

Epistemology and care: two thresholds between philosophy and politics¹

Epistemología y cuidado: dos umbrales entre la filosofía y la política

Javier Camargo Castillo  & Ivon Cepeda Mayorga 
Tecnológico de Monterrey - México

ACCESO  ABIERTO

Para citaciones: Camargo Castillo, J., & Cepeda Mayorga, L. (2023). Epistemology and care: two thresholds between philosophy and politics. *Revista de Filosofía Hodos*, 12(1), 21-36.
<https://doi.org/10.32997/rh-2023-4669>

Recibido: 20 de enero de 2023

Aprobado: 1 de marzo de 2023

Autor de correspondencia:
Javier Camargo-Castillo
javier.camargo@tec.mx

Editor: Jorge Luis Quintana Montes.
Universidad de Cartagena-Colombia.

Copyright: © 2023. González Garizao, N. Este es un artículo de acceso abierto, distribuido bajo los términos de la licencia <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> la cual permite el uso sin restricciones, distribución y reproducción en cualquier medio, siempre y cuando el original, el autor y la fuente sean acreditados.

ABSTRACT

This work explores the relationship between philosophy and politics from two thresholds. The first of them recovers the thought of Gloria Anzaldúa to suggest that, between the two, writing plays a double role: on the one hand, as a political act of social transformation, but also as an epistemological shift of the subjectivity and rewriting of reality from an ontology-epistemology of radical interconnection. The second threshold refers to a theoretical conception of care with authors such as Joan Tronto, Laura Pautassi, and Nadya Araujo Guimarães to establish how this perspective implies rethinking politics that addresses intersubjectivity. From the contrast of both approaches, we propose that there is a constant dialogue between politics and philosophy, and the possibility of making visible the vulnerability and interconnection of the human condition.

Keywords: Care; Gloria Anzaldúa; intersubjectivity; epistemic injustice; decolonial turn.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo explora la relación entre filosofía y política a partir de dos umbrales. El primero de ellos recupera el pensamiento de Gloria Anzaldúa para plantear que, entre ambas, la escritura juega un doble papel, por una parte, como un acto político de transformación social, pero también, como un shift epistemológico de la subjetividad y reescritura de la realidad desde una ontología-epistemología de la interconexión radical. El segundo umbral, se sitúa en la concepción teórica del cuidado con autoras como Joan Tronto, Laura Pautassi y Nadya Araujo Guimarães para establecer como esta perspectiva implica un replanteamiento de la política que atienda a la intersubjetividad. A partir del contraste de ambos acercamientos, proponemos que entre política y filosofía no solo hay un constante diálogo sino la posibilidad de hacer visible la vulnerabilidad y la interconexión de la condición humana.

Palabras clave: Cuidado; Gloria Anzaldúa; intersubjetividad; injusticia epistémica; giro decolonial.

¹ El presente artículo es una traducción del artículo: "Epistemología y cuidado: dos umbrales entre la filosofía y la política" (2023) publicado originalmente en la Revista Bajo Palabra, de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Bajo Palabra II. Época. N°32

Presentation

Reflecting on the relationship between philosophy and politics is nothing new, and it can be approached from multiple perspectives that analyze the problems faced by human beings. However, it is important to understand that from a reflection such as this one emerge unfinished proposals as a response to the concerns of a given time and era. Thus, we are forced to remain in a state of vigil or amazement as the different possibilities between philosophy and politics arise. At first, it is important to understand that this fields—in the words of Luis Villoro²—share the study of the behavior of individuals within a social environment, but through contrasting approaches. In this sense, for Villoro both horizons respond to different questions: politics focuses on questioning those factors that lead to a particular social situation; philosophy, and in particular ethics, wonders about commendable or desirable social ideals.³ Thus, Villoro's reflection focuses on a relationship between politics and ethics. He postulates a complementary relationship since “politics without ethics to justify it is blind force; ethics without political knowledge to explain it is an empty illusion”.⁴ This does not mean the relationship is a simple one, but rather, that a continuous tension between ideals which allow us to glimpse possible and desirable worlds according to notions of justice, equity, welfare, care, responsibility and freedom (to name some of these ideals), while confronting forms and structures of order and organization submitting to specific interests.

According to Villoro, there are two scenarios in which this tension could be alleviated but perhaps imply the preponderance of one of the elements. Thus, if the relevance of politics prevails, one can imagine the search to procure and maintain a social order based on criteria or epistemological considerations that can delineate a certain moral horizon that supports a certain political perspective. Villoro recognizes here, if a moral order is established and followed without further questioning, the risk of falling into an ideological discourse.⁵ According to the Spanish philosopher Marina Garcés, in politics “an authoritarian desire is growing that has turned despotism and violence into a new mobilizing force. [...] it is a new authoritarianism that permeates the whole of society”⁶ and makes it impossible to think of or envision other ways of conceiving and realizing a world (or other worlds), especially if these options are based on a perspective of meeting in what is common to all of us, of a relationship as a general “we”, of an interconnection or intersubjectivity.⁷

For Dora Elvira García-González, this impossibility of thinking about other worlds is also a reflection of an epistemic injustice that emanates from the systemic violence that reduces society to simplistic conceptions and promotes

² Villoro, L., “Ética y política”, en Villoro, Luis (Coord.), *Los linderos de la ética*, Ciudad de México, Siglo XXI, 2004, pp. 3-17.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4- 5.

