Chemawa is doing differently now:

> The history of boarding school was to erase all aspects of students' culture, language, traditional beliefs, spirituality and connection to their tribal communities. Today, this has been replaced with an embrace and welcoming of each student's tribal belief, history, culture, language and tribal values. Part of the school's graduation requirements mandate that students take two culture classes which includes Native literatures, Native histories, Native arts and art history, and Native studies, as well as complete a culminating project that identifies the unique nature of their individual cultural heritage….Chemawa is a place that recognizes and celebrates tribal diversity as well as the oneness of all indigenous people, tribal self-determination and respect for the inter-relatedness of all peoples and life.[215]

The school's radically different mission statement shows how Chemawa has come a long way since its early days, but it still has some ways to go. On the one hand, the change in curriculum from a focus on the assimilationist erasure of Native histories and culture to the welcoming and embracing of Native heritages is a step in the right direction. On the other hand, generalized classes like "Native Studies," "Native Art," and "Native History," can also further disconnect students from the specific land they are on and the lands they are from.

In addition, in 2017, Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) published a five-part series on Chemawa that suggests the school still has some important administrative problems that it needs to overcome. The OPB series discussed a general culture of secrecy at Chemawa, including lack of transparency regarding questionable spending practices,[216] and a pattern of refusing to hire Native American school administrators.[217] Although questionable bookkeeping is problematic, I find it more concerning that the

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[215] "Chemawa Indian School Academic and Residential Life Handbook, 2020-21," 4-5.

[216] Rob Manning and Tony Schick, "Behind the Fence: Chemawa's Culture of Secrecy," *Oregon Public Broadcasting.*

[217] Tony Schick and Rob Manning, "Help Wanted: Questionable Hiring and Non-Native Administrators at Chemawa," *Oregon Public Broadcasting.*

school demonstrates a pattern of refusing to hire Native American school administrators. Whether this exclusion is intentional or not, this pattern highlights a lack of sincerity regarding the school's new mission of uplifting, rather than erasing, Native peoples. I would say that the school's claims to progress are questionable, even perhaps suspicious, if Native persons are not being hired into leadership roles and positions of power. Lastly, and equally problematic, the school has yet to address the fact that the school rests on stolen land—the "history" section of school's website does, for instance, not even acknowledge that Chemawa was built upon land previously occupied by the Kalaypua peoples.[218]

As stated previously, almost 100 years ago, Chemawa students would enter the school by walking through the main archway which was meant to symbolized their "transition from 'uncivilized' space to 'civilized' space."[219] Today, Chemawa students enter by passing through a gateway that is connected to a chain-linked fence that was built around the perimeter of the school in the early 2000s. Although Chemawa is no longer an explicit site of assimilationist coloniality, it still has some ways to go before it can be called a true site of Indigenous liberation, and the chain-linked fence that now surrounds the school seems to more accurately symbolize its contemporary problems.

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[218] "Chemawa History," *Chemawa Indian School,* https://chemawa.bie.edu/history.html.

[219] Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima (eds.), *Away from home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences 1879-2000*, 24.

Conclusion

My aim in this chapter was not just to contribute to emerging conversations between phenomenologists of place and Indigenous philosophers, but to propose the place be understood as pluriversal. Although I believe there are potentially numerous examples of the pluriversality of place across history, this chapter payed particular attention to how this quality of place aided some Chemawa students in resisting the assimilationist practices and policies they were forced to endure. My next chapter will continue this conversation 3000 miles south of Oregon, and further explore the pluriversality of place in conjunction with another aspect of emplacement that I am calling "place-in-being."

CHAPTER V

PLACE-IN-BEING AS CATALIZING MULTIPLICITOUS SUBJECTIVITY: VIOLA CANALES' *THE TEQUILA WORM* IN CONVERSATION WITH PHILOSOPHIES OF THE AMERICAS

Introduction

In considering other ways of thinking about place, especially as in contrast to Western approaches, my previous chapter drew upon the works of Indigenous philosophers and described what I am calling *the pluriversality of place*. I argued that place can be understood as pluriversal in two senses. 1) How one understands what place is, and how places operate in our lives, is impacted by the ontological and epistemological frameworks that one brings to investigations of place. Thus, with the existence of multiple epistemologies and ontologies arise pluriversal ways of understanding place. My previous chapter demonstrated a kind of pluriversality by describing how Indigenous ontologies, as distinct from western ontologies, produce different ways of understanding and articulating the function and value of place. 2) Given that conceptions of place are influenced by ontological and epistemological frameworks, subjects can *experience* places as *ontologically multiple*. In other words, places can "hold" multiple ontologies which means that subjects can experience place in a plural way. My discussion of some of the student-led resistance practices that took place at the Chemawa Indian Boarding school in the 1940s-1960s, is one example of how a place can "hold" multiple ontologies and be experienced as plural.

Here, I continue describing the pluriversality of place but with a stronger focus on how subjectivity relates to place. By drawing on two currents of philosophies from the Americas, particularly American pragmatism and Latina feminist border thought, as well as Viola Canales' novel *The Tequila Worm*, I describe a relationship between place and subjectivity that I am calling *place-in-being.* Place-in-being names a relation between place and the very being of subjects. I claim that place is so fundamental to being that, for some subjects, relations to place have the power to split, multiply, or re-shape subjectivity. In this way, for some subjects, place-in-being drives or fosters multiplicitous selfhood – a theoretical understanding of non-singular selfhood put forth by Latina border feminists.

Place-in-being is, in part, inspired by the phenomenological works of Edward Casey and Jeff Malpas, as discussed in my second chapter. In their works, they posited place's essential importance to human subjectivity. Namely, they rightfully claim that place and self are codependent concepts: one could not exist without the other. Their focus, thus, was on what our experiences of *being-in-place* are. In this chapter, I propose that we consider a notion that I am calling, *place-in-being*, which is intended to name a fundamental relation to place whereby place is so ingrained in one's lived experience, that place seems to actively shape subjectivity.

Moreover, in this chapter, I argue that place-in-being fosters or drives the multiplicity of the self as described by certain philosophers of the Americas. Philosophies of the Americas matter for the study of place as these bodies of literature locate theory specifically within place: the geographic locations that encompasses what we now call "the Americas." My first section of this chapter describes what two American pragmatists

have argued regarding how selfhood is shaped by place and emplacement. Yet, these pragmatists largely focus on the self as singular. In contrast to the singular self, but with equal import on the significance of place for the shaping of subjectivity, my second section discusses the self as multiple by drawing on theoretical work from within Latina feminist border thought. In this second section, I also note how the pluriversality of place has always already been operating within Latina feminist border thought, even though it has not yet been explicitly articulated or fully unpacked. In my final section, I offer a more in-depth, place-focused, reading of Gloria Anzaldua's Borderlands, and introduce Viola Canales' novel, *The Tequila Worm*, into this conversation. I believe that these works show how place-in-being fosters and drives multiplicitous selfhood.

American Pragmatism on the Self and Environment

In considering how emplacement shapes subjectivity, I decided to include a discussion of the works of certain American pragmatists for two reasons. For one, early American pragmatists have always situated pragmatism as arising from, and continually informed by, the experiences of those residing within the United States. John Dewey, one of the founders of classical American pragmatism, describes pragmatism as the result of European philosophy's encounter with the "distinctive traits of the environment of American life."[220] For this reason, Albert Spencer, in *American Pragmatism: An Introduction*, argues that pragmatism should be understood "as a philosophy of place that

[220] John Dewey, "The Development of American Pragmatism," *The Later Works of John Dewey, Volume 2, 1925-1953* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1925), 19.

attempts to understand the meaning-making activities that shape the American experience."[221]

At the same time, some philosophers have challenged pragmatists' use of the descriptive "American" for this philosophical tradition. John Lysaker, for instance, argues that describing a philosophical tradition as "American" perpetuates the capitalist, imperialist, and racists tenants upon which this nation was built.[222] However, in this regard, I agree with Pratt and Mckenna, when they write: "we must see the work of philosophy—and philosophy in America in particular—as inexorably bound to a history of domination and the struggle for liberation. Those who would set aside the American name, in effect, fail to take responsibility for these histories."[223] Similarly, I maintain that acknowledging the specificity of place, better serves the aim of attempting to decolonize philosophical thought. If we pretend that this philosophical movement did not emerge from a specific context, then we will continue replicating the coloniality of space and excluding the lived experiences of those most marginalized in this nation.

The second reason that I discuss American pragmatism in this chapter is because a number of American pragmatists have theorized how our senses of selfhood are shaped and formed. Drawing on lived experience, a few pragmatists have also examined the ways in which our senses of self are inseparable from, and undoubtably impacted by, the

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[221] Albert Spencer, *American Pragmatism: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK and Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2020), vii.

[222] John Lysaker, "Essaying America: A Declaration of Independence," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 3 (2012): 531-553.

[223] Mckenna and Pratt, *American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to the Present*, 1.

particular environments we inhabit. Here, I focus on John Dewey's work on the self as motivated by his commitment to the organism-environment relation, as well as Erin Mckenna's observation that pragmatists' theorizations of selfhood need to acknowledge how structures of power impact the self's ability to shape environments.

