

Soul Searching: Chicana Feminist Imaginaries in *Undone*

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Abstract

This essay examines the interventions of Chicana feminist theory in the sci-fi television series *Undone* (2019). While the mysterious source and nature of the time-bending abilities the protagonist develops remain in doubt, the show makes possible a third interpretation that locates Alma's talents instead in Chicana feminist praxis as theorized in the contributions of Gloria Anzaldúa. We focus on this third way of understanding Alma's abilities. We show how the character resembles the Anzaldúan borderlands subjects of la nueva mestiza and the *nepantlera*, feminist figures whose inner psychic struggles reveal the historical and structural nature of oppression in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and whose oppositional consciousness visualizes new strategies for challenging it. We locate Alma's Anzaldúan praxis in three critical borderlands maneuvers: the counterstance, tolerance for ambiguity, and hyper empathy. Finally, by acknowledging the limitations of *Undone* as a mainstream vehicle for Chicana feminist critique, we offer that an Anzaldúan reading models an interpretive counterstance against the dominant scripts and interpretive frameworks of the show itself and the broader racial imaginaries of mainstream science fictions.

Key Words: *Undone*, Anzaldúa, borderlands, Chicana feminism, la nueva mestiza

*The authors wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our research assistants, Annie Means and Clara Epelman. The Student-Faculty Summer Collaborative Research Grant at Whitman College made this collaboration possible.

Every trauma is a trace ... The external event, whether it occurs as a form of prolonged structural oppression as in the case of racism or colonialism or as an instantaneous event like a car accident, inscribes itself in the psyche.

The Future Life of Trauma, xi

“Promise me, mijo. No jumping through mirrors looking for other dimensions. No digging up the courtyard looking for mines. And no cutting yourself in half. I need you to be... normal”

Matt Mendez, *The Astronaut*, 233

In her landmark work *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa asserts that “the mirror is an ambivalent symbol” but one that ultimately invites new ways of seeing (93). The first essay in our two-part analysis examines the mirror as a central narrative and visual device whose evolving function in Raphael Bob-Waksberg and Kate Purdy’s *Undone* (2019) —a hybrid and highly experimental text with an innovative audiovisual style and non-linear narrative— reflects shifting and unstable identities, locations, and temporalities.¹ *Undone* is a fascinating production about a Mexican American woman named Alma (“soul”) who seemingly develops extraordinary time-bending abilities after surviving a traumatic car accident that leaves her in a temporary coma. With these new powers, Alma travels through temporal dimensions and alternate realities that challenge her prior knowledge of the events that led to her deceased father’s demise, and, in turn, take the viewer on a narrative and visual journey of doubled and shifting perspectives. The mirror becomes a clever metonym for the intricate elements of doubling in the show’s narrative and visual composition, which includes the visual technique rotoscoping (a blend of live-action and animation) as well as techniques of narrative flashback, parallel storylines, and narrative looping.

In what follows, we focus on how the mirror and techniques of mirroring in *Undone* also cleverly index Chicana feminist imaginaries and, in particular, Anzaldúan borderlands theory. Ever the capacious device in *Undone*, the mirror reflects the psychic and material conditions of its Chicana protagonist, whose image on the mirror’s frequently fractured surface portrays the fissured geographic and psychic terrains Alma inhabits. Seen in this light, the mirror takes on a new mediating function as a cultural sign of Alma’s subjective positionality and the lived experiences of Chicanxs in the US Southwest. While the setting in the majority-Chicanx city of San Antonio and the biracial identity of its protagonist already invite a viewing of *Undone* through a Chicantx interpretive lens, the mirror intimates a more rigorous relationship with Chicantx feminist cosmologies than what might be expected from an Amazon Studios production. Indeed, the first season extensively engages core tenets of tejana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands theory, weaving Anzaldúan conceptual interventions throughout. In the protagonist, viewers find *Undone*’s iteration of la nueva mestiza and *nepantlera*, Anzaldúan types that envision and model a Chicantx feminist praxis of oppositional consciousness.