⁶ Garcés, M., *Nueva ilustración radical*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 2017, p. 7.

⁷ Garcés, M., *Un mundo común*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2013, pp. 20-22.

a specific social order and system, mainly oriented towards consumerism and mercantilism.⁸ García-González takes up Miranda Fricker's proposal and points out that epistemic violence can be understood both as testimonial injustice and as hermeneutic injustice. The former discredits the discourse and proposals that do not come from those interlocutors recognized and accepted by the same system, which excludes those voices coming from groups other than those accepted within a specific social order.⁹ This accentuates and normalizes the conditions of inequality and exclusion which in the long run can cancel any possibility of encounter and recognition of the other while dehumanizing our interlocutors.¹⁰ This type of testimonial injustice is reinforced by hermeneutic injustice, understood as that through which only certain socially accepted discourses are taken into account and considered valid and true.¹¹ García-González emphasizes how these types of injustices are used as instruments that repeat practices of oppression, silencing, subordination and discrimination of individuals and that allow the strengthening of certain logos that are consolidated within the structures of order and power. It is therefore necessary, in her words, to recognize and reappraise the importance of a philosophical thought that favors a dialogue between epistemology, politics and ethics,¹² not only as a critical voice as proposed by Villoro,¹³ but as a necessary voice that allow us to account for the injustices and inequalities expressed through mechanisms that have been normalized. Both philosophy and ethics serve as a horizon for questioning political practices promoting and strengthening epistemic injustices, and an analysis of the relationship between philosophy and politics implies expanding horizons that allow us to move towards other possible ideals and other forms of knowledge.

Thus, this text presents two possible thresholds to rethink the relationship between philosophy and politics. At first, we enter into the reflection proposed by Gloria Anzaldúa to expand the role of writing as a bridge between philosophy and politics. On the one hand, writing is a political act of social transformation, but it is also a bridge for the rewriting of subjectivity and reality, attending to an ontology and epistemology of radical interconnection.

In a second moment, as a dialogue with the reflections of Villoro, García-González and Anzaldúa, we approached care as a fundamental category to understand political and social relations and structures. Care is then a perspective that demands a reconfiguration that goes from the philosophical to the political, based on the understanding of its importance from the intersubjectivity that its practice implies when considering both the care receiver and care provider.

⁸ García-González, D.E., "Reflexiones desde las humanidades frente a las injusticias epistémicas. Una propuesta desde la ética del cuidado y la cura", *Otros Logos. Revista de Estudios Críticos*, Año 13, (12), 2022, pp. 40-42.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁰ Cfr. Livingstone Smith, D., *On Inhumanity*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020.

¹¹ García-González, D.E., "Reflexiones desde las humanidades..." *op.cit.*, p. 45.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

¹³ Villoro, L., "Ética y política", pp. 7-8.

Through the contrast of both approaches, we propose that between politics and philosophy there is not only a constant dialogue but also the possibility of making visible the vulnerability and interconnectedness of the human condition.

The double dimension of writing as a threshold between philosophy and politics

Gloria Anzaldúa was born on September 26, 1942 in a rancheria in southeast Texas located 40 kilometers north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Her cross-border status is something that will permeate both her political activism and her philosophy. Gloria Anzaldúa—lesbian, feminist, Chicana, theorist, poet, writer, teacher and activist—left an important philosophical legacy with works such as *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987); the compilation *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), with Cherríe Moraga, and the books *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990), and *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (2002); *Friends From the Other Side/Amigos del Otro Lado* (1997); *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y La Llorona* (2001).¹⁴

This section argues that from Anzaldúa's perspective, the relationship between philosophy and politics is given not only from one direction to the other, in an interchangeable way, but in two dimensions or registers of connectivity. The first one has been studied by different approaches to her early works, and can be framed within what, for example, Chad Kautzer considers radical philosophy. That is to say, a philosophy that does not seek to create a system but to find the instruments to change reality within thought; philosophy is praxis, in a conflicting reality it keeps a degree of prefigurative character in the community, and its realization or ultimate goal would be the disappearance of the oppression and injustice it denounces, and tries to transform.¹⁵ The second of them, shows an even greater radicality in Anzaldúa's philosophy and its plexus with politics, since it refers to a way of thinking the human condition from the perspective of an ontology of radical interconnection, as Ana Louise Keating would point out based on Anzaldúa's paradigmatic book *Light in the Dark /Luz en lo Oscuro: rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*.¹⁶

Much of the lucid reception and reading of Anzaldúa's work has focused on the work of "Borderlands/ La Frontera: *The New Mestiza*" where undoubtedly we can find there are many links between philosophy and politics. To mention just a few examples: the study of cultural domination and strategies of linguistic

¹⁴ Gutiérrez-Magallanes, M.S., Camargo, J, Jiménez, C., "2020: Anzaldúa En Tiempos Napanla: Presentación", *Humanística. Revista de estudios críticos y literarios*, 1, (2), 2021, 70-76. <https://www.humanistica.mx/index.php/humanistica/article/view/32>

¹⁵ Kautzer, Ch., "Introduction", *Radical Philosophy*, New York, Routledge, 2016, pp. 16-19.

