

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

COUNTER-STORYTELLING USING XICANA EPISTEMOLOGIES AND RHETORICS:

COUNTERING WHITE BENEVOLENCE AND WHITE IGNORANCE IN COLLEGE

LITERACY INTERVENTION SPACES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

ANNA KRISTINE TREVIÑO

Norman, Oklahoma

2021

COUNTER-STORYTELLING USING XICANA EPISTEMOLOGIES AND RHETORICS:  
COUNTERING WHITE BENEVOLENCE AND WHITE IGNORANCE IN COLLEGE  
LITERACY INTERVENTION SPACES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Sandra Tarabochia, Chair

Dr. Gabriela Ríos

Dr. Frances Condon

Dr. Susan Kates

Dr. William Kurlinkus

Dr. Mirelsie Velazquez



## Contents

Abstract .....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Author’s Note .....	x
Introduction .....	1
The Pipeline Leaks or Cracks, Dropouts or Pushouts, and Optouts or Left Out? .....	4
The Pipeline, What I saw, and Where I Stand in It.....	5
At My End of the Pipeline and the Beginning of This Project .....	7
Theoretical Frameworks: Critical Race Theory/Latinx Critical Race Theory and Chicana Feminism .....	23
Critical Race Theory.....	23
Latinx Critical Race Theory.....	24
Chicana Feminist Epistemological Framework.....	25
Methodology: Counterstory as a Critical Race Methodology .....	27
Chapter and Intralude Outline.....	31
Part I: Pedagogies of the Home.....	32
Part II: Towards an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom.....	32
Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation.....	32
Conclusion .....	33
Thread 4 Intralude I: Voy a Ser lo que Voy a Ser .....	34
Part I: Pedagogies of the Home .....	46

Threads 1, 2 and 3 Begin to Entangle: Luz and Esperanza Meet and Caridad is Mentioned ...	54
Thread 2: Esperanza's Choice .....	55
Thread 4 Intralude II: No Se Si lo Puedo Hacer .....	57
Part II: Toward an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom .....	61
Thread 1: Luz on the Beginning of Her Activism in the Borderlands .....	61
Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza on the Path to Student Success .....	64
Thread 3: Carrie, Almost Caridad.....	66
Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza in Need of Fe .....	68
Thread 1 Continued: Luz and Her New Writing Center Job .....	69
Thread 3 Continued: Carrie and Her First-Year Composition Class .....	71
Thread 1 Continued: Luz's Meeting with Esperanza.....	72
Thread 3 Continued: Carrie's Meeting with Luz Regarding Her Class.....	78
Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza's Second Meeting with Dra. Luz.....	84
Thread 1 Continued: Luz Before the Meeting.....	86
Thread 3 Continued: Carrie Before the Meeting .....	87
Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza before the meeting .....	88
Three Threads One Play: Luz, Esperanza, and Carrie's Meeting .....	88
Thread 4 Intralude III: Lo Que Será, Será.....	95
Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation .....	99
Thread 1 Continued: El Juicio de Luz.....	99
Thread 2 Continued: El Juicio de Esperanza.....	106
Thread 3 Continued: El Juicio de Caridad (Carrie) .....	112
Three Threads in One Braid y El Juicio: What kind of Chicana are You? .....	117

Thread 4 Intralude IV: No Hay Fin Pero Adelante.....	120
Thread 4 Conclusion: Stitching Heridas meanwhile Weaving Composite Counterstories.....	124
Conclusion .....	130
Summary of Part I, Part II, and Part III .....	130
Explanation of Each Counterstory .....	132
The Application of the Elements of a Chicana Raced-Gendered Epistemology .....	138
Pedagogies of the Home .....	139
Experiential Knowledge .....	139
Transdisciplinary Approach.....	140
Challenge to Dominant Ideologies.....	140
Commitment to Social Justice.....	142
Consejos .....	144
Works Cited.....	146

## Abstract

Most of us who ask ourselves “What do students need in order to succeed in college?” genuinely want to help students succeed. However, because helping others is known to be a good thing, we often don’t look critically at the driving force and mechanisms behind the concept of helpfulness; we often fail to see the violence of problematic ideologies hidden behind our motives to and the means by which we *help* students in classrooms and even writing centers. More specifically, we need to consider the ways in which what we believe to be helpful might be epistemically unjust for student writers. Specifically, I consider the ways in which white benevolence and white ignorance in sites of literacy interventions can impede Chicana identity development and affirmation. Counterstory as a Critical Race Methodology is one method that Latinas can rely on to create epistemologically just spaces, as well as one that can be incorporated into curricula to curve epistemological injustice as it makes room for the use of Xicana rhetorics and epistemologies.

**Dedication**

*I dedicate this project to the victims and survivors of the El Paso Massacre on August 4, 2019.*



## Acknowledgements

A shout out to all of the friends I have made at the OU Writing Center over the years, and a big special thank you to all the consultants who helped me think through some of this dissertation.

To all the students whom I had the pleasure of teaching, thank you for teaching me and continually challenging me to be a better instructor and writing consultant.

Danetra King, Wonderful Faison, and Rebecca Gerdes-McClain, I could not have made it to this end without you.

Dr. Nancy KingSanders thank you for your words of wisdom and compassion.

Lizette Gonzales, Kristina Lopez, and Roxanne Bruce-Beltran thanks for being there for me since our time together during our MA program.

Thanks to Efrain and Astrid for being kind to and generous with me over the many, many years we've known each other.

To Moira Ozias and Michele Eodice, thank you for introducing me to writing centers.

To my committee members, thank you for serving on my committee, your patience, and your support throughout the years.

A mi familia, gracias por todo lo que han hecho por mí. A lo menos, ustedes me han hecho la persona que soy ahora.

### **Author's Note**

First, for the white people reading this, I ask you to reflect on how it may be possible for you to succeed academically without having to read works by people of color, while people of color cannot do the same when it comes to reading work by white people. That is your privilege but understand that having privilege does not make you a bad person. This is not a critique of your character. I do not despise you in any way. The same goes for Latinas—the ones to whom I am speaking—who may feel defensive or conflicted given the possibility that we might see ourselves entangled in the messiness of white privilege, white benevolence, and white ignorance I touch on in and across the counterstories.

## Introduction

*At first, I was Mexican.* My family's roots, what I would call home despite not exactly growing up there or really anywhere in particular, lie in the borderlands of South Texas—specifically Rio Grande City and a bit of the surrounding areas, such as Roma and La Grulla. That is where my heritage is rooted, especially my Spanish. My heritage is an ambiguous mix of Mexico, Texas. The Spanish that derived out of that mix *was* actually my “first” language<sup>1</sup>, although I was taught both English and Spanish around the same time. I remember my tía Patsy (my dad's sister) teaching me while holding una manzana, “Manzana. Apple.” The majority of memories I have from when I was a young child (less than 11 years old) are of interactions with my family, particularly my large, extended family on my mom's side. While we were a family of seasonal migrant farmworkers and frequently moved from and back to home just about every year, I have stronger memories of the time when most of my classmates looked and sounded about the same as me. I hardly have any memories of my time in elementary schools when my classmates didn't.

*Then, Mexican-American.* I spent my middle and high school years in majority white schools. I recall that at thirteen, as one of the handful of Mexican students in my grade—usually one of two in my classes, I became highly attuned to the differences of our skin color. I was lighter than most of the others and became curious as to whether my Mexican peers saw me as Mexican, so I decided to ask my friends. More than once. They were mostly white friends with the exception of two of them, and only one was bilingual. Whether or not I was perceived as Mexican because of my lighter complexion by other Mexicans was not a mere issue of curiosity,

---

<sup>1</sup> Some people call it Tex-Mex. In *Borderlands* Anzaldúa also refers to it as a type of Chicano Spanish. See *Borderlands* pages 79-81 for a more detailed description of that Spanish. Also note that Anzaldúa lived in Harlingen, Texas which is about an hour and a half a way east from Rio Grande City, where I was born.

though; it was a product of insecurity brought on by questioning whether I was “Mexican enough.” My insecurity stemmed from the fact that from the age of 10 to 17, when most of my time was spent at school, I only had one friend who was Mexican and also spoke Spanish. That insecurity also stemmed from the fact that when we stopped moving back home, I saw my extended family less and less; because we settled more and traveled back home less, I began to lose the sense of self I described in the opening paragraph.

**After Mexican-American, I was Hispanic.** More recently, a few years ago in our shared graduate teaching assistant office, a white woman in the English master’s program, whom I considered a friend at that point, asked me for help pronouncing a word while she prepped for her Native Rhetoric presentation. I wrote it down while she spelled it out loud. I looked at the word and instantly knew it wasn’t *English* or *Spanish*. It was Nahuatl: Xochiquetzal. So, I simply told her that I did not know how to say it. She retorted snarkily, “*WHAT KIND OF CHICANA ARE YOU???*” I remained silent and chose not to respond for many reasons. One of which was the overwhelming amount of anger and disrespect I felt knowing that her boldness stemmed from white privilege<sup>2</sup> and white ignorance<sup>3</sup>. Another was the pain I felt as her words brought to the surface how insecure I was in my identity caused by the loss I experience as education continued to further remove me from my family and culture. I was also disgusted by her disregard for the

---

<sup>2</sup> Peggy MacIntosh describes white privilege, in part, as ‘an invisible package of unearned assets’ (McIntosh, 1997, p. 120). She also states that it is “a system of opportunities and benefits that is bestowed on an individual simply for being White” (Delgado Bernal 111). In my narrative, white privilege is most obvious in the fact that as a white woman, the other graduate student can not know how to pronounce words in English and her racial identity is not questioned. She also does not have to think about what it means to be white.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Mills states white ignorance is “not merely ignorance of facts with moral implications but moral non-knowings, incorrect judgements about the rights and wrongs of moral situations themselves” (22), as well as “a white refusal to recognize the long history of structural discrimination that has left whites with the differential resources they have today, and all of its consequent advantages in negotiating opportunity structures” (28). The white graduate student demonstrated white ignorance when she assumed that because of my racialized identity, I would have access to assets, such as knowing the Nahua language (or at least the word she needed to know) that assimilation/Americanization via colonization (Spanish and British) erased from my family.

colonial violence against indigenous people of Latin America and Latinx<sup>4</sup> people in the U.S. that led me and countless others like me, to not know a lot of things about ourselves, and which also pressures us into giving up the things we do know. Moreso, how would I even explain to her, a white woman who has probably only and always identified as white without any ambivalence, why I didn't even identify as a Chicana at that point?

*Ahora soy X(Ch)icana<sup>5</sup>*

I had to do a lot of work in order to begin openly identifying as a Chicana, but I also felt I needed the right space to engage in that work. While the work I did during my master's and doctoral coursework aligned with the political orientation in which I planned to ground my future work, I resisted cultivating the space I needed to become a *Chicana* feminist. In part, it was due to attending a predominantly and historically white institution, the results of the 2016 Presidential Election, and my belief that attempting to build that space among white people would do more harm than good for all involved. Thus, I compartmentalized who I was as a student in the classroom and who I was working to be as a researcher-scholar-teacher.

*Knowingly* compartmentalizing myself, for the first time in my life, made room for me to sit with and reflect on the uncomfortable degree of assimilation I had previously undergone. It also led me to be keenly aware of the contradictory and dichotomous relationships I had created out of two cultures I could more or less relate to. I also recognized that regardless of whether I have engaged in practices that split me into at least two, I will still be seen as a *success* story—

---

<sup>4</sup> According to Christine Garcia, “The conceptualization of the ‘x’ is rooted in the decolonization of the terms Latina/Latino on two levels: first, confronting and challenging the gender binary, and second, rejecting the silencing and erasure of AfroLatinx and indigenous languages by standard Spanish, the language of the colonizer of much of Latin America and the Southwestern United States” (210).

<sup>5</sup> Beginning the word Chicana with an X, according to Cherríe Moraga “indicates[s] a re-emerging política . . . grounded in Indigenous American belief systems and identities” (xxi). She also explains, “as many Raza may not know their specific indigenous nation of origin, the X links us as Native people in diaspora” (xxi). While originally believed to be the Nahuatl spelling of the “ch” sound, David Bowles argues that the Nahuatl X makes more of a “sh” sound.

especially in academic settings. I grew up poor, did good at school, went to college, and am now close to earning my PhD. But, as statistics on the Latinx/Chicanx pipeline show, I am not the rule. Holding me up as proof that we live in a meritocratic society weaponizes me against my own communities and gives people the opportunity to deny systemic and institutional issues in education.

### **The Pipeline Leaks or Cracks, Dropouts or Pushouts, and Optouts or Left Out?**

Many researchers of color, such as Lindsay Pérez Huber, Maria C. Malagón, Brianna R. Ramirez, Lorena Camargo Gonzalez, Alberto Jimenez, and Verónica N. Vélez, are working together to explore questions of access and equity across all levels of education using frameworks that challenge deficit perspectives that inform popular methods of inquiry. The shift in terms from dropout to pushouts, and cracks in the educational pipeline rather than leaks in the pipeline are two examples. Daniel G. Solórzano, Octavio Villalpando, and Leticia Oseguera were the first scholars who engaged in educational research from the perspectives of cracks and pushouts<sup>6</sup>.

Recently, Sonya M. Alemán, Sofia Bahena, and Enrique Alemán Jr. have taken a similar approach and remapped the pipeline in order to critically examine educational inequity in Texas towns like the ones I grew up in. Unlike previous research investigating the Latinx/Chicanx pipeline, they consider and include middle school as a critical transition point. As such, Alemán et al., found a significant crack in the Latinx/Chicanx pipeline between eighth grade and ninth grade, where 23 out of a 100 Latinas/os and Chicanas/os have already been pushed out. In addition, “Latina/o and Chicana/o students have the highest push out rate for high school (15%)

---

<sup>6</sup> The word crack rather than leak is used by researchers in education who do critical race work, specifically counterstory because it counters the deficit perspective the term leak attaches to students. The phrase “cracks in the pipeline” is the counterstory to “leaks in the pipeline,” emphasizing the systemic, institutional faults. Those faults lead to pushouts rather than connotating that racialized students are merely leaving (“dropping out”).

among all ethnic groups.” Given the data, it is clear that most Latinx students experience pushout early on, but I didn’t. So, what does that mean for me? Where do I fit in? No, these aren’t *smart* Chicana tears. If I believe in the power and importance of testimonio and composite counterstory, then my experiences while making it through also bare significance in discussions about Latinx access to equitable education. There’s a system in places that works against all Latinx students, but the impact isn’t always the same.

### ***The Pipeline, What I saw, and Where I Stand in It***

I remember making the decision to enroll in pre-AP classes my second semester in high school. At that point, I had already felt slighted since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. My classes were too easy. I knew I was smart enough. So, the process of who was put in the “smart classes” seemed unfair. It wasn’t until my first semester in high school that my World Geography teacher, a Mexican American man, was the first person who encouraged me to take AP classes. I started to consider it, but before making a final decision, I decided to talk to one of my Mexican friends (she was *del otro lado*). She told me that if the normal classes were too easy for me that I should do it. To say that the two people who encouraged me to enroll in Pre-AP/AP classes were both Latinx seems like a pretty big coincidence. I’d like to say that I didn’t know why no one had encouraged me before them, but my real question was: “why couldn’t they see that they couldn’t see me?” After all, I was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society, like the students in advanced classes. It’s not the way I was like them that made me Pre-AP/AP material. It was how I was not like them that didn’t.

I knew who was in Pre-AP/AP classes. They weren’t students with backgrounds like mine. I knew that most of the students were at least middle-class, and most commonly middle-class and white. It also wasn’t lost on me that *all* the Pre-AP/AP class teachers were all middle-

class and white. Despite knowing that, I decided to do it anyway. So, I looked up what I needed to do in order to take Pre-AP/AP classes in the student handbook. I was supposed to consult my (white) teachers beforehand, but I purposely did not. I was worried they would not recommend it, because I knew I wasn't the type of student who was tracked into Pre-AP/AP classes. After all, if they thought I should be in advanced classes, they would have already talked to me about it? So, I conspired alone until the day came that I had to walk up to my teachers and have them sign the form.

My experience, however, is not unique as Yosso and Solórzano point out in the “Unequal K-12 Conditions” section of their *Latino Policy and Issues Brief*, “[a]cademically rigorous enrichment programs and courses (such as Gifted and Talented Education [GATE], Magnet, Honors and Advanced Placement [AP]) disproportionately underenroll Chicana/o students” (sec. Unequal K-12 Conditions). Even more Susan Borge states in “Study Finds Hispanic Students Underrepresented In AP Classes” that “ethnic minority students do not have the same degree of the obligations and expectations from their teachers and counselors, and therefore may not receive the same access to information, regarding the future benefits of enrolling in advanced-level courses” (qtd in Gauntt). Gauntt also reported that, just as I did, other Hispanic students “had to seek advice rather than have the counselors inquire about them.” In the end, like Yosso and Solórzano assert, “unequal access [to academically rigorous enrichment programs and courses] corresponds with discriminatory school-based structures and practices rather than a lack of student or parent interest in academic enrichment” (sec. Unequal K-12 Conditions). There is a term that blames student and parents in order to hide discriminatory practices in academic



enrichment programs: “optout.” However, as my story demonstrates and Yosso and Solórzano report, we are left out<sup>7</sup>; we don’t *optout*.

Despite being left out and not tracked into academically rigorous classes, I thrived in them. At the same time I succeeded academically, as I expressed in the opening narrative of this introduction, I began to reject and distance myself from my cultural identity. I went from being Mexican to being Hispanic. In reality, I could decide to not identify in ways that would strongly mark me as a member of a racialized community, but in sum the way people interact or don’t interact with me leads me to have experiences marked by racialization. For example, I had to seek out information on Pre-AP/AP classes rather than being encouraged by the white teachers and counselors who knew I was a strong student. Even more, although I made just as good as, or even better grades, than others in advanced classes, I wasn’t befriended by any of them.

### ***At My End of the Pipeline and the Beginning of This Project***

In “Remapping the Latina/o and Chicana/o Pipeline: A Critical Race Analysis of Educational Inequity in Texas” Alemán et al. report that out of 100 Latinx/Chicanx students in Texas only 0.34 earn a doctoral degree (10). Moving away from a minority-majority area of South Texas where I earned both my BA and MA at a predominantly Hispanic, historically white institution to a predominantly, historically white institution in Oklahoma, by myself as a single woman, heightened my awareness of racialized experiences. So did the knowledge of historical white violence against people of color and the clear, loud resurfacing of anti-Mexican/Latinx attitudes as the 2016 U.S. presidential election day drew nearer. With the heightened awareness came the question of resilience. I was hardly contributing to class discussions and most definitely not correcting or pointing out problematic things other people in my classes said. I also kept

---

<sup>7</sup> The phrase “left out” is the counterstory to “optout;” Left out and optout being terms specific to academic enrichment programs.

from discussing the social and racial justice agenda of my research and work out of class discussions.

I didn't start thinking of my work as social justice work until one of my white professors at the predominantly white institution (PWI) referred to it as such. Even that small way that my professor framed my work—which I then understood was the typical, right way to do so in these spaces by the way it naturally rolled out—made me feel out of place. It made me feel out of place not in relation to physical spaces like the state, institution, or classrooms, but in relation to how I did and did not fit in with the work done in rhetoric and composition. I was trying to do the work that up until then just seemed like the right thing anyone should be doing, working to improve things for all, not work that existed in the periphery of rhetoric and composition as a field.

*I began to know myself as a social justice warrior.* During my MA, I wanted to work to improve the experiences students felt at the college level by connecting with students through teaching, to help them succeed in college. More personally, I felt I needed to give back to my community, to lift it up, but I didn't so much focus on the impact of the racialization on Hispanic students. My focus during my MA was classism in first-year writing classes. The majority of students I was teaching were not only Hispanic, but they were also from working-class/working poor backgrounds, so it still made sense to me then. For that reason, I worked to learn how to be a teacher who could take into account that students have different worldviews based on their social class. Teaching first-year writing classes at a predominantly Hispanic serving institution was the beginning of my development as a teacher. Next was teaching a first-year seminar class—a university success course at the same university the year before I began my PhD program.

Not too long after I started my PhD program, I realized that I embody teaching in ways that do not adhere to the expected white, middle-class standards<sup>8</sup>. That realization was not simply an intellectual one. It was one that pulled me toward and sucked me down a whirlpool of emotions, a fall into an experience that I would describe like the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance. It was not a linear emotional trip; it was certainly cyclical and continual. Simply stating that I felt like I didn't belong does not do justice to that experience which led me to look for comfort in places that I wanted to feel accepted and understood without feeling ashamed. So, I started reading work written by Chicana/Latina feminists and Latinx scholars and discovered that experiences like mine (and others less so) were being shared and written about.

In those texts I found words and thoughts and expressions that led me to understand that what I was experiencing was hermeneutical injustice, “the kind of epistemic injustice that occurs when a subject is unfairly disadvantaged in her capacities to make sense of an experience” (Medina 90). The language I collected from every piece I read gave me the shared tools of interpretation I needed to experience, as a member of a marginalized group, hermeneutical justice which I was previously denied through the social structures upheld by institutional racism that racializes people who are not accepted as white. Without finding my way to those texts during my doctoral program, this project would not exist. This project is the next step of that journey. Now that I know why I experience what I described as the stages of grief, I am moving forward by documenting that fact so that other Chicanas, who need to find the same or similar hermeneutical tools, can find them here.

---

<sup>8</sup> See bell hooks' *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom* as a book I relate to as a teacher of color.

However, gaining hermeneutical tools is only half of the work. Overcoming testimonial injustice, an epistemic injustice that occurs when “hearers . . . give less credibility than deserved to speakers” (Medina 54) is the other half. As Medina highlights, “these injustices [hermeneutical and testimonial] become intertwined, feeding each other and deepening the effects of each other” (96), and thus “the hermeneutical disadvantaged speaker is likely to find unsympathetic listeners who find her insufficiently credible” (96). In my case, that fact implicitly influenced my decision to seek places of comfort in work written by Chicana/Latina feminists and Latinx scholars. While in some work I did find comfort, in others I found confusion. For example, pertinent to this project, I struggled to understand all work related to Critical Race Theory. As I worked through it, I facetiously stated, “It must be *cultural intuition*.” The joke was on me though. I started to seriously wonder if it *was* all about *cultural intuition*, and what would that mean for me to do research from *that* place? From what I know as me, not as my *positionality*. I re-read again and again, focusing on Aja Martinez’s dissertation as a model. Even as I write this, I think back to the words Martinez used and how she used them, especially the phrase documenting.

While I gained the shared tools of interpretation I needed to experience, as a member of a marginalized group, hermeneutical justice, what I was hoping for initially was testimonial justice. I needed to know that other racially minoritized people in academia were feeling or felt similar emotions. Was what I was feeling valid? Seeing myself in those texts, being able to make sense and being able to express what I was experiencing, I decided to work to become a Chicana feminist. It wasn’t a difficult decision to make because I recognized I shared the politic represented in many Chicana works: a politic arising from “Chicana as a twentieth-century phenomenon characterized by bilingualism, biculturalism, and shifting economic status. . . [a]lso,

a degree of independence, that is, movement away from traditional racial, sexual, and religious governance” (González 49). Beyond that however, I wasn’t exactly sure what it would take for me to finally see myself as a Chicana.

So, I learned that the roots of Chicana politics grew out of the Chicano movement, and because of that politic, according to Anna NietoGomez, Chicanas were seen as “as anti-family, anti-cultural, anti-man, and therefore anti-Chicano movement . . . ambitious, selfish women who were only concerned with themselves at the cost of everyone else. . . man-haters, frustrated women, and “*agringadas*” [Anglocized]. . . for to be associated with anything Anglo was close to being called a traitor” (88). While Chicanas have and do challenge some Mexican cultural norms, many Chicanas have and do push back on the antagonistic and demoralizing (mis)representations of them by both non-dominant and Dominant cultures. Chicanas take issue with both as they “[do] not necessarily want to assimilate. . . [and are] proud of their heritage” (Rosalie Flores 95). With that knowledge, I felt that in order to move forward in my commitment to becoming a Chicana feminist, I would need to complete a type of dissertation project consistent with that commitment. Therefore, informed by González, Flores, and the historical roots of Chicana politics, I theorize oppression, resistance, and subjectivity from a Chicana epistemology in my dissertation project.

According to Dolores Delgado Bernal:

Chicana epistemology [is] concerned with the knowledge about Chicanas--about who generates an understanding of their experiences, and how this knowledge is legitimized or not legitimized. It questions objectivity, a universal foundation of knowledge, and the Western dichotomies of mind versus body, subject versus object, objective truth versus subjective emotion, and male versus female.

Chicana epistemology maintains connections to indigenous roots by embracing dualities that are necessary and complementary qualities, by challenging dichotomies that offer opposition without reconciliation. (560)

However, Chicana/Latina epistemologies are not systematically valued and reproduced like the Dominant U.S. Eurocentric epistemology, which reproduces “covert and overt assumptions regarding White superiority, territorial expansion, and ‘American’ democratic ideals such as meritocracy, objectivity, and individuality” (Delgado Bernal 111). At its core the Dominant U.S. Eurocentric epistemology is the current reproduction of the colonial logics white settler colonizers used to justify the historical theft of indigenous lands and the concurrent subjugation of indigenous people. Today these colonial logics are still widely used across the nation to validate the oppression and subjugation of indigenous people and other racially minoritized communities as well as their epistemologies. For Chicanas, the oppression of racially minoritized epistemologies leads to the suppression of a Chicana identity.

Because Chicana epistemologies are oppressed, choosing how to identify, for women of Mexican heritage, is more complex than for whites. The question of identity leads to the identity problem Rosalie Flores outlines below:

the Mexican female has an identity problem, i.e., she may be a ‘Mexican-American’ if she is an American of Mexican parentage. She may want to be called ‘Spanish-American’ if she is from the southwestern part of the U.S. She may prefer to be a ‘Chicana,’ if she identifies with the NOW people of La Raza. It may be that she finds the term Mexican American does not describe the women activist within la raza, aware of her cultural heritage and of herself. (95)

My own experience of the Mexican female identity problem is evident in my opening narrative of this project. How I chose to identify changed multiple times during my childhood until my late 20s. As the Flores quote above indicates, and as I learned in my early 20s, the Chicana identity is *overtly* linked to politics and activism. Therefore, it was not an identity I embraced until I felt I could do right by it. While the Chicana is the only *politically-charged* identity, each identity has its own politic as Gloria Anzaldúa points out:

We call ourselves Hispanic or Spanish-American or Latin American or Latin when linking ourselves to other Spanish-speaking peoples of the Western hemisphere and when copping out. We call ourselves Mexican-American to signify we are neither Mexican nor American, but more the noun “American” than the adjective “Mexican” (and when copping out). . . . When not copping out, when we know we are more than nothing, we call ourselves Mexican, referring to race and ancestry; *mestizo* when affirming both our Indian and Spanish (but we hardly ever own our Black ancestry); Chicano when referring to a politically aware people and/or raised in the U.S. (84-85)

Digging deeper into my opening narrative, it is no coincidence that I began to cop-out of calling myself Mexican after settling in the rural, predominantly white community from middle to high school—what I recently learned is the *Hernández v. the State of Texas*<sup>9</sup> town. But, even

---

<sup>9</sup> *Hernández v. the State of Texas* was a significant case because through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ethnic Mexicans who decided to stay after the Texas border was re-drawn, moved from the Nueces River to the Rio Grande River, were legally classified as white. However, as the necessity of the case shows, they were racialized. As result of that racialization, Mexican Americans were not being judged by a jury of their peers. “The Court recognized in *Hernandez* that Jackson County failed to offer any evidence that contradicted the assertion that Mexican Americans were discriminated against—helping to establish the existence of a social class in Texas. This recognition of discrimination led the Supreme Court to decide to extend Fourteenth Amendment protections to persons of any distinct social class” (Bradshaw 369-70). Significant to the point is that none of the local history was taught in Edna, TX like in other places. Not teaching local histories helps perpetuate white ignorance, and even white privilege by the investment in cultural amnesia.

when I no longer desired to cop out, I hesitated. I hesitated because as Deena. J. González recognizes, “[t]he question that emerges. . . is. . . how *much* to be Chicana and in what circles or locations to situate that identity, or, have it situated for one” (135). Because I did not believe my *actions* overtly aligned with the politics required to consider myself a Chicana, I did not feel Chicana enough.

