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Aliendigenismo
Traveling to other dimensions with Rancho Shampoo

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

Guillermo Miguel Estrada

Committee in charge:

Professor Ruben Ortiz Torres, Chair
Professor Anya Gallacio, Co-Chair
Professor Brian Cross
Professor Shelley Streeby
Professor Michael J. Trigilio

2020

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Co chair

Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

This research study is dedicated to:

All Pluridimensional People

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Aliendigenismo
Traveling to other dimensions with Rancho Shampoo

by

Guillermo Miguel Estrada

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Ruben Ortiz Torres, Chair
Professor Anya Gallaccio, Co-Chair

This is a work of auto-historia. I made a reflect on the processes of my life taking into account the people around me and those who are no longer among us. This investigation it is an exercise in exploring limits and regions that has led me to the paths of fiction and identity.

Yes, cultural roots are important, but I was not born at Tenochitlán in the ancient past nor in an Aztec village in modern times. I was born and live in that in-between space, nepantla, the borderlands. There are other races running in my veins, other cultures that my body lives in and out of, and a white man who constantly whispers inside my skull.
Gloria Anzaldúa, "Border Art", 185

Where it all began.

"Sometimes I would like to explain everything in detail but I think that the future in these limits is not written. There is no understanding of where we come from and where we are going. I would also like to believe that." This is what I (Guillermo/Memo) imagine John Connor the leader of the resistance in Terminator 2¹ would say about limits and regions; but this is my version to explain Aliendigenism in my environment.

I am from the city of Tecate, Baja California. This city is considered the belly button of California because it is right in the middle and between Alta and Baja California. My name is Guillermo Miguel Estrada Cosio, and I am also known as ***Memo Navajas***. I was born on the 5th of February, 1979. Ever since I was in my mother's womb, I want to believe that I have been an "Alien"². I just never realized it until present day, forty years later. The first thing I should mention is that in May 2013, I sent my request to become a legal citizen to the US Government. Before, visas or passports were not needed to cross into the United States, gradually as the country grew, laws were applied to cross or travel to U.S territory, In my case had tourist and B1/B2³ travel visas to be on this side.

¹ Terminator 2, the first movie I saw in cinema

² Alien is: foreigner, extraterrestrial, stranger or outsider.

³ Until before 1875, immigration to the United States was not regulated. 1 In 1875, the Act of March 3 was passed, the first immigration law that excluded the entry of undesirable aliens (criminals and prostitutes). Beginning in 1880, racist campaigns against Asians led to the approval of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (effective until 1943), 2 which ordered, among other things, the suspension of immigration of Chinese workers and the deportation of all Chinese with irregular stay in the country. In 1885, the Act of February 26 prohibited the immigration of foreigners with employment contracts arranged before their immigration. Temporary residents and their servants, actors, artists, teachers, domestic workers, and skilled workers in an industry not yet established in the United States were excepted. In 1888, the Act of October 19 ordered the expulsion, even up to a year after his arrival, of all foreigners who had immigrated irregularly with a previously arranged employment contract

When I got the notification that I had been accepted, I got the following notice, along with an *Alien Registration Number*:

The image shows a portion of a government application form. At the top, there is a box with the text: "To be completed by an Attorney or BIA-accredited Representative, if any" and a checkbox labeled "Check the box if Form G-28 is attached to represent the petitioner". Below this is a field for "Attorney State License Number:". The main section is titled "Part I. Information About You, the Conditional Resident" and includes instructions: "START HERE - Type or print in black ink." The form contains several fields for personal information: 1.a. Family Name (Last Name) with the value "ESTRADA COSIO"; 1.b. Given Name (First Name) with the value "GUILLERMO"; 1.c. Middle Name with the value "M.". There is also a section for "Other Names Used (including maiden name)" with fields 2.a. Family Name (Last Name) and 2.b. Given Name (First Name), both containing "ESTRADA COSIO" and "GUILLERMO" respectively. On the right side, there are fields for: 7. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) with the value "A- 204-791-799"; 8. U.S. Social Security Number (if any) with a redacted value; 9. Daytime Phone Number with the value "(619) 672-8178"; and 10. E-Mail Address (if any) with the value "estrada.cosio@gmail.com".

Figure 1: Excerpt from the copy of my application to reside in the United States. 2017. Copyright Owner

I thought that after having a tourist visa for so long, that being considered an *alien* was great. That same year, in 2013, I got my legal residence and in 2016 I stopped being an *alien* and became an American citizen, which I found less attractive because it meant that I was no longer an *alien*. In 2017 I enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts program in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego. A requirement for the program was to create an individual show, in the first year. The *First Year Review*. This show took place in May 2018 and I presented my project Rancho Shampoo (RS).

RS is a fictional character inspired by my grandfather but I do not remember if he was from my creation or only appeared in my imagination, he is a very ambiguous character that haunts my head, but I have seen him walk in dreams and in my reality. Many people have been able to greet him and take a photo with him, I still do not want to

do this exercise with the intention of seeing or shaking his hand.. The character is able to travel across the cosmos and to bring back to earth information regarding his ‘*Rayovac Ancestors*’⁴, which can be interpreted from different angles and personal perspectives. After seeing this show, which was titled *Behind the Cosmos* (2018), my great friend *El Chino* had a revelation, an epiphany in which he saw the word ‘*Aliendígena*’ come to light for the first time. From this moment on, it is I, Guillermo Estrada, who had, continue to have and will keep on having the responsibility of explaining what ‘*Aliendigenismo*’ is. This is where it all begins.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis project is based on the concepts of “*autohistoria*” and “*autohistoria-teoría*” by Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa practiced these concepts in her writings, and explained them in the preface of her book *Light in the dark = Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (2015) as following:

Conectando experiencias personales con realidades sociales results in autohistoria, and theorizing about this activity results in autohistoria-teoría. It’s a way of inventing and making knowledge, meaning, and identity through self-inscriptions. By making certain personal experiences the subject of this study, I also blur the private/public borders.⁵

By making RS and Guillermo Estrada coexist in the same space and in the same body, both through my artwork and in this thesis, I am also erasing the limits that are both private/public and real/imaginary. How do you make fiction become a reality? How

⁴ In *aliendígena* mythology, it is the name given to people that have passed away and are living behind the cosmos. Their faces float in natural gas

⁵ Gloria Anzaldúa, “Preface,” in AnaLouise Keating (coord.) *Light in the dark = Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, Durham and London: Duke University, 2015, 6.

to unite two communities that know nothing of each other, separated by the border? How can a human inspire a non-human? How can a fictitious character bring myths to reality? Such questions I aim to answer in this thesis.

Through the exercise of auto-historia (Chapter I) and the use of Interview (Chapter II) I will explore, from my own experience and self-reflexion, why is it that '*Aliendigenismo*' is so important to this region: Baja California (Mexico) and California (USA).

For Anzaldúa, the interview is a writing process, an oral writing process. She explains how through this process she discovers things about herself:

It's so rare that we listen to each other. The interviewee and the interviewer are sort of a captive audience to each other. I like to do one-on-one talks because I discover things about myself, I make new connections between ideas just like I do in my writing. Interviews are part of communicating, which is part of writing, which is part of life. So I like to do them.⁶

In this thesis, the Interview functions as a tool to both listen to myself and listen to Rancho Shampoo. To discover more about us, '*Aliendigenismo*' and the '*Aliendígena*' being. '*Aliendigenismo*' and '*Aliendígena*' are composite words. I will further expand on what is and who is an '*Aliendígena*' in Chapter II. I will take on a journey through *auto-historia* and the interview to know more about Rancho Shampoo, who is the main focus of this thesis. He lives on both, the limits of planet earth and fiction. RS is also the first '*Aliendígena*' to really understand '*Aliendigenismo*'.

