

A black silhouette of a bird, possibly a crow or raven, perched on a branch. The bird is facing right, with its wings slightly spread. The branch is dark and textured, extending from the bottom right towards the center.

Community Science & Borderlands Rhetorical Praxis in the #UrbanBirdProject

Kenny Walker, Paulina Hernandez-Trejo, Amelia King-Kostelac,
Jennifer Smith, Marisol Cortez, Lauren Granger, & Annette Portillo

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University of Texas, San Antonio
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ARSTM@NCA 2021 Preconference on Rhetoric, Science, and the In/humanities



“The future belongs to those who cultivate cultural sensitivities to differences and who use these abilities to forge a hybrid consciousness that transcends the “us” versus “them” mentality and will carry us into a *nos/otras* position bridging the extremes of our cultural realities, a subjectivity that doesn’t polarize potential allies.”

~

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*

Community Science & Citizen Science

Citizen Science as “the public involvement in the discovery of new scientific knowledge” (Cooper, et. al. 2021; Kinsella, 2004; Kelly/Mehlenbacher & Miller, 2015; Kelly/Mehlenbacher & Maddalena, 2015; Wynn, 2017).

Community Science should be reserved for projects that:

- “Are linked to social action with aims including protection of human rights and measurable improvements for communities who face environmental injustices and public health challenges.
- Include community-based participatory research (CBPR), community-engaged research, community-owned and managed research (COMR), street science, and other participatory methods aimed to bring social change.
- Elevate local experts and place-based issues above academic experts and publication-driven research agendas.
- [Commit] to social action and antiracist, decolonizing research praxis aimed at elevating multiple ways of knowing, engendering trust, and sharing power” (1387).



DIVERSITY

Inclusion in citizen science: The conundrum of rebranding

Does replacing the term “citizen science” do more harm than good?

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#UrbanBirdProject & community science

via a **USDA-Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Grant**

The overall goal of the project aims to develop leadership skills, promote science and cultural literacy for conservation behaviors, and to strengthen the educational bridges of students from primary schools to HSI universities:



- Engage students and community members in bird-focused ecological research;
- Engage culturally relevant praxis around the significance of birds across communities;
- Engage in the co-development & co-construction of knowledge through community science.

#UrbanBirdProject Project Design (USDA-HSI Funded Project)

- **Content Workshops**

- **Avian Ecology Workshops**
Dr. Jennifer Smith (UTSA)
- **Mexican-American Studies Workshop**
Dr. Marisol Cortez and Dr. Liliana Saldaña (UTSA)
- **Indigenous Studies Workshop**
Masauki & Lupita and Dr. Annette Portillo (UTSA) w/ Indigenous SATX community members

- **Community Engaged Research**

- **Community Science Meetings**
Paulina Hernandez-Trejo, Lauren Granger, Dr. Amelia King-Kostelac, Dr. Claudia Garcia-Louis and Dr. Kenny Walker
- Students, teachers, families, and workshop participants

- **Research Triangulation**

- Participation-Observations/Reflective Memos
- Field-based Artifacts
- Student Journaling/ArcGIS Storymap Projects
- Community Building



Anzaldúa's Consciousness & the Borderland

- “Nos/otras suggests a position of being simultaneously insider/outsider, internal/external exile”
- “Nos/otras accommodates contradictory identities and social positions, creating a hybrid consciousness that transcends the us versus them mentality... blurring the boundary between us and others. ... Proximity and intimacy can close the gap between us and them.”

Nos/Otras
(Us/Them)

Anzaldúa (2015) *Luz en lo Oscuro/Light in the Dark*:

Methodology: New Materialism → Border Materialism



Source: <https://www.visitsanantonio.com/selena/>

Anzaldúa (2015) *Luz en lo Oscuro/Light in the Dark*:

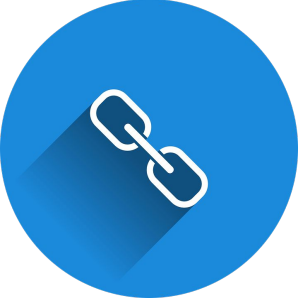
- Combining spirituality with materiality, bridging between the material and immaterial

New Materialism

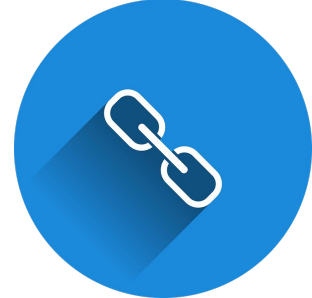
- Rose from “emergence of pressing ethical and political concerns that accompany the scientific and technological advances” (Coole & Frost, 2010; Graham, 2015; Druschke, 2019).

