CULTURAL ARMOR AND LIVING IN THE CROSSROADS: SURVIVING AND THRIVING THROUGH A MEXICANA/MESTIZA CRITICAL FEMINIST ETHIC OF CARE

BY

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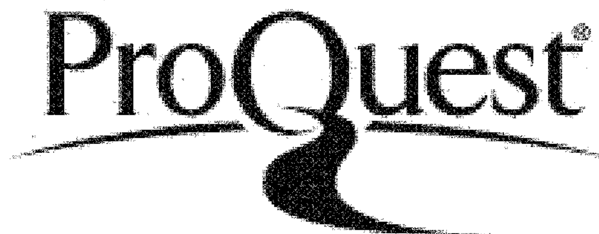

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yourselves as poems of *Revolución* for yourself and your students as a means to survive this place, you reconstruct your students' identities and experiences as visible and valuable as well. Thank you for the gift of your knowledge and your *being*, which I treasure so much.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family whose faith and wisdom runs deep into the earth and deep into our history—I dedicate this work especially to those members of my family who have stood by me every step of the way:

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL ARMOR AND LIVING IN THE CROSSROADS: SURVIVING AND THRIVING THROUGH A MEXICANA/MESTIZA CRITICAL FEMINIST ETHIC OF CARE

BY

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Mexican/Mexican-Americans are native to this continent on both sides of the U.S./Mexico Border and while projections show a 300% population increase by 2050, the struggle for equity and educational access persist. This Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* reveals a Mexican/Mexican-American Ethic of Care which creates schooling spaces in which Mexican/Mexican-American students find healing, dignity, and academic preparation necessary to build hopeful futures for themselves and their families.

This research reveals curriculum and pedagogy that embody a Mexican and Mexican-American Ethic of Care and the *Testimonios* of racialized struggle and survival that undergird it. Utilizing *Testimonio* as methodology, I conducted individual interviews, field observations, focus group interviews, and collected ongoing self-reflections and photographic data over the course of five months with four Mexican/Mexican-American female educators within a mid-sized U.S./Mexico border city.

The findings of this study reveal rootedness of a Mexican/Mexican-American Ethic of Care within intergenerational *Testimonios* and within the larger Mexican/Mexican-American struggle for equity and access. Findings likewise reveal that participants reconstruct notions of social justice revolution through a blurring and blending of mainstream notions of revolution. Within participants' knowledge of the professional, personal risk of fighting for social justice in visible ways reminiscent of the 1960's Chicano Movement, participants fight for their Mexican/Mexican-American students beneath an ambiguous blurring—a *mestizaje*—which conceals and protects their long-term ability to do so. Their concealed *Revolución* is then fought by way of their tongue/language, physical bodies, and spirits as *Revolucionistas*—re-imagined and reconstructed Revolutionaries—who carry education as an ethical imperative.

Findings of this research have implications for educators at all levels and of all backgrounds to conceal and thereby sustain their battle for all marginalized

students. Findings have implications for challenging mainstream constructs of success, for recruitment and retention of Mexican/Mexican-American teachers, and for rooting curriculum and pedagogy within *Testimonios* of resilience which position Mexican/Mexican-American students not within oppression frameworks but within the complexity of their intellectual and resistance legacies. Findings likewise have implications for researchers with regard to methodological reflexivity within decolonizing research epistemologies. Findings likewise challenge notions of researcher reciprocity and participants' inclusion as co-researchers within a Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology.

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CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION

> Indigenous like corn, like corn, the *mestiza*[1] is a product of crossbreeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions...the *mestiza* is tenacious, tightly wrapped in the husks of her culture...she clings to the cob...she holds tight to the earth—she will survive the crossroads.
>
> —Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 81

> Traditionally black folks have had to do a lot of creative thinking and dreaming to raise black children free of internalized racism....in our own little black neighborhoods, with schools and churches, in the midst of racism, we had places where we could undo much of the psychological madness and havoc wreaked by white supremacy...though there was so much pain and hardship...there was also the joy of living in communities of resistance.
>
> —hooks, 1993, pp. 80-81

For young people of color at the perilous crossroads of class and race, survival of body-mind-spirit—which according to both Black and Chicana Critical Feminist epistemologies are intricately woven and inextricable (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 1998)—has long relied upon cultivating and sustaining a tenacious rootedness to pockets of being where dignity and self-love could grow strong enough to heal the pain that comes from a life spent living in an inequitable and racist world. West (1993) pays tribute to this survival enabled by "black foremothers and

---

[1] The term *Mestiza/o* and more colloquial *Mexicana/o* describes a racialized, hyphenated reality at the crossroads of ethnic identity spanning both sides of the border (Villenas, 2006). It is the result of genetic mixture of Indigenous, Spanish, and African ancestry within the context of 16th century Spanish conquest of Mexico and what is now the American Southwest (Acuña, 1988; Anzaldúa 1987; Córdova, 1994; Menchaca, 1999). While I do not disregard common terms of *Mexican-American*, *Mexican* or *Hispanic*, I gravitate toward *Mestiza/Mexicana* as they unite along ethnic identity, transcending nationality, geography, and politically demarcated national borders as opposed to (re)inscribing them (Delgado Bernal, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999).

forefathers" who created these sheltered spaces of nourished resistance—"buffers to ward off the nihilistic threat, to equip black folk with the cultural armor to beat back the demons of hopelessness, meaninglessness, and lovelessness" (p. 23). I too am a beneficiary of community spaces of resistance that were strong enough to heal the spiritual and cultural woundedness that results from membership into a Mexicano, Mexican-American, Hispanic, Hispano, Chicano community—a native counter-culture colonized and marked as a foreign Other in the very land of our birth (Gaspar de Alba, 1998; Moraga, 1983). I, too, have witnessed the healing power of clinging tightly to the husks of culture, language, and history—of remembering that which we were meant to forget (Anzaldúa, 1987; Lorde, 1978). For me, this tight *hoja*[2] wrapping around me, this buffering force, came to me in the form of my third grade teacher, Mrs. Castañeda. She knew us Mexicano kids —she knew our families, our songs, and the winding path that was our home language. She spoke to us of struggle and of injustice; we knew too that her own family was not immune to the continued agony of subjugation, nor the ways in which it could erode a body. She knew how to toughen us up and love us at the very same time. She dared to love us as kin. She never said it, but in her deep-set brown eyes, I saw a tenacious love that she bore in her heart and enacted through her hands. She taught me to love all of the pieces of myself and begin to understand, challenge, and value my own scattered and twisting identity and history as a Chicana, as a Mexicana. Within buffered community spaces of school, church, and home such as I experienced as a student of Mrs. Castañeda,

[2] Corn husk

truth-as-resistance was offered as a way to nourish and deconstruct the distorted reflections of our faces, of our family's faces, and of our inherent worth and capacity in the world. Therein, silenced, racialized *selves* were reclaimed from all of the places to which they had been banished.

According to Moraga (2011), for those daughters and sons whose very DNA remembers the grief of cultural erasure, enslavement, second-class citizenry, social rejection, and colonization, healing must come in the form of seeing through the eyes of truth and collecting and re-collecting that which has been lost. Part of this re-collecting of self is found in schooling environments that prepare young people to negotiate the highly racialized society in which they live (Collins, 2009; Henry, 2006; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). For Hispano, Mexicano/Mexican-American and Black communities, it was teachers standing at the center that created these nourished spaces resistance, and it is this history which calls us to action to understand the present lived realities of teachers continuing this legacy, even amid the deeply colonizing spaces of public schooling.

As a Chicana teacher myself working for seven years with predominantly *Mexicano* and Chicano students, I consciously and unconsciously enacted the role of teacher in very particular ways in order to respond to my students' sociocultural/political and historical realities. *I loved them differently and they knew it*. Doing right by them brought with it a responsibility that, when voiced, often resulted in my being labeled a racist by some of my White colleagues. While my light skin, heterosexuality, youth, and appearance approximating mainstream

standards of femininity provided the privilege to speak and act my revolution audibly and visibly in ways my Mexicano colleagues living and working outside of these sites of privilege were silenced and harshly sanctioned for, my work in the name of equity for my Mexicano students became a forbidden love of sorts. While I did not silence or hide my battle for equity on behalf of my Mexicano students or their families, I did become more conscious of others' resistance to it. I became more careful in how and when I expressed it. I hid this love from my colleagues who claimed they did not see any students differently, and nor should I, because of their ethnic identity, race, language, or histories of educational and social marginalization. Moraga's (1983) words, though telling of a forbidden love between women within a nation hostile to females and especially lesbians of color, echo the feelings I experienced when loving my *Mexicano*/ Chicano students. She writes, "Loving you is like living / in the war years.../while bombs split/ outside, a broken / world" (p. 29).

I continued to love these kids while the bombs split outside my windows, bombs that kept poverty high and graduation rates abysmal; a raging war that ensured that the zip code surrounding our school was grossly overrepresented within the New Mexico Penitentiary. We, my students and I, held on to each other with the kind of love that Moraga (1983) tells, "calls for this kind of risking/ without a home to call our own.../battle bruised/ refusing our enemy, fear" (p. 30). Like Moraga's (1983) poem, we were all we had. Perhaps I fought to keep them there—or we held on to each other—because we recognized ourselves somehow in each other. To be sure, we were *not* mirror images of each other, and my students had perhaps the best grasp

of this knowledge. While they accepted me as a Mexicana and in some ways culturally similar to them, they also simultaneously positioned of me as a cultural outsider and in terms of my Whiteness. It was a distinction of race, class, language, and residency status that I was not able, nor willing, to make at that point,

As a beginning teacher, I elected to work in this particular community because I wanted to work with *my* people: Mexicanos. I saw my family's struggle for educational access at the intersection of race, class, and language in the faces of my students while I myself have not ever felt firsthand the shame and lowered expectations thrust upon my Mexicano brothers and sisters living in Brown skin. I have never known the perceived incompetence that comes with an accent that differs from the mainstream standard White variety. While I do speak Spanish, I am not immediately identified as a Spanish-speaker—I am instead able to share this part of myself as I choose, for my English is almost untouched by my Spanish. Likewise, I am rarely recognized as Mexicana. It is an identity I can choose to reveal—and I do—but there is always privilege in the choosing (Moraga, 1983).

In this research, I have had to navigate and understand my access to White privilege in a way I was not ready to do while I was teaching in a predominantly Mexican-Mexican-American community. Throughout my life I have sought validation as a Mexicana: to be recognized as a heritage speaker of Spanish, to be recognized in my light skin, blondness and green eyes, as a woman of color. When I am honest with myself, however, I have to face that my *Mexicanidad*, being Mexicana, has only ever been a source of pride for me. Although a history of low

educational expectations, shaming and silencing—of being called 'dirty Mexican'—has been passed down to me by the generations above, within my own light-skinned, green-eyed body, being Mexicana has always been a space of joy through connectedness to family, place, language, history, and community.

When I was teaching, I brought this privilege of body and voice, both my ethnic pride and intergenerational knowledge of linguistic erasure, into my classroom. While I recognize now that I did not always perceive the intersections of my social identity critically, my privilege served me in particular ways. I was given administrative space to outright reject particular mandates of the Eurocentric literature canon by my department chair of Language Arts. I instead created a curricularly and pedagogically Mexicano-centric classroom with impunity. The literature we read, the stories and poems my students wrote, and the language(s) we communicated in within the walls of my classrom were aimed at resisting racial/cultural denigration and reclaiming the dignity and beauty found in being Mexicano. We were given space, I was given space, to create a classroom that was ideologically predicated upon our Mexicano identity(ies) as visible and valuable . Who I was as their teacher and the classroom I created curricularly and pedagogically had everything to do with who *they* were, and likewise who *I* was able to be in the fullness of my privilege to live and teach my revolution, my war (Moraga, 1983), out loud.

Within school spaces such as I as a Mexicana teacher endeavored to build, exists a critical love rooted in opposition and resistance (Collins, 2009; Valenzuela,

1999). For communities at the intersection of class and race, survival of life and spirit has required the psychological work of educators of color circumscribing spaces where love and care are time-hardened and calloused, spaces of healing and resistance with the strength to prepare individuals to combat a harsh and inequitable world where their very beings are daily diminished and distorted (Cross, 2003; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). For educators of color—and specific to this work, Chicano and Mexicano/Mexican-American and Hispanic teachers—the creation of shielding, fostering, and ultimately preparatory spaces of schooling are necessary to challenge and transform current realities of social inequity reflected in graduation rates, educational attainment data, and overall rates of poverty and marginalization. I, as researcher alongside my teacher/sister Mexicana/Mexican-American participants within this study, seek to more deeply understand and communicate how we go about creating and fostering these preparatory, buffered spaces for our Mexican-American, Mexicano and Chicano students in order that we may heal from our histor(ies) and (re)claim our capacity in the world.

Current Realities

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 estimates, there are more than 52 million Hispanics/Latinos living within the United States today making up nearly 17% of the total population; and these figures continue to grow. According to U.S. Census population projections, Latinos will comprise nearly one third of the entire U.S. populations by the year 2050, nearly tripling in size; however, educational parity continues to lag (J. Gonzalez, 2011). Of the total U.S. population that had attained a

Bachelor's degree in 2011, only 6.9% were Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics), a figure no doubt compounded by the 13.6% rate of Hispanic dropouts as compared to the national rate of 7.1% (NCES, 2011). When analyzing the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) longitudinal scores in both mathematics and reading achievement, the numbers seem to stack up almost identically across the board with White students at nearly a 200% advantage over their Hispanic peers. Hispanic students in the 4th and 8th grade in both math and reading are achieving levels of *Proficient* and *Advanced* at less than fifty percent the rate of their White peers. According to longitudinal NAEP figures released in 2011, 4th grade reading levels for White and Hispanic students on average demonstrate a nearly thirty point gap between 1992 and 2011, and even as high as a thirty-five point differential in some cases.

While Hispanics are in the numerical minority nationally, we struggle for educational and social equity. Even in New Mexico, the site of this research, where we comprise roughly 46.7% of the population, educational parity is equally elusive (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). According to the New Mexico Public Education Department's (PED) Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) data for 2011 in math for all grades, Hispano/Latino students achieve levels fifty percent lower than their White peers. New Mexico's AYP data (2011) in regards to reading is again startling. Hispanic students are trailing their White peers at more than twenty-five percentage points on average. Disaggregated graduation rates in New Mexico are no more promising. According to the New Mexico Public Education Department's (2010) 4-

year cohort data, 75.6% of White students are graduating high school within four years—which in and of itself is not promising—while their Hispanic counterparts are graduating at a rate of over ten percentage points lower. For English Language Learning students, of which the vast majority in New Mexico are of Mexican origin, four-year graduation rates flag by another five percentage points at 60.8%.

These statistics sound the alarm for ensuring the academic success of Mexican and Mexican-American students, but they also represent a much deeper issue than that which is numerically evident. Steps toward reaching equity for Latinos and Mexican/Mexican-Americans must be rooted in the recognition of the accumulated educational and social debts owed to all disenfranchised and marginalized peoples (Ladson-Billings, 2006) exemplified here in federal and state figures. Additionally and equally important, educational transformation must also be rooted in understanding and highlighting the resistant, and nourishing roles that teachers of color have played historically in affirming cultural and linguistic identity while rigorously preparing their students to challenge and negotiate the oppressive and deculturalizing social realities exacted upon their families and communities.

The Study

The overall history of education for U.S. Latinos/Hispanics has been marked by forceful cultural and linguistic assimilation, colonization, and exploitation. For Mexican and Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, public education was designed and exacted in order to ensure a national economic and social stability that relied chiefly upon the maintenance of a lower class of people comprising a cheap Mexican

and Mexican-American workforce (Acuña, 1988; G. González, 1999; San Miguel, 1999). Mexican and Mexican-Americans are of particular scholarly significance within this research as well as within greater conversations regarding U.S. Hispanics due to their having the longest ongoing European occupation and contact on this continent beginning in 1539 in current day New Mexico (Chávez, 2011; Kennedy & Simplicio, 2009; Ortiz, 2009). Moreover, Mexican/Mexican-Americans comprise over 64% of the U.S. Latino population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012) and have continuously occupied a geographic area of the Southwest United States that continues to be their ancestral homeland. Steeped in the heavy knowledge of this history, I seek to more deeply understand what it looks like when communities of color educate *their own*. Grounding myself deeply within Anzaldúa's (1987) notions of clinging desperately to the earth below us and the husks about us, I seek to unearth how communities have and continue to foster the intellectual and resistance legacies that may ensure not only survival but the creation of nourishing environments in which young people and communities may grow and thrive.

According to Moraga (2011), there exists a deep bloodline-knowing that occurs in the bodies of those who are the inheritors of slavery, colonization, and oppression—there is an "agelessness, an old knowledge, in their bearing" (p. 38) that is carried at a chromosomal level. This qualitative Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* seeks to reveal and more deeply understand how this embodied, ancestral knowledge may inform Mexicana/Mexican-American female educators working with predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American students and communities. This

research seeks to reveal the capacity for creating buffered communities of healing and resistance for Mexican/Mexican-American and Chicana/o students—schooling environments in which they may survive, thrive, and ultimately achieve academic success. I seek to understand an Ethic of Care manifested within the daily actions of Mexican/Mexican-American/Mestiza female educators working within schools and communities that have and continue to experience educational, cultural, linguistic, and economic domination (Acuña, 1988; J. González, 2011; Romero et al., 2008; San Miguel, 1999; Valencia, 2011a, 2011b). Naming and identifying tenets of a Mexicana and Mestiza Ethic of Care offers possibilities for educators of all cultural backgrounds to embody this Ethic to serve the needs of Mexican/Mexican-American students whose educational experiences have not previously prepared them to live, work, and create equitably within the society to which they belong. This Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care?
2. What are the *Testimonios* of struggle, resistance and survival that inform Mexicana and Mexican-American educators?
3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?

Theoretical Framework

I utilize both Black and Chicana Critical Feminist theoretical frameworks rooted in the interconnectedness of spiritual, intellectual, instinctive, embodied, imagined, historical, and cultural ways of knowing and consciousness/*conocimiento* (Anzaldúa, 2000; hooks, 1994)—frameworks cultivated within legacies of survival and uplift within Black and Chicana/o communities living amidst racial oppression and subjugation (Anzaldúa, 2000; Cross, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2006b; Foster, 1993, 2010; hooks, 1994; Trinidad Galvan, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 2006). Resisting the perpetuation of racism, sexism, classicism, linguicism, nationalism, and heterosexism, Black and Chicana Critical Feminist frameworks privilege suppressed, silenced realities within the intersections of these oppressions not made audible and visible within mainstream society (Collins, 2009; Moraga, 1983, 2011). This Chicana Critical Feminist research positions participants as co-researchers and subjects of self-definition who are central to their own experiences (Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 1998; 2002). It is a methodological and epistemological positioning aimed at reclaiming and reinterpreting that which has been constructed as deficit through dominant cultural lenses (Pérez Huber, 2009).

Black and Chicana Critical Feminisms recognize the power that language holds to define a larger social reality for self and others (Anzaldúa, 2000; Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012; Knight, 2004; Lorde, 1984; Oesterreich, 2007; Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012). Because of the power of voice, colonization and domination throughout history have been wielded in large part by linguistic

extermination (hooks, 1994; Smith, 2002). Within Black and Chicana Critical Feminist theoretical frameworks, language instead becomes a reclamation stronghold of place and dignity—spaces in which to build the strength to "rise up, tongue intact" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 203), and reclaim authority within the realm of one's own existence.

To be certain, *I am not these women*. While I am a Mexicana/Mexican-American female, my access to White privilege, class status, my heterosexual female body, my command of academic English coupled with Spanish bilingualism, my level of education as a doctoral student, and my unquestioned U.S. citizenship come together to create a unique lived reality that my participant do not share. There are many pieces of my identity that operate in these spaces of privilege, and naming this privilege—this separation—is often painful. While I have never *experienced racism in the flesh* (Moraga, 1983, p. 58), my often invisibility as a woman of color carries with it a price. I too carry in my bloodlines the nearly 500 years of colonization and conquest that we as Mexican/Mexican-American peoples on this continent have survived.

While I have felt the pain of not always being recognized within the 10,000 years of Indigineity on this content that has come together to create a Mexicana/o identity, I also do not bear the burden of living and breathing within Chicana, Mexicana, and *Mestiza* bodies that are themselves "the conquered nation...despised from within and without" (Moraga, 2011, p. 41). In this knowledge, the participants involved in this study and I, in the complex role of Chicana female and primary

researcher, negotiate our unique histories and diverse lived realities as Mexicanas. I as researcher must continuously negotiate where our histories and identities as Mexicanas, females, and educators intersect and where they diverge. This knowledge and continued negotiation of my privilege is essential to my ability to work within a Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology.

This Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology is rooted in the recognition of the historical and continued denial to Mexicanas of the right to bear credible witness to their/our own realities. We, my participants and I, stand in this research together, though in our difference, at the dangerous intersection of Brown and White bodies inscribed upon uniquely. We stand in our gender, in language, diverse residency status, and in our class identities. For Mexicana/Mestiza educators raised within the imposed silence and docility of a patriarchal system, "[t]o speak is to oppose" for the "very articulation of the Chicana reality through her own voice is immediately, by its very nature, a voice of resistance and the foundation for oppositional consciousness" (Córdova, 1994, p. 194).

The methodology and theoretical framework of this research has been constructed to create spaces for our voices to actively challenge the constraints of a society that refuses to see or validate lived realities at the intersectin of race, class, gender, language, and resident status. My participants and I will speak and listen to the confluence of *Testimonios* of survival and resistance as we co-construct an understanding of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that may act as new tools—deconstructive *and* reconstructive tools. These tools hold the power to ultimately

lead us, healed, upon a new shore (Anzaldúa, 1984, 1987; Lorde, 1984) where Mexican/Mexican-American and Chicano students may lead lives of dignity and validation as they are academically equipped and intellectually nourished within the context of schooling and beyond.

This research is methodologically rooted in *Testimonio,* or the authoring of individual and communitied selves through the sharing of often untold and treasured stories, *papelitos guardados* of resistance to social oppression and domination, as well as the stories of survival therein (Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001). According to Moraga (2011), Chicanos and Chicanas have long "told stories aloud: as weapons...as historical accounts and prophetic warnings, as preachers and teachers against wrongdoing...as prayer....through this storytelling one's awareness of the world and its meaning grows and changes" (p. xvi). *Testimonio* as methodology within this research seeks these *meanings* manifested in word and will privilege lived realities delegitimized within academic arenas. *Testimonios* that reveal injustice rooted in oppression are, by their very essence, a challenge to dominant ideology (Alarcón, Cruz, Guardia Jackson, Prieto, & Rodriguez-Arroyo, 2011; Pérez Huber, 2009). *Testimonio* as methodology stands as spoken witness to one's process of becoming a political and agentive subject within her own life (Cervantes-Soon, 2012). This research, through the telling and negotiation of participants' personal, familial, and community *Testimonios,* seeks to more deeply understand the ways in which Mexican/Mexican-American/Mestiza female educators construct pedagogy and

curriculum within the larger structures of their particular ethic of care within predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American communities and in particular with Mexican and Mexican-American students.

