

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,450
...dissertation that was primarily on her
work, she left behind enough materials

2

00:00:06,450 --> 00:00:10,520
to constitute about 125 linear feet of unpublished

3

00:00:10,520 --> 00:00:16,539
materials that now occupy her archives.
So as you can see, it was quite a joy for me

4

00:00:16,539 --> 00:00:23,070
to have the opportunity to spend some
time there. Anzaldua is most known

5

00:00:23,070 --> 00:00:28,779
for her book Borderlands La Frontera: The
New Mestiza, which includes mixed genre

6

00:00:28,779 --> 00:00:34,980
chapters of poetry, mythology, memoir,
philosophy, and the history of the

7

00:00:34,980 --> 00:00:42,230
U.S.-Mexican border and in it she introduces her theories of mestiza
or borderline

8

00:00:42,230 --> 00:00:47,809
consciousness and other concepts like
mestizaje and nepantla, all that relate

9

00:00:47,809 --> 00:00:54,660
to a state of being in between or mixed
beyond binary conception, not only on the

10

00:00:54,660 --> 00:00:59,030
physical level, but a cultural level,
psychological level, linguistic level,

11

00:00:59,030 --> 00:01:06,580
and sexual level. According

to Anzaldua, napanitla, a napanitlaren

12

00:01:06,580 --> 00:01:12,060
is one who navigates a liminal
space between identities, languages, and

13

00:01:12,070 --> 00:01:16,740
even ways of knowing, which has proved
useful to those invested in

14

00:01:16,740 --> 00:01:21,259
cross-cultural or coalitional justice
work. So her work proceeded and

15

00:01:21,259 --> 00:01:26,860
precipitated the concept of
intersectionality, also built on

16

00:01:26,860 --> 00:01:32,580
DeBouois' double consciousness. She roots
her concepts in the language and the mythos

17

00:01:32,580 --> 00:01:37,560
of the ancient civilizations of
Mexico from the Olmecs to the Aztecs.

18

00:01:37,560 --> 00:01:44,320
Her groundbreaking use of code switching
or transitions, sometimes even [inaudible]

19

00:01:44,320 --> 00:01:49,049
within the middle of a sentence,
but most certainly even within

20

00:01:49,049 --> 00:01:54,740
paragraphs from standard to working
class English, to Chicano Spanish, to

21

00:01:54,740 --> 00:02:00,130
Tex-Mex, to Nahuatl or the Astec language,
has influenced not only literary and

22

00:02:00,130 --> 00:02:04,310
composition studies, but gender and
ethnic studies, LGBT queer studies,

23

00:02:04,310 --> 00:02:07,370
sociology, and a number of other fields.

24

00:02:07,370 --> 00:02:12,950
So she purposely frustrates monolingual
readers in order to bring them into her

25

00:02:12,950 --> 00:02:18,010
own experience and also the experience
of Mexican-Americans who live in the

26

00:02:18,010 --> 00:02:22,490
United States. She's internationally
recognized as a leading cultural

27

00:02:22,490 --> 00:02:25,600
theorists. She's won a lot of awards
including a National Endowment of the

28

00:02:25,600 --> 00:02:31,430
Arts Award for Fiction and an American
Studies Association prize for Lifetime

29

00:02:31,430 --> 00:02:38,380
Achievement. I work on a concept that's
been virtually overlooked and what I

30

00:02:38,380 --> 00:02:45,120
discovered spans all of her work and that
is the concept of the Nahuatl... of the

31

00:02:45,120 --> 00:02:50,750
Naguala which is Nahuatl or Aztec for the shapeshifter. So here I

32

00:02:50,750 --> 00:02:55,630
have a list of a number of her most
major publications and the last few by

33

00:02:55,630 --> 00:03:07,830

the way are actually children's books. So while at the University of Texas I sifted through

