

MUTING GENDER IN THE BORDERLANDS: STILL A BIO- GEOPOLITICAL OPEN WOUND.

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Resumen: Este ensayo es el resultado del estudio del silenciamiento de la voz de la mujer, como parte de la tradición de un discurso representativo de la identidad mejicana, que tiene su raíz en la necesidad de reconocer su historia y un pasado de dolor, que esperan ser reparados y analizados. En este sentido, la feminización de un pueblo derrotado justificado por *Doña Marina* como la lengua de la conquista, deja una impronta psicológica bajo la cual el mejicano se siente perdido y abandonado por la Madre que ha dado a luz al primer mestizo mejicano. En esta intersección de la pérdida de una nación, el abandono de la madre y el odio hacia sí mismo, “the loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behaviour is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others” (Anzandúa 1987c, 83).¹ La reconciliación con esta vergonzosa ancestralidad llega de la mano de la figuración

¹ La pérdida del sentido de dignidad y respecto en el macho, estimula un falso machismo que lo hace denigrar a las mujeres e incluso abusar físicamente de ellas. Con su comportamiento sexista coexiste también el del amor a la madre que está por encima de todos los demás sentimientos. [mi traducción].

sincrética de la Virgen de Guadalupe: diosa mestiza cristiana legada al pueblo mejicano. En este trabajo, enlazaré la relación existente entre la identidad nacional mejicana y su representación iconográfica entre mujer/nación. De igual manera, trazaré un puente entre la historia no reconocida del pasado mejicano y el efecto psicológico de la conquista española y con asuntos relacionados con la frontera entre Méjico y los Estados Unidos de América, lo cual incide en una doble conquista y sus consecuentes negociaciones en la construcción de la subjetividad mejicana.

Palabras clave: Malinche, Virgen de Guadalupe, identidad, materia(rea)lidad del cuerpo, la chingada, voz femenina, narrativa nacional.

Abstract: In this essay I will explore how silencing of women's voice has a tradition conforming a discourse of the Mexican identity, that comes from their unacknowledged history, their not coming to terms with a hurting past that needs to be addressed and foreclosed. In this instance, the feminization of a defeated people justified by Doña Marina as the tongue of the conquest, leaves a psychological imprint in which the Mexican feels at a loss and abandoned by the Mother who has born the first mestizo Mexican son. At this intersection of loss of a nation, abandonment by the mother and self hate, "the loss of a sense of dignity and respect in

the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behaviour is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others" (Anzandúa 1987c, 83). Reconciliation with that shameful ancestrality comes with the syncretic figuration of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a mestiza Christian given goddess. Linking this national identity and iconographic representation of women/nation, I will also make a bridge between this unacknowledged history and the psychological effect of the Spanish conquest and issues dealing with the borderline between Mexico and the USA, which makes for a double conquest and the subsequent negotiations of subjectivities.

Key words: Malinche, Virgen de Guadalupe; identity; body matter-reality; la chingada; female voice; national narrative.

"We are going to have to do something about your tongue," I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. "I've never seen anything as strong or as stubborn," he says. And I think, how do you tame a wild tong, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down?

"How to tame a wild tongue," (Anzaldúa 1987b, 75)

Mexican iconographic history is marked by two ever present female figures in constant oppositional tension with one another. La Malinche is a foundational figure for the nation dating from Spanish colonial times. Ostensibly the Indian princess lover of Hernán Cortés, today she represents the sexually dominated female from whose loins the mestizo Mexican national and racial identity springs: That which is referred to today as the RAZA. This is not without its ambiguities, however.

The idea of the conquered, violated woman, emblem of the defeated Aztec civilization is incarnated in the Malinche. To be the son or daughter of her (literally the copulation) is to be the offspring of the country's paramount prostitute, a constant reminder of defeat and humiliation in the female form. The Mexican finds only comfort in a mother given to them by Christian conversion whose deeds are praised and worshiped. Conversely, this Mother Virgin has no voice of her own. She appears to a humble Mexican farmer on his way to his uncle's home.