Participants and I listen and make meaning of *Testimonios* through multiple methods. These methods include two semi-structured interviews, my ongoing observations of each participant, photo elicitation, five focus groups, and participants' ongoing self-reflections. I gather participant *Testimonios* from four Mexicana and Mexican-American educators through multiple methods. Due to the large amount of data collected from each participant as well as the deep level of understanding that is desired for the study, I have chosen to work with four participants. I believe that four participants is a number large enough to create a collective space in which to develop our understanding of a Mexican and Mexican-American Ethic of Care but small enough to allow for the breadth and depth of data that is sought through these multiple methods. The following methods have been utilized with each participant:

Data Collection and Analysis

Individual, semi-structured *Testimonio*. *Testimonio* as methodology within this research has sought meanings and understandings manifested in the telling of stories as a testament to the lived realities of survival and uplift in the lives of these Mexicana/Mexican-American educators (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Carmona, 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Menchú, 1984). One of the avenues through which participants' *Testimonios* was sought is through the collection of two semi-structured individual interviews that took place at the beginning and end of the study.

Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were transcribed by me and shared with each participant. These transcriptions and the lived realities contained have been foundational in informing our growing understanding of the roots of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Participant transcripts have likewise served as data for analysis within all of the five focus groups that are part of this study.

Field observation. I have conducted ongoing observations of each participant over the course of five months both within classrooms and other school spaces as well as within the interconnectedness of community spaces outside of the designated school hours (Henry, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). The purpose of observations was to begin identifying how the act of teaching and the crafting of curricular and school spaces is connected to the sociohistorical and sociocultural identity of each Mexican/ Mexican-American educator. Participants received print copies of my observational data for their own reflection and analysis.

Visual methodology. Participants have taken photographs of their own classroom pedagogy and likewise brought photographs from home illustrating their pedagogies and the *Testimonios* undergirding them in order to reflect and represent their own ethic of care and a greater Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Through the analysis of all of the photos taken and brought by participants, we have sought a greater understanding of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and its manifestations. Participants were asked to share their photographs within our focus group specifically dedicated to the analysis of photographic data in order to create an artistic reflection

of knowledge beyond the capacity of mere language (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Eisner, 1993; Sanders-Bustle, 2003).

Focus group. As stated above, *Testimonios* were likewise sought through five focus groups taking place throughout the study which were audio-recorded, transcribed, and shared with all participants. As stated previously, the five focus groups offered participants a critically reflective methodological space (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012) in which to share and analyze each of the following pieces of data: semi-structured interviews, observational data taken throughout the study, ongoing self-reflections, and photographic representations of participants' growing understanding of a Mexican/Mestiza Ethic of Care.

Self-reflection. Participants throughout this research engaged in continuous and self-directed reflection that informed this research. Participants' ongoing self-reflections in spoken and written form touched on aspects of their classrooms, curriculum, and/or pedagogies as rooted within *Testimonios* of struggle and survival within and beyond schooling (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). All self-reflections were initiated by participants and shared throughout the research within focus group meetings, with myself as researcher, as well as within families and among colleagues. The subjects of self-reflections included 1) transcriptions of their own individual interview 2) their own and others' photographic representations, 3) my observational notes, and 3) focus group meetings. The purpose for self-reflection was to ultimately build a growing consciousness/*conocimiento* (Anzaldúa, 2000) of their ethic of care and of a larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. I as researcher likewise utilize my

own self-reflections in the form of a researcher journal throughout the duration of research.

Significance

There is historical record documenting that when communities and teachers of color held local ownership over education, the young people within these communities flourished academically, culturally, and spiritually despite the harsh and persistent conditions of racism and linguicism that surrounded these schools. Within segregated schooling of the Jim Crow South as well as that which took place in communities of Northern New Mexico including the Spanish-American Normal School of El Rito, there is evidence of an academic rigor and cultural affirmation within nourishing school experiences—insulated spaces strong enough to buffer the cruelty of subjugation and equip students to thrive (Cross, 1998; Foster, 1993; Maestas, 2011; Milk, 1980). School spaces such as these offer insight to social justice educators as they rigorously equipped young people to join the struggle for freedom, validated their intellectual potential, and tended to the entirety of young people's mind-body-spirits (Collins, 2009). For many young people of color during this time, these schools—and particularly the community educators who ran them and taught within their walls—were places of undoing the cruelty of the outside world (hooks, 1993). Within these pockets of resistance are echoed notions of *querencia*, a term that comes chiefly out of the scholarship of *place* and the sacredness of *space* in New Mexico. Originally a bullfighting term dating back as far as 17th century Spain, notions of *Querencia* have expanded. Native New Mexican poet and historian Juan

Estevan Arellano (2007) utilizes definitions found in both *El Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* as well as *El Diccionario de la Lengua Española de Real Academia Española:* earliest definitions of *querencia* define it as the place in the ring where the bull retreats time and again in order to heal his wounds and assess the physical damage. In more current scholarship, Arellano (2007) notes that *querencia* has been used to refer to sacred spaces, both physical and psychological, from which one draws strength and healing.

Perhaps echoed in the story of the bull, the *querencias* of homes, church, and school situated within communities of color—these buffered spaces constructed by community foremothers and forefathers (West, 1993)—offered walled spaces of healed resistance, though could not alter the brutality that existed outside its confines nor that which penetrated these walls. With the full knowledge of this history forever present and heavy in this research, these four Mexican/Mexican-American educators and I sought to unearth and identify tenets of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and the role these may play in the creation of spaces of healing resistance. This research has sought to deepen knowledge of how these very nourishing and resistance-oriented community spaces are constructed so that we as educators within Chicano and Mexican/Mexican-American communities may understand our role in fortifying the capacity of these spaces for creating equity in the lives of these young people.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

Tracing Notions of Care

Upon a historical analysis of schooling for students of color, a bleak reality of a deliberate and forceful cultural erasure and denigration through school practices and policies is evident (Cross, 2003; G. González, 1999; Lomawaima, 1993; Milk, 1980; Smith, 2002). Public education has long existed to recreate the social structures and dynamics of power currently in place and as such, it has busied itself with controlling the minds and bodies of those who stand apart from dominant, White, middle-class culture, thus clearing away the "backward cultural beliefs" that purportedly inhibited them from "embark[ing] on the process of social betterment" (G. González, 1999, p. 106). Within culturally oppressive paradigms of schooling, students' role in this process continues to be constructed in terms of social refinement, to "accept their proper place in society as a marginal class" (Lomawaima, 1993, p. 236). While some argue that the harsh realities of deculturalization, educational denial, and forced assimilation for people of color are no longer present in educational spaces nor legally sanctioned, students of color continue to face seemingly colorblind pedagogies refusing to see them for the multiple identities and sociopolitical realities they embody (Godinez, 2006)—colorblindness that breeds malignant silences which Lorde (1978) asserts cumulatively create a "psychology of the oppressed / where mental health is the ability / to repress / knowledge of the world's cruelty" (p. 42).

In contrast to Lorde's (1978) description of a psychology of the oppressed stands a Black feminist and Chicana/Mexican-American or *mestiza* consciousness, a

"fliud, resilient, and oppositional" (Delgado Bernal, 2006b, p. 127) Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology rooted in Indigenous, European and African backgrounds. Within a *mestiza* consciousness lies the capacity to survive and thrive at the crossroads of culture, power, and oppression (Anzaldua, 1987; Darder, 1991; Godinez, 2006; Knight, et al., 2006; Villenas & Moreno, 2001) while navigating the complex intersections of "races, languages, nations, sexualities, and spiritualities— that is, living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers" (Delgado Bernal, 2006b, p. 117).

Within a racialized society, White children and even adults maintain a privilege of racial ignorance and colorblindness that children of color cannot afford (Thompson, 1998, p. 535), but these disparate realities are very rarely acknowledged within the public spaces of schooling. In the words of Anzaldúa (1998), "dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty...we have never been allowed to develop unencumbered" (p. 86). Students from historically marginalized groups are today bound within an often unacknowledged educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006) accumulated within a *knowledge apartheid* (Pérez Huber, 2009) that is the result of gross social inequities, continued subordination, and visible and invisible assimilationist pedagogies thrust upon them within oppressive Eurocentric educational structures (Darder, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2006; Spring, 2007, 2010). Through liberatory pedagogies rooted in traditions of survival and uplift found within a Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic of care, students and educators

may together develop the buffers of cultural armor (West, 1993) that will enable them, "in the midst of cultural assault" (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 672) to survive and thrive both within and without oppressive educational structures (Knight et al., 2006; Oesterreich, 2007).

Much of the literature in ethics of care in education over the past thirty years has defined it within a moral and humanistic framework, a *feeling with* another individual in an attempt to replicate the intimate, nurturing and characteristically feminine relationships of care acted out within the private spheres of home and family (Thompson, 1998). Although it has been noted by some that caring and notions of *need* varies widely within broader feminist visions which "reflect[s] the different contexts in which women face the problem of caring" (Fisher, 2001, p. 112), a White feminist liberal ethic of care explicitly likened to mothering within ostensibly private and safe spaces has overwhelmingly dominated discourses of care within academic and practitioner spheres (Blum, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Larrabee, 1993; Noddings, 1992, 2003; Oakes & Lipton, 2003). And while Fisher (2001) argues, "the conditions of caring differ so greatly" which necessitates "develop[ing] more than one argument about caring and needs" (p. 112), constructions of care have remained static. Within White feminist middle class discourse, an ethic of care continues to be rooted within an individualized emotional connectedness (Gilligan, 1982) in order to build trusting and personal relationships for the purpose of creating an academic competence "in whatever field of study or work they may choose" (Oakes & Lipton, 2003, p. 280-281). This widely and often uncritically accepted individualistic and depoliticized

humanistic epistemology said to shape the "social, emotional, and academic conditions in classrooms" (Oakes & Lipton, 2003, p. 280) is characterized by Noddings (2003) as an essentially nonrational mode of relative engrossment in which educators are charged with "not attempting to transform the world" but instead "allowing [themselves] to be transformed" (p. 34). As such, caring exists as a "pre-act consciousness" (Noddings, 2003 p. 28) of inert empathy and compassion in which a shift toward problem-solving, critical analysis, or resolution is viewed as a degradation of the act of caring.

In the same vein as the call toward a unified 'sisterhood' within the feminist movement has been critiqued by women of color for overlooking the dynamics and intersections of class and race always undergirding the social dynamics of gender politics (Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 1998; hooks, 1994; Pesquera & Segura, 1993), *care* within White feminist liberal thought has been most similarly devoid of the acknowledgement of the sociopolitical dynamics of power and oppression. Within the depoliticized frameworks of mainstream middle class feminism, care has been visibly constructed as an interconnected feeling *for* and *with* another distinct individual to whom one shares relationship (Blum, 1993; Gilligan, 1982)—an ethic of care that does not move toward any particular end; it is therein necessarily constructed as a neutral and historically decontextualized emotional connection far removed from the imperatives of social justice. Gilligan (1982) goes further still in stating that a feminist ethic of care is necessarily incompatible with the enactment of a universalizable and abstract enactment of justice. While those who care, according

to Noddings (2003), "act…in behalf of the cared-for" (p. 23), care as constructed here maintains its place within a moral relativism that does not "posit one greatest good to be optimized" (Noddings, 1992, p. 21). While authentic caring, defined as personalized regard and connections of mutual satisfaction, is positioned over aesthetic caring which situates academic achievement as the sole purpose for creating caring relationships (Noddings, 2003; Oakes & Lipton, 2003), neither authentic nor aesthetic caring as constructed within White feminist cultural frameworks sense the urgency (Knight, 2004) of validating the multiple identities (Darder, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2002; Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010) and *native knowledge* ways of knowing (Asher, 2010; Godinez, 2006; Smith, 1993, 2002) that bicultural students bring into the classroom. Likewise, neither aesthetic nor authentic caring seek to cultivate critical communities of perseverance to challenge historical and current educational and social inequities that continue to marginalize students of color, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Anzaldúa, 1987; Delpit, 2003; Henry, 2006; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Villenas & Moreno, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Constructions of Care in Public and Private Spheres

Feminist scholars have long called for the reintegration of conceptualizations of public and private worlds and in so doing sought to bring into final communion the knower/the known and experience/knowledge, which are both often disregarded and silenced within academic spheres valuing disjointed and so-called objective knowledge (Collins, 2009; Grumet, 1989). According to Grumet (1989), the public and private spheres of being have falsely become "categories that organize our

experience…embedded in our identities as men and women and perpetuated in…epistemologies and social relations" (p. 14). The everyday spaces of home and family are visibly permeated by the sociopolitical realities existing within the public sphere; and for those groups and individuals within society who are marginalized, colonized and oppressed, this dichotomy between the public and the private is all the more false.

In the lives of people existing within conditions of social and cultural erasure and denigration—those whose very beings have been continuously rejected within mainstream American society—the so-called private spaces of home have never been sanctuaries from the ever-encroaching tide of violent physical, social, psychological, and political oppression (hooks, 1993). Thompson (1998) likewise states, "No home is altogether safe from …the burning of crosses on the front yard, invasion from lynch mobs, sexual harassment on the job or joblessness due to racism" and as such, caring within families of color "had to be, in part, *about* the surrounding society, because it has had to provide children with the understanding and the strategies they need to survive racism" (p. 532). A Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care is rooted within a political and social environment that acknowledges the ultimate singularity of public and private spheres—a world in which mothering is necessarily political, "involv[ing] the psychological work of teaching cultural dignity and integrity" within the "colonizing spaces between race, patriarchy, and capitalism" (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 672, 685). Within a harsh sociopolitical reality that daily threatens one's survival and that of her children, a mainstream ethic of care

involving "retreating from society to a space of innocence" (Thompson, 1998, p. 527) is simply not an option, as failing to see and negotiate racism and oppression is a privilege not afforded to those who find themselves within its grasp (Pesquera & Segura, 1993). According to Collins (2009), this negotiation and communal resistance of oppression through a supportive social matrix has developed within and alongside the historical oppression that has marked race relations in this country from its beginnings. For women of color, and particularly within Collins' (2009) work, Black women, "the severity of oppression...and our actions in resisting that oppression" (Collins, 2009, p. 191) has long shaped relationships to children, each other, community, as well as to their very selves.

While I have critiqued here a White feminist liberal ethic of care positioned within the private spheres of home and family life through interlocking ties to maternal nurturing, Black and Chicana Critical Feminisms' inclusion of mothering or 'othermothering (Collins, 2009; Foster, 1993; Thompson, 1998) within a critical feminist ethic of care is in no way attempting to replace one maternal, apolitical sentimentality with another. Mothering within a Chicana framework, or 'othermothering' within Black communities, has always existed at the intersection of the private and the political. For Black and Mexican/Mexican-American and Chicana women living within the borderlands of culture, nationality, race, class, and gender (Anzaldúa, 1987; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Godinez, 2006; Knight et al., 2006; Villenas, 2006) mothering and 'othermothering' represents an ethic of care rooted in personal accountability and empowerment (Collins, 2009; Cross, 1998; Henry, 2006;

hooks, 1990; Knight, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villenas & Moreno, 2001) a politicized caring with the capacity to "bring people along—in the words of late-nineteenth-century Black feminists—'uplift the race'...to attain the self-reliance and independence essential for resistance" (Collins, 2009, p. 208). Through pedagogies of interconnectedness among intellectual legacies, resistance strategies, and cultural/community knowledge(s) and spiritualities, Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care interrupt and deconstruct current sociopolitical realities built upon the domination, silencing, and inferiority of the 'Other' (Ball, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 2006b; Delpit, 2003; Oesterreich, 2007).

Care as Multi-Connectedness

According to Palmer (2007), good teaching—teaching from an open heart—is founded in the "capacity for connectedness" to the lives and personal passions of students. Accordingly, good teachers have the ability to fashion "a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves" (Palmer, 2007, p. 11). While interpersonal connectedness between students and teachers that encourages vulnerability, openness, and being fully present is essential to creating a community of learners with the courage to reach beyond the ways in which they currently see and make sense of the world (hooks, 1994), Palmer's (2007) discussion of personally connecting with students in order to help them *create a world for themselves* ignores an important fact. Students already *come* from intricately woven and fully formed worlds that have and continue to exist long before they came to sit in any teacher's classroom and long

after they leave it. Denigration, economic oppression and social marginalization continue to exist within low socioeconomic communities of color. As such, good teaching is not only in creating classroom spaces in which vulnerability and openness is encouraged and sought through interpersonal connections to our students—we must guide young people with the knowledge, tools, and spaces of practice to navigate the complex political and socioeconomic worlds they *already* inhabit.

A theoretical lens of Black and Chicana Critical Feminisms creates the spaces for such sociopolitical navigation as it repositions caring from a mainstream feminist middle class, and ostensibly at its core ethically neutral engagement of inert sentimentality—a pedagogy of the heart (Palmer, 2007)— to an ethical *calling* (Collins, 2009; Cross, 1998; Darder, 1991, 1995; Henry, 2006): an "individual and collective responsibility as part of a moral imperative" (Knight, 2004, p. 221) to critically engage with and act upon the often harsh and unjust social realities that exist within and beyond the walls of our classrooms (Anyon, 2005; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Within Black and Chicana Critical Feminist Ethic(s) of Care frameworks, the freedom gained through education is not situated as a personal or intellectual freedom from attached responsibility, but that found in interconnectedness. This pedagogy of critical connectedness brings about the ultimate freedoms of living and learning—a radical and liberatory connectedness embodied in performative rituals (Villenas, 2006) of mothers and daughters who "[c]ut…the umbilical cord…to set us both free" and in doing so can later *return to each other* as well (Castillo, 1996, p. 59). It is a bound freedom found in collectivity

embodied within the African philosophy of *I am because we are* (Achebe, 1989; Delpit, 2003, p. 16).

Without this profound multiconnectedness found in Black and Chicana feminist pedagogies (Ball, 2000; Delpit, 2003; Villenas & Moreno, 2001), students who have experienced "psychic and emotional withdrawal within the regular track" often resist and reject formalized schooling in varying ways, "demand[ing] with their voices and bodies...a more humane vision of schooling" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 62). Attending to the "social and emotional growth of students" (Foster, 1993, p. 111) is often positioned as a calling to connect with one's students not only within academic spheres but also critically and as kin, through "simple acts of kindness" that values student "dignity and basic humanity" (Ladson-Billings, 1994) in the pursuit of social equity. Standing in stark opposition to the disjointedness existing within colonizing and socially reproductive educational structures—disconnectedness between knower/known, teachers/students, and between classroom knowledge and the world from which it is extracted (Freire, 1970; Grumet, 1989; hooks, 1994)—stands Valenzuela's (1999) description of Mr. Sosa. For Mr. Sosa, a band teacher at Seguín High School within a predominantly Mexican-American community, caring as multiconnectedness is manifested through feeding his morning class of students before beginning to teach them, thus creating a "more affirming and positive world" that "may [be] only be a *taquito* away" (p. 111). For this teacher, pedagogically blurring the lines between the public spaces of school and the private spaces of home

and family (Foster, 1993) is the means by which he is able to serve his students as whole human beings of body/mind/spirit.

Within Chicana Critical Feminisms rooted in Mexican and Mexican-American epistemologies, this holistic vision of schooling is perhaps best embodied within notions of *educación*—respectful and caring relations in and out of the classroom that engage one's whole individual, personal as well as communitied self in learning and growing (Godinez, 2006; Valdez, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 2006; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). Black and Chicana Critical Feminisms argue that to create socially just classrooms, emancipatory frameworks of *educación* must not only seek connectedness as individuals, community members, or kin, but must also be deeply rooted in the rich cultural and intellectual legacies, those home pedagogies (Knight et al., 2006), of the communities in which we are situated—the honoring of which is integral to an ethic of care rooted in social justice (Darder, 1995; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Delpit, 2003; Foster, 1993; Cross, 1998; Henry, 2006; hooks, 1994; Rolón-Dow, 2005).

Connecting to Legacies of Care: To Survive and Thrive

"I write these words to bear witness to the...strength and power that emerges from sustained resistance and the profound conviction that these forces can be healing, can protect us from dehumanization and despair" (hooks, 1990, p. 209). Within Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care, a "cultural armor" (West, 1993, p. 23) of healing resistance—cultural *mascaras*, or masks, of resistance braided into the very being of Chicanas (Godinez, 2006), is the means by which bodies,

minds and spirits are "nourished, supported, protected, encouraged, and held accountable" (Gay, 2000, p. 47). Within oppressive and colonizing educational institutions in which students of color are struggling to "survive the crossroads" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 81) while on the wrong side of the "ultimate border...between knowledge and power" (N. González, 2005, p. 42), a sociopolitical existence in which not only their personhood but the very historical legacies, home pedagogies, and scholarly contributions they call their own are dismissed and distorted (Acuña, 1988; Anzaldúa, 1987; D. Bell, 1992; Córdova, 1994; Fanon, 1963; Knight, et al., 2006; Paz, 1985; Smith, 2002; Taliferro-Baszile, 2010). This fractured existence of both invisibility and hypervisibility is born of longstanding hegemonic and colonizing pedagogies that do not connect to their bodied and spirited selves, intellectual legacies, sociopolitical realities, nor their cultural ways of knowing (Asher, 2010; Darder, 1995; Delgado Bernal, 2006b; Oesterreich, 2007).

Within critical ethic(s) of care framework rooted in Black and Chicana Feminist pedagogies stands a firm commitment to continuity and connectedness to the intellectual and resistance legacies of dominated people (Córdova, 1994; Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2012; Villenas, 2006) within which the accumulation and application of knowledge exists for the uplift of one's community—a responsibility to maintain rootedness in the legacies of survival of one's people(s). Perhaps similar to the Hebrew tradition of connectedness to ancestral suffering discussed in Michaels' (1996) novel, one's "forefathers are referred to as 'we,' not 'they'", and is spoken, "'When we were delivered from Egypt...'"; no division is drawn between those who

came before and those who will follow because in essence, the "Jew is forever leaving Egypt" (p. 159). Within this charge of perpetual cohesion between oneself and one's community lies an indistinct naming of *we* and *they*—within an ethic of care rooted in connectedness and continuity, one becomes educated "for your ancestors" who came to this soil with *salt water in their veins,* and "for your descendents" (Delpit, 2003, p. 19) who will carry it thus, forever acknowledging the historical and corporal bridges between the two. As such, Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care builds upon connectedness in education as a means of reclaiming one's societal right to be viewed as fully human, a "preparation...to continue the struggle" (Cross, 1998, p. 32) rooted in the "survival and wholeness of all people" (Knight, 2004, p. 212) in which educators position themselves and the curriculum as political and social agents of change.

Within a framework of Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care drawing upon rich intellectual and cultural legacies as a visible and valid source of knowledge in the classroom, students of color may revalue their individual and communitied selves with the knowledge that their own lives, breath, and beating hearts (Fanon, 1963, p. 45) hold equal value to those of the dominant class who continue to hold privilege within intellectual spaces of education. It is within liberatory frameworks of education embedded within a critical ethic(s) of care that intellectual, cultural and agentive legacies of communities of color are acknowledged as a "validation vision", a means of uncovering our "true faces, our dignity"; within

critical ethic of care frameworks lies a reclaiming of self, in, essence an "exoneration ...seeing through the fictions of white supremacy" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 87).

