

The Spacing of Decolonial Aesthetics

DON THOMAS DEERE

Fordham University, USA (ddeere@fordham.edu)

This essay develops on the aesthetic dimensions of decolonial thought in the work of Rodolfo Kusch and Enrique Dussel, who both point us to non-objectifying modes of thinking and being. Beyond a strictly epistemological approach, decolonial critique ought to offer an account of bodies, spaces, and movements that are the very condition of thought—that is to say, the condition of a mode of thinking otherwise, beyond the dominant colonial paradigm. This account of aesthetics involves the spacing and temporalizing of bodies as they live and move through the world, or what Alejandro Vallega calls living-thinking. The spacing-temporalizing of life points us also to the rhythm of life—life as movement, flow, and spacing. Turning to resistant epistemologies alongside the work of Omar Rivera, I consider how these epistemologies go beyond disembodied and abstracted ways of knowing as they sidestep the subject/object divide and engage sensuous and embodied dimensions of thinking, aesthetic experiences, diverse geographies, and histories. In closing, I argue that decolonial aesthetics also points us to a critique of the colonality of space. Moving beyond a cartographic grid that attempts to capture subjects and spaces in advance on its coordinate plane, decolonial aesthetics opens onto the richness of embodied and cosmic spaces.

Key words: aesthetics; space; decolonial thought; Rodolfo Kusch; Enrique Dussel; Latin American philosophy; Indigenous thought

The famous Cartesian formula, which equates the *ego cogito* with the being of the subject (*cogito ergo sum*), identifies pure thought with life and pure life with thought alone. If I am thinking I must be alive, and I can only be sure that I am living when I am thinking. The disembodiment and disavowal of the affective and spatial dimensions of life and living are brought to their apex in this formula. For this reason, Descartes' mode of thought has often been the target of decolonial critique. For example, Enrique Dussel argues that the *ego cogito* is the culmination and formalization of the conquering ego, the *ego conquiro*, of the colonizer.¹ Not only disembodied but also solipsistic, the *ego cogito* does not recognize the existence of the other or any being outside of its interiority. Furthermore, this ego is centered on itself, yet it pretends as if thought comes from nowhere, dislocated and without spatialization in the world. Colombian philosopher and decolonial theorist Santiago Castro-Gómez calls this zeroing out of one's subject position the *zero-point hubris* of modern/colonial thought.²

The problematic of zero-point hubris lodged at the heart of modern/colonial thought has often led to an epistemological emphasis in decolonial theory, focusing particularly on the epistemological occlusions of other modes of thought outside the European center. In Alejandro Vallega's and Omar Rivera's essays in this volume of the *Journal of World Philosophies*, we get accounts that highlight not only the epistemic dimensions of liberation and resistance but also aesthetic ones. As Eduardo Mendieta has argued, the epistemic dimension of colonality has at times overdetermined the discourse of decolonial thought.³ The philosophical critique of modernity/coloniality

turned to the epistemological dimensions as it developed its own critique of colonizing histories as distinct from social scientific, political, or theological critiques of colonization.

In both Vallega's and Rivera's essays, we see that this epistemic dimension cannot be fully articulated or understood without considering the aesthetic shaping of the sensible, affective, material, and communal. This aesthetic mode points to an epistemology that is not strictly divided between subject and object, as in the western instrumental rationalist approach. Rodolfo Kusch's work on Indigenous Andean thinking is particularly powerful in this respect, as both Vallega and Rivera show. Kusch unpacks an alternative mode of being, which he contrasts with the objectifying and substantive notion linked to the Spanish term *ser*. Instead, the Aymara term for being, *utcata*, could be more closely linked to a spatialized and temporalized being in the world, better captured by the Spanish *estar* or *estar siendo*. *Estar siendo* points to an embedded and woven mode of being, tied to community and cosmos.⁴ I will describe this embedding here as a form of aesthetics. The aesthetic dimensions of thought and living point to an important condition for any decolonizing project and for the possibility of decolonial epistemic critique. This is not to say that these aesthetic, bodily, and psychic dimensions are non-epistemic, but instead that they point us to a richer and more capacious understanding of what constitutes the resistant epistemic world of historically colonized subjects.