As it is, both, La Malinche and La Virgen de Guadalupe, take on an Aristotelian matter(reality) in which "inasmuch as certain phantasmatic notions of the feminine are traditionally associated with materiality, these are specular effects that confirm a phallogocentric project of autogenesis" that translates into an

“economy that claims to include the feminine as the subordinate term in a binary opposition of masculine/feminine excludes the feminine, produces the feminine as that which must be excluded for that economy to operate,” (Butler 1994, 149) so no voice is granted to this gendered excluding national discourse, in which tragedy, betrayal and greed intersect.

I would argue that in the construction of republican nations, the body of reference to draw from is that of the female body, thus determining it as a reproducer of male discourse and rejection of male ordained functions such as authorship. Both, La Malinche and La Virgen are constructed through the branding of “bodies subjected to the politics of punishment and reward,” (Lingis 1999, 287) whereby power—as a political, ideological discourse is an active, ever changing, technological reasoning— sees the feminine function as an entity “to receive, *dechesthai*, to take, accept, welcome, include, and even comprehend” (Butler 1994, 153). Therefore this renders the enabling of an ontology by which she is “only to be entered, but never to enter” (Butler 1994, 153).

In this essay I will explore how silencing of women’s voice has a tradition conforming a discourse of the Mexican identity that comes from their unacknowledged history, their not coming to terms with a hurting past that needs to be addressed and foreclosed. In this instance, the feminization of a defeated people justified by Doña Marina as the tongue of the conquest, leaves a psychological

imprint in which the Mexican feels at a loss and abandoned by the Mother who has born the first mestizo Mexican son. At this intersection of loss of a nation, abandonment by the mother and self hate, “the loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behaviour is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others” (Anzandúa 1987c, 83). Reconciliation with that shameful ancestry comes with the syncretic figuration of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a mestiza Christian given goddess. Linking this national identity and iconographic representation of women/nation, I will also make a bridge between this unacknowledged history and the psychological effect of the conquest with the borderline between Mexico and the USA, which makes for a double conquest and the negotiations of subjectivities. These negotiations being proposed by ways of creating new consciousness wished-for by Chicanas such as Gloria Anzaldúa; that is, the need to march “towards a new consciousness: La conciencia de la Mestiza” (Anzaldúa 1987, 77).

For this essay, I will draw on materials from Octavio Paz’s “El laberinto de la soledad,” from post structuralist thoughts on power and body relations analyzed by Alphonso Lingis and Judith Butler, as well as from writings from Anzaldúa’s book *Borderlines/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987).

I

To understand the historical specificity of Mexican origin and identity as a tragedy, incarnating in the story of Doña Marina, a “truth manifested on (her) body” (Lingis 1999, 287), a self hate reigning in the Indigenous population; the machismo with which Mexican women have had to deal with since the suppression of Marina’s voice, her tongue, her agency in substitution for a model of virginity and purity that would be willing, even if powerful, to construct her identity through and by the male’s voice, representation. Hers is an identity that is dependant upon her invisibility in her presence. In other words, she is just present to be overlooked, she is the pre-text of the main text; hers is nothing but a reason to be adorned, adored in her silent power. As for men’s constant quest for what woman is, Octavio Paz’s opinion tells of an inscription of the body as the unfound map of the Treasure Island; a representation of an **(im)matereality** of the woman’s corporeality, a non situated substance:

Woman is another being who lives apart and is therefore an enigmatic figure. It would be better to say that she is the Enigma. She attracts and repels like men of an alien race or nationality. She is an image of both fecundity and death. In almost every culture, she is the goddesses of

creation and also goddesses of destruction. Woman is a living symbol of the strangeness of the universe and its radical heterogeneity. As such, does she hide life within herself, or death? What does she think? Does she truly have feelings? Is she the same as we are? Sadism begins as revenge against a feminine hermeticism or as a desperate attempt or as a desperate attempt to obtain a response from a body we fear is insensible. (Paz 1961, 66)