Students of color are forcefully resisting the "historical amnesia" perpetuating an erroneous "foreign identity of otherness in [their] own country" (Darder, 1995, p. 322); through their words and their actions, they are crying out for rigorous and interconnected pedagogies that honor and engage the whole of their multigenerational identities (Delgado Bernal, 2006b; Oesterreich, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Audre Lorde (1978, p. 44) echoes this call for pedagogies that heal the wounds of oppression and marginalization— here, her words stand as a challenge to an often hollow, fragmenting ethic of care rooted in White liberal feminist thought:

> make me whole again
>
> to love
>
> the shattered truths of me
>
> spilling out like dragon's teeth
>
> through the hot lies
>
> of those who say they love
>
> me

As the multiple intellectual and cultural legacies of students of color are often conspicuously twisted while simultaneously made invisible within the dominant, White spaces of schooling (Darder, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2002), a Black and Chicana Critical Feminist ethic(s) of care must strip away the lies and

untruths that "continue to reproduce a conversation about [our] invisibility" (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010, p. 491) and instead offer up an "interstitial spaces between coloniality, patriarchy" within which lives and breathes a decolonizing "interruptive space of possibility" (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 675).

Fighting and Feeding: Legacies of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care

"We had to know to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing...preserve and protect, we had to defend and attack...We still have to do these things" (Smith, 2002, p. 13). In Smith's (2002) description of the epistemologies of spirit, of land and of *whakapapa*, or Maori descent lines, are notions of survival deeply embedded within traditions of both fighting and the preservation and protection of all that is precious. Within a Mexicana and Mestiza Ethic of Care lies a similar pedagogy of fighting and feeding which, though birthed within the fierce physical battle for social justice, may only reach fruition through nourishing those minds, bodies, and spirits likewise involved in the struggle. These seemingly contradictory acts of violent aggression and maternalistic nurturing are often found interwoven within female deities of the Chichimeca, Totonac, Toltec, and Náhuatl peoples of present-day Mexico[3]. Within indigenous Mesoamerican societies, women have been central to both battle and harvest, as evidenced in particular within extant artifacts including

[3] Because of U.S. expansion beginning in 1846, the aforementioned indigenous groups are likewise ancestors to people of Mexican-American/Chicano and *mestizo* ancestry living within the borders of the United States today.

pictorial *códices* depicting all aspects of daily life among the peoples of central Mexico.

Náhuatl women, embodying "both fecundity and death" (Paz, 1985, p. 66), traditionally fulfilled dual roles of loving nurturer and hardened warrior—as manifested within unified images of Earth Mother and warrior—in the service of community survival and social uplift. The September 16th Náhuatl feast day of Toci[4] is one such example celebrating "both women's domestic concerns and her warlike abilities"; this celebration honored "goddesses of the earth and vegetation" (Salas, 1990, p. 7) while also celebrating the perseverance and protective nature of women soldiers through engagement in mock public battles. Modern accounts of women's involvement in war have also been found during Mexico's 1810 war for independence against Spain, the 1846 war against the United States for its northern territory, and most notably during the decade of the 1910 Mexican Revolution (Acuña, 1988; Salas, 1990). The Revolution itself, an agrarian revolt (Wolf, 1969), and therefore chiefly and inevitably rooted in fertility and reproduction, is further situated within a realm of femininity as a "return to the maternal womb" toward Mexico's full communion "[w]ith herself, with her own being" (Paz, 1985, pp. 148-149). This feminine and maternal essence of the Mexican Revolution is further

[4] September 16th also marks Mexico's cry of independence from Spain in 1810 under the battle flag of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Wolf, 1969), *María Insurgente*, whose image is said to have merged with the Náhuatl Earth and Mother goddess, Tonanzín (Paz, 1985). Together, these Earth Mother deities layered upon each other within the context of Spanish colonization stood in the minds and hearts of many to be the quintessential "Mexican nationalist defender[s]...the catalyst[s] of Mexican nationalism" (Salas, 1990, p. 24).

realized historically as women are simultaneously visible in the role of caretaker and *soldadera* as they fought, fed, killed, nursed, and loved alongside their male counterparts toward the goal of improved social conditions for Mexico's starving and undereducated peasant class (Azuela, 1916/2000; Wolf, 1969).

According to Salas (1990), female Mexican soldiers or *soldaderas* "combined their traditional roles as mother, war goddess, warrior, tribal defender, sexual companion...within the context of army life" (p. 44). While they are often depicted in war accounts and revolutionary literature as performing domestic duties: lovingly combing through battlefields nursing wounded soldiers, and performing burial ceremonies for fallen men, these women were undoubtedly the fiercest and bravest of soldiers, even serving as *coronelas* or battle leaders, in addition to men (Wolf, 1969, p. 31). It was not uncommon for female soldiers to provide a point-blank mercy killing for wounded and suffering soldiers beyond recovery; nor was it uncommon for them to serve on the front lines of battle (Poniatowska, 2006). Additionally, soldaderas were responsible for large scale destruction of life and property amid the ruling class as they were able to fashion inconspicuous underskirt belts able to singlehandedly smuggle up to one hundred rounds of ammunition each into otherwise highly protected areas (*El Paso Morning Times*, 1913, as cited in Salas, 1990, p. 56). While on the surface this contradiction of women soldaderas fostering life while at times simultaneously revoking it violently may further entrench the notion of woman as "the Enigma...a living symbol of the strangeness of the universe and its radical heterogeneity" (Paz, 1985, p. 66), more accurately it seems to embody the precise

essence of *Ometeotl*—the *Two God* of the Náhuatl people, a deeply rooted Mesoamerican philosophy wherein male-female, light-dark, and death-life are but the perfect completion of life within a universe that is only made whole in complex duality (León-Portilla, 2009). Within this perfect duality of war-goddess and life-giver harkening back to her indigenous legacies, soldaderas acted with all the "skill, resourcefulness, and aggression that survival required" while at times taking on "a decidedly motherly attitude toward the welfare of their fellow male soldiers" (Salas, 1990, p. 73). Soldaderas daily ensured survival of not only a political movement and those that were living, breathing and struggling therein, but of the collective soul and spirit of a people as well.

This responsibility of fighting and feeding toward freedom is a deeply rooted ethic of care that Chicana, *Mestiza*, and Mexican/Mexican-American women have carried on their backs and in their hearts for thousands of years. For the women who served as both warriors and Earth Mother caretakers during the Mexican Revolution, taking arms and moving into battle was deeply rooted in critical love and a sense of urgency (Knight, 2004) toward community survival. For one soldadera, the war was simply "the smell of gunpowder and the crying of the wounded"; she states, "I saw no romance in it. We were just poor people fighting for our stomachs" (Quinn, 1972, p. 21). Beals writes of a soldadera within the Zapata military who perhaps quintessentially embodied an ethic of care rooted in fighting and feeding—her rifle "lay...for eight years...beside her *metate* upon which she ground the maize for tortillas" (as cited in Salas, 1990, p. 39). This pedagogy of nourished resistance and

resilience epitomized in the physical and psychological spaces shared by the machete and the corn continues to live and breathe within a Chicana Feminist Critical ethic of care (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Córdova, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 2006b; Pesquera & Segura, 1993; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). This struggle for "survival and wholeness" (Knight, 2004, p. 222), continuity and connectedness (Villenas, 2006) found in Chicana and Black Critical Feminist Ethic(s) of Care is salient in an engaged pedagogy "feeding people in all their hungers" (Moraga, 1983, p. 132)—a healing communion of body, mind, and spirit in a liberatory revolution (hooks, 1994).

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Moving From a Chicana Ethic of Care to a Chicana/Mestiza/Mexicana and Even Brown-Blood[5]-ed Ethic of Care

Stepping into this work, into the depth of this search into what a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care looks like, feels like, and in what ways it is pedagogically rooted in *Testimonios* of struggle and survival of Mexican and Mexican-American educators, my ears and mind were finely tuned to hear words such as 'oppression', 'justice', 'fighting', and perhaps even some splatterings of the word 'revolution'. Sitting atop many stacks of academic texts—both figuratively and quite literally within my tiny apartment—I came into this research emboldened by accounts of the linguicism and racism I have been told my entire life by my family and close family friends. These firsthand accounts would later be layered with critical and socially conscious academic language offered during my college years while on the periphery of Chicano student organizations. As an educator in a predominantly Mexicano community, my identity as a light-skinned and middle class Mexicana provided me the privilege to speak and act freely within my critical social justice frameworks. As a graduate student of Critical Pedagogies, I became even more

[5] This reference to Mexican/Mexican-Americans and *Brown blood* was in response to a question I posed during a Focus Group which was dedicated to the analysis of participant photographs. I asked the group: "Is there something that all of your photos have in common?" to which Sophia laughed, "Brown blood". While she said this in a humorous manner, it carried with it an underlying sense of a knowing and dignifying humor, in line with Carrillo's (2006) *humor casero mujerista* that unites this group of *mestiza* and therefore "Brown blood[ed]" women and speaks back to the historical stratifications of skin tone and bloodline that have been used to marginalize and divide Mexican/Mexican-Americans of indigenous ancestry, especially in New Mexico (Nieto-Phillips, 2004).

deeply grounded in historical notions of social justice revolution the manifestations of it within public schools. As I peer back through time, at myself even recently as I was researching and writing my proposal, I know deep down that my committee members made a sound argument in cautioning me that I was writing like someone who had already found what they were setting out to find.

Growing up in a family deeply rooted in our *Hispano* community and *Mexicano* heritage, a family which has over time gained a significant amount of social capital here in New Mexico, and then conducting research within my own geographic community created in me an unconscious sense of what I was sure to find when I sat down with my participants and observed in their classrooms. I *myself* was raised with a particular Mexicana Ethic of Care—a hardened love/care rooted in our status as an underclass of people, an Ethic of Care deeply planted in the hope, deep faith, and beauty that living amid struggle can offer. Since birth, I have been raised within a deeply rooted and cellular understanding of a Mexican/Mexican-American Ethic of Care by my tias, tios, my grandparents, and my mother and father, but it was this cellular knowing and my own positionality that kept me from seeing what I was to see within this research. It was the privilege of voice, validity, and impunity couched in the intersections of my identity: intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and resident status that I had to put on a shelf nearby in order to even hear the nuances of *La Revolución* that are communicated beyond the radicalized and visible/audible manner I had communicated them as an educator in my own classroom. I had to learn to see revolution fought by those who recognize the

dangerous nature of revolutions fought in the name of social justice. The participants in this study waged their revolution on behalf of their Mexican/Mexican-American students and their families in ambiguous and therefore protected ways: through word, body and being, and even in silence. Observing these four female and Mexicana educators in their classrooms and speaking with them at length over the course of five months taught me what I so desperately needed to know: One does not, cannot make a revolution through books but through struggle (Menchú, 1984, p. 223). And while I was perhaps aware of the perils of either intellectualizing or romanticizing the ongoing struggle for equity, I was not prepared for what Cruz shared during our first research focus group when I guided our group conversation toward what it means to my participants to work or fight for social justice:

> [In college] they tell you, like, "you have to go out there and advocate for yourself and you have to go out there and protest and you have to go out there and do this and you have to stand up for yourself and you have to" and it's like, *why*?! I'm not oppressed. Ooh, I hate that word. "You are the oppressed" and I feel like a roach being pressed.

Cruz was not the only participant who felt that 1960's notions of advocacy or the fight for social justice did not name what she did in her classroom with her Mexicano and Mexican-American students. Teresa likewise shared the cautions of her family against the political lexicon so characteristic of the Chicano movement: "my mom would say, 'never say *Chicana*, those are the radicals.'...I don't like the ruffling feathers. You don't have to go out there and be pushy, 'look at me look at

me, I'm Chicana, I'm proud'" (Teresa). As a researcher, I was perplexed—what I was witnessing in their classrooms seemed to belie this resistance against naming what they do in their classrooms and naming themselves as social justice activists. Within their *Testimonios* was manifested a pedagogy emboldened by the historical and continued oppression of a race of people—their own Mexican and Mexican-American people. And while the curriculum that these four female Mexicana teachers construct in their classroom and the pedagogy they embody centers in academically equipping their Mexican and Mexican-American students to navigate a world that does not view them or their family as equals, a world in which their parents are often made to feel inferior (Penélope), there is a contradictory space between how they name the work they do and the role they take within it.

At this first focus group, they spoke in agreement: *No estés buscando pleito.* And while these words, *don't always be looking for a fight or looking to how someone is disrespecting you* (Cruz, Teresa) were present within the legacy of what they had been taught within their extended families and by mothers and fathers alike, it was the phrase that followed that offered a fuller picture: No estés buscando pleito, *pero no te dejes tampoco*. Pero te dejes tampoco: *Neither let yourself be disrespected*. It is in the very lives of these participants, "through [their] living testimony" (Menchú, 1984, p. 196) that the struggle for social justice, *La Revolución* (Córdova, 1994) is waged, and though they resist defining themselves as revolutionaries or "radicals" for *La Causa, La Raza* (Penélope, Cruz), the fight for social justice for the children they teach is alive and well in their classroom

curriculum, pedagogy, and their everyday interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. These Mexicana/Mestiza educators and participants in this study challenge me to question my own adoption of limiting dichotomies and narrow conceptualizations of revolution and the privileged sites of my identity that have allowed me to wage revolution in visible and audible ways.

In looking for a Mexican/Mexican-American Ethic of Care and social justice revolution(s) through the lens of my own positionality, I had not the eyes to see who my participants are as revolutionaries in the struggle for equity. In many ways, I have yearned to see my experience and identity as unquestionably linked with *my Mexicano community*, and by extension my participants, for it is painful to feel separated from those I perceive as my community, and those of us with White skin and features are not beyond the reach of internalized oppression (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010; Zook, 1990) but this negation of the power and privilege I have access to and the complexity of my identity is itself a privilege. Unlike those of my Mexicana/o sisters and brothers who are immediately perceived within the intersections of their ethnic and linguistic identity, I must own the fact that I can always make a choice when it comes to which parts of me I bring along, and that fact alone is a space of privilege afforded to those of us who stand in White skin and English dominance. It has not been easy to come to terms with the fact that my "claim to color" has been made uncritically and without the complexity of intersectionality of class and colorism (Moraga, 1983, p. 58), and has often been a claim that has created only feelings of connection and 'home'. As a teacher in my own classroom and likewise

now in this research, I was not fully ready to hear and understand why even those students who knew me well within my Mexicana identity often referred to me as 'kind of White'. It hurt me then and is not easy to bear now.

It is imperative to my work that I continue to negotiate the truth that my lived reality as a Mexicana, a feminist, scholar, and as a woman exists within the intersections of 10,000 years of the history and oppression of my people and likewise within my own class and Whiteness, as a woman who is constructed within White privilege first and perhaps secondly within my Mexicana identity. This truth bears an even deeper understanding of my search to be seen and validated as a Mexicana, and also what can only be described as fear of those Chicana/Mexicanas who I view as *having* this validity.

Rooting myself within the complexity of my identity is critical to my work as a Mexicana/Chicana and Critical Feminist researcher, and is critical to finding my home within an indigenously rooted Chicana and Latina Critical Feminist research epistemology(ies) (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Villenas, 2010), which themselves offer up agentive and adaptive spaces that embrace the ambiguity I have often rejected and sometimes feared. These research epistemologies themselves reject dichotomies that "offer opposition without reconciliation" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 560). By clinging to the dualisms of either being perceived as White/Mexicana, a Spanish/English speaker, a social justice revolutionary/someone perpetuating the status quo, I inscribed these limiting dichotomies onto my participants as well. It is imperative to my work that I continue to come to terms with my own lived reality within the

complexity of power and privilege and my own *Testimonio* to be validated and recognized as a Mexicana and Chicana which moves me to see myself within a sameness of Mexicana identity without critically analyzing a difference that comes with privilege. My participants' *Testimonios* and the ambiguity they embrace within their own lives and in their classrooms urged me to move beyond my own limiting frameworks I was imposing onto them and instead continue to work to understand, expand, and reframe the Ethic of Care these four Mexican/Mexican-American female educators embody.

Decolonizing Research Spaces

I approach this research perpetually and humbly aware of the colonizing history of such research in marginalized and Othered communities (Smith, 2002; Villenas, 2010). I am a native-born Mexicana/Hispana/Chicana, woman myself of Spanish-speaking origin likewise living within the geographic space that my Spanish and Mestiza/o ancestors have long inhabited. I ground myself within a Chicana Feminist Epistemology Framework which calls us to reclaim and reinterpret that which may be seen through dominant cultural lenses as deficit (Pérez Huber, 2009). I embark upon this endeavor in order to identify and understand the means by which marginalized communities *educate their own,* toward the continued goal of social uplift and transformation in our Mexican/Mexican-American/Mexicano/Hispano, and Chicano communities.

The peoples of this land that I inhabit—we who are the inheritors of the cultural mixing between the Spanish, Indigenous peoples of this continent, as well as

the African peoples forcibly brought here as well—we who have either adopted or been ascribed identities including but not limited to Mexican-American, *Mexicana/o, Paisana/o*, Chicana/o, *Mestiza/o,* Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispanic, *Hispana/o,* Latina/o, or *Indígena/o*—have collectively and individually experienced a history of oppression and marginalization beginning in the early 16th century with the arrival of the Spanish, and continuing on until today (Anzaldúa, 1987; Gaspar de Alba, 1998; G. González, 1999; E. Martínez, 1998). As I position myself as researcher, I likewise take into account this historical context, ever-endeavoring to more deeply understand the realities of Mexicana, Mestiza, Mexican-American educators who work within communities that are rooted in this aforementioned cultural layering ever-contextualized within historical oppression and geographic occupation.

Racism, segregation, linguistic assimilation and extermination, forced labor, feminine subjugation, geographic relocation and genocide, economic and social disenfranchisement, and educational marginalization have all been manifestations of Spanish, Mexican, and later U.S. conquest and subsequent colonization of Indigenous and *Mestizo* peoples of the Southwest (Acuña, 1988; Córdova, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). As such, the community I conducted this research within is one that, according to Pesquera and Segura (1993), also continues to experience a domination that is particularly characterized by the U.S. occupation and subsequent annexation of the northern territory of Mexico between 1846 and 1848 that has resulted in a continued "peonage and proletarianization of the racially marked Chicano people" (Olguín, 1997, p. 175).

Our experiences as Mexican/Mexican-American, Hispano, Chicano peoples remain always within multilayered worlds of colonized and colonizer, oppressed and oppressor, and birthright inheritors of this land, though we are continuously constructed as trespassers upon it (Anzaldúa, 1987; Darder, 1991; Villenas, 2010; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). It is this deep understanding—this multigenerational "knowledge of conquest, loss of land, school and social segregation, labor market stratification, assimilation, and resistance" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 564) passed through the bloodlines of our stories and rituals and infused into the teaching practices and pedagogies of the Mexicana and Mestiza educators with whom I have conducted this research. Armed with this historical understanding, there is great need to continue to uncover these cultural buffers within classrooms headed by community educators in order that we may fortify these spaces of resistance where Mexican/Mexican-American students may thrive and flourish (Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Prieto & Villenas, 2012).

Employing a Chicana Feminist Epistemology

A Chicana Critical Feminist framework is a tool by which to resist epistemological constructions that support and perpetuate racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression, a critical framework that deliberately uncovers and honors realities not made visible within mainstream society. Employing this critical lens as part of a decolonizing research framework also validates participants as subjects capable of self-definition by positioning them as central within their own experiences and within the research (Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 1998; 2002). A

Chicana Critical Feminist framework, in the long tradition of research epistemologies that challenge the status quo stands as a direct challenge to "certified knowledge" which "open[s] up the question of whether what has been taken to be true can stand the test of alternative ways of validating truth" (Collins, 2009, p. 290). Chicana Critical Feminist epistemologies recognize that what is considered science is always value laden, regardless of the instrumentation and detachment one may employ from his/her study or focus; as such, we instead seek to reach beyond the quantitative/qualitative methodological dyad, embedding our work in restructuring methodologies in order to unearth the lived realities of those whose experiences have been historically invalidated—a Chicana Critical Feminist research framework shakes the very epistemological foundations of scientific research (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Pérez Huber, 2009).

This Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* is rooted within *endarkened* feminist and critical epistemologies which "speak to the failures of traditional patriarchal and liberal educational scholarship and examine the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 556). It is important to note that a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology is not intent on replacing one truth for another within dominant frameworks but to "acknowledge and respect other ways of knowing and understanding, particularly the stories and narratives of those who have experienced and responded to different forms of oppression" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 120). It is in line with this knowledge of the great value that lies in opening silenced spaces that I have approached this research. I situate myself within a

Chicana Critical Feminist framework of academic research that seeks a deeply contextualized and nuanced understanding of the structures that create and maintain social injustices and the nourished resistance to disrupt them (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1993; Moraga, 1983).

A Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* as Methodology: *Testimonio* as Bearing Credible Witness

> This is my testimony. I didn't learn it from a book and I didn't learn it alone...it's not only *my* life, it's also the testimony of my people...my personal experience is the reality of a whole people.
>
> —Rigorberta Menchú, 1984, p. 1

In line with epistemologies that call for traditional as well as the imaginative means of seeking the histories and ways of knowing of marginalized peoples (Collins, 2009), this methodology has sought to establish creative and multimodal spaces for a continuously evolving self perhaps present in the 'more' of meaning that lies underneath, in-between, and within the spaces of more traditional paradigms of research (Otto, 2007, p. 78). This multilayered and patchwork methodology has made way for the emergence of a multidimensional self-representation perhaps unreachable through traditional means—one that has unfolded organically and spontaneously within this self-directed and multimodal visual/oral collective and self-representation. Echoed in Ybarra-Frausto's (1991) explication of *rasquachismo* within Mexican and Chicano communities which "draws its essence from the world of the tattered, the shattered, and broken...to gain time, to make options, to retain

hope" (p. 156), this research represents a resourceful matrix of methods to arrive at a deeper and more nuanced understanding. I have utilized mainstream methods of individual semi-structured interview, focus group interview, and field observation; however, this Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* has gone farther still. Through the collection of photographic representations collected by the participants themselves, we have together endeavored to identify tenets of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care rendered and negotiated within participants' educational spaces and approaches, as well as the personal and collective histories of resistance and survival that inform them and are infused through them.