¹⁶ Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*, Durham, Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empire, Nations en Duke University Press, 2015, p. IX.

resistance in order not to reproduce models of oppression;¹⁷ to address the political uses of autobiographical writing;¹⁸ to rethink the migrant condition, the racialization of bodies, discrimination and violence;¹⁹ to criticize and propose educational alternatives in multicultural and transnational contexts with a special focus on youth.²⁰

However, Anzaldúa's ideas are a threshold that continues to be revisited and dialogues not only with the theoretical references which nourish it and contests, but also with contemporary philosophical movements such as posthumanism, new materialism and decolonial feminism. This is how Ana Louise Keating refers to it²¹ in the introduction of the posthumous work *Light in the dark. Luz en lo oscuro. Rewriting identity, spirituality, reality* by pointing out that:

for Anzaldúa epistemology and ontology (knowing and being) are intimately interrelated- two halves of one complex, multidimensional process employed in the service of progressive social change.²²

Thus, political condition is foundational, however, the political seems limited to the margins of what philosophy allows it to see, for example, what is subject, reality, community, language. Philosophy would then be a creative action making this interconnectedness visible and experiential, and the political would be reconfigured through other narratives that go beyond the notions of identity and representation,²³ to offer instead channels to other forms of knowledge and transformation of subjectivity.

It is important to highlight is that it is not a matter of establishing a sharp division between the previous interpretations of her work and those envisioning a transversal and evolutionary study of the concepts and terms that Anzaldúa creates throughout her work. It could be said that now is possible to see these works from different planes communicating with each other, which were already underpinned and still remain open for exploration.²⁴ We dare to

¹⁷ Cfr. Arriaga, M., "Construcciones discursivas en los márgenes: resistencia chicana en Borderlands/ La Frontera: the New Mestiza, de Gloria Anzaldúa", *Anuario de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas*, 10 (2) 2013, 1-15. <https://cerac.unlpam.edu.ar/index.php/anuario/article/view/592>

¹⁸Cfr. Barrientos, P., "Contar historias y dibujar sobre arena. Autohistoria, escritura e identidad en la obra de Gloria Anzaldúa", *Revista Liminales. Escritos sobre psicología y sociedad*, 7 (13) 2018, 61-82. doi.org: 10.54255/lim.vol7.num13.321.

¹⁹ Cfr. Cantú, N. E., Gutiérrez, C. L., Alarcón, N., Urquijo-Ruiz, R. E., "Volumen One: Güeras y prietas. Celebrating 20 Years of Borderlands/ La Frontera 2007" en *El Mundo Zurdo*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 2010, pp.17-60. Cfr. Saldivar-Hull, S., Alarcón, N., Urquijo-Ruiz, R. E., "Immigration, The Immigrant, and the Racialized Body" en *El Mundo Zurdo 2*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 2012, pp. 20-73.

²⁰ Kasun, G.S, Mora-Pablo, I., *Applying Anzaldúan Frameworks to Understand Transnational Youth Identities*, New York, Routledge, 2022.

²¹ Ana Louise Keating is a pivotal figure in the reception of the studies on Gloria Anzaldúa along with Norma Cantú.

²² Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, op. cit., p. XXXII. Traducción propia.

²³ Pérez Bernal, M. "Repensando la identidad de la mano de los feminismos a la búsqueda de nuevas alianzas", *Bajo Palabra*, (20), 2019, 227-244. <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2019.20.013>

²⁴ Cfr. Keating, A.L., *The Anzaldúan Theory Handbook*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2022.

say that the philosophical heartbeat that unfolds throughout Anzaldúa's work has been heard more and more clearly. As demonstrated by the works of Ricardo F. Vivancos,²⁵ Andrea J. Pitts,²⁶ Kelli D. Zaytoun,²⁷ and many other voices that have appeared in the volumes of *El Mundo Zurdo* edited by The Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa.²⁸

Back to the prologue of *Light in the Dark...*, in which Ana Louise Keating situates Gloria Anzaldúa's thought with points of encounter and difference with philosophical avant-gardes such as speculative realism or object-oriented ontology. Anzaldúa sought a non-anthropocentric gaze to think the real in a way that the spiritual also has a place, she sought to take materiality radically seriously considering its interconnectedness, interdependence and "sanctity" of all existence.²⁹ Ana Louise Keating emphasizes that within this materialistic vision, Anzaldúa also considered language, which has strong connotations for the type of philosophy that she carries out and therefore its links with politics in both directions.³⁰

Anzaldúa closely associates language with matter. In her ontology, language does not simply refer to or represent reality; nor does it become reality in some ludic postmodernist way. Words, images, and material things are real, embodying different aspects of reality -ranging from the "ordinary reality" of everyday life (in its physical, nonphysical, and semi-physical iterations) to what Anzaldúa describes as "the hidden spirit worlds".³¹

For Ana Louise Keating this is fundamental, because if the ontological and the epistemological converge, they also come together with the aesthetic. Thus, writing has the role of linking and concretizing the transformation that is possible through it. "For Anzaldúa, writing is ontological —intimately connected with physical and nonphysical beings, with ordinary and nonordinary realities."³² Therefore, writing would have a political role by allowing the colonial wound to heal but also in creative terms, rewriting reality:

Anzaldúa "rewrite[s] reality" in more expansive terms, incorporating Spirit, ancestral guides, indigenous wisdom, imagination, and cultural-mythic figures. She identifies creativity and storytelling with healing and associates both with progressive sociopolitical change on multiple levels. Defining "illness" broadly to include the effects of colonialism,

²⁵ Vivancos, R. "Sección Especial" *Cuadernos de ALDEEU*, 34, 2019, pp 111-280.

