

The Borderlands Feminine: A Feminist, Decolonial Framework for Re-membering Motherlines in South Asia/Transnational Culture

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Abstract: This paper uses Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands framework to resignify and recover the marginalized, forgotten sacred feminine and, thereby, South Asian motherlines. The borderlands is conceived of as a new consciousness, an alternative to that which is written in history. It offers a radical synthesis of spiritual healing with anti-oppression work. Creating self-affirming, complex images of female identity, and making revisionist myths—while engaging the self in relation to culture—constitutes a decolonial practice. It enables South Asian women—as the Others of colonial modernity and brahmanical patriarchy—to renew their relation to an episteme of the sacred that liberates their voices, vitality, and authority. The post-secular sacred locates as essential a critical interrogation of all forms of oppression. The researcher enacts her decolonial recovery at the edges of her South Asian/brown postcolonial feminist subjectivity. The borderlands framework makes possible a profoundly relational, integrative onto-epistemological praxis that forefronts the grandmothers, the foremothers, and the experiences of women of color on their own terms.

Key Words: Borderlands Framework, Decolonization, Female Identity, Gloria Anzaldúa, Sacred Feminine, South Asian Motherlines.

Introduction

Chicana cultural theorist and feminist Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) borderlands framework offers a radical synthesis of spiritual healing with anti-oppression work. By refusing to prioritize one over the other, she creates a multimodal, living, organic theory that offers an interstitial home for postmodern, postnational, postcolonial identities. Borderlands consciousness makes possible reconciliation and integration by moving “toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79). This is a profoundly relational and integrative onto-

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epistemological praxis. In this paper, I examine how the borderlands framework constructs bridges between the past and the present, the old and the new, myth and imagination and reality, post-colonial and pre-colonial. These structures and flows are not readily visible in Western modernity. Creating self-affirming, complex images of the feminine and of South Asian motherlines makes it possible for South Asian women—the Others of colonial modernity and brahmanical patriarchy—to renew their relation to an episteme of the sacred that liberates their voices, vitality, and authority. It further enables transcultural, transnational interventions that acknowledge my South Asian/brown postcolonial feminist subjectivity.

For Anzaldúa (1987), the *borderlands* refer to a consciousness at the confluence of two or more cultural, racial, ideological, or spiritual values that makes “crossing over” (p. 77) possible. The metaphor of borderlands does not narrowly connote mere geopolitical borders (Anzaldúa’s theory was specifically informed by the U.S./Mexico border), but invokes the psychic, emotional, and sexual dimensions of the terrain of intermingling (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2000, p. 176). Feminist and comparative politics scholar Leela Fernandes (2013) writes that it is the borders of her psyche that provide, for Anzaldúa, the psychic/political/cultural space to move beyond the violence of the territorialized borders she was confronted with (p. 106).

Anzaldúa (1987) considers the task of breaking down of dualisms one of innovation, after chemist Ilya Prigogine’s work on “dissipative structures” as a new source of order (p. 120). Further, this is a task of healing:

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp.78–79)

This overlapping consciousness makes possible reconciliation and integration. Decolonial theorist Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2012) writes that this self “is not a continent or a separate island, but, rather, a border, a point of encounter, an intersection, or even an archipelago, understood as a point of relation with other selves” (p. 198). In her movement “toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79), the border dweller changes and heals the split at the root of consciousness. This is the opus, the great alchemical work—what Anzaldúa (1987) also terms spiritual *mestizaje* (p. 103).

Anzaldúa’s (1987) other names for the both/and consciousness of the borderlands—*new mestiza* or *mestiza consciousness*—reflect her Chicana positionality. She writes:

The work of *mestiza* consciousness 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. The answer to the problems between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our language, our thoughts. (p. 80)