⁶ Cited in AnaLouise Keating, "Risking the Personal. An Introduction," *Interviews/Entrevistas/Gloria Anzaldúa*, London, New York: Routledge, 2000, 3.

CHAPTER I

In this chapter I will elaborate on my own *autohistoria*. Where these life experiences have taken me to, in both, real and abstract dimensions. My creative process, the knowledge I hold, and my working situation, all have been greatly impacted by the relationship I have to the regions and limits that exist between the United States and Mexico. It is also important to note the presence of friends and family. Without all of these interactions, it would be impossible to reach these real and imaginary places that have materialized throughout the years.

Anzaldúa's concept of *autohistoria* is briefly explained in the "Glossary", written for *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (2009). There, AnaLouise Keating writes: "*Autohistoria* focuses on the personal life story but, as the autohistorian tells her own life story, she simultaneously tells the life stories of others."⁷ This brief explanation seems pertinent and accurate in relation to my own thesis, since I consider that life experiences, both, collectively and individually lived, bring us to new spaces of exploration that weave and mingle as time goes by. In Anzaldúa's conception of *autohistoria-teoría*

[w]riters of *autohistoria-teoría* blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and/or other forms of theorizing. By so doing, they create interwoven individual and collective identities. Personal experiences—revised and in other ways redrawn—become a lens with which to reread and rewrite existing cultural stories.⁸

⁷ AnaLouise Keating, "Appendix1: Glossary," *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, 319.

⁸ AnaLouise Keating, "Appendix1: Glossary," *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, 319.

To me, *Autohistoria-teoría* is an extraordinary exercise that allows for mental wandering, crossing the limits of our own mind, of our own universe. In this way alternate myths and legends can be created, realities and fictions where other individuals converge, some of whom are real and/or some fictitious, and you can travel in and out of these worlds seamlessly. How do these personal stories affect the present? Where am I going? Where am I coming from? Who is here? Who isn't here? Can I travel across the cosmos? Why do I see them in my dreams? My family? My friends? My 'Rayovac Ancestors'? Are maps and dimensions one and the same, or are they different?

In the section named *Auto-historia I: Grandfather and Cosmos* I will talk about the relationship I had with my grandfather; the experiences I had with him, which are very fresh in my memory. How they developed and why they are still so present through this fiction character called Rancho Shampoo (RS), who has helped me, Guillermo Estrada, to understand the importance of 'Aliendigenismo'. To put it clearly; within this fictional, I see Rancho Shampoo as my very own Juan Matus.⁹ RS explains, teaches and guides me as I navigate to other dimensions, he accompanies me over the limits of this Earth and the cosmos. This way, I can see the limits of this region pluridimensionally, from Earth, the cosmos and the underground.

In the section titled *Auto-historia II: Nepantla – Jobs, Studies and Art*, I will talk about how my job, studies and art are interconnected and mixed. These three areas have

⁹ Juan Matus was a Yaqui, and the guide and shaman of Carlos Castaneda, a Peruvian writer and anthropologist who wrote *Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan: una forma Yaqui de conocimiento* [*The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*], Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

been foundational in my way of life so that this universe can exist. Within my life they all depend on each other, and they are also connected in the *autohistoria* I will develop in the following pages. Why do I want to get a job? Do I need money? Do I really want to study? Do I want to learn? Do I want to understand? Do I already know what art is? What is art? Do I want to continue in the maintenance business to make money? Do I want money? I don't care about money... or do I? I'll just build a tunnel and throw myself in.

Auto-historia I: Grandfather and Cosmos

If one looks beyond the obvious, one sees connections to the spirit world, to the underworld, and to other realities.
Gloria Anzaldúa, "Border Art", 179

My name is Guillermo because that was the name of my maternal Grandfather, and Miguel because that was the name of my paternal Grandfather; I never knew my paternal grandfather, but he knew me. As a child I was much closer to my mother's side of the family, a traditional cowboy family. When my maternal grandfather Guillermo Cosio Sotelo (who inspired this research) found out that I was going to be named Guillermo, just like him, he was excited because I was the first of his grandchildren to bear his name.

I remember that one of the activities my grandfather excelled at was masonry. I saw him building a concrete wall in my house or making a floor out of cement in my uncle's house in Tijuana. He worked in the orange groves; he sold firewood for old

stoves. (At that time the houses outside the city had wood burning stoves. There wasn't any gas service in those areas). He built his own home; the house where I lived for many years before coming to the United States. I lived through so much with him, but I never thought he was really an "Indio" or that he had actually been born on the Kumiai reservation in Campo, California (20 minutes from Tecate). He passed away when I was 16. It was a complicated time for me, but death happens to all of us.

After my grandfather passed, I kept hearing about how he had been born in, and was part of the Kumiai community. I didn't pay attention to any of that, until years later when my family showed me my grandfather's birth certificate. To my astonishment, it actually said he was born on the Campo Indian Reservation in California.

8-25-75		DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS SPACE FOR STATE REGISTRAR ONLY			
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	A	TYPE	BY WHOM ISSUED AND SIGNED	DATE ISSUED	DATE ORIGINAL MADE
	B	Baptismal cert., Holy Trinity Church, El Cajon, Calif.		10-6-75	2-25-28
	C				
EVIDENCE AS STATED IN DOCUMENTS	A	BIRTHDATE OR AGE	BIRTHPLACE	NAME OF FATHER	M Maiden Name of MOTHER
	B	5-4-27	Campo Indian Reservation, CA.	Guillermo Cosio	Adela Sotelo
	C				
STATE REGISTRAR	I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT NO PRIOR CERTIFICATE HAS BEEN FOUND ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE FOR THE ABOVE REGISTRAND, THE EVIDENCE HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND SAID EVIDENCE SUBSTANTIATES THE FACTS AS SET FORTH IN THE FOREGOING ABSTRACT			OFFICE OF STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS OFFICE OF THE STATE REGISTRAR	BY: P. PAUL L. SHIELDS, CHIEF Vital Statistics Section
	STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, OFFICE OF THE STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS			DATE FILED NOV 21 1975	(REV. 7-73) FORM VS-05

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Ernest J. Scarborough

Figure 2: Excerpt from the copy of my grandfather's birth certificate. Copyright. Owner.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
ASSESSOR/RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