²⁶ Pitts, A., "Chapter 1. Interpretative Threads of Anzaldúa's Work en *Nos/Otras. Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Multiplicitous Agency and Resistance*, Albany, 2021, pp. 13-27.

²⁷ Zaytoun, K. D., "Chapter One. La Naguala in Theory and Practice" en *Shapeshifting subjects. Gloria Anzaldúa's Naguala and Border Arte*, Urbana, Chicago, Springfield, 2022. Kindle Edition.

²⁸ Camargo, J., "El Mundo Zurdo entre nosotros: Encuentros con Gloria Anzaldúa desde la filosofía, la imaginación, la resistencia y el testimonio", *En-claves del pensamiento*, (26), 2019, pp. 125-134. <https://www.enclavesdelpensamiento.mx/index.php/enclaves/article/view/392>

²⁹ Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, op. cit., p. XXXI.

³⁰ Ídem.

³¹ Ídem.

³² Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, op. cit., p. XXXII.

assimilation, racism, sexism, capitalism, environmental degradation, and other destructive practices, epistemologies, and states of being that occur at individual, systemic, and planetary levels, Anzaldúa maintains that artists can assist in the healing process.³³

These two levels that in the above are concomitant, the transition from one to the other can be seen with greater progression in María del Socorro Gutiérrez-Magallanes's article, "Gloria Anzaldúa y el giro descolonial desde la frontera para el mundo". The former I would call the colonial turn, while the latter is mentioned as an epistemological *shift* that occurs between authors and readers.³⁴

Regarding the decolonial turn, as in other texts that approach Anzaldúa's ideas from the political autobiography, Gutiérrez-Magallanes points out that:

Gloria Anzaldúa deploys urgency and utopia in her texts in two ways and invites us to take a decolonial turn. First, she unveils a territory marked by a history of genocide, violence and racism as a result of a mixture of a colonial past and a neoliberal-capitalist present. And second, the author uses a wide repertoire of narrative strategies of resistance to illuminate this territory as a potentially decolonized site and as a political horizon of freedom that goes from the border of Aztlán to the world.³⁵

Carolina Meloni rightly refers to Anzaldúa's case as an autobiographical narrative in which what she calls body-politics would be at play, where "writing implies a radical act of commitment not only political, but also vital, corporal" or an organic writing that "comes from the entrails, from the guts, from the living tissue itself".³⁶

But after this first approach, where the link between writing as the production of political thought is already visible, Gutiérrez-Magallanes recovers how in *Borderlands* and in Anzaldúa's writings the different stages of a process of decolonization towards a *knowledge* in which the change of consciousness is a possibility: the epistemological shift.

For Anzaldúa (2002), the decolonization process or this path towards *knowledge* is made up of the following seven phases: 1) the outburst, rupture, fragmentation, an end, a beginning; 2) Nepantla, to be in the middle; 3) the Coatlicue state, ignorance and the cost of knowing; 4) the call, the commitment, the crossing and the conversion; 5) putting Coyolxauhqui back together, new personal and collective stories; 6) the outbreak, a struggle of realities; 7) Change realities, act on the decolonial vision or spiritual activism (Anzaldúa, 2002: 546-568).³⁷

³³ Ídem.

³⁴ Gutiérrez-Magallanes, M.S., "Gloria Anzaldúa y el giro descolonial desde la frontera para el mundo", *Camino real: estudios de las hispanidades norteamericanas*, 2018, 10, (13), p. 82.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁶ Meloni, C., *Feminismos fronterizos. Mestizas, abyectas y perras*, Madrid, Kaótica Libros, 2022, pp. 212-213.

³⁷ Gutiérrez-Magallanes, M.S., "Gloria Anzaldúa y el giro descolonial desde la frontera para el mundo", *op. cit.*, p. 85

To put it briefly, writing is a bridge of ontological trance and transit. Writing, then, is not only the means of communication of a thought but a possibility of entry into another shared possibility of being.³⁸ It can be said that it starts from an “author” to her readers, only if it is emphasized that the author, through writing, reconfigures her subjectivity and explores through language the way to make the reader enter, not in a story, but in a form of being that transforms the way in which the reader knows and knows herself. In *Light in the Dark* Anzaldúa—if we come back to the full title of the book—would be offering us an existential methodology for this rewriting of identity, spirituality and reality, nothing more and nothing less.

Anzaldúa in some interviews referred to her philosophy as the way she describes her spirituality, as *nahualismo*, which she pointed out can be translated as “shamanism”.³⁹ Ana Louise Keating goes back to that characterization to point out that she perceived in indigenous thinking “a vital force of decolonial wisdom for contemporary and future life on this planet and elsewhere”. Anzaldúa saw the need for a change in the way of meeting the world, but this did not imply a return to “authentic” ancient teachings, instead a reworking of them into the current context, where imagination and creativity have the power to change or reinvent reality.⁴⁰

Inmaculada Lara-Bonilla emphasizes that while Gloria Anzaldúa’s work related to queer feminism and decolonial theory has received much attention, her philosophy of consciousness, related to writing and theory making, has not been studied enough.⁴¹ What Lara Bonilla concludes after a review of the works of phenomenological authors is that for Anzaldúa there is a “connection between the physical method and the psychological path of writing, between the material dimensions of the practice and spirituality, between forms of expression and transformative habits of meaning-making”.⁴² And concludes that *Light in the Dark* ...“constitutes a practical, embodied attempt to describe and enact a decolonizing theory through the study of several phenomena related to writing, which centers the body, its orientation, positionings, and trauma”.⁴³