Like other Chicana/o scholars and activists, Anzaldúa was engaged in a reimagining and reformulating of the ancestral traditions of the indigenous Aztec and Toltec people. Laura Perez (1998) reminds us that this was a politics of memory. In drawing from indigenous cultures that are

politically oppositional to (neo)colonizing cultural and religious systems, and then recoding them, cultural agents enact a spirituality that can help redefine worldviews and identities at the borderlands. In an attempt to establish a common worldview that is “at odds with the reigning capitalist culture of extreme exploitation of the planet and human beings” (Perez, 1998, 'Membering the Spirit' section, para. 3), the mestiza borrows from and synthesizes diverse beliefs and practices. This is a decolonial gesture when practiced by the “marginalized, the mutable, and the unarticulated” (Perez, 1998, *Beyond the Susto of Nepantla* section, para. 6), and allows the borderlands to become for them a full and central, ever-shifting, place of knowing and being. Its seeking of resonance prevents the borderlands from being invoked as “yet another . . . peripheral resource in the center’s production of meaning” (Perez, 1998, *Beyond the Susto of Nepantla* section, para. 6). The bridge that is constructed through memory between the past and the present, the old and the new, enables transcultural affirmations of the feminine, the queer, the colored, the colonized, the indigenous. It reclaims and reconstructs for them the fullness of their humanity.

Throughout her writings, Anzaldúa repeatedly underscores the need for new forms of alliances between women, genders, cultures, races and other social positions, material and nonmaterial worlds, humans and nonhumans. Instead of monolithic, oppositional identities, her framework foregrounds alliance-making and forging commonalities from a holistic, relational perspective.

Anzaldúa’s activism embodies what womanist/feminist scholar AnaLouise Keating calls her metaphysics of interconnectedness (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2000, p. 11). Her risk-taking not only opens the door for other scholars to invent new forms of alliances and identities where they may bring in spiritual realities, imaginal realities, and their inner subjective life, but also empowers them to discuss these on an equal footing with issues such as race, class, age, and ethnicity (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2000, p. 144). In the serpent movement of spiritual *mestizaje*, justice and healing are envisioned hand in hand.

I turn to Anzaldúan thought as a framework for its inerrant capturing of my own lived experiences of borders, taking into account the effects of psychic, political, ideological, and gender borders on my own embodied belonging and efficaciousness in the world. As Cathryn Merla-Watson (2013) writes, “The domain of theory...should be a collective enterprise of suturing multiple constituent elements of identity and lived experience” (p. 226). India—just as the other colonies of Europe—was subjected to the more repressive aspects of Enlightenment rationality, expressing the colonial state’s anxieties about order and control (Siddiqi, 2002). This paper seeks to connect the parts of my identity that were gradually split off under the governing ideologies of rational secular colonialist modernism: ancestral, nonwestern, fierce, female, sexual. It is an attempt to reconstruct a consciousness of the prepatriarchal feminine while living under patriarchy’s gaze. It is an attempt to reconcile the oppressor in me with the oppressed in me. It is an attempt to be in integrity both as a scholar and as an artist—for I realize that unless I do this work, I cannot show up in my fullness in either scholarship or art; nor can I do the work of countering the logic of domination.

Historian and Ethnic Studies scholar Emma Pérez (1999) envisions the decolonial imaginary as “a rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written in history” (p. 6), and the apparatus that allows the move between the colonial and the postcolonial. The Anzaldúan notion of borderlands demands a similar willingness to be re-membered. The dismembered parts come together to

synthesize a new being. We do not stop at critiquing standards of Western rationality and objectivity; we create new patterns of rationality and objectivity informed by the heretofore suppressed feminine and “primitive.” Accessing these parts in ourselves, we gradually decolonize our being. We de-link from Western modernity and open up to what Partha Chatterjee terms “our modernity” (as cited in Mignolo, 2012, p. 27), locating possibilities of other temporalities.

The excavation of meanings and practices that are non-Eurocentric and non-androcentric is a slow, layered process that unfolds in a spiralic fashion. The circle or spiral is the pattern or “means-by-which” the eternal cycle of birth-death-and-rebirth—in which all forms of creation are eternally turning and evolving—can be experienced (Wilshire, 1989, p. 102). Writing that follows a cyclical pattern rather than a linear form is able to return to ideas or themes “at intervals with different levels of understanding” (Wilson, 2008, p. 42). Anzaldúa (2002) sees developing a new consciousness as a cyclical, ceaseless process (p. 562). In the spiral, time is not a linear construct. What happens here can affect the past, present, and future—it can enliven the body, and heal ancestral and future generations. The spiral connects the center and the periphery, the inner and the outer. This intimate connection means that as the spiral moves outward, individual and collective actions of spiritual *mestizaje* contain the possibility of renewing the sacred.