John Dewey was a prolific early pragmatist who wrote on philosophical questions of metaphysics, education, social reform, democracy, human nature, logic, and more. Dewey's writings on the qualities of the self, especially in relation to human development, were motivated by his concern for cultivating democracy and ethical citizens. His books, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1922) and *Democracy and Education* (1916), describe the self as continually in a process of becoming, rejecting the idea that humans are born with particular natures or essences. In his words, "the self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action."[224] However, foundational to Dewey's pragmatists work, as Trevor Pearce has argued, is his understanding of the organism-environment interaction.[225]

For Dewey, the continual shaping of one's self is dependent upon the environments that one inhabits. Organism and environment are interlocked in mutual relations of construction and reconstruction. William James, Dewey's pragmatist forefather, systematically described Dewey's articulation of the organism-environment

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[224] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916) 427.

[225] Trevor Pearce, "The Origins and Development of the Idea of Organism-Environment Interaction," in *Entangled Life: Organism and Environment in the Biological and Social Sciences*, eds. Eric Desjardins & Trevor Pearce (Springer, 2014).

relation in the following way: "…for each action of *E* [environment] upon *O* [organism] changes *O*, whose reaction in turn upon *E* changes *E*, so that *E*'s new action upon *O* gets different, eliciting a new reaction, and so on indefinitely."[226] Put differently, Dewey subscribed to the notion at organisms and environments mutually influence one another, in a continual process of transformation.

Many of Dewey's works demonstrate his commitment to this position. For instance, in *Experience and Nature* (1925) Dewey explains that "what the organism actually does is to act so as to change its relationship to the environment."[227] In *Democracy and Education*, where he argues that education is a central tool for shaping democratic citizens, Dewey claims,

> the only way in which adults consciously control the kind of education which the immature get is by controlling the environment in which they act, and hence think and feel. We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference.[228]

In this passage, he makes clear how strongly he believes that environment shapes the self, claiming that environment *is* that which teaches the young, not other more developed organisms.

In *Human Nature and Conduct,* Dewey outlines a more specific account of how one's self is shaped by our locational surroundings. In this work, Dewey claims that the shaping of the self is mediated by three processes: impulse, habit, and intelligence. Impulse, for Dewey, refers to our innate drives and appetites, those human characteristics

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[226] William James, "The Chicago School," *Psychological Bulletin* 1 (1904): 1–5.

[227] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago: Open Court, 1925) 283.

[228] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 41.

that do not operate at the level of rationality and are universal to humankind. Examples of impulses include feelings of fear, anger, joy, sadness, tiredness, etc. Per Dewey, organisms are always engaging with their environment, whether their environments are unnoticeably safe or alarmingly precarious, and it is their surrounding environments that give rise to their rudimentary impulses. However, our responses to impulses, the actions we take as propelled by these primary feelings, over time, produce consistent and more meaningful actions, which is what Dewey calls habits.

For Dewey, "[h]abits as organized activities are secondary and acquired, not native and original. They are out-growths of unlearned activities."[229] The impulse of pain caused by placing our hands on a hot stove leads us to cultivate the habit of not touching hot stoves. Moreover, this act might also lead us to cultivate a habit of caution towards the unknown, since a certain impulse must have prompted our desire to place our hand on a hot stove in the first place. However, the relationship between a habit and the impulse that caused it is not always predictable. According to Dewey, "Any impulse may become organized into almost any disposition according to the way it interacts with surroundings," which means that habits are not universal in the way that impulses are.[230] For instance, someone who never grew up with a stove top, might have cultivated the habit of avoiding other tools and machines that can cause pain from burning heat, but might not avoid stove tops if they do not know they can be burned by them. Habits are

[229] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), 89.

[230] Ibid., 95.

specific to environments, which means that physical location, time, culture, and all things external to organisms influence the kinds of habits organisms can cultivate.

According to Dewey, the summation of habits "constitute the self."[231] The sum of our habits is the way we interact with our environment and is what helps us remain in homeostasis with all the environment(s) we inhabit. For Dewey, a habit is not a thing: "[a] 'habit' is a term used to indicate quality, type, or line of behavior...they only describe activities that are subject to prediction."[232] Thus, our habits are not something we possess, but rather our habits *are* us.

Yet, selfhood, for Dewey is far from unchanging and static; habits can be altered but only if environment is taken into consideration. In other words, selves can grow and change, but only if we re-locate to different environments or if the environments we inhabit also shift and change. Thus, for Dewey, our self cannot change without a consideration of the environment we inhabit. Dewey put it this way:

> [For habits to change] there must be change in objective arrangements and in situations. We must work on the environment not merely the hearts of men. To think otherwise is to suppose that flowers can be raised in a desert or motor cars run in a jungle. Both things can happen and without a miracle. But only by first changing the jungle and desert.[233]

Even if organisms do not want their habits to change, a change in environment can sometimes force an organism to alter their habits. However, the intentional art of altering

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[231] Ibid., 25.

[232] Ibid., 102.

[233] Ibid., 22.

old habits or acquiring new habits in response to different or changed environments is what Dewey calls intelligence.

Dewey's understanding of intelligence is different from the typical understanding as measured by academic standards. Instead of defending the notion of intelligence as the acquisition of knowledge, Dewey defines intelligence as a practical function that allows one to live a successful and stable life. His idea of intelligence is similar to Plato's and Socrates' ideas that the intelligence of the philosopher should be in service to them living a good life.[234] For Dewey, when an organism's habits are not sustainable in a new or changing environment, that organism's intelligence is measured by their ability to cultivate new habits that are better suited for the environment or their ability to change the environment to sustain their existing habits. Put another way, "intelligence is a particular manifestation of habitual behavior that functions to 'transform a situation in which is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, and harmonious."[235]

Yet, Dewey's measure of intelligence does not offer a complete picture of how selves are impacted and shaped by the environments they inhabit. As some feminist pragmatists have observed, Dewey's theorization does not fully consider the fact that some subjects, especially marginalized subjects, are impacted by social power structures like racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. These structures of power impact some subject's ability to alter their habits and selfhood, and some selves have more power than others to

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[234] Yoram Lubling, *The Person Vanishes: John Dewey's Philosophy of Experience and the Self* (New York and Washington, DC: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2011), 104.

[235] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, 103.

shape and re-shape the particular environments that they inhabit. For instance, Erin McKenna's "The Need for a Pragmatist Feminist Self" argues for a self rooted in a dual consideration of the works of John Dewey and Sarah Hoagland. The feminist pragmatist self is intended to be a response to the "incomplete pictures of the self" found in the ethics of care and ethics of justice.[236] Mckenna outlines Dewey's notion of the "integrated self," i.e. an expanded notion of Dewey's intelligent self, previously described. The integrated self, "acts more than [they are] acted upon; [they are] involved in and responsible for [their] own creation. [They are] not thrown around by natural or social forces, but use such forces with intelligence, purpose, and foresight."[237] In other words, Dewey's integrated self takes control of their environment, and thus has the agential power to shape themselves. Yet, as a keen feminist lens reveals, not all environments and places are experienced equally by all subjects. For this reason, McKenna draws on Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Value*, not only because Hoagland's "view of the self as 'one among many' provides a nice link between feminist and pragmatist thought," but mainly to argue that Dewey's integrated self must be modified to account for the ways in which, for example, "heterosexism establishes the relationship of domination and subordination as the normal way of relating."[238] Therefore, those in a position of subordination, in any particular environment, cannot

[236] Erin Mckenna, "The Need for a Pragmatist Feminist Self," in *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, ed. Charlene Haddock Seigfried (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 133.

[237] Ibid., 148-150.

[238] Ibid.,150-151.

become integrated selves in the way Dewey describes, and, as we know, those typically set in positions of subordination tend to be women, persons of color, queer persons, etc.

Going further, Hoagland argues that some subjects might even need to leave environments in which one is in a position of subordination before any attempts at changing the self, on the individual level, can be seriously considered.[239] Thus, per McKenna, what is needed is a pragmatist feminist self - a theory of the self that posits that selves are shaped by environment and habit, that, at the same time, acknowledges that the environments one inhabits are always already imbued with social relations of power. The pragmatist feminist self, unlike Dewey's original integrated self, emphasizes changes in relations of power just as much as it defends the need for changes in habits in individuals.

In recent years, some Latina feminists' philosophers have provided novel accounts of non-singular selfhood that highlight how some liminal subjects have adapted to, but also began resisting, these environmental, or place-specific, relations of power. One prominent example includes the work of Gloria Anzaldúa whose writings describe selfhood as informed by her lived experiences living in the South Texas U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Anzaldúa's account of the self as non-singular and shaped by place, is compatible with Dewey's and McKenna's pragmatists articulations of the self as constructing, and constructed by, the environments one inhabits. Moreover, Spencer's previously mentioned book, *American Pragmatism*, argues that Gloria Anzaldúa should be read as an American pragmatist, even though she does not explicitly describe herself

[239] Ibid.,153.

as such. In the following section, I discuss how Anzaldúa and her predecessors articulate the self as plural, in order to unpack the relationship between the multiplicity of the self, the pluriversal place, what I am calling place-in-being.

Multiplicitous Selfhood with Anzaldúa, Lugones, and Ortega

Plural, or multiplicitous, selfhood,[240] is a central theme in what Elena Ruiz has described as "feminist border thought."[241] Methodologically, feminist border thought draws on existential, phenomenological, sociopolitical, and decolonial theory. Most feminist border writings evoke these methodologies to describe experiences that have been rendered invisible within mainstream feminist circles. Of particular importance, feminist border writers describe their lived experiences in ways that challenge western notions of a singular, unified, self. The writings of feminist border theorists testify to the existential experiences of having a non-singular self.