The Anzaldúan concept of the borderlands captures the multiplicity of oppression Chicantx experience in the US southwest as a direct result of a century-long history of Anglo colonial violence. While the term broadly refers to the geographical territory of the US-Mexico border region as the historical site of struggle for Chicantxs, it also designates the embodied and psychic consequences of this oppression, in particular for the Chicana. Memorably described by Anzaldúa as an “herida abierta,” la frontera conveys the ways oppression and inherited trauma manifest in the Chicana’s flesh. Many other concepts in the Anzaldúan imaginary emphasize the inner, psychic dimensions of this colonial legacy. Of la mestiza, the central Chicana borderlands subject in her theoretical corpus, Anzaldúa writes:

1. The first essay, entitled “Soul Searching: Alter(nat)ing Realities in *Undone*” is included in pages -- of *Ciberletras* 48.

El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. ... The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*, a cultural collision. (*Borderlands* 100)

La *mestiza's* flesh becomes the material site of the historical conflict unfolding in the borderlands, and her "soul" the psychic arena. Alma's own name alludes to this Chicana feminist intervention, while her story arc during the first season parallels the quoted passage above: she is seemingly trapped between a supernatural realm unlocked through her newfound abilities of time manipulation, and the "technical" world of scientific explanation. A car crash in the first episode sets Alma's inner struggle into motion. We see her racing through the streets of San Antonio after a contentious argument with her sister Becca, her hurried traversal through the urban landscape and the subsequent accident striking an immediate resemblance to the affective cumulus of spatial disorientation, physical and psychic injury, and the tacit suggestion of transcendence captured in the Anzaldúan conceptual matrix of the borderlands and *la mestiza*. After coming out of the coma, Alma finds herself *entullada*, disoriented temporally and spatially, as she transitions back and forth between temporal states – in her words, she is "caught in a weird loop." (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 2. 00:11:36-00:11:38).

Much in line with Anzaldúan borderlands theory, *Undone* proposes that Alma's Chicana subjectivity creates the conditions for critical intervention and creative living. Anzaldúa's concept of *Nepantla*, a Nahuatl word for "an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries" ("(Un)Natural Bridges" 243) sets the stage; the figure who inhabits those in-between spaces, the *nepantlera*, in turn, "facilitate[s] passages between worlds" (248). Inhabiting *Nepantla* unlocks for the Chicana critical and creative skills necessary for her survival. In an essay published in the anthology *This Bridge We Call Home* (2002), Anzaldúa elaborates:

Living between cultures results in 'seeing' double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent. Removed from that culture's center you glimpse the sea in which you've been immersed but to which you were oblivious, no longer seeing the world the way you were enculturated to see it. ("Now Let Us Shift" 549)

The condition of nepantilism, of being caught between spaces and torn between ways (in *Undone*, Alma's "weird loop"), inspires the *nepantlera's* critical ability of "seeing through" the fictions and the myths reified in the service of the dominant culture. The idiomatic phrasing "seeing through" offers an important element of visibility to the deconstructive, critical perspectives of the *nepantlera*, which elsewhere Anzaldúa defines as *la facultad*, or "the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface" (*Borderlands* 60). Alma similarly boasts the ability of seeing through the disciplining scripts and dominant ideologies in *Undone's* world. She is an incisive critical thinker, with a nuanced understanding of historical and structural systems of oppression; her disenchantment with her life thus stems as much from the conditions of historical and structural inequalities of the world around her as it does from personal tragedy.

Even before she acquires her extraordinary new abilities, Alma is

presented as a discerning, critical thinker. Her tenacious opposition to her sister Becca's engagement to Reed, a wealthy Anglo, is informed by the history of Anglo-Mexican relations in Texas. Although Alma's mother and Becca see the marriage as a triumph, Alma "sees through" the surface of the happy engagement to locate underlying historical dynamics that form the basis of her opposition. Her discerning eye is only sharpened after the car crash, as her abilities of time manipulation subsequently allow her to relive conversations with others from an external perspective. Upon revisiting Becca's joke on how it would look for Alma to have a back brace at her upcoming wedding, and replaying the scene against Becca's earlier quips on Alma's lack of productivity in planning the wedding as a result of her coma, Alma begins to recognize deeper anxieties in her sister's jokes. Indeed, she sees her sister's deeper commitments to assimilationist modes of kinship and the trope of a "perfect pretty princess engagement," as she would later call it in a confrontation with Becca (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 2. 00:10:37-00:10:40). Alma's abilities allow her to recognize, and later challenge, how quotidian scripts in her life are steeped in the Anglo colonial legacy.