As “la lengua,” the interpreter, she has to be shut up: “Wild tongues can’t be tamed; they can only be cut out” (Anzaldúa 1987b, 76), since

to be a mouth—the cost is too high—her whole life enslaved to that devouring mouth. *Todo pasaba por esa boca, el viento, el fuego, los mares y la Tierra.* Her body, a crossroads, a fragile bridge, cannot support the tons of cargo passing through it. She wants to install “stop” and “go” signal lights, instigate a curfew, police Poetry. But some something wants to come out. (Anzaldúa 1987b, 96)

La Malinche: slave, translator, guide and mother, all these modes of transformation, from a passive, obedient subject into a position carrying agency and respectability gained Marina the

double gaze of the conqueror and the conquered peoples: loyal and traitor. Her work as interpreter and mediator, an essential component of the conquest and from my point of view, decisive for a successful conquest, has been violently override by a nation building discourse leaving Marina voiceless in the psychological, *métisse*, Mexican identity. She, the tongue, her tongue has been cut off from all discourse and would only be present as La Chingada, the one that gave birth, not to the proud Cosmic Race, but to the bastard son, whose mother later abandons in search of a European father. This bastardization has resulted in the acceptance, for unity under an umbrella of syncretic unity, in a trade from a historical past and the consequent fall of the Aztec Empire, to a virginal more comforting signifier that would, in turn, embrace, support, understand, give comfort to and unite and cleanse the shame in La Virgen de Guadalupe.



This, I think, has led to a deep misogynous streak in Mexican society:

our history as an independent nation would contribute to perpetuating and strengthening this servant psychology, for we have not succeeded in overcoming the misery of the common people and our exasperating social differences, despite a century and a half of struggle and constitutional experience. The use of violence as a dialectical resource, the abuse of authority by the powerful (a vice that disappeared) and, finally, the scepticism and resignation of the people—all of these more visible today than ever before, due to our successive post-revolution disillusionments—would complete the historical explication. (Paz 1961, 71)

A national discourse that stands on the gender proscribed and prescribed distribution of voice, representation and agency, indispensable women characteristics: “She is the battlefield for the pitched fight between the inner image and the words trying to recreate it. *La musa bruja* has no manners. Doesn’t she know, nights are for sleeping?” (Anzaldúa 1987, 96). La Malinche is silenced through an engendered biological and then mythical construction as

the First Mexican Woman, then the Mother of Mexico to be expelled and silenced from the foundational discourse as the Mexican Eve, the Traitor to her race. Her different names – names given to her – testify of the inscriptional matter she has become for the Mexican identity: La Malinche, Malinal, Malintzin: One that will be given name and form, but whose children will be, in the final analysis, bastards. Her tongue, just as it served her survived the most difficult stages of her life, made her vanish all together from the national discourse creating a tongueless monster, traitor and dishonourable woman in Mexican culture, thus becoming La Chingada. Being so, Mexicans regard themselves as *Los Hijos de la Chingada*, consequently, creating a Mexican condition as a condemnation under Western eyes. Then

who is the *Chingada*? Above all, she is the Mother. Not a Mother of flesh and blood but a mythical figure. The *Chingada* is one of the Mexican representations of Maternity, like *La Llorona* or the “long-suffering Mexican mother” we celebrate on the tenth of May. The *Chingada* is the mother who has suffered – metaphorically or actually – the corrosive and defaming action implicit in the verb that gives her name. It would be worth while to examine the verb. (Paz 1961, 75)

And “What is the *Chingada*?” The *Chingada* is the Mother forcibly opened, violated or deceived. The *hijo de la Chingada* is the offspring of violation, abduction or deceit. If we compare this expression with Spanish *hijo de puta* (son of a whore), the difference is immediately obvious (Paz 1961, 80).