Borders and Vitality: A Personal Account

Stories, memories, voices, and energies of other kind can get trapped in the liminal state between borders, if the borders are not permeable enough to allow movements or crossovers. This became vividly clear to me when—during a vision in early 2016—I found my female ancestors immured in a tunnel-like underworld.

Their life spark and vitality had been suppressed or stolen away, they said, by the heavy mantle of patriarchy. The term *patriarchy* rightly elicits much debate and critique in feminist and other scholarship. For example, scholars caution that systems of male dominance be analyzed with attention to power differentials in their cultural, temporal, spatial, and other intersectional dimensions, rather than be conceived of as universally monolithic, homogenous, ahistorical hierarchies (Kandiyoti, 1988; Patil, 2013). I have come to understand patriarchy not only as the institution that patrols the borders of gender roles and the sexuality of individuals of all genders. It is also a metonym for the experience of smallness, fear, rejection, shame, and lack of inner authority that accompanies many women on an ongoing basis—that for them is the only way in which they have experienced being women. It is the feeling of being cut off from something vital in themselves; of powerlessness at not having been able to change the tide. Based on evidence of pre-patriarchal, non-patriarchal, and matriarchal alternatives in early as well as living history, it has been theorized that patriarchal power structures are a cross-cultural historic development, linked with diminishment of the role and status of women (Gimbutas, 1991; Göttner-Abendroth, 2012; Sanday, 2002).

In the vision, I was in that dark space with my female ancestors, and they were asking me to write so they would—riding on the stream of the vital force living in words—come out.

Vitality, then, was for my ancestresses the key to liberating themselves from a history of institutional, structural oppression—and from history itself, which is often the oppressor’s account

made authoritative because of an imbalance in power. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) notes the critique of history as a project of Western Enlightenment that has developed alongside imperial beliefs about the Other, assembled around totalizing, universalizing, evolutionist, and progressivist ideas (pp. 29–32). Feminist thinkers have further called out much of history as male-stream and noted that such accounts erase or sideline women’s roles, and relegate their often complex enactments of agency to a simplistically conceptualized victimhood. Feminist theorist and political philosopher Mary Hawkesworth (2007) points to the “pervasiveness of the mistakes about the nature of women and their roles in history, politics, and society and the imperviousness of mistaken views to refutation” in androcentric scholarship (p. 95). Theologian Mary Daly (1978), creative spinster, suggests “hag-ography” and “hag-ology” as models women can adopt to uncover hidden histories of women—of Hags: “Hag-ographers perceive the hilarious hypocrisy of ‘his’ history.” (p. 17).

The ancestresses’ bidding of words as a means of introducing vitality made immediate sense to me as a writer. In poetry, I am deeply familiar with something moving in language that is beyond language—something that wells up from the pools of words and finds its way in us to animate or, as the case may be, to dishearten. The ancestresses were asking me to remember something further about the role *women* can play, in particular in their capacity as artists. My intuitive understandings found confirmation in the study of gynocentric American Indian cultures by Laguna Pueblo/Metis poet and scholar Paula Gunn Allen (1986). She writes:

Pre-Conquest American Indian women valued their role as vitalizers. Through their bodies they could bring vital bodies into the world—a miraculous power whose potency does not diminish with industrial sophistication or time. They were mothers, and that word did not imply slaves, drudges, drones who are required to live only for others rather than for themselves as it does so tragically for many modern women. The ancient ones were empowered by their certain knowledge that the power to make life is the source of all power and that no other power can gainsay it. Nor is that power simply of biology, as modernists contentiously believe. When Thought Woman brought to life the twin sisters, she did not give birth to them in the biological sense. She sang over the medicine bundles that contained their potentials. With her singing and shaking she infused them with vitality. (p. 27)

Here, the power of generativity is not, as Gunn Allen makes clear, merely biological. Functioning in a ritual manner, using their bodies to bring vitality into the world, is what awards women the status of mothers. Creating embodied language is as much a sacred activity as giving human birth.