Three prominent feminist border theorists are Gloria Anzaldúa, Maria Lugones, and Mariana Ortega. Both Lugones and Ortega were inspired by Anzaldúa, as her writings spoke to their own lived experiences. Within the works of Anzaldúa, Lugones, and Ortega, I see the greatest traction for further articulating the pluriversality of place in

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[240] Maria Lugones uses the term plural selfhood. Mariana Ortega prefers the term multiplicitous selfhood in order to indicate that those who experience non-singular selfhood, highlight different selves in different contexts, without losing their sense of an "I." When referring to Lugeons' work, I will use "plural selfhood." When referring to Ortega's work and my own position, since I agree with Ortega's metaphysical conception of the non-singular self, I will use "multiplicitous selfhood."

[241] Elena Ruiz-Aho, "Feminist Border Thought," in *Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Social and Political Theory*, eds. Gerard Delanty and Stephen P. Turner (Routledge, 2011).

relation to anti-colonial articulations of emplacement. In this section, I trace the development of multiplicitous selfhood, especially focusing on times when these theorists emphasize the important of place. In this body of literature, I argue, we can see the pluriversality of place and place-in-being as always already assumed, but not yet fully acknowledged or articulated. My next section will further describe what I see as the relationship between selves and places in such a way that describes the role that place-in-being plays in the catalyzing of multiplicitous selfhood.

Anzaldúa: the New Mestiza—a Plural Self

Gloria Anzaldúa's most cited work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), describes her experiences growing up along the U.S-Mexico border. Her theorization of non-singular selfhood, which she calls "the new *mestiza*" is directly informed by her childhood and adolescence in the Rio Grande Valley. In *Borderlands*, it is clear that place plays a central and key role in her selfhood and identity. As Priscilla Solis Ybarra argues in *Writing the Good Life: Mexican American Literature and the Environment*, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* is describing, not just the Rio Grande Valley, but the identity of the land alongside the identity of its Chicano/a peoples, and how the two are interconnected.[242]

From the first chapter, the relevance and value of place, is readily apparent. Anzaldúa opens *Borderlands*, with a more accurate account of Texas history. She recounts how "[i]n the 1800s, Anglos migrated illegally to Texas, which was then part of

[242] Priscilla Solis Ybarra, *Writing the Goodlife: Mexican American Literature and the Environment* (University of Arizona Press, 2016), 28.

Mexico, in greater and greater numbers and gradually drove the *tejanos* (native Texans of Mexican descent) from their land…[The Anglo's] illegal invasion forced Mexico to fight a war with the U.S., in an effort to keep Texas…."[243] In 1848, Mexico lost the war and was coerced into relinquishing Texas to the settler colonists. On February 2nd of that year, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the *tejanos* became foreigners in their own land. Texas was now a part of the United States, and the Mexicans that lived on that land became overnight citizens of the United States. However, this is not the history that the state of Texas currently teaches its school children. The current narrative does not acknowledge how white settlers illegally migrated to Texas and drove the *tejanos* from their land, much less the confusion and helplessness that the *tejanos* experienced having no vote in becoming overnight citizens of a different country. In response, some Chicano/as abandoned their land and homes and migrated further south, back onto Mexican land. Others refused to leave, and protested the new order.

Anzaldúa's family were among the families that stayed, and the narrative of *Borderlands* proceeds by telling us about her family and life on the border. Growing up in the Rio Grande Valley, Anzaldúa tells us how she continually juggled Anglo-American and Mexican American cultures and family values, while facing racism and discrimination on both sides. For instance, although she was raised in a bilingual area, schoolteachers nonetheless admonished her for speaking Spanish in school. As she tells us: "being caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was a good three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler." Even as an adult, her university forced her to enroll in a

[243] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 28.

courses aimed specifically at removing her "non-American" accent.[244] For Anzaldúa and many Chicano/as from the border, the culmination of these kinds of experiences has resulted in multi-layered forms of internalized discrimination and racism. As Anzaldúa describes: "within us and within *la culture Chicano*, commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture."[245] Although these kinds of experiences can happen to any Chicano/a in the United States, no matter where they are geographically located, *Borderlands* emphasizes a particular kind of impact these experiences can have on those whose day to day lives are geographically and culturally situated in the cross hairs of two nations.

For this reason, Anzaldúa argues that the continual cultural collisions that occur between the United States and Mexico have given rise to a new kind of culture, one that is neither fully Mexican nor fully of the United States, but instead a hybrid of both. Hence, Anzaldúa describes the U.S.-Mexico border as a *borderland:* a place where Chicano/as experience "[t]he coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference" which causes "*un choque*, a cultural collision."[246] For instance, in the fifth chapter of *Borderlands*, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," Anzaldúa describes the seven languages that a Chicano/a from Southwest Texas might speak: Standard English, working class and slang English, Standard Spanish, Standard Mexican

[244] Ibid., 75-76.

[245] Ibid., 100.

[246] Ibid.

Spanish, North American Spanish dialect, Chicano Spanish, Tex-Mex, and Pachuco. She specifically describes Chicano Spanish as a "border tongue" and "a living language," one that "sprang out of the Chicanos' need to identify ourselves as a distinct people."[247] In this chapter, Anzaldúa also describes how South Texas Chicano/as developed their own accent, so their use of these languages might sound distinct from speakers of other regions, especially regarding Chicano Spanish. As she explains, "Chicanos and other Spanish speakers also shift *ll* to *y* and *z* to *s*. We leave out initial syllables saying tar for *estar*; *toy* for *estoy*, *hora* for *ahora*."[248]

Mariana Alessandri's article, "Forging El Mundo Zurdo: Sexual and Linguistic Atravesados in Gloria Anzaldúa's Rio Grande Valley," draws inspiration from *Borderlands* to further describe the cultural mestizaje (mixing) taking place in the U.S-Mexico borderlands. Alessandri has also spent a significant amount of time living and teaching in the Rio Grande Valley, so this piece is inspired by her personal experiences, as well. In this article, Alessandri suggests that "subversive acts like speaking Spanglish and transgressing gender norms are ethico-political in nature, and can be especially effective in shifting perceptions about impurity in geographical borderlands like the Rio Grande Valley."[249] In line with Anzaldúa, Alessandri thematizes the linguistic mestizaje and again brings to light the ways in which hybrid languages both continually arise and

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[247] Ibid., 77.

[248] Ibid., 79.

[249] Mariana Alessandri, "Forging El Mundo Zurdo: Sexual and Linguistic Atravesados in Gloria Anzaldúa's Rio Grande Valley," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (2015): 2.

are policed in the borderlands. However, she takes this analysis further to argue a connection between linguistic mestizaje and sexual mestizaje. She writes, "[i]t is fitting that border people adopt a border tongue. Anzaldúa's 'forked tongue' evokes the image of border-bodies as also being forked." She proceeds to examine "cross-dressing, androgyny, and other types of sexual border crossings," to argue that "similar to the way Spanglish [what Anzaldúa calls Chicano Spanish] is taken as an assault on both Spanish and English, various forms of sexual deviance are taken as an assault upon heteronormativity."[250]

What I find most interesting in Alessandri's connection between the linguistic mestizaje and sexual mestizaje is her emphasis on place. She writes: "in the valley, if someone wears a beard and high heels, their body is different from a cross-dresser in New York even though both are undoubtedly challenging the logic of purity."[251] Although she does not describe the specifics of what these differences are, I take Alessandri to be contending that for a Valley person, the connection between linguistic mestizaje could give rise to a sexual mestizaje that is always in construction and at the same time resisting gender or sexual norms. For a Valley cross-dresser, perhaps Alessandri is suggesting that there are particular bodily comportments, manners of expression, or manners of speaking, born from situated place-specific cultural mixing, that differentiate them from a cross-dresser from other places.

[250] Ibid., 7.

[251] Ibid.

In *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa describes how cultural collisions in the Rio Grande Valley between the U.S. and Mexican cultures have resulted in a new kind of subjectivity, a subjectivity she calls "the new *mestiza*." Anzaldúa details how the opposing messages she received from her Mexican, Indigenous, and U.S/Anglo cultures cultivated in her a desire to seek a new way of being, one that was born from the junctures of these influences. Anzaldúa's new *mestiza* describes what happens to selves that must cope with contradictory messages, messages that are most prominent at the "borders" of a society. Per Anzaldúa, these place-based and cultural influences are so ingrained in subjectivity that new mestizas residing within borderlands become, or, are "border-selves."

Drawing on Indigenous (Aztec) philosophy, Anzaldúa claims that border-selves are continuously in a state of *Nepantla*. As she explains:

> *Nepantla* is the Náhuatl word for an in-between state, that uncertain terrain one crosses when moving from one place to another, when changing from one class, race, or sexual position to another, when traveling from the present identity into a new identity.[252]

According to Anzaldúa, new *mestizas* (or border-selves) are in a state of *nepantla*: they must juggle conflicting messages stemming from multiple world-views and ways of being. Rather than reject one culture in favor of another, as the colonial West often prescribes through assimilationist practices, new mestizas blend and mix their various influences. This refusal to side with one way of being over another results in the creation of a hybrid, plural, selves. Hence, Anzaldúa invokes the term *mestiza*, which comes from *mestizaje* a term that was historically used to designate the racial mixing of Europeans

[252] Gloria Anzaldúa, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (Duke Univ. Press, 2009), 108.

and Amerindians. But, the "new *mestiza*," is not just racially mixed, her "self" is mixed and she must cope "by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity" of all kinds. Anzaldúa states that the new *mestiza*,

> has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.[253]

According to Anzaldúa, by refusing to subscribe to dualistic, either/or, thinking, the new *mestiza* can develop a *mestiza* consciousness, whose work it is "to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh, and through the images in her work, how duality is transcended."[254]

I find Anzaldúa's emphasis on the self as mixed and plural as highlighting an element to her theory that is not often acknowledged. Why does she claim that for border-selves, "nothing is rejected, nothing abandoned?" Why don't border-selves simply "become" different selves in different contexts? Anzaldúa's work continually emphasizes plurality and mixing, over replacement or total transformations of selves.