While we Chicanas consider the question of *how much*, it is not a question that is disconnected from the influence of the Dominant U.S. Eurocentric epistemology reproduced in formal education settings, including higher education. Typically, institutions of higher education, and similar institutions that require women to document their identity, continue to enact present-day colonization through the reproduction of institutional pressures that direct them to categorize themselves as Hispanic or Latina, excluding Chicana as an option. At the higher education level, self-identification on forms is especially pertinent as for many women, it may be one of the formative experiences in their adult life when they must officially document their identity on forms.

The limited options for identification deny women the opportunity to redefine themselves from the previous restrictions placed upon them by documents such as their birth certificate that, for women who can be classified as mestizas, label their race as white. Such classification is a gross misrepresentation as it hides the fact that Mexican-Americans have historically been and continue to be targets of racism and discrimination (Madrid 49). Overall, constraints and conditions, such as the ones previously mentioned, created by the dominant culture are factors that lead Chicanas to reject the identity. Further, within common first-year college courses, Chicanas also face issues which include marginalization, misrepresentation, and the lack of adequate access to culturally relevant education. The identity constraints along the



aforementioned issues within classes no doubt have an effect on the perceptions women hold of themselves and their cultures, which places them in a position to easily accept dominant narratives. Therefore, projects like mine are necessary not only to highlight the suppression of Chicana identity, but also to counter dominant narratives women are taught to accept in higher education.

Writing instruction (which includes the teaching of rhetoric) and dominant student success programs contribute and reproduce conditions that lead women of Mexican heritage to reject a Chicana identity. Based on my own experiences with the two locations and the scholarship produced in each field, white benevolence<sup>10</sup> leads administrators and instructors<sup>11</sup> to knowingly, or unknowingly, engage in color-evasive, assimilatory practices that also contribute to epistemological injustice and identity suppression. In both sites, white benevolence continues to reinforce the racial hierarchy through the lack of opportunities for identity development and affirmation. In broad strokes, lack of opportunities for identity development and affirmation translates into the two parts of epistemological injustice: hermeneutical and testimonial injustice. Thus literacy, writing, and rhetoric are integral when it comes to epistemological justice because of their roles in understanding, interpreting experiences, and making oneself heard, which I will discuss in more depth later along with white benevolence.

---

<sup>10</sup> Also called saviorism, paternalism, charity, humanitarianism, messianism, philanthropy, and righteousness (Bebout 110). According to Bebout, “white benevolence is a form of racial paternalism. . . stripping away the agency of communities of color. . . reinforcing racial hierarchies the guise of protectionism” (14-15). Historically, white benevolence in education dates back to Americanization schools. As cases in California note, Mexicans/Mexican-Americans were also segregated into separate schools, mostly due to racism (Mexicans were seen as “dirty mixed breeds” as the result of mestizaje in Latin America, linguistic prejudice and claims that they needed to learn basic hygiene. Because of the last two, whites argued that Mexicans would fall behind and needed special help.

<sup>11</sup> Racialized or not, white ignorance “will often be shared by nonwhites to a greater or lesser extent because of power relations and patterns of ideological hegemony” (Mills 22).

White benevolence can also be seen in both sites by the limited use of the term race and instead using “less-threatening euphemisms such as *diversity* and *underrepresentation*” (Ruiz 5), as well as other metaphors like “inclusion and social justice” (Ruiz 5). Such reframing, then, reproduces dominant narratives of white benevolence by centering white acts of *goodness*. However, in the case of writing instruction and student success, ideas of goodness and goods are intertwined. Therefore, I focus on these two sites because, unlike others, they are understood as providing the general preparatory services required for students to advance in their college careers; in essence giving students the goods required to achieve whiteness from a benevolent stance.

In student success, white benevolence can be traced back to the 1980s, and since then a growing number of colleges and universities have instituted student success initiatives to increase retention of “non-traditional” and “diverse” students which function from an epistemology of white benevolence. This institutional investment has resulted in multiple, ongoing conversations regarding what students need in order to succeed in college. As students who are likely to leave institutions are likely to do so within the first year of college, many retention researchers center their attention there and align with what John N. Gardner has coined as The First-Year Experience. Other researchers focus on student success initiatives beyond the first year: Vincent Tinto is known for his student support model and George D. Kuh for his work on student engagement. However, these dominant student success models, which ultimately stress student acculturation and college-readiness, fail to have a significant impact on the targeted students.

Explanations for this lack of impact include inadequate designs of initiatives for at-risk students (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot); the lack of a cohesive and easy to understand student

support model (Tinto); and unsatisfactory student learning experiences (Kuh). While such explanations are not entirely wrong, their dependence on an identity- and politically-neutral understanding of education is problematic and works from an epistemology of white ignorance. Scholars who work from marginalized and critical perspectives argue that traditional student success initiatives, and common explanations for their failure, do not take student identities into account in meaningful ways (Harper). In particular, they are founded on colonialist logics which view communities of color as deficient. This is problematic because ultimately, racially minoritized students are taught to engage and interact with the university, their communities, and themselves with those same logics.

For example, in *Thriving in College and Beyond*, a textbook used in some first-year seminar classes, students are taught that there are four principles of college success: active involvement, use of campus resources, interpersonal interaction and collaboration, and personal reflection and self-awareness. In essence, those four principles reflect Tinto's theory of student departure. His argument is that student retention rates would improve if the guiding principle for institutional action centered the social and intellectual growth of the students. Scholars and researchers who have scrutinized Tinto's theory did so on the basis that there were problems when attempting to apply his model across race and ethnic backgrounds. According to Adele Lozano, Tinto revised his model and "admitted that student participation in college life does not necessarily indicate actual integration in social and academic systems" (6). Lozano also stated, "[it] is an important distinction, because despite the fact that racial/ethnic minority students may participate in the social and academic life of an institution, it is possible that because of historic, structural, and institutional racism, they may not feel a sense of belonging or integration in the

life of the institution” (7). Even more, she, like others points out that concepts like integration and acculturation are problematic when it comes to marginalized students.

Notably, as quoted in *Teaching First-Year College Students* and originally published in *Challenging & Supporting the First Year Student*, Kuh writes, “For many students . . . the initial weeks of the first academic term are like being in a foreign land” (86). While Kuh is not speaking to a student audience, in *Thriving in College and Beyond*, a textbook used in some first-year seminar classes, Cuseo, Thompson, Campagna, and Fegas use a similar metaphor: “Your movement into higher education represents an important life transition. Somewhat like an immigrant moving to a new country, you’re moving into a new culture with different expectations, regulations, customs, and language” (xxx). Composition and rhetoric scholars have used similar language when discussing first-year students’ acquisition of writing skills, the initiation into academic discourse; some “dignify the struggles of basic writers by characterizing [the] struggles as confrontations not just with a new language or new genres but with a whole new world view” (Bizzell 22). That new world view being an academic one “makes a strong bid to control all of a student’s experience” (Bizzell 23) in sites of literacy intervention.

Acquisition of an academic world view in sites of writing instruction (which include the teaching of rhetoric) stunt Chicana identity development because the teaching of writing creates spaces that are typically rooted in Eurocentric systems of knowing that privilege Standard American English (SAE)<sup>12</sup> for the sake of mastering academic discourse. According to Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur, there are two predominant perspectives on language difference, which I argue are based on white benevolence and reproduce epistemological injustice: 1) an eradicationist perspective wherein writers are expected to conform to universal and uniform

---

<sup>12</sup> I zero in on language difference because as Anzaldúa states, “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself” (81).

conventions (SAE); thus, instructors seek to eradicate difference in the name of correctness; and 2) an accommodationist perspective wherein writers have been given rights to their own language but must compartmentalize their difference; thus instructors acknowledge language difference but codify language practices in the name of domain-specific appropriateness (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur 303).

While Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur parse out two perspectives on language difference, a combination of the two is constantly at play. The constant play between eradicationist and accommodationist perspective is informed by three social epistemologies: white ignorance, white privilege, and white benevolence. White ignorance and white benevolence are epistemologies which people of all groups can reproduce. In fact, one of the foundational givens through the counterstories I present is racially minoritized students' and instructors' uncritical acceptance of white benevolence and white ignorance. There is, however, one key difference when it comes to the reproduction of white ignorance and benevolence: white privilege. Racialized people do not have the same access to white privilege, regardless of how much white benevolence they are gifted with or how much white benevolence and white ignorance they embody.

Thus, the symbiotic relationship I see between the two language perspectives is one that I am compelled to document in order to show the ways in which the teaching of writing as its own entity and as an extension of dominant student success models in higher education impact and deny the important development of Chicana literacies. More so, once Latinas begin to engage in literacy and rhetorical practices based on an epistemology of white ignorance in the name of (white) benevolence, the opportunity for Chicana identity development and affirmation is stunted. It is stunted because the language, literacy and rhetorical practices they have been given

a chance to collect through institutional practices beginning early in their formal education years provide them with the dominant's shared tools of interpretation with limited to no formal opportunities to apply and learn those which aren't.

It is important to note that while teachers and/or academics have attempted to reflect on how the two perspectives of language difference play out in course design and assessment today, not to long ago it was common practice for students, particularly in K-12 settings, to be physically punished and segregated for speaking a language other than English at school. That highlights the more sinister beginnings of white benevolence. Historically, having separate schools for Anglos and Mexicans was a good thing because "the Mexican students' language, Spanish, was a tremendous handicap" (Madrid 54) and "through the teaching of American customs, the repute of the Mexican children would rise to the level of the White students" (Madrid 54). In other words, stripping Mexicans of their culture and substituting it with whiteness was not only a successful outcome, but the ideal one as well. Under the pretense of white benevolence, whites justified racism.

Based on my own lived experience, what I have witnessed, and the scholarship produced by racially minoritized individuals, I know the lack of opportunities for Chicana identity development and affirmation in writing studies and in dominant models of student success is no accident; it is a part of a continual system that perpetuates epistemological injustices in order to thrive. All of which keep girls and women from developing a Chicana identity, impedes girls and women from accepting and viewing themselves as Chicana, and decreases the chances for Chicana cultural resilience. In order to highlight that, I will rely on CRT's counterstorytelling methodology specifically grounded in LatCrit and Chicana feminism. In particular I will weave

together composite counterstories primarily rooted in testimonio, and also pull from work by individuals speaking from minoritized positions, published scholarship, and current events.

Within writing studies my dissertation project relates to the growing Latinx scholarship calling for the decolonization of and anti-racist work in the discipline challenging the oppressive normative structures in academia—normative structures that perpetuate epistemological injustice and oppression. Specifically, I aim to stress how mainstream first-year composition curricula continue to mirror colonial logics of the larger sociopolitical sphere, leading to forced assimilation by not providing opportunities for Chicana identity development and affirmation. Documenting the epistemological injustice in formal education in the U.S. shows that the cracks in the Chicana educational pipeline are a direct result of the pervasiveness of white benevolence in education, which oppresses the epistemologies of racially minoritized people. Therefore, I position myself as a testimonialista to specifically fight against the hermeneutical and testimonial injustice white benevolence enacts on racially minoritized people.

My dissertation project, then, is significant when it comes to teaching in sites of literacy intervention in that it highlights how the lack of consideration of social epistemologies allows the dominant narrative to claim my experience as a success story. Through testimonio, which emphasizes the connection between the individual and collective experiences of Latinas, we can more clearly see how pertinent the question of continual identity development and affirmation is in relation to writing and rhetoric, and literacy. Instead of reproducing ideas of college success and completion as the ultimate success, I pivot to the idea that continual identity development and affirmation efforts Latina students work to complete college is a more successful outcome. I will use the term *adelante* as a way to reject the terms of retention and persistence. *Adelante* is technically an adverb and when translated into English can mean forward or onward. It is

typically used in cultural-political contexts as a word of encouragement, empowerment, and a rallying cry. In line with its interpretation as a rallying cry, and as I mentioned before, this project is the next step of my journey as a Chicana—my process of *adelante*. That is, at this point of my life, when it comes to me specifically, *adelante* looks like moving forward by documenting my journey so that other Chicanas, who need to find the same or similar hermeneutical tools, can find them and testimonial justice here.

Overall, the goal of my dissertation is to show how counterstories can give rise to *adelante*. That will be done in two ways: the content of the counterstories in which the characters are presented at different stages of *adelante*, and my use of intraludes which serve as an example of how and when my process of weaving the counterstories together created an epistemologically just space. Thus, this project is not all about the reader as an audience, but also my development as a Chicana at this point of my academic career and what I feel I must do in order to keep earning the right to call myself as such. I am holding not only my readers accountable, but myself as well. In addition, through the content and with the rhetorics used, I am demonstrating to other Latinas who are at different points of their academic journeys—from late high school years to graduate school and beyond—some of the challenges they may face and how *adelante* can help them progress through it. Noteworthy is the fact that Latinas are my primary audience even if they serve as writing program administrators and teachers in sites of literacy intervention, my hope is that they, too, are able to learn and incorporate *adelante* in what they do.

Given that I draw from social epistemologies such as white benevolence, white ignorance, and white privilege, there are significant lessons that both Latinas and white women can learn: 1) that embracing counterstory is a method that can be incorporated into curricula to support the development and affirmation of racially minoritized individuals and groups; 2) that



counterstories can make room for racially minoritized epistemologies and racially minoritized rhetorics and literacies. Ultimately, I hope that through the use of counterstory as a Critical Race Methodology and application of Chicana rhetorics, that other Chicanas, who need to find the same or similar hermeneutical and testimonial tools, can find them here in order to experience a sense of epistemological justice and incorporate those tools into their academic settings as students or otherwise.

### **Theoretical Frameworks: Critical Race Theory/Latinx Critical Race Theory and Chicana Feminism**

*Critical Race Theory.* Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Chicana feminism will serve as the foundational theoretical frameworks for my dissertation project. According to Iris D. Ruiz “Critical Race Theory is a type of decolonizing knowledge. . .questioning an allegedly objective body of knowledge” (13). Ruiz also points out that “[t]o perform CRT is to enact a type of epistemic disobedience” (Ruiz 13). CRT, which in part builds on the radical feminist movement as well as Chicano movements of the sixties and early seventies among others (5), and with its civil rights movement roots, will serve as the foundational theoretical framework for my dissertation project because it provides a lens for me to view “race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination” (Delgado Bernal 110).

Scholars in education and other disciplines have turned to CRT as a theoretical framework out of:

frustration not only in searching for research on People of Color, often finding deficit explanations of their behavior and social circumstances, but also in looking for qualitative research methodologies that are critically sensitive in their abilities to situate

lived experience within a broader sociopolitical frame—both in the final research product and throughout the entire research process. (Malagon, Huber, and Vélez 253)

Similarly, with regard to the teaching of writing, scholars in writing studies have argued that current methodologies for writing assessment and curriculum/program development do not adequately account for race. Therefore they have recommended instructors rely on a CRT theoretical framework to build methodologies that better account for race (Inoue; Martinez) and engage in a “sustained examination of race, racism, and the effects of both on composition instruction and effective writing program administration” (as cited in Martinez 68).

Scholars in literacy studies have relied on CRT to understand “the interconnectedness and influences of race in literacy learning and teaching” (Willis 53) and to understand literacy as a “racial battleground”(Ladson-Billing ix) — “the site of struggle for racial justice while it simultaneously served as a site of racial injustice, since it was sometimes used to rationalize White privilege” (Ladson-Billing ix). Likewise, I view literacy as a site for racial justice and will rely on CRT to counter the deficit perspectives functioning in three touchstone locations where students commonly experience, what can be arguably called, literacy interventions within the first year of college: First-Year Experience programs/student success programs, first-year composition courses and writing centers; the latter two being grouped into writing instruction which includes the teaching of rhetoric.

***Latinx Critical Race Theory.*** While CRT is a foundational theoretical framework that considers the centrality of race and racism in systems of subordination, the framework is typically used in work that discusses issues of race and racism generally. In order to specifically focus on Latinx people’s experiences of race and racism, educational researchers such as

Solórzano and Yosso have relied on the LatCrit branch of CRT to more accurately represent, embody, and inform Latinx experiences, keeping in line with the five central elements of CRT.

Using LatCrit, specifically, educational researchers such as Daniel Solórzano, Tara Yosso, and Lindsay Pèrez Huber, have been able to design, develop, and implement research methodologies “used to reveal the ways Latinas/os experience race, class, gender, and sexuality, while also acknowledging experiences related to issues of immigration status, language, ethnicity, and culture” (Pèrez Huber, 79) as well as “identity, [and] phenotype” (Delgado Bernal 108). According to Delgado Bernal, CRT and LatCrit are both used to: “explore the ways that so-called race-neutral laws and policies perpetuate racial and/or ethnic and gender subordination” (Delgado Bernal 108). While both challenge ideas of colorblindness and meritocracy, LatCrit differs from CRT in that it “is concerned with a progressive sense of a coalitional Latina/Latino pan-ethnicity, and it addresses issues often ignored by critical race theorists” (Delgado Bernal 108). The focus is on Latinx communities specifically and minoritized communities in general (Solórzano & Yosso 38). LatCrit also allows for specific Latinx identities to be centered, such as the Chicana identity.

***Chicana Feminist Epistemological Framework.*** Raced-gendered epistemologies are supported by the five important elements that CRT and LatCrit share: 1) the importance of transdisciplinary approaches; 2) an emphasis on experiential knowledge; 3) a challenge to dominant ideologies; 4) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; 5) a commitment to social justice. Broadly speaking, a Chicana feminist epistemology is what Delgado Bernal considers a raced-gendered epistemology. According to Delgado Bernal, critical raced-gendered epistemologies . . . “offer unique ways of knowing and understanding the world based on the various raced and gendered experiences of people of color”

(107). One way Chicanas come to know and understand the world is through liminality—most of us being a product of both Latin American Spanish colonizers and the colonized, as well as colonial subjects of British colonization here in the U.S.

As a raced-gendered epistemology, I will rely on a Chicana feminist framework specifically to “work from ways of knowing that are in direct contrast<sup>13</sup> with the dominant Eurocentric epistemology” (110) and to “seek political and social change on behalf of communities of color” (110). I will also use a Chicana feminist framework to write composite counterstories that “view experiential knowledge. . . as a strength and acknowledge that the life experiences of students of color are uniquely individual while at the same time both collective and connected . . . [and] consider pedagogies of the home, which offer culturally specific ways of teaching and learning and embrace ways of knowing that extend beyond the public realm of formal schooling.” (109).

For my dissertation project, then, I will rely on the epistemic resources and abilities of a Chicana epistemology to create a discursive space where I document a collective story. That collective story is a testimonio, which encompasses experiences outside of and inside of academia, while challenging dominant notions of who can construct knowledge and the form that constructed knowledge must take (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 3). However, rather than only narrating a personal testimonio, for my dissertation I will weave together three composite counterstories which include my lived experience as a source but do not present my personal lived experience as a narrative—with the exception of the intraludes. The epistemic

---

<sup>13</sup> I have been asked if the “dichotomy” between non-dominant and dominant is productive. As a Chicana, my answer is yes, specifically because of our liminality and the erasure we experience. And perhaps more importantly, a Chicana epistemology works to challenge the beliefs in dichotomies, drawing from the duality of deities in Mexica culture.

resources and abilities I use to create a discursive space include using Chicana rhetorics of difference and borderlands rhetoric.

Chicana's establish rhetorics of difference by including "memories of the seemingly mundane, such as memories of mothers cooking or of back-breaking manual labor . . . experiences in their homes, on the streets, and with their friends" (Lisa Flores 148). They also fuse the public and private, use first person, multiple languages, and multiple tones, "including academic, autobiographical, and poetic" (Lisa Flores 145). They do so to emphasize the significance of their culture and lives, rejecting of the external. That rejection allows Chicanas to establish themselves as "different from stereotyped perceptions and different from dominant culture" (145) to name themselves. Borderlands rhetoric involves, as previously implied in rhetorics of difference, the experiences of living in two worlds. Based on that, Chicanas "put language into play by using disruptive discursive strategies that reflect our lived experiences as fragmented, partial, real, and imagined, and always in the process of becoming" (Licona 106)<sup>14</sup>. Overall, I use both rhetorics in the composite counterstories to document forms of epistemological injustice and reveal systems of injustice created and reproduced by the Dominant U.S. Eurocentric epistemology operating in the institution of higher education.

### **Methodology: Counterstory as a Critical Race Methodology**

This project is based on a Critical Race Methodology (CRM) that aligns with the CRT framework I described in the section above. A CRM can include, as Aja Martinez states, "various methods such as storytelling, family histories, biographies, cuentos, testimonios, and counterstory" (46). In particular, critical race methodology has been used to specifically challenge "biological and cultural deficit stories" (37) reproduced in education "through

---

<sup>14</sup> I use both a Chicana rhetoric of difference and borderlands rhetoric throughout each counterstory. I encourage you to analyze each counterstory, and even intraludes, for them.

counterstorytelling, oral traditions, historiographies, *corridos*, poetry, films, *actos*, or by other means” (37). Work using a critical race methodology also relies on data from in and out of school settings and such data is seen “as valid, appropriate, and necessary forms of data” (37).

According to Solórzano and Yosso:

Critical race methodology contextualizes student-of-color experiences in the past, present, and future. It strategically uses multiple methods, often unconventional and creative, to draw on the knowledge of people of color who are traditionally excluded as an official part of the academy.

Counterstory, as a Critical Race Methodology informs my project because as a methodology, it is “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (Solórzano and Yosso, “Critical Race Methodology,” 32.) Counterstories, then, are particularly important to my project because they “can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform” (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, and Solórzano 95). Ultimately, I aimed to use counterstories to intervene and push back on the majoritarian narratives of white benevolence reproduced in student success and writing studies, which reinforce racism and notions of white superiority—because while whites believe they are being helpful, they promote whiteness at the expense of the development of other identities—with their accompanying literacies and epistemologies.

I also weave together composite counterstories because this type of telling emphasizes collective experiences. More specifically, my goal is to answer Martinez’s call to employ a critical race counterstory methodology that is “a hybrid form of scholarly inquiry and specifically rely on composite counterstorytelling as a writing genre” (69). According to Hunn, Guy & Mangliitiz “[c]omposite stories or narratives represent an accumulation, a gathering

together, and a synthesis of numerous individual stories” (244-245). While I have included testimonial aspects in this dissertation, I weave composite counterstories because they offer a certain level of anonymity.

In order to weave together the counterstories, I gathered the data to synthesize. While I weaved data from multiple sources and take the shape of stories, the composite counterstories are not fictional because the sources and information gathered are from real sources, such as “statistical data, existing literatures, social commentary, and authors’ professional/personal experiences concerning the topics addressed--for the discourse, setting, and characters” (Martinez 69) and involve “the critical examination of theoretical concepts and the humanization of empirical data” (Martinez 69). Sources incorporated into the counterstories, borrowing from Solórzano and Yosso, will be chosen based on Strauss and Corbin’s theoretical sensitivity, which “refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (as quoted in Solórzano and Yosso 476). As outlined by Delgado Bernal, sources will also be chosen based on cultural intuition, which “is achieved through. . . personal experiences (which are influenced by ancestral wisdom, community memory, and intuition), the literature on and about Chicanas, professional experiences, and the analytical process we engage in when we are in a central position of our research and our analysis” (as quoted in Solórzano and Yosso 476).

I first planned to decide on the data and then chose which form/style the counterstories would take. There are various styles of composite counterstories, such as chronicles, narratives, allegories, parables and dialogues (Delgado, “Storytelling” 2438). In writing studies, Martinez has also advanced sophisticated argument, book reviews, and narrative pedagogy as styles for composite counterstories. Based on Martinez’s work, the form/style selected for each

counterstory are chosen to achieve rhetorical effectiveness (37). The style of a composite counterstory, then, can be considered “a communicative form that relates its purpose to the audience as story, most heavily relying on the personal as a strategy” (Martinez 37). However, as the project took shape, the data drove the form/style (and vice versa). That was a result of my reliance on cultural intuition, theoretical sensitivity, and the personal as strategy which led the way for the form/style of each episode in order to achieve rhetorical effectiveness.

Latinas/Chicanas in high school are, technically, my primary audience followed by Latina graduate students, faculty and administrators, and last but not least, everyone else. Thus, I worked to balance audience needs, and decided to make each counterstory as “non-academic” as possible<sup>15</sup>.

Throughout each counterstory, I examine the logics of white benevolence, white privilege, and white ignorance in dominant models of student success and the teaching of writing as causes of the cracks in the Chicana educational pipeline. I weave together composite counterstories, a form of counterstory-telling that draws from various sources such as scholarship and current events. Using linear and nonlinear strategies, readers can follow each individual character’s thread linearly by jumping to and from pages using cross-reference links in the footnotes or choose to read the counterstories from beginning to end. My dissertation includes three counterstory episodes: *Pedagogies of the Home*, *Toward an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom*, and *Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation*. Within each episode, I have threaded the journeys of three characters together: a first-year college student, Esperanza, the writing center director Luz, who recently earned her PhD; and the first-year

---

<sup>15</sup> In rhetoric and writing studies that fact is stressed in Casie Cobos words: “if we do not start (re)considering the ways that marginalized peoples—including Latin@s and Chican@s—have always already participated in histories of rhetoric, we will continue to construct histories as traditional and necessary, or radical and extraneous” (133).



writing instructor, Caridad. Each character plays a role in highlighting how, by means of white benevolence, privilege, and ignorance, Chicana identity development and affirmation is stunted in spaces of literacy intervention. As a reader, you should engage with the counterstories as a character as well. Reflect on moments where you see or think white benevolence, ignorance, and privilege. Where do your understandings and beliefs intersect with the stories? What could they add to the counterstories?

### **Chapter and Intralude Outline**

Using intraludes, I also weaved myself a thread to make visible the amount of intellectual and emotional labor that I had to expend in the years before I began to write this dissertation. I do so for audience members who want to know more about my personal process when it comes to how I was able to learn about CRT/LatCrit and counterstory. I also use the intraludes to lead readers to understand how writing this project helped me experience epistemological justice, how I used my graduate program to develop my own sense of being a Chicana. That is, the intraludes are one piece I use to contend that when incorporated in sites of literacy intervention by instructors and administrators, counterstory can help create the conditions necessary for *adelante*: opportunities for the identity development and affirmation of racially minoritized students as they navigate college and (re)negotiate ideas of success.

The intraludes are composed of emails I sent to Dr. Tarabochia who is a white/anglo woman and Dr. Ríos who is a Chicana, blog posts I wrote, and assignments I completed in my Research Methods class. As the intended recipient of my emails, Dr. Tarabochia is my dissertation chair. When it comes to content included related to my Research Methods class, I interact with Dr. Tarabochia as my professor for that specific class (she was already my chair at

that point). Dr. Ríos serves as one of my dissertation committee members. I did not get the chance to take a class with her.