I have grounded this research within the decolonizing methodology of *Testimonio* which recognizes that the right to voice and the authority to bear credible witness to one's lived reality of struggle and survival is an essential avenue by which oppressed peoples may stake a place of dignity and equity within society (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Privileging voice is especially critical for U.S. peoples of Mexican and Mexican-American descent and perpetually characterized as "foreigners" (San Miguel, 2003, p. 40) within their own land. In all social theaters, the elimination of language was a key strategic move social domination and the 'Americanization' of an underclass of people portrayed as a rebellious, mongrel Indian race" (Nieto-Phillips, 2004, p. 52). Wiping the people clean of their language and voice was seen as the "linchpin of culture" by which their backward cultural ways could be destroyed, instead "replaced by the heart of the superior culture, English" (G. González, 1999, p. 58). The

effectiveness of legal policies intent at shaming into silence generations of tongues geographically situated within the land of the Southwest United States—peoples native to the Southwest since before the 16th century Spanish conquest—is rooted in the great weight that language carries in the validation of individual and collective life and experience.

It is precisely *because* of the central role that silencing has taken in colonization and domination that voice has here been inhabited as a site of decolonization. According to hooks (1994), "language disrupts, refuses to be contained" and as such, in the mouths of peoples fighting against marginalization, those with a "spirit of rebellion" (hooks, 1994, p. 167), language is a place of refusal and rebellion as well. With this knowledge at hand, this research has sought to continuously create spaces of validation for these four Mexicana/Mestiza participants and myself as a Mexicana/Mestiza/Chicana researcher.

Research Design and Methodology

In line with Collins' (2009) assertion that critical researchers aiming to privilege silenced, delegitimized realities must approach through innovation and creativity, I have assembled a multilayered methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Ybarra-Frausto, 1991). My participants and I have collected a patchworked meaning-making that emerges through a matrix of semi-structured interviews, field observations, focus group interviews, and self-reflections. This research was likewise informed by participants' own visual/photographic representation that represent their classrooms, curriculum, and pedagogies as they continuously inquired into the myriad

ways in which they educationally and socially equip their students to survive and thrive.

Research Site

This research took place in a mid-sized city of nearly 100,000 lying 60 miles from the U.S./Mexico border. Per capita income (2010) is under $20,000 while 20.4% of residents live below poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). I chose this site because of its proximity to the U.S./Mexico border and its large Mexican/Mexican-Americans population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2011 estimates, the city's ethnic breakdown is predominantly Hispanic (56.8%) and White (37.5%). The official public school demographics reported a 73.9% Hispanic enrollment with 14.2% English Language Learners (Office of Accountability, Assessment & Research, 2011). Likewise, over 40% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

Participants

In line with a Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology I aimed to privilege voice in the construction of lived realities. As such, four Mexican and Mexican-American female participants were centrally positioned within this research in all data collection and analysis (Córdova, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Latina Feminist Group, 2001). They are as follows:

Teresa Rivas teaches in a large comprehensive public high school. She teaches 9th through 12th grade English and the ENLACE class, which is part of a statewide collaborative intent upon improving academic access for primarily students of Mexican and Mexican-American descent. Teresa was born and raised along the

U.S./Mexico Border to a Mexican and Mexican-American father and mother respectively. Teresa is a heritage speaker of Spanish and English dominant.

Penélope Parra teaches Health and Law Studies to 9th through 12th grade students at a large comprehensive public high school. She was born in Southern California to Mexican and Mexican-American parents. Her father was born and raised in Mexico City while her mother was born and raised along the U.S./Mexico Border roughly ten miles from where this research is situated. She and her parents relocated here from California in 2004. She is raising a four-year old son with the help of her parents. She is a heritage speaker of Spanish and English dominant.

Sophia Meza teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Social Studies and History in a Dual Language Charter School. She was born in Durango, Mexico to Mexican-born parents. She moved to California before her formal schooling began and relocated to the city in which she now teaches during her high school years. Sophia is a native speaker of Spanish and fully bilingual in Spanish and English.

Cruz Maldonado teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Mathematics in a Dual Language Charter School. She was born in El Paso to a single mother from Juárez, Mexico. Cruz's mother moved to the U.S./Mexico Border region twenty years before she was born. Cruz is a native speaker of Spanish and is fully bilingual in Spanish and English. Cruz is raising a 15-year old son and is a fulltime caretaker to her mother within the home they three share.

I began with a Criteria Sampling calling for female, Mexican/Mexican-American educators within both a comprehensive public high school and a charter

middle school. I subsequently relied upon Chain Sampling to complete my goal of four participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I selected four participants as my goal in this study because of its rootedness within the collective sharing of *Testimonios*, which relies upon an intimacy and trust (Pérez Huber, 2009) not easily gained within common focus group sizes of seven to ten (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 149). I was able to recruit four participants ranging from fully bilingual to English dominant heritage speakers who self-identify as *Mexicana*, Mexican, Mexican-American, Hispanic, or any combination of these. Participants are diverse in residency status, nationality, and socioeconomic status, range from struggling class to middle class. This diversity was significant as Chicana Critical Feminists' acknowledge that the sociopolitical realities of struggle and oppression exist at the borderlands of race, gender, language, citizenship status, sexuality, and class.

Data Collection

Data collection was undertaken at the intersections of Chicana Feminist theoretical frameworks and methods. Methodology which I present below contains not only the concrete detailing of steps involved in the process of eliciting meaning-making in the lived realities of participants but also the frameworks that undergird it. While the dichotomy between method and the methodology are largely falsely constructed, they require different types of thinking and explanation. While I do describe methods as they relate to the methodology undergirding this work, a more detailed and precise presentation of methods used in this inquiry can be found in Appendix D.

Individual, semi-structured *Testimonios*. I collected data through the sharing of often untold *Testimonios* of struggle and survival, of becoming political and agentive subjects within social struggle (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Carmona, 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Menchú, 1984)). One semi-structured individual *Testimonio* was sought from each participant at the beginning of the research study and a second semi-structured interview was conducted at the close of the research study. The second interview followed the interview protocol that was used for all participants but likewise delved into areas particular to each participant's *Testimonio* and lived realities that emerged throughout. All individual semi-structured *Testimonios* lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and I immediately transcribed and shared transcriptions with each participant.

Field observation. I conducted one three-hour classroom observation for each participant per week throughout the five-month course of the fall semester. All observations followed the public school academic calendar, which both schools shared. Honoring the fluidity and interconnectedness between academic, cultural, and sociopolitical identities and realities as part of a Critical Feminist epistemology (Henry, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999), I likewise conducted field observations of participants outside of their class time and outside of official school spaces. I observed interactions during passing periods, lunchtime, parent nights, talent shows, and parent-teacher conferences. I observed participants interacting with students, families, and other colleagues in school and community spaces alike.

Visual methodology. Participants were asked to take photographs that reflected and represented their ethic of care. They also requested to bring photographs from home that also showed or told the story of who they are as a teacher of Mexican and Mexican-American students and I agreed and changed the methodology accordingly. Photographs they brought were those of their families, of them as children, and of groups of students they have taught in the past. Participants were told that they could take or bring as many photographs as they wished and that they would be asked to share at least two within focus group. Participants brought between five and ten photographs each. Challenging Western traditions utilizing visual methodology within anthropology and social science research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), participants were positioned as authoritative subjects within this inquiry and not as objects of study as they participated in the recursive revisiting of photographs in order to create a nuanced and ever-evolving sense of their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care (Sanders-Bustle, 2003). Photographs served as an impression as well as a creative expression of participants' own curriculum and pedagogy, capturing tacit knowledge beyond the capacity of linguistic expression (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Eisner, 1993).

Focus group: Sites of collection and analysis. Five focus groups rooted in *Testimonio* together provided a storied connectedness between participants that transcends the individual nature of story present in mainstream discourse. Challenging Fontana and Frey's (2008) caveat that group dynamics may impede individual expression, Black and Chicana Critical Feminist epistemologies maintain

that our stories are not just our own but are created and blended in concert with the voices, experiences, and memories of others, existing as "multiple subjectivities of individual lives" (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 20). Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, the knowledge and memory we carry is not ours alone but is melded within the many voices that sustain it. Moraga (2011) writes that our actions and our words contain a "corporeal knowing" that does not and cannot keep us, "that we can remember histories and futures through and in spite of the body we wear" (Moraga, 2011, p. 198). This critical methodology of *Testimonio-ed* collectivity stands as a direct challenge to more individualistic perspectives positing that our memories and experiences exist distinctly within private worlds. Sharing spaces of *Testimonio* within a focus group stands as a departure from the "heroic autobiographical tradition... speaking from the voice of the singular 'I'...our individual identities express the complexity of our communities as a whole" (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, pp. 20-21).

Focus groups served as a site for the collection of data and likewise for the analysis of it, continuously an opportunity to collectively identify emerging themes that were reflexively used to code all data collected within this study. Five focus groups of 90-120 minutes each took place over the course of this five-month study. All focus groups were immediately transcribed and transcripts were shared with participants in the study. Data collected within each focus group also later served for reflexive analysis and a means of crystallization within later focus groups (Luttrell, 2010a, 2010b). While I had originally set out to video record all focus groups in order

to ensure accuracy in attributing voice to each participant, video recording proved awkward and I was unable to record all participants' equitably without conspicuous positioning of the camera in a manner that was disruptive. I opted instead for taking detailed notes of facial expressions and body language as I simultaneously took audio-recording of each meeting.

Reflexive crystallization (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Luttrell, 2010a, 2010b) and principled fidelity to analysis within the research phenomena (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008) were utilized in all aspects of data collection and initial and recursive analyses. Participants analyzed data within focus groups for emerging themes, continuously contextualizing their understanding of their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care within previous focus group data, individual transcripts, and against their own and other participants' experiential, cultural knowledge (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Crystallization among participants and across data sources was utilized not as a strategy approximating validity but an alternative to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Luttrell, 2010b).

The first focus group served to communicate the purpose and focus of the research and its theoretical grounding. During this first focus group, I described in detail the methodology and particular methods that would inform the study. This first focus group defined participants' and my role within this research in terms of data collection and analysis and created an agreed upon timeline for the collection and analysis of data.

The second focus group meeting was dedicated to the analysis of my observation data of participants' classrooms and interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and myself. No interview protocol was used in this focus group as participants directed discussion through their own self-reflections of my observational data in each of their classrooms. Participants were provided paper copies of my observational notes for their analysis. From initial observational data, participants and I began the process of looking for patterns in what we observed that informed our continuous understanding into a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. We began the reflexive process of noticing and naming themes as they continued to emerge in order to create a framework for later incoming data.

The third focus group was intent upon analyzing visual/photographic representations captured by participants as well as the photographs from their own lives and experiences that they provided for the focus group. Each of the participants' photographs were copied and enlarged to a 5x7 size so they could be initially analyzed and color-coded according to established themes and those newly emerging. Photographs were laid loosely onto our meeting table in order for participants to directly handle the photographs and pass them around the focus group. Photographic data and themes uncovered therein were present and available at all future focus groups in order to be reflexively revisited throughout the study.

The fourth focus group was intent upon the discussion and analysis of the second half of my observational notes that were provided to participants. This focus group meeting was likewise directed by participants' self reflections of observational

data and therefore did not follow a prescribed interview protocol. Participants were asked to find two places within these observational notes where they felt their pedagogy as Mexicana/Mestiza/Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American students was particularly palpable or evident. Participants brought copies of these observational notes to our meetings with their own markings and reflections recorded in the margins to share with the group.

The fifth and final focus group served to further solidify and finalize themes that emanated from our continuously unfolding data. Present within this fifth and final focus group presented a culmination of data which emerged throughout the previous four focus groups, observations, participants' photographic representations, and individual interviews. This focus group was audio-recorded, transcribed by me, the researcher, and shared with participants.

Ongoing self-reflection. As a passageway into the richness of multilayered perspectives (Latina Feminist Group, 2001), participants throughout this research created a multilayered, multimodal representation that emerged through their own continuous self-reflections that touched on aspects of their classrooms, curriculum, and/or pedagogies. Their reflections were self-directed and took many forms—some were shared with me as researcher and others were shared with other colleagues, students, and their own families. The subjects of their reflections included 1) transcriptions of their own individual interview 2) their own and others' photographic representations, 3) my observational notes, and 4) focus group meetings. The purpose of ongoing self-reflections was to create a growing understanding and to build

consciousness/*conocimiento* (Anzaldúa, 2000) of the myriad manifestations of their ethic of care and of a larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Self-reflections were sometimes spoken or written into the margins of their *Testimonio* transcripts and focus group transcripts I provided to them as well as on copies of observation notes.

Data Analysis as Fashioning a Revolution with the People

Working within a decolonizing methodology that has the capacity to open spaces for self-empowerment and a deeper understanding of institutional agency for all involved in the research necessitates that participants be fully engaged in self-authorship and self-representation at every stage within the research. *"To take part in the...revolution it is not enough to write a revolutionary song; you must fashion the revolution with the people. And if you fashion it with the people, the song will come by themselves, and of themselves* [emphasis original]" (Fanon, 1963, p. 206). Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, it is not sufficient for a researcher to simply collect, analyze and retell the stories and truths of those who have been historically silenced and who continue to experience sociopolitical, economic and gendered marginalization, even if on the surface one is endeavoring to honor those lived realities of struggle; Córdova's (1994) writings support the need for participants' full involvement in the research process, from collection of data to analysis as well as within the recursive and reflective construction and articulation of new understandings. She states that the "passion and depth of Chicana writings originate from the need to survive, first, by deconstructing others' definitions of us...[T]he Chicana is in the best position to describe and define her own reality" (Córdova,

1994, p. 182). Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, a participant's role is not only the telling of one's story but likewise the analysis of it and possible public representation, which goes farther still in displacing damaging historical distortions and untruths (Cervantes-Soon, 2012). According to Delgado Bernal (1998), foundational to a Chicana Feminist epistemology is the inclusion of Chicana research participants in the analysis of data which allows "participants…to be speaking subjects who take part in producing and validating knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, pp. 575)—essentially valuing participants as creators of knowledge within the quest for their own deeper understanding, and not merely objects of someone else's, my, research study.

Grounded in notions of research as empowerment with a commitment to change, theoretical grounding wherein theory and process involves shared ownership and power between participants as researchers and chief researcher, this Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio* aimed to involve participants fully at multiple levels of data collection and analysis (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Delgado Bernal, 1998). I maintain that such diversification is essential and foundational to a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology aimed at empowerment and the uncovering of historically silenced realities. *Trustworthiness* and *ethical principles* were scrupulously endeavored through responsibility not only to these participants involved in the study but also to the communities in which they are situated, even if these responsibilities come into conflict with each other (Smith, 1993, 2010; Villenas, 2006).

Ethical Responsibility

In order to maintain an ethical responsibility to participants, communities and the theoretical frameworks within which I am situated, I as one who operates within decolonizing epistemologies must maintain a deep sociopolitical embededdness that acknowledges the historical power and oppression present any time research is conducted within a community that has been positioned as 'Other' (Collins, 2009; Smith, 1993, 2010). I as a researcher intent on working within a decolonizing framework must maintain a connectedness to social justice and self-determination for these participants and all participants agreeing to participate in research. Research must not only matter to the community in visible and sociopolitical ways—it must engage and embolden the community as it seeks to transform and heal the wounds which colonization has inflicted over time. Those of us working within a decolonizing methodology must continue to arm ourselves with epistemologies that operate from the perspective and profound understanding that the "history of research...is so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only for colonization and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development" (Smith, 2010, p. 96). As such, I was conscientious in every decision within the research process, ever-working toward reconstructing this reality and redefining what academic research is and the capacity it has for creating social transformation.

One of the strategies of maintaining ethical responsibility discussed within critical frames of research is that of maintaining responsibility toward one's

individual participants and their right to privacy or to self-disclosure (Valenzuela, 1999). Within these traditional ethnographic frameworks, responsibility toward one's participants is positioned within an individualistic framework that respects the rights of those that have agreed to participate in the research. While methodologies situated within critical feminist epistemologies and decolonizing frameworks are likewise concerned with respecting the rights of those participants who have agreed to be a part of the study, we must be equally responsible for acting ethically "not just among people as individuals but...collectives, and as members of communities" (Smith, 2010, p. 101). This is a dual responsibility that will create complex ethical dilemmas for the researcher, becoming particularly problematic when I as a researcher—as in this research—felt myself to simultaneously and eternally exist in "both, as well as in between the two" (Villenas, 2010, p. 347) spaces of both insider and outsider, colonizer and colonized in relation to the particular cultural, historical, linguistic, and economic realities of the participants and the communities in which I will continue to conduct my work.

Intuition as a Means of Trustworthiness

Within an indigenous and specifically Maori epistemology rooted in New Zealand indigeneity, what the Western world knows as intuition is indistinguishable from the ways in which they have been taught to define reason or intellectual understanding. There is no imposed "separation between mind and body...the distinction between sense and reason...are cultural constructs...In Maori world views...the closest equivalent to the idea of a 'mind' or intellect is associated with the

entrails" (Smith, 2002, p. 48). The indigenous construct of intuition as a validated site of knowledge is manifested within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology as well (Pérez Huber, 2009). As Chicana and Mexicana researchers, "ancestral wisdom, community memory" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 565) are deeply embedded sites of knowledge that we carry with us as we walk through the research process. Similar to what is found within the Maori epistemology described by Smith (2002), Black Feminist and Chicana Critical Feminisms recognize emotion and contextualized and experiential knowledge as a site of deep understanding that can act as an intuitive compass to guide both the researcher and participants in seeking a profound and rooted grasp on that which perhaps may be known (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1994; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga, 2011). Additionally, this nuanced and deeply contextualized presence of intuition in all aspects of the research is recognized and validated as that which will continue to guide me as a researcher along the path of ethical principles (Villenas, 2010, Delgado Bernal, 1998).

I, as a Chicana/Mexicana researcher of a similar though not identical cultural and historical background to my participants and who likewise grew up in close proximity to the community in which I conducted this research, come to it with a particular experiential and cultural situatedness. To ignore the particular intuition that results from this experiential understanding would be to ignore a powerful research tool that has enabled a multilayered and complex understanding that would otherwise not have been available to a researcher who does share this situatedness (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Allowing my intuition to drive me in my work, in concert with other

methods of trustworthiness, has enabled me to conduct this research within the context of a deep historical and cultural understanding, thereby maintaining ethical principles in a way that would not have been possible otherwise. In order to document moments of intuition and how it guided my understanding and meaning-making as a researcher, I have kept a researcher journal.

Positionality

Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, transparency of positionality within academic as well as interpersonal realms is essential as one's ethical responsibility and connectedness toward the community is continuously being negotiated and evolving (Villenas, 2010). Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, positionality is not negotiated in terms of a dichotomy of harmful or helpful bias, the poverty of dualisms Greene (2010) warns against and that which is defined by Marshall and Rossman's (2011) as "assumptions, any prior observations or associations that might influence the research...[or] that could be useful or, conversely, could be seen as harmful bias" (p. 97). The continued visibility and ongoing development of researcher positionality within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology is instead negotiated as a confluence of identity and perspective that colors the research in particularly complex, nuanced and multilayered ways.

Within a Chicana Critical Feminist epistemology, the negotiation of positionality must also come with challenges to the sort of essentialized identity labeling that can take place within a Western framework of research, what Delgado Bernal (1998) states are "dichotomies of mind versus body, subject versus object,

objective truth versus subjective emotion, and male versus female"; conversely, a Chicana Feminist epistemology "maintains connections of Indigenous roots by embracing dualities that are necessary and complementary qualities, and by challenging dichotomies that offer opposition without reconciliation" (p. 560). This very same confluence of identity, as analyzed within the context of how my own positionality led me to name participants outside of how they named *themselves*, is the very same positionality which has allowed me to hear and see nuances of their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that someone without this positionality may not have had the eyes to see. This experience illustrated to me the critical necessity of moving beyond dichotomies of 'harmful' or 'helpful' bias and into spaces where we are ever-present, *consciente* (Anzaldúa, 1987) of who we are in the research and how we ourselves color what we find there. It is not enough to say that I am either an *insider* or an *outsider* to this research community with no reconciliation between these parts of me. I am continuously a living, breathing embodiment of all of the intersections of my lived realities, and my particularly situated identity as a bilingual, native-born, light-skinned, and English-dominant U.S. Chicana/Mexicana has manifested itself in both marked and subtle ways throughout the research.

While Wright Mills (2010) strongly urges qualitative researchers to integrate their lives and their work in the craft that is intellectual thought, for those of us who live and breathe the work we do in everyday ways because it is *who we are* at the core of our gendered, experiential, and cultural identities, there is no question as to whether we can somehow integrate our lives into our work, but simply *how* we may

best negotiate this particular situatedness. The intellectual work involved within this research was and continues to be as inextricable to me as the skin that wraps around my bones.

I self-identify as a Chicana, *Hispana*, and Mexican-American female of middle to lower class background. My family is of mixed Spanish and Indigenous ancestry spanning Northern New Mexico to Central Mexico, and I myself manifest the light-skinned, blonde, and green-eyed European and Spanish traits of my Mestiza ancestry. My family has longstanding geographic ties to Northern Mexico as well as Northern and Southern New Mexico and the U.S. Mexico Border region. I grew up less than 30 miles from where I conducted my research and have lived within 250 miles of my birthplace for the majority of my life. Similar to the participants I worked with, the Spanish language and culture reaches far back into my history and remains strong within my family, manifested in interpersonal interactions, stories of being subjected to linguistic and ethnic oppression, the use of sayings or *dichos*, and a wealth of historical and generational knowledge. Like two of my participants, Teresa and Penélope who were likewise born and raised within a U.S. context and along the U.S. Mexico Border, I and my family have consciously worked to maintain and recuperate our heritage language of Spanish. As a Chicana and Mexicana researcher within this work and with my Mexicana/Mestiza participants, I was continuously negotiating the privilege contained within my English-dominance, my level of education, my U.S. citizenship, and my own physical features and body that align with dominant culture standards of Whiteness and femininity. While there are many

privileges available to me as one who visibly bears my European ancestry on my body, this privilege does not come without the pain of seeking validity and visibility as a Mexicana and Mestiza, even among my own people (Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010; Zook, 1990). The intersection and accumulation of these identities is a site of both privilege and pain that I have lived my entire life and it results in an insider-outsider positionality (Villenas, 2010) that is ever-present and colors my work in unique and infinite ways.

Within a traditional qualitative research framework, my cultural and historical background may be characterized as creating a lack of objectivity that may have served to bias my research in ways unforeseen—an insider identity, which could compromise my ability to see the research apart from my own experiences. However, within a Chicana Feminist epistemology, notions of *objectivity* and *neutrality* are challenged and debunked, as my identity is never removed from who I am as a researcher. Instead, my sense of self and positionality has informed and grounded this research in meaningful ways, continuously challenging me in order to reach a level of ethical interaction worthy of my theoretical framework.

As somewhat of a cultural insider to the heritage language, collective history and interactions of gender and class that is likewise present, though uniquely manifested in my research participants and the community in which I have conducted this research, my own understanding of the colonizing and dehumanizing history of research is essential. For academic researchers who themselves come from marginalized communities, the role of *native researcher* or *native scholar* (Smith,

2002) is a complex one that involves understanding both the historical impacts that research has had and continues to have within oppressed communities, as well as the ways in which the institution may appropriate this knowledge, experience, and insider status for scientific ends that fall outside of the benefit of the communities in which the research is taking place.