In emphasizing mixing, I believe Anzaldúa's work assumes what I am calling place-in-being, the idea that selves can be so tied to certain places that these places unequivocally affect how one operates in the world. Throughout *Borderlands,* it is clear that the U.S.-Mexico border and the borderlands that is the Rio Grande Valley, are key players in the creation and perpetuation of border-selves. This place is bordered and continually mixing, and, likewise, so are its people. My next section will further discuss

[253] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 101.

[254] Ibid., 102.

place-in-being by taking a look at Viola Canales' *The Tequila Worm*, which is a semi-autobiographical novel set in the Rio Grande Valley. First, however, I want to discuss two ways in which Anzaldúa's early articulation of border-selves have been taken up, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of multiplicitous selfhood.

Lugones on plural selves as "world"-travelers with no "I"

Inspired by Anzaldúa, Maria Lugones likewise theorized the self as plural, but took Anzaldúa's analysis further by introducing the concepts of "worlds" and "world"-traveling, in order to further describe experiences of plural selfhood. The concepts of "worlds" and "world"-traveling initially arose from Lugones' desire to better theorize feminist coalition amongst women of color in the United States—women who share experiences of feeling like both "insiders" and "outsiders" in their daily lives, as caused by racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments. In order to give a name to the experience of feeling included in some contexts while simultaneously feeling excluded in other contexts, Lugones evoked the term "worlds."[255]

According to Lugones, a "world," is an intentionally ambiguous concept. "Worlds" are akin to social circles and, or, communities of meaning, but they can also be defined in other ways. Essentially, however, "worlds" must be "inhabited at present by some flesh and blood people," which means that a "world" devoid of living persons, would not exist, in Lugones' sense. However, "worlds" may be inhabited by imaginary or non-living people, so long as at least one living person is inhibiting the space we are

[255] Lugones' work uses quotation marks around the term "world." For this reason, I do so as well.

calling a "world"[256] In addition, Lugones states that "worlds" could comprise actual whole societies, or they can be marginalized, smaller, groups within a larger dominant society. Thus, some "worlds" can be inhabited by many people, while some are inhabited by just a few.[257] Although Lugones does not directly address this, it seems that "worlds" could undergo transformative processes as well, such as morphing from one version of a "world" as it is known by its inhabitants, into another more, or less, recognizable "world" over time. Lugones' description of "worlds" suggests non-human persons can construct or maintain their own "worlds," though she does not directly address non-human persons and their "worlds." At the same time, I do believe that some Indigenous articulations of non-human personhood are compatible with Lugones' concept of "worlds."

In her work, Lugones does not outright explain the relationship between "worlds" and the material, concrete, locations within which one experiences "worlds," which is to say that Lugones did not clarify how place relates to the idea of "worlds." Speculating from what Lugones has said about "worlds," and given that "worlds" must exist some*where*, perhaps the characteristic and attributes of specific places contribute to the construction of "worlds" just as human and non-human subjects participate in the construction of "worlds." For example, and consistent with Anzaldúa's writings, the U.S-Mexico border that is located in South Texas gave rise to a particular borderland culture that is different than the border culture that exists at the U.S-Canada border in

[256] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 87.

[257] Ibid., 89.

Washington state. Certain places, perhaps, are *actively* involved in the creation and maintenance of "worlds" and not merely anchor points for "worlds." Conceptualizing the role of place in this way is further supported when considering how the concept of "worlds" is foundational for articulating an experience she calls "world"-traveling, an experience that Lugones often describes as requiring literal, physical travel from one place to another.

Lugones suggests that although all subjects inhabit at least one kind of "world," some subjects might inhabit more than one "world" at various times in their life, and sometimes they need to "travel" between them. Movement in and out, or towards and from, various worlds is what Lugones describes as "world"-traveling. For many, especially for liminal subjects, "world"-traveling is a kind of survival tactic. As Lugones writes, "I think that most of us who are outside the mainstream of, for example, the United States dominant construction or organization of life are "world" travelers as a matter of necessity and of survival."[258] Entering a specific place, often includes entering a specific "world," and sometimes one needs to leave a place in order to move into another "world." For liminal subjects who must "world"-travel often, for whose days are fulfilled with continuous travel, one might have to adapt by becoming different selves in these different worlds.

According to Lugones, experiences of "world"-traveling illuminates one's plural selfhood. Subjects that must continuously inhabit multiple "worlds," come to experience themselves as multiple to the point of feeling like different persons across the various

[258] Ibid., 88.

"worlds" they inhabit. As Lugones describes, "[t]hose of us who are "world"-travelers have the distinct experience of being different in different "worlds" and of having the capacity to remember other "worlds" and ourselves in them."[259] She maintains that "world"-traveler subjects experience an "epistemic shift from being one person to being a different person" as they move between "worlds."[260]

By claiming that one can *be* a different person in a different world, the metaphysical implications of selfhood that Lugones is setting forth are radical. She clarifies that those who are multiple, those who are familiar with this experience of being a different person in different "worlds" are not merely acting, they really do feel like they have different selves:

> One does not pose as someone else; one does not pretend to be, for example, someone of a different personality or character or someone who uses space or language differently from the other person. Rather, one is someone who has that personality or character or uses space and language in that particular way. The 'one' here does not refer to some underlying 'I.' One does not *experience* any underlying 'I.'[261]

Lugones is suggesting here is that the "worlds," themselves, heavily contribute to the structure of one's selfhood. Per Lugones, there is no internal "core" self, for "world"-traveling selves. Instead, different "worlds" "hold" or "support" the different selves that subjects can access when they travel there. Put differently, the "worlds" seem to sustain the conditions for particular selves, that cannot be accessed outside of those "worlds." Lugones' account of selfhood also suggests that if a "world" disappears, so might one's

[259] Ibid., 89.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid., 89-90, emphasis in original.

self of that "world." And, on the other hand, if a new "world" emerges, a new self is possible in that "world."

Lugones further clarifies that whether or not one travels between "worlds," depends upon how various "worlds" make one feel. In one "world" a certain subject might feel welcome, relaxed, and safe. In that same "world," another subject could feel uneasy, insecure, and threatened. Here, already, we can speculate the manifestation of two different selves for two different subjects, as confident and secure persons tend to act and appear very differently from those that feel uneasy and unsafe.

Lugones describe four ways in which one might experience being at ease in a "world." The first is by "being a fluent speaker in that "world.""[262] Lugones is not just referring to a shared linguistic language, but also culturally specific, and sometimes unspoken, norms of communication. Second, Lugones claim that another way of experiencing ease in a "world," is by feeling "normatively happy" in that "world."[263] Third, the presence of shared histories might help one experience ease in a "world." Lastly, Lugones locates "social bonds" as another source of ease in a "world." Lugones also call this experience as being "humanly bonded" to those in the same "world."[264] This avenue for ease is especially salient to "worlds" that one experiences as unsafe. As Lugones writes, "[i]t should be noticed that I may be with those I love and be at ease

[262] Ibid., 90.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid.

because of them in a "world" that is otherwise as hostile to me as "worlds" get."[265] Thus, for some being "humanly bonded" to others in a shared "world" might aid them in finding comfort in uncomfortable surroundings. This is one reason that creating and supporting student groups for diverse populations on college campuses is important, as these avenues for shared connection can have a positive impact on diverse student retention and graduation.

Interestingly, Lugones' articulation of human bonding as a source of ease in a "world" does not seem to consider possibilities for connections between humans and non-human animals or between humans and specific places. For Lugones, I wonder: can humans find ease by being "place-bonded?" Lugones does not say. Yet, I feel that this question is important, as it challenges Lugones' largely human-centric articulation of "world"-traveling. I believe that my description of the resistance practices led by the boys group Chemawa, the "coffee break" gatherings as described in my previous chapter, shows an example of "world"-traveling, whereby ease was generated not just by shared-history and human-bonding, but also by place-bonding. The change of location, a new "world" created within a larger oppressive "world," helped the boys feel more at ease and survive their time at Chemawa. My point in recalling this example is to note that the human-bonding aspects of those gatherings were not sufficient, the change of location, the sanctuary of the forest, was essential to the generation and maintenance of their safer "world."

[265] Ibid.

Ortega on Multiplicity as Being-in-Between "Worlds"

In 2016, Mariana Ortega published *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenally, Multiplicity, and the Self,* a ground-breaking work that reads Anzaldúa as offering new insights to phenomenological work on the self. In this book, Ortega finds inspiration not just in Anzaldúa, but Lugones and other feminist philosophers, as well.

