POETIC PREFACE: Dear Reader...

Well, I wanted to begin this discourse, this immediate task of writing a journal introduction, in the form of a personal letter, because this level of writing is more primary, basic, informal and direct. For survival purposes, as a world traveler woman, I trust this type of “talk” or “discourse” most. On the other hand, in the world of academia and private patriarchal towers of highest education, I desire a hybrid mix of lingo, *siempre*.

For survival purposes, the level of the personal transforms within the geographic political historically specific *self*, into the *un*, *sub*, *meta* and *supra* modes of consciousness. This is why I find it necessary to speak in a more “common language” first. In respect to the immediate task I’ve chosen, I am also curious to develop a journal that would contribute in a progressive way to overall world thought and culture. At the same time, I walk a tightrope balancing act to stay true to so many values, her-stories, and languages at war with what is compulsory world knowledge indoctrinated/permeated within U.S. public and private schools as what is supposedly true world democracy and his-story. So what about OUR story? Maya Angelou already told us ‘Why that Caged Bird Sings.’ Yet, I know in my heart, and with my blood, that something is wrong with this picture.
Caló, Ebonics and other forms/modes of linguistic mutations, alternations and transformations are readily accepted in this treatise. The occasional use of ancient "flor y canto" will be encouraged as a coping strategy to deal with the harsh realities of living in occupied Aztlán, realities that are seldom forgotten within this discourse.

WHAT'S at STAKE for ME?

In this mode of self-conscious experimentation with form and content in this project, I intend to remain playful with the seriousness of proper Queen's English. I reckon if necessary, I could argue further for this attempt to rupture and challenge limits and boundaries of academic discourse (university/universe/universal knowledge) vernacular. As a teacher in numerous social institutions, I have discovered that the bridge between the highly literate and the growing epidemic of world illiteracy is one of the immediate crises for which higher academic elitism is directly responsible.

Nevertheless, for survival purposes I understand the importance at particular times to stay metaphorical, evasive, and subversive in language. Subcultural icons of meaning that need to stay free from the confines of too rigid rules and regs custom made to protect, serve, and feed hegemonic world culture censors. Language is a most basic form of symbolic meaning and for relationships of how consciousness is represented in both thought and culture.

Personally, what motivates me to accept this mission, this task, this gift of editing this Spectator issue, is that I am very interested on both micro and macro levels in a mujerista aesthetics and activism. On the micro level, I am interested in how Chicana spectators and mediamakers have individually created and survived as women artists, and how their works have helped create audience/spectator positions that generate a diverse range of responses. As important role models to many, these women develop a nueva Chicana feminista/womanist point of view and have offered inspiration, continual support and encouragement of live hands, minds and hearts-on access for future generations of Xicana spectators and media makers. I would like to acknowledge that I am thankful to be one of the spectator and film-movie-media makers that the women in this journal collection have influenced.

On the macro level, I wish to understand how these women function and survive as cultural spectators/producers in a particular moment in history, the contemporary realm. Of major interest is the dialectic of how their works have already influenced and can continue to influence the shaping of particular cultures and how those cultures have influenced and shaped the media makers and their audiences. On this level, current local/global, socio-economic, personal and political dimensions are collectively understood. For example, I am concerned with the question “Is there a Chicana aesthetic?” And, more particular, “Is there a mujerista aesthetic?” If so, what is the difference between these two terms, that is, between Chicana and mujerista and their respective aesthetics?

By representing our-selves through media, we can begin to heal the damage done through misrepresentation and under-representation. This collection explores how self-representation can lead to healing via community building and...
self-empowerment, and more specifically focus on the importance of Chicanas, as examples of influential mujerista-media-miento-makers.

At MIT, Henry Jenkins and others have begun a relatively new program in “Comparative Media Studies.” I found it interesting in their publicity brochure that they defined “media” as everything from ‘Advertisements, to Cyberspace, to Drum beats, to Smoke Signals.’ Yet I would like to extend this definition of “media” even further to include storyboarding, lowrider cars, comic books, murals, tattoos, barrio graffiti, and body piercing. The “movies” for this project will include cinema, video, television, slide shows, digital and new media, pyramid murals, pectorals, and even large sand designs.

If we are all on the Planet Earth and the planet is constantly rotating, then in actuality all images are constantly moving. The ancient pre-columbian ancestors described this Quinto Sol (Fifth Sun “Olin”), the contemporary world in which we exist, “The Age of Movement.” These concepts and beliefs are fundamental to the origins of the Chicana/o Movement’s philosophy and cosmology. Eventually all borders collapse and the “movies” for the purpose of this project can become “pan-arte.” And we should all be living pan-arte 24-7.

