

## NOTES

1. The monographs I have in mind all highlight, albeit in varying ways, the original dimensions of Beauvoir's thought and include (though this is by no means an exhaustive list): Margaret Simons, *Beauvoir and The Second Sex: Feminism, Race, and the Origins of Existentialism*; Kristana Arp, *The Bonds of Freedom: Simone de Beauvoir's Existentialist Ethics*; Debra Bergoffen, *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Gendered Phenomenologies, Erotic Generosities*; Eva Lundgren-Gothlin, *Sex and Existence: Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex*; and Sonia Kruks, *Retrieving Experience: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics*.

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**Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions.** By MARÍA LUGONES. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

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María Lugones's *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* is a brilliant and theoretically dense book that makes several important contributions to the project of theorizing resistance to multiple oppressions. By pulling together previously published essays—several of which have been influential among feminist philosophers and women of color theorists—with some newer material, Lugones provides her reader with the rare and valuable opportunity to see the continuity within the

development of the thought of one of the most original thinkers working today. And while some of the earlier essays seem dated, several of the most influential essays, such as “Playfulness, ‘World’-Traveling, and Loving Perception,” have been usefully revised and updated. These essays are as relevant and compelling today for what they can teach us about forming coalitions and resisting multiple oppressions as when they were first published.

At stake for Lugones is the “tactical strategist’s” ability to enact, as well as to recognize in others, resistant intentionality for the purpose of forming political collectivities that can encompass heterogeneity and multiplicity (208–9). Toward that end, she aims to make visible alternative domains of intelligibility—or “worlds of sense”—within what we commonly understand as reality (20–26, 85–93). Lugones explains that certain kinds of acts are accorded intelligibility *as political* within a hegemonic “world of sense.” Such acts might include organizing a rally, marching in the streets, or campaigning for elective office. At the same time, other acts lack intelligibility *as political* within that same domain. These might include a person of low status calling attention to himself when he is expected to remain invisible, a person who is labeled mentally ill refusing to be “cured,” or a young person’s inattention to the schooling she experiences as inimical to her well being. Such acts, according to Lugones, are political insofar as they are part of an intentional interfering with, refusal of, or resistance to the reductive and unitary logic of the hegemonic common sense. And while such intentions are unsupported by the kind of institutional back up that would transform them into agency, Lugones nevertheless considers resistant intentionality important insofar as it helps subordinated individuals “sustain themselves” by “keeping [them] from being exhausted by oppressive readings” (15). Furthermore, Lugones considers the ability to recognize resistant intentionality (in oneself and in others) as central to any political project that wishes to alter the hegemonic organization of power effectively. According to Lugones, resistant emancipatory intentionality is that which people struggling together must learn to make social in their efforts to create coalitions that might succeed against multiple oppressions (224–26).

Key to Lugones’s ability to make what is usually invisible or unintelligible both visible and intelligible is her careful explication of the way we all live within multiple, contemporaneous, and even overlapping “worlds of sense,” each with its own sociality. Lest we pass too quickly over Lugones’s achievement, we should recognize her account of “worlds of sense” as a theoretical advance in thinking about the dynamics of resistance. Indeed, Lugones’s account of “worlds of sense” can be seen as elucidating, extending, and deepening W. E. B. DuBois’s notion of double consciousness—even though Lugones does not draw explicitly on DuBois. Her account elucidates the “worldly” context for double consciousness, reminding us that consciousness presupposes a sociality—a set of values, characteristic ways of interacting, particular persons who actively

inhabit a specific geographical and psychic space. Furthermore, Lugones moves us away from the us/them binary (often figured as a black/white, female/male, or worker/capitalist dichotomy) toward the recognition of ontological multiplicity. Finally, Lugones's account of "worlds of sense" deepens the notion of double consciousness by calling attention to the institutional structures and ideological frameworks that provide "back-up" to hegemonic worlds of sense, thus rendering them intelligible and visible. By calling attention to that institutional "back-up," Lugones provides an explanation for why some worlds of sense are hegemonic—that is, why they have the power to define and enact "common sense," while others are correspondingly rendered invisible or unintelligible, and, consequently, much less powerful.

In the introduction and throughout most of the book, Lugones tells us stories about her mother as a way of illustrating the sort of small gesture that might appear, from the perspective of a hegemonic world of sense, as nonsensical or irrational but that might be undertaken with resistant intentionality from within a subordinate world of sense. Part of Lugones's aim in telling these stories is to help us "travel" to her mother's world so that we might understand her mother as someone who was not wholly constituted by oppression, but who actively resisted her oppression. Another part of Lugones's aim is to drive home the point that we all exist, and our actions have meaning in, several different worlds of sense simultaneously. Consider the following story:

Whenever my mother would ask for something, she would say, "It is on that thing next to that thing." If you were not in the habit of following her in her moves—maybe that was not what your relation to her asked of you or what you put into it—you would never be able to bring her "that thing." My father was related to her in such a way that not knowing how to follow her in her moves through the cleaning and the cooking and the making of a life for us was to his advantage and part of his patriarchal position. He would not bring her "that thing." . . . But if you did follow her into her moves, as we kids had to, you could easily get her "that thing." You see, she—someone who was to be unimportant, the perfection of whose makings was to lie in the making and not being visible—managed to make herself important and to keep the makings both visible and invisible. "This," "on that," "next to it," were stations in her path, she was the pivotal directional subject. (29)