Conclusion

As a Chicana teacher and scholar who, like many that have been educated within institutions steeped in dominant ideologies that define knowledge in particular ways that historically have silenced the very communities from whence we hail, the very act of being an academic places us, insider/outsider (Villenas, 2010) native researchers (Smith, 2002) within and between worlds that often run contrary to our cultural selves. I and other Chicana scholars living within the conflicted and contested spaces of dominant and marginalized ontologies and epistemologies, am "[c]radled in one culture...straddling all three cultures...*la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war...The coming together of two...incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 78). For the native intellectual, Smith (2002) cautions that just the very act of academic writing can be dangerous to our own cultural selves because, "by building on previous texts written about Indigenous peoples, we continue to legitimate views about ourselves which are hostile to us" (Smith, 2002, p. 36), and while Smith is speaking here of Native people in particular, the same may be said about communities who similarly have been positioned as less than or lacking in inherent value. As Chicanas, Mexicanas,

Mestizas, we are "born into a culture of silence...Catholicism brought to us by missionaries influenced many of our world views and taught us the values of piety, humility and bearing our crosses in silence" (Córdova, 1994, p. 175). Locked in fierce and continuous resistance, though often the sole means of attaining liberation from oppression, is no way to live from one day to the next. Anzaldúa (1987) cautions—"[a]t some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank...somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once" (p. 78). We must—I must—as Chicana Critical Feminist researchers living and working within the Borderlands and crossroads of culture, language, class, history, gender, and educational experience (Anzaldúa, 1987; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Villenas, 2006), find continue to find communion between the whole of ourselves and the work that we do within institutions that have historically circumscribed and subjugated our very right to do it.

The crux of this struggle taking place within Smith's (2002) *native intellectual* and Villenas' (2010) researcher as *insider/outsider colonized/colonizer* is not merely the feelings of inner conflict that arise as I set out upon the academic work. It is in maintaining a lens that is grounded in cultural ways of knowing—refusing to silence the cultural spaces in me that run contrary to the dominant White and predominantly male spaces in which I must work and live. According to Smith (2002), the danger that must be dealt with in regards to cultural insiders working within mainstream institutions is that "these same...'Native' Intellectuals'...are the group most closely aligned to the colonizers in terms of their class interests, their values and their ways

of thinking" (p. 69). Compounded within this dynamic of cultural insider as researcher uncritically espousing dominant culture ideology is that the information gained as a result of said research may further entrench denigrating, distorted perspectives of marginalized peoples and will do so with the ostensible authority that comes from a so-called 'insider'. For Villenas (2010), she found a different problem. She herself was co-opted within the White spaces of school staff and administration within the community in which she was working, putting into peril her capacity for building caring and trusting relationships with people to whom she identified as her own. She cannot "escape a history of her own marginalization nor her guilt of complicity" (Villenas, 2010, p. 348) within the *colonizer/colonized* role she brings to her particular research.

Until I as a Chicana Critical Feminist researcher identify those places within me that have both benefitted from White privilege and been colonized within dominant spaces, I will remain within a fixed and powerless position. Simultaneously, I am the *colonizer* superimposing my own positionality and likewise perpetuating an academic institutionalization in communities I hope to 'serve'. I am both another arm of colonization to the communities in which I am working, and a sister standing alongside. The oppression that runs through my veins—the colonization and racism that has ripped language out of my throat—is the same oppression that creates mother-tongued whispers on the margins of public spaces. I am both Mexicana *insider* and Chicana academic *outsider*, a *colonizer* and a *colonized* academic woman, a "half-breed caught in the crossfire between

camps...not knowing which side to turn to, run from" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 202). Like other Chicana Critical Feminist scholars, I am forever living, working, and thriving at the crossroads of culture, language, and colorism (Anzaldúa, 1987, Moraga, 1983). I carry the totality of my cultural and historical self into this research as I have sought to unearth tenets of a Chicana Ethic of Care by centering upon Mexicana/Mestiza and Mexican-American educators' *Testimonios*, including my own, as a means of deeply understanding how to fortify spaces of nourished resistance in which Mexican and Mexican-American students may survive and thrive. This negotiation of the many layers of being is not new or unique—it is a shouldering of the complexity of identity as ancient as the cultural and linguistic lineage paving the road on which I will continue to walk. *No se raje, chicanita. No se raje*[6].

[6] *Do not give in, do not become discouraged* (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 200-201)

CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS

Mestizaje de *Revolución*: A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of Healing Resistance

These four Mexicana and Mexican-American female educators are women warriors—*Revolucionistas* fighting for social justice, equity, and dignity in the name of their Mexican and Mexican-American students and their families. Without the eyes to see them as such, however, *La Revolucionista* that is embodied within their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and Her revolution, *their* revolution, may remain obscured. These Mexicana and Mestiza educators daily enter into battle for their Mexicano students' right to language, dignity, and educational access. They fight for their communities and for students' families that in many ways mirror the places from which they too come. These Mexicana/Mestiza educators engage in the struggle to academically equip their Mexicano students to take their rightful place in this world. But crouching within their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is the wisdom that *La Revolucionista* must live to fight another day, and the more visible and audible *La Revolución* and *La Revolucionista* are, the more vulnerable they are to outside attack. Fortified in this knowledge, these Mexicana/Mestiza educators protect their *revolución* for social justice, and their role as *La Revolucionista,* through a fluid, ambiguous multilayering—a mestizaje—that conceals, reveals, and all the while reconfigures what it means to fight on behalf of Mexicano students and their families.

The first time I sat down with Penélope for an interview inquiring into who she is as a Mexicana teacher of Mexican and Mexican-American students, her ethic of care for her Mexicano students was concealed too within a blurred and ambiguous

mestizaje of beautiful hopes and dreams for *all* of her students, "I want them to be successful, I want them to do good things in this world, I want them to make it." She communicates an unwavering faith in them, "it is *absolutely* possible for them to be successful in this world and the more they hear it the better" and believes their success can be made possible through "getting to know them as people...I wish *all* teachers would do that for them." Upon first glance, Penélope's teacher identity and her desire for her students' success is not situated within the context of race or ethnicity—neither hers nor her students'. As we begin speaking of her family's history of educational struggle, however, deeper layers of Penélope's battle on behalf of her Mexicano students and its rootedness in *Testimonio* begin to emerge.

Penélope speaks of her parents' and grandparents' schooling experiences, of their being "treated as a second class citizen...less than" and in doing so Penélope reveals knowledge of a larger historical struggle for Mexicanos within the U.S. and Mexico:

> [I]t was a struggle for everyone... my mom dropped out of high school...My dad...extremely intelligent, just a high school diploma...grandma never finished school...My dad's parents...weren't given the opportunity....These were the old days [in Mexico] when you went to school till 2nd or 3rd grade and that was it.

Within the hardship of the denial of formal education, Penélope says her parents "use[d] themselves as an example, 'is *this* what you want to do?...We want better for you children—go, go educate yourself. *That's* power in this world." And while

Penélope has always placed great value on the life her parents provided for her and her brother, their message was not lost on her: *You must become educated because those before you could not*. Penélope tells me of a school photograph of her grandma as a young girl that she wants to share with our group—a photo she says will help me understand who she is as a Mexicana teacher for Mexican/Mexican-American students.

It is a 1920's black-and-white schoolyard photograph of Penélope's grandma as a young girl that hangs in her mother's hallway. Penélope tells me she has looked at it for as long as she can remember, and that it has grown in meaning for her, "the older I get, the more I want to know who's who and why." Penélope describes to me the children,

> They're all different ages...there was [one] schoolhouse and of course the teacher...White woman, and all the little kids in overalls and *no shoes*! Picture... my grandma in her school picture with no shoes...they wore the same little coveralls all week...the kids got pulled out of school to work out with the families out in the farms. My grandma tells me about picking cotton, picking chile, onions ...it's a long time ago but not really.

Within Penélope's words—*it's a long time ago but not really*—stands a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care rooted in interconnected *Testimonios* of struggle and survival for those Mexicano children, those generations who have come before her whose race, class status, and language marked them as second-class citizens who were made to feel as though they were, in Penélope's words, "less than" their Anglo,

English-speaking counterparts. This photo would continue to come to life over time within Penélope's Mexicana/ Mestiza Ethic of Care and her classroom curriculum and pedagogy.

One month after Penélope first told me about her grandma's 1920's schoolyard photograph that she wanted to share during our upcoming Focus Group meeting, she spoke to me about it again during first period. As her students were finalizing an assignments, Penélope walked to the back of the class and shared,

> This study is really making me aware of those ways that my parents struggle and how they [pointing to the students sitting in her classroom] have and do struggle too. So it's good...and I'm still going to bring, maybe today, that picture of my grandma. She actually did have shoes, but the kid right next to her didn't.

Penélope's 'mistake' is telling: she does not differentiate the struggle of her grandma from the other Mexicano children pictured. Though Penélope has looked at this photograph her entire life as it has always hung in her mother's hallway, she saw not her simply her grandma's struggle—the shoes she *was* or *was not* wearing. Penélope sees not her grandma's economic and educational struggle reflected in this photo but a collective, intergenerational Mexicano struggle that transcends her. It is this collective struggle that emboldens her *Revolución*

Present in Penélope's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is the knowledge that we today are not far removed from these Mexicano children and their collective battle for dignity and educational opportunity. Penélope has looked at this photograph her

entire life, and in it she sees an interconnected and intergenerational Mexicano struggle that is rooted in the race, class, language, and residency status of the Mexican and Mexican-American children pictured in the photograph. Though Penélope's language surrounding what drives her curriculum and pedagogy at times leaves race, class, and language subordination untouched, her silences stand as a mestizaje of *La Revolución*, a blurring concealment that protects her ability to wage this war. *La Revolucionista* within Penélope's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care will not be silenced. It is this intergenerational knowledge of struggle, these *Testimonios*, that nourishes Penélope's *revolución* and is manifested within her curriculum and pedagogy.

Several months later, echoes of a similar pedagogical rootedness in collective and intergenerational struggle are heard in Sophia's words as she looks upon this same photo that Penélope has shared with us during the evening of our third focus group. Each participant has been asked to share a photograph that communicates her ethic of care as a Mexicana teacher of Mexicano students. Penélope introduces this photograph of her grandma to our focus group assembled: "This little Mexican girl right here is my grandma...behind her is my grandma's sister and you can just see them pobres [poor]...and just looking at their faces...it just seems so far removed but...it was just a generation ago." Through these words, Penélope draws attention to our generational proximity to this struggle depicted in this photograph. Sophia reaches over and picks up Penélope's photo. She looks at it silently, then shares with us the rootedness of her *own* ethic of care within this photo:

It's not that we don't *want* that but you can't forget...you're from that place...You don't have to forget it but you can still move beyond it...your grandma's picture, it's still moving...you're transcending it into *these* kids. Continuing. Not staying where we were struggling.

Sophia speaks of her own battle, of her pedagogical grounding in the lived realities of those generations who have come before her. Sophia maintains we cannot forget these children or the places of struggle and survival that is our legacy. Present in Sophia's and Penélope's words is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed through the curriculum and pedagogy of all four Mexican and Mexican-American teacher participants in this research: *Because of what we know of struggle in the places from where we come, we have a responsibility to do better than that for our Mexicano students*. Their collective Ethic of Care, Sophia shares, "transcend[s]" this knowledge, this responsibility, "it into these kids", to nourish and equip the next generation of Mexicanos. But Within their Mexicana/Mestzia Ethic of Care lies a deep knowing that the continued struggle to survive linguistic silencing and racialized oppression necessitates concealing and protecting *La Revolucionista* and Her *Revolución* from those who would threaten it.

Teresa describes the dangerous line she walks as a Mexicana high school teacher for the ENLACE program, a program aimed at educational access and social equity that founded during the 1960's Chicano Movement. Teresa explains in our first focus group this necessity to conceal and protect her battle for her Mexicano students, "it's that hard line...part of [ENLACE] is teaching the kids to advocate for

themselves but then if we advocate for them too much they'll cut the program." Teresa goes on, "I'm careful about what I say... I've actually had...teachers say, 'I'm shutting the door, we don't wanna lose our program'...I'm scared." In Teresa's words is present a fear of being too vocal or visible in her *revolución* and her knowledge of the necessity to hide in plain sight by walking the "hard line" of academic and social advocacy for her students and conformity.

Penélope, too, speaks of the need to conceal the voice of *La Revolucionista* that speaks through her Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Penélope is careful when talking to students who come from "Caucasion families who are very straight laced, the right wing...I share my stories but I also am very mindful...I don't ever want them to think, 'oh my teacher is little miss Mexicana, always talking about being degraded.'" Like Teresa, Penélope's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is manifested pedagogically in her classroom, however, it is not always safe for *La Revolucionista* to speak to Her rootedness in the *Testimonios* of struggle and survival of those Mexicanos who have come before. In *La Revolucionista's* ability to conceal and reveal her battle in a way that will not be recognized as such, She maintains her strength, protects her *revolución*. As Tonantzin, dark Earth Mother goddess(es) of the Nahuatl, draws her strength "from being buried in the earth" beneath Christian saints and symbols (González-Crussi, 1996, pp. 5-6), *La Revolucionista,* stands in plain sight. She is emboldened and protected by Her ability to reconfigure Her own essence and the essence of Her *revolución*. Within the pedagogy of these four Mexicana.Mestiza women is revealed a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of mestizaje

that (re)configures and (re)constructs the battle that *La Revolucionista* wages in preparing their Mexican/Mexican-American students.

La Revolucionista is protected in Her dangerous and contested battle through a "fluid, resilient, and oppositional" (Delgado Bernal, 2006b, p. 127) mestizaje that is Her birthright as Mexicana and Mestiza. It is a chromosomal inheritance of survival through rebirth and reincarnation She carries in Her bloodlines. These Mexicana/Mestiza educators remain pedagogically rooted in *Testimonio* and the Mexicano struggle for social justice in their classrooms through a mestizaje which conceals, blurs, and redefines notions of what it means to fight on behalf of Mexicano students. The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care at its most cellular level is rooted in a mestizaje that is in itself a "testament of our vibrant resistance...that eats, breathes, dreams, and lives...[in] multiples mundos...multilingual conciencias" (Sánchez, 2003, pp. 20-21). By the inhabiting of Sánchez's (2003) *multiple worlds* and *multilingual consciousnesses*, *La Revolucionista* living and breathing within these educators' Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is protected, emboldened in Her battle.

The pedagogy of these Mexicana and Mestiza educators *is* the revolution. Embodied in word, body, and spirit, *La Revolucionista* heals the woundedness thrust upon us as Mexicanos who Sophia attests are, "*still* at the bottom of our society... children who...don't feel like they're acknowledged or recognized." Their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is a reconnecting with that which was once lost as they endeavor toward a more solid educational, social, and political *place to stand* (Baca, 2002) for Mexicano students and their families. These educators offer their

Mexicano students subversive paths for their survival (R. Martínez, 1996) through a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care with the power to hold fast to dignity and their rightful place in this world. Within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, *La Revolucionista* and Her *Revolución* is (re)named, (re)incarnated within the curriculum, pedagogy, and very physical presence in classroom spaces of these four Mexicana and Mestiza educators. *La Revolucionista* fights not by the sword but through Her *lengua/j* [word], *cuerpo* [body], and *espíritu* [spirit].

La Revolución a Través de Lengua/je[7]: Speaking a Mestiza Double Consciousness

La Revolucionista hides in plain sight by speaking a double consciousness of seemingly contradictory realities. The duality and ambiguity of these Mexicana teacher participants' Mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1987) is long rooted in resisting and ultimately surviving the complex layering of five-hundred years of mestizaje and coloniality that have threatened to eradicate an entire people. These women speak of the battles they wage—of the racism and oppression *La Revolucionista* knows by heart, by blood—though her words come through blended dualities. Within her ability to speak in fluid and amorphous realities, *La Revolucionista's* battle, the battle of these Mexicana teacher participants, can never be fully and concretely defined outside of Herself. Within blended and seemingly contradictory spoken realities that protect and fortify *La Revolucionista's* battle stands a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that is testament to the mutable fortitude at

[7] A revolution through word or through language

the heart of these Mexicana/Mestiza educator's bloodlines as Mexicana and Mestiza women, a survivability infused into their pedagogy and classroom curriculum.

As a Chicana/Mexicana researcher working to remain ever-present in my Chicana Critical Feminist framework(s) which calls me to analyze and write from a space that honors participants' credibility as valid witnesses to their own experience, I present the following seemingly contradictory spoken realities cautiously. Offered up as mere data outside of the bounds of ethical responsibility of a Chicana Critical Feminist theoretical framework, these somewhat contrasting statements could provide an opportunity for which these participants' capacity to accurately name their own experiences could be discredited or diminished. When heard and analyzed through a lens of Chicana Critical Feminism(s), these spoken realities, which *do* counter each other in notable ways, instead create a rich and complex understanding of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that challenges either/or dichotomies and notions of unchanging 'truth' through the use of their tongues to shape the words within their pedagogy and curriculum.

Teresa: The ways in which Teresa speaks of herself as a Mexicana teacher for Mexicano kids and her rootedness in *Testimonios* of oppression and survival among her Mexicano people is complex and often changeable. She speaks knowledgeably and unwaveringly of the historical educational practices of cultural erasure meted out to Mexican and Mexican American children like her parents who came from Spanish-speaking homes: "My mom says she still dreams in Spanish but both my parents had their mouths washed out with soap in elementary school so they swore that would

never happen to us." Like generations of Mexican and Mexican-Americans who experienced the everyday schooling practices of physical punishments for speaking Spanish (San Miguel, 1999), Teresa conveys to me that this brutality her parents experienced would not allow their mouths or their hearts to pass this source of their shame down to their children. Teresa says her parents did not pass their Spanish language down to their daughters because they did not know that the world would move beyond the restriction, shaming, and physical brutality her parents experienced as a result of their native Spanish. In Teresa's words, her parents did not pass their Spanish language down because they did not know "that the world was gonna change." Some four months later, Teresa would challenge her assertion of this changing world and its openness to bilingualism.

In her second individual interview I commented to Teresa, "your kids speak Spanish and English in your class continuously, proudly. And loudly! Is that common? Do you think they do that in other classes?" She answered me almost casually: "No. There are teachers at this school that don't allow it." As these words hung in the air, I could still hear echoes of Teresa's words: *my parents... swore that would never happen to us, not knowing that the world was gonna change.* Teresa's touting of a changing world that celebrates and encourages bilingualism contrasted with her later words lamenting that there are still "teachers at this school that don't allow it" confounded me.

The *changing world* Teresa refers to can perhaps be accounted for in national discourse surrounding the social capital of multilingualism in a global economy

(Grin, 1996; Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997; Jorge, Lipner, Moncarz, & Salazar-Carrillo, 1983) or increased mainstream media attention on the economic and cognitive benefits of bilingualism (Bialystok, 2011; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Dreifus, 2011; Khan, 2011; Kluger, 2013; Kovács & Mehler, 2009). Though the make-up of privilege perhaps has expanded to include multilingualism in a global economy, native Spanish-speakers like Teresa's students are still standing on the outside looking in as silence and linguistic restriction continue to characterize schooling for Mexican and Mexican-American students (Gutiérrez et al., 2002; Macedo, 2000). Teresa's notions of a changing world, when further contextualized within her spoken mestizaje that then speaks to the continued restriction around her students' native Spanish both conceals and reveals a bloodline-knowing (Moraga, 2011) at the heart of her Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Within Teresa's ability to conceal and blur her deep knowledge of continued linguistic silencing, *La Revolucionista* is protected as she and her students boldly carry the Spanish language across the threshold of still-contested school spaces.

Teresa's mestizaje concealing, revealing *La Revolucionista* is present in how she speaks identity and race and the role these take in informing her ethic of care for her Mexicano students. Teresa tells our assembled focus group, "I don't label the kids...They're not a race, they're not an ethnicity." While some of Teresa's statements made during individual interviews and focus groups do support this spoken resistance to see students along racial or ethnic lines, her words are a

mestizaje, an elusive double consciousness of race-neutrality and racial consciousness that belie this resistance.

In an individual interview, Teresa's spoken mestizaje of *La Revolucionista* emerges as she tells me about two Hispanic/Mexicano boys who recently failed her high school English class, and in Teresa's discussion of their failing grade in her class is present her failure as well, "I feel like I failed them... [These boys] slipped through the cracks...these are my people...and it hurt more because they were." Teresa speaks of the toll it takes on her, "I'm hard on myself, I think I could do so much more, I could be so much more...They're like the people I grew up with. There's similarities to all these kids. I *grew up* here." She speaks plainly here of the particular pain connected to the struggles of her Hispanic and Mexican/Mexican-American students. Teresa's words speak to the pain she feels as connected to who they are: *these boys are her people*. Teresa speaks of the great responsibility she feels towards her Hispanic/Mexicano students because of the common places and *Testimonios* from which they both come. Their academic struggles hurt her more because of who they are—because of who she is.

This mestizaje of *La Revolucionista* and Her *Revolución* is again present within Teresa's classroom, embodied in Teresa's dualistic, multilayered language in regards to racial and ethnic identity. In a classroom discussion within her ENLACE class, Teresa and her students are creating a banner to be used in an upcoming parade to showcase their ENLACE program. Teresa asks the students come up with some words to write on the banner that describe who they are ethnically and racially. She

asks the students, "ok, who are we? What do we want to say?" A few students offer, "We are the future...we are individuals...powerful, family...strong." Teresa writes these words down on the board. One young man speaks up loudly: "We are Chicanos. We are Indians" to which Teresa replies, "Not everyone, not everyone. What else should we write?" Another young man adds, "we are Mexican" and while Teresa encourages students to display Mexican flags on their banner, when it comes to identity conveyed through language, she again steers the class toward more inclusive and geographical terms. Teresa suggests, "What about 'We are New Mexicans? We are Hispanics?'" She likewise suggests that students could name their identity in relation to their city. I note her hesitation to name racial identity outside of the more neutral language of geography or 'Hispanicness'. I write in my observation notes: "Is there a hesitation to name Mexicanness?" Teresa's preference for more inclusive, politically neutral language during this class discussion stands in stark contrast to the racial and political language spoken later during this same class period.

As the discussion moves toward the mistreatment of U.S. Mexicanos, one young Mexican-American girl speaks indignantly, "and what would the U.S. do *without* us, anyway? We do jobs that one else wants to do." Another female Mexican-American student adds to this statement in a strong voice, "Yeah. We're treated like immigrants here...like we're nothing." Teresa does not silence this critical and politically laden discussion so heavily steeped in race, class, and immigrant status. While Teresa does problematize these students' critique within larger realities of poverty, her classroom remains a space where students are able to engage in a

racialized, politicized, and critical discourse. A few weeks after the ENLACE parade, Teresa is again having a discussion with her class that goes beyond race-neutral and apolitical language.