34

00:03:07,830 --> 00:03:12,640

her unpublished work and then before I left I went through all of her published

35

00:03:12,640 --> 00:03:18,170

work looking for traces of the shapeshifter and during PDL I worked on

36

00:03:18,170 --> 00:03:22,340

a series of articles and now I'm in the process of putting together a book

37

00:03:22,340 --> 00:03:28,640

proposal on the Naguala that, in part argues that Anzaldua's use of Naguala

38

00:03:28,640 --> 00:03:33,000

is as important as are often cited mestizo consciousness and was critical

39

00:03:33,010 --> 00:03:39,170

to her theorizing at the end of her life. I argue that Anzaldua

40

00:03:39,170 --> 00:03:43,630

invokes the shapeshifter to propose new ways of imagining our own personal

41

00:03:43,630 --> 00:03:48,800

psychological work in relationship to working with others across difference, to

42

00:03:48,800 --> 00:03:55,920

end multiple forms of oppression. Now the shapeshifter trope in literature and in

43

00:03:55,920 --> 00:04:03,440
film often represents transitions in
identities, circumstances, life paths, stages,

44

00:04:03,440 --> 00:04:12,020
the shapeshifter will guide, but
sometimes mislead the hero or accompanies them

45

00:04:12,030 --> 00:04:16,310
on their journeys. Their appearance is on
the rise in literature and film, but

46

00:04:16,310 --> 00:04:21,400
there's actually very little scholarly
work on the shapeshifter, especially when

47

00:04:21,400 --> 00:04:27,310
we compare it to the work on vampires
and other monsters. Scholarship on the

48

00:04:27,310 --> 00:04:31,050
Nagual shaman in literature is especially
inadequate.

49

00:04:31,050 --> 00:04:35,410
my theory about that is all the
experience of shape shifters as outcasts

50

00:04:35,410 --> 00:04:40,580
really might resonate with a reader,
perhaps the shapeshifter's distant

51

00:04:40,580 --> 00:04:44,650
relationship to the enlightened rational
human is responsible for its lack of

52

00:04:44,650 --> 00:04:48,830
attention by academics. Shapeshifters
also appealed to our intrigue with

53

00:04:48,830 --> 00:04:53,810
animals in the supernatural. So in light

of the shapeshifter's posthumanist features

54

00:04:53,810 --> 00:04:57,720
that emphasize extreme human
transformation and the deep links

55

00:04:57,720 --> 00:05:02,010
between humans, animals, and the spirit
world, perhaps it's not surprising we've

56

00:05:02,010 --> 00:05:07,040
overlooked them given our liberal
humanist secular roots of scholarly work.

57

00:05:07,040 --> 00:05:12,320
Maybe shapeshifters take us too far from
our humanity, even the dark side that

58

00:05:12,320 --> 00:05:16,640
vampires in monsters represent.

59

00:05:16,640 --> 00:05:20,450
So I've traced Anzaldua's use of the
shapeshifter trope through her work, but

60

00:05:20,450 --> 00:05:25,200
concentrate on her use of it in her
final published essay. It's a substantial essay,

61

00:05:25,200 --> 00:05:31,419
almost 20,000 words. It's called Now Let Us Shift The Path of
Conocimiento : Inner Work and

62

00:05:31,419 --> 00:05:38,050
Public Acts, because of her extensive use
and unique use of the concept in that

63

00:05:38,050 --> 00:05:45,220
essay, which are referred to in just a
moment. The broader umbrella of my work is a

64

00:05:45,220 --> 00:05:49,789
theoretical project, but it's meant to
have practical implications. My interest

65
00:05:49,789 --> 00:05:56,800
is in subjectivity, particularly that
which is expressed through the subject

66
00:05:56,800 --> 00:06:01,700
self for self-hood, how we experience
being a self and having agency in

67
00:06:01,700 --> 00:06:07,480
particular moments in time and place and
I draw from Anzaldua's theory of Naguala

68
00:06:07,480 --> 00:06:11,280
or shapeshifting to describe what I call the self in

69
00:06:11,289 --> 00:06:16,380
coalition; the intricate concrete
intersubjective processed ease in which

70
00:06:16,380 --> 00:06:18,150
persons participate

71
00:06:18,150 --> 00:06:22,760
as they develop the kind of interrelatedness that is required for
coalition work.