9012

178007 **DELAYED REGISTRATION OF BIRTH** 27 002806

STATE BIRTH CERTIFICATE NUMBER			
1. FIRST NAME <i>Guillermo</i>	10. MIDDLE NAME <i>Sotelo</i>	11. LAST NAME (AT TIME OF BIRTH) <i>Cosio</i>	
2. SEX <i>Male</i>	3. DATE OF BIRTH-MONTH, DAY, YEAR <i>May 4, 1927</i>	4. NAME OF PHYSICIAN (OR OTHER PERSON ATTENDING THIS BIRTH) <i>Born at Home</i>	
5. PLACE OF BIRTH-NAME OF HOSPITAL <i>1212 Campo Indian Reservation</i>	5a. CITY OR TOWN	5b. COUNTY AND STATE <i>San Diego Calif.</i>	
6a. FIRST NAME OF MOTHER <i>Adela</i>	6b. MIDDLE NAME <i>Hope</i>	6c. LAST NAME (MAY BE NAME) <i>Sotelo</i>	
7. BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY) <i>Sierra Juarez Baja CA</i>	8. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF MOTHER <i>none</i>	9. COLOR OR RACE OF MOTHER <i>Mexican</i>	
10a. FIRST NAME OF FATHER <i>Guillermo</i>	10b. MIDDLE NAME <i>Seseda</i>	10c. LAST NAME <i>Cosio</i>	
11. BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY) <i>San Diego Baja Calif.</i>	12. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF FATHER <i>none</i>	13. COLOR OR RACE OF FATHER <i>Mexican</i>	
14. I HEREBY CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT AND THAT I HAD PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THIS BIRTH AT THE TIME OF OCCURRENCE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON: <i>Guillermo Cosio</i>			
15. DATE SIGNED <i>8-11-75</i>		17. ADDRESS OF APPLICANT (STREET, CITY, STATE) <i>Rancho Cienega Redonda Tecate Baja Calif.</i>	
18. SIGNATURE OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT <i>Guillermo Cosio</i>		19. RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON WHOSE NAME IS ENTERED IN ITEM 1 <i>Father</i>	20. AGE OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT <i>78 yrs</i>
21. DATE SIGNED <i>8-11-75</i>		22. ADDRESS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT (STREET, CITY, STATE) <i>Rancho Cienega Redonda Tecate B.C.</i>	
23. I HEREBY CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT AND THAT I HAD PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THIS BIRTH AT THE TIME OF OCCURRENCE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON: <i>UDEL</i>			
24. SIGNATURE OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT <i>UDEL</i>		25. RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON WHOSE NAME IS ENTERED IN ITEM 1 <i>UDEL</i>	26. AGE OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT <i>67</i>
27. DATE SIGNED <i>8-25-75</i>		28. ADDRESS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE AFFIDAVIT (STREET, CITY, STATE) <i>Rancho Escondido Tecate Baja Calif. Mexico</i>	
<small>DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS SPACE FOR STATE REGISTRAR ONLY</small>			
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	A. TYPE <i>Baptismal cert., Holy Trinity Church, El Cajon, Calif.</i>		BY WHOM ISSUED AND SIGNED <i>10-6-75</i>
	B. DATE ISSUED		DATE ORIGINAL MADE <i>2-25-28</i>
	C. DATE FILED		
EVIDENCE AS STATED IN DOCUMENTS	A. BIRTHDATE OR AGE <i>5-4-27</i>		BIRTHPLACE <i>Campo Indian Reservation, CA</i>
	B. NAME OF FATHER <i>Guillermo Cosio</i>		MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <i>Adela Sotelo</i>
	C. DATE FILED		
STATE REGISTRAR		OFFICE OF STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS OFFICE OF THE STATE REGISTRAR - BY: DEPT. L. SHEPDS, CHIEF OF VITAL STATISTICS	
STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - OFFICE OF THE STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS		DATE FILED NOV 21 1975 <small>(REV. 7-73 FORM 95-05)</small>	

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Ernest J. Dronenburg, Jr.

May 17, 2011 Ernest J. Dronenburg, Jr.
Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk

This copy is not valid unless prepared on an engraved border displaying date, seal and signature of the Recorder/County Clerk

* 003033062 *

Figure 2.1: Copy of my grandfather's birth certificate. Copyright. Owner.

After finding out about this, it became something I would be turning over in my head for years. I felt so guilty about not believing him. More so because I could no longer see him and ask him about all of it in person. I had to seek an alternative.

In August 2005, I went on a trip with my parents to Utah to visit some uncles on my father's family side. On our way back we stopped at *Bryce Canyon*, which is somewhere between Utah and Las Vegas. There was a Native American gift shop: wooden keychains with eagles on them, posters, taxidermy, leather jackets, instruments such as maracas, whistles and drums among other things. I remember I had 35 dollars with me and I bought a wooden flute and a CD of a Native American flautist named Carlos Nakai. I was 26 years old at the time and I started to reconnect with my grandfather. I remember listening to that record a lot and trying to replicate the sounds with the flute. I would even play the flute at parties I would throw in my house, just to bug my friends. I knew the sound would be too much for them.

In 2009, my mother, Romelia Cosio Villavicencio treated me with my first *Mac Book Pro*, as a way to encourage me to finish my History degree (I had completed my courses in 2005, but had not finished by thesis project.) My mother is an evangelical Christian. When I was 5 my mother started going to church, and I went with her. It was at this time that I started to take on music. I practiced ear training in the church. When I turned 15 I stopped going to church. In 2009, with my new *Mac Book Pro*, I started to experiment with GarageBand, a recording software that comes with the computer. It's a

basic music production program that allows you to play music, record sounds and make loops.

Two years later, in 2011, my first EP “*Apache Mudo*” came out. This was also the first time that I used the name Rancho Shampoo. I felt great because in my own world, I thought this was something I gave to my grandfather in return for all he taught me. In my own dream, in my own fiction, I thought of it as a way where my grandfather and I reconnected. As I moved on with my creative work I started to believe more and more in it, and my grandfather appeared to me in my dreams more and more. In one of my dreams I told him that I now believed everything he told me, but from my own reality, from my own universe. They¹⁰ say that everyone goes to heaven when they die, in some other cases they also go to hell or as I like to say to the Underground. And if you go to the underground you are only going to prove your courage in matters of fear to know what you are afraid of. It is like when you are about to sleep and you are able to detach yourself from your body; once you do, you can see how you sleep. That is the closest feeling to the Underground. All this might be possible, but I believe that when they die all people fade behind the cosmos. That’s where all the ancestors live, or as Rancho Shampoo calls them, the *Rayovac Ancestors*. I would like to see my grandfather again physically, but at this moment it’s impossible. Nevertheless, these limits are easier to cross in fiction, especially if you are an *Aliendígena*. An *Aliendígena* is capable of tracking and understanding their own paths, journeys, of crossing boundaries and understanding their own histories. If you are *Aliendígena*, you are capable of traveling to

¹⁰ When I say them, I refer to the Pentecostal Christian world in which I was raised and taught. The fear of Christianity is latent in reference to heaven and hell, that’s why when I say “they” are them.

other dimensions. I cannot travel the cosmos physically, but I can do so in fiction, in the world of Rancho Shampoo. As an *Aliendigena*, Rancho Shampoo can travel to other worlds, territories, spaces. I'm left to dream. It is in dreams where I am closer to my grandfather. I saw him last night. I dreamt of him. Maybe that is why I am very perceptive right now, maybe that's why I'm inspired. In the dream I brought him a pair of Levi's jeans. He said that he would alter them. I cried because I could hold his hand in my dream.

Auto-historia II: Nepantla – Jobs, Studies and Art

The nepantla state is the natural habitat of artists, most specifically for the mestizo border artists who partake of the traditions of two or more worlds and who may be bi-national. They thus create a new artistic space – a border mestizo culture.

