

# STRUGGLES FOR LIBERATION IN ABYAYALA



*Edited by*

**LUIS RUBÉN DÍAZ CEPEDA  
AND ERNESTO ROSEN VELÁSQUEZ**

**WILEY Blackwell**



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## Notes on Contributors

**AFyL Women Collective** is a group of *compañeras* from diverse territories and disciplines throughout Latin America who are part of the Philosophy of Liberation school of thought. Their objective has been to trace the contributions and categories that are fundamental to produce theory and politics from their own experience and testimony as Latin American feminist women. They also seek to walk together as they move toward the production of a feminist perspective in the philosophy of liberation.

**Ernesto Castañeda** is director of the Immigration Lab, and the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies at American University in Washington, DC. Among other books, he is the author of *Building Walls: Excluding Latin People in the United States* (Lexington Books 2019), *Social Movements 1768–2018* with Charles Tilly and Lesley Wood (Routledge 2020), and co-editor with Cathy L. Schneider of *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change: A Charles Tilly Reader* (Routledge 2017/UNAM 2022).

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**Nadia Heredia** (National University of Comahue, Argentina) is an associate professor at the National University of Comahue; member of the coordinating team of AFyL Argentina and academic coordinator of the program in Philosophy of Liberation. She is a teacher by choice and she has a love of the world and its people. She is a human rights activist and works on disability issues.

Her research focuses on the Philosophy of Liberation. Specifically, she focuses on the works of Enrique Dussel and its ethical-pedagogical derivations, from a Latin American perspective.

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**Elisabeth Paquette** is an assistant professor of Philosophy and Women and Gender Studies at University of North Carolina Charlotte. She works in political philosophy, decolonial theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, and continental philosophy. Her publications can be found in *philoSOPHIA*, *Philosophy Compass*, *Radical Philosophy Review*, *Hypatia*, *Philosophy Today*, and *Badiou Studies*. She is author of *Universal Emancipation: Race Beyond Badiou* (University of Minnesota Press, 2020).

**Stephanie Rivera Berruz** is an associate professor of philosophy and co-director of the Center for Race, Ethnic, and Indigenous Studies at Marquette University. She received her PhD in Philosophy from SUNY Buffalo in 2014. She is the recipient of the Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship (2017–2018) and The Way Klinger Young Scholar Award (2021) for her work on Latinx feminisms, Caribbean, and Latin American Philosophy. Her research is inherently interdisciplinary and explores historiography, social identity, current political issues. She published a co-edited anthology: *Comparative Studies in Asian and Latin American Philosophies* (2018), and her work has been featured in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *Genealogy*, *Hypatia*, *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy*, and *Essays on Philosophy*. She is also an avid salsa dancer, a lover of travel, and fervent activist in her local community.

**Ernesto Rosen Velásquez** is an associate professor of Philosophy at University of Dayton. He specializes in decolonial thought, Latinx and Latin American philosophy, critical philosophy of race and political philosophy. He is editor and contributor to a collection put together with Ramón Grosfoguel and Roberto D. Hernández, *Decolonizing the Westernized University: Interventions in Philosophy of Education* (Lexington Press, 2016). Some of his publications are “Jorge J.E. Gracia’s Contributions to Latina/X/o Philosophy and His Engagement with Philosophy of Liberation” in *The Philosophical Legacy of Jorge J.E. Gracia* eds. Robert Delfino, William Irwin, and J.J. Sanford (Rowman Littlefield, 2022); “Criminalization and Undocumented *Migrante* Laborers in the Zone of Nonbeing,”

*Critical Philosophy of Race*, 7(1): (2019); and “Dussel’s Metaphysics of Alterity and the Aesthetics of Liberation,” *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy* 8 (2) (2017). He is preparing a manuscript titled *Problem People* with SUNY Press.

**Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda** is a philosopher and a sociologist. He is an assistant professor in the Humanities Department at the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. His research focuses on ethics, borders, social movements, decolonial theory, and philosophy of liberation. Having published a number of book chapters and journal articles in Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and the United States, his most recent works include *Latin American Philosophy and Social Movements: From Ciudad Juárez to Ayotzinapa* (Lexington Books, 2020) and he is co-editor with Amy Reed Sandoval of *Latin American Immigration Ethics* (AUP, 2021).