In this essay, I develop on the aesthetic dimensions of decolonial thought particularly in the work of Rodolfo Kusch and Enrique Dussel. I argue that through them, we see that the subject/object divide is not a natural or necessary starting point but only a specific modality of subjective instrumental rationalism. I draw on Vallega's and Rivera's work in this volume and elsewhere to inform my account, as they provide critical illuminations and approaches for the questions of decolonial aesthetics. In closing, I argue that decolonial aesthetics also points us to a critique of the coloniality of space. Moving beyond a cartographic grid that attempts to capture subjects and spaces in advance on its coordinate plane, decolonial aesthetics opens onto the richness of embodied and cosmic spaces. The decolonial aesthetic account thus opens up to non-objectifying modes of seeing, feeling, and encountering space.

1 Aesthetics

In opening, I highlight Eduardo Mendieta's critique, not with the aim of undermining the importance of an epistemological critique of coloniality, but to show instead the rich ground that is opened by dwelling on the aesthetic dimensions of life in a decolonial perspective.⁵ In order to disrupt the terms of colonial epistemologies, decolonial critique must offer an account of bodies, spaces, and movements that are the very condition of thought—that is to say, the condition of a mode of thinking otherwise beyond the dominant colonial paradigm. This aesthetics has also to do with the spacing and temporalizing of bodies as they live and move through the world. The spacing-temporalizing of life points us also to the rhythm of life—life as movement, flow, and spacing.⁶

The notion of aesthetics at hand draws on the broad sense of *aesthesis*, which has not only to do with art and beauty but points to the very conditions that shape the possibilities of our experience, the conditions that frame pre-conceptual sensibility. For Kant, the two fundamental aesthetic conditions for the perception of the subject are space and time.⁷ Yet, for Kant, thinking outside of the subject-object divide is not an option. As we will see below, this clearly occludes the aesthetic and affective nature of Indigenous and decolonial thinking. In this account, I also include the body, community, and cosmos in these aesthetic conditions and emphasize the historical

formations that shape the way spaces and times are lived, inhabited, and endured. Vallega's work in this volume and elsewhere has been essential in carving out such a decolonial notion of aesthetics.⁸ Rivera's notion of resistant and germinative epistemologies also resonates with this notion of aesthetics in the emphasis on embodied and communal modalities of knowledge. Indeed, Rivera helpfully outlines the ways in which oppressed epistemologies resist the disembodied and abstracted way of knowing through aesthetic experiences, geographies, and histories. Furthermore, his account of germinative force and the weaving of communal knowledges offers an illustration of how resistance is lived out in tension with the modern/colonial project.⁹

This aesthetic account takes us in the direction of a non-objectifying mode of thinking. The subject-object divide should not be taken for granted as a starting point; instead, we will see that resistant epistemologies unpack a mode of thinking that does not attempt to separate and isolate objects from the self or from the world or community. Both Enrique Dussel's decolonial philosophy of liberation and Rodolfo Kusch's account of Indigenous thinking point us to non-objectifying modes of thinking and being. In Dussel we can see the pre-conceptual sensibility of life that is at the heart of his notion of proximity. Kusch also describes a related problematic with respect to Indigenous thinking in the Américas when he writes that Indigenous "knowledge is not of a reality constituted by objects, but one full of movements or happenings" (Kusch 2010: 12).¹⁰ This mode of thought does not separate an exterior world of objects projected onto a screen from an interior world of understanding. Nor does it separate thought from the rhythm, movement, affect, and space of the body. There is a weaving of knowledge between cosmos and community, which we can see in Kusch's account of *estar as utcatha*. In this sense, aesthetics is not opposed to thinking or understanding but instead ties into a richer notion of a non-objectifying mode of thought.

2 Kusch and Dussel

Kusch's work on Andean Indigenous thinking offers valuable resources to any account of decolonial thought, as we are able to see the novel pathways of decolonial critique that are opened up by serious engagement with his writings. He is certainly an underappreciated thinker in decolonial and liberatory thought, and his work can be powerful especially in reframing the aesthetic and the epistemic in non-oppositional terms. I think we can also see that there are profound resonances to be unpacked between Kusch's work and Dussel's work on the question of a non-objectifying (or perhaps aesthetic) mode of thinking. Both thinkers are considered to be founders of Latin American philosophy of liberation, even if their work is rarely brought into dialogue and Kusch's work is much more concerned with questions of Indigenous thought in the Américas and the legacies of Indigenous thinking for contemporary perspectives in Latin America more generally.