Lugones's point in telling this story is not that her mother did not live within a hegemonic world of sense, or that she could make herself immune to the deprivations and demands of that patriarchal realm. Rather, Lugones's point is that the meanings attributed to her mother by a patriarchal world of sense did not

exhaust her mother's being. As a homemaker of her era and culture Lugones's mother was expected by the hegemonic world of sense to "make" a home in a way that did not call attention either to herself as a creative being or to the physical and cognitive processes involved in that making. Yet she resisted that construction of herself and so found ways to make herself visible, important, and central. She did so by creating an alternative—albeit subordinate—world of sense with its own codes, inhabitants, and modes of participation. It was a world in which Lugones, her mother, and her siblings actively participated, but in which Lugones's father did not. So, although Lugones's father also existed within that world, he was a functional outsider to it—a noncompetent non-participant who may not have been even aware that it existed. Just as Lugones's mother's refusal to name what she wanted might have been interpreted from the perspective of Lugones's father's world of sense as verbal laziness, so *his* behavior would have been interpreted quite differently from the perspective of her world than from his own. Furthermore, while Lugones's father would have been central to his own (hegemonic) world of sense, he was probably peripheral to Lugones's mother's (subordinate) world of sense. In essence, Lugones's father was a different being—with a different positionality and valuation—in Lugones's mother's world than in his own. Thus Lugones reminds us how the social is always heterogeneous; because there are generally multiple and overlapping worlds of sense coexisting within any given geographical and temporal space, "no one slice of 'reality' [can have] a univocal meaning" (28).

In addition to illustrating her point about social heterogeneity, such stories make evident the fact that Lugones is her mother's daughter. To understand where Lugones ends up in the book, her readers need to follow carefully "her moves." It is only by doing so that we are able to "get" (understand) "that thing" (a particular point or even her argument as a whole). Moreover, it is this kind of "moving with" that most characterizes Lugones's methodology in this book.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, part of what makes Lugones difficult to understand at times is that *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes* is an enactment of the kind of methodology of resistance she advocates. Significantly, she wants to resist not only specific acts of oppression, but also the very logic of domination itself. Toward that end, she takes aim at the institutions, practices, and even vocabularies that she sees as (1) facilitating the erasure of alternative multiple worlds of sense; (2) participating in the logic of fragmentation rather than multiplicity; and (3) conceptualizing oppressions as interlocking rather than intermeshing. To avoid theorizing/writing in terms that she regards as reproducing familiar conceptual binaries (theory/practice, tactic/strategy, reason/emotion), Lugones introduces new terminology and insists that her readers recognize an all-encompassing relationality—both conceptually and at every level of human interaction.

To begin, Lugones asks us to make the "epistemic shift" necessary for acknowledging the dynamic movement that always attends the "oppressing/"

being oppressed  $\Leftrightarrow$  resisting" relation (11–12, 208). In Lugones's view, to talk about "the oppressed" is to reify conceptually those who suffer under oppressive logics, while to participate in conceptual reification is to participate in the logic of domination. Moreover, to represent one party as "the oppressed" while representing another as "the oppressor" is to make a binary of a complex relational web in which multiple different parties interact within multiple different relations of power with each other. Lugones also introduces the notion of "active subjectivity" as a conceptual alternative to late modern agency (6, 210–20). Modernist agency is, Lugones reminds us, "a mirage of individual autonomous action" in which the social, political, and economic institutions that back up the successful agent are effectively obscured (211). Active subjects, in contrast to agents, must move tentatively, with care, aware both of the lack of institutional back up and of the possibilities for creating the coalitions necessary for bringing their intentions to action. Finally, Lugones introduces a new kind of subject, the "I  $\rightarrow$  we" (6, 226–29). According to Lugones, the "I  $\rightarrow$  we" presupposes "neither the individual subject [nor] . . . the collective intentionality of collectivities of the same" (6). Rather, this subject works/theorizes from what Lugones calls the "pedestrian" view: "the perspective from inside the midst of people, from inside the layers of relationships, institutions and practices" (5).

For the most part, the new terminology and the conceptual shifts Lugones asks us to make are not introduced until the last few chapters in the book (although they appear in the introduction, which presumably was written after the chapters were finished). And while each of the earlier chapters builds toward the later ones, the overall effect is to leave the reader with the sense that a new stage of the work is just about to begin. It is as if Lugones has figured out her methodology, has put into place the conceptual tools she needs, and will continue her travels on the way to collectivity and coalition. My sense of anticipation is increased by the questions I am left with at the end of the book, including: Are all resistant intentionalities equally emancipatory? How, when we are in coalition, do we decide between conflicting intentionalities? What are the mechanisms through we take an intention that lacks sociality and make it social? I look forward to following Lugones's moves—as well as moving with her—as she continues her pilgrimage.

## NOTE

1. Not only does Lugones require us as her readers to "move with" her in order to understand her, but she also approaches the theorists whose work she takes up in this same way—moving with them as she explores and explicates their argument before carefully delineating where she departs from them.