### ***Part I: Pedagogies of the Home***

I open this project with Part I: Pedagogies of the Home. Delgado Bernal (2001) defines pedagogies of the home as “the communication, practices and learning that occur in the home and community...and serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps Chicanas...negotiate the daily experiences of sexist, racist, and classist microaggressions” (624). In this counterstory episode, the character who is in the midst of developing and affirming a Chicana identity throughout the entirety of the project, Esperanza is introduced. Throughout the episode Esperanza moves through events and environments where she learns about herself through pedagogies of the home, consejos, cuentos, educación, and respeto (Guzman-Martinez). As she moves through events, the episode develops as her family stresses the importance of education and builds to the point where she must make the decision to attend college or not, and her decision process includes lessons she learned from the pedagogies of the home.

### ***Part II: Towards an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom***

Part II: Towards an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom centers the role first-year writing classes play in assimilation through the naturalization of monolingual, monocultural approaches to the teaching and learning of writing. As such, this counterstory episode explores the possibility of *adelante* as Esperanza the writer, Luz the writing center director, and Carrie, Esperanza’s first-year writing instructor, work together to talk about potential ways the class can be more epistemologically just.

### ***Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation***

In Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation, assimilation and the concept of *adelante* are explored more broadly with consideration to the relationship between informal and formal education that can lead to identity development and affirmation. Narratives of what Luz, Esperanza, and Caridad know and how they know it move together as each character represents an expression of what it means to be(come) a Chicana.

### ***Conclusion***

The concluding chapter contains a more in-depth discussion of each counterstory. I show where I have applied the elements of a Chicana raced-gendered epistemology—pedagogies of the home, experiential knowledge, transdisciplinary approach, challenge to dominant ideologies, and commitment to social justice. Further, I highlight how this whole project shows how counterstories can serve epistemological just goals and as such, demonstrate with the aid of intraludes how weaving together counterstories for this project itself led me to engage in creating an epistemologically just space and writing process by engaging in the project as Chicana feminist using, as Lisa Flores states, our “own creative works as a tool in the discursive construction of a space of their own” (143).

### Thread 4 Intralude I: Voy a Ser lo que Voy a Ser

February 16, 2017<sup>i</sup>

To: Gabriela Rios

Subject: Reading Suggestions

Hi Gabi,

Sorry for not responding to your previous email!

I have actually been struggling with the fact that I am not currently active in the world beyond grad school; it feels very wrong to just sit and think about the issues of today and not take action. This is probably the biggest reason I do not identify as Chicana. It's something I am trying to figure out though.

Anyway, I was wondering if there were any specific readings you would recommend that would involve me in the Chicana comp-rhet/rhet-comp world, like beyond Anzaldúa?

-Anna

---

\*\*\*

Treviño, Anna. "From dreaming of being Tejano music singer to being a higher ed

administrator." *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress. <https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/05/>.

Accessed May 13, 2021.

May 27, 2017

The first career I ever dreamed of was singing. In fact, I wanted to be "a singer like Selena."

Currently, it's a writing center director, but eventually I want to be an Associate Vice President for Student Success. From Tejano singer to higher ed administrator. I am not sure which,

---

<sup>i</sup> Spring 2017 was the fifth semester of my doctoral program. I began to work on compiling a reading lists for my comprehensive exam. Dr. Ríos is a Chicana and a professor serving on my dissertation committee. I never took a class with her.

statistically, would have been more probable considering my background is more like Selena's than that of most writing center directors<sup>ii</sup> and AVPs . Both are, most likely, highly improbable outcomes for their own reasons.<sup>iii</sup>

“Amor prohibido murmuran por las calles  
Porque somos de distintas sociedades  
Amor prohibido nos dice todo el mundo”<sup>i</sup>

Alas, here I am. PhD program. Ya mero.

“Carcacha, paso a pasito  
No dejes de tambalear  
Carcacha, poco a poquito”<sup>ii</sup>

Estoy mintiendo. Nunca se acabará.

Mis obligaciones son para siempre. Cada momento. Cada palabra que leyo. Cada palabra que escribo. Lo siento.

“Aaaayyy! Cómo me duele”<sup>iii</sup>

La realidad de ser Chicana caminando por este camino me daña y a veces pienso que . . .

“No me queda más  
Que perderme en un abismo  
De tristeza y lágrimas”<sup>iv</sup>

Pensando en las injusticias, la discriminación y las perjudicas que nuestra comunidad ha sufrido

“[Ha] llenado de luto mi vida  
Abriendo una herida en mi corazón  
. . . [y] . . .  
[Es] causa de todo mi llanto  
De mi desencanto y desesperación”<sup>v</sup>

---

<sup>ii</sup> I first began to work at the writing center during the summer of 2016.

<sup>iii</sup> I'm keeping my options open these days.

Pero yo sé que lo que hago no es para mí. El cambio es necesario. Tengo que continuar, luchar.  
¿Si no yo, quien?

“Y se emociona (y se emociona)  
Ya no razona  
Y me empieza a cantar (cantar)  
Me canta así así  
Bidi bidi bom bom”<sup>vi</sup>

Y la verdad es que es un ciclo de sentimientos y experiencias—hope, passion, strength, contentment, surety, tolerance, isolation, powerlessness, homesickness, intolerance, apathy, sadness, rinse and repeat. I do my best to stay within the good feelings. No doubt the wonderful people I have met on this journey help curb some of the bad feelings. But sometimes, it’s the Tower, the “peer” in class, the feeling of being the token, the ache for family, for my (Other) culture, that gets me, the tug-o-war of the us or them when I just want to be me.

“Amigo, no soy una muñeca  
Que le das cuerda cuando quieres”<sup>vii</sup>

It’s the resistance, for me, that leads to persistence. Knowing que hay algo en el otro lado de esto para mí, algo más que yo, que me da motivo para continuar, aunque no me quieran aquí, aunque creían que no merezco estar aquí, o aunque no soy la clase de persona que típicamente perciben poderosa o inteligente, no concederé. A todos que me duden:

“Quiero verte hasta sudar”<sup>viii</sup>

Yo voy hacer yo y . . .

“Si en mi no encontraste felicidad  
Tal vez alguien más te la dará”<sup>ix</sup>

Por supuesto es difícil, pero

“Ya me cansé de escuchar  
Oh excusas y más mentiras”<sup>x</sup>

~ ~ ~

*“Forbidden love, they whisper in the streets.  
Because we are from different social classes  
Forbidden love, the whole world says to us”*

*I am almost there.*

*“I should take it baby step by baby step.  
I shouldn’t give up.  
I should continue little by little”*

*I am lying to myself. That the difficulty will never end.*

*My obligations are forever. Each moment. Each word that I read. Each word I write. I feel it.*

*“Oh, how it hurts.”*

*The reality of being Chicana on this path damages me and sometimes I think . . .*

*“That I have nothing left  
But to lose myself in an abyss  
Of sadness and tears”*

*Thinking about the injustices, the discrimination y the prejudices that our community has suffered*

*[Has] filled my life with mourning  
Opening a wound in my heart  
. . . [and] . . .  
[It’s] the cause of all my weeping,  
Of my disenchantment and despair”*

*But I know that what I do isn’t for me. Change is necessary. I have to continue, fight. If not me,  
then who?*

*And [my heart] gets excited (and gets excited)  
No longer reasons*

*And it starts to sing (sing)  
It sings like this  
Bidi bidi bom bom "*

*And the truth is that it is a cycle of feelings and experiences.*

*"My friend, I am not a doll  
That you can wind up when you want"*

*There is something on the other side of this for me, something more than me that motivates me to continue, regardless of whether I am wanted here, regardless of whether they believe I deserve to be here, or that I might not be the type of person they typically perceive has strong or intelligent, I will not give up. To everyone who doubts me:*

*"I even want to see you sweat"  
I am going to be me and . . .  
"If in me you didn't find happiness  
Maybe someone else can give it to you"*

*Of course it is difficult, but*

*"I am tired of listening to  
Ugh, excuses and more lies"*

---

Treviño, Anna. "Why Resistance and Healing?" *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress.

<https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/05/>. Accessed May 13, 2021.

May 31, 2017

Resistance and healing are key to my continual progress and success generally, but especially at a predominantly white institution (PWI). Of course, I wouldn't *know* this until being knee-deep



in the pain of it all—until I first picked up Gloria Anzaldúa’s *La Frontera*, read the first few sentences and I started to cry. **Lloré.**

Healing is painful, especially the needed healing you have learned to repress in order to succeed—the visibility and validation you have had to learn to live without, learned never to expect.

I still can’t *just* read Chicana works. I *still* cry. Pero, “**no hay tiempo ni espacio para llorar**”—

Si, el dicho that serves as the title of the intro de *Chicana Sin Vergüenza*, because it is true that “it hints at the urgency of working toward change” (Torres 3) and “also implies that we might have to work through some pain in order to accomplish effective relationships” (Torres 3).

Academic papers for class, scholarly proposals and articles must be written. Work must be done.

\*\*

Writing traditional academic papers as a ventriloquist is not my goal. My voice, I have decided, because of who I am and what I want to accomplish in this world, must be more. As I began to read Chicana works, I realized that I have never been alone in this thought. Many before me have felt and believed as I do. Many continue.

As I sit here at home and write, I see that acts of resistance such as this feel empowering. But, I know that is only half true. Acts of resistance are also damaging because it is painful to challenge the Dominant. This is true because my culture is, in Anzaldúa’s words, “*es una herida abierta*” where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture” (25).

I am not an *either/or*. I am an *and* living in situations that call for more or less of what surrounds my coordinating conjunction.

---

Treviño, Anna. ““How does a brown body know?” A reflection.” *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress.

<https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/06/>. Accessed May 13, 2021.

June 11, 2017

The reading that inspired this post:

Cruz, Cindy. “Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body.” *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspective on Pedagogy and Epistemology*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godines, and Sofia Villenas, State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 59-75.

Since first joining the conversation, I always rejected the notion of objectivity, as well as the rationality/feelings dichotomy—“by inviting feeling one does not automatically leave out the thought process.” As I continue to read Chicana feminist work and reflect on my experiences as a student and my teacher identity, I realize there is more to this rejection than a simple stance I took years ago (and found white authors to cite accordingly).

I think my move from South Texas to Oklahoma awoke me—the ache of wanting to be surrounded by people who *just get it*. This displacement/dismemberment from my culture isn’t the first; it’s just another, further leap into *success* that made it undoubtedly clear how my “brown body, in its migrations between first and third worlds, act and is acted on by the political and economic forces of globalization” (Cruz 62). The move was a shift in current, and I could

not articulate, but I could feel being swept into the Dominant waves of Terry Eagleton's Westward voyage (Cruz 62), and for many years, it is the direction in which I aimed to travel. It is the direction we are taught to desire though West is given other names like "college degree" and "social mobility." For many of us, a college degree is how we achieve social mobility. But no one ever tells you what you are giving up, that those goals aren't just about attaining good jobs that pay better; they are about accumulating whiteness, and in that process, rejecting our Otherness.

I've read scholarship that has the audacity to claim that deciding to pursue a college education is a commitment to the subjection of, in my words, whiteness. But what that scholarship conveniently ignores is that the people of the working classes, especially the people of color from the working classes are constantly bombarded with messages our entire lives that tell us who we are is not good enough, not enough to succeed. Eagerly, from the combination of seeing our families struggle and seeing ourselves as inadequate, we accept the terms and conditions of whiteness. Some of us reject it. Some of us push through it. Some of us live in the continual flux of acceptance, rejections, and pushing through it.

Talk to me about retention, and I can tell you about what I've read, but mostly, I'll want to talk about what I saw and experienced as a FYS instructor. In academia, I am taught that the scholarship trumps my experience every time, as contradictory, as inefficiently practiced that scholarship is, it wins. Academia tells me that empiricism matters more than my experiences. Academia tells me that I cannot be trusted, that I should not trust myself. But if I happen to read something in a journal that supports my experience, well then, that's a different story. How does

the brown body know in academia? It doesn't, so it's given "objective tools," "logic," and "reason" created by and reproduced for white bodies.

I have never and still don't desire to publish anything I write for class, as much as my professors attempt to have us write publishable papers or conference presentations. I never really knew why, but I always told myself it is because I don't take class work as seriously as I would my own work. As I am working on my first publication (as a co-author), I get to see, feel, and hear my true voice. At the end of this semester [Spring 2017], I began reading Chicana feminist work to recover from another semester in a PhD program. I was shocked with what I discovered. I read people who sound like me (use a personal voice), who use two languages like I do, people who reject dualism and the dichotomy between emotion and reason...I share this with the Chicana feminists I have never read before from the 60s, 70s, and 80s.

I felt that the further along in academia I tread, the more disconnected I become from my cultural identity, the more I reject myself.

Brown bodies are still being colonized. As a result, our bodies accumulate similar needs and wounds, although separate in time and space.

The brown body knows lived theory.

---

Anna K. Treviño<sup>iv</sup>  
 ENGL 6103  
 5 September 2017  
 Response 2

[Llévame Como Equipaje](#)<sup>xi</sup>

---

<sup>iv</sup> ENGL 6103 was my Research Methods class during my last semester of course work. Dr. Tarabochia (a white/Anglo woman) was my professor for the class and had already been serving as my dissertation committee chair.

Currently, I am listening to music in Spanish while writing in English. I don't even understand how that is possible, but it is. It seems like I am thinking and writing in English while processing what I am hearing in Spanish at the same time. My brain, however, most likely isn't simultaneously processing two languages, but rather it is switching between the two quickly enough to make it seem that way (I'm going to look this up later). But, truly embodying my whole self rarely feels as seamless and harmonic. It's messy, difficult, overwhelming, and even painful at times.

When it comes to reading for class, that still holds true for me. It's never just a "yes, I agree" or "no, I disagree." Usually, it's more of a "...well, shit..." with a lot of frustration attached, followed by "I regret all my life choices that have led me to this moment." I guess this is my way of letting you know that I'll probably never have any answers, solutions, or certainty in response to readings this semester. With that said, I'm struggling with Cushman because I can't see how she is setting herself aside. I suppose it's the ideas of community involvement, reciprocity, and the "petty" acts of resistance, but something still seems off to me. A part of it is that I have grown to cringe at the word empower every time I read or hear it because I have learned to understand it as "leftist posing [which] assumes a here-I-am-to-save-the-day air" (Cushman 20). On one hand, I know there is the need for resources, access, and power, and I am sure this idea of empowering those without is how I got here (a PhD program). But, on the other hand, what does it mean to have gained/have been given access to an unjust system? How does that affect people?

It boils down to her question "How else will we be able to give in equal amount to what we take?" (20). Who gets to decide what that type of equity looks like? Is there even a such thing if we are already beginning from such a privileged position as academics? Being from a working-

class and Mexican-American home, I don't think so. I don't think that as an academic I could give back to the communities I hope to work with in fair amounts because even if it is reciprocal, I am gaining more privilege on the privilege I already have. I think what I can give back can be an attempt to less the gains gap, but I don't think it truly does.

I don't know what giving back means to me yet. I know this is something that I have felt missing, that I have felt the need to connect with communities, but I think a part of that is my own selfishness, because sometimes I do feel isolated in academia. I do feel like an outsider, and sometimes my otherness feels emphasized, and it's hard. It is hard to be from some place so different, to be on this path because I want to help, but because I also want to be home. At the end of the day, though, I don't have one. I have changed in ways that keep me from belonging at home, but in ways not complete enough to make academia my new home. I'm kind of this weird hybrid, and so home has to be some weird hybrid as well? I don't know what it means to hold commitments to communities of color and to academia, but I appreciated that Cushman did touch on the difficulty of being a volunteer and a researcher. Maybe the answer will always be that the answer will vary. That makes sense to me. Reciprocity will look different because it will always be negotiated.<sup>v</sup>

---

<sup>v</sup> Thread 4 Intralude II: No Se Si lo Puedo Hacer, p. 56

## End Notes

---

- <sup>i</sup> Music video by Selena performing “Amor Prohibido.” © 2001 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/sADUuDB2MzI>
- <sup>ii</sup> Music video by Selena performing “La Carcacha.” © 2001 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/mOpZylrrymM>
- <sup>iii</sup> Music video by Selena performing “Como La Flor.” © 2001 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/FwZTgDjRLM0>
- <sup>iv</sup> Music video by Selena performing “No Me Queda Más.” © 1995 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/hKVH5g99FPI>
- <sup>v</sup> Selena. “Tú Solo Tú.” *All My Hits: Todos Mis Éxitos*. Capitol Latin, 1999. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=VjDCsJs6pNE&feature=share>
- <sup>vi</sup> Music video by Selena performing “Bidi Bidi Bom Bom.” ©1995 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/qPkNVMtMXyc>
- <sup>vii</sup> Selena. “No Debes Jugar.” *All My Hits: Todos Mis Éxitos*. Capitol Latin. 1999. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=5k3AIAezXj0&feature=share>
- <sup>viii</sup> Music video by Selena performing “Techno Cumbia.” © 2001 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/UX3qQyZxEYM>
- <sup>ix</sup> Music video by Selena performing “Como La Flor.” © 2001 Q Production Inc. Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/FwZTgDjRLM0>
- <sup>x</sup> Music video by Selena performing “La Llamada.” *La Leyenda*. © © 2010 Capitol Latin, Exclusive License To Universal Music Latino, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/om3KWmuFRAA>
- <sup>xi</sup> Intocable. “Llévame En Tu Viaje” 2C. Capitol Latin, 2008. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=tsjfkYBBR38&feature=share>

### Part I: Pedagogies of the Home

It was hot in South Texas. High 90s. So, it wasn't a surprise that the kitchen in Esperanza's house was hot as well, despite the fact that the AC and ceiling fan were on. It was even less of a surprise considering all four stovetop burners were being used. Esperanza, her mother, and her older sister estaban preparando la cena. On one burner was Esperanza's favorite. Calabaza con pollo. She always loved the way the buttery-ness of the squash and the sweetness of the corn melded with the spices, particularly the comino and pimienta. She never knew what happened in the pot while it was cooking, but she was pretty much convinced love is what made it all come together. On the burner behind the calabaza con pollo, los frijoles were cooking. On the two burners on the right was a comal being warmed up for the tortillas. A lot of the times heat is considered uncomfortable, unpleasant, even dangerous. But to Esperanza, the heat in the kitchen always felt different. Comfortable. Probably because the kitchen was the heart of the house to her.

Just as the kitchen was the heart of the house, the dining room was the ears of the house. It's where the women in her family bonded through storytelling, where she loved to hear "the sounds of [her] mother and aunts gossiping--half in English, half in Spanish" (Moraga 26). This evening though, it was just the three of them, and only the specifics of the meal preparations had been discussed. She had just turned 14 a month before, so Esperanza knew at some point her mother would ask. And sure enough, this was that moment. Her mother waited until her sister Fe left the room and asked, "Esperanza, are you going to want to have a quinceañera?" Her older sister Fe didn't have one. She had gotten pregnant shortly after her 14th birthday. She had a boy, Angel. But that's not why her mom waited to ask until Fe was gone. It was because three years later, Fe was still trying to cope with Angel's death. He was 3 months old when he died of SIDS.



At the age of 11, Esperanza didn't know what SIDS was. Neither did her cousins who were around her age. When they asked their older cousin Vicky, who was older by two years and visibly annoyed by their question, she said the window was left open at night and a lechuza got in. Other than Vicky being annoyed, she also in part, told her younger cousins that a lechuza got Angel because after the funeral, Fe had changed in unexpected ways. Some people in the family started calling her a bruja.

On her way back to the dining room, Fe stirred each pot of food and checked to see if the comal was hot enough. Judging by how quickly she pulled her hand away, it was. She went to the table to grab two of the raw tortillas to cook. On her way back to the stove, she looked Esperanza in the eyes and said, "You should have one, Esperanza. Everything will come together nicely, and it will be a very important night for your future." And without another word being spoken, in the silence, the three knew that it had been settled. Esperanza would have a quince. To break the calm stillness, their mother got up from the table to check on the food.

"Ya deberia 'star. ¿Cuantas tortillas has hecho, Fe?"

"Tres, a Ma."

As Esperanza got up to clear the table Fe said, looking straight ahead at the wall behind the stove, "¿Sabes que? I think a dress de color de una lila te quedará bien."

"It's my favorite color," Esperanza replied.

"Unos cuantos más minutos le falta a la comida no mas," said their mother before she started humming. Fe and Esperanza looked at each other and quietly laughed. She was humming "Eres Tú" by Mocedades. It was obvious the song was how Esperanza got her name. At the beginning of the second verse, like they've done since they were little, Fe and Esperanza, began to sing along:

“Toda mi esperanza, eres tú, eres tú

Como lluvia fresca en mis manos

Como fuerte brisa, eres tú, eres tú

Así, así, eres tú”<sup>xii</sup>

They sang and hummed together until the song was finished--perfectly timed with when all la cena was hecha.

After turning off all the burners and arranging the tortillas in the tortillero, Fe turned to look in the direction of what would be the front door, if the wall separating the kitchen and living room did not exist. They heard the sound of a knock, the front door opening, quickly followed by a woman in a playful, throaty and cheery tone say: “Hel-LOOOO! ¿DÓNDE ‘STÁ la geeeennnt-TTTEEE?!” Fe, Esperanza, and their mother laugh in unison. Tía Estrella always made an entrance with the way she would change her voice. They heard two sets of feet walking towards the kitchen. “¿Porkkkke se rien?” Tía Leslie said in a higher-than-normal-pitch, sassy-child-like voice as she and Estrella walked into the kitchen.

“¡Que padre huele la comida, llegamos a tiempo, sister!!” Estrella said.

“¡Chifladas! Pasenle, hermanas, ya mero comenzábamos sin ustedes,” their mother replied mientras se saludan con besos--the traditional kiss on each cheek.

After they finished greeting each other, they each grabbed plates and begin serving themselves food. They made their way to the dining area sharing a few compliments about the smell and look of the food. After they sat down, Estrella was the first to speak. “Oye, tenemos que discutir si vas a querer tener una quince, Esperanza. Que tal.”

“Mom just asked her about that before you got here,” Fe replied.

She and Espy shared a knowing look, silently agreeing that it was clear their mother shared and discussed all matters with everyone in the family. At times, as a strategy to get things her way.

“Yes, I decided it would be okay to have one. Fe says it is important that I do.”

“¡Ándale!” Estrella exclaimed.

“OMYGOSH!” Leslie began. “¡Se acuerdan de lo que pasó en la quince de Anna?!” The pitch of her voice rose as she asked the question, culminating into uninhibited laughter from all. Of course everyone remembered. Esperanza’s mother continues:

“Le dije a Vero que no lo hiciera! That it would be a bad idea to push the slice of cake in her face because Anna has a bad temper...”

“Y LA TERCA lo hizo anyway ...” followed Estrella. The laughter continues. The volume of the conversation and laughter increases as the story goes on.

“Duuuude, but who would have thought that was going to happen??? Que Anna le iba a tirar la cuchilla!!”

“Pos, you can’t say she wasn’t WARNED!”

“She was lucky I had all the ingredients needed to make the healing cream so that she wouldn’t have a scar on her face...”

The story came to a close, and as the laughter subsides, the women shook their heads in unison.

Esperanza more often than not, did not contribute to the storytelling. Mostly because she loved to listen and watch the intimacy created by the interactive sharing of the stories. Her family knew that. They also understood that her laughter and investment in what was being said, how, and by whom is her form of participation. But someone would always be sure to speak to

her directly as a way of including her. Leslie says: “Ey, Espyyyy, sabemos que you are really good at writing, Miguelito needs some help with a paper he is writing for his Texas history class. Quiere saber si le puedes ayudar.”

“Por supuesto.”

“Great, I’ll let him know to call you.”

The liveliness of the conversation died down for a bit while they ate. But it never stayed quiet for long. That’s why Esperanza considered the dining area the ears of the house. They continued to tell stories and laugh until they finished the meal and even as they cleaned up afterward.

The next day, they contacted the family and let them know, asked who wanted to be padrinos for what. As Fe predicted, everything fell together nicely. But, no one ever doubted her.

\*\*\*

Her hair and make-up had already been done when La Madrina entered the dressing room in the salon. “Aquí tengo el vestido! Esperanza, are you ready to put on your dress?” she asked. Esperanza nodded. She couldn’t believe how fast the year went by. She remembered the day her mother asked her if she wanted a quince like it was yesterday. She knew that sometime soon, her mother would be ready to ask her if she was planning to go to college. It wouldn’t be as easy as it was for her to decide on having a quince. Esperanza’s parents had been seasonal migrant farm workers until she was 12. It was hard work, physically taxing, but her parents did what needed to be done for their family. Because of the labor conditions they suffered through, her parents, especially her mother, always stressed the importance of education. She knew her parents wanted a different life for their children and believed that education was the way to get that. But, it felt

like a lot of pressure. She would be the first in her family to go to college. She wasn't even sure what kind of job she wanted even though she was top ten percent of her class. She felt suffocated, not so much by her thoughts, but by the heaviness of her dress. The layers of tulle on the dress, petticoat, the hoop skirt. She did love the color of it, though. "Relax, it's going to be fun!" said Fe. La Madrina finished zipping up the dress. Esperanza turned around and was showered with compliments by those in the room with her: Tía Estrella and Leslie, her sister Fe, her mother, and La Madrina.

As they turn to make their way out of the room together, "Is your friend Luz going to make it after all?" Esperanza's mother asked La Madrina. "I don't know. La veo bien deprimida...me dijo que iba tratar, but she couldn't make any promises," La Madrina replied. "Oh, no se preocupen..." added Fe. Esperanza didn't hear a word. She was too busy looking out at the dance hall. Lilac paired against white, as well as the green of plants and flowers. The seven-tiered cake with a purple fountain. It all worked so well together. She watched the live band begin to set out their equipment. At first, she felt excited. But then she thought of how much it all must have cost. Her mother walks up beside her. "Don't worry. Everyone sponsored as much as they could afford. Like Fe said, it all worked out," she whispered to her while she hugged her.

Family and friends start filing in. Some carrying gifts and placing them on the designated table. Esperanza's mother grabbed her hand and led her a saludar la gente. Some guests she sort of remembered. Others she didn't remember knowing at all. Most asked if she remembered them. But they were all excited to be there and complimented her on how beautiful she looked. The things they said made Esperanza feel awkward but their energy warm, familial.

“Esperanza,” La Madrina called. “Las damas y los chamberlains ya están listos. Preguntan por ti.” Some of them were her cousins. Some were her friends. They were standing against the wall already paired up. Esperanza’s friend Robert was her escort/dancing partner for the night. “HEEEYYY,” they all shouted as she walked up to them. “HAPPY QUINCE!” Esperanza laughed. “Thanks guys.”

“Estoy LISTA para BAILAR!” Diana, Esperanza’s cousin, energetically expressed.

“Yeah, I’m SOOO ready to see you fall trying to dance,” Diana’s boyfriend teased.

The night went on. Pictures were taken. Posted to various social media platforms. A couple of them shared live moments on Facebook. Music played. [Intocable](#)<sup>xiii</sup>, [Michael Salgado](#)<sup>xiv</sup>, [Elida Y Avante](#)<sup>xv</sup>, [CNCO](#)<sup>xvi</sup>, [Wisín Y Yandel](#)<sup>xvii</sup>. And of course, La Reyna de Tejano, the one and only [Selena](#)<sup>xviii</sup>. Eventually, like always, la Macarena played. People danced, sang along, se rienian y chismeaban. People drank. Some too much. No one fell. Cake was eaten. Peacefully.