Concomitantly, her names stand for all other attributes ascribed to her, as an empty wall waiting to be graphitized, passively receiving the marks, the identities, and mutant, strange, bizarre. Mute and open. It is thus, that her figure has been conformed from different approaches, like a text, of interpretations, translations, decodification and, therefore, producing a kaleidoscopic system of significations whereby her name(s) bring and bear in mind treason, ambiguity, nothingness, rejection, abjection and objectivation.²

La Virgen de Guadalupe has no tongue, voice, humanity, presence in flesh and bone; she is literally transmitted through Juan Diego. She is not to face or talk to the superior priest representing the Spanish church. The Mother has no way of an actual agency but through another tongue, but this tongue is that of a male. He is her representative, her spokesperson. She is not to speak, she is not to appear, she is to be figured, configured, and imagined. She is

² Yet, for Bernard Díaz, the most important outcome of Doña Marina’s life was her assimilation into Spanish culture and with the same values of a devoted Spanish mother.

“given birth,” she is born from the womb of flowers carried by this humble Mexican farmer, as if he also had the power always longed for by men: reproduction. He literally gives birth to La Virgen de Guadalupe: “whereupon he opened his white cloak, in which he was carrying the flowers, and as the roses of Castile dropped out to the floor, suddenly there appeared the most pure image of the most noble Virgin Mary, Mother of God, just exactly as it is, even now, in Her holy house, in Her church which is named Guadalupe (...).”³

Yet, so that her presence, apparition is believed evidence have to be provided. Seeing is believing. Nonetheless, we all are waiting to see father God, but in order for her to be credible, the Virgen has to give proof of her divinity, perform miracles, activate the senses through the smell of flowers, they eyes of the beholder, she has to be exposed, humble and talk, be heard by Juan Diego. I still would argue that, as far fetched as could be deemed, this bestowal upon the male child of all the mother’s rights could be linked to the same situation facing some women in Islamic traditions. They are not allowed alone in the streets unless accompanied by a male member of her family: it could even be her little boy. She is not to carry out transactions unless in the company of males.

This is a daughter born out the entrails of her humble servant and her birth takes place, not as an assisted one, but as that in which all power is given to this man to just open his apron and reveal his

³ In “History of the Miraculous Apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531”, n/d, n/y, n/p.

already syncretic, unifying, comforting Virgin.⁴ How come La Virgen has no voice or tongue to appear in front of the priest and demand of him the shrine she wants in her name? How is it that her celestial endowments do not render her the possibility of a self representation and thus, the humiliation of all that believe in the Mother of God? She is yielding her voice to a man. In the narrative she is willingly infantilizing herself as she does not see herself fit to face the ecclesiastic authority. A humble Indian does. She, the Mother of God, does not.

In contrast to La Malinche, at least at first glance, Guadalupe is the iconic patron saint of Mexico, The Virgin of Guadalupe. Tradition has it that Juan Diego, a converted Mexican Indian to Catholicism had a vision of the appearance of the Virgin Mary who asked him to establish a church in her honour and specifically for her worship.

As Octavio Paz ponders

⁴ The devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, based on the story of apparitions of the Virgin Mary to Juan Diego, an Indian neophyte, at the hill of Tepeyac in December 1531, is one of the most important formative religious and national symbols in the history of Mexico. In this first work ever to examine in depth every historical source of the Guadalupe apparitions, Stafford Poole traces the origins and history of the account, and in the process challenges many commonly accepted assumptions and interpretations. Poole finds that, despite common belief, the apparition account was unknown prior to 1648, when it was first published by a Mexican priest. And then, the virgin became the predominant devotion not of the Indians, but of the *criollos*, who found in the story a legitimization of their own national aspirations and an almost messianic sense of mission and identity. Poole finds no evidence of a contemporary association of the Virgin of Guadalupe with the Mexican goddess Tonantzin, as is frequently assumed, and he rejects the common assertion that the early missionaries consciously substituted Guadalupe for a pre-conquest deity. Available at: http://books.google.com/books?id=1TXXAAAAMAAJ&q=virgen+of+guadalupe%C2%B4s+story&dq=virgen+of+guadalupe%C2%B4s+story&hl=es&ei=tbUCTbTHNiDOrO7taYB&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAA .

if we ask about the third figure of the triad, the Mother, we hear a double answer. It is no secret to anyone that Mexican Catholicism revolves around the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In the first place, she is an Indian Virgin; in the second place, the scene of her appearance to the Indian Juan Diego was a hill that formerly contained a sanctuary dedicated to Tonantzin, “Our Mother,” the Aztec goddess of fertility. (Paz 1961, 84)

The subsequent establishment of the church for this purpose is the work of Juan Diego and ecclesiastical authorities. In other words, again we have the preponderant masculine role being emphasized in the erecting of a place of pilgrimage and worship albeit to the virgin mother of Jesus.