Motherlines

As soon as the ancestral behest was made, I realized it intended to secure healing and freedom for my ancestresses as much as the liberation of my own voice, life energy, and inner authority. I sensed for the first time the unbroken chain connecting me with my ancestresses, despite and through the trauma and the violence and the rupture. Poet and Jungian analyst Naomi Ruth Lowinsky (2009) gives the name *Motherline* to this sense of female continuity and interrelatedness.

The Motherline links generations of women to their future and their past—it honors the life stories, lore, and wisdom of their mothers and their grandmothers as the source of their own stories and wisdom. Lowinsky (2009) writes that the Motherline lies in the background of modern, patriarchal consciousness, and women (and men) are often unaware of their connection to it (p. 13). Which is why, she says, its very image “seems to evoke its absence, its loss, the pain we feel in the feminine” (p. 34). The feminine—like the masculine—is not a rigid gender category, but a vital concept: “the realm of mystery, the cyclical nature of life, the realm of women’s bodies” (Lowinsky, 2009, p. 30).

An absence of the vital feminine was etched yet unmourned in my early experience of reality. Colonization and coloniality not only have shaped my personal history and the collective history of my people, they also created circumstances that disrupted and impaired motherlines. However, the process of erosion of motherlines in South Asia went on for centuries before the arrival of the European colonizers. Brahmanization in South Asia gradually changed the political, social, and cultural landscape, grafting itself onto autochthonous, folk traditions that worshipped the great mother (Göttner-Abendroth, 2012, p. 70). This prefiguration is not that of the self-sacrificial mother of a patriarchal consciousness:

Mother-goddess can be interpreted as expressing ideas of power, autonomy, and primacy in the widest sense of the term. She conveys not so much the idea of physical motherhood but a worldview in which the creative power of femininity is central; the goddess mediates between life and death and contains in herself the possibility of regeneration. (Ganesh, 1990, p. 58).

Under the impact of Brahmanization, the mother goddess turned into a subservient spouse of the male deity relinquishing her autonomy. Baron Omar Rolf von Ehrenfels (as cited in Krishnaraj, 2010, p. 17) notes that strong mother-right elements persisted in India to a degree and extent more than elsewhere in the world. Yet gradually there was a sidelining of ways of living based on female-centered, earth-centered practices where knowledges were transmitted down the female lineages. These included lifeways founded on a knowledge of the woman as a medium for regulating the energies of the household, community, and the cosmos. Women had been custodians of ways of contacting the energy sources so as to initiate rites of auspiciousness (see Jayakar, 1990; Nagarajan, 2007), but the patriarchal hierarchy that permeated India via the Vedic caste system cut off many of these lineages and these knowledges.

Once superiority was established—of men over women, and of the upper castes especially Brahmins over the lower castes and the outside-caste/indigenous people—these Others of the Vedic caste patriarchy were relegated to the margins of history and of religious participation.

Ironically, even as India is known for its worship of the goddess and for its symbolic honoring of women, its women are penalized for going against tradition. They are simultaneously “made repositories of tradition but do not have access to their own tradition” (Krishnaraj, 2010, p. 17). There are exceptions that have kept nature-based, women-led rituals alive among folk and non-Vedic traditions such as Tantra (Jayakar, 1990; Khanna, 2000; Mookerjee & Khanna, 1996), but the overwhelmingly patriarchal, and increasingly nationalistic and xenophobic interpellation of

religion in India has had a disastrous impact on the rights and sense of agency of its non-Brahmin, non-cisgender male Others.

Clearly, my ancestresses believe that the “female memories of power and energy” (Jayakar, 1990, p. xiii) can be reclaimed from the margins, at the borderlands. Female-bodied feminists who take on the challenge of engaging their discomfort with the primitive and the feminine—itsself stemming from a modern rational, Western feminist interpretation of this notion—will find themselves recuperating the wholeness of their female, borderland selves. They may find themselves resuscitating their Motherline, and through this work learning—as I am—to be “open to others in relations of hospitality and generosity, and...commit ethically and politically to and for [an Other]” (Maldonado-Torres, 2012, p. 197). For, living at the borderlands and enacting a borderlands consciousness in contact with the ancestral, the premodern, the feminine, the embodied is as much about epistemic and ontological justice as it is about recovering the sacred in our post-secular narratives.