Both Becca and Camila, Alma's devoutly Catholic mother, reproduce disciplining scripts intended to keep Alma within a perceived state of normalcy. From Alma's perspective, Becca and her mother stifle her creativity and critical potential, though Camila instead sees protection and safety in tradition and the status quo. She insists that Alma seek professional help and take medication to treat mental illness, which in her mind will return Alma to a prior state of normalcy interrupted by the car accident. The disciplinary power Camila exercises over her daughters must be understood, however, as one among many of the adaptive modes that borderlands subjects adopt in response to oppression. She represents a maternal type frequently seen in the Chicana literary tradition—a character with a canny understanding of the systems of power in the world around her, who takes few risks and makes due with the cards she is dealt. Much as with the mother in Matt Mendez's short story "The Astronaut," quoted in the second epigraph above, the disciplinary intent of normalcy stems from her knowledge of the oppressive order and of the implicit dangers of challenging it. Camila fears Alma's insistence on the supernatural at least in part because she has learned that safety for her people resides in the space of the normal.

At every turn, however, Alma resists abiding by Camila's disciplinary views. Alma instead engages in what Anzaldúa calls a counterstance—"a duel of oppressor and oppressed" in which "all reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against" (*Borderlands* 100). She frequently finds herself adopting oppositional stances against the dominant ideologies espoused by her family and friends, and their expectation that she lead a mundane life. At one point, she exclaims in frustration, "I just can't do it. I can't do the wedding, and the birth announcements, and the piano lessons, and the matching Halloween costumes" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 1. 00:04:53-00:05:04). Meanwhile, she remains steadfast in her unabated opposition to Becca's engagement to the symbolic Anglo oppressor. To frustrate the illusion of a perfect dinner party celebrating the engagement, Alma dons a drawn-on mustache, an iconic sign of gender deviance. Later, when she tries Becca's engagement ring on her finger, she muses sarcastically: "This blood diamond really does make me feel special" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 1. 00:16:04-00:16:06). Through these and other similar interruptions of Becca's alliance with Reed, Alma performs an Anzaldúan iteration of what Sara Ahmed calls the feminist killjoy—"a figure that refuses to share an orientation toward certain things as being good because she does not find the objects that promise happiness to be quite so promising" (39). Her various challenges to the family's attachments—to the engagement ring and its symbolic promise of marriage into a wealthy Anglo family, for instance—thus destabilize

the invisible ideologies of the dominant culture. When Becca accuses Alma of sabotaging her engagement out of envy, an Anzaldúan interpretation of Alma's behavior as a Chicana feminist counterstance allows the viewer to take the character at her word when she replies, "believe it or not, I am trying to help you. You don't want to marry Reed" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 1. 00:20:13-00:20:14).

Alma's oppositional attitude extends beyond the local dynamics of her family life. Against the grain of Western medical discourse, she challenges pathological explanations of her mental state, opting instead to believe that she is a kind of psychic time traveler with untapped abilities and special mental acuity. Although she eventually acquiesces to Camila's pleas and sees a psychiatrist, she spends the meeting deflecting the logic of medical diagnosis altogether. As the scene initially comes into view, with the camera still focused on the exterior of the Health Center building, her voice comes through with clarity:

What is sanity? Is it sane that we live in boxes made out of concrete, and wires and pipes? Is it sane that we have to buy our food and water and land, and healthcare, and childcare, entertainment, and that every part of our natural lives has been commodified, taken from us and then sold right back to us? I mean, let's talk about that. (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 4. 00:09:03-00:09:24)

Alma's monologue steers the conversation away from the expected patient-therapist dynamics and toward a deconstructivist and Marxist appraisal of the medical space. At the same time, the scene challenges Alma's perception of reality by presenting schizophrenia as a plausible interpretation of her mental state; by leveraging the authoritative voice of the psychiatrist, schizophrenia thus emerges as a primary framework through which viewers situate Alma's experience as intelligible. The question of Alma's condition, in this way, becomes another symbolic and narrative site of cultural collision and ambiguity. Her dismissal of medical explanations can be understood to signify a challenge to Western epistemologies and the over-pathologization of subjugated people, as Anzaldúa observes in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, even as the medical remains a plausible alternative to the supernatural. Anzaldúan theory itself allows for the interpretation of schizophrenia to coexist ambivalently with the psycho-cultural phenomena described by the concepts of *Nepantla* and the borderlands. *La mestiza*, as the "consciousness of the borderlands," must learn to navigate the interstitial and ambiguous terrains of *Nepantla* and the in-between.