³⁸ Something similar, from other philosophical coordinates, is what María Antonia González Valerio points out when she says that: “The text has to be action, refiguration of the world of praxis, performativity, challenge to change one’s life (as Gadamer affirms, the text tells us: that’s you and you have to change your life). Hermeneutics has insisted on thinking about the text in an ontological and ethical-political key. The text is not what is exhausted in the game of signs, but what is always pointing towards a you, towards a dialogue that, although it is delineated and indicated in the same textuality, must be executed singularly, on each occasion, for who reads. The story builds an order where there was none before, it imposes its own order on the narrated action to build significant wholes, and Ricœur calls this extracting a configuration from a succession. The configuration must establish an intelligibility pact with the reader. Readability depends on the plausibility of the plot.” González-Valerio, M. A. “Hablar para ser escuchada o sobre el leer y escribir el mal en incesante penuria”, *En-claves del pensamiento*, 2022, (32), e543. <https://doi.org/10.46530/ecdp.v0i32.543>

³⁹ Anzaldúa, G. *Borderlands / La Frontera. La nueva mestiza*, Madrid, Capitán Swing, 2016, pp. 284-285.

⁴⁰ Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, op. cit., pp. XXXIII-XXIV.

⁴¹ Lara-Bonilla, I., “Writing excess in *Light in the Dark/ Luz en lo Oscuro*: Anzaldúa’s Phenomenology of Writing as a Decolonizing Tool” *Cuadernos de ALDEEU*, 34, 2019, p. 165.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

And here we can delve into how this philosophy provides methods for thinking, becoming writing, rewriting reality and becoming a political event in which subjectivity and the relationship with the world are transfigured; referents are explored that erase the borders between the human and the non-human in favor of a basal interconnection: the personal vanishes only to be regained in a more expansive form, in the common, or to use two concepts that Anzaldúa coins, it becomes the work that matters towards a left-handed world through a spiritual activism.⁴⁴

Care, a perspective from the threshold between philosophical theory and political practice

Talking about care is not easy. It demands a reflection transcending the theoretical perspective of knowledge production, where sociology intersects with philosophy, political science, and gender studies. In a sense, referring to care implies the search for a practical horizon through the public agenda that impacts the development of public policies that, in turn, suggest a horizon of more significant gender equity. Then, care is a subject on the threshold between a philosophical horizon and a practical horizon, whose study enables a social transformation through a critical look at how the issue of care is considered within the social structures and cultures of a country, as well as within its normative and public policy framework. In this sense, although care is a cross-cutting issue to the human condition, it has been relegated to a minor task within contemporary Latin American societies.

According to Karina Batthyány, care is perceived as a 'second-rate' task, which does not have the same value as other productive tasks within society. This notion of care as an activity less valuable reproduces a gender inequality in which care tasks fall mainly on women, who are expected to perform care tasks in a 'natural' manner⁴⁵. In addition, there is a phenomenon called the 'crisis of care' (which is increasing in Latin America) and is linked to demographic changes among women who are now entering the labor market. These working women can no longer spend the same time performing care work. This crisis of care is reinforced by the aging of the population (which in turn requires more care) and the lack of renewal of the people by younger generations because there is a tendency to reduce the size of families, also linked to the lack of time to exercise care tasks⁴⁶. This situation accentuates the importance of resuming and studying the issue of care. According to data from the International Labour Organization, in Latin America, on average, women perform 74 percent of total hours of care⁴⁷. However, there has also been an increase in women's

⁴⁴ Keating, A.L., *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁵ Cfr. Batthyány, K. *Las políticas y el cuidado en América Latina*, Santiago de Chile, Naciones Unidas, CEPAL / Cooperación Española, 2015.

⁴⁶ López Estrada, S., "Políticas de cuidado infantil en América Latina: Análisis comparado de Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay y México". *Frontera Norte*, Vol. 29, (54), 2017, pp. 26-46.

⁴⁷ Araujo Guimarães, N., H., & Sugita, K., "Cuidado e cuidadoras: o trabalho do care no Brasil, França e Japão", *Sociologia & Antropologia*. Vol. 1, 2011, pp. 151-180.

participation in the paid labor market. This means there is an increased demand for care - or care services - at home to cover activities that women can no longer perform to cover their working hours while showing how women continue to be normalized as caregivers. Thus, in this text, we rescue the proposals from thinkers such as Joan Tronto, Laura Pautassi, and Nadya Araujo Guimarães to establish a common thread to consider the concept of care. This threshold comes from the theoretical conception of care to its implementation through concrete actions that allow us to move from normative and structural frameworks within societies.