The Virgin of Guadalupe is always pictured with her eyes submissively looking down. Here there is no female affirmation whatsoever, in fact, not even of the potential fecundity of her female body. The triangular garb of most Virgin Mary erases this dimension. Thus the idea of breaking that is so attached to birth as well as the act of procreation is no where to be contemplated. Other worldly purity is the transcendent message.

Nonetheless, both female iconic figures of Mexican national identity in my opinion, despite their seeming oppositional distance, share some fascinating and very telling characteristics: they are constructed in opposition to one another: one denies, rejects her children while the other one shelters, protects and shields them:

This phenomenon of a return to the maternal womb, so well known to the psychologist, is without doubt one of the determining causes of the swift popularity of the cult of the Virgin. The Indian goddesses were goddesses of fecundity, linked to the cosmic rhythms, the vegetative processes and agrarian rites. The Catholic Virgin is also the Mother (some Indian pilgrims still call her Guadalupe-Tonantzin), but her principal attribute is not to watch over the fertility of the earth but to provide refuge for the unfortunate. (...) worshipers do not try to make sure of their harvests but to find a mother (Paz 1961, 85). (...) The

Virgin is the consolation of the poor, the shield of the weak, the help of the oppressed. In sum, she is the Mother of orphans. All men are born disinherited and their true condition is orphan hood, but this is particularly true among the Indians and the poor in Mexico. (Paz 1961, 85)

And as “individualized bodies” (Lingis 1999, 292), La Malinche and La Virgen de Guadalupe owe their existence and legitimacy to the agency of male figures that will constantly make of them the eternally irreconcilable enemies. Yet, both are humbled in a phallic world: the Virgin by the implicit denial of this human male property and the Malinche by being the victim of its violence. Both play a role in a false juxtaposition of virtue and debauchery as mutually exclusive which denies their unavoidable yin/yang relationship. This may be part of a schizophrenic national trait, the inability to deal with the purity of the Malinche and the stain hidden the Virgin of Guadalupe, a distribution of power on female bodies turned into coded, disciplined bodies, where the social is described as a pedagogical space upon which national narratives will be legitimized, as with prostitutes (Lingis 1999, 288).

La Malinche constitutes a bad reference to family and national codes and identity. She is the degenerate, the instable and corrupted body, thereof, she has to be shut up, shut down from history. What is interesting in this narrative of national

iconography is also one more point where both, Malinche and Guadalupe find another point of intersection: their motherhood templated in the passive, accepting cartographies:

in contrast to Guadalupe, who is the Virgin Mother, the *Chingada* is the violated Mother. Neither in her nor in the Virgin do we find traces of the darker attributes of the great goddesses: the lasciviousness of Amaterasu and Aphrodite, the cruelty of Artemis and Astarte, the sinister magic of Circe or the blood-lust of Kali. Both of them are passive figures. Guadalupe is pure receptivity, and the benefits she bestows are of the same order: she consoles, quiets, dries tears, calms passions. The *Chingada* is even more passive. Her passivity is abject: she does not resist violence, but is an inert heap of bones, blood and dust. Her taint is constitutional and resides, as we said earlier, in her sex. (Paz 1961, 85)

II

The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* (it's an open wound) where the Third World grates against the

First and bleeds. And before a scab forms, it haemorrhages, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country---a border culture.

“The Homeland, Aztlán/El otro México” (Anzaldúa 1987a, 3).