Gloria Anzaldúa, "Border Art", 181

No one was born knowing everything, so you have to learn and adapt. The effect of learning is what has us here today sitting or lying in front of the computer reading from our comfort. I don't know what you went through to be here right now; or if this was your idea when the adults asked what are you going to do when you grow up ?;. In my case I did not plan anything but I am also laying here writing and reading like you. Even as the *Aliendigena* manifesto says, "The *aliendigena* uses all the physical and mental knowledge acquired during his stay in this world to develop real and fictional projects". I don't want to convince you to get on the Ship like Marshall Applewhite did in his religious sect to reach the Heavens Gate but we do take a tour of this area of limits.

Most of my life has been lived in Tecate, Baja California. It's about sixty miles south of San Diego, California where I currently reside. When I was young my cousins lived in El Cajon, California. I thought it was really interesting that they visited us in Tecate. It was as if they visited us from another world or another universe that I would never understand, beginning with the language. I had always been curious about the United States. I had always asked why we (my parents and sister) didn't live in the United States. I think my parents loved being in Tecate, Baja California too much.

I remember crossing the border in Tecate to go to El Cajon. When we had crossed it was different. It felt like another world, another dimension. My parents, uncles and grandparents would go shopping at the swap meets. I also remember crossing the border in my grandfather's 1979 Toyota pick up, standard transmission, brown with a cream colored stripe, plus a camper in the back. All these memories started to shape the idea of another world or dimension, which I wanted to be a part of.

When I was in High School, I had lot of different jobs in Tecate: I worked at a factory that produced coupons that would offer certain discounts at stores; I washed cars or worked in factories that produced furniture. I was a construction worker or I sold food with my mother. I had a lot of other jobs that I can't recall. They all helped me to make my living and to understand the value of work. This is what my parents wanted me to understand, the value of work. From age 15 to 18, I was in an experimental phase, which my parents didn't appreciate. I had acquaintances that would encourage me to do some "good" and some "bad" things. These experiences were important as I got to know

different perspectives from the ones I got to know as an Evangelical Christian. It was important for me to get to know the world outside of Christianity.

Before going to College in Tijuana, my parents asked me if I really wanted to study. Going to college was too much for them, as no one in my family had ever graduated. They thought it would be the same for me. After gaining all that work experience in my adolescence, I knew that I didn't want to spend my life working those back breaking menial jobs that only provided a minimum wage, enough to cover the bare essentials: "I need to study so I don't end up like some of my friends that had already left school to make money."

In 1999 I started my studies in History at the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* in Tijuana. Two years later, my parents decided to immigrate to the United States. Before that, we had always been able to go back and forth with a tourist visa. When my parents left, I stayed in Tecate. I had to find a way to cover my travel and food expenses if I wanted to finish college. It was my trial by fire.

My father, Juan Miguel Estrada Garcia, began working in El Cajon, California in an apartment complex as a Superintendent. My father told me that if I wanted to work on the weekends or during vacation, that there was a job that would pay me fifty dollars a day. I wouldn't earn that working all week in Tecate. I quickly said yes. I started working by throwing out garbage and tearing down old kitchens to replace them with new ones. When there wasn't work to do at the complex, I would go to work with my uncle José

Alcaraz, laying out carpets for a company called *Carpetería* (currently *Carpet One*), located in Miramar. My uncle still lays out carpets.

During this time in 2003, till the moment of my graduation in 2005, I was traveling in a triangle, if you can call it that. I would go from Tecate to Tijuana, from Tijuana to Tecate and from Tecate to El Cajon, California. It was a situation where I had one foot firmly placed in Academia and another in physical labor. I felt great that I was able to be in both worlds, in both dimensions, in both realities.

Without knowing it, I was living in the state of *neplanta*, a náhuatl word which means “in between”. Gloria Anzaldúa explains: “Art and la frontera intersect in a liminal space where border people, especially artists, live in a state of ‘nepantla’.”¹¹ For Anzaldúa, *nepantla* is a place on the border, a space of resistance, of disruption, a state of survival from where one reconfigures fragments and creates new ones. In Anzaldúa’s own words:

The border is in a constant *nepantla* state and it is an analog of the planet. This is why the borderline is a persistent metaphor in *el arte de la frontera*, an art that deals with such themes of identity, border crossings, and hybrid imagery. ... Border art is an art that supersedes the pictorial. It depicts both the soul of the artist and the soul of the pueblo. It deals with who tells the stories and what stories and histories are told. I call this form of visual narrative *autohistorias*. This form goes beyond the traditional self-portrait or auto-biography; in telling the writer/artist's

¹¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, “Border art,” en AnaLouise Keating (coord.), *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, 180.

personal story, it also includes the artist's cultural history.¹²

My personal history, as well as my cultural history, reveals itself as I cross the limits of this region. After graduating in 2005, I decided I no longer wanted to study. Back then my idea was to have a well payed job. I started working in maintenance in El Cajon, California. I was coming and going from Tecate to El Cajon until I moved into a studio apartment in La Mesa, California. There I met Chuy Zapata and his brother Alex. They were both immigrants from Mexico City. Alex thought me how to work with cement while I helped him laying out floors. We did several jobs, including some concrete stairs. It was a fun time. I had completely forgotten about school. I was learning new things and making money. I would return to Tecate every Friday and spend all my money on parties.

Alex Zapata returned to Mexico City, and I remained in charge of all the heavy masonry work. At the end of 2005, my uncle *Perro Raleigh* arrived in El Cajon. I needed help with the masonry and who better than my uncle, who knew much more than I did. He taught me a few tricks to improve the laying paving, creating structures and even affixing stones to the facade of apartment buildings. In 2006 we were offered work in Escondido, California, so we went there to live. We would do remodeling and painting jobs, we would even stick rocks together to simulate fencing. That was the best period I spent with my uncle. A lot of what I know about working with concrete is thanks to him.

¹² Gloria Anzaldúa, "Border art," en AnaLouise Keating (coord.), *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, 181 y 183.

When the work dried up, there was not much to do so I returned to live in Tecate. From 2007 and 2009 I worked as an assistant to an artist named Laura Castanedo. It was a clash of realities. I had never held an office job. I would have preferred to have worked in construction. The great thing about that job was getting to meet people from the art world. I started to think that working in the arts might be a good choice for me. In early 2009, my friend Cristian Franco Martin, who is from Tecate but resides in Guadalajara, suggested I should spend some time in Guadalajara, Jalisco. I went there for a few months and met several artists: Emanuel Tovar Andrade, Edgar Cobian, Lorena Peña Brito, Susana Rodriguez, Cinthia Gutiérrez, Ana Alcantar, Maria Larios, Felipe Manzano, Rubén Mendez, Diego Martínez, among others. They struggled to make art. They inspired me to find my own path.

At the end of 2009, I was back in Tecate and decided to take up video production. The *Univerisdad Autónoma de Baja California* had started a program where doing a video thesis was an option to earn a degree in the History department. And so I did. My work was called “*El Moro de Cumpas: Registro de la memoria colectiva en Baja California*”, which was an interview-based video piece. I was always supported by my thesis advisor and now friend Mario Alberto Magaña Mancillas—currently a researcher at the *Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales del Museo* in Mexicali Baja California. This is how Mexicali came to be my base of operations. I remember I would travel from Tecate to Mexicali to produce, I would go to Tijuana to take care of paperwork, and I would go to get jobs in El Cajon to fund my video thesis. That’s how I spent a year of my life, until 2011 when I got my degree. I was the first historian to graduate with a video

thesis at the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California*. At that time, this was an unimaginable accomplishment for me.

