Healing Trauma with Latinx Creativity
Testimonios, Autohistorias, and Arpilleras
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Latinx Creativity
- Represents Latinx lived experience
- Fosters cultural/gender resilience
- Promotes psychospiritual transformation
- Addresses living in-between (borderlands) and trans-nationalism

Latinx Creativity: Self-healing
- Interdisciplinary and syncretistic
- Exorcising trauma through art
- Fosters integration of fragmented traumatic self
- Promotes self-healing

Latinx Creativity
- Reclaims ancestral discounted wisdom
- Supports ethnic traditions (i.e., creation of altars, ceremonies, rituals, etc.)
- Nurtures cultural identity development
Latinx Creativity: Healing with Social Justice

- Culture specific coping mechanism against oppression
- Vehicle for resistance and subversion
- Aims to decolonize
- Fosters empowerment and liberation

Decolonizing Latinx Creativity

- Reprocessing trauma
- Development of agency
- Identity reformulation
- Promotion of post traumatic growth

Latinx Creativity: Artivism

Art that promotes critical consciousness in the service of healing and social justice (Sandoval & Latorre, 2008)

Latinx Creativity: Artivism

Testimonio
Autohistoria
Arpilleras
Testimonio

- First person narrative of experiences with suffering, oppression, and resilience
- Artistic methodology to understand identity from a psychological, sociocultural, and political perspectives
- Emerged from human rights abuses in Latin America
- Testimonial literature

Testimonial Literature

- Oral or written autobiographical narrative
- Emphasis on experiences with oppression
- Rooted in the human rights tribunals, truth commissions in Chile and Argentina
- I, Rigoberta Menchu; When I was Puerto Rican, are examples of testimonial literature

Autohistorias (Assemblages)

Artistic method of piercing fragmented parts of the traumatized oppressed self by creating alternative visions of the person and the world.

“I change myself, I change the world.”

Gloria Anzaldúa
Arpilleras

Complex tapestries woven by Chilean women (arpilleristas) that emerged as artivism during political repression under the Pinochet dictatorship.

Arpilleras

Depict scenes of violence affecting oppressed individuals. Promote resistance and cognitive empowerment against oppression and violence. Artivistic methods that are culturally congruent with trauma recovery.

Arpilleras

Developed in workshops sponsored by the Catholic church and distributed internationally through its human rights section.

International Arpilleras

Arpilleras became international icons of liberation.

Today they are symbols for the struggle of indigenous groups against state violence in Colombia, Perú, and in other countries.
Conclusion

• Latinx creativity addresses oppression and trauma.
• Promotes self-healing and reconnection with ancestral wisdom.
• Heals by empowering, decolonizing, and liberating.
• Fosters a psychospiritual transformation