In the first instance, we start with a reflection on the definition of care that allows us to become aware of a condition of inherent vulnerability and fragility of the human being, which in turn resonates with the need for shelter and accompaniment as part of the process of meeting that need. Care also implies interaction and intersubjectivity, that is, a relationship with someone else because a bond or contact is established between someone who cares and the person who is cared for. Thus, according to Berenice Fisher and John Tronto, the human being is also caring being, understanding care as

*... a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.*⁴⁸

Tronto recognizes that it is a broad definition, but also this definition allows us to understand that care is present in various forms within different spaces and facets of life. It also helps to clarify the constant movement between the ability to care and the need to be cared for. Besides, there is also the link of care with a notion of specific spaces, environments, and the need to share living memories. This is how Tronto seeks to emphasize the condition of interconnection through five moments in which care is given: 1) Caring for (caring about), which involves detecting a need in someone; 2) Caring for that need (caring for) where there is a commitment to address this need; 3) Seeking care (caregiving), which refers to having the skills to provide care; 4) Receiving care (care receiver), which involves listening to know if the need that had been detected could be met or if it was not; 5) Caring with others (caring with) which implies a notion of solidarity and shelter in the sense of being able to take care of the group or community to which one belongs.⁴⁹

Tronto recognizes that, despite being a theoretical and broad definition, it also allows us to think of care from a sense of interdependence where those who receive care can also provide care at a different time. However, it also

⁴⁸ Fisher, B., Tronto, J. "Toward a feminist theory of caring", en E. Abel y M. Nelson (ed.), *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, Albany, Ste University of New York Press, 1990, p. 40. Énfasis en el original, traducción propia.

⁴⁹ Tronto, J., "There is an alternative: homines curans and the limits of neoliberalism", *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 1(1), 2017, pp. 27-43.

recognizes that care must be guaranteed as a right as part of these dependence relationships.⁵⁰ For her part, Laura Pautassi points out that reflection on care also implies asking whether there is the possibility of thinking about care as a right to receive and give care. Otherwise, it is part of not recognizing the relevance of the care tasks inside the society and how they are needed to keep society moving. As most care tasks are done by women, diminishing the importance of care also reinforces systems of inequality and injustice against women. Hence the transversality of the consideration of care from a struggle for gender equity. Thus, Pautassi stresses that the linkage of care to a legal condition has multiple impacts. The first is considering the subject of law, which requires a different position not only at the discursive level but also at the normative and institutional levels. Pautassi proposes that it is not the same to be subject to the right to care as to receive care as a gift that is left to individual action or decision. Thinking of care as part of the legal framework implies changing structures within society that allow for transversality within public policies and that, in turn, push the shaping and strengthening of both a national care system and a care regime. For Pautassi, a right to care is "transcending the particular to consider the universality that accounts for differences."⁵¹ To this end, it is essential to consider the three dimensions of the right to care: the right to care, the right to care, and the right to self-care, which involves moving from a rhetorical discourse to a reorganization of the State through institutions and policies either of education or health that are reconfigured from the notion of care. According to Pautassi, it is critical to understand that the main contribution of the right approach to care is:

contribute to closing the gaps and 'building bridges' between the human rights system, social policies, and development strategies, which at the same time link the political system [...] to reorient economic policy along the same lines as the development strategy under a rights framework.⁵²

It is a way of transcending a debate based on inequalities and the distribution of resources to propose comprehensive rights for the population. In addition, Pautassi believes that a political system that considers care a right allows women and the other populations to whom these policies would be directed, such as children and older persons, to contribute to empowerment, migrants, sick, among others.

In this sense, considering and measuring the time spent on unpaid activities carried out mainly by women allows us to tangibly visualize the care activities that help the development of the community, as well as who carries out these activities. Similarly, care policies must be linked to social policies that provide shelter for those who give and receive care⁵³. While, as Pautassi points out, the

⁵⁰ Cfr. Pautassi, L., *El cuidado como cuestión social desde un enfoque de derechos*, Santiago de Chile, Naciones Unidas, 2007.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

⁵³ Por su parte, la filósofa italiana Silvia Federici también se ha posicionado sobre el tema insistiendo en que se podrían proponer políticas públicas diferenciadas que permitan apoyar a las personas que ejercen labores de

right to care serves to think about and defend care as a part of seeking and defending oneself from a normative setting within a society, this must be accompanied by an ethical and moral reflection that makes it possible to consider the relevance of care from an everyday action. In this scenery, women are the primary providers of care, but their struggle to recognize care transcends other populations in situations of inequality and vulnerability.

Nadya Araujo Guimarães proposes to understand care from the sexual dimension of the people who provide care work and from a notion of care circuits. These dimensions of care allow us to draw convergence criteria and heterogeneities when discussing care studies. Araujo Guimarães, like Pautassi, recognizes that the care issue is intertwined with a gender issue which is demonstrated according to the statistics on who carries out care tasks and which are part of the 'care crisis.' Following the reflection of Araujo Guimarães, it is impossible to pressure women into the labor market in Latin America. However, this did not mean pressure for other women to do domestic work and devoted themselves to care activities. Suppose this situation is added to cultural trends that see care as part of women's family activities. In that case, it is necessary to propose ways and alternatives to break these cycles of inequality and oppression of women and other populations (indigenous or migrants, to name a few) from notions of obligation and ill-care.