After the cake, it was time to open the gift of surprise. Typically, this gift is a grand gesture. Expensive. Many times playfully boxed in many boxes, like Russian nesting dolls, accompanied by helium balloons. People gathered around Esperanza, eager to see what was in the final box. With every box she opened, she simultaneously felt excitement and guilt. She got to the final box. Opened it. Pictures were taken. It was evident to Esperanza when she opened the final box that her mother had talked to pardinós in charge of the gift, her tía Estrella and tío Pancho, and convinced them a laptop would be the perfect gift. She understood the implicit message of the gift: go to college. Esperanza. Her name meant hope in English. That’s who she was in her family’s eyes. What they saw in Esperanza, *hope*. They hoped she would go to college. But they also had Fe, *Faith*. With Fe, the women in their family understood there were

many paths one could take. No matter what, *habría luz*. Fe herself exemplified that truth. After opening her *regalo de sorpresa*, La Madrina quickly turned and walked toward Esperanza. She wasn't alone though. She was walking over with the woman who had noticeably arrived late. Fe had pointed out the woman who arrived late to Esperanza earlier, nodding in her direction and saying, "She's probably the biggest Selena fan in the whole place. *Alamejor mas que ti.*" Esperanza side-eyed her sister, knowing there was something she knew but refused to tell her.

Whether Fe had her abilities since she was little, no one really knew. She never talked about it. But her family noticed little things. Mostly how the air would become lighter when she walked in a room; how she seemed to be able to manipulate the energy around her in good ways, and how sometimes she watched people with a certain expectation in her eyes, like she was waiting for something she already knew would happen. Within the last year she became a well-known *curandera* (to others a *bruja*), and her abilities got around by word of mouth. So, did her story. People said that after Angel died, God himself must have sent his own Angels to comfort Fe. That it was no coincidence she had named her son Angel. He must have been one of the Angels sent to her. That he only intended to give her enough strength to lift her spirit but that he accidentally slipped and gave her more. That excess was rumored to be what turned Fe into a *curandera*. That she saw no other way to thank God for what he had given her but to share her gift with others.

Fe gave freely. When anyone needed her, she was there, and she always knew when she was needed. Lately, she knew Esperanza was having a difficult time. That having to decide whether she would go to college was hard on her. Fe also knew that Esperanza would succeed no matter what decision she made. After all, she had already seen it. She was grounded and connected to her community. That's where all their family's strength came from. And each time

a story was told and retold, the ties of their community were strengthened. Esperanza's story was one that the women in their community had woven into it. Every story was linked. Sometimes, Fe's visions would let her see exactly how. That's why she pointed out that the lady with La Madrina was also a huge Selena fan to Esperanza. It was a detail that depending on the series of decisions Esperanza made, would be crucial about three years later.

### **Threads 1, 2 and 3 Begin to Entangle: Luz and Esperanza Meet and Caridad is Mentioned**

La Madrina and her friend reached Fe and Esperanza. La Madrina stood in front of Fe and the yet-to-be known woman in front of Esperanza. The four smiled at each other, and the woman was the one to break the silence. "Hi, nice to meet you all," she said while she extended her hand to shake Fe's and then Esperanza's. "Igualmente," both Fe and Esperanza said at the same time. La Madrina nodded excitedly and quickly explained to Fe and Esperanza that Luz is a profesora at the University and teaches writing, while looking directly into Esperanza's eyes. Luz laughed. It's the typical way she gets introduced to people in South Texas, but she laughed because it makes her uncomfortable. "Yes," Luz added, "I earned my PhD in writing studies and have taught writing classes in college. Now I am in charge of the writing center at the University." "Ha sí?" replied Esperanza's mother. La Madrina cut in, "Oyes, no que Agapita quit college because she had a lot of trouble writing? Que su profesora era Latina<sup>1</sup>, but que se creia muy buena, not having an accent, toda agringadad." "Es verdad. Ha si fue." The women nod. "Yeah, that's not uncommon," Luz said as she sighed. She turned her eyes to Esperanza with a look of sympathy.

Esperanza looked at her inquisitively and knew the reason this desconocida was invited was definitely connected to el regalo de sorpresa. It was a set up. It was like Fe read her mind in

---

<sup>1</sup> Thread 3: Carrie, Almost Caridad, p.65



that moment and said, “We’re trying to encourage Esperanza to go to college, but we know she has a great future ahead of her no matter what she decides.” Luz looked at Esperanza. “Yeah, I remember having to make that decision, too. Sometimes I regretted it. I seriously thought about quitting,” Luz said before her voice began to trail off as she finished her sentence, “and it wasn’t because I wasn’t a good student.” The three of them looked surprised. La Madrina asked, “Pos, if you were making good grades, I don’t know why you would want to quit??” Fe with a look of compassionate understanding, smiled gently and met Luz’s eyes, “It takes more than a brain studying to make it through. Todo el cuerpo tiene que estar de acuerdo.” In that moment Esperanza wasn’t sure, but she thought she saw Luz’s eyes tear up a little bit. She knew that she’d remember that moment often throughout the rest of her time in high school, and she was only a freshman.<sup>ii</sup>

## **Thread 2: Esperanza’s Choice**

It was in the beginning of November during her senior year in high school that Esperanza was called into the school counselor’s office. She had no idea why. She opened the door anxiously, unsure of what would happen when she stepped in. One of the two counselors greeted her. The white one. She told Esperanza that her grandmother had just called the office. She smiled as she said that her grandmother mostly spoke quickly and in Spanish but that she caught a few words and understood that Esperanza’s grandmother called them to make sure that she went to college. With all the support and push she had from her family, she decided she would at least apply. She still had the option of not going even if she was accepted. She didn’t have a car. She didn’t know how she would really be able to afford college.<sup>iii</sup>

---

<sup>ii</sup> Thread 1: Luz on the Beginning of Her Activism in the Borderlands, p. 60

<sup>iii</sup> Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza on the Path to Student Success, p.63

## End Notes

---

- <sup>xii</sup> Mecedades, Sergio and Estibaliz. “Eres Tú.” *20 Exitos*. MSM Agency, 1987. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn2HcxN6Npk&feature=share>
- <sup>xiii</sup> Music video by Intocable performing “Eres Mi Droga.” © 2015 Intocable, LLC. Exclusively Licensed to Universal Music Latin Entertainment, a division of UMG Recordings, Inc, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/nbAMbpy7FO8>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Salgado, Miguel “Michael.” “Cruz de Madera.” *Cruz de Madera*, Joey Records, 1994. *Spotify*, <https://open.spotify.com/track/2h4OfbEcHdMCdItEuQU0Vv?si=a72735c3fa7444d5>
- <sup>xv</sup> Reyna, Elida. “Duele.” *EYA*, Tejas Records, 1998. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=UnDxAB-OfRk&feature=share>
- <sup>xvi</sup> CNCO, Meghan Trainor, and Sean Paul. “Hey DJ (Remix).” *Hey DJ (Remix)*, Sony Music Latin, 2018. *YouTube Music*, [https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_1XpKHWMU0&feature=share](https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=n_1XpKHWMU0&feature=share)
- <sup>xvii</sup> Music video by Wisin & Yandel performing “Estoy Enamorado.” © 2010 Machete Music. Licensed to YouTube by UMG Recordings, Inc, *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/whBcmlaSLJM>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Selena. “Baila Esta Cumbia.” *All My Hits: Todos Mis Éxitos, Vol. 1*. Capitol Latin. 1999. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=hdOn90IbM8U&feature=share>

### Thread 4 Intralude II: No Se Si lo Puedo Hacer

Anna K. Treviño<sup>i</sup>  
ENGL 6103  
12 September 2017  
Response 3

#### Final Destination?

While it's hard to believe, it is not exactly surprising to me that racial methodologies aren't prominent or in place in composition studies. It's not the best feeling to wish I was on the other side of the paradigm shift, where maybe things just need to be improved rather than created and advocated for. I suppose this is where I fit into the research aspect of what I have chosen to be my discipline. Ultimately, I am motivated by the need to make a difference and that ties back to my personality in that I like helping others. But it is tricky, and no, it doesn't usually feel productive. Usually that's because I have to first have to accept the conditions I am working from, and for me, that requires validation. When most discussions center on dominant and accepted narratives, methods, and so on, it is easy to become ungrounded and to lose sight of the fact that I hold varying commitments and way power dynamics constantly prioritize and reprioritize those commitments. As a researcher, should I hold commitments to both the dominant and non-dominant methods? I often think that it would be easier to choose one, well really that choosing to accept dominant methods and commitments would make things so much easier. This would pretty much kill my interest in my career though.

In terms of personal validation, however, Inoue's "Racial Methodologies for Composition Studies," helped quite a bit. I definitely see a lot of the assumptions I work from reflected in this piece, especially Omi and Winant's racial formation theory and its implications

---

<sup>i</sup> Research Methods class; my last semester of coursework.

for writing assessment. Also, when Inoue stated that Spidell and Thelin “probably could not sample a statistically significant population of black or Latino/a student, let alone Asian Pacific Islanders or Native Americans,” (131), I realized why I favor qualitative research over quantitative and why I feel the concepts of generalizability and replicability make me uncomfortable. Because when people’s experiences and lives are outnumbered, how is that a valid way to assess/investigate issues surrounding their communities. I was also unaware, as mentioned in one of the readings, that people from marginalized communities will respond in different ways depending on the situation, and so, the concept of replicability isn’t applicable to all research projects.

Looking back on all the readings this semester and my responses, I know that as I develop as a researcher, that I will struggle, but I also think that as I build my career and throughout the process of doing so, that my identity as a researcher will shift and hopefully grow. I struggled to make sense of *my place* in what we’ve read because I could easily see a little bit of myself in everything we’ve read, but this week’s readings, especially Inoue and Lamos, helped me realize that I will not find one box, and that the various commitments and assumptions I hold will lead me to have various research projects rather than one. This I’ve come to realize is actually a really good thing. For example, my previous experiences and research in FYE programs, obviously stir an interest and need to conduct institutional critiques. At the same time, my experiences in the classroom as a student and a teacher of color are the basis for my interest in narrative inquiry, but also that I can see why, to me, those lead to an overlap. So, I am pretty excited about that.

---

September 19, 2017

ENGL-6103-001 > Assignments > Reading Response 4 >

Submission Details

Grade: 0 / 10

Reading Response 4

MISSING

No Submission

Perhaps you can do an additional interview write up to make up for your absence and missed assignment.

September 20, 2017

To: Sandra Tarabochia

Subject: Checking in

Hi,

Thanks for checking in. I took the time and day I needed for myself.

-Anna

October 5, 2017<sup>ii</sup>

To: Gabriela Rios

Subject: Comp-Rhet Chicana Research?

Hi,

[I cringe sending you this email, as I've been encouraged to seek you out, but I am not sure if this fits into your research area.]

I'm currently interested in learning about why and how Chicanas in comp-rhet use narrative research, and was wondering if you know where/how I can find examples of specific pieces/articles that may be helpful?

<sup>ii</sup> I was looking for these sources for an assignment I had to complete in my Research Methods class.

Thank you for your time,

Anna

---

October 6, 2017

To: Gabriela Rios

Subject: Comp-Rhet Chicana Research?

Continued email thread

The complicated questions are the only kind I know. lol.

That helped though.

I'm familiar with a lot of Chicana researchers' work stemming from education, but for my research methods class, it all has to be grounded specifically in "CRL."

So, I'm trying to figure out what it means to be a Chicana researcher in comp-rhet, as opposed to a researcher in comp-rhet who just happens to be Chicana. Maybe better questions would have been: How do/can I make sure that I am making a place for myself in the tradition? Who should always/never be cited in the work I do?

I guess I worry about reproducing a colonialist mentality and approach to research. But of course, there is always the possibility that I'm focusing too much on difference...

Hope you have a good weekend!

Thanks for you[sic] help,  
Anna<sup>iii</sup>

---

<sup>iii</sup> Thread 4 Intralude III: Lo Que Será, Será, p. 94

## **Part II: Toward an Epistemologically Just First-Year Writing Classroom**

### **Thread 1: Luz on the Beginning of Her Activism in the Borderlands**

Luz discussed the possibility of pursuing a PhD with her mother. Her mother wasn't too keen on the idea. She believed Luz could either go for a PhD or get married and have children. Luz's family didn't understand why she was thinking about getting yet another college degree. She always felt a few degrees of separation between her family since high school. So, it wasn't much of a surprise to Luz when they just thought she liked to read that much. None of it was of ill will. Still, she stopped talking about it. Eventually, her mother brought it up during one of their phone calls. Luz was quiet for a few seconds after her mother asked if she was still planning to keep going to school. She said, "I don't know." "Well, I don't think it's a good idea," her mother replied. Then she asked Luz what she wanted. Told her she had already been in school for a long time. Luz can still remember that phone call, not so much because of her mother's words, but because she heard her father shout, "QUE LE SIGA" in the background. However, the things her mother said to her were things she was already thinking to herself. They were valid concerns. Concerns that have nothing to do with whether we (read: Mexicans/Mexican-Americans) value education, like the ever-present, stereotypical narrative would portray. In fact, it was from her mother that she learned to value education. Obviously then, she was also thinking of what her father said in the background of that call. Luz decided she'd apply to one PhD program and leave the rest to fate.

After earning her Ph.D., Luz relocated and returned to her hometown in the borderlands of South Texas. She had been invited to a quinceañera by a close friend and hadn't been to a quince in many years, being culturally isolated while attending a research 1, predominantly and historically white university. In fact, she hadn't been around many other Latinos at all and was

nervous. Her Spanish wasn't nearly as good as it was going into the program, definitely not as good as it was during her childhood. Luz worried that she would not be able to hold conversations with people who still identified Spanish as their first language. She didn't want to come across as *agringada* or as a *mexican't*.

It took her some time to work up the courage and to decide any amount of awkwardness would be worth it. Deep down she knew attending the quince was something she needed, a sense of belonging. Regardless, it took her a while to overcome her sense of inadequacy and she ended up being late. The first thing she saw was La quinceañera wearing a lilac dress dancing with her father. Her dress reminded Luz of hers. Cap sleeves with white and silver decorative beads. While she loved the way she felt in it, it was pretty dreadful having to wear a hoop and a petticoat underneath a dress already weighed down by layers and layers of tulle. After the father-daughter dance ended, the live band began to sing a cover of grupo [Intocable's song, Sueña, and of course, She couldn't help but sing along: "Sue-e-e-eña. Ciera tus ojo-o-o-s..."](#)<sup>xix</sup> A few couples head to the dance floor, opening the baile, while others who haven't had enough liquid courage, or have yet to be seduced by the music begin to sing along from their seats.

Luz sat at a round table with a square lilac tablecloth on top of a white round tablecloth that reached the floor. The chairs matched. They had white covers with lilac bows tied around the backs. At the center of the table was a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a few figurines. There were four, 3-inch ones shaped like a decorated 3-layer cake on which a quinceañera stood. When you opened it from the base, there was a small replica of a rosary. It seemed to be made of some soft, baked material. Ivory beads with pink flowers and the beads where you stopped to pray a Hail Mary. Other figurines were small lilac high heels, and little plastic tiaras. That there were only four was a bit of an issue. You see the table sat six. Two couples: one married, one



might-as-well-be-married, and Luz and her friend. She felt at home, especially when a [Selena song started to play: "Solo fotos y recuerdos. Fotos y recuerdos. Fotos y recuerdos. Fotos y recuerdos."](#)<sup>xx</sup> In that moment, she remembered all of the times she didn't have to worry about how good her Spanish was because she was always surrounded by at least one person who spoke Spanish. So, it didn't feel like she was out of practice because it was a part of her whole person which included various aspects of her culture and traditions.

The beginning of a new song, the song *everybody knew*, pulled Luz out of her head. Everyone still left at the quinceañera couldn't help but sing along to [Ramon Ayala. "Tragoooooos amargooooos de licor. Que noooo me hacen olvidaaaaa."](#)<sup>xxi</sup> As the song ended, Luz drifted back to things she couldn't forget, things which others openly discussed. Ugh. Politics. The border crisis. The border wall. The child detention centers/concentration camps. The defamation of Mexican women as rapid breeders and their "anchor babies." Portraying Mexicans as criminals and illiterate. None of that escaped her work; her experiences, and the impact of the anti-Latinx and anti-immigrant rhetoric. People do not seem to understand those are narratives that have been perpetuated since at least the Anglo invasion of Mexican territories. *Fertile Matters* by Elena Gutiérrez was the book that came to her mind. She cried while reading it. How women of Mexican heritage/origin were sterilized. The untold stories full of discrimination and violence she felt were being perpetuated in that conversation. All of what Luz heard were things that she worked to challenge in her scholarship. She dedicated her research to countering dominant narratives of racially minoritized students.

At that point, someone announced that it was time for Esperanza to open her regalo de sorpresa. The opening of the gift was always her favorite parts of a quince. After the crowd settled down, La Madrina wanted to introduce Luz to Esperanza. They made their way across the

dance floor until they reached her. She was holding her regalo de sorpresa. It was a very expensive laptop. At that point, Luz realized there might have been more than one reason she was invited; it was because she had recently earned her PhD.<sup>i</sup>

### **Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza on the Path to Student Success**

The pressure she felt to go to college did not make choosing a college, filling out applications, scholarships, and eventually the FAFSA any easier. No one in her family she was close to had gone to college. Her parents and her sister hadn't. No one in her family had careers; they had jobs that helped them get by. So, she didn't even know what to major in. Other than giving her scholarship applications, her counselors didn't seem very confident in their ability to guide her throughout the process of choosing a college or major either. It was overwhelming. The scholarship applications made it pretty clear she hadn't been on the right track for college despite her grades. They asked about extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and questions that she felt she had no answers for, like "why do you think you deserve this scholarship?" And, after deciding to apply to a university not too far away and beginning the application process, she learned you had to pay to apply?

In early December, Esperanza managed to get through the application process, somehow even found a waiver for the fee. A couple of months later, she received her acceptance letter. Being in the top ten percent of her class, she knew she would get in. She had heard from the more privileged kids that in Texas you would be automatically accepted wherever you applied to if you were in the top ten percent. But of course, the stress did not end after she received her acceptance letter. From the packet, she learned she was required to go to a weekend orientation

---

<sup>i</sup> Thread 1 Continued: Luz and Her New Writing Center Job, p. 68

before school started and had to pay for that, too. Included in the packet was also information on how to fill out the FAFSA.

Esperanza knew she came from a low-income family background. So, she had never asked for much, and when her white-middle class friends invited her out, they always made sure to tell her they would pay. But now, getting to college meant not only asking her family for money, but also income tax documents. For the first time, she would not only know she came from a poor family who relied on government assistance from experience, but also from the numbers printed in black and white. The process was difficult in many ways, and it seemed that every step of the way, she was reminded she did not belong in college. The other people she knew had decided to go to college at a university had parents who also went to college. None of Esperanza's close friends made the decision to go to college. But despite it all, she made it through the process.

Esperanza wasn't worried about her classes. She knew she was good at school, but being in a new place with new people did worry her. Other than the stress she felt because of the financial aid process (she had been selected for verification and the required loan entrance counseling), her first week went well. She made friends with a couple of students who she had in two or three of her classes. Classes seemed easier than the ones she took in high school. They were fun, for the most part. It helped that they were small classes like the ones she had in high school. The palm trees were a comfort. They reminded her of the drive on highway 83 from Rio Grande City to McAllen which was lined with palm trees. She didn't miss home. She was only two hours away.

During her first week, Esperanza noticed that even though the university was two hours from the Texas-Mexico border, almost all her professors were white, except her English

professor. She was a Latina. Well, she looked like a Latina. She didn't *sound* like one. On the first day of class, she read the syllabus out loud to the class. On the second day, she introduced the class to the anatomy of an essay: an upside-down triangle, followed by three rectangles, and a triangle at the end—a total of five paragraphs. She also talked about MLA format. She read and gave the class exercises from one of the required books for the class, *Rules for Writers*. It was boring. Things Esperanza already knew. She was always a good writer. She felt uneasiness and tension every time she attended her college English class. She also felt frustration. She didn't feel challenged. How and what was being taught made the class feel like the professor thought her students weren't smart or capable. The language used in the writing text also didn't help. But, the prompt for the first essay seemed fun. She had to research and write about her generation and culture. It was an informative essay, and she enjoyed writing it. When she turned in the first rough draft, she felt good about the work she had done and was excited to get feedback from her professor. The following week, her heart sank when she read the feedback her professor left on her paper.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Thread 3: Carrie, Almost Caridad**

Caridad was an only child. A part of the third generation of her family born in the U.S. At home, her name was shortened to Cari (pronounced in Spanish). While she was given a name in Spanish at her birth, when she started school, her teacher insisted on calling her Carrie. Her teacher told her it would be better than Caridad because people would be able to say it, and after all, they were in America so she should have been given a name in English. She hated the way it made her feel when her teacher tried to say her name while calling roll. She already looked different than most of her other peers. Hearing her teacher stumble over her name, made her feel

---

<sup>ii</sup> Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza in Need of Fe, p. 67

even more different. So, she decided she preferred being called Carrie. She didn't know how to speak Spanish anyway even though her parents did. They only spoke to her in English, and they only spoke Spanish at home. It didn't really bother her. After all, she was a U.S. citizen and everyone in school only spoke in English, so why would she need to speak in any other language other than English? Besides, the stories her parents read to her were also in the English language, and when she started school, her parents got her a white English tutor so that she could learn to speak without their accent.

Because of how invested her parents were in her learning, Carrie learned to love school. She hated history. It was boring, but she still loved to hear about all the great things people like Christopher Columbus did. She also admired the brave leaders of the civil rights movement, like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. Her favorite classes were always reading during elementary and middle school. In high school, they were her language arts classes. In elementary and middle school, she enjoyed the classes when they got to talk about the book they had just read. Her teachers would always call on her first, and she liked that. It made her feel smart and like she stood out from her classmates in a good way. In high school, Carrie learned to appreciate classic works such as *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Frankenstein*, *The Great Gatsby*, and so much of Shakespeare's work. Studying them made her a great writer. They made her feel cultured. To her, literature was the epitome of creativity and imagination. For that reason, Carrie suggested that their senior prom theme should be "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Carrie was excited when students voted in favor of the idea, too. She had worried that her classmates were all going to laugh at her. It came as no surprise to her high school language arts teachers that when it was time for Carrie to apply to colleges, she knew she wanted to be a high school literature and language arts teacher. Her parents were excited to hear about her decision to

become a teacher, and even more excited when during her senior year in college, Carrie decided to pursue a master's degree in English. She was living the life they wanted for her.

After graduating with her MA in English, Carrie secured a full-time lecturer at a HSI in South Texas. It was a teaching institution, and her duties consisted of teaching first-year writing classes and a couple of sophomore literature classes. Most students at the university were first-generation, working class. When she first started working at the university, she was assigned a faculty mentor who would often talk to her about how difficult the students were, that they were always unprepared for class, that most didn't buy the required textbooks, that the students didn't know how to *think*. The faculty mentor especially complained about how the students could hardly write and speak English. None of that was a secret. Those opinions and complaints were echoed across the university. However, it was exactly for those reasons that Carrie felt she was in the right place. Carrie felt lucky that her parents had cared enough to read to her in English as well as hire an English tutor so that she would sound intelligent. She wanted that for her students, too. They could succeed as long as they worked hard. Education was the key. <sup>iii</sup>

### **Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza in Need of Fe**

Esperanza went home to visit her family. She cried as she talked to her mom and sister about the issues she was having with her English professor. "Mija," her mom began, "we wanted you to go to college because we thought it would be a good path for you. Toda la familia saw como te gustaba aprender. You especially loved to write. Ya sabes. Tu 'scribías, y nosotros leíamos. Sin duda, you are a writer. Eres un alma que le da filo a el lápiz y también llena la pluma con tinta. Tu maestra está equivocada y voy a hablar con ella." While their mother talked, her sister watched her cry. Fe had one of her looks on her face. She reached over to Esperanza

---

<sup>iii</sup> Thread 3 Continued: Carrie and Her First-Year Composition Class, p.70

and put her hand on her shoulder. It helped Esperanza stop crying. After their mother stopped talking, Fe looked at her mother and nodded her head in the direction of the kitchen. Their mother understood. “Vamos. Esperanza. A la cocina.”

She knew what it all meant. Fe had the idea that Esperanza needed una limpia. The eggs and glasses were in the heart of the house. That’s where Fe always did the limpieas. After the ritual was done, Fe spoke. “I saw this moment. That’s why I gave you la pulsera. But you lost it, no? You’re thinking about quitting. The experience te ha sido una herida profunda. But don’t give up yet. You have options. Anoche, soñe de una luz. Buscala si decides que quieres continuar en este camino. La luz será tu puente.” Fe’s visions came in many forms. They weren’t always very straight forward.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Thread 1 Continued: Luz and Her New Writing Center Job**

Three weeks into the semester and in my new position, I received an email from a first-year student. In it she wrote that she knows she has always been a good writer, but she is struggling in her English class. Her professor told her she needed to go to the writing center. As I read her email, I thought of the experiences I had as a first-year student. What writing felt like to me. The relationship my rhetoric and composition classes led me to develop with writing and writing centers despite the fact that I was a good writer. To this day, I still remember the professor required us to go. If we didn’t, we’d get a whole point taken off our grade (he graded on a scale of 0 to 3). I hated having to go. My heart always raced. My hands would get sweaty. My face turned red. It was an awful experience even though I knew I was a good writer. I learned that in the sixth grade when my white woman English teacher said to me, “I didn’t expect that you would write so well!” while she handed my paper to me with an A plus written

---

<sup>iv</sup> Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza’s Second Meeting with Dra. Luz, p.83

and circled in red. I wasn't fooled. I knew it wasn't a real compliment. The teacher had no reason to have assumed I wouldn't be a good writer. I was a new student, sure. My family had just moved to town. It was late in the school year, but I was a quiet student. Always did my homework. Always passed the state mandated tests with commended scores. The teacher's comment also wasn't much of a surprise to me. I hated that class since the first day because of the way the teacher talked to me.

My first-year writing professor wasn't much different in that regard. I could hear the implied messages when he spoke, when he made us go to the writing center: "I don't expect you will be a good writer." Being judged as a bad writer made me feel guilty, like I had done something wrong even before I had committed a crime. No doubt feeling that guilt and judgement shaped my experience of the writing center before I ever stepped into one. It was the same story every time I went despite knowing that I only got feedback on minor things like commas. I still remember the color of the slips. It was a fitting color, what I imagined minty green pea soup vomit would look like. The fact that I imagined it as the color of vomit was also fitting considering I always felt nauseated when the tutor would check the little boxes of what we covered on the slip, add comments, and sign their name.