Given the gringo conquest of more than half of the original Mexico and its transformation into the Southwest of the United States, it is not unreasonable the point of view expressed by the Chicano demographic presence there that “we did not cross the border; the border crossed over us.” However, this inconvenient historic truth is not easily accepted by the American white population of the region who, in affirming the “line in the sand” and the physical and electronic wall being built with regards to Mexican nationals in search of work, consider themselves the only legitimate inhabitants north of the border. Their resentment of continued Chicano/Mexican “otherness” as not conforming to supposed patterns of assimilation into the American mainstream may well in part be explained by a history of conquest and resistance as opposed to an immigration motivated by supposed “choice” or at least intention. Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987a, 3) description is right on target:

borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live there: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the “normal”. Gringos in the U.S Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens—whether they possess documents or not, whether they are Chicanos, Indians or Blacks. Do not enter; trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot. The only “legitimate” inhabitants are those in power, the whites and those who align themselves with whites. Tensions grip the inhabitants of the borderlands like a virus. Ambivalence and unrest reside there and death is no stranger.

The lack of any coherent overarching immigration policy emanating from Washington and the political “hot potato” that this represents for any administration, have contributed over the years

to a chaotic nightmare situation along the US-Mexican border. The knee-jerk, xenophobic, vigilante responses on the part of some whites to the perceived “threat” of a Mexican take over of the southwest or creation of an Aztlán homeland are accompanied by the overlapping authorities of border patrol, coast guard, physical fence building and electronic surveillance and federal immigration authorities as well as by laws in border states (of doubtful constitutional admissibility) which require local police to practice ethnic profiling.

The feeling nationwide of rampant permeability of the US border to the south has made, of recent date, for a huge tide of anti-immigrant sentiment directed in large part against the Latino population irrespective of status in the country. Scapegoating is a practice of long standing in times of uncertainties and crisis and the United States today is no exception. The ambivalence of the human character with respect to walls, borders, demarcations, frontiers is expressed through history by their continual creation and transgression. On the one hand, they afford an inner and outer sanctum, an “us” and “them” and, on the other hand, they raise themselves up as a kind of challenge to self-knowledge which can only be achieved through their trespass in the contemplation of the “other” and, thus, of “self.”

Yet, *la conciencia de la mestiza* comes at a time of healing, of union, of coming to terms with one another in an effort to

acknowledge, recuperate a lost indigenous past, mythology and history. And like her ancestors, she “worship(s) the rain god and the maize goddess, but unlike (her) father, (she) ha(s) recovered their names” (Anzaldúa 1987c, 90). As proposed by Anzaldúa, the *mestiza* understands that “*somos una gente*” (Anzaldúa 1987c, 85) that demands from the gringo acknowledgement of their internalized oppression, negation and erasure of others. This “to compensate from your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience and our experience because it makes you feel guilty – you’d rather forget your brutish acts” because “where there is violence and war, there is repression of shadow;” therefore, the gringo has to “admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger in your psyche. By taking back your collective shadow the intracultural split will heal. And finally, tell us what you need from us” (Anzaldúa 1987c, 86).

Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall” is a philosophical musing, in the context of the traditional New England stone wall, on that primal force in nature and, ergo, in us that “doesn’t love a wall that sends the frozen ground swell under it.”⁵

⁵ Something there is that doesn't love a wall, / That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it, / And spills the upper boulders in the sun, / And makes gaps even two can pass abreast. / The work of hunters is another thing: / I have come after them and made repair / Where they have left not one stone on a stone, / But they would have the rabbit out of hiding, / To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean, / No one has seen them made or heard them made, / But at spring mending-time we find them there. / I let my

Conclusions

As the discourse of national identity reconstructed through time, it has been evident that the voice and presence fades more and more. La Malinche is shut up, zipped up, faded and belittled. Her conversion, loyalty and conception of a son by the conquistador, makes of her figure the archetype of the Indian traitor to her/his race, nation and beliefs. As a passive receptacle,

 this passivity, open to the outside world, causes her to lose her identity: she is the *Chingada*. She loses her name; she is no one; she disappears into nothingness; she is Nothingness. And yet she is the cruel incarnation of the feminine condition. (...) If the *Chingada* is a representation of the violated Mother, it is appropriate to associate her with the Conquest, which was also a violation, not only in the historical sense but also in the very flesh of Indian