Although Ortega is largely in agreement with Lugones' description of the plurality of the self, Ortega disagrees with Lugones' claim that plural selves do not experience an underlining "I." Ortega argues that Lugones' account of the plural self cannot respond to the following questions:

> Does the self have multiple sets of memories? Does the self contain all my memories of all of my experiences while traveling different worlds? Since the self is different persons in different worlds, from what perspective does the self identify this difference? Since Lugones describes her experience in the first-person perspective, what constitutes such a first-person experience?[266]

I agree with Ortega that Lugones' account of plural selfhood does not provide answers to these kinds of questions. Although Lugones' account of the self productively names an experience of plurality that was, especially at the time, rarely acknowledged in mainstream philosophical conversations of the self, there is more to be articulated and discovered regarding multiplicitous selfhood.

Since Ortega does not find the answers she seeks in Lugones' theory of the "I"-less plural self, she posits her own understanding of the "world"-traveling self. Ortega claims that multiplicitous selves do experience a sense of "oneness" that is granted by a sense of "existential continuity." This sense of "existential continuity," per Ortega, is

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[266] Maria Ortega, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* (SUNY Press, 2016), 97.

chiefly grounded in experiences of continuous temporality. Although Ortega momentarily entertains the idea that one's sense of "oneness" could be granted from embodiment, she decides not to focus on the ways that embodiment might provide senses of "existential continuity" because the body, likewise, could be understood as multiple. Anzaldúa seems to agree with this position when she writes, "[o]ne's own body is not one entity," in reference to the ways in which human bodies depend on internal, living, bacteria and microorganisms for its survival.[267]

For Ortega, existential continuity is the means through which a sense of an "I" arises, and she appeals to the Heideggerian notion of temporality to explain existential continuity. For Heidegger, past, present, and future are not distinct, but are intertwined, with the present self projecting toward the future and being informed by the past.[268] For Ortega, this means that in the present, the multiplicitous self is informed by the past while imagining her future, garnering a sense of continuity in herself. This also accounts for how multiplicitous selves are capable of knowing how they are faring across worlds, and contemplating their memories of past "world"-traveling. On the topic of memory, Ortega also reads Lugones' comments on memory as hinting at an underlying "I." Ortega writes,

> The crucial role that memory plays in the active subject's ability to resist leaves this account too closely connected to the very vision of the self that Lugones criticizes. Lugones' description continues to return to the 'I,' even though there is an attempt to decent it or disperse it.[269]

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[267] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Interviews/Entrevistas* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 158.

[268] Ortega, *In-Between*, 79.

[269] Ibid., 111.

Thus, as Ortega describes, although Lugones claims that multiplicitous subjects don't experience an underlying "I," her writing, nonetheless, points towards its existence. Instead of claiming that multiplicitous subjects do not experience an underlying "I," Ortega posits that multiplicitous selves are both plural, and also individual, selves in a view she names *existential pluralism.*[270]

Ortega's articulation of existential pluralism stems from her own experiences of world-traveling. When she travels, she states that she does not become completely different persons in different worlds, but her experience is closer to a "highlight[ing] [of] different identities in different contexts"[271] For Ortega, all of one's interconnected identities are "present" at every instance of 'world'-traveling, and one never completely travels out of the worlds they inhabit. For this reason, Ortega concludes that multiplicitous selves are always already in-between multiple worlds, an experience she calls being-between-worlds.

Given this particular contention between Lugones and Ortega, it is difficult to defend one's work as more "correct" over the other. Ortega raises excellent points regarding the metaphysical problems with Lugones' account, yet since both are offering theory in response to personal lived experiences, it could be that the experiences of some might relate more to Lugones' articulation, while other might relate more to Ortega's (or neither).

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[270] Ibid., 89.

[271] Ibid., 79.

At the same time, when considering both Ortega's and Lugones' works, I am left wondering: in which ways do place and experiences of emplacement relate to multiplicitous selfhood, especially since Anzaldúa's original formulation of the non-singular self was so heavily rooted in the U.S-Mexico South Texas borderlands? Or, what is the relationship between the pluriversality of place and multiplicitous selfhood? And, could a focus on place, shed more light on this debate?

There are a few key moments where the works of Lugones and Ortega, respectively, discuss place. For example, at times Lugones' work mentions emplacement through metaphors of geography and movement. In the introduction to *Pilgrimages* she invites the reader to reflect upon how their "life is spatially mapped by power," and to consider how one must move, geographically, as though "looking for signs of power and of limitations, reductions, erasures, and functionalist constructions."[272] Lugones argues that each of us relate to structures of power in varying degrees within a framework of "oppressing/being oppressed ⇔ resisting,"[273] where by in some contexts one's actions contribute to the systems of power that oppress others, in other contexts one might be actively oppressed by the maintenance of these structures, and in other contexts one might be taking steps towards resisting and dismantling these structures. Her concept of "oppressing/being oppressed ⇔ resisting," is meant to challenge the oppositional binary between the more classically conceived oppressor/oppressed relation, in order to acknowledge the complexity of how one can move between these three positions, no

[272] Lugones, *Pilgrimages*, 8-9.

[273] Ibid., 10-11.

matter how one is socially positioned within the geographies they traverse. Moreover, per Lugones, this movement can also be literal. As one moves through different "worlds"—in and out of different geographical locations—they might shift from contributing to the oppression of others in one "world" to aiding in the resistance of oppressing in another.

In her chapter, "Streetwalker Theorizing," Lugones addresses one relationship between geography and resistance when she describes her concept of "hangouts" which are, she calls, a "spatial politics." Per Lugones, hangouts should be understood as an "everyday practice of resistant inhabitation of space."[274] Here, I believe her use of "space," is more akin to "place," in that she means the actual inhabiting of a real location for the purposes of resisting oppressive logics of domination. In a sense, hangouts are the intentional occupation of a location, in such a way that demonstrates resistance towards structures that oppress liminal subjects. One example of a hangout could include two men or two women openly dancing with each other in a typically heterosexual dance club. In the United States, such an act is not illegal and not usually akin to a protest, in a more formal sense, but such a demonstration can productively disrupt the implicit norms of a conventionally heteronormative place. Such a hangout sends a message of resistance: the refusal to hide, and the refusal to refrain from taking part in the joys of dancing, just as heterosexual presenting dancing pairs are at liberty to do.

In addition, the last chapter of Ortega's *In-Between,* addresses place via her concept of *"*hometactics:" which is a location specific disposition of residence towards the unease that comes with feelings of un-belonging. Ortega's idea of hometactics is

[274] Ibid., 234 n15.

similar to Lugones' hangouts, however her concept explicitly addresses the notion of "home" or "homes" for multiplicitous selves, many of which have ambiguous relations to the idea "home." Reflecting upon her own experience, Ortega writes,

> …I, as a Nicaraguan-born, bilingual, lesbian, academic Latina living in the United States, have to constantly negotiate the multiple aspects of myself and travel to the different worlds associated with my various social positions. Yet, despite my status as a multiplicitous self, I also find myself asking the home question—a home question that comes in terms of geography—is Managua, Nicaragua, really my home, or is it Los Angeles, or Cleveland? And also in terms of associations with others—do I belong with US Latinos, Chicanos, Latin American exiles, or women of color?[275]

According to Ortega, hometactics "are everyday practices that multiplicitous selves can perform in order to have a sense of familiarity, ease, or sense of belonging in a space or location…" and "…are practices that we might suddenly recognize as granting us new possibilities of belonging in a location and a sense of identification with others with whom we may or may not share social identities…."[276] One example she offers of hometactics includes painting one's walls lively colors or the colors of one's childhood home, if such renovations would generate positive emotions. She also suggests cooking and sharing foods from one's ancestral lands. This suggestion was especially helpful to me during the COVID-19 pandemic, when I could not travel home for the holidays. For my Christmas away from home, I made Mexican tamales for my friends as a hometactic. Ortega also suggests reconsidering our understandings of family, and attempting to expand our social circles to build a "family" independent of blood relation. Lastly, much in line with Anzaldúa, Ortega notes that "[t]here are linguistic hometactics as well,

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[275] Ortega, *In-Between*, 196.

[276] Ibid., 205.

switching languages in different contexts or integrating words from familiar languages to feel more at ease."[277]

In both of these locationally based concepts, which promote resistance towards colonial logics of domination, the relationship between multiplicity of the self and place, is less evident. At the same time, in the descriptions of multiplicity that Anzaldúa, Lugones, and Ortega provide, the significance of place cannot be ignored. In Anzaldúa's articulation of the border-self, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are what birth the new mestiza. For Lugones and Ortega, "world"-traveling spurs and propels multiplicity, yet "worlds" no doubt, *are* specific place. In so far as "world" must be occupied by flesh and blood people, a "world," then, cannot exist without place. For Lugones' "world"-traveling self it seems that particular relations to place(s), and certain modalities of emplacement, including the shifting to and from different modalities of emplacement, are what garners, maintains, and solidifies one's multiplicity. In the next section, I bring a phenomenological lens to Viola Canales' *The Tequila Worm*, a semi-autobiographical novel that takes place in McAllen, Texas – the very borderlands that inspired Anzaldúa's new *mestiza*. After discussing the place-centric themes in this novel, I examine the principle character's relationship to her own multiplicity within a pluriversal place, and make a case for the value and significance of *place-in-being*.

[277] Ibid., 206-207.