**Amy Reed-Sandoval** (UNLV, USA) is an assistant professor of Philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She works in the areas of political philosophy, with a special interest in issues of migration, Latin American and Latinx philosophies, bioethics, and feminist philosophy. She is the author of *Socially Undocumented: Identity and Immigration Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2020). She is the founding director of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

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**Enrique Téllez-Fabiani** (Iberoamerican University, México) has been a professor at several universities for over 20 years. He is the author, co-author, and editor of several books on literature, history, and philosophy. For several years, he has organized international academic events as a member of the Association of Philosophy and Liberation (AFyL) and the Philosophical Association of Mexico (AFM).

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# Introduction

ERNESTO ROSEN VELÁSQUEZ AND LUIS RUBÉN DÍAZ CEPEDA

It is obscene and paradoxical how human beings can use the power of imagination—often touted as making us special and superior to other animals—in ways that has and continues to produce the legalized institutionalization of death that could in the future ultimately make human beings extinct. Some people have and continue to face immediate existential threats through the prison industrial complex, anti-black police violence, immigrant detention centers, ongoing wars and other forms of state sanctioned violence that target racialized/sexualized people. Nuclear war, pandemics, environmental catastrophe, intelligent racist AI robots, any one or combination of these human inventions could destroy all human life and perhaps all life on earth as we know it. If we end up annihilating our species what would mother earth say? Imagine mother nature waiting to exhale at some point takes a deep breath again and says “finally my gang rapist abusers invested in fracking, pollute my veins-waters, air, engage in thoughtless deforestation in the name of profits and collectively chant ‘drill baby drill’ can leave me alone. But I will miss the land defenders who struggled at the Dakota access pipeline, those who fought against environmental racism/sexism and countless others around the world throughout history who fought on the frontlines and everywhere else for my care and well-being.”

It is also incredible how human beings can use their imagination to come together to feed other bodies and souls; to lean on each other in trying times; to forge deep emotional connections; to cry, laugh and learn together; to collectively create beautiful meanings that inspire us and bring out the best in us that is waiting to blossom. This collection you hold in your hand dear reader not only aims to clearly lay out and understand some of the various intermingled catastrophes people face but also what folks occupying different positionalities do to try to resist these life-threatening conditions and through such collective processes of struggle make new meanings, create new forms of

relationality and subjectivity that transform the organization of space and time. Struggling is an important notion in the title of this book because struggles for liberation are linked with ongoing histories of resistance, direct collective action, youth movements, community organizing, and protest. We cannot simply think and write our way out of this totally avoidable and unnecessary hell on earth that has been generated, persists, and tries to continue to persist in the future. We cannot choose to avoid getting our hands dirty, rubbing shoulder to shoulder, being arm in arm with, and alongside social movements that protest against injustice.

Neither can we disregard the importance of reconceptualization. We need to change our attitudes and ways of thinking, speaking, and doing if we want to change the world. To think transformation can happen only through mass protest is also not straightforward. In the face of cross-racial mass protests emerging in the United States and around the world when Black Lives Matter clearly expressed a demand to defund the police, what is the response by the US state at federal and local levels? Using taxpayer funds to develop cop city in Atlanta Georgia or spot-shooter technology in Dayton Ohio or investment in Boston Dynamic's police robots in New York city or president Biden's solution to the problem of anti-black police violence: increase the police budget and "train them to shoot them in the leg instead of the heart." These and other collective actions of citizen mobilization (after months of peaceful protest think of the people's occupation of president Rajapaksa's mansion in Sri Lanka that called for his resignation) show us that protest by itself is not enough. We also need to take power in the sense of occupying governmental positions at all levels because utterly incompetent, self-interested, greedy, wildly ignorant, malevolent individuals occupy positions of power that pass legislation that effects the people and environment in harmful ways and blocks the creation of more participatory democratic governmental procedures. We need all of this and more if we want to fundamentally change the world.