neighbour know beyond the hill; /And on a day we meet to walk the line/ And set the wall between us
once

again.
We keep the wall between us as we go. / To each the boulders that have fallen to each. / And some are
loaves and some so nearly balls / We have to use a spell to make them balance: /'Stay where you are until
our backs are turned!' /We wear our fingers rough with handling them. / Oh, just another kind of out-
door game, / One on a side. It comes to little more: / There where it is we do not need the wall:/ He is all
pine and I am apple orchard./ My apple trees will never get across /And eat the cones under his pines, I
tell him./ He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbours'. /Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head: /'Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it/ Where there are cows?
/

But here there are no cows. / Before I built a wall I'd ask to know/ What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence./ Something there is that doesn't love a wall, /'That wants it
down.' I could say 'Elves' to him, / But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather / He said it for himself. I see
him there/ Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top /In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed. /He
moves in darkness as it seems to me~/ Not of woods only and the shade of trees./ He will not go behind
his father's saying,/ And he likes having thought of it so well/ He says again, "Good fences make good
neighbours."

Available at: <http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/frost-mending.html>.

women. The symbol of this violation is doña Malinche, the mistress of Cortés. It is true that she gave herself voluntarily to the conquistador, but he forgot her as soon as her usefulness was over. Doña Marina becomes a figure representing the Indian women who were fascinated, violated or seduced by the Spaniards. And as a small boy will not forgive his mother if she abandons him to search for his father, the Mexican people have not forgiven La Malinche for her betrayal. She embodies the open, the *chingado*, to our closed, stoic, impassive Indians. (Paz 1961, 86)

If La Malinche was a silenced tongue, the interpreter of a historical event, La Virgen de Guadalupe is a silenced Mother. Both at the intersection of a phallogocentric discourse of national narrative in which women are to be silenced, seen, acted upon and inscribed as the Chingadas, whose bastard children are to find shelter in the arms of La Virgen through a process of re-ethnification, merging and reconciliation between a conquered people and that one that finds union. Yet, it is imperative to understand that the machismo undergone by Chicanas “is the result of hierarchical male dominance. The Anglo, feeling inadequate and inferior and powerless, displaces or transfers these feelings to the Chicano by shaming him. In the Gringo world, the Chicano suffers

from excessive humility and self-effacement, shame of self and self-deprecation” (Anzaldúa 1987c, 83).

But the fact was that the Empire was divided: the Cholulans against the Tlaxcalans, the Aztecs; and the relationship between Cortés and Doña Marina is seen as a tender love affair, a passion born out of a gratuitous encounter, rather than that of being another part of a conquest where, for the most part, women are put into servitude, be it sexually or domestically. This, together with the reality of internal division and dissent found within the territory, made for an easy conquest, tactic and strategy.

The sense of self and self knowledge can be acquired in many ways, but here, I would maintain, that for a people the border, the line in the sand, is there to be consciously questioned and is an essential element in this process. As the *mestiza* in transition towards a new consciousness, the demands are up:

Though we “understand” the root causes of male hatred and fear, and the subsequent wounding of women, we do not excuse, we do not condone, and will no longer put up with it. From the men of our race, we demand the admission /acknowledgment/ disclosure/ testimony that they wound us, violate us, are afraid of us and of our power. We need them to say they will begin to eliminate their hurtful put-down ways. But more than the words, we

demand acts. We say to them: We will develop equal power with you and those who have shamed us. (Anzaldúa 1987c, 84)

Then, it is time for reconstruction, for finding the lost voices, reclaiming new beginnings on the grounds of a common dialogue, of recognition and respect. It is time for a new subjectivity, a multifarious subjectivity loaded with the pack of openness, flexibility, creativity, constant renewal and eclecticism, as dogmatism is a prescription for disastrous narcissisms. For those of us who don't love walls, who want to speak our bodies and be treated with love and understanding, those of us let us rise up, never to go back to the Aristotelian dark caves and be proud of our past, where wisdom comes in dreams, not in books.

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