Place-in-Being and Pluriversality of Place as Catalyzing Multiplicitous Selfhood

Similar to Anzaldúa, Viola Canales was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, which is a cluster of towns and cities in South, Texas that border the U.S.-Mexico border. While Anzaldúa's childhood was spent in the smaller town of Hargill, Texas, Canales grew up in the larger city of McAllen, Texas. And, while Anzaldua's formative years were marked by her family's experiences as migrant farmers traveling across the Rio Grande Valley in search of work, Canales' childhood experiences were shaped by her more sedentary life in the city. When she was 15 years old, Canales was offered a scholarship to attend St. Stephen's Episcopal boarding school, in Austin, Texas. Her experiences surrounding her decision to attend this school inspired her first novel, *The Tequila Worm* (2007).

The Tequila Worm tells the story of Sophia, the narrative character, who's coming of age journey mirrors many of Canales' own true-life experiences. In this borderland novel, fourteen-year-old Sophia, whose family and Chicano/a culture are so prominent in her life, is offered a scholarship to attend St. Luke's Episcopal School—a prestigious college-preparatory boarding school in Austin, Texas, 300 miles from home. After much thought and deliberation, her family reluctantly allows her to pursue her dream of attending this school. Although Sophia's journey, and the lessons she learns along the way have much to teach Chicano/a young adult audiences, here, I will focus on the moments in this novel where Canales' seems to be articulating both the pluriversality of place and the significance of place-in-being in Sophia's life and family. In doing so, I will describe some of the affective dimensions of place-in-being: intersubjectivity, vitality, ontological possibility, and temporality that this novel illuminates.

Sophia's McAllen, TX: Two "Worlds" in One Pluriversal Place

In the opening paragraph, Sophia lets her audience know that her neighborhood is a special place, a genuine community with sincere connection.

> In the evenings when the cool breeze began to blow, all the families came out to their porches to sit and talk, to laugh and gossip. And that is where and how our barrio became one family. Doña Clara visited every summer and no one missed her stories, for she came carrying a bag filled with secret things that conjured up the most amazing tales.[278]

By opening the novel with this description of Sophia's childhood neighborhood, Canales alludes to the idea that place structures intersubjectivity, starting from the very first page. In *Solitary Confinement*, Lisa Guenther argues that our

> sense of concrete personhood relies essentially upon embodied relations to other embodied consciousnesses in a shared world. The world is not just the 'environment' of an organism that responds to stimulation; rather, it is the ultimate horizon of meaningful experience. [279]

Here, I take Guenther to be describing the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity: one's subjectivity is not formed in isolation, but rather constituted by other subjects and the objects that surround us in a shared life-world. However, with Canales' novel, I aim to show how intersubjectivity is not just constituted by our embodied relations to other embodied consciousnesses our shared life-world, but also by the places we inhabit and experiences of emplacement that we undergo, as well. In this opening description, Sophia is telling the reader that her sense of family is expansive, including blood relatives and all of her neighbors. As the story progresses, place's role in structuring intersubjectivity

[278] Viola Canales, *The Tequila Worm* (Wendy Lamb Books, 2005), 1, emphasis in original.

[279] Guenther, *Solitary Confinement*, xxviii.

becomes clearer. In describing her neighborhood-family, Sophia tells the reader that her side of town, is markedly different from "*el otro lado*" (the other side). Sophia describes the other side of McAllen, TX as affluent and up-kept, but unwelcoming to those from her side of town. The two sides of the city, as Sophia understands them, come to symbolize, not just a geographic divide, but a cultural divide that exemplifies different relations to place.

For example, throughout the novel, Sophia's side of McAllen, is described as "magical," especially in reference to how it is heavily shaped by Mexican-American culture. For instance, Sophia recounts a memory of her father taking her to the cemetery the day after one Halloween when Sophia had expressed her desire to live in the other side of McAllen. One observation about Sophia's desire to live on the other side of McAllen, which pertains to place structuring intersubjectivity, is that her desire is not simply to be located in the other-side (i.e., own a home there, attain a career there, etc.), but she wants to become like those who live there. She longs to be seen as someone *from* the other side and to separate herself from her home-place, and that which has constituted her current self. Sophia's father is upset to learn of Sophia's wishes, and thus tries to show her why their side is valuable too. On the way to the cemetery, her father says, "I'm taking you to the cemetery to show you something *magical* about *this side*."[280] When they arrive, neighbors are dancing, chatting, and eating at the gravesites of their loved ones. In Sophia's young mind, she believes that that evening she witnessed the living

[280] Ibid., 34, emphasis in original.

partying *with* the dead—that the relatives from the beyond had materialized on the Earth for the night.

Canales does not clarify to the reader whether the ghosts of the dead are *actually* returning for the evening. Yet, whether or not the reader is expected to believe, along with Sophia, in the metaphysical real-ness of these ghosts, doesn't really matter. For Sophia, the ghosts of the dead *are* there and Canales is showing how, for Sophia and her family, the divide between the living and the dead is quite thin. For them, and their life-world, the return of dead relatives is possible, and once a year families are expected to greet their departed loved ones at the central meeting point, the cemetery. The times in the novel when Sophia's family include considerations for the dead and their welfare, in their own day-to-day lives, demonstrates an expanded sense of intersubjectivity that does not exist across all times and cultures. This expanded sense of intersubjectivity includes loved ones whom have passed; these relations to the dead seem to sometimes inform decisions that the family makes and how the living choose to spend their lives.

Moreover, this theme of life and death highlights another dimension that structures place-in-being in Canales' novel, which I will describe as vitality. By vitality, I am aiming to capture that which pertains to life and death: what sustains life, how one conceptualizes the idea of *living*, not just in the standard biological physical sense, but also in the mental, psychical, and social senses. One's formative experiences of place, that which comes to be place-in-being, can shape one's understanding of what it means to live and how living is, or should be, maintained. Experiences of emplacement can also shape how much one thinks about death, and how one conceptualizes what happens after

we die. In other words, the extents to which death arises in the foreground or background of one's mind can be shaped by place-in-being.

Returning to the magical aspects of Sophia's McAllen, a bit earlier in the novel, Sophia's father had reminded Sophia that their side of McAllen is also populated by people that have special gifts—gifts that the doctors from the other side do not have. Sophia's side of McAllen is home to a local *curandera* (a Mexican witch doctor). Sophia recounts how this curandera was able to cure Lucy, Sophia's sister, of *susto* (shock), that she developed after surviving a car accident. The doctors from the more affluent side of McAllen could not find anything wrong with Lucy after the accident. She had no internal nor external bodily injuries, yet Lucy was plagued by *something*.

> She'd scream at leaves blowing on the ground, calling them spiders. She'd burst out crying and say the strangest things, like the time she said she'd swallowed the straight pins she'd seen in a box, when she hadn't at all.[281]

Not knowing how else to help Lucy, her family called upon their local *curandera*, who performed a ritual that cured Lucy of her *susto.*[282] One observation pertaining to vitality is how seriously Lucy's parents handled Lucy's *susto*. To them, Lucy's *susto* was so concerning that urgent action was needed. *Susto* was impacting Lucy's livelihood, her ability to maintain a happy and peaceful childhood. One can imagine parents of other cultures, places, and times, not taking such outbursts seriously, and not considering this kind of condition a matter of life and death. One can imagine, such as in certain parts of the United States, especially given how young Lucy was at this point in the novel, other

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[281] Ibid., 27.

[282] In these moments, when the magic of Sophia's side of town is mentioned, I suspect that Canales is paying homage to the literary genre of "magical realism," as famously crafted by Latin American authors like Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Marquez.

parents might have dismissed these moments as Lucy's overactive imagination, or as mere cries for attention. Or, perhaps she would have been taken to a child psychologist. My point in mentioning this, is not to value one treatment or approach over another, but to discuss a third dimension of place-in-being that I see prominent in this novel: ontological possibility. By ontological possibility, I mean that which appears possible or impossible within one's life-world. One's experiences of place, and how those experiences shape subjectivity, place-in-being, to some extent, open and close avenues for action. Sophia's parents did not lose hope in grappling with Lucy's *susto* since la *curandera* was *available* to their family. They did not consider a child psychologist, because, in their world, that was not a viable option. Lucy's parents, worked with the option available to them: *la curandera's* gift was alive and real in their shared world, and the urgency and seriousness of *susto* was real, as well.

The dimensions of intersubjectivity, vitality, and ontological possibility continue to arise in the novel, especially as her family debates allowing her to attend St. Luke's Episcopal School. One reason that her parents are hesitant to let her go, is because they are worried that Sophia cannot be happy there. Although this kind of preparatory school can expand Sophia's conceptions of her own ontological possibilities—such as being able to attend a prestigious college and eventually earn a high salary—her parents' sense of vitality, their idea of what it means to live a quality life, does not include these monetary considerations. Sophia's mother, in particular, is worried that if Sophia leaves then she won't be able to become a good *comadre*. In the novel, a *comadre* is an adult woman whom maintains a sense of duty, kinship, and obligation to the other *comadres* in the neighborhood. Being a good *comadre* extends beyond being a good friend, a *comadre* is

closer to a sister, the obligations can be more demanding but the fruits of such relations can be richer. For Sophia's mother, the vitality of her daughters includes their learning how to become good *comadres*. Failing as a *comadre* can entail exclusion and social-exile from the community, a closure of ontological possibilities and an impoverishment of the networks that maintain intersubjective experiences. Sophia's mother worries that if Sophia leaves, and if St. Luke's influences her in what she perceives to be the wrong ways, then Sophia will not be able to become a good *comadre*.