Going back a bit, in 2008, Cristian Franco Martin invited me to take part in his new performance project called “*Los Nuevos Maevans*” along with Julián González and Hernán Franco. All of them *carnales*. Suddenly, I found myself inserted into the underground music scene, directly plugged onto the stage. I met people whom I consider to be the best music producers in Baja California. People like FAX (Rubén Alonso Tamayo) and Maniquí Lazer (Rodo Ibarra, Jung Sing, Valentin Torres). At the beginning, it was hard for me to understand the idea of performance, but I decided to do it anyway. In 2010 I almost left everything art related in order to get a job working for the city of Tecate. Thanks to Cristian Franco’s insistence, I joined in a tour called *Aplastados por la Fe*, going to the cities of Guadalajara Jalisco, Leon Guanajuato and Mexico City. I always joke that I want to write a book called: “From Christianity to Politics, and from Politics to Punk.”

Going back to 2011 during the time of my History degree, I was experimenting with music software that came pre-installed in my computer. I would record the sounds I made with the flute I had purchased in 2005. Sometimes I would record voices. Eventually, that led me to record my EP *Apache Mudo*, then the indie label *Indian Gold Records*, led by Valentin Torres and Rodo Ibarra, released it. How did these things happen? It was a little virtual production I did in my little house in Tecate. For all this to get done, I had to continue working in the United States. I had to generate money to

finance these projects. The money came from maintenance jobs and apartment remodeling. I would use my tourist visa to go from Tecate to El Cajon, sometimes from El Cajon to Mexicali, crossing through Calexico.

By 2013, I started new music and video projects. That was the year I applied for legal residence in the United States, so I had to be much more careful with everything I was doing. I made a documentary called “*Gobernar es Coordinar: Milton Castellanos 1971 -1977*”. It was about a reconstruction period in Baja California during the administration of Governor Milton Castellanos Everardo. The new Rancho Shampoo record, again an EP, was titled “*El vuelo del Golondrino*”, which was suggested to me by my friend Christian Fernández—current director of the Institute of Cultural investigations of UABC’s museum in Mexicali. For both of these projects to come to fruition, I had to assemble a group of friends into collaboration. Julian González did all the visuals; Rubén Alonso Tamayo (FAX) helped me with the audio, teaching me the basics of *Ableton Live*. By 2015 we had issued a third EP called *Alberca de Lava*, all the while supporting myself working in maintenance and apartment remodeling, while legally residing in San Diego. In 2018, our latest EP came out, titled “*Detrás del Cosmos*”. This was done in collaboration with dear friends like David Bautista Toledo, Rubén Alonso Tamayo, Cristian Franco, Polo Vega, Valentin Torres, Hernán Franco, Julián González, Rodo Ibarra, together with *Static Discos*, a label based in Tijuana headed by Ejival. For this project I used my wages as a UCSD employee. I’ve never left my maintenance and remodeling job in San Diego. I currently work as a Teacher’s Assistant at UCSD, I am a manager at Glainere Apartaments and continue working maintenance at the apartments

owned by Jim Nicholas at 4960 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard 92117, in San Diego, California.

CHAPTER II INTERVIEWS I+II

- *Interviewing people does not always lead to the truth in history.*¹³

In this chapter, through two interviews, I will have the opportunity to talk with my *alter ego*, whom I call Rancho Shampoo. This is the first time I will officially have this interaction where I, Guillermo Estrada, will be able to reflect on my other self. It's important for me to converse with him, because the ideas that have been built around him through my thoughts and memories are relevant in terms of understanding my process and the transition to *Aliendigenismo*. In an interview, Guillermo Gómez Peña is asked What has performance meant to you as your form of artistic production? and he says:

Well, performance has given me extra freedoms, freedoms that other artistic and intellectual disciplines did not offer me through performance. I allow myself to be a border crosser, to travel between multiple territories, I can be at the same time an experimental linguistic vernacular anthropologist, media pirate, activist of extreme sexuality, chronicler of my times and this possibility of exercising multiple trades allows me to resolve my permanent crisis of professional identity. Performance is also a genre in crisis and therefore it is ideal for the great crisis of our times. Performance is also iconic in the here and now and that allows us to articulate the present moment in a way that it cannot do for itself. For example, the theater or dance cannot do it.¹⁴

The main reason for the existence of my *alter ego* was to create my own spirit guide, to see my own life through a different perspective with the intention that other

¹³ Lutz, Niethammer; ¿Para qué sirve La Historia Oral? Pag. 3

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgnjMtV3-WQ>

people do the same. Being able to speak to yourself is an exercise that can take you to different places and spaces, both in the memory and in fiction. From my point of view, it is necessary to possess the ability to travel to other realities, to other worlds and other dimensions. This makes it possible for one to disconnect themselves from their own being and enter into another body. It is like detaching your own soul and launch it to the cosmos.

What follows is a conversation that encompasses biographical matters, exchanges of ideas and points of view between Rancho Shampoo and Guillermo Estrada. This encounter took place in *El Cerro Sangrado de la Panocha* in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico. The date was February 5th, 2020, on the 41st anniversary of these two beings.

In the following text, we will interact; talk and debate about work days, trips and introspective walks. To identify and/or differentiate between both characters, I will use the following Initials:

(RS) Rancho Shampoo

(GE) Guillermo Estrada

INTERVIEW I:

The Limits of Baja California/California and the Cosmos

(GE) Ever since I can remember, I've explored ideas, traditions and customs related to diverse groups and communities of people around me or somewhere close enough to establish a sort of unconscious dialogue that has now turned more professional and methodical. From a personal point of view, all the data and information mentioned in this thesis are relevant. I have talk with family and friends about history and stories related to "autohistorias", I took personal notes of travels and journeys to find out more about my roots, historical and anthropological environments that surround me.

So, after having cleared that up, please Rancho, how long have we known each other?

(RS) Guillermo, I've known you almost since your birth. You met me more recently. You think or you thought you discovered me, or rather you think you created me but the truth is I have always been by your side. Why does this happen? Because sometimes truth goes beyond fiction. You recently discovered "Aliendigenismo" without even knowing you have been an Aliendígena your whole life although you were in touch with these real and inter-dimensional limits. The first person that put you in touch with these limits was your grandfather. His work and processes were wise, but you still can't grasp why and how you are doing it.

(GE) Well, I've never really thought of it in that way, but I think you're right. I think we are in this reality where we see ourselves as photographs. I see the photograph and the photograph sees me. We get nostalgic, but on occasions we don't reflect on the other side of the photo. I think I went on a tangent with this rumination, hahaha...

(RS) Hahaha... Tell us, Guillermo: Where and when were you born?

(GE) I was born in Tecate, California on February 5th, 1979, in a small town bordering with California. Tecate is a city with a population of about 72, 860 registered residents according to a 2015 census.¹⁵ This city is surrounded by native communities (Kumiai and Pai Pai), ranches, and the cities of Tijuana, Ensenada and Mexicali. Tecate is a city that hosts an important quantity of cave painting and vestiges of the first people that settled on the peninsula.

(RS) Don't forget El Cerro de la Panocha where this journey actually began.

(GE) Alright, I won't forget, but please tell me: Why do you think the journey began there?

(RS) That's really *your* challenge: travel through time and think about your first memories, Guillermo.