WHY is DIVERSITY IMPORTANT to CULTURA NOW?

I was able to hear a talk/discourse by rapper Chuck D when I visited Harvard University for a graduate student of color recruitment event. Introduced by Professor Cornel West, Chuck D spoke about the importance of “Hijacking the Media.” He explained that behind every corporation there are individuals. These lessons of not to give unnecessary power to entities that we know little of, are also taught in the film The Wizard of Oz (1939). That is, that many of the people in power positions, as we discover of the wizard in the plot of the journey to Oz, are merely human like us, and that it’s really no big deal to negotiate at various levels. This fear is demystifying people of color’s involvement in otherwise white male centered arenas.

As women of color, for example, living in America and dealing with Anglo/Eurocentricism and male dominated corporations, systems and other state apparatuses, we must understand the reason for culture shock. When two oppositional forms of consciousness interact, there is an array of possible outcomes. These dynamics may include appropriation, integration, hybridization as positive, negative, and at times, I believe, even neutral energy forces. These experiences happen at both micro and macro levels of human evolution and re-evolution.

With respect to issues of living healthy and striving for global democracy, this issue of Specator also includes a self-reflexive archaeology of my-self (mind, body and creative spirit). I do this to keep aware of my own positioning as filmmaker, video artist, and cultural critic. I do this to evaluate simultaneously a her-story of our neo-tribe, reinscribing ancient wisdom with the flow of a pen – or a cyberspace wave. This is a contemporary ethnographic deconstruction of a highly technological mutant virgin puta hybrid culture continually being reborn. In an age of a cosmic race, la raza cósmica reconstructs newer visions of utopia – in an otherwise dystopic late patriarchal
postmodern pathological disorder. This is a simple and yet highly technological song written in freedom and bound to the rhythms of the rainbow.

Lastly, this journal is a passage of change for a xxicana identified woman learning to master the queen’s language, and the king’s logic. And as it was in the beginning and as it is at the end of this Fifth Sun, for example, experiencing what is healing for the U.S. lesbiana de color. This pedagogical journey also has both a micro and macro level – as a personal one that I am following and as the basis for an alternative curriculum for transformational transcultural awareness. It is in this interplay between these two levels, that I find the importance and potential healing power of cinema, movie-miento and mediamaking.

Almost any alter-Native attempts at positively progressive change are exciting in this day and age. In this space and time, I observe and feel as both ethnographic participant and observer in this study. A transcultural human cosmology remains in my political unconscious, and as crystal clear as an ancient lengua nearly lost. In the words and images of these dynamic powerful image makers, multiple lessons and quests for cinematic sovereignty and healing ring loud and clear. From their works, lower budgets, and at times (I can speak for myself), not only “low income,” but “no income” realities, still has the magic of survival at hand. From the depth of a multidimensional, multiethnic, multisexual, multigalactic, multimedia expression out come these pouring words to you. In the goal of a user-friendly collection of Chicana intellectual and creative wealth, I am constantly evolving into the synthesis of this transcultural space-time, I cannot but help rite these words away, from the least, and from the most – at an honorable purpose towards progressive and maybe more often than not, radical experiential stance and sensibility. For these reasons of survival, I am granted the freedom of this POETIC PULSE – and for all this, and more, and forever in the tune of loving all my relations, con safos, y qué.

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In the spirit of my Chicana familia, my Trojan familia, my queer familia, my global familia, and all the intersections -- I offer this manuscript as a work-in-progress. En el edad del movimiento. My ancient ancestors prophesized that we are currently in the age of movement. And so, we shall see.

Word. Word up. Spoken word. The oral tradition. Testimonios. Flor y canto. Critical analysis. They say pictures say 1,000 words. Here are mujerista movie-mientos in the mediamaking mode. I present familia, friends, comrades and colleagues. Sharing stories, thoughts and feelings. In struggle, solidarity, survival and creativity. If you’re open, you may feel the play of love as well.
Xtra special thanx to my blood familia, extended familia, Trojan familia, too many to name. And to the interviewees – kudos! How proud I am to know you – to be able to talk with you – to learn from you. And to the reader who holds this manifestation – bienvenidos. I welcome you into the world of our transcultural diversity. A diversity of voices, ideologies, cosmologies, psychologies – and songs of so many special women’s spoken words. Now here in print. In your hands now, hear in print. Identities of age, color, class, politic, career, appearance, ability, ethnicity, cultura. It is what it is. We are who we are. Word up. Word.

1 The Massachusetts Institute of Technology publicity brochure for their definition of “media” read:

OSA HIDALGO DE LA RIVA

Thanx Trojan Familia