St. Luke's Episcopal School, Austin, TX

Despite her parent's hesitation, and after much thought and deliberation, Sophia decides to accept the scholarship she was offered to attend St. Luke's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, and explore "*el otro mundo*" (the other world). Although her parents and sister are reluctant to let her go, they eventually find peace in her decision. Given the way that Canales describes the two sides of McAllen, Texas, it seems that Sophia's longing to attend St. Luke's is meant to parallel Sophia's desire to live on the other side.

At St. Luke's, Sophia experiences cultural shocks of various sorts. Every night she was expected to dress formally for dinner and she was served food she had never tried before. Sophia was intimidated by the other students whose summer vacations were spent abroad in Europe, while hers was spent working in McAllen's cucumber packing plant. In addition, Sophia is shocked to learn that her fellow peers have no issue leaving home. Sophia is most surprised by the differences in values her and her peers hold. Unlike herself, her classmates are not fazed by the thought of living far away from family, their relationships to place and home are much more transient and displaced than

her own. In addition, in some cases, her peers seemed to have more superficial relations to their family than Sophia does. Those students, some of which told Sophia that they were dropped off at boarding school in order to not be a "burden" upon their parents, have a very different relation to St. Luke's than Sophia. To them, St. Luke's did not *appear* as a new world to explore, like it did to Sophia, but as the monotonous place their parents leave them at the end of each summer. The weight and significance of what this place means, varies greatly across students, as dependent upon their place-in-being as shaped by where they were coming from.

Over time, Sophia finds small ways to adjust to her life at St. Luke's, including setting up a spiritual alter in her dorm room and writing short stories about her memories from home—practices that Ortega might call "hometactics." At the same time, there are key moments in her stay at St. Luke's that further highlight the aforementioned dimensions of place-in-being. One of Sophia's first conversations at St. Luke's included a white student asking Sophia, upon learning that Sophia is Mexican-American, "Don't you think Mexicans are obsessed with death?"[283] This question was not meant to convey sincere curiosity, it was meant to call attention to Sophia's difference, to make her feel like a spectacle. Later, this same student "pranks" Sophia by scattering her alter pieces all over the school, both literally and symbolically disrupting Sophia's attempts at feeling more at home in this foreign place. In describing moments like these, Canales is reminding the reader of how difficult it can be, especially for marginalized persons, to try

[283] Ibid., 138.

to establish a connection to place when there are those that would actively try to prevent them from doing so.

Ultimately, what Sophia discovers by experiencing this new place, a place so radically different from home, is not a longing to leave home behind in favor of this new world, but rather a longing for reconciliation between her two selves within these two places. In other words, she comes to seek a way to garner multiplicity of self rather than trying to shed her old self in favor of a new one.

La Plaza, McAllen, TX

Near the end of the novel, Sophia is called home from school, just short of her graduation, and finds that her father is gravely ill. He is bed ridden with an unspecified ailment, and passes within a short amount of time. Although the whole family is struck with grief, Sophia decides to honor her father by returning to school, graduating, and eventually pursuing a law degree from Harvard University. Many years later, Sophia has enough money saved to help her mother move into a different house. When Sophia and her mother decide to visit their old barrio years later, its magic seems gone. The families that used to gather outside no longer talk, gentrification is running rampant, and the locals are gradually being pushed out. It is in this part of the novel that the connection between temporality and place-in-being seems most evident. Upon her return to her old neighborhood, Sophia confronts changes that she had not imagined would take place. Like Sophia, when we leave a place, we rarely think about how that place will change if and when we return. Even if we recognize that change is, often, among the only constants in this universe, most of us do not typically spend time wondering how our familiar

places will change over time. Yet, when we leave our favorite city, for example, and upon our return we might notice new buildings that have been built, unfamiliar faces walking in the streets, or the absence of some of the locations we used to frequent. In witnessing these changes, we might feel, if not shocked, at the very least nostalgic for the prior version of that place. If that place was significant enough to impact our sense of self, we might feel especially emotional about the changes that were out of our control.

The impacts that time has upon place, could call upon us to interrogate our relationships to certain places. Unlike the objects we own, places will often change with or without our input. These changes can be cause by environmental circumstances, but is more often caused by other people working on and within that place—others who may also come and go. The temporal dimension to place, the way in which place changes over time, reminds us that places are not *ours* to control. Our favorite, or beloved places, will change and grow, just like the other people in our lives. Changes to a place are caused by other people working on that place, just as that place works on them. In the face of these changes many of us might confront a sense of limitation regarding *how much* we can contribute to the changing of a place. This experience of limited control over what a place is or looks like, can help us recognize the other intersubjective connections that exist within place, as well as interrogate how our intersubjective relation to certain places look and feel. Do we harbor senses of domination or control over certain, or all, of the places we inhabit? If so, could we approach place differently? For instance, could we approach place in such a way that maintains respect both for our desires of how a place should look, or be, in conversation with the others that inhabit that place, including not just other humans but non-human persons as well?

In the novel, Sophia herself, confronts these kinds of questions. After returning to her neighborhood and witnessing this depressing change to a once magical place, she decides to buy back her childhood home and tear it down. In its place, she builds a *placita*,

> with orange trees on each corner and plantings of roses, hibiscus, beautiful red and purple bougainvillea, and in Papa's memory, Mexican jasmine. There were wooden benches, too, and even a small wooden gazebo at the very center that [she] painted bright pink.[284]

The construction of the *placita* was Sophia's way of trying to reconnect to place; in other words, it was her active attempt at trying to reestablish her intersubjective connection to her neighborhood. Sophia also constructs a fence with a locked gate around the plaza, and only distributed keys to the old families of the neighborhood, perhaps as a representation of how closely she is trying to hang onto what was before, unconsciously trying to maintain a sense of control over the place. However, she seems to shed that kind of relationship to her childhood place over time, when she begins to witnesses more and more families gathered at the *placita*. They would sit, talk, and sometimes contribute to the gardening and up-keep. As more time passed, the old families started inviting the new families to the plaza, and the *barrio* community was slowly repaired. One year later, Sophia tells us that she received a phone call from her mother saying "'*Mi'ja*, would you please take the fence down? Everyone knows each other now—so it's just in the way.'"[285] The tearing down of the fence, seems to symbolize Sophia's new relation to place, whereby she accepts that she cannot fully control how her childhood place will

[284] Ibid., 196.

[285] Ibid., 197.

look and feel, but could, in conjunction with her neighbors, maintain a voice in how her childhood neighborhood continues to grow and change. By the end of the novel, with the building of the plaza as a centralized place for gathering in the neighborhood, Sophia's initiative helps recuperate the community. Even though she no longer lives in that neighborhood, her experiences of place-in-being along with pluriversality of place, catalyzed her multiplicity of self and helped her bring back a magic that was once lost in her childhood barrio.

In this novel, pluriversality of place, multiplicity of self, and place-in-being were demonstrated periodically by the ways in which Sophia "carried" place with her, aiding her in entering new worlds without losing connection to the old ones. Dimensions of place-in-being were also highlighted, including intersubjectivity, vitality, and ontological possibility. In addition, Sophia's profound relationship to her home-place that was cultivated over time, her place-in-being, helped catalyze her possibilities for multiplicity of self away from home. Perhaps even, but not exclusive to, the possibility of multiplicity of self becomes viable when one's place-in-being harbors certain ontological possibilities—the ontological possibility of recognizing the pluriversality of place and fostering multiplicitous selfhood. This idea is most exemplified by Anzaldua's border-self as directly tied to the pluriversal places that comprise the borderlands. Similarly, in Canales' *The Tequila Worm*, Sophia's own multiplicity is connected to her travels between pluriversal places.

By considering Anzaldúa, Lugones, Ortega, and Canales together, I propose that a relationship between pluriversality of place and multiplicity of the self, can be illustrated in the following way:

Pluriversality of Place ←→ Place-in-Being ←→ Multiplicity of Self.

This triad is meant to depict a relationship between place-in-being, the pluriversality of place and the multiplicity of the self, whereby place-in-being helps foster multiplicitous selfhood. By naming this relation, in this formulaic way, I am suggesting one means for understanding what I see as the underlying relation of place and self that has infused feminist border literature, without receiving much attention or articulation. However, by acknowledging, naming, and bringing this relation to the foreground, I hope to offer one conceptualization of self and place that can help us approach both differently; that is, in such a way that resists the structures of coloniality, especially the coloniality of space.

Conclusion

This chapter proposed a new way of thinking about relationships to place that I called *place-in-being*. Naming this relation to place was inspired by two philosophies of the Americas, Latina feminist border thought and classical American pragmatism, as well as Viola Canales' novel, *The Tequila Worm*. With Latina feminist border thought in relation to Canales' novel, in particular, I argued that we can understand place-in-being and the pluriversality of place as catalyzing multiplicitous selfhood. This relationship between the three concepts is meant to illuminate one means for understanding how we can conceptualize the role that place plays in the formation and maintenance of multiplicitous selfhood.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: REVISITING PLACE-IN-BEING

While pursuing this project, I was drawn to Canales' *The Tequila Worm* because Sophia's story mirrors a few aspects of my own life. Like Sophia, I left my Texas border town to pursue my educational goals—a Ph.D. at the University of Oregon, in my case. Like Sophia's parents, my parents, too, could not understand why I wanted to move so far from home. My Mexican mother and Mexican-American father had never traveled more northwest than the Texas-Nebraska and Texas-New Mexico borders. They were worried about what might happen to me, and who I might become that far away from home. In one sense, they were right to worry. In Oregon, my ontological possibilities were expanded, I saw new futures in my horizon, a new self was allowed to grow.