Since people are participating in constant struggles for liberation around the world pushing for another better future, this collection focuses on some of these sites of contestation. While the perspectives in this collection are operating primarily within the context of the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, we do not identify the location of the struggles within America or América. This is because America is the term European cartographers chose in honor of the Italian navigator, merchant, explorer Amerigo Vespucci who understood that the continents Columbus landed on were not India but new continents unknown to European Spanish explorers. Thus, while the term "America" initially referred to the two continents—North America and South America—and then later was appropriated by the English 13 colonies and given an exclusive reference to the United States, we reject the parochial use of America. While we are aware that it has been said that Anglo control of northern Mexico's territory is an occupation of a part of the American hemisphere this does not imply, we adopt the broader earlier use deployed by European cartographers in the sixteenth century. The latter choice of spatiotemporal reference tracks sixteenth century European cartography and opens up a way of connecting with continental uses of América by Caribbean and Latin American philosophers such as José Martí, Roberto Fernández Retamar, Simón Bolívar, and Edmundo O'Gorman. However, it is limited. It assumes acceptance of European colonizer's naming and "discovery" of indigenous people who dwelled in these regions for millennia prior to the voyages of Columbus. In order to shift the emphasis away from this European and Spanish mestizo centered spatiotemporal cartography, it is perhaps more appropriate to shift the geography of reason and use the name *Abya Yala* deployed by indigenous peoples to refer to these lands as a way of trying to avoid the occlusion of their experiences, life-worlds, histories of

oppression, and struggles for liberation. This is why we chose to name the book *Struggles for Liberation in Abya Yala*. But what does it mean for us to acknowledge indigenous lands in the title of this book?

We do not intend this land acknowledgment to be merely rhetorical. We do not intend it to be akin to what Lorgia García Peña identifies as the relatively recent practice of faculty and administrators automatically and non-reflectively reading land acknowledgements prior to any university event in North America.<sup>1</sup> She astutely observes how this practice does not take seriously that the westernized university “sits on stolen land built by enslaved labor to support and justify the project of colonizing exclusion.”<sup>2</sup> To avoid this kind of performance of ornamental multiculturalism, we need to struggle to get the land back, fight for reparations, stand in solidarity with, and abolish dispossession. As we write this people of color still live in a state of emergency. What do people do in these catastrophic conditions in which the planet’s sacred elements of water, air, earth, plants, animals, humans, and all life in water and on land are being destroyed and polluted in order to gain financial profits and hold onto the levers of power in the federal, state and local political machinery? They protest. But what often happens when people protest and call attention to structural problems and they articulate clear demands? The prevailing order kills, silences, criminalizes, imprisons or diminishes the thrust of the original demand and offers a minor reform that does not fundamentally address the problem. Although the range of contributors may not always necessarily share the same view, method, or liberation praxis, each of them in some form declare another world is possible. Such is the scream that comes from the underside of modernity; from the people that have chosen to rebel and act in solidarity against the system that oppresses them. These voices have been listened to and amplified first by philosophy of liberation and later by the decolonial turn, which has grown to be a fruitful philosophical tradition with influence in Africana philosophy, feminism, critical race theory, ethics, and political philosophy. It is in the latter area where we focus in *Struggles for Liberation in Abya Yala* by reflecting on the theoretical reach of the decolonial turn, as well as its implications in education and social movements in search of liberation in the United States, México, Argentina, Chile, and the Caribbean.

As it is known, the decolonial turn implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures promoted and constitutive of capitalism and Western modernity. Maldonado-Torres explains that it has three important moments. The first one is the early 1900s with the independence movements in America. Having origins in the Haitian revolution, the first begins with the problems of emancipated peoples of the African diaspora at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. A second moment emerges with the disenchantment with Europe as a result of a series of wars, the Jewish Holocaust, and liberation movements that took place in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, propelled by Césaire and Fanon’s writings on colonialism. The third and current moment started with the fall of the Soviet Empire and the 500-year anniversary of the conquest of America. Also, in the early 1990s, Anibal Quijano coined the notion of coloniality of power to describe the continuation of oppressive colonial relations fired up by European modernity. As Mignolo and Walsh claim, this brought intellectual and social movements that have spread all over the world in connection with social organizations.

Both philosophy of liberation and the decolonial turn have drawn wide attention to capitalism and colonial relationships that facilitate the exploitation of a large segment of the population. In response to these conditions, their members think with the *people* and have developed forms of resistance. In this book, we give continuity to this *praxis* of merging theoretical work and in-field