Women in the New Modernity of India

Goddesses in the religious life of the Indian subcontinent are attributed with power, autonomy, and primacy, while Indian women often remain subject to norms and violence regulating their social roles and conduct. Partha Chatterjee (1989) argues that a “new patriarchy” emerged in India with the origin of an anti-colonial nationalism (p. 627). The nationalist discourse, during its struggle against colonialism, invested the home and the world with polarized values (spiritual versus material). The home/world dichotomy came to be represented by gender roles, and women were assigned the responsibility for ensuring that the purity and superiority of India’s inner identity—its spiritual culture—remained intact. This purity was asserted as superior not only in opposition to westernization, but also in opposition to the “barbarism” and “irrationality” of the common, lower classes. The new modernity of India conferred upon women the dubious honor of becoming the bearers of a nationalistic morality, which, while claiming to revere woman as goddess or as mother, ironically narrows the primacy, scope, and sphere of her spiritual participation (Chatterjee, 1989, pp. 629–630).

Colonization made India an unbidden subject at the table of Western modernity and its offspring, Enlightenment rationality and secularism. Just as in the West, ontologies and epistemologies emerging from the province of tradition were seen as non-modern. This included “nature, the past, women, the feminine, the household, ‘the primitive,’ and loyalty to kin and tribe” (Harding, 2008, p. 8). The invention of religion itself was a by-product of colonialism, creating an arbitrary partition between the sacred and secular (Sen, 2013, p. 9). The brahmanical forms of practice were what came to be codified as Hinduism (King, 1999, p. 102).

According to Ashis Nandy (1995), there is a local meaning of secularism in India that does not place religion as outside politics, but connotes multireligious coexistence and equal respect for all religions. This notion of secularism draws its rationale from the broader traditions of religious practice in South Asia. This non-modern understanding has been losing ground to the Western model, especially with the continuing influence of nationalist ideologies in contemporary Indian polity. Nandy (1995) suggests that the religions, cultures and visions that have become silenced or marginalized in the dominant postcolonial narratives of secularism may hold the keys necessary

to bringing in the transformations necessary to bring inter-communal harmony (p. 37). Lata Mani (2009) too advocates reexamining the meanings conferred by modernity upon the terms sacred and secular in order to carry out the work of social and personal transformation (p. 9).

Decolonizing the Feminine

The cooption of femininity by nationalistic morality in India has created the need for memory work where the feminine can be written in transcultural yet culturally specific, open-ended, fluid ways. The convergence of colonial rationality and brahmanical patriarchy has produced a condition where women struggle to remember their own sovereignty and authority. I seek to actively access and source non-brahmanical traditions for their possibilities of alternative, non-dominant spiritual knowledge and leadership for women. The call is for no mere romanticization of tradition, but for a participation in its reconstruction from the inside out so that it becomes a place of liberation for the Others of modernity, including women. This is a deeply self-willed, self-authorizing, feminist, decolonial act of reclaiming. It is a transformational practice that is about moving away from the epistemic hegemony of the West to knowledge making that privileges the non-West, the non-male, the non-white, and the non-European. Decolonization values the past as part of the present, not as something to reject. The past continues to “frame what becomes actuality from a horizon of possibilities” (Isasi-Díaz & Mendieta, 2012, p. 6). By decolonizing “spaces of belonging, sites of dispossession, claimed interstices, erased memories, and hushed stories” (Isasi-Díaz & Mendieta, 2012, p. 6), we create alternatives to that which is written in history.