One of Kusch's key insights is generated out of his reflections on the Aymara term for being, *utcatha*. He translates this with the Spanish *estar* (and not *ser*), in the sense of mere givenness. *Utcatha* is a mode of being in the world that registers affect, movement, and states prior to objectifying thinghood, and it also ties to notions of shelter and germination (Kusch 2010: 5). Kusch then gives us a notion that does not oppose thinking to feeling or knowing to sensing—but rather points us to decolonizing aesthetics and sensibility, which would at the same time entail a more capacious account of knowing.

As María Lugones and Joshua Price explain, "*Ser* marks a relation between subject and objects understood as definable, fixed, having an essence, ordered in relations of cause and effect"

(Lugones and Price 2010: lvi). The world of *ser* is tied to what they call the enterprising subject—the one who is able to manipulate the world of objects around them for their own control and gain. They characterize this *ser* mode of subjectivity as “a projection of possession” (Lugones and Price 2010: lvi). *Estar* points to a non-essentialist mode of inhabiting the world, a germinative relation with affective dimensions. The cosmos itself is unstable, unlike the stable world of objects in the *ser* world. Our mode of being as *estar* does not search to control or to tame the cosmos but rather to find points of stability and relation. Or, as Rivera describes, drawing from Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *estar* might even be about living in the resistant disjunction between different forces: *ch'ixi* (Rivera 2020: 80).

In Dusselian philosophy of liberation, we can see a connection with Kusch’s account of the relation between aesthetics and the epistemic. In Dussel’s *Ethics of Liberation*, life is foundational in justifying any liberation struggle and critiquing prevailing systems of domination. Life, prior to reason, and prior to any individuation, is what must be the starting point of ethics. Dussel is here developing a materialist account of ethics drawing from a variety of influences, ranging from Emmanuel Levinas, to Marx, to Indigenous thought, and other ancient codes of ethics. He is, however, critical of the kind of (instrumental) materialist approach that relies on the possessive individualism of a subject striving for pleasure or self-preservation as in utilitarianism or the social contract theories of Locke and Hobbes. These latter approaches draw a separation between the life of the individual and the life of the community too quickly. Dussel’s approach, by contrast, situates the normative dimension with the growth and flourishing of life, but not as a struggle between individuals in a world of scarcity. That is to say, all moral and political systems should aim to reach the measure of producing, reproducing, and securing the lives of its people without producing victims (even though this will always remain a regulative ideal).

A system becomes unjustifiable when it produces victims, or when individuals and communities cannot fully flourish in their lives. Any system where there is systemic suffering, or death, is a system that cannot justify itself in the face of the normative value and force of life.¹¹ Dussel’s ethics here emerges as a kind of negative ethics: an ethics for the victims, in defense of the struggle against domination, in the name of liberation.

Beyond this strictly normative focus, Vallega emphasizes the preconceptual and prelinguistic dimensions of life in his reading of Dussel. He shows that life is grounded on sensibility and corporeality and these cannot be taken up without considering their fundamental aesthetic dimensions. This is what Vallega calls the “temporalizing-spacing movement in bodying,” which already takes us from “life” as a substantive concept to gerundive living as a process underway, a continual shaping and re-shaping that cannot be reduced to thinghood (Vallega, forthcoming).

Dussel’s emphasis on the generative and ethical movement of life in *Ethics of Liberation* (1993-97) can be brought together with his earlier account of proximity from *Philosophy of Liberation* (1975-1977). The notion of proximity in this earlier text shows that life is never self-contained, strictly individuated, or separate from the concrete living of others—in short, living in this sense is always an active and transformative source of resisting.¹² Proximity can never be subsumed by totality or the objectifications of a totalizing subject-object mode of reasoning. The openness of life to the lives of others would hold not only for life within a localized community or in Latin America specifically, but life across the globe.