72
00:06:22,760 --> 00:06:27,460
In other words, I want to answer the
question of how do we best understand

73
00:06:27,460 --> 00:06:31,760
and communicate with each other in ways
that honor each other's experiences

74
00:06:31,760 --> 00:06:37,690
without as Maria Lou Gonez
called for, falling into a politics that

75
00:06:37,690 --> 00:06:42,000
values or assumes sameness, commonality, or

76
00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:47,280
homogeneity without falling into a
politics that mythologized nation

77
00:06:47,280 --> 00:06:52,540
or place and answer the question of what
sort of agency do we need as individuals

78
00:06:52,540 --> 00:07:01,820
and as groups of oppressed peoples in
order to effectively resist oppression

79
00:07:01,820 --> 00:07:08,220
So I explore what is the subject if not understood in terms of
traditional liberal humanism,

80
00:07:08,220 --> 00:07:16,490
which has a commitment to man, the human, and freedom which elevates
the rationale

81
00:07:16,490 --> 00:07:20,610
independent human as invested in
self-determination, self-sufficiency,

82
00:07:20,610 --> 00:07:27,050
unity, autonomy or if not understood more
recently in terms of postmodern or

83
00:07:27,050 --> 00:07:32,900
postructuralism, which argues that the
subjects self doesn't exist at all, but

84
00:07:32,900 --> 00:07:37,350
is determined by power that is exercised
in a variety of ways including through

85
00:07:37,350 --> 00:07:42,190
language as we move through the context

of our material lives. So I like other

86

00:07:42,190 --> 00:07:50,470
theorists including Mariana Ortega want
to explore the subject stuff and

87

00:07:50,470 --> 00:07:55,270
argue that the subject self does not
have to be relegated to modernity and I

88

00:07:55,270 --> 00:08:03,000
found in Anzaldua's theories, a way of doing that

89

00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:10,720
So some of the capacities that I'm
interested in, that occur at the level of the

90

00:08:10,720 --> 00:08:16,920
subject self, would include memory, empathy, compassion, oral and
written narrative,

91

00:08:16,920 --> 00:08:25,380
or storytelling. All have become important
to social movement activity. Also self-hood

92

00:08:25,380 --> 00:08:29,160
offers an examination of what
Aristotle called practical syllogisms;

93

00:08:29,170 --> 00:08:36,099
reasoning that ends an action. Anzaldua
uses the term Naguala or shape

94

00:08:36,099 --> 00:08:42,140
shifting in its traditional ways in her
stories as humans that shift into

95

00:08:42,140 --> 00:08:48,230
animals, as mythological animal
companions, but she also uses it in her

96

00:08:48,230 --> 00:08:52,890
non-fiction essays to describe a process
of awareness or a sense of one's self

97
00:08:52,890 --> 00:08:59,610
that is deeply relational. So the root of
Nagual is na, which in the Nahuatl

98
00:08:59,610 --> 00:09:04,510
language means knowing. The Naguala
represents a way of knowing that

99
00:09:04,510 --> 00:09:10,490
precipitates coalition work and so I
don't want to go into this for time

100
00:09:10,490 --> 00:09:14,680
sake, but I wanted to mention that the
shift that she's talking about here, that

101
00:09:14,680 --> 00:09:19,400
she's associating with the shapeshifter
trope, is not just a psychological one,

102
00:09:19,400 --> 00:09:27,650
its epistemological, but it's also
embodied, it has material effects and so

103
00:09:27,650 --> 00:09:32,700
while we might interpret the Naguala
as a metaphor, I argue that it's more

104
00:09:32,700 --> 00:09:38,430
than that, because to her in following
her Nagualismo informed beliefs, she

105
00:09:38,430 --> 00:09:43,210
felt that all change started with the
imagination, which she saw as materials.

