

Opening Meditation: Meditation on the body. Pay attention to the grating, to the disharmony. What did not feel good today? Where did you grate? Soften. Where did you feel good? Soften. Where you were in agreement? In disharmony? Allow all of this. Soften.

Stand up and find a space. Listen in your body to this statement: *My body is a geography of selves made up of diverse, bordering, and overlapping countries (Gloria Anzaldúa)*. Allow your body to move with this statement and with the music. Bring all the diverse countries to the moment, even if they are at war. Allow all countries, all selves, all shifting borders to come to the table.

Or: Find a partner. Take turns with the question, “Who are you?”

**Bruja Pedagogies:
In(Re)surgent Knowledges**

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My short story of shifting geography of selves: Bodyworker/American Studies Scholar, White/not-White, Settler/IAIA. Done with the war; is not about building a cohesive identity, but letting all embodiments emerge in solidarity

Driving Inquiry: How do we build solidarity against barbarism, or de-humanizing, exploitive, extractive forms of power *over*? Barbarism thrives on binaries...we can see this in our increasing polarization in our communities, homes, and on the national stage. What is the real target of inquiry, if it's not ourselves (neoliberalism) or each other (separatist nationalisms)?

Initial Questions:

Irene Lara argues that *brujas*, or “witches,” have been disordering colonial/patriarchal/capitalist narratives for centuries. Currently, young Latina/Black/Indigenous culture makers in the US are reclaiming this word, blurring lines between art, activism, and spirituality. This class explores theories, literature, art and music of contemporary bruja feminism as it reaches across borders of geography, race, class, generational time/space, and human/non-human divides.

What does Irene Lara mean by “bruja feminism?” What could it look like to consider “bruja” not only as subject, but as method? Is that the right word, or should we chuck it as a remnant of colonialism, a word marking women for social death?

What does it mean to know and to speak from embodied, ancestral, marginalized knowledges and histories? Especially when those knowledges don't square within neat cultural/ethnic/identity/geographical categories?

Or when claiming these knowledges means further marginalization from the “privileges” of neoliberal citizenship and whiteness?

Texts:

Alexander, M. Jacqui. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred.*

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Light in the Dark: Luz en el Oscuro*

Castillo, Ana. *Massacre of the Dreamers; Essays on Xicanisma 20th Anniversary Updated Edition*

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers (available online)*

Perez, Laura. *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*

Chapters and Excerpts:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *La Frontera*

Lara, Irene. *Bruja Positionalities: Toward a Chicana/Latina Spiritual Activism*

Lopez, Jessica Helen. *Always Messing with Them Boys*

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider*

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature*

Ortiz, Wendy. *Bruja.*

Leanne Simpson. *Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation*

Assignments:

Visual analysis

Autohistoria

Final Project integrating analysis with creative methodologies

Questions that Emerged:

Brujas/Witches are an interesting topic, but the real topic is how resurgent knowledges are insurgent, refusing Cartesian separation of mind/body, Western ontological totalitarianism (Mignolo), and the foundations of “self” underpinning colonial identities and categories. What could this mean for scholarly methodologies and pedagogies? Especially when higher education in the U.S. is often complicit with ethnographic entrapment and the production of good, neoliberal citizens?

Challenging epistemological totalitarianism at the heart of neoliberal institutions means directly engaging feelings of grief, despair, and urgency over our fragmented, frayed lived ecologies.

BUT, if focusing on the individual self feeds the roots of neoliberalism, what could it also look like to touch, embody, and love while simultaneously critical of cultural narratives and systems? In other words, what kind of scholarship can pierce binaries that separate “serious” critique from relational and spiritual practices, or self from systematic critique? (Sylvia Wynter, Franz Fanon)

Laura Perez writes, “neoliberal capitalism benefits crucially from our exile from spiritual discourse.”¹

What pedagogies can radically reimagine time, space, and selves in relationship to living worlds (alive and ancestral) outside of colonial hierarchies of being, ethnographic entrapment, and western ontological totalitarianism? How do we get there?

Themes that Emerged:

Liminal Identities and Refusal of Colonial Logic (*Nepantla*, or *Coyolxuahqui Consciousness*): Or, White Skin vs. Whiteness (liberal feminism, neoliberal citizenship)

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*
Gloria Anzaldúa, *La Frontera, Light in the Dark*.
M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*

Creative experiments with orphaned structures of feeling— grief, dispossession, fragmentation, pain. Directly confronting colonial hierarchies of being through our own bodies.

Conocimiento, or Resurgent knowledges:

“These knowledges (the non-Western, the female, the queer, the poor) are as old as humanity and which have outlived pseudoscientific and culturally parochial philosophies that rationalize imperialist capitalism and racism and consign the non-Western to the primitive prehistory of civilized “man,” remain as alternatives to the growing solitude, alienation, despair, and illness of too many in today’s societies of rampant consumerism, spiritual emptiness, ethical confusion, and the visible crimes and duplicities of government, ethical confusion, and the visible crimes and duplicities of government, big business, and institutional religion.”—Laura Perez (*Chicana Art*, page 2007)

BUT— (refusing ethnographic entrapment)

“My dilemma, and that of other Chicana and women-of-color writers, is twofold: how to write (produce) without being inscribed (reproduced) in the dominant white structure and how to write without reinscribing and reproducing what we rebel against. Our task is to write against the edict that women should fear their own darkness, that we not broach it in our writings. *Nuestra tarea* is to envision Coyolxauhqui, not

¹ Perez, Laura. *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Alarities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

dead and decapitated, but with eyes wide open. Our task is to light up the darkness.”— Gloria Anzaldúa
(*Light in the Dark*)

Sexuality and Sensuality: Reclaiming the Body

Ana Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers*
Lopez, Jessica Helen. *Always Messing with Them Boys*
Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider*
Ortiz, Wendy. *Bruja*.
Princess Nokia

Decolonization and Decoloniality:

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (*Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*)
Walter D. Mignolo (*On Decoloniality*)
Leanne Simpson (*Land as Pedagogy*)

Emergent Futures and Speculative Fiction:

Speculative fiction of Octavia Butler, Donna Haraway, Ursula K. LeGuin, *Octavia's Brood*
Emergent Activisms (adrienne maree brown), Afro-futurism, *The Black Panther*

Care webs emerge in which difference—existing in multiply fragmented selves—yoke to multi-
plicitous, tentacular, and singular acts of “love and rage.” Perhaps within these emergent rela-
tional spaces, we can begin to reconstitute new imaginaries in relationship to living worlds.