I avoided writing centers after that. I even turned down the opportunity to work as a graduate writing consultant after the writing center directors invited me to meet with them. A whole seven years later I still viewed writing centers as problematic, but I eventually gave it a chance and moved over to the writing center after the second time the Associate Director reached out to me. That experience set the tone in more than one way for who I hope to be as a writing center director. I don't want writers to experience what I did. I wasn't exactly sure what Esperanza was hoping to find in me. I was happy she reached out, but I was nervous. How



should I reply? What should I *sound* like in my email? I decided to play it safe. Keep it generic. I wrote:

*Hi Esperanza,*

*Thank you for reaching out to me. How about we set up a meeting? I would be happy to read your writing and we can definitely make space for you to talk about what you are experiencing. I should be in during regular work hours, so feel free to drop by whenever is most convenient. Of course, we could also meet in whatever space would be a more comfortable setting for you.*

*Warmly,*

*Dr. Luna Luz<sup>v</sup>*

### **Thread 3 Continued: Carrie and Her First-Year Composition Class**

Grading was not always my favorite experience, especially when with a 4/4 load each with 27 students. That is not to say that I find grading insufferable. It is just that I do not know where, as a teacher, I am going wrong, what am I doing wrong in the classroom. I provide students with handouts, with example outlines and example papers, which are examples of how I completed the assignments (I wrote them as I developed the assignments). I assign peer-review assignments and review the assignment prompts and the rubrics every week. I have eight office hours every week, yet for some reason, students do not attend. I even host mandatory conference hours instead of holding classes twice each unit. I also use Blackboard so that they always have access to course materials and grades, and they can even see which assignments they are missing. I feel like I've had the chance to be highly flexible being at a small university where I do not have to use a standardized curriculum. The first-year composition coordinator is only in

---

<sup>v</sup> Thread 1 Continued: Luz's Meeting with Esperanza, 71

charge of reviewing my syllabi and approving it. There is only so much I can do to help them succeed.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Thread 1 Continued: Luz's Meeting with Esperanza**

Soft conversations, questions, and laughter always find their way into my office. I appreciate the noise from the writing center. It was one of the things I wanted more of in the new space I stepped into as the writing center director just a few weeks ago. I leave my door open for those reasons. The staff used to look at me in strange ways because I became noticeably emotional hearing writers and consultants, as well as the office assistants, not only code-switch but also code-mesh: moving in and out and between Spanish and English. Their talk is music to my ears. Didn't get to hear much of that at a PWI. The noise gave me a feeling of home, other than the fact that being back in South Texas was home. Back home, I could turn on my car and hear a variety of music--tejano, norteno, corridos, reggaeton-- in Spanish on many different channels, not just two. Mesquite trees in abundance, not quite ever really green grass, but definitely green cactuses, where taco stands with indoor seating largely out-numbered "Mexican" restaurants, where raspa stands sold elotes y fruta preparada--oh, mangonadas are my weakness-- where you could buy a bag of flamin' hot cheetos with nacho cheese put directly on them, and where convenience stores really meant convenience because most have drive-thru windows. Home. Where a few feet beyond the Super H-E-B was the U.S.-Mexico bridge.

"Dra. Luz?" Yesenia's voice jolted me back to my immediate surroundings. She laughed. "Perdon, no entendi a espantarte. A student, Esperanza, is here to see you." "No te preocupes. I was thinking about how good it is to be back home. Yes, espera/ /ba a Espera/ /nza. Haha. Get it?" I thought it was clever word play, Yesenia not so much. I suppose it's one of those things

---

<sup>vi</sup> Thread 3 Continued: Carrie's Meeting with Luz Regarding Her Class, p.77

maybe only someone who hadn't freely moved between both languages in a while would find funny. I walked out of my office to introduce myself and welcome Esperanza to the space. I had checked our records and knew she had yet to visit the writing center. I wondered what I could do to make the writing center, a space that is thought to be the cure for the *illiteracy* that cannot be fixed in classrooms: a "fix-it shop." Isn't that what Esperanza's writing professor implied when she said, "I recommend you go to the writing center"? To be fair, even people in writing center studies haven't decided what we should be doing in writing centers. What could writing centers be if we all agreed that they are not "fix-it shops," that Standard American English is a myth, and that we should be pushing against the colonial impulses of writing centers—colonial impulses that draw borders between English and other languages?

As I joined the here and now again, I looked up and immediately met Esperanza's eyes. I saw frustration. I could sympathize with her, knowing the history of writing studies, of discrimination in education, and the anti-Latinx sentiment in the USA that never quite goes away. However, I saw more than just frustration and I couldn't help but smile. We looked at each other in silence for a few seconds before I reached out my hand and without thinking welcomed her in Spanish. She seemed surprised and relieved. Before she could reply to me, I invited her into my office—in English this time. I didn't have much in my office, and it was the first time I had a student meet with me. I became highly self-conscious of what I did have as we sat down and she took in her surroundings. My framed Selena loteria card poster. The Tapatio coffee mug, a small gift from home, a Latina professor gave me a couple of years into my PhD program. The framed pictures of my family working in the fields. A small San Marcos blanket draped over my chair I had custom printed with one of the associative collage poems I wrote for my dissertation. Despite the rhetorical space I attempted to create by showing parts of me, we sit in silence for a

while. But, it's not an awkward silence at all. There are things I want to say of course. I think about what she could possibly need from me, how she may need to support her.

As her eyes shift over my bookshelf, and she whispers, "Counter.....story." Interrupting the feelings of awkwardness, warmth stirred as I examined my belongings. It isn't a question, so I could tell she had some background on the topic. In return I nod twice and repeat, "Counterstory."

She looks at me inquisitively. Eyebrows burrowed. Squinting. She laughs, "Selena. Counterstory. My quince. You were there. You sang a lot. Especially the Selena songs," she looks back at my La Reina de Tejano loteria poster. "Fotos y Recuerdos is my favorite song of hers," she adds. "Ah! Yes, I remember! It was my first night back in South Texas. Your Madrina. Today, I think it was a set up and not just a coincidence. It's not uncommon for parents to want their children to go to college." I follow up by asking her how her time on campus was going.

She winced a little. I understood she wasn't quite ready to begin talking about it. Her eyes shift to the pictures of my family on my desk. I smiled. "That's my mom right there, I pointed at a woman behind a tractor full of cantaloupes. This one is of my dad early in the morning before he went to las labores. This terrible one of the windshields is one I took when I was about seven. Back when disposable cameras were a thing. My younger cousin and I were in the car. At that age, our jobs were to take water out to those chopping the weeds in the fields. I guess it's weird that we have a lot of pictures of our family doing hard labor. The kind of labor most people don't see as prestigious. It was the family, you know. A lot of us still cherish those memories because of how close we were. The day-to-day matters."

"My parents were also migrant workers," Esperanza replied. "Sometimes it's hard to believe that I even made it here, but I don't know if I belong here. If I will stay." "Yes, I got the

feeling that might be something you might be thinking about from the emails you sent,” I responded.

She sighs, looks at the digital clock on my desk and says, “I have class in ten minutes. I don’t want to go. *English* class...”

“Ah, we didn’t get to talk about that class at all... will you be late? I can email your professor. How about we schedule another meeting sometime this week...we can go for coffee or lunch?”

“You like El Tapatio? A block away from here, no?” She laughs while looking at the El Tap mug on my desk.

I smile. “Yes, I do. I used to go there with my friends while I was a master’s student here. Actually, I didn’t buy myself that mug,” I laughed. “One of my professors came to visit here while I was in my PhD program and got it for me as a gift. Not gonna lie. I cried a little when I saw it on my desk with a little note that said, ‘A little gift from home.’ It meant a lot to me. But let’s not make you late for your class. You can email me when you decide when and where you would like to meet, if you would like to meet again. I’m sorry we didn’t get to talk about your English class, but I enjoyed meeting you. Again. I’m a little embarrassed about what you saw of me at your quince. Pero, knowing that I am here too, I hope it makes you feel a little more like you belong here.”

After Esperanza left, I thought of a few articles I have co-authored. Articles that point out the inherit middle-class and white design of writing centers located in PWIs. But, even less funded writing centers, like this one, which is technically a part of a HSI, are still situated in institutional spaces that promote middle-class whiteness. Even more, this HSI is a historically white institution where whites and Hispanics were segregated because of the anti-Mexican

sentiment fortified by the Mexican-American War which ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Discrimination against Mexicans prevailed. Education was weaponized, and although time has passed, and students are no longer segregated here, education still functions in a manner that it was intended to: to make Mexicans more palatable to white people, it's just not as explicit anymore. With all of that in mind, I wanted her to know that her feelings are valid. That, in fact, education in this part of the U.S. was specifically designed to make people like us feel like we don't belong. I wondered what I could do to provide Esperanza a sense of validation before our next meeting. I couldn't get past the fact that she winced when I asked her how her time on campus has been.

She winced a little. I always paused and probably winced just as she did when someone asked me during grad school at a PWI how things were going. "They're going," was the best answer I could come up with for people I didn't think were wanting to hear or ready to hear my truth. You go to new places and have new experiences. Most people romanticize that. I think people do that too when it comes to discussion of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). It's like this weird unjust dichotomy. That racialized minorities will either struggle at PWIs or not struggle at MSIs. And you know what, I didn't ask Esperanza about that. Why she chose this university. Could be many reasons. In places like this, students are usually recruited with the implicit I-am-like-you-and-I-succeeded-here-and-so-will-you. I get it. It's about knowing your audience, and representation is a good thing, but too many universities don't do anything beyond that. Why not show the real stories, not just the pretty ones? Maybe that's why Esperanza winced. It wasn't what she expected, what she had hoped. If this university was for people like her, why was she struggling? I can see how that would be hard to admit. Not to mention being first-gen. A migrant family's dreams come true. We've seen struggle and as children, we've

lived it. She is still here. I am still here. I thought about Anna. *WE* are still here. Anna, Esperanza and I. First-gen college kids from migrant backgrounds. Combined, we share experiences, but we all have different ones, too. Esperanza knows her story and now mine. I don't think her knowing another would hurt any.

So, I decided to send her Anna's first publication, the one she co-authored with Wonderful<sup>xxii</sup>. While the professor Anna had for her first-year writing class was not white, I felt the relationship between the class and the writing center, as well as Anna's relationship with the larger politics at play and the institution, might resonate with some of Esperanza's experiences. I felt Anna and Wonderful's use of each other's distinct voices as well as narrative style might help her see that her writing is not *bad*. I also sent her a piece in which Anna discussed Chicana rhetorics and provided examples of how she embodied them in her writing. I felt those two pieces could potentially work together to not so much dismiss the writing accepted as legitimately academic, but to situate it in the wider system of rhetorics and literacies.

Overall, although Esperanza and I did not have a chance to discuss her paper or her class, I felt like our meeting went well. Moments like the one Esperanza and I shared, matter. Those moments are not about "retention" or "persistence" as defined by Tinto and so forth. They are not institutional moments. Those moments are not anything that a university can curate to "retain" students. By reaching out to me—pressing each letter to write the email; by walking to the writing center—stepping foot in it; walking into my office—sitting; every syllable she spoke. All of those overlooked minute actions are choices being made. Continual efforts: *adelante*.

*Adelante*. As a student I took countless classes in which white professors would tell the class (of predominantly Hispanic students) to look to the right and then to the left and told us that half of us would drop out by mid-terms. I remember in a music theory class, the professor did

that. She wasn't even a particularly mean person. In fact, I liked her. Professors, who I liked, would also openly critique students, stating that we just didn't know how to write. When I was a junior, one of my literature professors, who I liked, bluntly, with no hesitation, told our class how terrible first-year and second-year students were at writing. One of my psychology professors, who I liked, did the same while a group of us students were visiting her in her office hours. They would judge us for not having the required books for class during the first week—many of us had to wait for our financial aid to be dispersed to afford the books, and sometimes that could take about two and a half weeks.

I often thought that quitting, going home, and getting a job at a grocery store would be better. Being in college, waiting until graduating to get a job, in a way, it made me feel useless. *I should be working already.* College felt like an unnecessary burden when I could already be working. *I am from a family of laborers.* Isn't that what the judgments from professors, who I liked, were telling me? *We are not writers. We do not care about learning. We are not cultured enough. We are laborers.* Whether I should stay or leave was a constant renegotiation. Despite the overtly judgmental attitudes of the professors, my feelings of uselessness, I played by the rules of the game. Until my doctoral program. Moments like the one Esperanza and I shared, mattered. Moments of *adelante*, not retention, not persistence.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Thread 3 Continued: Carrie's Meeting with Luz Regarding Her Class**

Two days ago, I got an email from the new writing center director. She invited me to drop by for some coffee and to talk about my class. She was wondering what she could do to support me as an instructor as well as the students in my class. I had a lot of papers to grade and meeting with her would put me behind schedule, but I figured I did not want to start off on the

---

<sup>vii</sup> Thread 1 Continued: Luz Before the Meeting, 85



wrong foot. Besides, maybe she could make grading a bit easier for me if the students in my classes could get more help with grammar and MLA. There are a few students who are especially struggling this semester, and one with whom I cannot seem to get on the same page. That student seems intent on misunderstanding the learning outcomes of the class and learning goals of each assignment. I do not want to seem like I am not a capable teacher, though. It is probably best not to mention any struggles that I have. Keep the focus on the basics with which students struggle, the things that writing centers do.

I felt nervous and stopped before turning the corner into the hall that would lead me to the writing center. It made no sense. I have earned the right to be here, to stand in the front of that classroom. I have *earned* the right to be here. I worked harder than anyone can imagine, and I am here to help students succeed. In my classes, they can learn essential skills that will get them through college. In that way, the work I do, and the work of the writing center are the same. The writing center and I help students meet the standards they need to in order to succeed.

I placed my hand on the doorknob and I went from feeling nervous to feeling dread. It reminded me of the times I visited the writing center as an undergrad. It didn't matter that I was a good writer. The fact that the professor required us to use the writing center made me feel like a bad writer, like all of us in the class had inherently written below his standard before we even had the chance to turn in one writing assignment. I remembered the way he would mockingly address some of the issues he saw in our papers during class, like the time he condescendingly told us that "anyways" is not a word and expressed his annoyance at the fact that many people from the South Texas added an unnecessary *s* to the end of certain words. He used HEBs (the grocery store) and Sonics (the fast-food restaurant) as examples. I was not one of those people, but I still felt like he was making fun of me. Those moment stuck with me because it was clear to

me that he wanted us, his students, to visit the writing center not because it would help us, but because it would help him; us doing so would make his job easier.

I opened the door and walked in. I was early and was greeted by a student employee. He asked me my name, if I wanted coffee, if it was my first time there. I said yes. He walked me around the space and gave me a quick rundown of what the writing center *means*, which I thought was an interesting choice of words, and it made me think about what I assumed the writing center *does* without ever having visited the place. We stood in the middle of the room surrounded by three round tables, and I began to eavesdrop on a session because I heard the two people at the table laugh and speak both in English and Spanish and a mix of the two. I didn't overhear much because I noticed that one of the first-year seminar instructors walked in and requested to meet with a consultant to gather input on the assignment prompt she had put together. I was surprised at how *unconventional* this writing center seemed to be. My face must have shown my surprise because the student employee smiled and asked me if I had any questions. I said no and he walked me over to an office and welcomed me to sit down. He let me know that Dra. Luz would be in soon. I thanked him, sat down, and looked around.

My guess is that the non-academic, more personal items were carefully curated to present some sort of argument about to whom the space belonged, clearly someone from a disadvantaged background based on the framed photographs on the desk. I heard some happy goodbyes and see you next times, and who I presumed was Dra. Luz walked in with a genuine smile. "Hi, you must be Carrie?" she stated in the form of a question. I stood up to shake her hand and said yes, and that it was nice to meet her. "Thank you for taking time to squeeze me into what I am sure is a busy day for you. I'm sorry we only have 30 minutes together," she said as we both sat down.

“Oh, I am glad for even just these 30 minutes. I do have somethings I’d like to talk about,” I replied.

She leaned in and I could see excitement in her eyes. “Okay, I look forward to listening. If you don’t mind, I’d like to know a little bit about you first. Nothing super personal. I just enjoy hearing teacher’s origin stories, you know, what inspired you to teach, what you like about it, formative experiences you had during your undergraduate years.”

I felt unprepared and hesitated. “Well, I learned to value education from a very young age. I love to read and truly appreciate the craft of writing, being drawn into stories. I know a lot of that stems from how dedicated my parents were to setting me up for success.” She nodded enthusiastically as I spoke.

“Yes, education is so important. My story makes sense in the end but is pretty messy,” she responded. “This is my mom here,” she pointed to one of the framed photographs of a woman in a cotton field that sat on her desk. “She didn’t get to graduate from high school, so she always made sure to tell me how important my education would be. I can guarantee you she never imagined this is where I would end up. No one in my family, including me, would have thought it,” she laughed. “You know though, I do think she had something else in mind when she thought about education. I think she meant learning skills and facts and not so much a direct line to assimilation.” A few quiet seconds past. I wasn’t sure how to respond to her given how different our experiences were.

“As an undergrad, did you visit the writing center?” she asked me.

I laughed. “Yes, actually walking in the door brought back some memories. Not the most comfortable ones. I mean, I was a good writer, but the way that my first-year writing classes

were set up, and the way the professors framed the writing center, it . . . it wasn't an encouraging feeling."

Her eyes shifted from me to the door and asked, "What do you think about the set up here?"

I felt my body tense. "Oh, well, it's different than the writing center I used as an undergrad and honestly, what I've seen and heard isn't at all what I expected."

"For sure. I didn't have all that great of experiences with my first-year writing class and the writing center I went to then. Funny, huh?" She sighed, half smiling and continued, "You know, we've worked with a few of your students, and they are doing some pretty awesome stuff in your classes. They really seem invested in developing as writers. I was excited when I saw that one of your students, Esperanza, emailed me directly."

"Yes, I am glad that she followed through," I replied feeling a bit uncomfortable now given that this is an *unconventional* writing center, the fresh memories of my first-year writing class, and my and her origin stories.

"So am I. I'm sure from what you've seen here what we approach the teaching and learning of writing beyond the classroom set up. When I was brought into writing centers, I was told that consulting and teaching were different. I had already guessed that, but I never could have imagined how MUCH it would open up my eyes to different ways of the teaching and learning of writing. I REALLY had no idea how much influence the grading aspect had over me. It was all good, good enough, or bad. AND, I was someone who already thought about power dynamics, exclusionary practices, and was critical of the idea of good writing and errors. Of course, I always wanted to be a better teacher. I think in some way we all do.

A lot of people think writing centers are merely an extension of the classroom, still holding on to the *idea of a writing center*, but there are people in writing centers that are stirring winds in many ways. Creating writing centers that are committed to social and racial justice. I'm sure you've thought about these things, too—well, in the design of and assessment practices in your classes,” Luz smiled as she finished her sentence.

I felt uncomfortable, and after about 10 seconds said, “You know, I do my best to make sure students learn the necessary writing skills they need to succeed in college. And, like you said, *of course* I'm always working on being a better teacher and improving my courses. For example, with *Esperanza*. She struggles with transitions and grammar among other things. I don't see how assessing any of *those* have to do with social or racial justice. I teach writing not activism. *Esperanza's* writing isn't clear. I see that she is trying to get it right, but she isn't meeting the requirements for the assignment, for *academic* writing. That's the kind of writing that leads to success.”

Luz sat quietly looking directly into my eyes. She was nodding, seemed deep in thought. I could not place her facial expression, which drew attention to her eyes. I couldn't tell if it was a look of concern, anger, or judgement. Did I come across as a close-minded person? As one of those snobby I-know-it-all professors who can't ever figure out how to use a projector or raise the blinds in class? I came here to . . . why did I come here? Whatever the reason, it does not feel like I accomplished it. Luz tilted her head from the right side to the left. My body tensed. I could tell she was about to speak. “Unfortunately, our time together has come to an end. I will say that I understand your perspective. She stood, signaling that I should start making my way out, “Let me walk you out.” When we reached the door, she left me with one final thought,

“What you value in writing is valid, but would those values be any less valid if someone enacts them in a different way?”<sup>viii</sup>

### **Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza’s Second Meeting with Dra. Luz**

A week later Dra. Luz and I met again. I decided I didn’t want to meet at the writing center this time. Not that I hated the place or anything. I just wanted to be in a place where I could be more myself. So, instead El Tapatío late that afternoon, we went to a community-sponsored hall across from it where mostly students gathered. As she walked in, a worker greeted in her Spanish and offered homemade food students brought. Members of our families were also here. There were pictures of Frida Kahlo, Celia, Dolores Huerta, Gloria Anzaldúa, Selena, and painted interpretations of La Llorona and various types of Latinx food among others. I liked the place because it was comforting, not just because of the presence of families, but the smell of the food, and the memories Día de la Familia left. I wanted her to feel those things too.

I was happy to see Dra. Luz. I waved at her. When she got to our table le di un abrazo. She looked around the table and everyone stood up to welcome her with a hug as they introduced themselves to her. I wondered if she recognized the last two. They looked like me. I figured there was a chance.

“Luz, I am so happy to see you again. ¿Me reconoces? Soy la mama de Esperanza,” mi mama le dijo as she reached out to her.

Fe stepped forward, “Aparece que Esperanza encontró la Luz como esperábamos.” I sighed and smiled because, yet again, my sister Fe, la curandera’s visions once again lived up to her reputation—a reputation that led some to think of her as a witch. I whispered to myself what Fe had said to me when I went home and felt hopeless about my classes and being in

---

<sup>viii</sup> Thread 3 Continued: Carrie Before the Meeting, p. 86

college, “*You’re thinking about quitting. The experience te ha sido una herida profunda. But don’t give up yet. You have options. Anoche, soñe de una luz. Buscala si decides que quieres continuar en este camino. La luz será tu puente.*” The light (*luz*) wasn’t a literal light like in her vision. It was the writing center director, *Luz*. She would help me get through this. “*La luz será tu Puente.*” She would be my bridge. She is my bridge.

At that moment, Dra. Luz was close enough to hear me repeat what Fe said. Her eyes moved from Fe to me to Fe again. Her eyes teared up. She understood. The next thing she said was, “Annnnddaaleee! Fe was the bruja I heard people talking about at the 15,” and added, “I struggled so much during my PhD program. I considered quitting more times than I can count. I often wondered whether it would even be worth it.”

She sat down at the table with us. My mom passed her a platter with various types of pan dulce. “Toma,” she told her. There was a pink concha on the top. She looked up at Fe. Fe nodded. I knew by that interaction that the concha being on top wasn’t a coincidence. Fe knew little things like that. After they stopped making eye contact, my mom started a conversation, jumping from topic to topic, between languages. Sometimes, everyone at the table broke off to talk about smaller, somewhat or not even related things. We laughed a lot, including Dra. Luz. Time passed too quickly, and we all stopped laughing. There was always that time with us when we stopped to just take in how great it was to be together. That was always the end.

“Ama,” Fe said as she turned to mom. Mom nodded. “Es tiempo, mujeres.” Everyone except Dra. Luz and I stood up. Each one lined up and one by one hugged me and Dra. Luz goodbye. Fe was the last. She held on to me a little longer. Dra. Luz and I sat back down at the table. I pointed at the wall, “Did you see the picture of Selena?”

“I would never overlook Selena. You know that about me already. This place is really comfortable. I think it would actually be the perfect place to write,” she said.

“Because ‘Writing doesn’t just happen between pen and paper or during the clicks of the keyboard. It grows out of the renegotiations between one’s mind-heart, body, and space’ . . .?” she added, seamlessly finishing my sentence with a direct quote from Anna’s first publication.

“Sin alguna duda. I see you got to read Wonderful and Anna’s article.”

“Sí.”

“Annnnnnd?” She asked eagerly.

I looked around the room and shrugged without saying a word at first. I know Dra. Luz saw that I was trying not to cry.<sup>ix</sup>

### **Thread 1 Continued: Luz Before the Meeting**

“Wednesday is the day,” I said out loud to myself somewhat excited and confident, somewhat unsure of what would come from my meeting with Esperanza and Carrie in two days. I was excited at the thought of seeing Esperanza again. I reached out to see how she was doing a couple of times in the past week, but I didn’t hear back from her until this morning. That didn’t bother me, though. It wasn’t about me. I just wanted her to know she is not alone here. The unsure part of myself—well, after getting a sense of Carrie and her class from our previous meeting, I wasn’t sure if I would be able to get us all on the same page. For sure, I didn’t want to end up making things worse for Esperanza. On the other hand, I also want to support her without dismissing, diminishing Carrie as an instructor. I knew for sure I wasn’t going to bring up epistemologies of white benevolence, white ignorance, and white privilege although they are, as my work as well as Anna’s shows, important pieces in conversations like these. Conversations

---

<sup>ix</sup> Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza before the meeting, p. 87



which are imbued with competing epistemologies. This meeting will be, in essence, the physical manifestation of what happens in the mind-body-spirit of a lot of Chicanas.

Ugh. The more I think about it all, the bigger, more concerning it feels. What help can I be to Esperanza feeling like this today and having two more days to overthink everything? “No seas tonta,” I heard the voice in the back of my head say. It wasn’t mine; it was Anna’s. “She always knew how to warmly encourage me,” I replied out loud sarcastically. Pero si, I was being una tonta. Qué sosería que estoy aquí tratando de soportar a Esperanza, trying to let her know she’s not alone. Time to give her a call; it’s not like she’s not already in my head. “Annnnd, of course, she didn’t answer,” I thought. As soon as I finished that thought, my phone rang. It was her. It was Anna.

“Hello,” I said after answering the phone.

“Qué querías, what’d you want?”<sup>x</sup>

### **Thread 3 Continued: Carrie Before the Meeting**

I have a meeting with the writing center director and one of my students, Esperanza, tomorrow. She’s one of the students who has been struggling in my class quite a bit. She’s emailed me a couple of times, asking questions about the prompts. She seems rather committed to passing my class, no doubt. I know from her assignments that she is a thoughtful student, but her essays lack the necessary structure. They are not thesis driven. They are not organized very well. Sometimes she uses disconnected, separate quotes as transitions between paragraphs. Truth be told, I am glad we are meeting. Esperanza could use extra support, and I am not sure if the writing center director can actually get her on the right track, but I mean, she *is* the writing center director, so she must know a thing or two about teaching writing . . . even if *her* writing center is

---

<sup>x</sup> Three Threads One Play: Luz, Esperanza, and Carrie’s Meeting, p. 87

. . . . *whatever it is*. There is also the question she posed to me as I walked out the writing center that I just can't stop from sneaking into my thoughts, "*What you value in writing is valid, but would those values be any less valid if someone enacts them in a different way?*"

Obviously, that has to do with Esperanza's writing, and it was not just a general comment. It seems there is something there that I cannot see. That makes me frustrated, nervous. She is doubting my ability as a teacher. I feel it. I could just be projecting, I suppose. After all, I *am* doubting her abilities as a writing center director, and by proxy, the writing center and all the consultants there. Gosh. I *must* be projecting. I guess it would not be such a bad idea to hear her out, but Esperanza will be there. I do not want a student of mine to learn to question my authority. Though, maybe the point of the three of us is so that we can all hear each other out, talk about how what each of us values and how we enact them? I think I am somewhat okay with that . . . not completely comfortable, but I do want Esperanza to succeed in my class.<sup>xi</sup>

### **Thread 2 Continued: Esperanza before the meeting**

I'm meeting with my profesora and Luz at 3 today. I don't think I really want to go. Sí, será bien a ver a Luz otra vez. Pero like, it makes me cry when I think about our meetings. I don't want to cry anymore.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Three Threads One Play: Luz, Esperanza, and Carrie's Meeting**

[ *Dramatis Personae*

LUZ, *writing center director*

CARIDAD, *first-year writing instructor of Esperanza*

ESPERANZA, *first-year writing student of Caridad/Carrie*

KRISTINA, *graduate writing consultant*

AURORA, *undergraduate student writer*

GUADALUPE, *writing center office assistant work study student*

SCENE: *the writing center at a Minority Serving Institution (Hispanic) a university in South Texas]*

<sup>xi</sup> Three Threads One Play: Luz, Esperanza, and Carrie's Meeting, p. 87

<sup>xii</sup> Three Threads One Play: Luz, Esperanza, and Carrie's Meeting, p. 87

1.1

*Enter Kristina*

GUADALUPE

Hey, Kristina! You're super early.

KRISTINA

Yeah, I had a meeting with my dissertation chair.

GUADALUPE

¿Uffffff, como te fue?