Anzaldúa’s own work exemplifies this. As a Chicana and Mexicana, she invokes the indigenous sacred feminine to muddy the waters of the singular cultural identity, which is the subject of a Chicano Movement dominated by a masculinist and heterosexist cultural nationalism (Yarbro-Bejarano, 1994, p. 12). Reconstructed, the indigenous feminine figures are able to converge the past and the present, the cultural and the autobiographical psyche. Re-membered, they do not stay in the past—but claim the past, the present, and other temporal structures and flows that may not be recognizable in Western modernity. The border-crossing Coatlicue in Anzaldúa’s narrative, for example, reclaims her all-encompassing, multigendered aspects from the patriarchal, male-centered narratives that had split them off and cast them underground—claims Anzaldúa—and redefines the very contours of autonomy:

And someone in me takes matters into our own hands... Mine. Ours. ...And suddenly I feel everything rushing to a center, a nucleus. All the lost pieces of myself come flying from the deserts and the mountains and the valleys, magnetized towards that center. *Completa*. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 51)

Again, by reconnecting Guadalupe to indigenous goddesses, Anzaldúa recuperates the former’s capacity to include “the impure, mestizo/a, queer women and men for whom there is no room in dominant religious traditions” (Delgadillo, 2011, p. 26). Memory work becomes, for Anzaldúa, a relational exercise that connects individual and collective worlds at the borderlands: the displacements, pain, suffering, resistance, and empowerment therein. It enables her to formulate her complex, shifting subjectivity amidst a newly emerging collective identity. Her revisionist mythmaking is, further, a decolonial exercise: it enacts self-affirming images of female identity that create a rupture in the status-quo. These, Keating (2013) writes, are fluid, transcultural

universals that “open up psychic spaces where alterations in consciousness can occur” (p. 118). Even as living on the borders is borne out of the necessity to survive, these multiple voicings of myth at the borderlands are necessary for women that do not identify with dominant Western heteropatriarchal tellings of the feminine to survive.

The current of nationalism in South Asia, like Chicano nationalism, is predicated upon an oppressive patriarchal and colonial gender structure. Nationalists have repeatedly attempted to wipe out India’s other, indigenous modernities since the latter do not produce the univocal, homogenous subject of the nation-state. This loss of plurality narrows the space available to women in the public and spiritual spheres. Cultural life, in private and public, continues to be framed within a discourse defined by masculine norms. Reflective of the power structures, goddesses become consorts of male gods, and women become subservient wives, mothers, and daughters of men who are the chief functionaries in the religious and sacred realms.

My situatedness within a transnational space gives me a sense of the ways in which national and transnational processes of oppression of the feminine overlap. Women’s experiences within the transnational empire are often imbricated, and the Anzaldúan model of reconstruction of the sacred feminine—and, via that, renewal of a post-secular sacred—gives me one strategy through which I may enact my interventions in the transnational/postcolonial imaginary of South Asia. By taking into account the Others of modernity so as to restructure our very understanding of the contours of modernity, the borderlands framework makes possible a meeting of the goals of social, political, epistemic, and ontological justice.

At the borderlands, it is not the dominant but the “other” ways of knowing that are valued (see Denzin et al., 2008). Other ways of knowing include those associated with women, nature, indigenous peoples, and people of color—and posit interests, feelings, passions, and the body as valid and authoritative sources of knowledge. They are able to connect the historically colonized Others to their own epistemology, ontology, and axiology—in other words, to their own autonomy, struggles, and resistance. I will end this paper with a proposal that poetry and autoethnography be considered as emergent integrative research strategies at the borderlands.

Both poetry and autoethnography disrupt inheritances of colonialism, imperialism, and androcentrism in the academy by making space for the epistemologies, ontologies, and interventions of feminist, non-European, indigenous scholars and scholars of color. Both enable nontraditional scholars to engage with knowledge production in the fullness of their sensory and social dimensions. They help nontraditional scholars make sense of their lives, by making possible integral discourses and helping them explore the “total complex of knowing”(McNiff, 2008, p. 34). Both offer “new ways to see” (Leavy, 2009, p. 254). The research methodologies of poetry and autoethnography embrace vulnerability, and demonstrate that emotional and psychological aspects are integral to social research. Likewise, they allow for a synthesis of the intellectual and aesthetic dimensions of research.

Through a process of analytic and creative reconstruction of the past and the present—the autobiographical and the cultural psyche—a transnational borderlands feminist can participate in the transformation not only of her own identity, but also of the collective identities of the communities she engages in. Here she stands in the limen, continually reaching for wholeness, a

full participant in the unfolding of her own spiritual knowing. She puts herself back together again, in writing, in her anticolonial struggle—and she restores to her ancestresses their autonomy and vitality.

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