Importantly for Dussel, proximity always comes before the split that would allow a separation between an internalized subject and an externalized world. Prior to the subject that interprets and manipulates a world of objects, there is always the being of proximity, open and

responsible to others. Proximity is the festival of life that connects the community prior to any detour into an individualizing rationalizing subjectivity. Dussel does not deny the existence of the rationalist subject that rules over external objects, but this is a *detour* from our true ethical and aesthetic condition that neither interprets nor encounters the world in terms of objects (Dussel 1985: 21).

Kusch's work can help us better understand this originary openness of proximity that is laid out in Dussel. For Kusch offers up an account of Indigenous thinking that does not even require or get distracted by the detour into instrumentalizing subject-object thinking—it refuses to think the solution to a problem in the world can simply be solved with a water pump and a bureaucratic office (cf. Kusch 2010: 9). Again, this is not an objectifying mode of thinking but rather an affective or rhythmic “thinking.” Indeed, Kusch writes, “The indigenous take reality [...] as a screen without things but with intense movement” (Kusch 2010: 14). This is an embodied mode of “thinking” where sense and affect are gathered but not ossified in a pre-conceptual bodily process. It is one that is neither objectifying nor strictly conceptual, yet still offers epistemic bearings. It is a more capacious and, perhaps, aesthetic notion of thinking. Prior to isolated and fixed objects, there are movements and affects. The space and time of the body does not adhere to static or fixed conditions, nor does it strictly isolate and individuate itself as separate from a larger community of life.

In a similar way, Rivera describes the resistant epistemology of storytelling, for example, as an “epistemic practice of ‘weaving’ that casts light on multiple relationalities between social personalities and their respective perspectival knowledges” [...] (Rivera 2020: 79). The knowledge is not lodged in the mind of one privileged thinker, and it is not wielded over others from an isolated condition. Instead, this image of the weaving of epistemic practice points to the multiple relationalities that are entangled and the movement of thought across its various spaces, affects, threads and knots.

The movement of this woven thought is spatialized and temporalized. In this way, we might say there is a sense of aesthetic thinking that is rhythmic. It involves a vital force of expanding and contracting, the flowing out of one's self and connecting up with the field of relations. Rhythm involves the emergence of meaning and the drawing of patterns that the body invests in at a pre-conceptual level. Kusch takes this so far as to think the possibility of different modes of gathering these rhythms and patterns as intrinsic to the notion of understanding.

3 Space

The rhythm and spacing of this resistant woven self connect to an embodied and affective thinking, rather than a withdrawn and isolated thinking. There is no pure retreat to a citadel of the mind that would be spaceless and bodiless. The critique of Descartes cited at the outset points not only to the separation of life from the body but also to the retreat that colonizing thought makes to an empty space, freed from fractious materiality and rhythmic flows. Decolonial aesthetics has to do not only with the affective, sensuous, and bodily mode of thought, but also with precisely how these dimensions of sense-making and “bodying” are spaced out in the world. As the Martinican thinker Édouard Glissant writes in his reflections on thought in the Caribbean, “But thought in reality spaces itself out into the world” (Glissant 1997: 1).¹³ How has the possibility of inhabiting and

interpreting the world been formed by different modes of organizing and structuring spaces that are seen, felt, and lived?

This is a central question of decolonial aesthetics. Indeed, as Rivera points to José Martí's seminal intervention in "Our América," the question of liberatory thought in Latin American has itself been framed by the aesthetic condition of place (Rivera 2020: 76). What does it mean to think from América instead of Europe? For Martí, it is important to emphasize the kind of thought that organically grows out of and is adequate to this place rather than one that is grafted on from the outside. This contextual concern with one's place and space is an aesthetic framing of the question of liberation, as it points to the conditions of thought. In this way, Martí reminds us that liberatory thought should be attentive to the situation of its emergence: the lived history, the spaces, the landscape, the environment, and the cosmos (in the Andean sense) are all essential to the framing of liberatory thought.