KRISTINA

¡Ayyyyyy! Ni se. I don't think she knows either jajaja. Pero en serio. No sé lo que estaba pensando when I decided to take this project on. She's a good person, and I love her, but I don't know.

GUADALUPE

Mujer. Se te nota. Not to make you feel weird or anything, but I saw you at the consultant table yesterday looking like you were about to cry, so I skipped assigning you to a writer then para darte un break.

KRISTINA

Estaba muy fastidiada. Like I said, she a good person pero ¡ahhhhhahhhhay como me duele!

GUADALUPE

¡jajajajajaja! Well, you'll get through it. It's who you are. Eres fuerte. Ya sabes. No te agüites. But watch out. I saw Dra, looking your way yesterday, too.

*Enter Luz*

LUZ

Kristina, you're early. How about you come to my office for a few minutes?

GUADALUPE

Te dije [whispers to Kristina turns to follow Luz into her office. Kristina talks about her experiences, and Luz listens until it is her time to speak. She engages Kristina with cuentos and consejos as methods]

*Luz sits with Kristina consulting with Aurora*

KRISTINA

Yeah, so, I think you are doing really good stuff. I am not your professor, so I don't know what grade you would get on your paper. But, I do think revising and looking out for the things we talked about could make it even better.

LUZ

Hey, I know learned a thing or two from sitting here with both of you that I know I will keep in mind as I write and revise.

1.2

*Enter Carrie*

GUADALUPE

Hu-- [Carrie interrupts]

CARRIE

Dr. Luz de la Luna is expecting me.

GUADALUPE

Right. Can I have your name?

CARRIE

It's Carrie. She's expecting me.

GUADALUPE

Sure. It looks like the meeting doesn't start for a few minutes. Follow me.

[They walk over to Luz's office]

GUADALUPE

As soon as Dra. finishes with the consultation, she will be right over.

[walks back to the front desk]

LUZ

Hi, Carrie. Thank you for making time to fit this meeting into your schedule. I truly appreciate it. I really think we'll all be able to work together to figure out at least in some small way how Esperanza and you can move forward for the rest of the semester. Of course, I'll always be here for both of you. Mostly what I had in mind is to discuss what Esperanza's goals and aims are for the writing she is doing in your class, as well as how those might fit in to your assignment expectations, and what sort of compromise we can all agree to.

[Luz sits down]

*Enter Guadalupe*

GUADALUPE

Sorry to interrupt, Dra, but Esperanza is here. Are you ready for her? Or should I tell her you'll be ready for her in a couple of minutes?

LUZ

I think we are ready for her. Carrie, what do you think?

CARRIE

Uh, sure.

GUADALUPE

Great. I'll go let her know.

*Enter Esperanza*

ESPERANZA

Hi.

CARRIE

Hi.

LUZ

Esperanza, it's good to see you again. Come in. Have a seat.

ESPERANZA

Thanks.

[Esperanza sits closer to Luz, facing Carrie]

LUZ

Alright, we're all here. I wish there was something I could say that could cut the tension in here, but in the past, students have not found the things I say funny. I think some of them just laugh at how corny I can be in those moments. This one time—

Oh, sorry, getting side-tracked here. Being a teacher can be an exciting thing. Although, it comes with its set of difficulties for sure. Assessment was always something I struggled with. Nothing I tried ever felt right. The closest I ever got was grade agreements and portfolios, but still.

CARRIE

I see. That sounds interesting. I've read a little about them, but I couldn't really see how they would work well with my classes. I'm more traditional. It's the way I was taught, and as a student it worked for me. I want to give my students the same experience I had, how it felt to make As on difficult papers according to an expert's expectations.

ESPERANZA

So, what was it like for you? When you were me?

LUZ

I think that's a great question.

CARRIE

Well, I was not like you. I enjoyed writing and was always good at it. It came naturally to me.

Luz

Okay. Esperanza, how about you tell us about your relationship with writing.

ESPERANZA

I mean, I'm definitely not as confident as she is. I mean, it's not like I have a master's degree or whatever, but back at home everyone thought I was a good writer.

CARRIE

I did not mean it the way it came out. I was merely trying to convey what my relationship to writing was and is. My parents did all they could to help me succeed. I had tutors from a young age, and they did not teach me Spanish.

LUZ

Oh, that's interesting. My parents taught me Spanish. It used to be my first language until high school when I stopped speaking it at home. I guess some of those things that happen at school can follow you home.

ESPERANZA

I still know Spanish. It means a lot to me. My favorite stories that people in my family tell are always in Spanish, and sometimes in both Spanish and English. Still mostly in Spanish.

LUZ

Those are my favorite, too. It reminds me of something . . . Cherrie Moraga once wrote. At least I think it was her. When I read it during my doctoral program, I knew I would never forget it. It resonated with me that much. I remember posting it on social media and one of my aunts saying it could have been me who wrote it. Let me see if I can find it real quick.

[Luz types and clicks away on her computer]

Here it is. Carrie, I think you'll like this one, too. Ah, there it is. In *This Bridge Called My Back*, on page 26. In the chapter titled "La Güera:"

Sitting in that auditorium chair was the first time I had realized to the core of me that for years I had disowned the language I knew best

-ignored the words and rhythms that were the closest to me. The sounds of my mother and aunts gossiping - half in English, half in Spanish - while drinking cerveza in the kitchen. And the hands - I had cut off the hands in my poems. But not in conversation; still the hands could not be kept down. Still they insisted on moving.

[Silence from all]

LUZ

You know, I think I can see a bit of all of us in this. I think based on what Esperanza and I already said, it's obvious how we fit into this, but Carrie, I wonder if you feel you see yourself in there somewhere?

ESPERANZA

I do.

[Silence from all]

CARRIE

I would say potentially the "still the hands could not be kept down. Still they insisted on moving" part, because I do enjoy writing, even to this day, but Spanish was not, and is not, the language I knew best.

ESPERANZA

But it is mine, and I think that's what I am trying to do to not "ignore the words and rhythms that were the closest to me."

CARRIE

I see. But in your writing, that's holding you back.

LUZ

You know what this reminds me of? One of Aja Martinez's pieces. Hold on. I for sure know where I have this one.

[Luz types only makes a couple of clicks]

Yup, here we are. Her article that was published in Praxis: A Writing Center Journal "Alejandra Writes a Book: A Critical Race Counterstory about Writing, Identity, and Being Chicax in the Academy:"

Alejandra was getting kicked out of her graduate program. They told her to "take the masters and go." They told her she wasn't a "good fit" for their program. They told her she didn't write on par with the other students. They told her she didn't know how to use MLA. Her peers struggled to read her writing, because after all, she struggled to write it. It wasn't her voice, the writing they wanted was foreign, another language, one she was not proficient in, yet no one knew how to translate and help her learn. They knew good writing based on what they said wasn't good writing. They knew what they didn't want, and they didn't want Alejandra. She was a "bad fit" (Episode 4).

[Silence]

CARRIE

Let's move on to Esperanza's writing.

LUZ

Sure. So, I looked at the materials you sent me, and you have a rather traditional set up.

CARRIE

Yes. I do.

ESPERANZA

Okay, Dra. Luz, you know that it's not working for me.

CARRIE

Yes. That is true.

LUZ

We, here, at the writing center like to support students even in writing that is not considered traditional. Based on your understanding, of course, of what is traditional and what is not, Esperanza's work is untraditional. But I would go so far as to say that she is merely relying on more than one system of rhetoric. One dominant one, you refer as traditional, and a marginalized one I see as Chicana rhetorics. So, what she is doing is not wrong exactly. It's just not what you are looking for, or a type of rhetoric you have yet to engage with.

CARRIE

That must be what you meant by "What you value in writing is valid, but would those values be any less valid if someone enacts them in a different way?"

ESPERANZA

Oh, I can definitely see that now with the help of the quotes you just read to us.

LUZ

Right. Work like that. It's also out there for you Esperanza, and I can always guide you to it if you're interested.

CARRIE

If, as you stated earlier, this is a meeting to negotiate a compromise, what solution do you propose?

ESPERANZA

Hey, well. In the next papers, you are going to make us explain why we made the choices we did when writing. What if I write the paper, like what Dra. Luz called Chicana rhetorics, and then instead of explaining why I did what I did, I outline what, you, call a traditional paper?<sup>xiii</sup><sup>xiv</sup><sup>xv</sup>

---

<sup>xiii</sup> Thread 1 Continued: El Juicio de Luz, p. 98

<sup>xiv</sup> Thread 3 Continued: El Juicio de Caridad (Carrie), p. 113

<sup>xv</sup> Thread 2 Continued: El Juicio de Esperanza, 106

## End Notes

---

- <sup>xix</sup> Music video by Intocable performing “Sueña.” © 2015 Intocable, LLC. Exclusively Licensed to Universal Music Latin Entertainment, a division of UMG Recordings, Inc. *YouTube*, <https://youtu.be/-sIasjS8g2k>
- <sup>xx</sup> Selena. “Fotos y Recuerdos.” *All My Hits: Todos Mis Éxitos, Vol. 2*. Capitol Latin. 1999. *YouTube Music*, <https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=dFwBFRBYKK0&feature=share>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ramon Ayala Y Los Bravos del Norte. “Tragos Amargos.” *¡MAS MUSICA BRAVA!* Martzcom Music, LLC / Freddie Records, 1980. *Spotify*, <https://open.spotify.com/track/3GVhFY1hAKPW5TiWM2TnpV?si=98dd65c6d1a44aa6>
- <sup>xxii</sup> Faison, Wonderful and Anna Treviño. “Race, Retention, Language, and Literacy: The Hidden Curriculum of the Writing Center.” *Learning from the Lived Experiences of Graduate Student Writers*, edited by Shannon Madden, Michele Eodice, Kirsten T. Edwards Williams, and Alexandria Lockett. Utah State University Press. July 2020.



### Thread 4 Intralude III: Lo Que Será, Será

Anna K. Treviño<sup>i</sup>  
ENGL 6103  
10 October 2017

#### Engagement Assessment

##### Interaction:

Unacceptable. I often disengage from the process.

##### Ownership/Leadership:

Unacceptable. I don't play an active role in discussions.

##### Scholarly Contribution:

Competent. I think the questions that I do ask stem from my reactions to readings or to understand the significance of the readings to how I hope to define myself as a researcher (my question about interdisciplinary literature reviews)

##### Listening:

Unacceptable. I think my behavior frequently reflects a failure to listen because I don't usually answer questions or respond to my peers.

##### Reading:

Competent. In my responses, I try to engage with the readings in a way that feels meaningful to me. Usually, this involves trying to work through the struggles that I have trying to grow in the way I would like.

##### Goals:

Respond to one comment and one question from peer during every class period.

##### How you can support this:

As contradictory as this may seem, it would probably be best if you don't call on me in class.

Anna K. Treviño  
ENGL 6103  
9 December 2017

#### Engagement Assessment

##### Interaction: competent

<sup>i</sup> Research Methods-last semester for coursework. These were self-assessments, not assessments written by Dr. Tarabochia

Ownership/Leadership: competent

Scholarly Contribution: competent

Listening: competent

Reading: competent

Grade: 30

I often found myself wondering what other things I could have read, what other program I could have attended that would have better supported me in the ways in which I want to grow, who I want to be, and the work I wish to do. What would it be like to be in a class where someone else cares about social and racial justice as much as I do?

But really, I don't know how to respond in the way that is expected for this engagement reflection, because it's not that I don't know how to do things, but rather that I choose to or not to speak in class/respond to others.

I've also had to come to terms with the fact that I seem to need this degree if I want to proceed into a career path in academia, but I don't belong in these spaces. I hear it in the normal every day things that are said and not said, and it is reinforced by the fact that the way I value other people and myself don't seem to align with what is expected of me.

I know you want specific examples from class for this, but this whole year has really just been about surviving.

---

December 12, 2017<sup>ii</sup>  
 To: Gabriela Rios  
 Subject: Methods Question

Hi,

I have a stupid question. I have been reading on counterstory and testimonio as research methods, but I am unclear as how to collect them from participants. For example, would I introduce the participants to counterstory and then ask them to write one, and the same for their testimonios?

Thanks for your time,  
 Anna

---

February 2, 2018<sup>iii</sup>  
 To: Sandra Tarabochia  
 Subject: Today's meeting

I appreciate your concern and trust. At the moment, I'm not happy with my list and am looking for more scholars of color to include.

-A

---

March 2, 2018  
 To: Sandra Tarabochia  
 Subject: An Article

Thought this article was interesting <http://thepeerreview-iwca.org/issues/issue-1/writing-center-administrators-and-diversity-a-survey/>

---

<sup>ii</sup> Winter break. I had already completed the Research Methods class for which I had proposed a CRT counterstory project. I wasn't sure how to collect the data. Spoiler alert: Testimonios are also counterstories, and like counterstory, testimonio can be used as a methodology.

<sup>iii</sup> I was no longer in coursework. Spring 2018 was scheduled to be my comprehensive exam semester, but I ended up pushing it back to the fall.

“We found it interesting that only 10 of our 313 respondents reported being bilingual, and only two of these reported that they speak Spanish. We had a preconceived notion that many of our bilingual directors would speak Spanish, given the growing Latino population. Yet we found that most bilingual directors reported speaking European languages other than Spanish (the one exception being Farsi/Persian). These results suggest that race may be a factor in these cases, including the historical “acceptability” of immigrants from Western Europe as opposed to those from other areas. Prejudice and discrimination against Hispanics in terms of language is well documented (Lippi-Green, 2012).”

And also “Similarly, the percentage of Hispanics who answered our survey (1.3%) is not representative of the percentage of Hispanics as faculty members (4%) nor of their population in the U.S., which is 16.7% (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).” But like, why is this citation from the CDC?????

-W<sup>iv</sup>

---

<sup>iv</sup> Thread 4 Intralude IV: No Hay Fin Pero Adelante, p. 120

### Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation

#### Thread 1 Continued: El Juicio de Luz

“Doctora,” Sofia said while she lightly tapped Luz on the right shoulder. Luz became aware of the mild pain on the right side of her neck. She had fallen asleep in her office with her head on the desk. She opened her eyes. It took a couple of seconds for Luz’s vision to focus on the face of the person standing before her. She did not recognize her. Sofia saw the confusion on Luz’s face. “You are new this semester. We haven’t met. I am a custodian. My name is Sofia. I hope you don’t mind that I woke you. No one is usually here this late, and it didn’t seem like you had planned on it.” Luz smiled and said thank you. She had fallen asleep while taking notes on Pilar Hernández-Wolfe’s *A Boderlands View on Latinos, Latin Americans, and Decolonization: Rethinking Mental Health* book. She was particularly drawn to some of the questions Hernández-Wolfe posed in the appendix and listed them in the document as well:

- “Think about your name. Do you define yourself by your first or last name or both? Who gave you this name? What is the cultural legacy behind it? What language is it in? Where does your last name come from? Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?” (120).
- “What is the name of the city or town in which you were born? What is the name of the state and country? Is it a European name? If so, what is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?” (120).
- “Does the experience of ancestral knowledge have meaning for you? Can you trace who your ancestors were for four generations back? If you can, what did you learn about the interplay of migration, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, language, religion, and the economy in their lives?” (119).

- If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge about the interplay of migration, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, language, religion, and the economy in their lives?” How did each generation’s ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, class status, languages, religions, and migrations change over time?” (119).
- “Do you understand how your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship? How have you benefited from the changes and achievements that each generation brought about?” (119).
- “Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness? What transformations in your relationships with others, the land, and the spiritual did it involve?” (121).

Luz made sure to click save, to grab what she needed, to thank Sofia and then made her way out of the writing center. With every step she took, Luz thought of Hernández-Wolfe’s questions and thought of how to respond to them. So, she opened the voice recorder app on her phone to keep track and began knowing she would not be able to answer all by the time she reached the car.

But before Luz could begin to answer:

“Doctora,” she heard,  
while she felt a light tapping on her right shoulder.  
She assumed it was Sofia.

However, as she turned around to look,  
Luz found herself standing in a strange hallway  
with many doors of different ages, sizes, textures and colors.

She was faced with an overwhelming number of choices, and the hallway seemed to know that because suddenly, she found herself in front of a small, old wooden door. It was built with a collection of horizontal planks held together by a wide, vertical piece of rusted metal. It was locked, and for some reason, also sealed shut with concrete around the frame. Luz could not help but reach out to touch it. As she did, the concrete crumbled, and the lock dissolved. She crossed the threshold with her eyes closed, not sure if she wanted to see what she was walking into, some parts of the questions Luz had just been asked echoed in her mind:

“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?” (120).

*“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?”* (120).

“Where does your last name come from? Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?” (120).

*“Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?”* (120).

“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge about the interplay of migration, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, language, religion, and the economy in their lives?”

*“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge  
... ?”*


“Do you understand how your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship?” (119).

*“...your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship”*


“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness? What transformations in your relationships with others, the land, and the spiritual did it involve?” (121).

*“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness?”*





I didn't get to study that history in any formal setting. I didn't learn about it from my family.



**One of my undergraduate college history professors once opened class with “Discovery, rediscovery, or invasion depending on how you want to look at it.” But, the class was still taught from an objective perspective.**

The Arawak “lived in village communes, had a developed agriculture of corn, yams, cassava. They could spin and weave, but they had no horses or work animals. They had no iron, but they wore tiny gold ornaments in their ears” (Zinn 3).

**in high school, *Lies My Teacher Told Me : Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James W. Loewen. She talked about us. Us. She**

**I didn't get to study *that* history in any formal setting. I didn't learn about it from my family. No one ever told the counterstory.**

As Williamson states, “The Spaniards were therefore seeking goods and services which the indigenous societies were simply not equipped to provide” (12), and he continues, “the Spanish settlers interpreted the Indians’ reluctance to work as laziness, while the Indians would not comprehend the Spaniards’ lust for gold or their labor demand” (12).

**We used a typical college history textbook.**

**I learned mostly by word of mouth.**

**One of my friends in my master’s program told me about a book one of her teachers gave her when she was**

*“Questions of what I know or do not know about ancestors are not questions that need to be answered in order for people to have the success I have now.”*

*-Carrie*

stated the obvious. We didn't come here on the Mayflower. We were here first. The border crossed us. That was the first time I realized that, well, the history I was taught, wasn't the whole story. I learned mostly by word of mouth. I accepted that. I had stories. Not just the stories I was told in school, and because of that, the stories from outside of school, were more real to me. After all, implicit in the stories I heard by word of mouth is the significance of the message that they were stories someone didn't want us to know. Purposefully left out.

*"Bisabuela's mom, Tatara Abuela, passed on a few stories, too. She remembers the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). How instead of being on our side, they judged us just like the whites."  
-Esperanza*

The anti-Semitism in Spain garnered Christian support by means of the Spanish Inquisition, Christian support, which was later used as to lead the crusade against Muslims.

**But as I began to write about those (other)stories, I realized being told something doesn't count as credible in academic settings. You need to cite your sources. So, I bought books**

**with information that I already knew, but this time, by people telling the other stories.**

**More specifics. They went back further. To Spain.**

**How the history of Spain matters more than just saying Christopher Columbus and other conquistadores were funded by Spain.**

Those religious crusades (the holy war) set the stage for, and justified, the violence and atrocities the Spanish conquistadores committed against the indigenous people they would encounter later in the New World.

**I learned of Mestizaje. The casta. The project of blanquimiento. I had to learn the stories that my body told others. That my history wasn't The History.**

**But as much as I knew, it was very little. I didn't know the indigenous name of the land in which I was born. I knew hardly anything about my great grandparents, much less of any ancestors before them. To be fair, neither did my parents. <sup>v</sup>**

---

<sup>v</sup> Three Threads in One Braid y El Juicio: What kind of Chicana are You?, p. 118

**Thread 2 Continued: El Juicio de Esperanza**

Luz made sure to click save, to grab what she needed, to thank Sofia and then made her way out of the writing center. With every step she took, Luz thought of Hernández-Wolfe's questions and thought of how to respond to them. So, she opened the voice recorder app on her phone to keep track and began knowing she would not be able to answer all by the time she reached the car.

But before Luz could begin to answer:

“Doctora,” she heard,  
while she felt a light tapping on her right shoulder.  
She assumed it was Sofia.

However, as she turned around to look,  
Luz found herself standing in a strange hallway  
with many doors of different ages, sizes, textures and colors.  
This time, she stood in the hallway as Esperanza.

It was strange. Luz could see, feel, and hear the same things Esperanza could. She could also hear Esperanza's thoughts. Moving through the hallway, again she felt how overwhelming it was to be faced with the number of doors she could choose from, and the hallway seemed to know that because suddenly, she found herself in front of a small, old wooden door. It was the same one she had chosen. The one that was previously built with a collection of horizontal planks held together by a wide, vertical piece of rusted metal. It was locked, and for some reason, also sealed shut with concrete around the frame. Esperanza could not help but reach out to touch it. As she did, the concrete crumbled, and the lock dissolved. She crossed the threshold with her eyes closed, not sure if she wanted to see what she was walking into, some parts of the questions Esperanza had just been asked echoed in her mind:

“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?” (120).

*“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?”* (120).

“Where does your last name come from? Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?” (120).

*“Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?”* (120).

“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge about the interplay of migration, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, language, religion, and the economy in their lives?”

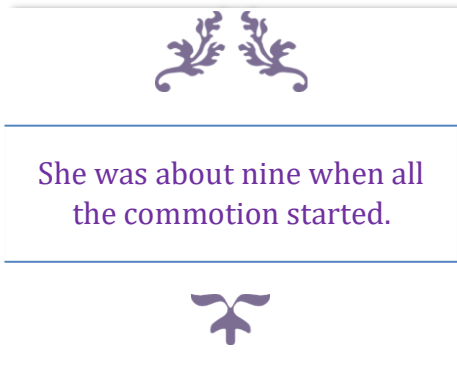
*“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge . . . ?”*

“Do you understand how your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship?” (119).

*“...your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship?”*

“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness? What transformations in your relationships with others, the land, and the spiritual did it involve?” (121).

*“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness?”*



**My mom once told me that before Gramma was born here in South Texas, Great Gramma lived in California. That’s where Great Gramma was born in 1938. She passed on stories her Gramma, Gramma to Mom, and Mom to me (and Fe). Great Gramma**

**always started with the story about when she lived in Westminster.**

**Ella estaba bien young so she didn’t remember mucho. Pero de lo que si se acuerda was school. She liked the way the gringo kids sounded like when they said things in English, but they didn’t like her because she was Mexican and made fun of the way she sounded cuando ella hablaba Ingles. They went to separate schools, the gringos and the Mexicans. *Que they needed special help supposedly.* La escuela para los**

According to Robert J. Alvarez (1986, p.119), the Mexicans were described as “half-breeds,” and the streets of Mexican immigrant communities were overcrowded with “shacks” belonging to people who were “illiterate,” “diseased,” and who possessed the “reckless prodigality of rabbits” (Madrid 50).

**Mejicanos no era una cosa bonita. It wasn’t a particularly nice building. She wondered**

**why, if the only reason the gringos and the Mexicans needed to go to different schools was**

“Méndez vs. Westminster eventually went to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and won in 1947. Seven years before Brown vs. Board of Education, California became the first state to end legal school segregation” (Robbie 58).

**because the Mexicans needed extra help, the gringo school was much better.**

**She was about nine when all the commotion started when a new family came to**

**town. Unos de los niños se miraban Mejicanos y**

*“I knew hardly anything about my great grandparents, much less of any ancestors before them. To be fair, neither did my parents.”*

*-Luz*

**otros como gringitos. But even before she was nine, things looked the same for Bisabuela. Her family was originally from a U.S.-Mexico bordertown in Texas, and they also**

“the white child looks on the Mexicans as on the Negro before the war, to be cuffed about and used as inferior people” (as cited in Montejano 230).

**had the same problems there; white people saw Mexicans as inferior and weren’t afraid to show it.**

**Bisabuela’s mom, Tatara Abuela, passed on a few stories, too. She remembers the League**

**of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). How instead of being on our side, they judged us just like the whites. The white people called us uneducated, so LULAC told us we were uneducated and needed more education; they called us dirty, so LULAC told us that we were**

“the race ideas of Anglos –ideas of cleanliness, of beauty, of respectability—constituted much of the cultural ground which segregationist policies were discussed and debated” (Motejano 232).

**dirty and to clean up. They didn't fight for us. They fought against us. Whites used those excuses and more to look down on us and treat us bad, and LULAC stood beside them.**

**Like Bisabuela, Tatara Abuela also went to a separate school from the gringos. She said that the only books they had where the old, used ones that the white kids didn't want anymore. One of her cousins though, went to a school that did have a mix of white students and some Mejicanos, but most Mejicanos like her cousin didn't like being in the same school with whites because of the way their white classmates and teachers treated them. A lot of Mejicanos would stop going to school, especially because of how they were targeted when the subject of the Alamo came up. They treated us like we were the foreigners when we were here first. The border crossed us.**

*"From what I can tell, it seems like the focus is so much on the past and past "wrongs" that it teaches young people to hate white people."*

*-Carrie*

"In the early nineteenth century, the Texas Rangers blurred the lines between enforcing state laws, practicing vigilantism, and inciting racial terror . . . The US Military also actively policed ethnic Mexicans. They collaborated with the Rangers to suppress uprisings that challenged American rule in the region" (Muñoz Martinez 11).

**The border crossed us because of the gringos. They didn't want to live in Mexican territory because they no longer wanted to abide by the nation's laws, especially regarding slavery. With racism and prejudice in their hearts, they succeed. That made them bolder. It was now their land so to speak. Some of us still owned our own land despite the redrawing of the border. That led to continual violence in the area. So, while the U.S.-Mexico War had ended, the gringos weren't**



**ready to stop fighting. They wanted control, and in order to do that, they needed to make us feel like we were more worthless than them, and they needed to make us afraid. Just because the war was over, it didn't mean all of us were ready to give up, and they knew that. That's why my Tata Abuela ended up in California. Because thanks to the Texas Rangers, Tata Abuelo ended up on a postcard.**

“When photographers turned their lens on the violence in the United States, they captured victims of extralegal executions. Texas Rangers, local police, US soldiers, and civilians are shown in these photos. Indeed, it is the authority of a soldier's uniform or the presence of a Texas Ranger that lent credence for the deeds captured on them” (Muñoz Martinez 11).

**Abuela tells me all of that is only a peek at all the stories that have moved us women from being Mexican-American to Chicanas.<sup>i</sup>**

---

<sup>i</sup> Three Threads in One Braid y El Juicio: What kind of Chicana are You?, p. 118

**Thread 3 Continued: El Juicio de Caridad (Carrie)**

Luz made sure to click save, to grab what she needed, to thank Sofia and then made her way out of the writing center. With every step she took, Luz thought of Hernández-Wolfe's questions and thought of how to respond to them. So, she opened the voice recorder app on her phone to keep track and began knowing she would not be able to answer all by the time she reached the car.

But before Luz could begin to answer:

“Doctora,” she heard,  
while she felt a light tapping on her right shoulder.  
She assumed it was Sofia.

However, as she turned around to look,  
Luz found herself standing in a strange hallway  
with many doors of different ages, sizes, textures and colors.  
This time, she stood in the hallway as Carrie.

Just like with Esperanza, it was strange. Luz could see, feel, and hear the same things Carrie could. And just like with Esperanza, she could also hear Carrie's thoughts. Yet again, moving through the hallway, she could feel how overwhelming it felt to be faced with the number of doors to choose from, and the hallway seemed to know that because suddenly, she found herself in front of a small, old wooden door. It was the same one she had chosen. The one that was previously built with a collection of horizontal planks held together by a wide, vertical piece of rusted metal. It was locked, and for some reason, also sealed shut with concrete around the frame. Carrie could not help but reach out to touch it. As she did, the concrete crumbled, and the lock dissolved. She crossed the threshold with her eyes closed, not sure if she wanted to see what she was walking into, some parts of the questions Luz had just been asked echoed in Carries' mind:

“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?” (120).