struggles beyond what was known as the progressive governments in Latin America. We do so by presenting present day social struggles in search of liberation and freedom in the Americas from the perspective of scholars who take part in them. Thus, we aim to show and advance both the explanatory and normative power of philosophy of liberation and the decolonial turn. In a few words, *Struggles for Liberation in Abya Yala* is a collective book about a hands-in theoretical analysis of current social changes among all the American continents made by a combination of both well-established and rising scholars who are committed to radical social transformations that support victims of the system. It is divided into three sections: the first deals with a comprehensive analysis of the decolonial turn, philosophy of liberation, and the meaning of thinking from a liberatory feminism. The second section is devoted to education. Here, through the analysis of case-studies in the United States, México City, and Argentina, the authors encourage readers to promote social mobilization through education and to decolonize the Westernized university and educational practices. The final section addresses different struggles for social justice in México and Latin America as a whole. The authors reflect on challenging issues such as the relationship between social movements and political parties as well as the relationship between migrants, social organization and the state in México, the emancipatory capacity of art in Chile, the potentiality of farmers in Brazil, and animal rights movements in Latin America.

## Outline of the Chapters

The first chapter opens with a piece called, “Searching for Combative Decoloniality” by Nelson Maldonado-Torres. As decolonial thought begins to impact various fields and becomes institutionalized in an academic way with little to no engagement with social movements, he unpacks a concept gleaned from Fanon’s life and his writings on various stages of a colonized intellectual’s formation that bears attention: the notion of combative decoloniality. To illustrate the complexities with noncombative, anti-combative, and combative modes of operating, this piece does bridge-building work that shows the impact of how Fanon is taken up in the philosophical conversations between Salazar Bondy and Leopoldo Zea and connections are made to the contemporary movement efforts of La Colectiva Feminista en Construcción in Puerto Rico and Decolonize This Place in New York City. The second chapter, “Decolonizing Understanding: A Utopian Reading of Anibal Quijano’s Coloniality of Power and Knowledge” by Alejandro Vallega argues for a hermeneutic reading of Quijano. In contrast to a scientific reading that focuses on an analysis of the modern/colonial world system and victims resistance to this order, Vallega sketches another way of understanding decolonial reason. It is one that departs from the concrete lived esthetic senses that are outside of the oppressive grip of those being colonized. The third chapter, “Transmodernity as Postulate: First Eurocentrism, Prejudice, Critique” by Enrique Téllez-Fabiani explains that the dominant historical narrative of modernity is made up of several components tied up in a single knot, making single categories difficult to discern. Cultural-historical concepts (colonialism, imperialism, modernity, globalization, etc.) intersect with historical economic systems (mercantilism, capitalism, socialism, neoliberalism, etc.) and historical political systems (liberalism, fascism, communism, etc.). Because of this intersection, their limits are not entirely clear and often seem to disappear. Additionally, because this intersection is taken as the totality, it then seems that a single cultural unit—western globalization—is the only standard to which other cultures should be

thought. Thus began, for Dussel, a long-term philosophical project in which he tries to explain and overcome this disturbing idea. Dussel asks, then, how to place Latin America in world history. In order to answer this question, Tellez offers a broad argument, so as not to lose sight of some indicative aspects of the meaning of modernity, and Dussel's counterproposal: trans-modernity.

The book then enriches the discussions by focusing on the role that gender plays in how we understand oppressive structures and philosophy of liberation. Chapter 4 thinks of the strengths and limits of philosophy of liberation when gender is taken into account. It is a piece called, "Reflection on the Erotics of Liberation: A Contemporary Feminist Latin American Perspective" by AFyL/Women. This text is intentionally a collective creation made by a group of *compañeras* from diverse territories and disciplines throughout Latin America who are part of the Liberation Philosophy school of thought. They follow an ethical and political commitment that seeks to decenter the *ego cogito* of the hegemonic academy to position themselves from a feminist epistemology that is devoted to building more horizontal spaces where they can speak from their affections, feelings, bodies, to produce and create collectively and collaboratively between women. In this chapter, they analyze Dussel's works: *Liberation of Women and Latin American Erotics* and its subsequent edition-correction *For a Latin American Erotics* with the objective to trace those contributions and categories that are fundamental to continue producing theoretically and politically from their own experience and testimony as Latin American feminist women. They recognize in the philosophy of liberation the ethical and political commitment against the oppression of women but also the limits and biases that make it impossible to understand the alterity of women and the critical power of their horizon of liberation. In Chapter 5 "Sylvia Wynter's Gender and Genre for a Queer and Trans-Inclusive Politics", Elisabeth Paquette fleshes out the distinctions between gender and genre in the Afro-Caribbean philosopher Sylvia Wynter's thought. Paquette takes the time to carefully unpack the expansiveness of Wynter's project and the value that it has for thinking through and alongside queer, and trans forms of resistance.