Alma's powers of double-vision and her Anzaldúan technique of the oppositional counterstance align with what Frederick Luis Aldama calls a "Brown optic," or a Latinx-focused narration that affirms Latinx perspectives in speculative genres (such as science fiction) that historically cast the Brown other as monstrous (Aldama). Alma's opposition to the local dynamics of her family and personal life extend extra-textually as well, contesting "sci-fi's erstwhile racialisms" (Aldama 203). In a poignant scene, Alma performs a critical historical analysis of the Battle of the Alamo when she encounters an impromptu mock reenactment of the conflict as she and her boyfriend Sam walk past the Mission one evening. In a kind of ironic theatrical mirroring of the performance taking place in front of them, Sam sets up Alma's own dramatic performance of a critical re-interpretation. He says, "Do you have strong feelings about the Alamo? I am not aware" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 4. 00:04:17-00:04:19). Taking her cue, Alma goes into an impassioned explanation of how the Battle of the Alamo was really about European settlers fighting against the mexicanos because Mexico did not allow Anglos to own slaves. "I don't think that's what they want you to remember when you 'Remember the Alamo,'" replies Sam" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 4. 00:04:30-00:04:35). In scenes like these, Alma transforms into the viewer's guide to a critical perspective,

challenging not only the racialisms of speculative genres but also even national myths of Anglo supremacy.

While Anzaldúa acknowledges the counterstance as “a step toward liberation from cultural domination” (*Borderlands* 100), she maintains it is not a way of life. *La mestiza* must endeavor toward “a more whole perspective,” “juggle cultures,” and turn “ambivalence into something else” (101). Moreover, a *mestiza* consciousness is, according to AnaLouise Keating, “a holistic, nonbinary way of thinking and acting that includes a transformational tolerance for contradiction and ambivalence” (*Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* 321). *La nueva mestiza* must prove herself nimble and flexible in the face of ambiguity. In this vein, as early as the second episode, Alma uses her new abilities to adjust, at strategic points, her oppositional posture of the counterstance. We see a recurring scene of Camila admonishing Alma at the hospital when she wakes up from her coma after the crash. “What were you thinking? Do you know how terrible it would have been for me if you died?” (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 2. 00:02:32-00:02:35). Alma’s initial reaction to what she perceives as Camila’s self-involved commitment to normalcy consists of a sarcastic retort: “I’m sorry I almost died at a bad time. That was super selfish of me” (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 2. 00:04:10-00:04:15). After several repetitions, Alma comes to sympathize with her mother’s perspective and adapts her response accordingly, shifting away from the counterstance. Alma resignifies the initial retort to strike an effect of a genuine apology. “I’m sorry I wasn’t wearing a seatbelt. Sometimes I only think about myself and not other people I could hurt” (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 2. 00:17:46-00:17:56). With her powers of double vision and time manipulation, Alma adopts new tactical responses to disciplining forces around her. She learns and adapts, but does not yield.

This instructive interaction with Camila also suggests how, in learning to adapt, Alma gradually strengthens her affective bonds with family members (and even strangers) through a relation akin to hyper-empathy. Alma’s psychoemotional connections with others form as a result of her powers of transtemporal travel, which also give her access to their inner consciousness. In these voyages to other psyches, Alma witnesses instances of oppression or tragedy that differ from her own, further shifting her own perspectives and making her more tolerant even in circumstances in which she has been wronged. Prior to the crash, Alma had ended her relationship with Sam, but after waking from the coma she initially had no recollection of the breakup. Realizing this, Sam proceeds as though it had not occurred, until Alma recalls the event and confronts him for deceiving her. In the scene, we find Alma locked inside her bathroom and Sam standing beyond the door, apologizing over and over again. She deliberately blocks him out by removing her cochlear implant, controlling sound as she will soon control time travel. Then, Alma unexpectedly travels into his past, seeing a vision of Sam as a child, first in India among his friends, and later as an immigrant child in the US being bullied by Anglo boys who torment him for his Indian-accented English. Back in the narrative present, Sam continues repeating the apology “I’m sorry” from across the door (an echo of Alma’s apology to her mother from the earlier episode), as Alma transports in time once more to see a young Sam practicing the American accentuation by repeating over and over the phrase “I’m sorry, said the little duck” (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 5. 00:13:45-00:17:58). Much like the technique of rotoscoping overlays hand-drawn images with recorded footage, Alma’s abilities similarly allow her to superimpose the different situational meanings of Sam’s enunciations, changing their meaning. This doubled perspective eschews Sam’s local act of violence and deception to privilege a broader—indeed global and historical—perspective of the racial violence indexed in Sam’s American accent and the repeating phrase she continues to hear from beyond the door. Through affective links such as these, Alma facilitates an appreciation for the global workings of