I, like Sophia, grappled with how the particular places I traveled to and from pushed me to confront the unending change that temporality in place reveals. Perhaps less like Sophia, but much more pertinent in my life, were the ways that places seemed to preserved certain habits for me. What I would call a fifth affective dimension of place-in-being is the potential for the *preservation of habit*. As mentioned in my previous chapter, John Dewey offered an in-depth pragmatist count as to how our habits are shaped by the environment in which we reside. I agree with Dewey's analysis in this regard. At the same time, Dewey's account of the formation of habits suggests that one can leave certain environments and maintain those habits that the environment helped them cultivate. I do not disagree. Yet, as examined from my own lived experience, I feel that places can sometimes preserve habits for us, even habits that we think we might have long lost or forgotten.

For example, in Oregon, I was able to de-habituate myself from certain conventionally feminine habits that my family in Texas continuously encouraged me to adopt. Such habits included the daily use of make-up, maintaining a flawless hairstyle that is conventionally feminine, and dressing in ways that are read as feminine. These habits were successfully cultivated in me, over time, starting from childhood until I left Texas. While in Oregon, I slowly realized that no one in this new place had those expectations of me. Over time, I realized that I had the agency to decide for myself, each day, how I would look and be, without needing to worry about the community's judgment. Those particular gazes that I feared in Texas were not noticeable to me in Oregon. Of course, those gazes might exist in Oregon, and certain Oregonians might carry that same fear of judgment that I felt for most of my life in Texas, but I did not feel that fear in this particular place.

At the same time, although I try to carry this new sense of self with me whenever I visit Texas, if I stay there long enough, I find myself slowly dressing like I used to, shopping for new make-up, and caring more about whether I look passably feminine or not. Experientially, it is like those habits are preserved there, in that place. If I visit long enough, it is as if my body intuitively knows what to do and how to act in that place, whether or not I consciously think about it. Fighting those habits, and attempting to maintain my Oregonian-inspired sense of self, also becomes more challenging the longer I stay in Texas, highlighting another aspect of the connections between temporality and place.

Like the previously mentioned dimensions of intersubjectivity, vitality, ontological possibility, and temporality, as they pertain to place, the preservation of habit

is one that has carried a strong meaning in my life. The habituations, re-habituations, or de-habituations that are generated or maintained by place, bring me back to the moments I described in the introductory chapter and the overarching questions that inspired this project. The story I tell of visiting the U.S.-Mexico border, in particular, can be examined through the notions of habit. The conference attendees that decided to spend their visit taking selfies and posting on social media were exhibiting certain habits that they had acquired elsewhere, but *something* about the border brought those habits to the forefront. Perhaps such a site calls upon their habit of taking on a kind of "tourist mode." By adopting a tourist mode—objectifying the wall, "freezing" it via pictures on social media, and making it more of a spectacle than a solemn site of colonial oppression—those taking selfies seem to carry out a *flight to abstraction*, perhaps as a result of not knowing how *else* to engage with such a place. Such *flights to abstraction* are forms of thinking in terms of space, rather than place—thinking in the abstract "over there," rather than the here and now, which is a form of the perpetuation of coloniality, especially what I have been calling the coloniality of space. Scholars, philosophers, and people that do not know how *else* to engage with place, might be able to explore the ontological possibilities that places have to offer and undergo a re-habituation of relations to place. I would argue that such re-habituations could be understood as ethical imperatives.

One example of a group of philosophers that have taken on, as an ethical imperative, the project of helping students become more grounded in place is found in The University of Texas–Rio Grande Valley's (UTRGV) Department of Philosophy. The UTRGV is a Hispanic Serving Institution, and the university's strategic plan includes the following statement:

> Executive Summary: Establishing UTRGV as a bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate university enhances opportunities for student success, builds upon the cultural and linguistic strategic advantages of the region, and cultivates leadership manifest in culturally and historically respectful ways. By building curricula and programming that reflect these strategic advantages, UTRGV embraces the historical and cultural heritage of the region it serves.[286]

Through concrete action, it is clear that the resident philosophers of the UTRGV's Department of Philosophy have taken the university's initiative seriously. Here, I should mention that the UTRGV's Department of Philosophy hosted the aforementioned conference, and I thought it was a wonderful gesture of thinking in place to organize a visit to the border wall. I do not feel it was the conference organizer's responsibility to mediate how the other attendees were choosing to spend their visit to the border wall.

Regarding other ways in which the UTRGV's Department of Philosophy have taken up the UTRGV's strategic plan, for one, the department's mission statement, includes an acknowledgement of place:

> As a department located on the U.S.-Mexico border, we seek to promote more diversity within the profession of philosophy itself, where the underrepresentation of Latinos and Latinas is a serious problem.[287]

Since 2008, the department has hosted the *Anzaldúa Speaker Series in Philosophy: Honoring: Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Philosophical Legacy at UTRGV*. This interdisciplinary speaker series draws scholars from around the United States to discuss topics pertinent to

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[286] "Becoming a B3 Institution: Bilingual, Bicultural & Biliterate," *UTRGV, Strategic Plan*, https://www.utrgv.edu/strategic-plan/other-areas-of-focus/bilingual-bicultural-and-biliterate/index.htm.

[287] "Mission Statement," *UTRGV*, *Department of Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts*, https://www.utrgv.edu/philosophy/about-us/index.htm.

the lives of UTRGV students. In addition, with the hiring of Dr. Remei Capdevila Werning, the department has begun offering bilingual philosophy courses, as well as some courses fully in Spanish. Dr. Capdevila Werning teaches "Introduction to Philosophy," and upper division courses like "Philosophy of Art" and "Epistemology," either bilingually or fully in Spanish.

Moreover, some members of the department have a sustained track record of engaging in activist work within the surrounding Rio Grande Valley community. For example, in 2016, UTRGV resident philosophers, Dr. Alex Stehn & Dr. Mariana Alessandri, founded *RGV PUEDE: Parents United for Excellent Dual Education*, a program with the mission to "organize parents, families, and communities to support, improve, and extend dual language bilingual education programs from Pre-K to 12th across the Rio Grande Valley."[288] RGV PUEDE's latest initiative includes advocating for the McAllen Independent School District to expand their dual language program to the middle school level.

UTRGV's Department of Philosophy is a unique place because many of its resident philosophers take the university's location and positionality along the U.S-Mexico border seriously and tries to find ways to ground the university in the Rio Grande Valley. The place-based work being done there exemplifies one form of ethical engagements with place-in-being. The methods and desired results of future ethical engagements with place would need to be specific to other contexts and times, and should

[288] "Our Mission," *RGV PUEDE: Parents United for Excellent Dual Education*, https://rgvpuede.org/en/.

be the subject matter of further work in philosophical investigations of place and emplacement.

Returning to the notion of flights to abstraction in the forms of selfies and social media, such habits and impulses align with my questions regarding the increased uptake of online usage and videoconferencing that appeared during the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only time will tell the ways in which our travels to these virtual places impacted our habituation, re-habituation, and de-habituation. Did the zoom-world further encourage us to turn to *flights to abstraction* or did increased time in those spaces cultivate greater longings for connection to real-world places, a desire to be grounded in our actual physical and material surroundings? Similarly, future philosophical work on place would need to take the growth and increased usage of virtual places seriously when considering how to engage with place ethically. Yet, by articulating and naming the aforementioned dimensions of place-in-being, I feel that we can begin to better understand the existential significance of place and how it operates in our lives.

Like the notions of time and embodiment, *place* is so fundamental to human existence, that we literally could not *experience* without being emplaced. Given this fundamental fact, it is surprising that Western philosophical literature has devoted much more attention to time and embodiment, than place. In addition, as shown in my second chapter, the history of Western philosophy has written much on the concept and idea of *space,* rather than place, and has esteemed the idea of space on the grounds that its essential qualities are akin to universality and infinitude. However, throughout this work, I maintain that the philosophical attachment to space, rather than place, is motivated by colonial ends, and that the replication of universality and infinitude should be understood

as the *coloniality of space*.

Outside of philosophical literature, the importance of understanding human relationships to place is relatively more widely discussed. This is especially true in educational literature when discussing place-based educational pedagogy, theory, and practice. Place is also often discussed in environmental literatures, both in conjunction with philosophical literatures and otherwise. Nonetheless, I feel it is imperative that philosophers take seriously the significance and value of place, especially since philosophy is equipped to provide enriched accounts of how we experience place in our lives.

Some phenomenologists of place, as discussed in my third chapter, have already begun this work, although from a largely Western standpoint and without considering the impacts that colonialism and coloniality have upon experiences of place and emplacement. My dissertation, sought to fill this gap, and contributed three new concepts to the philosophical study of place and emplacement: the coloniality of space (as mentioned), *the pluriversality of place*, and *place-in-being*. Moreover, these concepts were derived in conversation with certain philosophies from the Americas: North American Indigenous, Latina border thought, and classical American pragmatism—philosophical schools of thought that Western phenomenologists of place had not previously engaged with in a substantial way.

At the same time, I believe that there is more that could be said regarding place and emplacement, especially as we move towards an ever-evolving future. Subsequent works in the philosophy of place, I feel, could examine how virtual reality technologies might change or shape our relationships to place. Furthermore, as we soon begin seeing

the impacts and effects of human caused environmental disaster, ever-more conversations regarding the relationships between self, place, and the natural world can only become increasingly more urgent.

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