The book then turns to education issues and opens Chapter 6 with the article, "Struggles to Make Black Lives Matter" by Ernesto Rosen Velásquez. Here, he reflects on black death and the events leading up to the attacks on the capitol as a way of contextualizing philosophy departments in the United States. He reflects on some of the internal challenges token Latinx philosophers in departments face when attempting to make substantive change within Westernized universities. The author fleshes out the philosophical significance of the youth movement-led initiative that declared Breonna Taylor Day. As a way of challenging tokenization, he thinks through the collective process of meaning-making that can emerge when doing community-based initiatives. He considers the potential to create other kinds of practices with a different temporality that does not fit neatly within the framework of national holidays, university academic calendars of black history month or anniversaries as people work to decolonize the Westernized university from within and without. Chapter 7 "In the Trap of Critique: Making Decolonization Metaphor" by Stephanie Rivera-Berruz asks what critical race scholars owe to the political realities they draw from for the livelihood of their scholarship. Berruz notes, the truth of our world is one that is, in the words of Sylvia Rivera Cuscicanqui, a "world upside down," a traumatic turn, set in motion by the construction of modernity through colonization. In this world, the murder of George Floyd is not aberrational and the crystallization of inequality during a global pandemic is not circumstantial. This essay is as a meditation on the paradoxes of being a scholar whose livelihoods feeds from political moments for inspiration. The author argues that if we are truly committed to the intimacies that

philosophy of race and other liberatory philosophical areas (e.g., decolonial philosophies), then we really need to contend with our positionality as knowledge producers that extends beyond alignment with ideological trends that absolve of failures to act.

Chapter 8, “Education in Latin America: Decolonization as an Ethical-Political Urgency” by Nadia Heredia tells us that reflecting on education in Latin America implies placing it in the historical context of permanent economic, political, and cultural tensions that cross it. From the founding dichotomy of the educational discourses of modernity—civilization or barbarism—Latin America has been the testing ground of the Global North in terms of educational policies. The center-periphery tension planted in Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s remains intact in its hardest core. Heredia asks then, what interests support the fact that education is considered as the privilege of a few? What links can be established between the discourses that underlie current educational exclusions and the discourses sustained by colonial modernity? In this chapter, she intends to deepen these questions from the Dusselian Philosophy of Liberation, as a way to contribute to the educational epistemological resistance that looks to raise its voice in favor of life in the middle of this civilizational crisis. In Chapter 9, “Philosophy of Liberation Praxis in Mexico City,” Gabriel Herrera Salazar offers an excellent discussion of how a critical social science can be developed. He develops the thesis that Dussel’s ethics of liberation has human life as both his material content and necessary principle to layout the foundations of critical social sciences. From this perspective, research methodologies should surpass the notion of “object of study” and give more emphasis to the inter-subjective communities as groups of human beings, who are non-objectifiable. The intention is to humanize, to make conscious, to liberate, and to decolonize in the development of dialogue and the cultural exchange. By doing so, we can learn from the wisdom of the other person, and together achieve a common objective with the intention of achieving justice for the oppressed, the victims or in other words those excluded.

The book then weaves in and elaborates on themes of social movements. For instance, Chapter 10 “Experiences of Weaving: The Chilean Social Revolt as an Esthetic Proposal” by Paloma Griffero attends to the significance of esthetics as it relates to resistance movements in Chile. In December 2021, Gabriel Boric, a former student leader and Congressperson of the Republic, was elected President in Chile. Pedemonte analyzes his rise in esthetic terms. She claims that Boric’s presidential campaign was consolidated fundamentally from “memes” that rose from all corners of the country, as if inhabitants in each territory felt as personal the responsibility of supporting the campaign from their own esthetic expressions and cultural identities. Humor and creativity were used as a tool for the manifestation of the *people*. This form of pluriversal expression began to develop since the Social Revolt of 2019, a spontaneous and disruptive movement, which demonstrates the need for esthetic identification and symbolic connotation in the places of protest, where cultural and generational heterogeneity is revealed. In this chapter, the author analyzes, from decoloniality and the esthetics of liberation, the emancipatory capacity of the cultural manifestations of the Chilean people in the Social Revolt and subsequent elaboration of a new Constitution and the election of the leftist candidate, Gabriel Boric.