*“What is the indigenous name of the land in which you were born?”* (120).

“Where does your last name come from? Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?” (120).

*“Are there any legacies that are honored or erased by your name?”* (120).

“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge about the interplay of migration, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, language, religion, and the economy in their lives?”

*“If you are unable to trace your ancestors, how does this inability inform your knowledge  
... ?”*

“Do you understand how your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship?” (119).

*“your ancestor’s evolving social contexts and shifting geographical locations shape  
access and opportunity or disadvantage and hardship”*

“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness? What transformations in your relationships with others, the land, and the spiritual did it involve?” (121).

*“Do you have an example of a journey to critical consciousness?”*

**I am living the life my parents wanted for me: to have a life full of opportunities in America as an *American*, and that is what matters. What the future could bring, not the**

“as a Latina . . . [f]or the first time in all my studies of American history, I finally found a story that told me that I, too, was worthy . . . It showed me unequivocally that every voice matters and that I am not “apart” but rather “an essential part” of American and even world history” (Robbie 63-64).

**past. People putting together and advocating for Ethnic Studies programs and the like should spend more time thinking about the skills and facts that open avenues for success. From what I can tell, it seems like the focus is so much on the past and past “wrongs” that it teaches young people to hate white people. It is sad**

**really. There are people trying to cross the border into our country who think more highly**

**of what America is than the students and teachers in Ethnic Studies programs.**

**Questions of what I know or do not know**

*“the history of Spain matters more than just saying Christopher Columbus and other conquistadores were funded by Spain. I learned of Mestizaje. The casta. The project of blanquimiento. I had to learn the stories that my body told others.”*

*-Luz*

**about ancestors are not questions that need to be answered in order for people to have the**

**success I have now. If those things were so important, I would not be where I am today, and my parents would have dedicated time to teaching me about it. For that matter, a lot of other Hispanic parents would have taught that history.**

**Instead, my parents were ecstatic that I chose English was my area of expertise. Learning about American literature from colonial times to recent acclaimed works was my passion, and that is where my interest in writing stemmed from as well.**

“Numerous scholars. . . have identified contributing factors for persistent underachievement as linked to the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction for these populations” (Colón-Muñiz and Lavandez 15).

**From American literature I learned a deeper, more nuanced understanding of this country’s history, and from it I also learned how to speak English more elegantly. Imagine how much better educated America would be if literature and literacies were valued as much as Ethnic programs that at most should only be optional and not required? That is more pertinent today than staying connected to a past lifestyle that obviously did no favors for my family. My guess is that my parents knew that lifestyle would also hold**

“. . . keeping these exciting, vibrant, and noteworthy stories and histories from the public eye only serves to perpetuate the marginalization of Mexican-Americans, thus rendering their experiences as insignificant, unheralded, and unimportant” (Madrid 47).

**From American literature I learned a deeper, more nuanced understanding of this country’s history, and from it I also learned how to speak English more elegantly. Imagine how much better**

*“The white people called us uneducated, so LULAC told us we were uneducated and needed more education; they called us dirty, so LULAC told us that we were dirty and to clean up. They didn’t fight for us. They fought against us.”*

*-Esperanza*

**me back and did as much as they could to keep me from it. I wish some of my students' parents had felt the same way. They are obviously struggling in college because of it. I imagine it would be even worse if they had been able to take classes in Ethnic Studies before coming to college.<sup>i</sup>**

---

<sup>i</sup> Three Threads in One Braid y El Juicio: What kind of Chicana are You?, p. 118

### Three Threads in One Braid y El Juicio: What kind of Chicana are You?



She passed on stories from her Gramma, Gramma to Mom, Mom to me (and Fe).



I didn't get to study that history in any formal setting. I didn't learn about it from my family.



If those things were so important, I would not be where I am today, and my parents would have dedicated time to teach me about it.



“WHAT KIND OF CHICANA ARE YOU???”



I am living the life my parents wanted for me: to have a life full of opportunities in America as an *American*, and that is what matters. What the future could bring, not the past.

She was about nine when all the commotion started.

I learned mostly by word of mouth. I accepted that. I had stories. Not just the stories I was told in school, and because of that, the stories from outside of school were more real to me.



“WHAT KIND OF CHICANA ARE YOU???”



I didn't get to study that history in any formal setting. I didn't learn about it from my family.

She passed on stories from her Gramma, Gramma to Mom, Mom to me (and Fe).



*“WHAT KIND OF CHICANA ARE  
YOU???”*

“Questions of what I know or do not know about ancestors are not questions that need to be answered in order for people to have the success I have now.”  
-Carrie

“Bisabuela’s mom, Tatara Abuela, passed on a few stories, too. She remembers the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). How instead of being our side, they judged us just like the whites.”  
-Esperanza

“the history of Spain matters more than just saying Christopher Columbus and other conquistadores were funded by Spain. I learned of Mestizaje. The casta. The project of blanquimiento. I had to learn the stories that my body told others.”  
-Luz

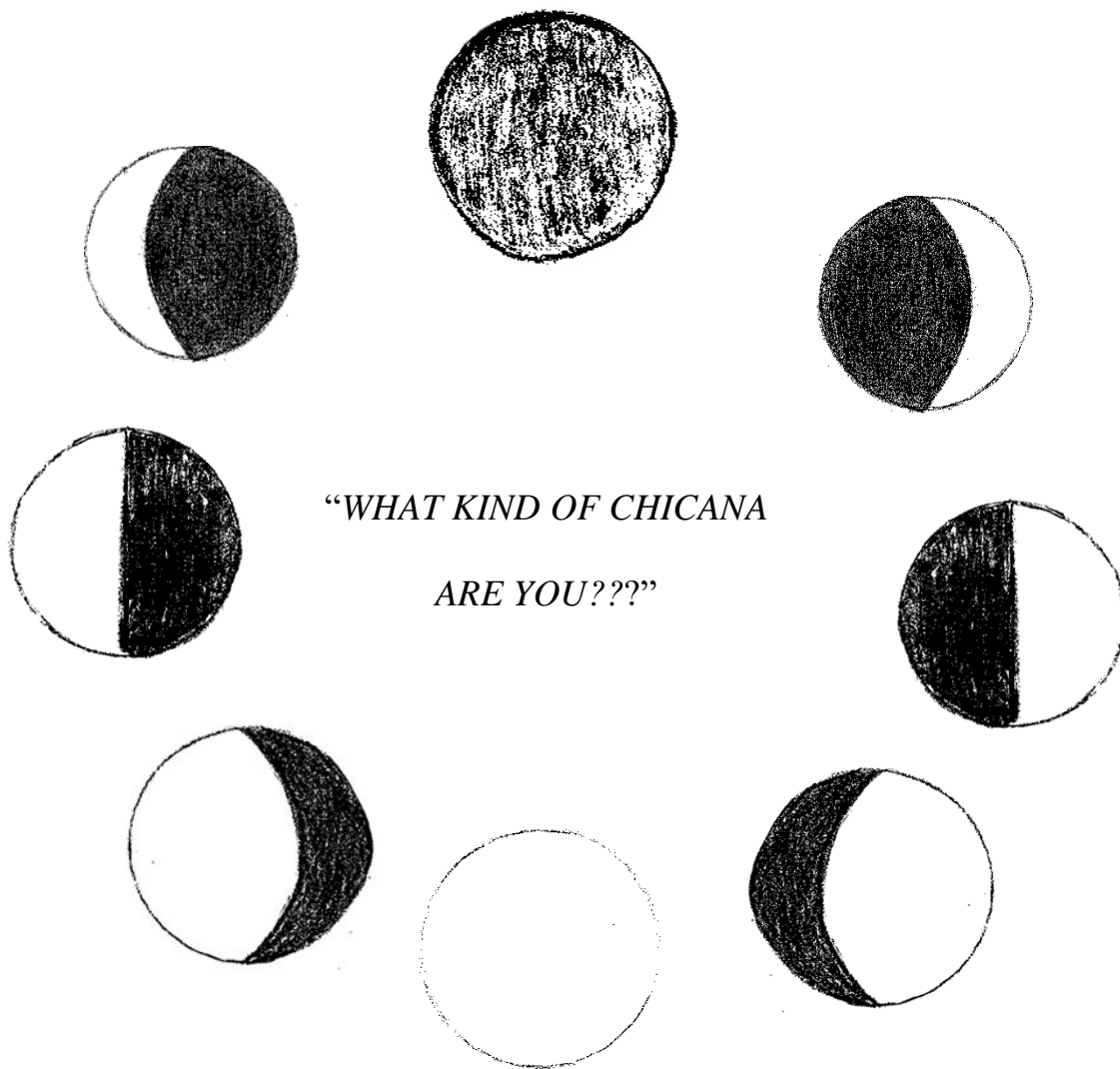
“From what I can tell, it seems like the focus is so much on the past and past “wrongs” that it teaches young people to hate white people.”  
-Carrie

“The white people called us uneducated, so LULAC told us we were uneducated and needed more education; they called us dirty, so LULAC told us that we were dirty and to clean up. They didn’t fight for us. They fought against us.”  
-Esperanza

“I knew hardly anything about my great grandparents, much less any of my ancestors before them. To be fair, neither did my parents.”

*“WHAT KIND OF CHICANA ARE  
YOU???”*





*“WHAT KIND OF CHICANA  
ARE YOU???”*

**Thread 4 Intralude IV: No Hay Fin Pero Adelante**

April 17, 2018<sup>i</sup>  
To: Sandra Tarabochia  
Subject: Meeting Today

Hi,

Sorry for the confusion and late reply. I have our meeting scheduled for 3 on Thursday and had conferences with students scheduled today. Are you available then?

I have been working on revising my proposal based off the feedback you provided last semester, (re)reading Aja's dissertation to help me think through my methodology and design, and updating the literature review section as well.

-Willow

---

July 7, 2018  
To: Sandra Tarabochia  
Subject: *\*redacted\** Workshop

I suppose the fact that I am a grad student and most of them having been teaching *\*redacted\** longer than I have? I worry that may work against the potential for impact. But also my strategy on *\*redacted\** has been to do my job, keep my head down, and stay out of people's way, and accepting would be doing the opposite. I also think that the things I discuss can make white people uncomfortable and I worry that if I do, doing my job in *\*redacted\** will end up being more difficult than it needs to be in the coming year...

---

<sup>i</sup> I was no longer in coursework. Spring 2018 was scheduled to be my comprehensive exam semester, but I ended up pushing it back to the fall.

I realize that none of this could happen, all of this could happen, or some of this could happen. I don't know if I know how to deal with the last two in a more formal setting like work.

---

July 17, 2018  
To: Sandra Tarabochia  
Subject: *\*redacted\** Workshop

Met with *\*redacted\** Workshop today. Decided to go for it. It's what I am here for and it's nice for my expertise to be acknowledged by others outside of my program of study.

Also got the fab idea to use parts of the chapter I have written with *\*redacted\** Workshop for the edited collection by Frankie and Wonderful and parts of my WC research talk for this. I should send you the draft, if you'd be interested. I haven't finished it out (still the first draft) and have been meaning to meet with *\*redacted\** Workshop to discuss it, too.

-W

---

July 20, 2018  
To: Sandra Tarabochia  
Subject: An Article

I am not sure if I sent you this one ["Using Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Racist Nativism To Explore Intersectionality in the Educational Experiences of Undocumented Chicana College Students" by Lindsay Perez Huber] yet. It has helped me think of why and how I need to articulate CRT, LatCrit, and Chicana feminist epistemology...also to consider critical race testimonios.

-W

---

August 15, 2018<sup>ii</sup>  
To: Sandra Tarabochia  
Subject: (No Subject)

Sounds good. I'm still working on the questions. I did the workshop yesterday, and I've talked to a couple of people about it already, but I don't feel like the conversations have given me what I need.

So, I will admit that my expectations for positive responses from the instructors were practically non-existent. I went in full on expecting that I would make most of them uncomfortable and that there would be obvious push back, which led me to design and frame the presentation as a conversation starter and end with us all brainstorming ways to encourage and incorporate code-meshing into out [*sic*] classes.

I made the moves I usually make. Began by talking about how writing classes still predominantly reproduce monolingual, monocultural ideologies and how that impacts students of color/minoritized students....that language plays a role in how we come to know the world and each other, as well as how we interact... leading briefly into touching on epistemological oppression/injustice/violence, quoting Dolores Delgado Bernal: "Although students of color are holders and creators of knowledge, they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings." Then briefly talked about code-switching and code-meshing as ways to be more inclusive of students of color/minoritized students in writing classes, while explaining the difference between the two. I ended by asking the instructors to think of ways that they could include code-meshing into their own classes.

---

<sup>ii</sup> I passed my exams in the fall of 2018.

And then it happened.

The white woman sitting next to me said that Latino parents want their kids to learn how to speak to "The Man" because that's what gets them jobs and gets them seen and heard. This white woman actually tried to silence me, a Chicana Latina, using some over-generalization of people of my pan-ethnicity against not only my own experiences, but also my research.

I feel pretty good about how I responded, but of course could have been better, and I know better for next time.

But what is really standing out to me is the implication that only white people are the only people worth writing, listening, and speaking to, which is not anything new, but I think the fact that this white woman literally felt like she had more authority on this than me—an actual Latina who does research on the very topic—that not only did she imply those things, she enacted them.

Overall, I've realized that I need to add "intergenerational" before epistemological injustice in my work. And I guess this is my problem, I keep "intellectualizing" the experience as an attempt to keep myself from having to come to terms with my position in this...I have taken a path that many Latinas don't, and that's not a judgement, but what more am I supposed to do to be heard by people like this? What more can we even do? And these are useless questions because the problem is not me, and I know that, but still...

I think I wrote this more for me than you, and maybe it doesn't make sense if I am asking you for affirmation, , but it's something I want you to know, and feel like if I don't get it out now and to you, it's going to hold me back.

#### **Thread 4 Conclusion: Stitching Heridas meanwhile Weaving Composite Counterstories**

When I began to imagine bits and pieces of this project, I had no idea how to do any of it, but I was determined to complete it regardless. I wanted it to be my Chicana moment. The one that answers the question, “What kind of Chicana are you?” The answer being one that embodies “a rhetoric of action and effectiveness and at the same time [uses the identity] as a mediating topos from which those who affiliate as such draw upon when negotiating their place in the world and how to act given these conditions”<sup>xxiii</sup> (Leon 154). Ironically, this dissertation did not merely end up being my Chicana moment, the one that pushes against dominant narratives to expose the ways spaces of literacy intervention in college are undergirded by epistemologies of white ignorance, white benevolence, and white privilege that led to epistemological injustice. This dissertation helped me become a Chicana by challenging myself to formulate a rhetorical practice based on a Chicana epistemology.

It was a challenge which Casie Cobos voiced in her dissertation *Embodied Storying, A Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics: (Re)making Stories, (Un)mapping the Lines, and Remembering Bodies*<sup>xxiv</sup>. By accepting Cobos’ challenge, the process of writing this created a space, using counterstory, where I could experience epistemological justice—epistemological justice as defined by Jose Medina<sup>xxv</sup>. Counterstory as an analytical tool and form based on Aja Martinez’s work helped me work through some of the hermeneutical injustices that previously kept me from identifying as a Chicana and in the presentation of that work into written form, I got to experience testimonial justice. However, as I acknowledge in the introduction and with the use of intraludes, a lot of work had to happen before I sat down to weave together this project, much of which I attribute to the clutches of formal education.

Counterstory became a method to present a testimony in ways that align with a Chicana epistemology, using, as Flores states in "Creating Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland"<sup>xxvi</sup> our "own creative works as a tool in the discursive construction of a space of [our] own" (143). Some of those works include Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*<sup>xxvii</sup> and her *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*<sup>xxviii</sup>. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*<sup>xxix</sup> edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa and *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*<sup>xxx</sup> by the Latina Feminist Group. Each of those works vary in the way they "retain the flavor of oral speech, others more stylized. Poetry, fictionalized personal account, interior monologue, dramatic dialogue, novelistic writing, and other forms evolved from the creative process of how to present the wide range of our life experiences" (Latina Feminist Group 21) even within themselves.

I drew from the two works of literature I had already read written by Chicanas: Ana Castillo's *So Far from God*<sup>xxxi</sup> and Helena María Viramontes *Under the Feet of Jesus*<sup>xxxii</sup>. Other works of fiction, I flipped through in order to get a sense of how Latinx writers engaged in fiction writing. Those included Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*<sup>xxxiii</sup>, Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me Ultima*<sup>xxxiv</sup>, and Tomás Rivera's . . . *Y No Se Lo Tragó La Tierra/ . . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*<sup>xxxv</sup>. I also scanned pages of *Other Musics: New Latina Poetry*<sup>xxxvi</sup> collection edited by Cynthia Cruz. I make no apologies for not having read through them from beginning to end because what I was assigned to read in my years of formal education did not really include any fiction, poetry, or plays written by Latinx people. There was half a class in my MA program where I gained some exposure to Latinx fiction. That's where I

remember reading *Under the Feet of Jesus* and Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

While I found places to pull from when I thought of *how* to write this project in relation to my research problem, I had to focus on the *where*: Texas, specifically South Texas. *Now* that I think of it, what a better place can exist when deconstructing myself into three people that can be thought of as the embodiment of the fact that the “border is the locus of resistance [Esperanza], or rupture [Caridad], and of putting together the fragments [Luz]” (Anzaldúa, *Luz in the Dark* 48)? But beyond work that touches on Mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa), Thirdspace consciousness<sup>xxxviii</sup> (Adela Licona), Oppositional consciousness<sup>xxxix</sup> (Chela Sandoval), Nomadic consciousness<sup>xl</sup> (Juan C. Guerra is from the Rio Grande Valley), and pointing back to it as my home, how much of South Texas did I know enough of in order to situate education in conversations white privilege, white ignorance, and white benevolence in a place that is considered minority-majority? Most of what I had read about Latinx rights centered California and Chicana feminism in general up until then. For example, *Chicana Feminist Thought*<sup>xli</sup> edited by Alma M García; “Chicana Identity Matters by Deena. J. González;” *The Decolonial Imaginary*<sup>xlii</sup> by Emma Pérez; *Fertile Matters* by Elena Gutiérrez; *Latino Civil Rights in Education*<sup>xliii</sup> edited by Anaida Colón-Muñiz and Magaly C. Lavadenz; *Massacre of the Dreamers*<sup>xliv</sup> by Ana Castillo *Methodology of the Oppressed* by Chela Sandoval; *There Was a Woman*<sup>xlv</sup> by Domino Renee Pérez.

So, my path down history began. David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*<sup>xlvi</sup>; Monica Muñoz Martinez's *The Injustice Never Leaves You*<sup>xlvii</sup>; Nicholas Villanueva's *The Lynching of Mexicans in the Texas Boderlands*; Guadalupe San Miguel's *Let All of Them Take Heed: Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in*



*Texas, 1910-1981*<sup>xlvi</sup>; Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez's *Texas Mexican Americans and Postwar Civil Rights*<sup>xlvi</sup>; among others. I also read about the categories of Hispanic, Latino, Mexican American, and Chicanos to understand their differences over time including, but not limited to, the following: "Becoming 'Hispanic': Secondary Panethnic Identification among Latin American-origin Populations in the United States;"<sup>1</sup> The Politics of Ethnic Construction: Hispanic, Chicano, Latino? series of *Latin American Perspectives* issue 75, volume 19, number 4; "Latinx thoughts: Latinidad with an X"<sup>ii</sup> by Salvador Vidal-Ortiz & Juliana Martínez; "Texas Mexicans and the Politics of Whiteness"<sup>iii</sup> by Ariela J. Gross; "The 'Other White': Mexican Americans and the Impotency of Whiteness in the Segregation and Desegregation of Texan Public Schools"<sup>liii</sup> by Phoebe C. Godfrey.

While I have included a few scholars who fall into rhetoric and composition (Cobos, Guerra, Leon, and Martinez) under this heading of healing, I haven't included those who have done anti-racist, diversity, equity, and inclusion work not directly related to Latinx work in the field. Although related, I could engage that work with a critical eye that accompanies it, sure, but the fact is it hadn't led me to do the work in this project that led to affirm and develop a Chicana identity, and as a result, experience epistemological justice.

\*\*\*

**además.** After I submitted a first, full draft of this, I picked up Anzaldúa's *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, and I found Anzaldúa's following words: "Through the act of writing you call, like the ancient chamana, the scattered pieces of your soul back to your body. You commence the arduous task of rebuilding yourself, of

composing a story that more accurately expresses your identity” (155-56). That’s, in a sense, is what I mean when I say that putting together this project has helped me become a Chicana.

## End Notes

- 
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Leon, Kendall Marie. *Building a Chicana Rhetoric for Rhetoric and Composition: Methodology, Practice, and Performance*. 2010. Michigan State University, PhD dissertation. *ProQuest*, <https://login.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/dissertations-theses/building-chicana-rhetoric-composition-methodology/docview/815513650/se-2?accountid=12964>.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Cobos, Casie. *Embodied Storying, a Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics:(Re) Making Stories, (Un) Mapping the Lines, and Re-membering Bodies*. 2012. Texas A&M University, PhD dissertation. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/13642092.pdf>
- <sup>xxv</sup> Medina, José. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Flores, Lisa A. "Creating Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 82, no. 2, 1996, pp. 142-156.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Aunt Lute Books, 2007.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Duke University Press, 2015.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldúa, editors. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., SUNY Press, 2015.
- <sup>xxx</sup> del Alba Acevedo, Luz. *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*. Duke University Press, 2001.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Castillo, Ana. *So far from God: A Novel*. WW Norton & Company, 2005.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Viramontes, Helena María. *Under the Feet of Jesus*. Penguin, 1996.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. New York: Plume, 1991.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. Hachette UK, 2012.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Rivera, Tomás. ... *Y No Se lo Tragó la Tierra/... And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*. Arte Público Press, 1992.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Cruz, Cynthia, ed. *Other Musics: New Latina Poetry*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2019.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Sáenz, Benjamin Alire. *Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood*. Cinco Puntos Press, 2004.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Licon, Adela C. "(B) orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-space Scholarship and Zines." *NWSA Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2005, pp. 104-129.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- <sup>xl</sup> Guerra, Juan C. *Language, Culture, Identity and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Communities*. Routledge, 2015.

- 
- <sup>xli</sup> Garcia, Mario T. *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*. Psychology Press, 1997.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Pérez, Emma. *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*. Indiana University Press, 1999.
- <sup>xliii</sup> Colón-Muñiz, Anaida, and Magaly Lavadenz, editors. *Latino Civil Rights in Education: La Lucha Sigue*. Routledge, 2015.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Castillo, Ana. *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*. UNM Press, 2014.
- <sup>xlv</sup> Perez, Domino Renee. *There was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture*. University of Texas Press, 2008.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*. University of Texas Press, 1987.
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Martinez, Monica Muñoz. *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican violence in Texas*. Harvard University Press, 2018.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> San Miguel Jr, Guadalupe. "Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981. University of Texas Press, 1987.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Rivas-Rodriguez, Maggie. *Texas Mexican Americans and Postwar Civil Rights*. University of Texas Press, 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Jones-Correa, Michael, and David L. Leal. "Becoming" Hispanic": Secondary Panethnic Identification among Latin American-origin Populations in the United States." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1996, pp. 214-254.
- <sup>li</sup> Vidal-Ortiz, Salvador, and Juliana Martínez. "Latinx Thoughts: Latinidad with an X." *Latino Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2018, pp. 384-395.
- <sup>lii</sup> Gross, Ariela J. "Texas Mexicans and the Politics of Whiteness." *Law and History Review*, vol. 21, no.1, 2003, pp. 195-205.
- <sup>liii</sup> Godfrey, Phoebe C. "The "Other White": Mexican Americans and the Impotency of Whiteness in the Segregation and Desegregation of Texan Public Schools." *Equity & Excellence in Education*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2008, pp. 247-261.

## **Conclusion**

Using the three composite counterstory threads, along with my own intraludes, I worked to show how epistemological injustice can operate in institutions of higher education. My goal was to show that injustice so that other Chicanas, who need to find the same or similar hermeneutical and testimonial tools (as I did) can find them here. Two of the tools that I have relied on throughout this project that have helped me to that end have been Chicana rhetoric and counterstory as a Critical Race Methodology.

### **Summary of Part I, Part II, and Part III**

#### **Part I: Pedagogies of the Home**

Esperanza is in high school at the cusp of fifteen struggling with the decision to go to college. Because of her family's migrant background, she and her family feel that earning a college degree would help her succeed; that is, have a life in which she would not have to struggle as her family did in terms of finances and physically straining working conditions. Through other characters, like her sister Fe, the idea of college being the tool for success is countered; while her family struggled and endured laborious work outside, there is nothing wrong with choosing a path that does not include college. Esperanza's ambivalence was recognized, so her family connected her with someone who had gone to college, even more had a PhD: Luz. Esperanza and her family meet Luz during Esperanza's quinceañera (quince). Luz was invited by her friend La Madrina. Luz was ambivalent about going to Esperanza's quince because her time in college had made her feel inadequate, like she had lost parts of her heritage, mostly her ability to speak Spanish well. She didn't know that the reason she was invited was so that she could meet Esperanza and be poised as a model of success, but Luz didn't feel that way because of the parts of her she felt she had lost.

## **Part II: Towards an Epistemologically First-Year Writing**

Luz is still at Esperanza's quince, a narrated section following the storyline in which Esperanza has chosen to attend college. She ends up at the same university in South Texas where Luz has begun her new job as a writing center director. While Luz is settling into her new job and feels like she is in a place that feels like home, being surrounded by students and writing center consultant who code-mesh Spanish and English, Esperanza is away from home struggling with her first-year writing instructor even though she has always been told that she is a good writer. On the other side, her first-year composition instructor is struggling to help Esperanza succeed in her class, so she directs her to the writing center. Here, Fe's (Esperanza's sister) visions come to fruition as Esperanza finds "la luz." Luz and Esperanza meet twice during this counterstory. The first time Esperanza and Luz meet, they do not end up discussing Esperanza's struggles. Instead, Luz shares details about her life and the two of them bond over having similar experiences. Luz and Caridad meet as well although a tension is left unresolved after their meetings. In a third and final meeting all three meet to find a way to support Esperanza in her first-year composition class.

## **Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation.**

After falling asleep in her office, Luz is awakened by Sophia, the custodian. She had fallen asleep while reading and taking notes on a book. She was reading about rethinking mental health for Latinos and Latin Americans from a borderland's standpoint. On her way out of the building she reflects on some of the questions that the author of the book included in the appendix as a way to apply during counseling sessions. Luz felt compelled to respond to some the questions, and didn't want to lose her thoughts, so she decided to record them.

However, before she gets the chance to, Luz found herself standing in a strange hallway

with many doors of different ages, sizes, textures and colors. She chooses a door and as she steps through the threshold, some parts of the questions Luz had just been asked echoed in her mind. While she doesn't directly answer the questions after she has stepped through the door, she shares her own story of what she knows, got to know, and that she didn't get to know her family's history as well as her place in U.S. History as a Mexican-American.

When her story ends, Luz's timeline rewinds and she ends up at the previous point in time when she is walking out of the building. She experiences the same phenomenon. This time however she moves through the storytelling as a spectator within Esperanza, and the person telling her story is Esperanza. Like Luz, Esperanza does not directly answer the questions after she has stepped through the door. Unlike Luz, Esperanza got to know her family's history because stories were passed down from generation to generation.