oppressive systems and derives greater awareness of the crosscurrents of discursive violence that act upon minoritized people everywhere. In the end, Alma forgives Sam for his dishonesty, even to his own surprise.

Taken together, Alma's critical counterstance, increasing tolerance for ambiguity, and growing empathy with others are all abilities that characterize the Anzaldúan figures of *la nueva mestiza* and *nepantlera*, whose consciousness is oriented toward an appraisal of history and structural systems even within the personal or local. In the Anzaldúan imaginary, *la nueva mestiza* represents the new political subject of the borderlands, a Chicana who acquires the critical consciousness to see through the myths of Anglo ideologies as well as a broader toolset of critical skills to construct a new future. "*La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes" (*Borderlands* 101). Similarly, Alma adopts Anzaldúan epistemological frameworks for healing personal and historical traumas; like *la nueva mestiza*, she adopts tactical maneuvers that enable liberated modes of living. Although the show maintains an ambivalent position regarding Alma's abilities (the first season concludes with a cliffhanger that leaves the audience uncertain as to whether or not Alma has managed to change the timeline and bring her father back), her own belief and commitment to her talents nevertheless reverberate tangibly in the world around her. The annulment of Becca's wedding at the end of the season seems to affirm Alma's opposition toward the marriage, for instance, suggesting that *la mestiza's* vision for the future is indeed possible. In these ways, Alma's journey in *Undone* is as much one of world-building as it is of deconstructive oppositionality.

While Alma is indeed a compelling protagonist who captures the ethos of Anzaldúan theory and critique, she also occupies a unique position considering the interpretive challenge she poses for *Undone's* target audience. An Amazon Studios production with a "mainstream" rather than Chicana audience, the show retains some of the problematic trappings of the representations of Latinxs traditionally seen in similarly Hollywood films and US mainstream media throughout the twentieth century. Scholars such as Mary Beltrán, Charles Ramírez Berg, Angharad Valdivia, among others, have addressed at length how representations of Latinxs have traditionally kept to a narrow band of archetypes, such as the border bandit or the Latin lover, that reify perceptions of Latinx as marginal and foreign to the United States and even as invasive forces that threaten US culture. While *Undone* does not reproduce such pernicious archetypes, it does, however, simplify Chicana cultures and epistemologies, stunting the show's potential for making possible new or alternative engagements between mainstream media and minoritized cultures and knowledges. As such, it is not an entirely cohesive vehicle for Anzaldúan or Chicana feminist critique and liberatory praxis.

Importantly, the show misreads a key piece of Anzaldúan theory and its understanding of Anzaldúa's conceptual intervention on the ways oppression manifests in the psyche and the flesh. In the pivotal scene preceding Alma's car crash, she and Becca argue about the upcoming wedding. "I get it," says Becca, "he's white and he's rich and you don't like him." Alma responds, "that's not the point. We are broken people. Ok? And broken people break people" (*Undone*. Season 1. Episode 1. 00:20:05-00:20:24). Alma's statements allow for several interpretations. On the one hand, she could be referring to her father Jacob's death, and the broken family unit it left in its wake. Alternatively, Alma could be referring to her hearing loss and disability or to the family's medical history of schizophrenia, both of which are shown to mediate Alma's otherwise supernatural abilities. In another

sense, however, the phrasing of “broken people”—as opposed to, for example, a broken family—suggests a broader interpretation with deeper ethnocultural implications. In our reading, Alma’s statement “we are broken people” resignifies the framing device Gloria Anzaldúa uses in the opening of *Borderlands/La Frontera*. The book begins with a poem reflecting on the US-Mexico border and its historical legacy on Chicanxs as a people:

1,950-mile-long open wound
dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,
running down the length of my body,
staking fence rods in my flesh,
splits me splits me
me raja me raja.
This is my home
this thin edge of
barbwire. (24)

The essay then starts with the two best-known and oft-cited sentences in all of Anzaldúa’s work: “The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages agains, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture (25). These early passages of *Borderlands/La Frontera* form the backbone of Anzaldúa’s theories on the colonial subjugation of Chicanxs in the United States, which she views as an enduring historical process extending far beyond the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, and which inflicts not just symbolic violence but also embodied violence felt in the very flesh. It is colonial violence past and present that wounds Chicanxs as a people. “Me raja,” It splits me, Anzaldúa says. In contrast, when Alma exclaims “we are broken people, we break people,” she positions herself and her family—allegorically, her culture—as the source of violence.

Undone also engages in problematic representations of indigeneity and knowledge. The show reproduces colonialist tropes of native cultures as non-extant; indigeneity seems to exist not in the present but in some elusive, long-gone past, while native characters themselves are often portrayed as ritualistic subjects who bear and transmit ancient, inchoate wisdom though not intellectual or scientific knowledge. In contrast, Alma’s Anglo father Jacob, a scientist, represents the primary source of intellectual knowledge for Alma. Though he is portrayed critically in the show, and in the end is revealed to have intentionally driven off a cliff to his demise, he is nevertheless in charge of deciphering and explaining his daughter’s abilities in scientific terms. While he represents to Alma the potential of knowledge and a transcendent state, Alma’s Chicana mother Camila instead is an obstacle. Jacob even guides Alma toward an understanding of her maternal indigenous roots. In this way, too, *Undone* simplifies Alma’s connections to indigeneity. Though she is knowledgeable of native cultures across the continent, more often than not depictions of indigeneity are presented through indirect discourse (for example, Alma shares a story about the Kogi tribe with the children at the daycare) or as simulacra, dances, or performances. In one scene, at witnessing one such performance, Alma even falls into a trance followed by some kind of spiritual awakening.

Reading *Undone* through an Anzaldúan lens, against the grain of its mainstreaming tendencies, acquires greater importance in light of the show’s limitations as a vehicle for Chicana feminist critique. Regardless of *Undone*’s fidelity to Chicana feminist imaginaries, an Anzaldúan lens offers an oppositional perspective that, in its own right, challenges the show’s whitewashing impulses, contextualizes its predominantly Anglo production and circulation, and accounts critically for the history of material and symbolic marginalization of the ethnic subjects it depicts. Further, centering Anzaldúan perspectives in our viewing means

activating Anzaldúan ways of being, perceiving, and knowing; in other words, it allows Chicax to take ownership of the narrative. In the words of Cathryn Merla-Watson, Anzaldúa “encourages [women of color] to speak to and illuminate their own lived experiences, ways of understanding that give insight into our diverse histories, hopes, dreams, desires, even our espantos or ghosts—that which invisibly, yet palpably, structures our lifeworlds and construct particular horizons of possibility” (225). An Anzaldúan reading of *Undone* means stretching toward the horizons of the Chicana imaginaries the show makes possible and even those it renders implausible.

The first serialized television show in the West to employ the innovative technique of rotoscoping, *Undone* is just as fascinating for its audacious if flawed foray into Chicana feminist critical thought. With its overt overlaying of drawn lines on live-action footage, rotoscoping seems a fitting match to Alma’s double vision and critical consciousness. Rotoscoping, too, transgresses borders and refuses containment.² Though not without its limitations as a mainstream vehicle for Chicana feminist cosmologies, *Undone* forays into the similarly innovative realm of Chicax speculative fiction, which in recent decades has seen a cultural renewal inspired in no small part by Anzaldúa’s own works of science fiction. Much like the female character of La Prieta (LP) in Anzaldúa’s fiction or Alita in Robert Rodriguez’s *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019)—a character who, incidentally, is also portrayed by Rosa Salazar—Alma is a *nepantlera* who examines the ephemeral textures of oppression in the borderlands and the embodied metaphysical detritus it leaves behind. From this material, Alma seeks to bend temporalities and space itself to envision alternative, livable futures.

2. The use of this technique is studied at length in the first essay of our two-part analysis of *Undone*. See note 1.

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