Chapter 11 then shifts to Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda’s discussion of the roles of immigration social movements. His contribution, “Migration Justice in Times of Pandemics in the Borderland of Ciudad Juárez/El Paso” shows how migration is an inherent human activity that has allowed us to explore and inhabit new territories. Its patterns depend on natural, personal, and sociopolitical circumstances. In this text, Díaz Cepeda reflects on the relationship between migrants and the

institutions pursuing migrant rights/justice. He situates his study in the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso borderland, focusing specifically on the last three years when caravans of national and international migrants arrived. He observes how for the most part, migrants have been welcomed and have received the support of locals, primarily in the form of donations (and services) from social, religious groups, as well as a handful of international organizations—even maquiladora owners have advocated for working visas out of a sudden corporate empathy. While this support network is certainly welcomed and needed, the author asks: Does this equate to immigrant justice? Or, what would justice for migrants look like? From the perspective of the coloniality of being, Díaz Cepeda argues that any actions taken to assist migrants, social justice entities must recognize moral autonomy and agency. Only through this recognition and migrants' full and active participation that true immigration justice can be achieved. Chapter 12 “Latin American Animal Ethics” by Iván Sandoval Cervantes and Amy Reed-Sandoval attends to how the animal rights/welfare movement in Latin America has frequently engaged the central questions proposed by animal rights ethicists from the United Kingdom and the United States. Importantly, however, it has also responded to the particular situation of the subcontinent. In Latin America, within the so-called *animalista* movement (an umbrella term that encompasses people interested in animal rights and wellbeing), different activist groups have connected their struggles directly to their territories and, thus, to violent conflicts that have shaped human/non-human relationships. In this chapter, the authors argue that acknowledging that animals are part of a particular territory, as many Latin American animalistas have done, productively problematizes debates around the rights of non-human animals, which are all-too-often de-territorialized. They also explore how comprehending non-human animals as situated within violent social conflicts allows for new ways of thinking about liberation and animal rights within specific contexts. Finally, in this chapter they seek to ground important features of the Latin American animalista movement within the theoretical frameworks of Latin American liberational philosophy and decolonial theory. They do this with a view toward challenging the widespread idea that animal ethics and animal welfare-based social movements are mere “impositions” on Latin American from the so-called Global North.

Chapter 13 shifts to Ernesto Castañeda's analysis of the social historical context from which the Zapatista movement emerges. In “Zapata Revisited: Views on the Zapatista National Liberation Army” he presents a historical synopsis of the evolution of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) while discussing its challenges to the liberal paradigm through its rejection of the definition of Mexico as a homogenous monocultural capitalist liberal democracy. He then proceeds to analyze how different observers and media have covered and reported on the movement through the years. Castañeda ends with an analysis of Marcos and the many challenges that he and the EZLN pose to the neoliberal paradigm. The last chapter by Osiris Gonzalez is “Decolonizing Peyote Politics in Mexico and Southwest USA.” He explains three significant moments in colonial history that have influenced drug policies in Latin America. The first occurred during colonization in the sixteenth century, when the trade of endemic plants like cacao and tobacco became globalized. This prevailing Puritanism persisted for around four centuries. The second turning point emerged in the mid-twentieth century after the discovery of Mescaline, LSD, and the spreading of knowledge about ceremonies with psilocybin mushrooms in Mexico. This sparked international interest in studying and potentially using psychoactive substances for therapeutic, commercial, or military purposes. The counterculture and social movements against the Vietnam War resulted in implementation of the “War on Drugs.” The third point of emergence occurred in the second decade of the twenty-first

century, known as the Psychedelic Renaissance. Scientific research resumed after several decades of interruption due to the therapeutic efficacy of certain psychedelic substances against mental illnesses and the emergence of a new and broad market.

## Notes

- 1 Lorgia García Peña (2022).
- 2 Ibid., 29.

## Reference

Peña, L.G. (2022). *Community as Rebellion*, 29. Haymarket Press.

## Section I

# Theoretical Approaches



# Liberation Philosophy and the Search for Combative Decoloniality: A Fanonian Approach

NELSON MALDONADO-TORRES

The impact of the discourse on decoloniality over the past decade has been palpable in a great number of areas of study, including professional fields in colleges and disciplines within the liberal arts and sciences; yet, the decolonial turn cannot fully take place within the globalized modern Western liberal university. The reason for this is that at the core of the decolonial turn there is a dimension that must be contained, delimited, and ideally removed in liberal and neoliberal settings: its combative character. The deactivation of combativity in academic discourses of decolonization and liberation is not new. It has already been long at work in philosophies and theologies of liberation, among other forms of thinking that were originally grounded on or that obtained inspiration from collective movements that challenged the basis of the modern/colonial world.