Border Materialism

- Definition: A framework to address how *marginalized* human bodies are affected and encircled by neoliberal capitalism with material properties (Lozano, 2019)



Linking Border Materialism & Nos/Otras to the #UBP



Application

- Border Materialism, like many theories, is moveable but we should be cautious
- Neoliberal capitalism via redlining in mid-1900s limited financial development
- Deculturalization via forced assimilation

Sites

- Different sites, yet similar forces fueling assimilation, deculturalization, neoliberal capitalism
- SAISD schools, neighborhoods, and families have also undergone a similar process

Attending to Materiality & Social Justice—*fieldwork*

Rhetorical Fieldwork & Co-presence in #SATX

-Rhetorical fieldwork for the experimental, embodied, and emplaced nature of rhetoric (McKinnon, Asen, Chávez, and Howard, 2016; Rai and Druschke, 2018).

-Rhetorical fieldwork and co-presence as a methodology theoretically informed by border materialism and oriented toward social change (Lozano, 2019; de Onís, 2016).

-“Do not romanticize the field.”

Longfellow Urban Bird Project

LONGFELLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL

UTSA

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

- Do you love watching birds?
- Ever wonder how many types there are or which ones live in our community?
- Do you want to learn the cultural significance of birds in regards to Hispanic heritage?
- Do you want your work to matter?

Come be a part of this exciting new club!
It's fascinating, it's free, there's food, there are field trips and we'll have tons of fun!!!

There are only 25 slots available!!!
Will you claim one?

Scan the code and join our Zoom meeting on Monday, September 20th at 4 pm to learn how!



Join Us for a Workshop Demonstration on Indigenous Relations to Birds

Led by...

Masauki Zepeda and Lupita Lagunes Jimenez

Masauki Zepeda, who is of Coahuiltecan Indian descent, studied the shamanic path with Huichol masters for 14 years in Mexico. Masauki is licensed to create fans made from the feathers of many birds in the services he conducts for the benefit of people all over the world.

Masauki is joined by his partner, Guadalupe Lagunes Jimenez, who is an expert in Indigenous practices and does outreach services through La Casa de las Mariposas in Toluca, Mexico. In this workshop, Masauki and Lupita will be drumming and signing to demonstrate how birds and bird feathers are understood in traditional Coahuiltecan practices.



When & Where
Longfellow Middle School
1130 E Sunshine Dr, San Antonio
Tuesday, October 26th, 4:00-5:30
&
Woodlawn Academy
1717 W Magnolia Ave, San Antonio
Thursday, October 28th, 2021,
3:30-5:00pm



“In the Field”



Funding for this project has been provided by the USDA Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program.

This research is being overseen by the UTSA Office of Human Subjects Research (IRB #20-252).

What's Next?

- MAS workshops, Birding Field Trips this Fall 2021
- Avian Ecology Research via backyard bird feeding and migrations
- Connecting to community, families via our Spring Symposium

Urban Bird Project

Contact us: urbanbirdproject@gmail.com

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Why?



This is part of an exciting new community science project focused on ecological and cultural significance of birds in our neighborhood and city.

[Home](#)

What's the upshot for Borderlands Rhetorical Praxis?

Borderlands Praxis is not just for borderlands; materiality and coloniality come to matter everywhere

~

Community science, street science, “science from below” and its implications at the intersections of public rhetorics and cultural rhetorics



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Urban Bird Project

**For more information and team bios,
visit urbanbirdproject.org
For questions, email us at
urbanbirdproject@gmail.com**



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