Teresa's class is having a discussion on the Zoot Suit Riots of Los Angeles during the 1940's and its catalyst, U.S *Bracero Program,* which sought cheap Mexican agricultural labor (Acuña, 1988; J. Gonzales, 2011). She connects the large population growth of Mexicanos in places like Los Angeles with increased brutality and criminalization of young Mexican/Mexican-American males. She asks the students, "how did the cops start treating the young Mexicanos?...You're right, they left... the Italians and the mafia...alone. That was different than what was going on in L.A. to Mexicans." The class continues talking at length about the general mistreatment of Mexicanos, and the connection of this mistreatment to the historical formation of gangs for protection against police brutality within Mexican and Mexican-American communities. While this discussion was primarily situated within the historical oppression of Mexican/Mexican-Americans, the continuation of racial profiling of Mexicanos\Mexican-Americans, police brutality, and the rootedness of these to a Mexicano identity were never spoken of fully in a past-tense that denied their continued existence.

Teresa's particular fight on behalf of her Mexicano students is spoken at times and concealed in other moments. Teresa *is* a *Revolucionista,* and her battle is one that resists permanence. Through a mestizaje of spoken realities that obscures her ongoing battle, Teresa ensures its survival. Within the blurred ambiguity of Teresa's identity

and race language and through simultaneously holding a world of celebrated linguistic diversity next to school spaces that continue to silence her students' native Spanish, Teresa creates a dualistic and protective space in which *La Revolucionista* may maintain Her warrior stance (Lorde, 1978). *La Revolucionista* survives only to the degree with which She remains unseen. In the duality of these layered spoken realities, Teresa's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care survives *tongue intact* (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 203). Within the duality of Teresa's words, her mestizaje of *La Revolucionista*, she is able to speak her knowledge of continued racial and linguistic oppression while protected within an ever-shifting concealment. Teresa's students, like poet Mayda Del Valle (2002), come from a *descendency* that "still marks me an alien in the country of my birth" and within Teresa's spoken mestizaje, she fortifies her classroom as a place to heal from and resist the continued oppression of this descendency that Teresa likewise shares.

Penélope. Within a shifting spoken reality that defies characterization, Penélope carves out a protected and uninterrupted space for *La Revolucionista's* voice of resistance within her classroom curriculum and pedagogy. Within the braiding of intergenerational *Testimonios* of struggle and survival is Penélope's Mexican/Mestiza Ethic of Care that both speaks to the enduring nature of injustice while simultaneously acting from the knowledge that the greatest source of power must then lie within one's own hands. Within a blurred mestizaje of contradictory spoken realities, *La Revolucionista* stands unseen in plain sight. Manifested in Penélope's pedagogy and the *Testimonios* undergirding it is a Mestiza/Mexicana

Ethic of Care that centers la Mestiza, and the students in her care, as central subjects of agency within the theater of their lives.

I first witness this Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care through a presentation Penélope gives to her 10th and 11th grade Health class every year, a presentation that is itself a mestizaje of shifting and fluid spoken realities of struggle, resilience, and joy. Penélope wants her students to know her because as she says, "compassion and consideration...value and respect" exist between people when they know each other more deeply. Penélope gives students a sheet with the words, "when we 'know' each other, we 'get' each other" written at the top. Included in the sheet are questions for them such as, "Who do you most admire?" and "What are you most afraid of?" She also lists what she also wants students to know about her, including:

Got married at 21, divorced at 30 (drama)

I have a 4 year-old boy (spoiled rotten, bossy lil' guy & I love it ☺)

I'm a single mom (don't feel bad for us, together isn't always best)

She shares intimate details of her life with simple candor. Penélope's *Testimonio* is firmly situated within the struggles she has survived in her life and the things that today bring her joy. Later class discussions in this Health class regarding sex and reproduction stand within the context of this first presentation—while Penélope emphasizes the hardship of raising a child alone and urges her students, especially her female students, to "be responsible for their bodies", her warnings perpetually exists within the mestizaje of her *Testimonio* here that lies not in the weight of struggle but in the joy of overcoming it.

Penélope's class today is having such a discussion in preparation for their unit on sexuality and the body. Penélope speaks openly about the emotional, physical, psychological, spiritual and social realities of sexuality with her 1st and 3rd period high school Health class. She asks her students to take out their Health textbooks that they will later use to familiarize themselves with the specific anatomical and physiological aspects of sexuality that they will need to understand for their End of Course (EOC) exam. As students are opening their textbooks to the chapter indicated on the board, Penélope begins a discussion that goes beyond the biological aspects in their textbook (which the students seem to be familiar with at a cursory level). The class discussion to follow focuses instead on the relationships and life responsibilities surrounding sexuality as well as the bodily impact on both females and males in regards to pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI), and the emotional vulnerabilities that impact them uniquely.

Penélope addresses the young men in her class: "Gentlemen, let's say you're with a girl and she says, 'I'm on the pill.' Tell me the range of mishaps that could occur", to which two male students reply with, "She could get pregnant", "Or an STD."

"Yes", Penélope responds, "remember, *it's not just the girl's responsibility, guys*." Penélope has mentioned to me previously that she works very hard at letting the boys know—"*especially* the boys"—that sexuality and pregnancy is "something they should do in a relationship." Penélope wants the boys to know that if they are going to have sex with a girl and/or father a child, they should do these things within

the context of a supportive, mature relationship. Sex is a shared responsibility between two people, Penélope urges, and it is not fair to place this responsibility on their female partners alone. She has begun this discussion on sexuality and relationships by addressing the young males in her class, however, Penélope has a special message for the girls:

> *Girls*, you need to be prepared—take control of your body...if you're going to be active sexually, what do you need to do?... At the end of the day, who is going to take care, to carry this baby?...You have the ultimate responsibility for your body.

This class discussion begins by holding males equally responsible for their sexuality in both intended and unintended outcomes as Penélope simultaneously bringing females into the truth that this responsibility of sex is *not* in fact shared equally and that they, as females, will ultimately carry the weight of it in their lives and on their bodies.

During the same class discussion on sexuality, Penélope directs the conversation toward the challenging though surmountable reality of raising a child alone or at a young age: "You *can* survive it. I survived it. Now I have my little guy, my joy, but it *is* difficult...it was easier before I gave birth than asking him [her then-husband] to leave after...but it was necessary...It was better." While she has not directly addressed either her female or male students in this part of the discussion, the context of her previous statement regarding responsibility uniquely and inequitably falling on the bodies of females strongly suggests she is again solely addressing this

part of her message to her female students. As I observe the dynamics of this class discussion, I am reminded of statements Penélope made during our first individual interview:

> My mom always said…'*Be responsible for your body… you have to be. You have no one else to blame…men will come and go, they will leave you child or not… it takes two people… but you will always be at fault, you will always be responsible, and you will always suffer the consequences…mi'ija, I would hate to see that happen to you*'…I actually try to drill the same mentality into the girls.

This life lesson from mother to daughter is that Penélope, as a girl and as a woman, carries an undue burden of ultimate responsibility for sexuality and children. Penélope's mother's *Testimonio* of young motherhood and raising Penélope and her brother single-handedly in their earlier years is braided (Montoya, 1999) into Penélope's class discussion and her Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Within her shift from a discussion directed at both males and females students to a discussion that singularly speaks to her female students lies Penélope's mestizaje of her role as a *Revolucionista* in her classroom. Penélope's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of ultimate responsibility and the spoken mestizaje through which this is communicated is again manifested in the description of her schooling experience. Herein, Penélope simultaneously indicts inequitable educational structures and her own reluctance to engage within them. We begin talking of Penélope's schooling by speaking of the experiences of her mother and the father who raised her.

Penélope reveals deep knowledge of the "criticism and the torment…second-class citizen[ship]" both parents endured at the intersection of their native-born and immigrant status, language, gender, class, and race. While detailing her own schooling experiences, Penélope draws a stark contrast to her parents: "*I've* never felt truly stereotyped…it was *my own* hesitation and self doubt… I cut myself short so many times…I didn't even allow myself to use some of the opportunities that were out there." Penélope's words of ultimate responsibility echo her mother's *Testimonio* of injustice coupled with the reality that it is she, Penélope, who must be strong enough to bear them. Within the shifting shadows of a deep knowledge of inequitable schooling and Penélope's simultaneous blaming of her own failures as a student stands *La Revolucionista,* She who will, who must, carry the weight. Penélope offers the following spoken mestizaje of schooling in her first interview:

> Teacher-wise, no, I didn't get that support …I don't want to fault them but I don't think that they made an attempt…they kind of wrote me off…every now and then I think *what I could have done*? I love medicine…Those are thoughts…still today.
>
> I was a lazy teenager…fine with just being average…I was a mouthy reluctant student… they already knew the expectation that I was living up to….'like, we're gonna focus on the kids who *want* to be here…who are expressing that they *want* secondary education.' That wasn't me so they just left me alone.

While it is difficult to know whether Penélope is justifying teachers' and counselors' lack of effort within her lack of academic motivation, the search for singular truth in

Penélope's words is futile. Her power, *La Revolucionista's* power, lies not in permanently enshrining 'truth' or placing blame on the structures of schooling but in Her ability to hold authorship over the construction of Her own reality. Within Penélope's grasp of ultimate agency within the sphere of her reality is a healing and resistant mestiza fluidity strong enough to survive and thrive amid harsh social injustices that she recognizes stand at the intersection of her race, class, and gender.

In an individual interview, Penépole connects her own feelings of invisibility and invalidation as a Mexicana female with the experiences of her Mexicana/o students:

> I was not the typical candidate for all of these different opportunities...not the type of girl that was involved with that or that received recognition for that...As a kid I felt like the chubby little Mexican girl who didn't deserve the credit or credibility as the other kids did...I see it more in the girls' faces who are dark complected, who are in their eyes not as pretty as someone else...they internalize it.

Penélope describes feeling undeserving of praise, out of place, and of internalizing an outside perception of herself as 'not as pretty', less than, and and she recognizes that her Mexican/Mexican-American students also survive these feelings of inferiority. The *Revolucionista* standing within Penélope's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care will not let her students face these conditions alone, however. I observed Penélope

standing for and with one student in particular during an IEP meeting that took place during the fourth week I was observing her Health class.

On this day, Penélope received notice that one of her Special Education students, Daniel [pseudonym] was having an IEP meeting, and she invited me to come along to observe. She tells me as we are walking over that she has some concerns about this student. He has only attended a few of her classes and is currently receiving a failing grade. When we walk into the meeting, we sit down at a table with three other teachers, a counselor, and Penélope's student and his mother. Daniel and his mother are speaking to each other quietly in Spanish. Daniel is answering his mother's questions about his low attendance. I observe that the mother is very uncomfortable and seems angry at her son. The counselor reads aloud Daniel's attendance record, which includes excessive absences and likewise reads his failing grades to the group assembled. Daniel's mother responds to the counselor in English. I record Priscilla's interactions with Daniel and his mother in my observation notes:

> Penélope is engaging the mother and the student as opposed to the other teachers...She asks Daniel's mother directly what she needed from her as a teacher. Penélope is giving Daniel's mother her cell phone number and said she would help her. She is now addressing Daniel: "We can pick your grade up, but we have to work together. Do you want to pick your grade up? What can I do to get you to my class, Daniel? What do you need from me? Is there anything about the class right now that isn't working for you or that you're struggling with? What can we do?" Penélope is the only person at the table

who is directly addressing the mother. She is seeking her opinions and expectations for Daniel's schooling.

Rooted in Penélope's *Testimonio* of surviving a schooling environment in which she did not feel supported or valued in large part because of her Mexicana identity and likewise because of her academic struggles and lowered achievement, her Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care will not let this invisibility be passed on for her Mexicano students. Penélope defies a schooling institution that refused to see her—she herself will not define her students' value by the grades they are receiving in her class. She sees her students—she sees their families, she sees their struggles, and she sees their possibility.

Within Teresa's and Penélope's ever-shifting and multi-layered discourse that both reveals and conceals knowledge of inequitable social structures lies a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. These Mexicana/Mestiza educators' *Revolución* is waged *a través del lengua/je*, through their tongue, through their language. These four female educators, and *La Revolucionista* embodied within their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, push against structures that perpetuate social and ethnic injustice while refusing to resign themselves to the status of victim. Even as Teresa and Penélope characterize the difficult and discriminatory social realities they and their students continue to confront, their words are dualistic, multicolored, and seemingly contradictory in their placement of responsibility. Much like *la Virgen de Guadalupe's* quintessentially fluid, indefinable mestizaje in the Américas (Castillo, 1996), Teresa's and Penélope's multilayered spoken realities resist circumscription,

"can never be hemmed in, enshrined... are never truly conquered" (L. Rodriguez, 1996, p. 131). In the mestizaje of spoken word that enables and embodies their Ethic of Care lies the power, the agency, to conceal and reveal what they alone choose. Within in-between spaces of el mestizaje, *La Revolucionista's* Ethic of Care, Her *Revolución* of feeding and fighting for students at the crossroads of their racial, classed, gendered, linguistic, cultural, and national identities is protected and emboldened.

La Revolución a Través del Cuerpo[8]: From a People Marked to a People Sealed

For Sophia, the battle on behalf of Mexicano students' dignity and rightful place in this country, her *Revolución,* is waged through her body in the form of a dime-size circular scar on her upper arm from a smallpox vaccine she received as a child in Mexico. It is a vaccination scar that her Mexican-born students bear on their bodies as well. Present within the Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of Sophia's curriculum and pedagogy, *La Revolucionista* (re)configures and (re)incarnates Her battle for social justice on behalf of Mexicano students through the weapon of Sophia's Mestiza body, a body printed upon within the context of her Mexican-born identity. Sophia explains the significance of this small circular scar by recounting to our assembled focus group a recent discussion between an Anglo student and a young Mexicano student:

> They brought it up today..."oh miss, *you* have one of those?" One of our only Anglo kids was like, "What *is* that? What *happened*?" And he [Mexicano

[8] A Revolution through body

> student] was like, "nah, man, it's cuz when you're born in Mexico they give you this shot. My mom and my dad have it...and my uncles have it"...and he [Anglo student] was like, "Ugh. That's weird. Does it hurt?...He didn't understand...They [Mexicano students] feel like, you're one of them...like, "Oh yeah, you're from there too? I'm from there too."

In Sophia's words is present a critical literacy that she and her Mexicano students possess in their consciousness and on their flesh: The bodies of those born and raised within the U.S. around Sophia's age or younger *do not bear this scar*. According to the Center for Disease Control, individuals born in the U.S. received their last smallpox vaccines around 1980 when the World Health Organization declared the disease eradicated; developing countries still administer it as it is still considered a threat (Vinzant, 2001). Through the presence and visibility of Sophia's upper-arm scar in her classroom, *La Revolucionista* defies distorted perceptions of the Mexicana/o body, perceptions represented by this Anglo students' reaction to Sophia's scar as strange, potentially painful, and just plain, "Ugh", distasteful. Sophia speaks to her marking, "el sello, tengo el sello." Through Sophia's words, *I have the seal,* she defies the notion that this imprint mars her flesh. Sophia's body is *sealed*, not *scarred*, and as she (re)constructs her sealed body and Mexicana identity, Sophia's Mexicano students are sealed and (re)constructed as well. Within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, *La Revolucionista* fights for the dignity of Mexicano students within a mestizaje of *La Revolución* that transforms Sophia's individual body and vaccination scar into a protective seal of shared Mexicano

membership beneath which Sophia and her Mexican-born students may find resistance and healing.

Sophia's students continually seek knowledge of this shared Mexicano identity through repeated questioning into Sophia's birthplace. Sophia laughs, recounting how many times she has told the very same students that she was born in Mexico, "the kids *know* where I'm from, they *know* I'm not born in the U.S.…sometimes they'll *still* ask me 'oye, miss, usted es de Mexico?'" This repeated questioning is a ritual that seems to signify more than one answer to one question: Perhaps Sophia's students find meaning in just hearing her say that she too was born in Mexico. What Sophia *does* know for certain is that what her Mexicano students feel good when they are recognized within their Mexicano identities. Sophia says she wants to make her Mexicano students "feel comfortable with who they are and where they come from…they'll wear their boots, their alligator, whatever…I tell them they look great, they look sharp so they're not ashamed of it, so they get excited someone noticed, recognized..." In these words lies a Mestiza warrior with the power to heal the shame Sophia's students experience within their contested Mexicano identities. *La Revolucionista*, She who transforms and (re)constructs the marked Mexicana/o body and identity within a mestizaje of *Revolución,* holds the power to "actually transform our experience, change our lives, save our lives" (Moraga, 1983, pp. xviii-xix). As Sophia reclaims her body from a marked and subordinate identity to that of a sealed Mexicana body Sophia wages a war against shame and invisibility. This warring, embattled *Revolucionista* within Sophia's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is

never far removed from the little girl in the photograph with the pink *Ballet Folklórico* dress [Mexican Folkloric] that Sophia brings to our third focus group.

Sophia shares this photograph of herself as a child with our third focus group in order to communicate the grounding of her ethic of care for Mexicano students. Teresa asks her, "Who *is* this?" Sophia laughs, "that's me!...in grade school in 2nd grade...The little Brown girl. I told you! I'm the little Brown girl, all slicked back." Sophia brings her hands to her hair, pushing it back tightly to mimic the "slicked back" hairstyle worn in traditional *Ballet Folklórico* dancing. Within Sophia's physical body pictured in this photograph, *La Revolucionista* (re)claims a Mexican heritage, birthplace, and Her own Brown skin. It is a naming and (re)claiming of Mexicano *descendency* (Del Valle, 2002) with the power to dispel the shame and denigration of an Mexicano identity invalidated within the United States. For *La Revolucionista* fighting through Sophia's classroom curriculum and pedagogy, Sophia's body in this photo and in her classroom defies the marking of a people stamped *immigrant their own ancestral lands* (Baca, 1990). *La Revolucionista* wields the weapon of Sophia's sealed body as a physical *Testimonio* that "comes to represent a larger space than [her] flesh" (Danticat, 1994, p. 236). L*a Revolucionista,* through a mestizaje of the *Revolución* for social justice, shelters Sophia and her Mexicano students beneath the curative seal of a Mexican/Mestiza Ethic of Care.

Through this imprint upon Sophia's body and her physical presence as a *Brown girl,* and now *Brown woman* and educator, *La Revolucionista* within Sophia's ethic of care battles to inoculate her students against the psychological disease of

second-class citizenship. *La Revolucionista* fights on behalf of Mexicano students that Sophia states are "*still* on the bottom of society...don't feel like they're acknowledged or recognized...[as] a family of immigrants...you're almost *expected* to fail." Embedded in Sophia's words and in her classroom curriculum and pedagogy is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of deep consciousness of the racial and sociopolitical battleground that U.S. Mexicanos confront. Present in Sophia's words is the acknowledgement that the Mexicano identity she and her students share brings with it an expectation of failure and an underclass status which Sophia seeks to challenge through her pedagogy. Her work toward dismantling this subordinated status is evident in a group activity Sophia conducts every year with her 7th grade New Mexico History classes during their unit on the Spanish Conquistadores.

For the upcoming *Conquest Debates*, Sophia has her students divide themselves into three groups who will each represent 1) Spanish conquerors/explorers 2) King and Queen of Spain, and 3) Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. Their assignment is to both defend their own role within the Spanish conquest as well as determine which group is most to blame for the resulting occupation. Students may not simply find fault with other groups but must present evidence to support their actions and likewise come to terms with their own responsibility. Sophia explains to me, "everybody wants to be the Native peoples because usually they're just shown as victims who didn't do anything wrong...the ones being attacked...but why *didn't* they fight? Why *didn't* they resist?" Sophia says she values this activity because it equips students to push beyond their marked social status to construct themselves on

their own terms. They "have to step up and defend themselves. That really does speak volumes to whether you're a victim or not"—and in her words I hear echoes of Gloria Anzaldúa (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Anzaldúa & Hernández-Ávila, 2000), if we posture as victims we *will* be victims. In Sophia's class, her Mexicano students are not victims either.

Speaking to me after class, Sophia tells me that her students have a responsibility to transcend the lower-class status that threatens to circumscribe them as less. Sophia emphasizes, "I don't cut them any slack, no one cut it for me... I had to work twice as hard to do the same type of work." Sophia knows from her own experience that as Spanish-speakers, Mexicano students are "always pushed off to the side...'oh, those are the bilingual kids"...[they're] going to carry...that label...with them but they're capable of rising above that bar." Sophia knows well the sting of this label and refuses to carry it as a scar that does not heal. Sophia shares her *Testimonio* of how she herself was imprinted by her experience as an outsider in her high school Honors classes,

> I was the only *beaner* in my class...*con el nopal aquí* [with a cactus on my forehead]...seriously, from my freshmen year to my senior year...I didn't look like a single person in the classroom. I should have been in the lower level classes and then I would probably meet more of my gente [people]...so I was in honors classes with girls walking around with their Louis Vuitton and their fricken' Holister...pero no me identificaba [I didn't identify]. Nobody.

But I did just as well as they did. Batallaba [I battled], I would stay up really late...I did just fine.

Sophia describes the isolation from her people, and of standing on the outside looking in at the intersection of her race/ethnicity, class and language. She speaks her *Testimonio* through a critical caricature of the Mexican girl she was perceived as: a *beaner* with a cactus, a *nopal,* marking her forehead. Within the context of this *Testimonio* of struggle and survival and now as a bilingual, Mexican-born, culturally rooted, and formally educated Mexicana/Mestiza woman, Sophia's body now stands as a deadly challenge to the subordinate status that often accompanies Mexicana/o identity. In Sophia's classroom, the presence of her body stands as an affront to the invalidated and outsider status her Mexicano students often struggle with beyond her classroom walls.

Sophia's body is thus transformed into an arm of spiritual survival, a critical text that speaks back to powers that have circumscribed a collective Mexicana/o body for their own purposes (Knight, et al., 2006). Through the reclamation of her own sealed Brown body, Sophia likewise brings her students under its anointing and protective shield, thus waging a war against the shame and psychological scarring upon their Mexicano identities and everyday reality. As Sophia's Mexican/Mestiza Ethic of Care holds up her own sealed Brown body under which her Mexicano students may find healing, *La Revolucionista* transcends Her own physical space and wages a healing *Revolución* with the means to *survive this place.* Within the Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care present in Sophia's curriculum, pedagogy, and

through the weapon of Sophia's body, the *Mexicanidad*/Mexican identity that unites Sophia with her students and their families is transformed from a people *marked* to a people *sealed*.

La Revolución a Través del Espíritu[9]: La Mujer Encargada/She Who Must Carry

For Cruz, the *Revolución* for academic access and rigor, dignity, and well-being on behalf of her Mexicano students and their families is a battle waged not through steel weaponry but through the enduring spirit of She who will carry: *La Encargada*. For Cruz, *La Revolucionista* fighting within her Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is a spirit who will endure. It is a spirit who will carry responsibility for others: *La que se encarga por los demás*. In a general sense, a person *encargada(o)* is she who is responsible or charged, though the literal translation of this word bears much more meaning within the context of Cruz's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and the weight of multiple responsibilities she carries as an educator. Cruz bears in her spirit the ethical urgency to carry and this urgency comes from the intergenerational *Testimonio* of her mother and from her own *Testimonio* as a young girl, a Spanish-dominant Mexicana female in her 5th grade classroom. Within the following two *Testimonios* we find the seeds of *La Encargada* which first taught Cruz to carry, the essence of which Cruz maintains in her classroom today.