Therefore, Araujo Guimarães proposes the category of 'care circuits.' The importance of talking about care circuits lies in being able to make visible the different relationships that are woven around care. Thus, this analogy of care circuits helps us to understand the connection between other actors involved in the issue of care and the intersectionality present in it. The care circuits allow us to see how by changing the meanings given to care and their considerations, there are also inequalities woven around issues of class, gender, race, and profession. Likewise, it allows us to see that from the meanings; there are also different modes of remuneration, both monetary and non-monetary⁵⁴. Therefore, Araujo Guimarães proposes to understand the care circuits from three perspectives: as a profession, as an obligation, and as a support. In the first instance, it seeks to recognize care as a profession to show that care activities are taken for granted and not seen as a profession, making it impossible to access social services that consider the occupations within a political market and regulatory order. Secondly, it points out and criticizes that care is regarded as an obligation mainly of women in the family. This perspective is based on a false prejudice that women in the family are the ones who have a condition of supposed love that feeds and ensures that children and older people are taken care of. For this reason, women are conditioned by the fact that their tasks are not valued professionally and fall into a condition of

cuidado como un subsidio a servicios de gas, luz o agua de acuerdo con indicadores de cuidado. Federeci, S. *Las luchas de la reproducción. Del 'salario para el trabajo doméstico' a nuestros días*. Marzo 22, 2029. Youtube: <https://youtu.be/Hr-3a3pKqfE>

⁵⁴ Araujo Guimarães, N., H., & Sugita, K., "Cuidado e cuidadoras..." op.cit., pp. 157-158.

dependency since they do not merit economic remuneration because they are not considered to work⁵⁵.

Finally, Araujo Guimarães points out that, in a more blurred care circuit, there are those activities of support or help that are done as reciprocity between neighbors or friends. Still, their measurement is difficult because they happen in subtle relations of support and solidarity where there is an implicit agreement of aid and where there is not necessarily an economic remuneration or existence. It is contextualized according to the person who needs support. For Araujo Guimarães, this circuit is necessary because it shows how a class condition also crosses discrimination. Thus, this circuit shows the relevance of care as a matter of social justice and the need for public policies of care as part of the search for an equitable distribution of resources, not only as a collection of decisions and relations only individuals. It is, therefore, essential to think about how these scenarios interweave the relationships that demarcate the different care circuits since they aim that care policies should seek to affect each of these circuits. Thus, a reflection that considers the tension between the philosophical and political horizons of care must recall how the State should provide public policies regarding care with a universal character and quality. Following Pautassi, this political horizon should also promote the development of a culture of care that supports the de-familiarization of care, a proposal based on considerations of both approaches from Tronto and Araujo Guimarães. Although part of the care activities takes place within the private family, it is also part of the reflection to consider the participation and responsibility of other actors, as well as enabling women to develop other activities and not promote cycles of dependency that lead to oppression and abuse. That is why the State becomes crucial to provide certain services, such as education, health, care capacity, and self-care, from a notion of quality care as part of a social responsibility. For now, women are the ones who respond to the need for care not covered by the State; nevertheless, considering other perspectives of care helps us to achieve a transformation of the structure and the normativity of society to settle and develop care from broader considerations welfare, dignity, and community.

As a conclusion

Throughout these pages we have reviewed the relationship between philosophy and politics through two thresholds. Gloria Anzaldúa's thought shows us that writing is not only a strategy to heal the decolonial wound, to work to build a more inclusive world, but also to critically review the shadows of our culture and propose other narratives that allow us to mobilize politically and create other imaginaries. However, writing, as presented in Anzaldúa's philosophy, is not only a tool for expression but also the means for the creation of new forms of subjectivity and ways of being. This gives rise to the recognition

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 162.

of a series of epistemic injustices that have been normalized, and in turn implies an epistemological change, a work in which writing is not the result of an individual authorship, but a process, a becoming a medium to make a different philosophy and politics with the word, since it starts from the vulnerability that is mobilized towards an overflow of the individual to recover an ontological plane of radical interconnection, in the human world and non-human worlds. It can be said that when the Anzaldúan thought connects with posthumanism and the new realisms there is a philosophical decentering and overflowing of the traditional political subject.

This open threshold, in which more complex ways of thinking about subjectivity can be explored, attending to its expansive potential within a continuously changing relational existence, dialogues in a more practical sense with the revaluation of the category of care in politics and the exploration of a human condition characterized by intersubjectivity and vulnerability. It requires recognizing that the current valuation of care as the exclusive domain of individual, private and family decisions are also part of a series of injustices that can be transformed through a reconfiguration of care from its philosophical and political perspectives. This implies human beings are capable of giving and receiving care, thinking about it from an intersubjective position and being able to appreciate the complexity implied by its valuation from the conformation of political systems and social relations; thinking about care also leads us to consider the agency and political organization of life from new categories. Authors such as Joan Tronto, Laura Pautassi and Nadya Araujo Guimarães, provide theoretical tools to approach care in which the historical context is combined with the questioning of an agency beyond the individual and the achievement of imaginaries that can go against the current of a society dominated by individualistic thinking, by the sharp separation between human beings and nature and by a short-term vision. Thinking in terms of care shows that our political involvement in the world can be a task in line with exploring in writing philosophy in a way that affects and connects with the vulnerability of others in order to share ways of being, imaginaries, forms of knowing, experiencing and rewriting our relationship with reality. The threshold of care as a distinct gravitational pole for politics thus coincides with the search for writing as an epistemological shift, another threshold, for cultural healing and an invitation to theorize from other perspectives.

References

- Aguirre, R., Batthyány, K., Genta, N. & Perrota, V., "Los cuidados en la agenda de investigación en las políticas públicas en Uruguay", *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, (50), 2014, pp. 43-60.
- Anzaldúa, G., *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*, Durham, Latin America Otherwise: Languages, Empire, Nations en Duke University Press, 2015.

