La Frontera

Gloria Anzaldua refers to the Borderlands/La Frontera as the metaphorical crossroads where different cultures and ideologies must combine, clash, or co-exist. For her this particular crossroad involved not only her “native” Chicano heritage, but also a slew of other languages, dialects, and vernaculars. This proves especially tricky with the Spanish-based languages, which overlap in some ways and are completely separate in others. The “Spanish” language has developed like the infrastructure of a tree, with some roots splitting away from others, and some roots wrapping around one another, due to the multiplicity of different cultures with which is has merged or fractured. These different languages are not only home to different words, but different memories, feelings, and thoughts that permeate the culture behind the language. Each of these cultures then hosts and reflects it’s own ideology, with language being a subtle tool for enforcing these ideologies. Gloria refers to the first time she had heard two women use the word “Nosotras”, the feminine form of “we”. She had only ever heard the masculine “Nosotros” - a prime example of how the language directly facilitates the inferiority or unimportance of women.

La Frontera, as the mental place where one must wrestle with conflicting identities, includes not only language, but the ideals and values of these different cultures. Gloria spent her entire life believing that being a lesbian was wrong, immoral, or evil. She was entirely immersed in the Spanish and Indian realms for all of her upbringing, which both severely condemn homosexuality. She chose instead to face her “Shadow Beast”, her id, her deepest and truest inner desires, and embrace it as an incredible part of her identity. Though the relationship may not be *as* hostile, I feel that, in a similar sense, I am doing this by studying English in a world/society that so values the economic, the business, the capital. Like Gloria, I recognize it as a rather important part of who I am, though it may be looked down upon. Like Gloria, I shan’t give it up.