(GE) Fine. One of my first memories—putting aside the photographs from the family album—took place when I was 5 years old, were the dances held at the house where my maternal grandparents lived. My grandmother, Guillermo¹⁶ Cosío Sotelo's wife, was called Maria de Jesus Villavicencio. Maria and Guillermo lived in Tecate, Baja

¹⁵ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipio_de_Tecate

¹⁶ En mi familia dicen que mi abuelo se emocionó al saber que por fin a uno de sus nietos le pondrían Guillermo.

California, on the *Primero de Mayo* neighborhood, on a street named after the same day that I was born: 5 de Febrero. In those parties there was a lot of norteño music, a lot of dancing, family, cousins and way too much beer. I remember it clearly because they always seem to end in drunken cowboy fights that happened over any little thing. All the cousins awaited the arrival of my uncle “Pancho”. He was that cool uncle we all have. The one that always brought women with him, the one that had that 1980 Black Oldsmobile Cutlass. The one that told stories that turned out to be lies. Nowadays, I remember him by the name of “*El Perro Raleigh*”.¹⁷ The usual soundtrack to these parties were old songs by “Los Alegres de Terán”, like “El Chubasco” – an anthem in most of Northern Mexico, “Los Cadetes de Linares” singing “Las tres tumbas”, or “Invasores de Nuevo León” with “El último Cartucho”.

My grandfather had a brown Toyota pick up that had a cream colored stripe. Maybe from 1979. I wouldn’t like to get that wrong, but I think that was the year. The pick up had a camper in the back. If I climbed into the camper I could use the window that faced the back to talk to the driver. My grandfather was a slow driver, really cautious. Once my father played a prank on him as my grandfather made a complete stop:

My Father: “Don Guillermo, there’s a car coming 2 kilometers ahead” (my father starts laughing).

My grandfather: “Oh! So it’s coming? You’ll see!”

My grandfather began accelerating so much that my father told him to slow down. The more my father told my grandfather to slow down, the more my grandfather would hit the gas. Now he was the one laughing.

My grandfather: “¡Ah verdad, Cabrón!”

My father never made that joke ever again.

I remember I had been grounded for doing some kind of prank and I wasn’t allowed to go anywhere. During that time, my grandfather Guillermo was living with us at our Infonavit, in Las Huertas house, in Tecate—a notorious neighborhood due to its gangs and murdered cholos. One of those days, my grandfather mentioned he was going to his house in the *Primero de Mayo* neighborhood. He asked if I wanted to come along to watch over his house and I said yes. He knew I was sad because I couldn’t go out and play or hang around with my friends. I suppose this is why he invited me. He asked my father if I could go, but he didn’t want to let me go. It took some convincing for him to allow me to go. My grandfather said: “*We’re leaving early tomorrow at five in the morning, so you have to be ready to go.*” I was nervous because I had never been out so early, nor had I ever been out walking at that hour.

¹⁷ That is how Francisco Cosío Villavicencio was named, for having traveled through the Cosmos by Aliendigenismo.

I remember that morning my grandfather woke me up because it was time to leave. I got dressed and as I opened the door I realized how cold it was at this time. It was still dark. I was regretting it but I pushed forward and left. We started walking. It was a 30 minutes walk. It seemed like forever. My grandfather asked me:

My Grandfather: “¿*Tienes frío?*” (Are you cold?)

Me: “*¡Sí!*” (Yes!)

Then he said: *¡Yo no tengo frío porque soy “Indio”!* (I don’t feel the cold because I’m an “Indio”!)

I really didn’t understand it at that moment, and I didn’t really believe him. In my imagination, at that time, an “Indio” should live in a teepee, and hunting, far away from the city. To me, my grandfather was just a cowboy. As we walked the wind grew more intense. We had to cross a river, a dried-out river covered in brush. It was very dark and I could hardly see anything. My shoes would get stuck in the sand. It felt very heavy. Maybe we only needed to cross a distance of twenty meters, but crossing that river felt like an eternity.

I remember he told me that “Indios” came from an actual community, or that they came from true blood and that gold would stick to their skin. He wore a medallion on a chain against his chest and he would say:

My grandfather: *¡Mira cómo se me queda pegada la medalla en la piel!* (Look how this medallion sticks to my skin!)

I saw how he would crouch down and the medallion would stick to his chest. I was very surprised by this as it would be impossible to happen to me. Reflecting upon it now I think that the medallion stuck to him because of sweating, the air or maybe the pressure between the body and the gold.

(RS) See how easy that was? I was there the whole time and I’ve seen everything you’re telling me.

(GE) Yes, it’s an interesting exercise. I didn’t remember a lot of things. Now I see how much of a traveler I’ve been, hahaha.

(RS) I think you’re more than a traveler, you’ve been creating your own biography, your own destiny. You’ve been forging your own destiny, your own names through these journeys and this is all due to the people around you. I want to be really honest with you, Guillermo. Without the people around you today, it would be impossible for to understand what you are doing here, what you want, where you’re going. Never forget them: your family, your friends, your brothers and sisters, your Rayovac Ancestors, including the Yeti. They’ve given you their

time, their knowledge and it's something you have to recognize. I want to ask you another question: Have you ever travelled to the Cosmos?

(GE) No, the truth is I haven't, but I would like to. I have the idea that one day God will come for us. That's because when I went with my mom to the Christian church that's what they would tell us, and that if we were good Jesus Christ would take us to heaven to see the street of gold and the oceans of crystal. But to get to heaven you would have to wait for his to come or you would have to die.

(RS) On the contrary, I think that you have traveled to the cosmos. You do that in your sleep. While sleeping are able to see and feel those who are most important to you, such as *Perro Raleigh*. Do you remember? Every time you go to sleep, it's as if you've eaten an almendroide¹⁸, which allows you to travel to other dimensions. This is why I told you not to forget the Cerro de la Panocha, where it all began.

INTERVIEW II

Aliendigenismo, the Self and the Aliendígena language

(GE) What's your name?

(RS) My name is Rancho Shampoo. It's not a common name, but it's real. I don't know why they chose that name, but I like it. Why? Because you don't know what's going on with that name. Maybe people imagine that I'm kidding, maybe they think I'm lying. Maybe they think I'm being truthful...but it is what it is and I think it's great.

(GE) When you say: "I don't know why THEY chose it." Who are They?

(RS) I'm referring to my ancestors. I'm talking about my parents. I'm talking about the people you can't see and the people you can see. I'm talking about the people, who during all this time I've been on the earth have been here to help me find my path, my goal. People call me by many names: Rancho or simply Shampoo. They call me Shaman. In certain cases they try to offend me, but I don't mind. I know that inside, in the deepest corners of their minds, they know I'm telling the truth.

(GE) It seems as though I am barely beginning to understand my purpose regarding this moment, this life, and it's thanks to the way you've taught me. What is or are your goals?

(RS) As you mention, there are several goals. One of them, perhaps the most important one, is for all of us to be capable of rediscovering our ancestors or as I call them "*Rayovac Ancestors*." They are the key to completing the *Aliendígena*

¹⁸ A hallucinogenic that grows at the foot of the Cerro de la Panocha.

loop. If I think about what I want to accomplish, it's a connection and reconnection through *Aliendigenismo* with the earth, with the cosmos and with the underworld. This with the purpose of seeing and knowing them because sometimes ideas and thoughts are inconclusive. Altars to the ancestors are great, but it's always better to be capable of seeing them. For me it's important to know what has happened since I last saw them. Where are they? What are they doing? Are they well? Why do people say we can't see them anymore? Is this sky the limit? The answer to this question is NO. This is why I want to walk in different directions. The sky is not the limit, nor is it the Cosmos or the underground. I think that I can reach beyond the Cosmos. I imagine a bright place, bathed in light...