- Anzaldúa, G. *Borderlands / La Frontera. La nueva mestiza*, Madrid, Capitán Swing, 2016.
- Araujo Guimarães, N., H., & Sugita, K., "Cuidado e cuidadoras: o trabalho do care no Brasil, França e Japão", *Sociología & Antropología*. Vol. 1, 2011, pp. 151-180.
- Arriaga, M., "Construcciones discursivas en los márgenes: resistencia chicana en Borderlands/ La Frontera: the New Mestiza, de Gloria Anzaldúa", *Anuario de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas*, 10 (2) 2013, pp. 1-15. <https://cerac.unlpam.edu.ar/index.php/anuario/article/view/592>
- Barrientos, P., "Contar historias y dibujar sobre arena. Autohistoria, escritura e identidad en la obra de Gloria Anzaldúa", *Revista Liminales. Escritos sobre psicología y sociedad*, 7 (13) 2018, pp. 61-82. doi.org: 10.54255/lim.vol7.num13.321.
- Batthyány, K. *Las políticas y el cuidado en América Latina*, Santiago de Chile, Naciones Unidas, CEPAL / Cooperación Española, 2015.
- Camargo, J., "El Mundo Zurdo entre nosotros: Encuentros con Gloria Anzaldúa desde la filosofía, la imaginación, la resistencia y el testimonio", *En-claves del pensamiento*, (26), 2019, pp. 125-134. <https://www.enclavesdelpensamiento.mx/index.php/enclaves/article/view/392>
- Cantú, N. E., Gutiérrez, C. L., Alarcón, N., Urquijo-Ruíz, R. E., *El Mundo Zurdo*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 2010.
- Federeci, S. *Las luchas de la reproducción. Del 'salario para el trabajo doméstico' a nuestros días*. Marzo 22, 2029. Youtube: <https://youtu.be/Hr-3a3pKqfE>
- Fisher, B., Tronto, J. "Toward a feminist theory of caring", en E. Abel y M. Nelson (ed.), *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, Albany: Ste University of New York Press, 1990, pp. 36-54.
- Garcés, M. *Nueva ilustración radical*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 2017.
- Garcés, M., *Un mundo común*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2013.
- García-González, D.E., "Reflexiones desde las humanidades frente a las injusticias epistémicas. Una propuesta desde la ética del cuidado y la cura", *Otros Logos. Revista de Estudios Críticos*, Año 13, (12), 2022, pp. 40-42.
- González-Valerio, M. A. "Hablar para ser escuchada o sobre el leer y escribir el mal en incesante penuria", *En-claves del pensamiento*, 2022, (32), e543. <https://doi.org/10.46530/ecdp.v0i32.543>
- Gutiérrez-Magallanes, M.S., "Gloria Anzaldúa y el giro descolonial desde la frontera para el mundo", *Camino real: estudios de las hispanidades norteamericanas*, 2018, 10, (13), pp. 79-89.

Gutiérrez-Magallanes, M.S., Camargo, J, Jiménez, C., “2020: Anzaldúa En Tiempos Nepantla: Presentación”, *Humanística. Revista de estudios críticos y literarios*, 1, (2), 2021, 70-76.
<https://www.humanistica.mx/index.php/humanistica/article/view/32>

Kautzer, Ch., *Radical Philosophy*, New York, Routledge, 2016.

Kasun, G.S, Mora-Pablo, I., *Applying Anzalduan Frameworks to Understand Transnational Youth Identities*, New York, Routledge, 2022.

Keating, A.L., *The Anzaldúan Theory Handbook*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2022.

Keating, A.L., *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2009.

Lara-Bonilla, I., “Writing excess in *Light in the Dark/ Luz en lo Oscuro*: Anzaldúa’s Phenomenology of Writing as a Decolonizing Tool” *Cuadernos de ALDEEU*, 34, 2019, pp. 161-184.

Livingstone Smith, D., *On Inhumanity*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020.

López Estrada, S., “Políticas de cuidado infantil en América Latina: Análisis comparado de Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay y México”, *Frontera Norte*, Vol. 29, (54), 2017, pp. 26-46.

Meloni, C., *Feminismos fronterizos. Mestizas, abyectos y perras*, Madrid, Kaótica Libros, 2022.

Pautassi, L., *El cuidado como cuestión social desde un enfoque de derechos*, Santiago de Chile, Naciones Unidas, 2007.

Pérez Bernal, M. “Repensando la identidad de la mano de los feminismos a la búsqueda de nuevas alianzas”, *Bajo Palabra*, (20), 2019, 227–244.
<https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2019.20.013>

Pitts, A., *Nos/Otras. Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Multiplicitous Agency and Resistance*, Albany, 2021.

Saldívar-Hull, S., Alarcón, N, Urquijo-Ruíz, R. E., *El Mundo Zurdo 2*, San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Tronto, J., “There is an alternative: homines curans and the limits of neoliberalism”, *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 1(1), 2017, pp. 27-43.

Villoro, Luis, “Ética y política”, en Villoro, Luis (Coord.), *Los linderos de la ética*, Ciudad de México, Siglo XXI, 2004.

Vivancos, R. “Sección Especial” *Cuadernos de ALDEEU*, 34, 2019, pp. 111-280.

Zaytoin, K. D., *Shapeshifting subjects. Gloria Anzaldúa’s Naguala and Border Arte*, Urbana, Chicago, Springfield, 2022.