106
00:09:43,210 --> 00:09:48,510
So she saw the imagination as a

vehicle for extending purpose into the

107

00:09:48,510 --> 00:09:53,339
world and that had immediate physical
effects and she felt this way about

108

00:09:53,339 --> 00:09:59,899
writing too. So if we think about it, there
certainly is a connection between our imaginations

109

00:09:59,900 --> 00:10:04,530
and the ways that our bodies respond
physically, right? So we think about

110

00:10:04,530 --> 00:10:10,740
pickles and we salivate, you know or I
think about getting up here and giving a

111

00:10:10,740 --> 00:10:15,490
talk and you know, my stomach feels funny
and so there's certainly is a

112

00:10:15,490 --> 00:10:20,170
relationship between the imagination and
the concrete material world. So she took

113

00:10:20,170 --> 00:10:25,190
this very seriously and it's very clear
to me in her writing that the

114

00:10:25,190 --> 00:10:30,110
shapeshifter trope was something that
she really meant to unleash at the level

115

00:10:30,110 --> 00:10:38,140
of social justice activism. Her most
substantial description of the Naguala and

116

00:10:38,140 --> 00:10:42,910
the shift in self-hood is in stage 7 of
Conocimiento Shifting Realities of Now

117
00:10:42,910 --> 00:10:50,100
Let Us Shift and in it she's talking
about transformation. So for the sake of

118
00:10:50,100 --> 00:10:54,900
time and I don't know where I am
with time at this moment. So I tried to

119
00:10:54,900 --> 00:10:59,040
provide at least a little bit of a
timeline here of how her thinking about the

120
00:10:59,040 --> 00:11:04,280
shapeshifter changed. She initially
referred to identity as shape-shifting

121
00:11:04,280 --> 00:11:10,250
activity and then she really gets into
what has to happen, not just on a

122
00:11:10,250 --> 00:11:16,490
psychological level, but in terms of
really changing what we think of as a

123
00:11:16,490 --> 00:11:21,160
state of being when we are working with
other people. So here you can see she

124
00:11:21,160 --> 00:11:26,620
says when a change occurs your
consciousness your awareness of your sense

125
00:11:26,620 --> 00:11:30,360
of self and your response to self, others,
and surroundings becomes cognizant that

126
00:11:30,360 --> 00:11:35,600
has a point of view and the ability to
act from choice. So there is some agency

127
00:11:35,600 --> 00:11:39,710

that's assumed there. This knowing knower is always with you, but is displaced by the

128

00:11:39,710 --> 00:11:43,840
ego and its prospective, this knower has several functions. You call the function

129

00:11:43,840 --> 00:11:48,680
that arouses the awareness that beneath individual separateness lies inter-relatedness,

130

00:11:48,680 --> 00:11:53,920
Naguala. So what I'd like to do actually is.. Well I want to

131

00:11:53,920 --> 00:11:57,340
remind you that this knower that she's talking about is an embodied

132

00:11:57,340 --> 00:12:00,720
capacity, it is not a transcendent one. So that's one of the reasons why I'm

133

00:12:00,720 --> 00:12:05,440
interested in taking up post humanism and exploring her work

134

00:12:05,440 --> 00:12:11,400
and she senses that the self has multiple parts and functions. So I see her

135

00:12:11,400 --> 00:12:17,270
commitment to self-hood. I don't see her going as far as some post-colonialists

136

00:12:17,270 --> 00:12:22,090
will go as far as to say really, they have a belief in ontological pluralism.

137

00:12:22,090 --> 00:12:26,660
I think that Anzaldua was actually a monist, which we can talk about if you

138

00:12:26,660 --> 00:12:32,020
like later, but I'm just going to focus on
the most substantial passage and now let us shift,

139

00:12:32,020 --> 00:12:38,030
that's connected to the Naguala and I'd like
to focus on it, because other scholars

140

00:12:38,030 --> 00:12:41,890
have also looked at this paragraph and
they completely overlook the

141

00:12:41,890 --> 00:12:45,610
shapeshifter and that's what this
paragraph is about and instead they focused

142

00:12:45,610 --> 00:12:51,050
more on the Napantla which is the liminal
space the liminality. So what she's says