Yet again, Luz lives the same experience except with Caridad. Unlike Luz and Esperanza, Caridad isn't concerned about family histories because she has not needed to know them to be successful. She also believes that other Latinx people don't need to know that history in order to succeed. She goes as far as to state her opinion that ethnic studies programs that do work to teach the history of Latinx people in the U.S. actually works against them and leads to resent white people.

At the end of this counterstory, statements that each composite character has made are braided together around the question in the introduction, "What kind of Chicana are you?" The last page of the counterstory ends with the cycle of the moon surrounding the same question.

### **Explanation of Each Counterstory**

#### **Part I: Pedagogies of the Home**

In this episode I establish the significance of the sister's names: Esperanza means hope and Fe means faith. It is important to note that faith plays a role in the purposeful development and affirmation of a Chicana identity, and on that note Luz is introduced. Luz is also a significant name in that it means light. In this case Luz is the only character I assigned a last name to: de la Luna. The full name then comes to mean moonlight (Luz de la Luna). In this case, Luz's character is the end result of faith. She is a Latina who earned a PhD and is holding a position in academia where she is then in a position to experience faith and hope while also helping struggling students like Esperanza keep their faith in themselves. In Esperanza lies the hope of a better future and working towards that future requires faith (Fe). Faith in this project is not an embodiment of Christianity, but Curanderismo. As a Curandera, Fe is able to provide Esperanza with the faith she needs, which plays an important part in the other counterstories. Symbolic names such as Esperanza, Fe, Caridad (Charity), and Sofia (wisdom) as well as magical realism are common in Mexican-American literature. *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya and *So Far from God* by Ana Castillo are two examples I drew from—more heavily from Ana Castillo.

I primarily engage a Chicana rhetoric of difference by including “memories of the seemingly mundane, such as memories of mothers cooking or of back-breaking manual labor . . . experiences in their homes, on the streets, and with their friends” (Flores 148) and multiple languages. A Chicana rhetoric of difference allowed me to unfold some of what Esperanza has learned and the how Esperanza has learned through pedagogies of the home: respeto, consejos, and cuentos. Carmen Guzman-Martinez states that “findings reflect the research on Latina/o socialization in which consejos [moral advice], cuentos [stories], and respeto [respect] are the main ways that children learn their place in the home and the world” (6). Events and settings in the story are from the personal, and the dialogue was mostly driven by my impulse to code-mesh.

## **Part II: Towards an Epistemologically First-Year Writing Classroom.**

In this counterstory, I highlight how first-year writing classes, writing centers, and first-year experience programs play a role in forcing assimilation through the naturalization of monolingual, monocultural approaches to the teaching and learning and assessment of writing. I fuse public and private, use first person, multiple languages, and multiple tones, “including academic, autobiographical, and poetic” (Flores 145).

Each character at play has engaged in different levels of identity development and affirmation that is complicated by the levels of education each has received and their educational career path aspirations. Luz earned her PhD, and much like me, developed her Chicana identity as a result of the epistemological injustice she experienced. Caridad/Carrie earned her MA in English, and her focus was literature not rhetoric and composition. Like me, she did not know much about her history, cultural rhetorics, or white benevolence in teaching. Esperanza is a first-year student. I position her as someone who has yet to be highly assimilated. She has not been taught to repress her Chicana identity, subsumed by a white, middle-class academic worldview.

Each of the three central characters—Esperanza, Luz, and Carrie—are heavily interweaved to serve as counterparts to each other, as well as to highlight the power dynamics involved with each character either beginning or ending their academic career in different stages and result in different consequences and potential in relation to each of their stage. Caridad/Carrie had been previously denied the opportunity for identity development, has created her class from the perspective of white benevolence, assuming student needs and her helpfulness in helping students succeed. As she learned to understand race from a color-evasive ideology, she did not develop a Chicana identity. Her character represents whiteness: “learned ways of knowing and doing that are characterized by a racialized (white) sense of oneself as best



equipped to judge, preach, and suffer” (Condon 3). As women of Mexican heritage, Esperanza, Luz, and Carrie are all people who the rhetoric of whiteness has systematically targeted. However, Esperanza is the character that I have created as the central target of whiteness (Carrie) in order to show its relationship to the teaching and assessment of writing.

In relation to whiteness, I also engage “the perspective that academic language is a set of disembodied empirical linguistic features . . . [and] I reject the logic that undergirds this perspective in favor of one that treats academic language as an ideological construction shaped by the social status of the speaker in relation to the listener/perceiver” (Nelson Flores). Carrie and Luz are two listeners/perceivers of Esperanza’s work, and as the story goes, Luz believes academic discourse is an ideological construction while Carrie does not. That fact is significant when it comes to the difference in Carrie’s and Luz’s assessment of Esperanza’s work: a difference that arises from Luz reclaiming a Chicana identity and Carrie not developing one. Thus, Carrie as a whitely person reads writing as an instructor from a white habitus. Here, my thoughts align with Asao Inoue, who argues:

Too often, the presence of a dominant White habitus is the measure of effectiveness of an assessment ecology. That is, when we see a student producing such writing, we tend to think all is okay with that student . . . Are your methods of grading helping the student accomplish the goals of the course or are your grades simply rewarding them for who they are or what they can already do? Or maybe, your grades are just measuring and ranking students, which will privilege students with a White habitus, and harm students who do not embody it? . . . Is your ecology punishing students for who they are? Is it punishing students who

are other than the ones who embody the ideal habitus that your standards and grading practices use to grade so-called quality? (239-40)

The questions that Inoue poses in the quote above are questions that Luz began to ask during her doctoral program. While in her doctoral program, by asking those questions, Luz was able to reaffirm and reclaim parts of a political Chicana identity. Her political commitments allowed her to see the value in Esperanza's writing rather than see deficit. Even more, it led Luz to understand the work of the writing center in more complex ways than it merely being a fix-it shop.

However, as Condon notes, “[i]n the world of writing centers, despite a recent surge of interest in and an emerging commitment to stamp out oppression and racism, there continues to be a kind of ongoing hand-wringing with regard to how to put that commitment into effect” (4). She also states that in the writing center, staff “perceive, not without reason, that our institutional position is perpetually in peril, always contingent upon the perception of administrators, teachers, and students that what we do supplements and reinforces both the kinds of writing taught in the classroom and the ways that writing is taught” (4). For those reason, I end Part II unresolved, a push for the reader to imagine how they would approach the situation as any or all three of the characters.

Significantly though, the play ends with a suggestion that Esperanza makes, which reflects the following words by Inoue: “while I talked about what was happening in her paper, why things were not as I wanted, I did not see at the time that she needed to have agency in the assessment process . . . She was looking for a way to be her own writer, perhaps even to take risks, to use the language she knew best, language that framed her experiences and view of the

world” (96). In other words, Inoue’s words reflect the point of tension between Esperanza and Caridad/Carrie.

### **Part III: Chicana Identity Development and Affirmation**

I center relationship between white ignorance, white privilege, white benevolence, literacy, and Chicana identity development and affirmation. Key in this counterstory is the fact that epistemological injustice begins before college. Whites/Anglos get to learn about themselves throughout K-12. The K-12 curriculum predominantly focuses on the literature, language, and history of white people. Specifically tackling the connection between history and literacy practices, I weaved together this counterstory in mind with those who argue that the “miseducation” of Latinos is often seen as the sole failure of the group,” those who argue that “...U.S. public schools are miserably failing Latino/a students;” as well as those who contend the “pedagogies of the home,” of Chicana/o families, is important to consider when discussing their lived experiences” (Guzman-Martinez 2). Caridad represents the first argument, Luz the second, and Esperanza the last.

In addition, this episode was inspired by Francisca E. Godinez idea to braid young Mexican identities and social formation. I enacted this act of braiding throughout the visual representations of all three composite characters in the second half of this episode to symbolically lay the cyclical social formation of a Chicana identity. For that reason, I also more explicitly engage with scholarly sources. By doing so, I “put language into play by using disruptive discursive strategies that reflect our lived experiences as fragmented, partial, real, and imagined, and always in the process of becoming” (Licona 106)

### **The Application of the Elements of a Chicana Raced-Gendered Epistemology**

The manifestation of the composite counterstory threads, and even my own, required me to make decisions regarding the type of sources I borrowed from to imagine settings, context, composite characters and the dialogue/content. In the process of making those decisions, I relied on a Chicana epistemology, which is what Delgado Bernal considers a raced-gendered epistemology. According to Delgado Bernal, raced-gendered epistemologies are supported by the five important elements that CRT and LatCrit share: 1) the importance of transdisciplinary approaches; 2) an emphasis on experiential knowledge; 3) a challenge to dominant ideologies; 4) The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; 5) a commitment to social justice. Based on a raced-gendered epistemology, I relied on a Chicana feminist framework specifically to, as Delgado Bernal states:

- view experiential knowledge. . . as a strength and acknowledge that the life experiences of students of color are uniquely individual while at the same time both collective and connected,
- consider pedagogies of the home, which offer culturally specific ways of teaching and learning and embrace ways of knowing that extend beyond the public realm of formal schooling,
- work from ways of knowing that are in direct contrast with the dominant Eurocentric epistemology;
- and “seek political and social change on behalf of communities of color” (Delgado Bernal 109-111).

### *Pedagogies of the Home*

Each counterstory can be read individually and were weaved together, a build-your-own-adventure approach to the project allowed me to renegotiate the primary audience to secondary audience. Build your own adventure tales typically have at least two different paths that lead the reader to different outcomes. In the case of this project, there are hopeful outcomes rather than defined ones specifically because of the cyclical need for identity development and affirmation. Regardless of there being hopeful outcomes rather than defined ones, I still consider my project a build-your-own adventure tale because the reader can choose to read it as a whole, read individual parts (episodes), or follow individual character threads. That tale set up mimics the multilayered characteristic of storytelling. So, every reader might relate to, embrace, or learn from something different in each counterstory based on pedagogies of the home: consejos, cuentos, educación, and respeto (Guzman-Martinez).

### *Experiential Knowledge*

Before beginning each of the counterstories, I had already engaged in extensive critique and evaluation of higher education based on my own experiences and what I witnessed. What I experienced and witnessed in formal education are common experiences represented in scholarship written by scholars of color. Thus, testimonio was the starting point from which each thread became a part of this project.

I took that process further and imagined what type of environment and support would have been more beneficial for me as a student. I also imagined who I would and would not want to be as a professor, how I would intervene if I were in a position with power (in this case a writing center director), and how I hope to give back to my community after earning my PhD. In other words, I began with my own testimonio and selected experiences I felt were defining

moments for my identity within and outside of formal education that were also commonly reflected in scholarship about the experiences of Latinx students at different points in the pipeline. In other words, as outlined by Delgado Bernal, I chose sources based on cultural intuition, which “is achieved through. . . personal experiences (which are influenced by ancestral wisdom, community memory, and intuition), the literature on and about Chicanas, professional experiences, and the analytical process we engage in when we are in a central position of our research and our analysis” (as quoted in Solórzano and Yosso 476).

### ***Transdisciplinary Approach***

In order to weave together this project, letting my intuition do its work, I incorporated sources from various disciplines: education, linguistics, rhetoric and composition, philosophy, and history. For example, some of the scholars I drew from are Dolores Delgado Bernal, Daniel Solórzano, Tara Yosso, Lindsay Pérez Huber, Mike Madrid (education); Suresh Canagarajah and Nelson Flores (linguistics); Charles Mills, Jose Medina, Peggy MacIntosh (philosophy); Aja Martinez, Kendall Marie Leon, Casie Cobos, Asao Inoue (rhetoric and composition); David Montejano, Monica Muñoz Martinez, Howard Zinn (history); Pilar Hernández-Wolfe (counseling).

### ***Challenge to Dominant Ideologies***

This project is based on a Critical Race Methodology (CRM). Counterstory, as a CRM, works as “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (Solórzano and Yosso, “Critical Race Methodology,” 32.) Counterstories, then, are particularly important to my project because they “can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform” (Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, and Solórzano 95). Critical race methodology has been used to specifically

challenge “biological and cultural deficit stories” (37) reproduced in education “through counterstorytelling, oral traditions, historiographies, *corridos*, poetry, films, *actos*, or by other means” (37). Work using a critical race methodology also relies on data from in and out of school settings and such data is seen “as valid, appropriate, and necessary forms of data” (37).

According to Solórzano and Yosso:

Critical race methodology contextualizes student-of-color experiences in the past, present, and future. It strategically uses multiple methods, often unconventional and creative, to draw on the knowledge of people of color who are traditionally excluded as an official part of the academy.

For this project, I relied on Chicana epistemological resources to create a creative discursive space where I documented a collective story—a testimonio, which encompasses experiences outside of and inside of academia, while challenging dominant notions of who can construct knowledge and the form that constructed knowledge must take (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 3). However, rather than only straight-forwardly narrating a personal testimonio, I grounded myself in Chicana rhetoric which for my dissertation I weaved together three composite counterstories, threads, which include my lived experience as one source.

Each one of those counterstories represents to some degree a self of my own: who I could have been (Caridad), who I wish I could have been (Esperanza) and who I am trying to be (Luz). Aside from the three composite counterstories, I also included my own thread using intraludes in which I implicitly tell of the work that I had to do to earn the right to call myself a Chicana. It is not uncommon that “[t]he question that emerges. . . is. . . how much to be Chicana and in what circles or locations to situate that identity, or, have it situated for one (Deena. J. González 135).

In my case, because I did not believe my actions overtly aligned with the politics required to consider myself a Chicana, I did not feel Chicana enough.

### *Commitment to Social Justice*

My dissertations project relates to the growing Latinx scholarship calling for the decolonization of and anti-racist work challenging the oppressive normative structures of academia—normative structures that perpetuate epistemological injustice and oppression. Specifically, I aimed to stress how mainstream first-year composition curricula and first-year experience programs, in an abstract sense, continue to mirror colonial logics of the larger sociopolitical sphere, leading to assimilation by not providing opportunities for Chicana identity development and affirmation. In fact, scholars who work from marginalized and critical perspectives argue that traditional student success initiatives, and common explanations for their failure, do not take student identities into account in meaningful ways (Harper). For example, students are taught that there are four principles of college success: active involvement, use of campus resources, interpersonal interaction and collaboration, and personal reflection and self-awareness. In essence, those four principles reflect Tinto's theory of student departure. His argument is that student retention rates would improve if the guiding principle for institutional action centered the social and intellectual growth of the students.

Scholars and researchers who have scrutinized Tinto's theory did so on the basis that there were problems when attempting to apply his model across race and ethnic backgrounds. According to Adele Lozano, Tinto revised his model and "admitted that student participation in college life does not necessarily indicate actual integration in social and academic systems" (6). Lozano also stated, "[it] is an important distinction, because despite the fact that racial/ethnic minority students may participate in the social and academic life of an institution, it is possible



that because of historic, structural, and institutional racism, they may not feel a sense of belonging or integration in the life of the institution” (7). Even more, she, like others points out that concepts like integration and acculturation are problematic when it comes to marginalized students.

Embedded in each of the composite counterstories, I have worked to highlight the tensions between Dominant and non-dominant cultures, as well as the Dominant and counter-narratives at play in education. For example, active involvement, use of campus resources, interpersonal interaction and collaboration, and personal reflection and self-awareness would not solve the historic, structural, and institutional racism that Esperanza experienced in her first-year writing class, Luz experienced in her PhD program, and Caridad (Carrie) experienced in general. The historic, structural, and institutional racism exists in the eradicationist and accommodationist perspectives of language differences, as well as reliance on white benevolence in college literacy intervention spaces.

Thus, documenting the epistemological injustice in formal education in the U.S. shows that the cracks in the Chicana educational pipeline are a direct result of the pervasiveness of white benevolence in education, which oppresses the epistemologies of racially minoritized people. In addition, I hope by showing that injustice, other Chicanas, who need to find the same or similar hermeneutical and testimonial tools as I did can find them here.

## Consejos

For the Latinas whose identities are at the center of this project, remember these words by

Sandra Cisneros:

*It takes a long time for women to feel it's alright to be chingona.  
To aspire to be a chingona!  
...You are saying, 'This is my camino, this is my path,  
and I'm gonna follow it,  
regardless of what culture says.'*

\*\*\*

If you are asking yourself as a teacher or administrator what you should do after reading this, start small.

- Acknowledge that students, faculty, and staff of color experience and navigate institutions of higher education in different ways, not only from white students, but also in some ways from each other.
- At bare minimum vocalize the previous statement in settings related to your title/position.

When it comes to spaces of teaching and learning of/development of writing curriculum:

- Take a class or two (preferably one within the first week and one during mid-semester) to show that different cultural rhetorics exist and position academic writing (or technical or professional) within systems of rhetoric.
- Make allowances for students who do want to codemesh. There are examples of this throughout my project. Academic writing does happen in other countries where English isn't the dominant language, so this really shouldn't be much of an issue.

- Keep in mind that you should not assess how “well” a writer codes. That is counterintuitive.

When it comes to first-year experience seminars/programs/student success initiatives:

- Don't rely on one-size fits all or most pre-packed programs or initiatives, regardless of their DEI efforts.
- Think about how the work you are doing tells a story about how students should navigate and understand their experiences in higher education and take that into account when working with students.
- Work to stop perpetuating deficit perspectives and don't let students do it either. That means if you are starting from “students don't know this,” you are doing it wrong.

Last but not least, for those who don't quite get it after reading my dissertation, read. There is only so much I can do to help you understand. I went through something similar. I had to do a lot of work to get here because I had not been exposed to the works that would have made this project possible. You can start with my works cited page to tree backwards and then from those, treeforward from sources.

### Works Cited

- Alemán, Sonya M., Sofia Bahena, and Enrique Alemán Jr. "Remapping the Latina/o and Chicana/o pipeline: A critical race analysis of educational inequity in Texas." *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 2019, 1-6.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Aunt Lute Books, 2007.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Duke University Press, 2015.
- Bebout, Lee. "Troubling White Benevolence: Four Takes on a Scene from "Giant." *Melus*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2011, 13-36.
- Bebout, Lee. *Whiteness on the border: Mapping the US Racial Imagination in Brown and White*. NYU Press, 2016.
- Bizzell, Patricia. *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992.
- Bradshaw, Gilbert. "Who's Black, Who's Brown, and Who Cares: A Legal Discussion of Hernandez v. Texas." *BYU Educ. & LJ*, 2007, 351-382.
- Cobos, Casie. *Embodied Storying, a Methodology for Chican@ Rhetorics:(re) making Stories,(un) mapping the Lines, and Re-membering Bodies*. Diss. Texas A & M University, 2012.
- Colón-Muñiz, Anaida, and Magaly Lavadenz, eds. *Latino Civil Rights in Education: La Lucha Sigue*. Routledge, 2015.
- Condon, Frankie. "A Place Where There Isn't Any Trouble." *Code-meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance*, edited by Vershawn Ashanti Young and Aja Y. Martinez, National Council of Teachers of English, 2011, 1-8.

- Cruz, Cindy. "Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body." *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspective on Pedagogy and Epistemology*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godines, and Sofia Villenas, State University of New York Press, 2006, 59-75.
- Cuseo, Joseph B., Aaron Thompson, Michele Campagna, Viki Sox Fecas. *Thriving in College and Beyond: Research-Based Strategies for Academic Success and Personal Development*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Kendall Hunt, 2013.
- Cushman, Ellen. "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change." *College Composition and Communication* vol. 47, no.1, 1996, 7-28.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores, Rebeca Burciaga, and Judith Flores Carmona, eds. *Chicana/Latina Testimonios As Pedagogical, Methodological, and Activist Approaches to Social Justice*. Routledge, 2017.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores, Elenes, C. Alejandra, Godinez, Francisca E., and Sofia Villenas. *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*. SUNY Press, 2006.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores. "Critical race theory, Latino Critical Theory, and Critical Raced-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as Holders and Creators of Knowledge." *Qualitative inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, 105-126.
- Delgado, Richard. "Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Plea for Narrative." *Michigan Law Review*, vol. 87, no. 8, 1989, 2411-2441.
- Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. NYU Press, 2017.

- Erickson, Bettee LaSare, Calvin Peters, and Diane Weltner Strommer. *Teaching First-Year College Students: Revised and Expanded Edition of Teaching College Freshman*, Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Flores, Lisa A. "Creating discursive space through a rhetoric of difference: Chicana feminists craft a homeland." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 82, no. 2, 1996, 142-156.
- Flores, Nelson. "Are People Who Support the Concept of Academic Language Racist? An FAQ." *The Educational Linguist*. Wordpress.  
<https://educationallinguist.wordpress.com/2020/02/01/are-people-who-support-the-concept-of-academic-language-racist-an-faq/>. Accessed 13 May 2021.
- Flores, Rosalie. "The new Chicana and Machismo." *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, edited by Alma M. Garcia, Routledge, 1997, 95-100.
- Garcia, Christine. "In defense of Latinx." *Composition Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2017, 210-211.
- Gauntt, Jennifer. "Study Finds Hispanic Students Underrepresented in AP Classes." Sam Houston State University, 25, October 2011.  
[shsu.edu/~pin\\_www/T%40S/2011/hispanicapstudy.html](http://shsu.edu/~pin_www/T%40S/2011/hispanicapstudy.html). Accessed 13 May 2021.
- Gillborn, David. "Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Education Reform." *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2005, 485-505.
- Gilyard, Keith. "The Rhetoric of Translingualism." *College English*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2016, 284.
- Gonzalez, Deena J. "Chicana Identity Matters." *Culture and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Bicultural Experience in the United States*, 1995, 41-54.
- Guzman-Martinez, Carmen. "Pedagogies of the home: A phenomenological analysis of race, Class, and Gender in Education." *NACCS*, vol. 39, 2012, 1-11.

- Harper, Shaun R. Foreword. *Closing the Opportunity Gap: Identity-Conscious Strategies for Retention and Student Success*, edited by Vijay Pendakur, Stylus, 2016.
- Hernández-Wolfe, Pilar. *A Borderlands View on Latinos, Latin Americans, and Decolonization: Rethinking Mental Health*. Jason Aronson, 2013.
- Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur. "Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach." *College English*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2011, 303-321.
- Huber, Lindsay Pérez. "Disrupting Apartheid of Knowledge: Testimonio as Methodology in Latina/o Critical Race Research in Education." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 22, no. 6, 2009, 639-654.
- Inoue, Asao B. "Racial Methodologies for Composition Studies." *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*, Southern Illinois University Press, 2012. 125-139.
- Inoue, Asao B. "Structuring Code-Meshing into Educational Policy." *Code-meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance*, edited by Vershawn Ashanti Young and Aja Y. Martinez, National Council of Teachers of English, 2011, 95-98.
- Kuh, George. "Student Engagement in the First-Year of College." *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*, edited by Upcraft, M. Lee, John N. Gardner, and Betsy Overman Barefoot. Jossey-Bass, 2005. 86-107.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. Foreword. *Making Race Visible: Literacy Research for Cultural Understanding*, edited by Stuart Greene and Dawn Abt-Perkins, Teachers College Press, 2003.

- Latina Feminist Group. *Telling to live: Latina feminist testimonios*. Duke University Press, 2001.
- Licona, Adela C. "(B) orderlands' Rhetorics and Representations: The Transformative Potential of Feminist Third-Space Scholarship and Zines." *NWSA Journal*, 2005, 104-129.
- Lozano, Adele. "Latina/o Culture Centers: Providing a Sense of Belonging and Promoting Student Success." *Culture Centers in Higher Education: Perspectives on Identity, Theory, and Practice* edited by Lori D. Patton, Stylus Publishing, 2010.
- Madrid, Mike. "The Lemon Grove Desegregation Case: A Matter of Neglected History." *Latino Civil Rights in Education*. Routledge, 2015. 69-79.
- Malagon, Maria C., Lindsay Perez Huber, and Veronica N. Velez. "Our Experiences, Our Methods: Using Grounded Theory to Inform a Critical Race Theory Methodology." *Seattle J. Soc. Just.*, vol. 8, 2009, 253.
- Martinez, Aja Y. "Alejandra writes a book: A Critical Race Counterstory about Writing, Identity, and Being Chicana in the Academy." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2016.
- Martinez, Aja Y. "Critical Race Theory: Its Origins, History, and Importance to the Discourses and Rhetorics of Race." *Frame: Journal of Literary Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2014, 9-27.
- Martinez, Aja Y. *Critical Race Counterstory as Rhetorical Methodology: Chicana@ Academic Experience Told Through Sophistic Argument, Allegory, and Narrative*. Diss. U of Arizona, 2012.
- McIntosh, Peggy. "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack." 1988.
- Medina, José. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2013.



- Mills, Charles. "White Ignorance." *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, SUNY Press, 2007.
- Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*. University of Texas Press, 1987.
- Moraga, Cherríe. *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010*. Duke University Press, 2011.
- Moraga, Cherríe. "La Güera." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Suny Press, 2015. 22-29.
- Muñoz Martínez, Monica. *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*. Harvard University Press, 2018.
- NietoGomez, Anna. "La Feminista." *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* edited by Alma M. Garcia, Routledge, 1997. 86-92.
- Pérez Huber, Lindsay. "Using Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Racist Nativism to Explore Intersectionality in the Educational Experiences of Undocumented Chicana College Students." *Educational Foundations*, vol. 24, 2010, 77-96.
- Robbie, Sandra. "The Meaning of Mendez." *Latino Civil Rights in Education*, Routledge, 2015, 80-86.
- Ruiz, Iris D. "Race." *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*, edited by Iris D. Ruiz and Raúl Sánchez, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Solórzano, Daniel G., and Tara J. Yosso. "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research." *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, 23-44.

- Tinto, Vincent. *Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action*. University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Torres, Edén E. *Chicana without Apology/Chicana sin Vergüenza: The New Chicana Cultural Studies*. Psychology Press, 2003.
- Treviño, Anna. "From dreaming of being Tejano music singer to being a higher ed administrator." *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress. <https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/05/>. Accessed 13 May 2021.
- Treviño, Anna. "'How does a brown body know?' A reflection." *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress. <https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/06/>. Accessed 13 May 2021.
- Treviño, Anna. "Why Resistance and Healing?" *Xic-Anna*. Wordpress. <https://annayxicana.wordpress.com/2017/05/>. Accessed 13 May 2021.
- Upcraft, M. Lee, John N. Gardner, and Betsy Overman Barefoot. *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*. Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Valles, Sarah Banschbach, Rebecca Day Babcock, and Karen Keaton Jackson. "Writing Center Administrators and Diversity: A Survey." *The Peer Review* no. 1, vol. 1, 2017.
- Williamson, Edwin. *The Penguin History of Latin America: New Edition*. Penguin UK, 2003.
- Willis, Arlette Ingram. Parallax: Addressing Race in Preservice Literacy Education. *Making Race Visible: Literacy Research for Cultural Understanding* edited by Stuart Greene and Dawn Abt-Perkins, Teachers College Press, 2003. 51-70
- Yosso, Tara J. "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race ethnicity and education* 8.1 (2005): 69-91.

Yosso, Tara, Octavio Villalpando, Dolores Delgado Bernal, and Daniel Solórzano. "Critical Race Theory in Chicana/o Education." *NACCS Annual Conference Proceedings*, vol. 9, 2001.

Yosso, Tara J., and Daniel G. Solórzano. "Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano Educational Pipeline: Latino Policy & Issues Brief Number 13." *UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center*, 2006.

Zinn, Howard, and Matt Damon. *A People's History of the United States*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.