(GE) I have several questions, but I would like to go slow. You mentioned *Aliendigenismo* and I would li... (interrupted)

(RS) You want to know about *Aliendigenismo*, right?

(GE) That's right. I've heard about it a lot lately.

(RS) I'm going to tell you because I don't think you've realized that you are an *Aliendigena*.

(GE) Maybe.

(RS) *Aliendigenismo*, is a way or channel you use to move from one place to another. You learn to see, to see and listen. Or so you can better understand, it's the way you travel to other mental and physical states. You can cross natural barriers and limits, men made barriers, spiritual, cosmic and underworld barriers. The moment you find yourself capable of crossing any earthly or mental limit, imposed by others, you are an *Aliendigena*. An *Aliendigena* is anyone who manages to understand and cross these barriers, using all the resources at their disposal.

In my case, I've been using *Aliendigenismo* with a single purpose in mind: to reconnect with my *Rayovac Ancestors*. It's similar to what you've been doing, but you haven't noticed. This is precisely why you seek me, so that I may help you. You unconsciously know I'm capable of doing this and naturally you seek help.

(GE) How do you know? Why do you think I'm searching for something?

(RS) You are not the only person, I've noticed. I see it in their faces, their need for help because they want to rediscover someone or know about someone.

(GE) Maybe you're right that I need help, because I do want to be able to see my ancestors again, or as you call them *Rayovac Ancestors*. Maybe it's not possible for me to see them now, but maybe in the future. The person I would love to see most of all is my grandfather. He always told me stories, but the most important one was about how he was born in the Kumiai community in Campo, California. That's really important to me.

(RS) Coincidentally, I just visited that community a few months ago. I met my friend Tim Cuero there. I am also searching for a *Rayovac Ancestor* and a *Perro Raleigh*. We have a lot in common, hahaha, but I think that the best way to find them is through their portal to the cosmos. I think that you should dare to embrace *Aliendigenismo*, become an *Aliendigena* without fear and face these hidden doubts head-on.

(GE) Why can't I see your face?

(RS) What need do you have to see my face? What good would it do for you and others to see a face? You and everyone else can project any face they want.

(GE) So I could potentially project my grandfather's face and you would be him, right?

(RS) That would be very easy, too easy. It would be like an *Aliendigenismo* hologram. If that's what you want, go ahead! But my advice is that you should be more in tune with the different dimensions of reality, such as dreams, fiction, underground, cosmos, the mind. You should do what you have to in order to really see your *Rayovac Ancestors*. Travel the cosmos, travel to the underworld after you've eaten the almendroide before bed. There you will find the answers and realities you really want. Do it without fear!

Guillermo! My advice to you is that you start looking into all that you have learnt and do a construction or reconstruction of what you know. Do your own interpretation of *Aliendigenismo*. You already are an *Aliendigena*. Do it! *Hazlo!* Build maps, make sculptures, create paintings, murals, installations, anything you can think of related to your own journeys, your own identity, your own way of seeing things. Involve your family, your friends who are now your sibilings. Once you experiment and do all this, you will know everything we've been talking about regarding *Aliendigenismo*, and you will see without even noticing it, that you have traveled to other dimensions.

(GE) Of course I will! I'll do it! Thank you, Rancho Shampoo. One final question: When will I find my ancestors? How do I communicate with them?

(RS) That's very easy. I'll leave you with a table of examples in three languages you must master. It's very simple, don't worry.

Table 1. Table and examples of Spanish, English and Aliendígena language

<i>Español</i>	<i>English</i>
¿Cómo te llamas?	¿What's your name?
¿Dónde naciste?	¿Where were you born?
¿De dónde vienes en este momento?	¿Where are coming from at this moment?
¿Qué Buscas?	¿What are you looking for?
¿Por qué no te podemos ver la cara?	¿Why can't we see your face?
¿Qué es el Aliendigenismo para ti?	¿What doesAliendigenismo mean to you?
¿Quiénes son tus amigos o familiares?	¿Who are your friends or relatives?

<i>Aliendígena Language</i>
¿Koh-Moh Ya-Mah?
¿Dohn-deh Nha-Sees-tek?
¿Deh Dohn-Deh Beh-ees?
¿Keh Boos-Khas?
¿Pohr Khe Noh Po-Dher Bher Kah-Rah?
¿Khe Alien-dígenismo Pah Rah Thi?
¿Kyeh-Nehs Sohn Ah-Mee-Go e Fuh-Milh-Yur?

(GE) Wow! Fantastic! Thank you, very much! I think things are much clearer now. There is direction and a purpose. I know what I must do. I'm sure we will see each other again, but for now... THANK YOU!

(RS) Noh Proh-bleema. Teh veho phrontho.

CONCLUSION

But the text will be different with each reader and each reading. The text will move and reveal something new every time you read it. If you read *Borderlands*, for example, ten years from now you will have a different identity and therefore will give it a different interpretation. You will be positioned in a different space, a different location, and you'll be thinking from that new bedrock-you will have a different perspective.

Gloria Anzaldúa, "On the Process of Writing *Borderlands / La Frontera*," 190

I consider it very interesting when Gloria Anzaldúa mentions that the understanding of her work on the borderlands will change over time, depending on who is reading it. Anzaldúa clarifies that these "borderlands are not particularly to the Southwest. In fact, the *Borderlands* are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."¹⁹ This speaks of a constant change, because the physical borders between Southwest Texas and Mexico, as well as people's psychological, sexual, and spiritual boundaries, will change as time goes by.

Temporality is very important to me and with the passage of time my perspective on the border has changed. Since I began working on this project I no longer think of the limits of the region where I live merely as borders. I see these limits as pluridimensional spaces in which an infinite of ideas and projects are born. From my point of view, borders can no longer be seen only as sites of control and power, where governments impose a series of rules that affect the freedom of movement of people and their activities. Borders

¹⁹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007, p. 19.

should be seen as spaces or regions around where more ideas can be kneaded, as if we were kneading the dough for flour tortillas. I am interested in the exchange and intertwining of new identities, realities and fictions that may foster other forms of creation and thought, starting from these three key concepts: 1) auto-historia; dealing with personal and collective histories, 2) limits and regions (physical, emotional, and spiritual) and 3) fiction (imagination, myths, legends). These three concepts have led the development of my recent work.

Building on Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of auto-historia,²⁰ I came to understand that through artistic practice it is possible to create narratives based on personal histories, which simultaneously tell the stories of the people who become entangled in the life that we live. It is important for me to reflect on self-awareness; that we get to know that all that surrounds us has a purpose. We have to go deeper into our own thoughts, talk to ourselves, really get to see and listen to the people and the spirits that envelop us, such as: family, friends, those who are not here, those who are also here but who float in the air. Having taken this first rounds into auto-historia, has led me to conceptualize the definitions of *Aliendígena* and *Aliendigenismo*.

Aliendígena and *aliendigenismo* are concepts that I coined based on words from two languages: English and Spanish. These languages refer to two supposedly different realities, however, they coexist in the same space and often overlap. *Aliendígena* also combines two seemingly opposite terms: alien and *indígena* (indigenous in Spanish).