143

00:12:51,050 --> 00:12:55,450
is "when you shift your attention from
your customary point of view to that of

144

00:12:55,450 --> 00:12:59,620
Naguala, from there you move your awareness
to an inner held representation of an

145

00:12:59,620 --> 00:13:04,830
experienced person, thing, or world. Naguala and the object merge.
When you

146

00:13:04,830 --> 00:13:09,630
include the complexity of feeling, two or
more ways about a person or issue, when

147

00:13:09,630 --> 00:13:13,760
you try to see her circumstances from
her position, you accommodate the other's

148

00:13:13,760 --> 00:13:18,640

perspective, achieving a conocimiento
that allows you to shift toward a less

149

00:13:18,640 --> 00:13:22,720
defensive, more inclusive identity. When
you relate to others not as parts,

150

00:13:22,720 --> 00:13:27,340
problems, or commodities from a
connectionist view, compassion triggers

151

00:13:27,340 --> 00:13:31,800
transformation. When you are in a place
between worldviews, Napantla, you're

152

00:13:31,800 --> 00:13:35,700
able to slip between realities to a
neutral perception, a decision made in the

153

00:13:35,700 --> 00:13:40,260
in between place becomes a turning point
initiating psychological and spiritual

154

00:13:40,260 --> 00:13:45,550
transformation". So here we see in her
belief in the concrete power of the

155

00:13:45,550 --> 00:13:50,460
imagination to enact change. The imagination she describes here and in

156

00:13:50,460 --> 00:13:56,020
much of And Now Let Us Shift is the
imagination of a self, of a knower informed

157

00:13:56,020 --> 00:14:01,490
and moved by the Naguala who continuously shifts the subjectivity of
personhood

158

00:14:01,490 --> 00:14:08,620
from inner preoccupations to neutrality
or Napantla the liminal space, to what

159

00:14:08,620 --> 00:14:13,630

she calls the nostras position or an alliance between us and others.

160

00:14:13,630 --> 00:14:20,780

I'm also interested in how Anzaldua uses the Naguala across her work including in her

161

00:14:20,780 --> 00:14:23,970

fiction and that's what I'm working on right now and I'm actually comparing it

162

00:14:23,970 --> 00:14:27,950

with Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, because I see a lot of similarity

163

00:14:27,950 --> 00:14:32,080

in not just their style but their content and philosophy. I'm actually

164

00:14:32,080 --> 00:14:40,060

right now, looking at representations of death in these narratives that are

165

00:14:40,060 --> 00:14:47,410

post-humanist representations, in that the protagonists seem to embrace, even in a

166

00:14:47,410 --> 00:14:52,270

bodily way, the threat of death or even as they're dying. There sort...

167

00:14:52,270 --> 00:14:58,100

instead of transcending, what death will mean for them once they passed on to another

168

00:14:58,100 --> 00:15:00,400

world. It's complicated.

169

00:15:00,400 --> 00:15:05,310

Probably should've gotten into that, but the interesting thing is that these

170

00:15:05,310 --> 00:15:12,210
protagonists are very invested in there,
they really don't see themselves

171

00:15:12,210 --> 00:15:17,440
as being deprived materially even though
they may be living during a military

172

00:15:17,440 --> 00:15:24,980
dictatorship as Macabeo was in in one of the narratives that I'm
looking

173

00:15:24,980 --> 00:15:31,070
at. Instead, they find joy in just the
small pleasures of their own bodies and

174

00:15:31,070 --> 00:15:39,200
inexpensive foods. So it's an interesting
journey for me. So just to close, I offer

175

00:15:39,200 --> 00:15:43,330
Anzaldua's work on the Naguala
as among other things, a contribution to

176

00:15:43,330 --> 00:15:48,620
how the shapeshifter is employed in
order to call for transformation in how

177

00:15:48,620 --> 00:15:52,140
we relate to each other and our
environment times of conflict and

178

00:15:52,140 --> 00:16:00,240
turmoil as subjects of a of a newly
define relational humanity. Thank you.

179

00:16:00,240 --> 00:16:01,340
[Applause]