As Glissant suggests, the thought that retreats to the spaceless realm of the abstract avoids the risk and commitment of the world. The abstract spaceless thinking also ties into a conceptualization of space as an empty container—we could refer to both of these as relating to the coloniality of space. The coloniality of space involves an objectifying instrumentalizing mode of plotting bodies and places onto a grid. It requires the subject-object divide as it plots the external world and its objects onto a fixed coordinate system that has nothing to do with the way those spaces are lived and felt nor with the historical and cosmological forces at work in any given space. These objects are defined and determined by their grid. It is a striated space that charts in advance any possible meaning and movements. As it turns out, this supposedly neutral and abstract space of the grid is, in fact, the vantage point of the colonial center as it charts out its empire.

Indeed, the Spanish colonial project was deeply invested in the ordering of urban design around a gridiron structure—and was arguably the first regime to have systematically employed such a spatial ordering on the design of their colonial cities.¹⁴ Like the abstract grid of Cartesian geometry, which is grasped by the mind alone and freed of fractious materiality, the Spanish colonizers sought to order their cities according to geometric principles. The Spanish colonial empire was a massive bureaucratic project that attempted to regularize its rule in the Américas through an emphasis on order, especially linked to urban design. In several major sixteenth-century laws formulated for this purpose, from the 1512 Laws of Burgos to the 1573 Royal Ordinances on town-planning dictated by Phillip II, colonial towns of the Américas were to be laid out according to an ordered grid. Within this grid, the forces of the body, of both the colonizer and the colonized, could be known and controlled in advance. Thus the abstract space of the mind provided a matrix for the organization of external objects.

The grid of colonial space was thus also connected to an understanding of space as empty both conceptually and practically: free for appropriation and free of any bodily or local mode of distribution. Indeed, what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls the "abyssal thinking" of Spanish and Portuguese colonization involved drawing a meridian line beyond which all space was free and empty for appropriation. Such a line was first drawn by the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*, "donating" all land and peoples to be "discovered" west of the Canary Islands to the Spanish.¹⁵ Emptiness is a form of ontological and epistemological division and control that denies the rights and the modes of existence of the Indigenous peoples who inhabit this land. Instead, a decolonial notion of space is perhaps without top or bottom, front or back: or without a prioritization of one over the other. It is a space populated with the tensions of the cosmos, the lived histories of bodies and resistances.

If we turn to the Andean indigenous perspective, we see a different account of space as it is lived in relation to the community and the cosmos. Rivera offers an account of what it means to sit in a plaza in such a way that resists the colonial grid (Rivera 2020: 83). There is another mode of the plaza, one that is not grasped purely by the subjective rational mind, but one that involves a spatial mode of distribution in harmony with the cosmos. Sitting in the plaza connects to the cosmos or a cosmological mode of thinking—one is not defined by one's position on an abstract grid, like an object plotted. The plaza can be a space of the enactment of ritual and community, a space of overturning the norms of daily life. The meaning of the plaza is not fixed by its abstract placement on a geometric grid; instead it is filled with the different forces and tensions of the cosmos, the community, history, and ritual.

In other work, Rivera writes about the dynamic tensions between different cosmic spaces in Andean thought, with particular focus on the Incan city of Machu Picchu. In Andean cosmological thinking, the relations between sky (Hanan Pacha) and earth (Uk'u Pacha) form a dynamic tension of forces that pull in different directions (Rivera, unpublished manuscript).¹⁶ For example, the Intihuatana stone sits atop this high mountain city and offers an interface with movements of the sun. In the subject/object language we would be tempted to simply call this rock a “sundial,” a tool to predict the time of day, like a clock.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Intihuatana_in_Machu_Picchu.jpg

Yet Intihuatana exhibits much more than this, as it sits at the intersection between the upward thrust to the heavens and its heavy downward weight that roots it with the mountains and the earth. The sky-facing-space of Hanan Pacha does not simply lead us to get lost in the heavens, like an ascent from the Platonic cave. Instead, the necessary intersection of this space with the earth-facing-space of Uk'u Pacha shows that both of these regions and modes of spacing are equiprimordial. In fact, the sky is not thought of as separate from the everyday spacings of life as communities weave their existence with their environments. It is not like a clock or a wristwatch that you can carry around with you, indifferent to place and the movements of the cosmos. It forms a centerpiece of the pull of forces and the dynamic of the community.