Ethical urgency to carry. Evident in Cruz's *Testimonio,* classroom curriculum, and pedagogy emerges an ethical urgency that shoulders the

[9] A Revolution through spirit

responsibility of educating young people in her classroom who come from intergenerational *Testimonios* of struggle and survival. This ethical urgency rooted within Cruz's Ethic of Care is communicated to me the first time we sit down together for her individual interview. When Cruz speaks to me of education: of her role as a teacher and the vital importance of education in the lives of her Mexicano students, she does so in the context of her mother who has not had the privilege of formal education and her words honor the struggles of a woman who singlehandedly provided for Cruz by working long hours of physical labor the majority of her life.

Testimonio of mother. Grounded within her mother's *Testimonio* is Cruz's imperative that her students must become educated "[para] que no se los traten como Mexicanos en el field [so they don't treat them like Mexicans in the fields]." Cruz's words here bear indignance and the weight of lived experience as a child who witnessed firsthand the trials her mother had to overcome. For Cruz, her *Revolución* is waged through spirit, *La Encargada*, who carries the weight of ensuring academic opportunity, rigor, and the dignity and well-being of her Mexicano students and their families.

The enduring spirit within Cruz's Ethic of Care was not born in her classroom or even with Cruz herself—this spirit is present and more deeply understood within the intergenerational *Testimonio* of Cruz's mother who worked long hours and many years in the cebollas/onion crops. "[She] would work go in at 6:00, 7:00 in the morning get out at 11:00, 12:00 at night in November/December, cuando está la cosecha [during the harvest]...they used to work for Thanksgiving and Christmas."

Cruz speaks of her mother's ability to carry on despite the physical burden of her work and the family responsibility she alone shouldered. Cruz's describes her mother as "always strong...she made me who I am...[she was] la trabajadora [hard worker], la fuerte [the strong one], la que tenía [she who had it together]." Cruz speaks of her mother as the "backbone of the house."

Cruz tells of her mother rising every day "*para hacerme mis chongos* [to do my ponytails] before the sun came up...She'd wake me up so I could go dressed decent. That's a Mexican thing...bien vestida [well dressed] bien limpia [clean]...y me hace parte *dura* aqui mis chongos [she would part my hair *hard* for my ponytails]." She laughs, places her hands on either side of her face, and pulls her skin back to illustrate the tightness of those ponytails. Within the multiplicity of her mother's responsibilities: shouldering the responsibility of her household by working days and nights in the fields and all the while carrying weight of her daughter's dignity by rising early to send Cruz to school *bien vestida* [well kept], Cruz's enduring spirit comes into even sharper focus.

These days, Cruz truly carries not only the living memory of those generations before her—she carries too her mother's physical health and the care of her ailing body. In Cruz's home, the woman who carries is now Cruz, and she tells me this during her second individual interview, "I've become the backbone...I pay the bills, now I'm the backbone of the house. But thanks to her [Cruz's mother] puedo hacer mucho [I can do a great deal]." Through the interconnected and intergenerational *Testimonios* of her mother who has taught Cruz to carry the weight of struggle while

maintaining dignity and self-worth woven in the present to the struggles that still exist today for her kids of Mexican American/Mexicano descent, Cruz today "prevails" as an educator "through the living memory of [her] ancestors" (Menchú, 1984, p. 188).

Testimonio of rainbows. Cruz's enduring spirit, *La Encargada*, and the weight she bears on behalf of her students is rooted in the following *Testimonio* that emerges as part of our discussion regarding her schooling experience. I ask Cruz, "did you ever feel like teachers underestimated you or dismissed you?" to which she replies: "Yeah, *he* did. 5th grade." I then follow up, "So what was that like?" Cruz responds quickly,

> Horrible! [laughing] No, no te creas [just kidding]. No sabes lo que me ponía hacer el maestro [you wouldn't believe what he had me doing]—unos rainbows with... tissue paper, you would cut...and then you would wrap them in a pencil with glue? That's what he had me do all year.

I was intrigued by Cruz's *Testimonio*. I wanted to know more: What did this task mean for her then and now as a bilingual and at that time Spanish-dominant Mexicana in the context of who he was as a White male teacher? I inquired further, asking Cruz how she thought this teacher may have perceived her academic ability. Cruz responded to my questions, "I don't know, he liked me because I was a good girl but he had me doing the fun stuff instead of doing the work." Though Cruz does satisfy my request to speculate as to this teacher's perception of her, I wanted to know more about why Cruz had told this story in response to my inquiry into a teacher who had underestimated her.

I tried to get back to my original question, "if you were aware of it then, or are aware of it now, why do you think he underestimated you?" Cruz again replied matter-of-factly "I don't think he underestimated me so much, I just think, como te digo [like I told you], I was the good girl, que he would rather have me do something fun." Following the light tone of this response, Cruz's tone then shifts to that of a solemn depth as she continues, "pienso en él, que aprendí desde esos rainbows [I think of him, what I learned from those rainbows]...Si, me afecta como yo enseño a mis niños [Yes, it affects me in how I teach my kids]." In Cruz's shift from her own *Testimonio* to the role it had in shaping her classroom curriculum and pedagogy for her 6th, 7th and 8th grade mathematics classes is the spirit of *La Encargada* whose *Revolución* on behalf of her Mexicano students will not allow her to stay in her 5th grade classroom or her memory of it.

Cruz swiftly adds: "I don't know what he thought. I don't know what he was thinking." Encapsulated in the finality of these two sentences, Cruz informs me that she does not wish to speculate as to this teacher's thoughts or opinions of her as a student in his 5th grade classroom. Cruz is finished talking to me about her 5th grade teacher, and the memory of this task serves her today only to the extent that it informs the spirit within her Ethic of Care, *La Encargada*, embodied in her role as teacher for her *Mexicano* students.

La Encargada: In the classroom and beyond. What Cruz learned from her mother and also "desde esos rainbows" is a great deal: Today, Cruz is an educator who demands a great deal academically from her students. She does not allow her

students to engage in activity unless they are developing necessary academic skills. For Cruz, the spirit of *La Encargada* urges her to carry the weight of her students' academic access and rigor, her students' dignity and sense of self, and likewise the well being of her students and their families.

Bearing the weight of academic access and rigor. In her 6th, 7th, and 8th grade bilingual mathematics classes, this spirit of *La Encargada* fighting within Cruz's *Revolución* is evident in the urgency with which Cruz plans curriculum that addresses the academic needs of her students. In my observation notes, I have recorded an interaction with a student in her 8th grade math class where this becomes clear,

> The kids are taking a test and Cruz has asked them to do only the even numbers in the book. A male student tells Cruz, "Thanks, miss. You've made it a little easier on us", to which Cruz responds, "Well, mi'hijo, I just want to make sure you understand. I'm not trying to work you out."

Upon hearing these words, the student smiles, nods, and goes back to taking his test. In this small interaction, Cruz communicates that she is intent upon assigning purposeful curriculum that assesses the progress students are making towards understanding the mathematical concepts she has taught in her classroom. She likewise communicates that she is not interested in making her students work just for the sake of being busy: to *work them out* for no academic gain. Cruz has not assigned this test as a practice of mental endurance but a measure of what her students know and understand. Present in Cruz's words and in curriculum that specifically evaluates and seeks to address her students' academic needs is evident the great value Cruz

places on her students' time and effort. Cruz continuously carries the responsibility of utilizing her students' time meaningfully in the service of their academic gain.

Bearing the weight of academic access and rigor on the off days. Even on days that are out of the ordinary such as the day of the in-school talent show or picture day, days that many teachers would position as 'throwaways' void of instruction, Cruz does not waste one minute—her students *will not make rainbows* in her classroom. Even on days when instruction time is cut, Cruz makes sure her students use the time they have for academic content by engaging them in mathematical games such as Sudoku and a game called *¡Basta!*. Everyday, *La Encargada* upholds her responsibility to construct math curriculum that engages and challenges her students through interactive whole group activities. During one class in particular, Cruz and her 6th grade students are playing the game *¡Basta!* together on the chalk board, a math game in which teams of students contribute three and four-digit numbers to a multiplication grid, work answers out together using primarily mental math, and then look for patterns across the grid and the significance of the patterns their answers are developing. Cruz is calling on students randomly for number contributions, "What day were you born? What year were *you* born [pointing to another student]?" Within Cruz's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, the curriculum and pedagogy of her classroom is only *justifiable* to Cruz if her students are "*en la frega* [working hard]" and likewise intellectually engaged.

Even while her students are having fun engaging in whole group and interactive math activities, Cruz's responsibility is the same: She plans curriculum

that is intent upon cultivating her students' critical thinking, offering the opportunity to practice skills her students are currently learning in her class, and continuing to measure her students' academic development in regards to current math concepts. Cruz says she is continually conscious of not "wasting their time" and for Cruz, interactive math games are "something fun but yet you're getting their mind to do something...y se ponen y estan en frega [they put themselves to it, they work hard]...I could *justify* that...it's not *...here, let's color this paper.*" As Cruz says these words, the seriousness in her tone is unshakable. Cruz carries the weight of assuring her students' time is meaningfully spent in challenging and enriching curriculum, and this involves a great time commitment on Cruz's part. Making sure she understands her students' academic progress, levels of understanding, and academic needs requires that Cruz spend a great deal of time with her students outside of the classroom.

Bearing great weight beyond the classroom. In the middle of the fall semester, Cruz informs me that she has begun tutoring during Saturday school, a voluntary resource for students who feel like they need extra help outside of the school day. She informs me she will be volunteering for Saturday school until the end of the year. While this extra time spent outside of the classroom is a tremendous sacrifice for any teacher, it is especially striking due to the fact that Cruz is the single head of her household—Cruz is taking care of her mother in her home, and her declining health is a continuous challenge. Throughout each week, I have seen Cruz give up her lunch hour, her time before school, as well as her afternoons when school lets out to tutor her students. On a weekly basis, I have seen Cruz's lunch grow cold

and dry on her desk as she moves about the school and her classroom tending to students' academic and social needs. In my observational notes, I wrote the following:

> Cruz just offered a student her prep time or time after school to help her with division. When I asked her about it she paused, "well, what else do I do?... I don't want to embarrass her in front of the class. She just freezes when it comes to division."

When I later commented about the amount of time that she regularly gives up for her students, she seemed surprised that I would see it as out of the ordinary. I asked Cruz, "so how much time would you say you spend with *this* particular student in a given week?" Cruz seemed surprised by the question and only replied, "well, she can't divide." In her matter-of-fact tone was the answer to my question—this young Mexicana student struggles with division, and her academic struggle overrides Cruz's lunch hour or time before or after school. For Cruz, her students' success or failure is a weight she herself carries on her spirit, even after she leaves the classroom. In my observational notes, I have recorded the following:

> Cruz is telling me about a unit test her students "bombed", she says, "it made me so sad. We went over and over it. Me da pena. Como me agarra [It hurts and it grabs me]—me pega fuerte [it hits me hard] and I got depressed. We went over it...but I was talking to my boyfriend about it. Que pena [it hurts]"

The failure of her students brings pain to Cruz that she carries home with her after the last bell rings. Counting the hours or the effort Cruz gives to her students is moot, for

she will continue to give of herself and her time so long as there is academic struggle in her students. Cruz's enduring spirit, *La Encargada,* fights for her Mexicano students by carrying the responsibility of honoring their time and academic potential, and this duty Cruz charges herself with does not begin nor end with math.

Charged with students' dignity and sense of self. Cruz carries the responsibility [se encarga] of likewise protecting her students' dignity and sense of self when they feel nervous, exposed, confused, or academically frustrated in front of their peers. During one classroom observation, I record in my observation notes:

> Eduardo [pseudonym] is at the board working out a problem. He is struggling to come up with the answer in front of his peers and is taking a long time. Cruz asks him, "Are you nervous, mi'hijo [my son]? To which he answers, "yes, miss". Cruz then asks Eduardo, "¿Pues, porque estas trabejando solo? [well, why are you working alone?]", and then speaks to the class, ""Ayudele. Ayudele, Mariana. Ayudele, Clarisa. ¿Que es la respuesta? [Help him, Mariana. Help him, Clarisa. What is the answer?]" Cruz's students are not put on the spot but are expected to...work together to get over the hump.

In asking Eduardo if he is nervous as he stands at the board staring at the problem he is trying to solve, Cruz normalizes and makes visible Eduardo's feelings of angst. Cruz questions not why Eduardo does not know how to use a math formula the class has been working on for a while now, but why no one has helped him yet as he stands at the board alone.

During the next 8th grade mathematics class, I note a similar interaction in which Cruz makes struggle visible and brings students together to support each other academically. In my observation notes, I record the following interaction as students are working at the board,

> Cruz is explaining isolating the variables in an equation. This is something new that students are working on. Cruz looks right at a student who was making a nervous face as he worked on the board and says to him, "Julio [pseudonym], you're going to be ok." After communicating to Julio that he has written the wrong answer, Cruz states, "¿Quieres hacerlo de nuevo? [Do you want to do it again?]." Julio is now shaking his head. "Alicia [pseudonym], do you want to do it…? Help him? Julio, do you want to pick Alicia to help you?"

This was moment that could have seemed like a teacher calling a student out or highlighting a students' struggle in front of others, but it instead came across as an opportunity to connect with a student and normalize Julio's stress of not knowing. There are no secret struggles in Cruz's class. Cruz again makes this student's frustration visible and then supports him by bringing in another student to help him. By asking Julio to ultimately choose who will step in and help him, Cruz likewise demonstrates that her role is not to simply save him. Julio ultimately must reach out to find a partner or friend to help him in his frustration of not knowing and to work out this math problem with him.

Within Cruz's *Revolución,* the spirit of *La Encargada* charges herself also with building her students up and ensuring they know their worth and capacity, "I've had students who came in, 'oh, I'm not smart... I can't do it'...my goal is to push them...have them *believe* they can do it. Not just believe...*know* that they're capable...making them feel proud of who they are." This weight Cruz bears on behalf of her students' dignity, and inherent value in the world can be seen outside of her classroom as well.

Bearing students' and families' struggle and well-being. Within a school that serves a Mexican/Mexican-American population at the perilous intersection of race, class, and residency status, Cruz likewise carries the weight of her students' and their families' struggles with untimely death, incarceration, and deportation. Within my observational notes, I have written:

> Cruz is telling me about some of the things her students are facing and how she is working with them to financially sustain their struggle. One student, Jaime [pseudonym], is not here today because his father was killed on Saturday. She has sent me a text [message] about an enchilada dinner she was helping sell tickets for. The money will go to the family...This reminds me of one of my first days visiting this school. I learned of another large fundraising event Cruz co-headed up two years ago to pay for a family to bring their grandfather's body back from Mexico and bury it here within the county limits.

I later note in my researcher journal that Cruz was selling tickets to a carwash and working outside of school "to help a family of seven whose two parents are facing deportation" and she tells me that "the staff is going to write letters to the judge to see if [they] can help in some way." Evident here, Cruz charges herself, along with her colleagues, with the weight of her students' and their families' struggle outside of her classroom.

Carrying us home. Out of Cruz's *Testimonio* of her year-long rainbow art project as well as the intergenerational *Testimonio* of physical labor she speaks here emerges a deep ethical urgency toward education for her Mexicano students (Knight, 2004). Cruz daily carries the weight of constructing supportive pedagogy rooted in collectivity that enables her students to reach their academic potential and to build a strong sense of their inherent worth and value. No matter the weight of Cruz's *Revolución*: both her students' academic access and their struggle, the legal and financial battles of her students and their families outside of her classroom, or her students' sometimes wavering academic confidence, Cruz's spirit and her *Revolución* will carry, must carry on. Cruz carries not only her students, their families, or even her own mother's continued struggles of body, mind, and spirit—Cruz carries the weight also of generations long gone. By her enduring spirit, Cruz carries also, "those who came before us, those whose black-and-white dreams have allowed us to dream in color, whose misery and grief, longing and hopes...ancestral yearnings... have fueled our tomorrows (Chávez, 2001, p. 8). Through Cruz's Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, the spirit of She who will persevere, Cruz has the power to carry her

Mexicano students—to carry *all* of us—back to a place where we are challenged and cherished into loving ourselves again.

Conclusion

These four female Mexican and Mexican-American educators together construct a complex, mutable reality amid the spaces in-between (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 675) as they fight for social justice for their Mexican/Mexican-American students. Within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care rooted in *Testimonios* of struggle and survival stands a mestizaje of *Revolución*, a mestizaje of *La Revolucionista,* woman warrior, who fights not through the steel weaponry of men's wars but through the weapons of Her *lengua/je* [words], Her *cuerpo* [body], and Her *espíritu* [spirit]. In the multiplicity, duality, and ambiguity of their *Revolución*, these four *Revolucionistas*, and their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care hide in plain sight to fight another day. The *Revolución* present within the curriculum and pedagogy of these four Mexicana/Mestiza female educators is protected and emboldened in seen and unseen spaces, enabled by a mestizaje that uniquely arms their Mexicano students to resist and heal from the intergenerational wounds they carry.

The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of these Mexicana/Mestiza educators is never removed from the injustices exacted upon a collective Mexicano body and experience. Their *Revolución*, the battle they wage against this injustice and denigration, is as blended, multilayered, and (re)constituted as the very history of a people born of colonization and contact (R. Rodriguez, 1996). It reverberates in *La Revolucionista's* word, body, and spirit, a "continual creative motion" (Anzaldúa

1987, p. 80) of *dual consciousness* with the power to deconstruct narrow paradigms that keep Her, *La Mestiza,* in a bound and rigid existence in the margins.

As these Mexicana/Mestiza educators fight for the sanctity of their students' culture, language, residence, academic success, and very sense of self they move "with centuries of practice guiding their hands" (Michaels, 1996, p. 39), for we as Mestizos have long relied upon our ability to hide in plain sight by reconfiguring, blending and bending our visible realities. It is a means of survival "that people of mixed race, people who have Indian blood, people who cross cultures, by necessity possess" (Anzaldúa, 1996, p. 54). Even as Indigenous men and women, masons, sculptors, and artists, were ordered to build churches and cathedrals out of the very stones of their own destroyed temples, their spirits would not be conquered. Into the "very heart of the Christian sacred" (Wake, 2010, p. 99), upon altars and within the foundation of the churches, Mestizo and Indigenous builders and masons strategically embedded spiritual symbolism, laid stones carved with the faces of gods and goddesses. Just as Christian clergy who attempted to extricate Indigenous imagery were halted by their inability to identify it (Wagner, Box, & Morehead, 2013; Wake, 2010), those without the eyes to see *La Revolucionista* will neither see Her war. As these Mexicana/Mestiza educators conceal their revolution from those who may threaten it, their battle is ensured.

Though these Mexicana/Mestiza educators resist in name the title of *La Revolucionista*, they do not cease to be *Revolucionistas*. Coursing through the bloodlines of their classroom curriculum and pedagogy is the adaptability and

survivability enabled through mestizaje's "profound concession to humanity" (R. Rodriguez, 1996, p. 24). In ways seen and unseen, these Mexicana/Mestiza educators redefine and reconfigure notions of *La Revolución* in which they, *Las Revolucionistas,* build a "footpath of knowing back to the village of our forgotten" (Moraga, 2011, p. 87) through their classroom curriculum and pedagogy. It is a path of knowing by which we as Mexicanos may be led to our rightful *Place to Stand* (Baca, 2002) that is the inheritance of a people *sealed.*

CHAPTER 5—IMPLICATIONS

A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care for Educators and Researchers

As Nahuatl/Aztec women who marched silently and solemnly for thousands of years every 16th of September to heavy drum beating in honor of Toci, goddess of harvest and war (Wake, 2010), these four Mexicana/Mestiza educators bear the sobering weight of the *Revolución* for social justice and dignity for their Mexican and Mexican-American students. This *Revolución* that is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is concealed and protected within a blurred, ambiguous mestizaje of what it means to fight for those at the dangerous crossroads of race, class, gender, language, and residency status. These Mexicana/Mestiza female educators carry their concealed *Revolución* by way of their tongues, their bodies, and their spirits. It is a battle these *Revolucionista* women-warrior educators surely lead but must not wage alone—male and female *Revolucionista* educators of all backgrounds and at all levels may likewise march solemnly beside them.

The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed in this research has the power to prepare all educators to recognize the critical urgency of the *Revolución* for Mexican and Mexican-American young people and *all* people who still find themselves on the outside looking in with regard to educational access, income disparities, and social injustice. The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed in this research arms *Revolucionista* educators to recognize and wage this still-relevant battle for equity and dignity for those on the margins. It likewise equips us with the wisdom

and the weaponry to conceal and protect this still-contested battle and thereby ensure its survivability and our ability to endure as warriors therein.

A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care has wide implications for educators at all levels. In an educational era where teachers are leaving their job within three to five years of the profession, this Ethic of Care challenges us to reframe how revolution is constructed and waged so teachers can stay in the profession and sustain their ability to work in the interest of students and their families who struggle for academic access. In a country that is facing a population increase of 300% by 2050 (J. González, 2011) of Mexican and Mexican-Americans, this Ethic of Care reveals the urgency to recruit and retain more Mexican and Mexican-American educators to serve these students. Even within this population growth, students of Mexican/Mexican-American descent are not faring well. This research has implications for how *Revolucionista* educators may move away from seeing students as marked by their marginalization to ultimately seeing students *sealed* in the power of their identities. This *sealing* occurs when we root curriculum and pedagogy within *Testimonios* of not only struggle, but likewise survival and resilience for marginalized people. In an era of high-stakes testing and school success that is narrowly defined within testing outcomes, the Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care embodied by these four female educators utilizes 'goodness' to widen what is important in schooling and education against dominant frameworks. Finally, this work has implications for researchers in regards to constructing reflexive methodologies in regards to photo elicitation and defining equitable involvement for participants bound within highly

ethical principles of research. First I will discuss the implications this work has for educators.

Implications for Educators of All Backgrounds

The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and its *Revolución* to equip Mexicano students to resist and heal from linguistic/cultural shame and subordination is revealed in this research through four Mexicana female teacher participants' curriculum and pedagogy. This work will be in vain, however, if we believe it meaningful or relevant only to those who are situated within these same cultural, gendered, or classroom spaces. While projections show the Hispanic population growing, those of Mexican or Mexican-American descent in this country still make up just over 10 percent of the total U.S. population (Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2011; Lopez, González-Barrera, & Cuddington, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), and that 10 percent is further underrepresented in the profession of education (Rich, 2013). I present this data not to numerically minimize the critical nature of this work but to convey how essential it is that the findings of this research have implications across the field of education.

If the findings of this research are to bring about hopeful educational possibilities for Mexican and Mexican-American young people and all those who struggle at the intersection of contested or subordinated identities, it will take the work of many people of all backgrounds. The findings of this research have implications for educators at all levels who recognize their work as part of the

Revolución. The implications of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, as revealed within these four *Revolucionistas'* battle for social justice and dignity, situates this battle for equity within an ethical urgency that reframes how battles of resistance are constructed in our collective psyche and how they may be waged in a way that will ensure survivability.

