

front the empire. Throughout their book, Friesen and Stoner reiterate the radical, anti-imperial voice that the body of Christ needs to hear again and again if it is to make manifest the kingdom of God, here and now. It is a hard message but one we need to hear until all of our lives—political as well as spiritual—are fully conformed to the life of Christ.

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Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Eduardo Mendieta, eds., *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2012. 321 pp. \$35.00. ISBN: 9780823241361.

“The maintenance of life is an expression of knowledge” (19). This is how Walter Mignolo begins his opening essay in the edited volume *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*. Serving as a kind of capstone for the collection, Mignolo’s claim captures a thread and a position that runs through the other contributions, albeit in different ways. The volume concerns the question of epistemology—of what we know and how we know and how we know what we know, and, most importantly for Mignolo and friends, how we produce what we know. The claim that the maintenance of life—meaning all spheres of life: economic, political, social, religious, as well as the banal acts by which each of these are constructed each day—is an expression of knowledge suggests that everyday life reveals our epistemologies, and at the same time, that everyday life produces our epistemologies. In their essays, the authors of this volume attempt to decolonize these default epistemologies that order our lives—epistemologies that occur at the intersection of power and knowledge, of coloniality and liberation.

Mignolo’s essay sets the stage for the remainder of the volume. He reviews the interactions between modernity, coloniality, postmodernity, and decolonization. Coloniality refers to the ideological structure undergirding various forms of colonialism and is, he argues, “constitutive of modernity” (23). Thus, there is a eurocentric linkage between knowledge and coloniality—eurologocentrism—which polices the boundaries of what counts as knowledge and who counts as an epistemic subject/agent. The work of decolonization is to de-link knowledge from eurocentrism (and thereby coloniality). “Decolonial thinking,” Mignolo writes, “means to dwell and think at the border (the slash “/” that divides and unites modernity/coloniality)” (26). Further, “decolonizing epistemology and decolonial epistemology have to be anchored in geo- and body-politics of knowledge” (27). I want to highlight two essays that perform this epistemology well and raise some provocative points of contact with Mennonite/Anabaptist theology and epistemology.

In her essay “Mujerista Discourse: A Platform for Latinas’ Subjugated Knowledge,”

Ada María Isasi-Díaz emphasizes the knowledge of Latinas at the grassroots. She privileges the voices of the oppressed and impoverished by “thinking with” them rather than “thinking about” them, as modern anthropologists tend to do (44). She positions herself in “an ongoing dialogue that profoundly respects the peoples’ ability to reason and to participate reflectively in their own struggle against oppression” (44). This decenters the eurologocentrism that privileges the white, the educated, the male. Isasi-Díaz affirms that the primary site for knowledge about oppression, conflict, resistance, and liberation is revealed and produced by those who experience it. She refers to this as *lo cotidiano*, which includes the experiences of micro aggressions, systemic oppression, and the ways of surviving and resisting them, as well as producing liberating forms of existing. In short, *lo cotidiano* refers to the profoundly deep and complex, yet also the ordinary: the “everyday of Latinas” (46). By privileging *lo cotidiano* as the site of knowledge and ordinary Latinas as epistemic subjects/agents, the everyday also becomes the site of decolonization and decolonial epistemologies.

Just as coloniality’s eurologocentrism ignores the knowledge of the non-elite, it also renounces any knowledge not based in rationality—that is, in a disembodied, objective mind. In her essay “Thinking Bodies: The Spirit of Latina Incarnational Imagination,” Mayra Rivera Rivera makes her case for embodied knowledge and what she calls “body-talk” or “body-words” (209–10). She explains how bodies remember experiences, especially oppressive and traumatic ones: “Colonial-sexual violence against African and indigenous women of the Americas indelibly marked the bodies of many of their descendants. Greed, violence, enslavement *literally* became incarnate” (209). Body-talk is the language that emerges from these colonized bodies. Unlike abstract logocentric discourse, however, these are words “that emerge from the islanders’ bodies, from their mouths, stomachs, esophaguses, and so forth” (214). With poetic force, “body-words seek to erode the confining structures of U.S. national, racial, and sexual ideologies” (215). The decolonizing epistemology of these Latinas comes from their bodies, from how and what their bodies remember. Likewise, Mayra Rivera Rivera argues, their theology emerges out of the stigmatized body of Jesus whom they remember. Their theology is one of suffering and liberation embodied in the incarnate God. Contrary to the redemptive suffering prevalent in colonialism, the purpose of Rivera’s linking of liberation with suffering bodies is to decolonize, to delink knowledge and liberation from coloniality and eurocentrism.

Each of these essays provokes questions about the linkages between coloniality and Mennonite/Anabaptist knowledge, theology, and everyday life. Indeed, given that the Mennonite tradition is a Christian tradition that emerged in Europe during the rise of modernity, it should come as no surprise that white Mennonites in the Americas retain and reproduce epistemologies of oppression. These must be examined, recognized, and named—while Mennonite theology has been critical

of some forms of state violence, it has not been anti-colonial. It is also the case that through missionary work many others have joined Mennonite/Anabaptist traditions. Indeed, European Mennonites no longer constitute the largest demographic of Mennonites/Anabaptists globally. The essays by Isasi-Díaz and Rivera present a particular challenge to European Mennonites in this regard. How might we position ourselves with our sisters and brothers so that we can stand with them against the coloniality that oppresses them? Because coloniality is eurologocentric, this will involve a decentering of ourselves so that we can privilege those marginal Mennonites/Anabaptists (and others) who suffer under coloniality—so that we can hear their body-words and their theologies and epistemologies of liberation. We must ask ourselves: What Mennonite/Anabaptist knowledges have been rendered unnecessary? What knowledges have we ignored? What knowledges have we deemed inadequate compared to our dominant eurocentric theologies? How do we decenter ourselves and enter into *lo cotidiano* of those on the margins of colonial regimes of power and knowledge? This is the challenge of decolonization that this book places before Mennonite/Anabaptist epistemologies and theologies today.

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Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2014. 245 pp. \$24.95. ISBN: 9780804791380.

In her provocative and insightful study *The Orphan Scandal*, historian Beth Baron tells a complex story in a consistently engaging and accessible manner, intertwining histories of American and European evangelicals, British colonial authorities, local elites, state officials, and leaders of the nascent Muslim Brotherhood in the 1920s and 1930s in Egypt. Baron organizes her study around a particular incident—the titular “orphan scandal” that rocked Egypt in 1933. On June 7 of that year, teenage Egyptian Muslim girl Turkiyya Hasan left the Swedish Salaam Mission school and home for orphans in Port Said after sustaining a beating that left her badly bruised. Hasan claimed the Swiss missionary Alzire Richoz had beaten her because she refused to convert to Christianity. Leaders of the mission school—who undeniably had exerted sustained emotional pressure on Hasan to convert—countered that Hasan had been beaten for showing disrespect to a visiting American missionary. Hasan soon became a *cause célèbre* among activists in the still-young Muslim Brotherhood, with the *ikhwan* (brothers) using Hasan’s case to rally popular anti-missionary sentiment. This “orphan scandal” in turn embroiled Egyptian state