The ascent to the Intihuatana induces a sense of vertigo—one cannot move upward without feeling the downward pull of the earth. The stone draws toward uk'u pacha or the space of the earth. The uk'u pacha brings out notions of the underworld and what is hidden and sheltered beneath stone and mountain, to “a world that could break through at any moment” (Rivera, unpublished manuscript). This moment where what is beneath breaks through and overturns the order of cosmos is called *Pachakuti* or cosmic upturn. Thus, this account of the urban space of Machu Pichu offers an account of spatial distribution that cannot be plotted on this grid, nor one that could be subsumed by this flat two-dimensional plotting. Intihuatana follows a trajectory that is not chartered in advance and instead points to the stillness and tension of the pull upward and downward—and the overturning forces welling from below.

Here also Vallega's reading of the “void or emptiness” (*xu*) in traditional Chinese painting in works such as Guo Xi's “Early Spring” (1072) offers a notion of emptiness contrary to the nothingness or the blank slate of “abyssal thinking” (Vallega, forthcoming). The emptiness of the sense of *xu* found in Chinese painting runs counter to the emptiness of the grid that was used for mapping of territory, so essential to western colonization. This emptiness is instead a spacing of its own: it is not the void or vacuum of matter waiting for its form. Indeed, Vallega describes this as the space of movement and germination. It is not passive or neutral. It is not the emptiness of the subject-object divide that holds out things to be interpreted, grasped, and absorbed. Instead, it points to the space of world happening and movement, what he calls the “the germinal dance of living-dying-birthing” (Vallega, forthcoming). It is not unlike the silence and stillness in the elemental architecture of Machu Picchu that involves a holding forth and a tension from which Pachakuti rises.

The sense of *xu* offers an aesthetic sensibility that is not reliant on things or an objectifying mode of thinking. The discipline of Chinese painting done in the studio, which does not involve an attempt to represent objects of nature in the plain air setup of western painting, is particularly striking in this respect. The aesthetic sensibility that this mode of painting works to produce could be considered decolonial, as it offers a different mode of distribution from the representational stage of Renaissance painting. Indeed, the latter was a mode of grid-like plotting of objects that has often been considered to be a precursor to the colonial practice of abstract plotting and objectifying space in sixteenth-century global cartography. Here, it is interesting to think how Chinese painting operates according to a different logic than Renaissance painting or early colonial cartography.

Deepening this contrast with the project of sixteenth-century colonial cartography, we can consider Vallega's account of the sixteenth-century Mapamundi drawn by the Andean thinker Guaman Poma de Ayala (Vallega 2020: 68). This map shows us an approach to cartography that is not interested in scientific accuracy or the application of a coordinate system to capture a space. Indeed, it offers a counterpoint to sixteenth-century European maps that sought to capture an

objective understanding of the “newly discovered” territory of the Américas. For the European colonizer, the latter kind of mapping was essential to the colonial project. It was essential for the control, knowledge, and order over this territory for the enterprising *ego conquiro*. Guaman Poma’s map shows us something else. The cardinal regions of the map do not refer to a space to be navigated but to the movement of the seasons and the forces one inhabits in the cosmos. Indeed, this is a map that corresponds to Andean cosmology and history, one that illustrates the different cosmic forces that are distributed through a territory.

4 Conclusion: Decolonial Aesthetics and Ethics

In closing, I raise a question about the relationship between decolonial aesthetics and ethics. In raising Mendieta’s worries about the hegemonic role of epistemology in decolonial philosophy, I would be remiss not to discuss his turn to the ethical dimension that he argues is primary. The notion of proximity in Dussel is not only an aesthetic category of pre-conceptual openness, but is also an ethical category—the originary openness to the other is one that refuses objectification or the isolated individuation that would foreclose responsibility to the other. In short, the subject of proximity is one that is always involved with the being of others and the being of the community (not unlike the weaving of relations in communal epistemic practices discussed by Rivera).