Gradually, as they entered the halls of the liberal university and theology seminars, liberation discourses were taken to be less the expression of reason emerging in combat, and more a body of perspectives, approaches, and critical theories to be for the most part studied and deployed in academic settings, publications, and debates. In this context, liberation philosophies and theologies largely became areas of expertise represented by middle-class academics with little to no engagement in collective movements for liberation, while combativity tended to be confused with and collapse into the critique of Eurocentrism and other forms of domination, all within the purview and horizon of the liberal arts and sciences. In this way, the structure of the white academic field (Maldonado-Torres 2020) and the ethos of *modern/western homo academicus* (Radebe and Maldonado-Torres forthcoming) largely remained untouched, even as the topics changed.

The deactivation of combativity in liberation philosophy and in decolonial theories, however, is not only a result of their integration within certain circles of the liberal academy. There are also internal contradictions and ambiguities in certain expressions of these areas that make them

complicit with this deactivation. More than six decades ago, the Afro Caribbean philosopher, psychiatrist, and militant Frantz Fanon outlined important general contours of the problem. In his classic decolonial treatise, *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon identified three stages in the works of intellectuals from colonial contexts: a first, assimilation stage, when the works of the “native” or local intellectual “correspond point by point with those of his metropolitan counterparts” a second, precombat stage, when “the colonized writer has his convictions shaken and decides to cast his mind back”, and a third, combat stage, that comes into being when the intellectual is part of the struggle and when writing is no longer the unique domain of the intellectual, both because intellectuals do not only contribute to the combat by writing and because many other writers emerge.<sup>1</sup>

Today, decades after the revolutionary process that inspired Fanon, it would be important to make explicit two additional modalities of intellectual work among colonized and racialized populations. These two modalities combine with the precombat stage to constitute three possibilities between assimilation and combativity. In that intermediate position, in addition to the precombat stage, one finds noncombativity as a firm and more or less set and permanent stage and anti-combativity as the explicit or implicit opposition, denial, or blockage of combative decoloniality. The differences between these modalities is not so clear since it could be difficult to ascertain when pre-combativity morphes into a more permanent noncombative posture. To this challenge, one must also consider that noncombativity and even pre-combativity can easily work in function of anti-combativity when they remain solely or for the most part inside the academy, since the function of the academy is to instill non- or anti-combative liberal values.

This Fanonian typology is particularly useful today when philosophies of liberation reappear under the banner of decolonial philosophy, and when references to decoloniality spread in the academy. For, overwhelmingly, it is arguably non-, pre-, and anti-combative intellectual activities and literature that are understood in the academy as modalities of the decolonial. The confusion is not difficult to explain since these forms of literature represent a challenge to the more clearly colonial, assimilation stage. Different from assimilation, non-, pre-, and anti-combative activity can include drawing up lists “of the bad old ways characteristic of the colonial world” as well as offering descriptions and analyses of the pervasiveness of death in the colonial context. Sometimes this literature can take on more optimistic tones and recall “the goodness of the people,” who are depicted as “the guardians of truth”.<sup>2</sup> Despite the appearance of radicality and declarations of allegiance to one or another form of non-western culture or thought, however, non-, pre-, and anti-combative intellectuals tend to see themselves and/or behave primarily as individuals and maintain an “outsider’s relationship” with struggles in combat zones of decolonial activity.<sup>3</sup>

Fanon’s critique of colonized intellectuals and his appreciation of combative decolonial activity played an important role in the formation of liberation philosophies since the mid-to-late 1960s, yet, overwhelmingly, liberation philosophy also arguably lost track of Fanon’s insights. This chapter seeks to illustrate this by focusing on the early formation of Latin American liberation philosophy. Latin American philosophers had long been concerned with the question about the existence of philosophy in Latin America and about its degree of authenticity. Early liberation philosophers, such as the Peruvian Augusto Salazar Bondy and the Mexican, Leopoldo Zea, combined the existing concerns among professional philosophers in the region—such as the question about the existence of philosophy and its authenticity—with the analyses and challenges that were emerging among combative intellectuals in the Third World. Fanon’s work became perhaps the most usual reference