²⁰ AnaLouise Keating, "Appendix 1: Glossary," *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009, 319.

Reflecting on the conversations I had with my grandfather and my experience of migrating to the United States, I realized that these two identities could be connected, and thus create other meanings in people's lives. After proving that he was born on the Campo reservation, of the Kumeyayy community, in California, my grandfather got a dual nationality (Mexican-American). Decades later I was an "alien" in the USA. My immigration status and my grandfather's ethnicity allowed us to easily move across both sides of the border.

The realities and identities that define people as Mexican, American, Mexican-American, Pocho, Chicano, or Gringo have undoubtedly influenced my work. Here it is important to mention the work that Guillermo Gómez Peña has produced based on these very realities and identities. Since his migration from Mexico City to California in 1978 at the age of 23—a year earlier Gloria Anzaldúa had moved from the Texas borderlands to San Francisco, in California—his performances have addressed precisely these issues. Gómez Peña describes his artistic practice as chronicling his life; writing and embodying ideas²¹. In this I partially agree with him. However, it seems to me that Gómez Peña is too much of a protagonist in his own pieces, and I am not interested in developing something like this in my work. I admit that I have not had enough time to develop a critical comparison between my practice and his. One of the things that changed through working on my final project is that I no longer feel Mexican, and I don't feel Baja Californian either; I do not feel Tecatense; I don't feel American; I don't feel Californian; I don't feel like an immigrant. Neither am I Chicano or Pocho, nor am I *fronterizo*. Now I

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xQu88m6MXU&t=183s>, Guillermo Gomez Peña, Dresher conversation, 0:42, 2016.

refuse to refer to people as *fronterizas* just because they live on the edge of two realities. As I said before, I propose to imagine the border beyond the social problems derived from a power and control structure imposed on people. That is why I do not include topics such as the border wall or drug trafficking in my work. Now my identity is that of an *aliendígena*.

Aliendígena

From the English *alien* and the Spanish *indígena*.

A person who has changed their residence to a territory that is not the one of their origin. Being aware of their roots, they delve into them; creating myths and/or legends in the search for means to communicate with their ancestors through memories and fictions, either personal or collective. Through physical, mental and/or spiritual means they acknowledge their own limits and regions.

The *aliendígena* person communicates in a variety of forms, including at least two languages: verbal or non-verbal, symbolic or imaginary. Based on these, they develop a new identity in order to transform their reality and cross onto other dimensions—the cosmos, the underground, or different temporalities. The *aliendígena* person consciously uses their imagination, dreams, and life experiences to work creatively. They are able to identify other *aliendígenas* with whom they will create collectively different legends and/or myths that will give way to alternate realities.

Reflecting upon the teachings of Rancho Shampoo I now understand that an *aliendígena* is able to hear the voices of their ancestors. They are known as *Ancestros Rayovacs*, they are scattered throughout the universe; in the third heaven. According to

Rancho Shampoo, the *aliendígena* person must find their own ceremonial center in order to connect with the cosmos. That is why he reminds us to "Grab your soul and throw it into the cosmos like a boomerang", this is the only way for *aliendígena* people to establish communication with their ancestors without getting lost in the cosmos. Likewise, thanks to the interview I had with Rancho Shampoo, I realized that there are times when truth goes beyond fiction. I understood that there will always be people by our side—such as ancestors, people who are visible or not—who directly influence our identity. I understood that there are ways or channels that we can use to traverse to other mental and physical states. These reflections led me to rethink my own artistic practice, and also think about the relationship it has with being an *aliendígena*. What kind of artistic practice do *aliendígenas* do? This is how the concept of *aliendigenismo* came about for the first time.

Aliendigenismo

From *aliendígena* and the Spanish suffix *-ismo*

Mental, spiritual and/or artistic activity that, through a collective effort, attempts to rethink and transform identities, regions, territorial, bodily and/or space-time limits. The practice of aliendigenismo can be realized in the public or private realm, however, its outcomes will always be shared with other people. As a result of this activity alternate realities arise—whether in their earthly, spiritual and/or cosmic forms—; bodies transcend their physical dimensions; and emotions create an expanded connection between people. With aliendigenismo it is possible to perceive a pluridimensional reality. Through aliendigenismo the aliendígena people get to be known.

Aliendigenismo is a creative way to collectively see and transform people's surroundings by combining their life experiences with a world of fiction. This fictional world is made up of everything that can be imagined. It is as if a bubble was created in the midst of earthly boundaries and regions. Upon entry to this bubble the limits change, they expand; a greater self-awareness is gained, emotions are enhanced and the experience of the world is felt jointly with more people. This is how other identities can be inhabited, and thus, traverse to other dimensions such as the cosmos or the underground.

When the concepts of *aliendigena* and *aliendigenismo* are fully understood, the space around us will be seen as a pluridimensional space, and the perception of other people will also be pluridimensional. Once the understanding of limits and regions is pluridimensional, the possibility to create and unite each and all of the *aliendigena* worlds and so, be able to practice *aliendigenismo*.

I hope that the definitions of *aliendigena* and *aliendigenismo* help transform the future of our realities, and perhaps we can also delve further into the future of these concepts. Perhaps through this proposal more people will be able to understand and make *aliendigenismo* their own, and also become *aliendigenas*.

Aliendigena Manifesto

\\ \\ \\ *Aliendigena* is able to launch his soul into the cosmos \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The aliendigena can travel to her own Cosmos \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The aliendigena creates its own dimensions \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Being aliendigena is to travel in your mind \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena = knows about her/his ancestors \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena is that person capable of finding her Rayovacs Ancestors; these ancestors exist in memory, in reality and in fiction \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The aliendigena knows the almendroid \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena = Collective \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The aliendigenas narrate their lives accompanied by those around them \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The Aliendigena travels to other dimensions / regions through its tunnels \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The aliendigena takes the time to get to know the Underground \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena is to see limits and regions in a pluridimensional way \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena is having your own hill to launch the soul into the Cosmos \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigenas are able to gather and create alternate alien worlds \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ The alien uses all the physical and mental knowledge acquired during her stay in this world to develop real and fictional projects \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Being aliendigena is to distribute your own Aliendigenismo \\ \\ \\

\\ \\ \\ Aliendigena is who understands Aliendigenismo \\ \\ \\

THE PLURIDISIONAL PEOPLE

This segment, I think, is perhaps the most important of all, because without the people who surround me, it would be impossible to comprehend a lot of things. These people are the ones who have influenced all this work: the research, the art, the physical work. Without them it would be impossible for me to understand where I come from, where I have been and where I'm going. I think it's a mix of ideas that have been forged through friendship and good will. Each of my friends has their own projects from which I have learned to be able to follow the path and find the Aliendigena path. In the Aliendigena manifesto a very important detail is mentioned that makes sense that all these pluridimensional people are taken into consideration in this text. "**Aliendigena = Collective**". It is an important reference of the manifesto because as I mentioned in the introduction we are not born knowing everything, in the path of your life you learn and collaborate. In an interview with Gloria Anzaldúa (I cant find the youtube link of this interview, but I will), she mentions that two people are needed for there to be a dialogue, in my case I found a series of people in my environment who, from my point of view, have their own limits, regions and dimensions, that is why the I call Pluridimensional People.

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