This leads us to the question of the relation between ethics and aesthetics. Vallega’s original elucidation of an aesthetic notion of life in Dussel takes us to gerundive living and then living-dying (and finally, living-dying-birthing) (Vallega, forthcoming). The movement to life as process, movement, and germination is a very helpful shift away from a more substantial notion of life as such, which would be in tension with non-objectifying proximity. This process and movement of living that is always coming to be must then involve its dialectical opposite of passing away or dying: living-dying. This raises a question about the normative force of life or living in Dussel. When we forge together living-dying, do we lose some of the force of that critique, which would point to systems of death that stand against the germinative force of living and the expansive force of life?

This is a profound worry. However, if we again return to the earlier Dusselian notion of proximity, perhaps we find a way out. Is it not the resistant sense-making of proximity and the originary openness to life and the lives of others that precisely generates ethical commitments to others? Is it not the instrumentalizing mode of subject-object rationality that manipulates objects, and treats all subjects as objects, that is precisely the same rationality that destroys life and fails at responsibility? In short, is it not an aesthetic openness to different non-objectifying modes of experience that also attunes one to the ethical commitments and responsibilities of a decolonial mode of inhabiting the world? The claim is not that aesthetics has primacy over ethics, or that if we take care of aesthetics then ethics will follow. The point is rather that ethics itself is already imbricated with the aesthetic, and aesthetics itself already involves normative components and modes of being that open up ethical engagement.

Don Thomas Deere is Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, USA. He received his PhD with distinction in Philosophy from DePaul University and previously taught as Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University. His work on Latinx and Latin American philosophy, decolonial theory, and continental philosophy has been published or is forthcoming in venues such as *Inter-American Journal of Philosophy*, *Decolonizing Ethics: Enrique Dussel’s*

Ethics of Liberation, *Oxford Bibliographies in Latino Studies*, and *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*. He is the co-translator of Santiago Castro-Gómez's *Zero-Point Hubris: Science, Race, and Enlightenment in New Granada*, forthcoming with Rowman & Littlefield International. Presently Deere is completing his book manuscript, *The Invention of Order: Modernity, the Américas, and the Coloniality of Space*.

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- 1 Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of the Other and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995).
 - 2 Santiago Castro-Gómez, *Zero-Point Hubris: Science, Race, and Enlightenment in New Granada*, trans. George Ciccariello-Maher and Don T. Deere (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, forthcoming 2020).
 - 3 Eduardo Mendieta, "The Ethics of (Not) Knowing: Take Care of Ethics and Knowledge Will Come of its Own Accord," in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theologies and Philosophy*, ed. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 247–64.
 - 4 See the commentary on this notion from María Lugones' and Joshua Price's "Translators Introduction," in Rodolfo Kusch, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, trans. Joshua M. Price and María Lugones (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), lv–lxx, lvi.
 - 5 Mendieta instead emphasizes the ethical ground of liberatory and decolonial philosophies. Ethics is primary and if properly attended to, epistemology/knowledge will follow, he argues.
 - 6 For a rich development of these issues and this approach, see Alejandro Vallega, "An Introduction to Liberatory Decolonial Aesthetic Thought (a South-South Path, from Indigenous and Popular Thought in América and from the Sense of Xu (徐) in Chinese Painting)" in *Decolonizing Ethics*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta and Amy Allen (State College, PA: Penn State University Press, forthcoming).
 - 7 Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153–92.
 - 8 Alejandro Vallega, "The Descent of Thought and a Beginning of World Philosophies," in *Journal of World Philosophies* 5, (2020): 61–75; cf. also Alejandro A. Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).
 - 9 Omar Rivera, "Resistant Epistemologies from the Andes (A Contribution to Latin American Philosophy)," in *Journal of World Philosophies* 5, (2020): 76–88.
 - 10 Rodolfo Kusch, *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, trans. Joshua M. Price and María Lugones (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010).
 - 11 Enrique Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation in the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*, trans. Eduardo Mendieta, Camilo Pérez Bustillo, Yolanda Angulo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, and Alejandro Vallega (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).
 - 12 Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Markovsky (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985).
 - 13 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).
 - 14 Cf. Angel Rama, *The Lettered City*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).
 - 15 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledge," *Review* 30, no. 1, (2007): 45–89.
 - 16 Cf. Rivera, *Stonelight: Cosmological Sensing, Racial Embodiment and Resistance* (unpublished manuscript under review).