Revolución: Reframing the Revolution for Social Justice and Dignity

These four *Revolucionistas* do not characterize themselves as freedom fighters—in fact, all four of these Mexicana/Mestiza teachers outright reject the nomenclature of *radicals* fighting for *Chicano pride,* and collective action in the name of *la causa* [the cause] or *la raza* [the people], terms they associate with the 1960's Chicano Movement. For these four Mexicana/Mestiza female educators, the radicalism of a revolution waged in this manner is divisive and dangerous. With the same breath they use to separate themselves the Chicano 'radicalism', however, these *Revolucionistas* speak and act unwaveringly a *Revolución* embodied within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. They wage *Revolución* within a practiced *mestizaje* of fighting that reframes dominant notions of revolution enshrined with a 1960's framework we have been taught to singularly recognize.

For *La Revolucionista* the *Revolución* is waged by creating academic spaces in which young people may resist and heal from cultural denigration but it does not end here. This battle lies also in preparing young people to navigate and thrive within the dominant structures in which they must live and learn. These four *Revolucionistas* and the Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed in this research informs educators

of all backgrounds that the *Revolución* lies in preparing students to resist oppression in plain sight and within dominant structures. As these *Revolucionistas* wage the battle for their students' right to language, identity, education, dignity, and the right to live and work freely within this country, they do it in a way that at times conceals its rootedness within a social justice framework.

As Teresa prepares her students to present their extensive research on the educational and social impacts of standardized testing at an upcoming school board meeting, there were times when her curriculum and pedagogy could be mistakenly perceived as ideologically bound within a dominant framework. Teresa's students spend weeks researching and analyzing data on how standardized testing affects all students and particularly racial and linguistic minorities and those of from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Some students ask if they can present in Spanish or *Spanglish*. Teresa responds that they cannot--students must write or translate their speeches and present them in English in order to gain their widest audience. As one young woman becomes frustrated with the overwhelming amount of data on the negative impacts of testing on students, especially those who already struggle academically and linguistically, the rootedness of Teresa's *Revolución* is revealed. Exasperated, this young woman asks, "can't I just say that these tests are *dumb*?" Teresa smiles at this outburst and quickly responds that she absolutely *cannot* present her research to the school board in this way.

This question then prompts Teresa to speaks to her students adamantly about how they must go about constructing their argument: "We have to do research. You

can't go in there guns blazing and have no teeth...[student] surveys are powerful but you have to have data to back it up." Teresa prepares students for the fight they are up against: "you have to have all the answers...they can still poke holes in our argument." While Teresa's classroom is a space that welcomes her Mexicano students' language(s) and the hard words of their lived realities, she centers the necessity for mastery of dominant languages of power within the fight for validity. These findings challenge educators at all levels to expand and deconstruct notions of revolution that prepare young people not only to resist dominant structures but to likewise thrive within them as an act of resistance. *Revolución* within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is not fought by "guns blazing"—young people, especially those who struggle for validity in dominant spaces must be academically equipped to navigate within dominant structures and master languages of power in order to fortify the longstanding battle for voice, educational access, and equity.

Testimonios as Challenge to Deficit Frameworks of Struggle

As *Revolucionista* educators, *La Revolución* does not end at making the struggle for equity and access visible—we must move beyond the frameworks of disparities and despair that position those who struggle as merely objects of an unjust system. These Mexicana/Mestiza female educators wage *La Revolución* by anchoring curriculum and pedagogy to agentive *Testimonios* of fighting and ultimately surviving and thriving at the intersection of their racial/ethnic, class, gendered, linguistic, and transnational identities. As they anchor curriculum and pedagogy within lived realities of not only struggle but also survival told in *Testimonio,* they create spaces in

which their students may also see themselves and their communities as agents capable of resistance.

Within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, educators' own *Testimonios* and those of students and their families are contextualized within the larger lived realities of Mexicano peoples and other diverse communities that have fought and survived similarly. These Mexicana/Mestiza female women warrior educators are not alone in their ability to root the work they do within *Testimonios*: *Revolucionista* educators working within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care may root their *Revolución* within diverse national and international *Testimonios* that highlight the capacity of diverse groups to act as agents of resistance and change.

A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that integrates *Testimonios* into the greater framework of *Revolución* stands as a resistance to all structures which seeks to limit language, perspective, expression, and *being* in all of its many forms. Many diverse groups and individuals have and continue to experience their voices and *beings* silenced, pushed out, and invalidated within dominant spaces, and a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that has the power to challenge deficit frameworks of oppression by building an interconnectedness of legacies of struggle and ultimate survival of diverse peoples.

One of the most salient *Testimonios* present in the classrooms of these four women warrior educators is that of the struggle to maintain the home language of Spanish and to hold fast to dignity within a history of linguistic erasure. These four educators create space in their classroom for the language(s) of their Mexicano

students—to varying degrees, otherwise marginalized languages of standard Spanish, *Spanglish*, and regional dialects of Spanish and English are integrated into classroom curriculum and pedagogy. Within the classrooms of these *Revolucionistas*, students are brought into *Testimonios* of agentive resistance to linguistic subjugation as they are provided the academic tools to bridge their home languages with the language of power and learn to master both. While these educators do share in their students' intergenerational *Testimonios* at the site of their Mexicana/o identities, their ability to wage *Revolución* in their classroom lies not simply in this shared Mexicana/o identity but in a willingness to use diverse *Testimonios* to shape their curriculum and pedagogy and thereby challenge deficit frameworks of struggle.

Diverse lived realities of struggle and survival can be brought into the classroom through fiction and non-fiction novels, short stories, plays, essays, poetry, children's books, family/community storytelling, children's songs and games, and students' own writing and creative expression. Student-centered inquiry, community-based action projects, and student research across the disciplines of math, science, history, social studies, health, writing, music, and the arts may also be based within *Testimonios*. As in Teresa's ENLACE research project on the impacts of standardized testing, the *Testimonios* of those who continue to struggle for educational access inform student research and the ways in which they present their findings. As Teresa prepares her students to fortify their findings for an institutional body which will try to "poke holes" in it, her words challenge deficit frameworks of oppression by

resisting structural inequality through the "teeth" of collective action, statistical analysis, and voices fortified in the language(s) of power.

Moving Beyond Marked Identities: Seeing Students Sealed

It is hard to ignore the changing demographics of this country, making it more ethnically and linguistically diverse. Many in the field of education know that at some point we will be working with groups of people who differ from ourselves culturally. Likewise, many of us have at least some knowledge of the racial, gender, and class oppression that has marred our national story within the United States of America. These dominant frameworks of education: multiculturalism, offering an awareness and perhaps even celebration of diversity and deficit frameworks steeped in oppression, despair, and social reproduction, are only enough to mark young people as Other within our classrooms. These four Mexicana/Mestiza female educators do not mark their students as simply culturally diverse or the inheritors of injustice and oppression—they *seal* them within the complexity of their identities. *Revolucionista* educators of all backgrounds may learn to see young people in the way these four Mexicana/Mestiza female educators see them: as those who have been shaped within community histories of resistance, *sealed* within the balm of the deep wisdom, faith, resourcefulness, generosity, community, and artful expression that rise out of the fight for body, mind, and spirit at the crossroads of contested identities.

As educators, we cannot seal students within a framework of multiculturalism that urges us to celebrate diversity and plurality without questioning why the silencing of difference exists and whom it serves. Likewise, for those who situate

within critical frameworks that position curriculum and pedagogy within the battle against subjugation and denigration, we must work to move beyond the seeing and naming of oppression. We must work beyond deficit frameworks that situate students and their communities as either multicultural or victims of 'isms', in Cruz's words, "like a roach being pressed." We must work to see young people and their communities not as objects of oppression but as dynamic agents of transformation within long legacies of survival, a sealed people who have not just resisted the dynamics of power and oppression but who have lived and thrived within and beyond its reach. According to Sophia, she and her Mexican/Mexican-American peers felt the sting of deficit frameworks that reduced their identity to a people marked Other:

> [In] this town...Spanish can be almost taboo...I didn't speak Spanish at all at school and neither did any of my classmates even though you saw them get picked up in las troquitas [small work trucks], their dads with their sombreros and in class I was like "hey", trying to say something in Spanish aver si ellos me contestaban y no me contestaban en Español [to see if they would answer me in Spanish and they didn't]...like, "I don't speak Spanish at school, *oh my God, how embarrassing*"

For Sophia and her Mexican/Mexican-American peers, academic and social success hinged upon their avoidance of the markings of 'outsider' and ultimately their avoidance of each other as well. I ask her who she would be today if she had had a teacher who saw her within the richness of her Mexicana identity. Sophia answers with some hesitation, "*quién sabe* quien sería ahorita... [who *knows* who I would be

today…]" and then brightens as she speaks again, "I think I would have been *this* person [pointing to herself]…I'm loud, I'm happy, I'm excited, I'm not embarrassed, I think I would have been *this* person in high school." When teachers are able to see all of their students in the complexity and beauty of who they are, it gives students permission to be exactly who they were meant to be: jubilant, excited, proud, and fully present in their schooling. Like Sophia, many educators of all backgrounds understand the challenges our students face. For these four *Revolucionista* educators and for all *Revolucionista* educators who seek to join the *Revolución,* a Mexicana/ Mestiza Ethic of Care provides the means to move beyond deficit frameworks of oppression to see the young people as sealed in the wisdom, beauty, and strength of their diverse identities and lived realities.

Recruitment and Retention of Mexican/Mexican-American Educators

Of the four Mexicana/Mexican-American female educator participants in this study, most had no more than two Mexican/Mexican-American teachers throughout her entire schooling. I originally went to Teresa, one of my first participants, to help me find other Mexican/Mexican-American female teacher participants at her school. She relays her frustration at finding so few, "I was astounded and I was saddened. And I looked at all the high schools and it's pretty much the same everywhere and it's not good…What *is* that? And it's *here*!" Teresa's dismay is not unfounded—even "here", 60 miles from the U.S./Mexico Border or in the Southwest where there are higher numbers of Mexicans/Mexican-Americans, the majority of educators working with Mexicano students are White. Disproportionate numbers of Mexican/Mexican-

American educators is an extant reality of 18th and 19th century district policies that fired and forbid the hiring of Mexican/Mexican-American teachers who got in the way of linguistic and cultural erasure for Mexicano children (Nieto-Phillips, 2004; Valencia, 2011b).

Penélope reveals knowledge of this history in discussion of her grandma's 1920's schoolyard photograph, "[b]ack in the day that's just how it was...it's the pobre...Mexican ...kids and the White teacher." Penélope grew up looking at this photograph hanging in her mother's hallway—looking into their faces, she saw children with no chance of ever having a teacher who was like them culturally or linguistically. In large part, it moved Penélope to become an educator. Within this history of educational marginalization, the very presence of Mexican/Mexican-American educators in classrooms serving Mexican/Mexican-American students and their families is itself an act of resistance within the *Revolución*.

While the presence of Mexicano educators in schools serving Mexicano students is not a simplistic answer, it does matter. As those rooted in an ancestry at the crossroads of racial and linguistic identities, we carry with us, to varying degrees, intergenerational *Testimonios*—bloodline knowing (Moraga, 2011) of racism, educational marginalization, linguistic silencing, assimilationist pedagogies, class struggles, and being marked foreign irrespective of the land of our birth. Like *Las Revolucionistas,* Mexican/Mexican-American educators come to the classrooms as the cultural inheritors of struggle and survival within dominant spaces. Within a

Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, these sites of knowledge may nourish and academically equip Mexicano students to do the same.

Programs of Teacher Education must recruit, retain, and prepare Mexican/Mexican-American educators to work within Mexican/Mexican-American communities. They must invest time and resources towards pipeline programs that identify Mexican/Mexican-American young people who are interested in becoming classroom educators. Teacher educators and programs of Teacher Education must support and guide Mexican/Mexican-American pre-service teachers and educational assistants through the process of teacher licensure. Sophia speaks of the deep significance of having just one teacher in high school who she could identify with culturally and linguistically:

> what she lives is what we live and what we do...we could relate and she understood my dad and my mom's situation...she would come over... bring us stuff because she knew we were new here and she would...invite us to places, to the church...she was trying to get us involved with the community so we became really close...she was one I could relate to...it made it more like, you, like you can see yourself in one of your teachers because I couldn't relate to most of them.

This *Revolucionista* educator knew Sophia. She understood Sophia's family and the places in which they struggled. She *lived what they lived* and *did what they did*; as such, she had the eyes to see her family not as a people struggling but as *sealed* members of community. These four Mexicana/Mestiza *Revolucionista* educators

bring knowledge that their very presence in classrooms for Mexicano students is an arm of the *Revolución*. The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed in this research calls for more Mexican and Mexican-American educators who will serve Mexican and Mexicano-American students and their families. As Sophia looked into the face of her Mexicana teacher and saw herself there, so too may Mexicano students see parts of themselves and their families within the classroom and within the faces and *beings* of their Mexicano educators.

Reframing Notions of Success

This Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care embodied in these four Mexicana/Mestiza educators' classrooms challenges us perhaps most at the site of our ideology and its alignment to dominant culture. To be sure, these educators are not untouched by dominant culture: They each speak of the process by which their families have survived and thrived by adapting to Anglo and English-speaking 'American' culture. These women are all either U.S.-born or have been raised here the vast majority of their lives. They hold U.S. Bachelor's and Master's degrees and have command of English. Despite their ability to live and work within dominant frames, their *Revolución* within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care endures and challenges educators at all levels and of all backgrounds to (re)frame mainstream notions of success and academic achievement within a high-stakes and competitive national schooling culture. This challenge to success is revealed in the context of Penélope's grandma's 1920's schoolyard photo. Penélope points to the photo and speaks these words:

> I don't want to say to do better than this...these kids in this picture have nothing to be ashamed of...there's a lot of things you can't control in life...be able to be powerful in some way, shape, or form...We can teach them [students] all the things in the book but at the end of the day, are they good people? Are they healthy...happy? To me those are the levels of success that mean the most.... I want them to do good things in this world...I want him [her son] to be worldly smart but I also want him to be connected with...family...to know our roots.

Penélope will not shame the children in this photo by teaching her students or her son to move past them or to "do better than that." Being "worldly smart[s]" or book smart does not define success because the totality of success, according to Penélope, is finding power within one's own realm: in being healthy, happy "good people" who do "good things in this world." Within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed here, success is found in being 'good' and in staying connected to one's history, family and community.

These Mexicana/Mestiza female educators challenge dominant frameworks of success by their actions and words, but also by their silence. Never do these four participants speak of state or national test scores within the context of theirs or student success. Never do they frame students' goodness within academic achievement or test scores, an aesthetic care (Valenzuela, 1999) found in mainstream White feminist Ethic(s) of Care. As these four participants challenge notions of

success that fall short of the totality of who their students are, the words of Jimmy Santiago Baca (1990) resonate:

> Papa gave us something...he bragged about us: he did not say we were...going to be rich someday. He said we were good. He held us up to the world for it to see, three children that were good, who understood love in a quiet way...that is how we made us: he offered us to the wind, to the mountains, to the skies. (p. 8)

In the words, actions, and silences of these four Mexicana/Mestiza educators stands a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that will not succumb to outside notions of success that leave their students out. As *Revolucionista* educators of all backgrounds, we too are challenged in how we frame success for the young people we work with. Standing within a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, we may resist narrow notions of 'success' and 'goodness' within the high-stakes cultures of schooling and dominant society that place ultimate value on power over others, wealth, competition, independence, and on demonstrated mastery of disconnected and quantifiable facts.

Methodological Implications

As the findings of this research have wide implications for those of all backgrounds: educators at all levels and researchers, it likewise has implications specific to researchers including research epistemologies and methodologies formed within both mainstream and Chicana Critical Feminist research frameworks. I come to this research through decolonizing research epistemologies and theoretical frameworks aiming to privilege silenced, delegitimized realities and rooted in

positioning participants centrally as co-creators of knowledge and authorities to the realm of their own experience (Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Smith, 2002; Villenas, 2010). As such, I adopted a *Testimonio* Methodology to inform this inquiry through a matrix of voice, action, image, and silence situated within the context of struggle and survival of a dominant and oppressive mainstream culture.

As this work unfolded, however, my Mexicana/Mestiza female educator participants challenged me to rethink and reconstruct methods within my *Testimonio* research methodology. Through the Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed in their curriculum, pedagogy and very *beings,* they likewise challenged me to confront specifically the ways in which notions of reciprocity and participation are framed within Critical Feminist research epistemologies.

Researcher Reflexivity within a *Testimonio* Methodology

One of the methods of data collection informing this research was the collection of at least two pieces of visual and photographic imagery from each participant. During our first focus group, I asked participants to take photographs of anything that communicated who they were as Mexican/Mexican-American teachers for predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students and their families. They were asked to take as many photos as they wanted and to select at least two that would be shared and analyzed collectively within focus group. The purpose of this method of data collection was to provide an impression and creative expression (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Eisner, 1993) of their own ethic of care and of a larger

Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. Participants' would soon reshape of this method and methodology and challenge me as a researcher and the conceptualization and construction of decolonizing, culturally informed research.

Participants each asked privately if they could bring their own photos that told the story of who they were as Mexicana female educators and why they did what they did for their Mexicano students. Present in their question were the beginnings of what I would come to find out and what they already knew: Their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care cannot be communicated through photos taken during this research because it is rooted in *Testimonios* dating back long before this research came into being. In their willingness to question and shape this method of data collection, they shaped me as a researcher in turn. This method of taking and sharing pictures was not actually reflective of my theoretical frameworks or Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology I was intent upon maintaining fidelity to. While my research question was intent upon uncovering participants' *Testimonios* of struggle and survival informing a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care, my method of data collection was framed in today and therefore could not help us in co-constructing the answer to this question.

Participants did take and share photographs of classroom spaces and class projects according to the methodology I originally outlined but they could not fully inform this work until my methodology made room for them to do so. The abundance of existing photographs they shared and the near absence of new photos was telling: Teresa took and shared one photographs from a recent ENLACE rally while Penélope

brought one photograph of a recent student research project on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sophia and Cruz did not take or share any new photographs at all, and they didn't need to—the *Testimonios* informing a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care could not be captured by photographs taken during this research. They focused a great deal of energy to the analysis of family and heirloom photos they brought depicting their cultural identities as well as those struggles, victories, and family/community responsibilities that nourished their practice of education while in contrast they treated the few and newly-taken photographs with brevity if not outright neglect within focus group. We must be cognizant as researchers that we are informed not just through words, actions, and images but also in participants' silences, hesitations, and in the seeming absence of data.

Within my participants' absent photographs lay the power to reshape and recommit me as a researcher to my theoretical frameworks and to my Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemology. As researchers of all backgrounds who work within communities whose lived realities are often silenced and delegitimized within dominant spaces, we must be ever-more cognizant that our research design allows for reflection and reflexivity. We must allow participant to give voice to shape research methodology and findings in a manner that validates and is informed by the lived realities and cultural frameworks that they inhabit.

Reshaping and Challenging Notions of Equal and Equitable Participation

According to Córdova's (1994) decolonizing methodologies, including those

found within Chicana Critical Feminist methodologies, call for participants' full involvement at every stage of the research process from the collection of data to its analysis. Participants must be a part of recursive and reflective analysis and potentially even the articulation and public presentation of new understandings. She states that "[T]he Chicana is in the best position to describe and define her own reality" (Córdova, 1994, p. 182) and as such, must participate as creators of knowledge within the quest for their own deeper understanding. And while dominant social science and anthropological research conducted within communities at the crossroads of delegitimized and marked identities calls researchers to work within inclusive and participatory research frameworks, the findings emerging from this work also call upon researchers to problematize what it means to participate equally, equitably, and at all stages of the research process.

According to Delgado Bernal (1998), a Chicana Feminist epistemology is situated within authority, voice, and the equitable co-creation of knowledge between researcher and participants. Herein, the inclusion of research participants in data analysis creates spaces in which participants are "speaking subjects who take part in producing and validating knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, pp. 575). Chicana Critical Feminist research epistemologies involve participants equitably at multiple levels of data collection and analysis (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Delgado Bernal, 1998). As researchers committed to honoring our participants' time, talent, and multiple familial and professional roles we must problematize notions of equal and equitable

participation within research epistemologies rooted in decolonization, participant voice, and co-creation of knowledge.

Within my methodology chapter titled "Data Analysis as Fashioning a Revolution with the People", I state that participants must be "fully engaged in self-authorship and self-representation at every stage within the research." I believed this deeply in a very literal sense when I wrote it and when I constructed my methodology and each method within this Chicana Critical Feminist *Testimonio*. My methodology originally called for participants to audio-record self-reflections of individual the semi-structured *Testimonios*, my observation notes taken in their classrooms, the photographs they shared, and of our focus group meetings. Participants were to record them and I would transcribe them as another data source informing this work.

As I spent more time with participants, I became increasingly aware of all of the multiple ways in which their Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed itself outside of their classrooms. They took full-time and sometimes sole responsibility for children, for their parents, for student clubs and groups. They participated in carwashes to raise money for students and their families who were facing deportation, poverty, and the high costs that come with incarceration and unexpected death. These *Revolucionistas* carried the weight of the *Revolución* in their hands and on their hearts both for their students and within their own families.

Within this knowledge and my own Chicana Critical Feminist theoretical framework and situated within my own researcher positionality, I could not bear to add one more responsibility to what they carry. I had originally perceived self-

reflections as the epitome of participatory inclusion—as a space for participant voice in the co-creation of knowledge and a means to collectively reveal a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care. What I did not then realize was that in designing research methodology within frameworks positioning full participation in all stages of the research as equitable authority within the shaping of the research, I was actually working against my decolonizing and social justice frameworks. I was not valuing the complex lives, multiple roles, and extensive responsibilities my participants were already carrying.

As researchers of all backgrounds who work within communities living in the complexity of struggle for dignity, educational access, economic stability, the right to live and work freely in this country, we must challenge our own work within the context of research frameworks of equality and equity, at all stages of the research process. Discourses of equality positions full participant involvement in all stages of data collection, analysis, and the public presentation of findings. Within these frameworks of equality, we as researchers impose our identities and our tasks onto the participants who already have their own identities and share of tasks. We must ask ourselves if our methodologies are serving our participants or solely our own academic and professional ends. We must work to devise methodologies that honor our participants' voices and lived realities while balancing the myriad professional and familial roles they inhabit every day. This involves building frameworks of equitable participation that ask participants to contribute their voices and experiences

meaningfully in ways that are enriching to them and build deeper understanding for them.

We must be honest with ourselves and with our frameworks when we say that participants' full and equal participation is inherently rooted in ethical principles. We must look beyond what we provide to participants during time we are conducting our research: the things we buy, the meals we cook or take-out, or the unique though time-bound opportunities that may arise through their connection to us as researchers and the institutions with which we are affiliated. We must challenge constructions of reciprocity circumscribed thusly and look for ways to make our research an opportunity for participants to see themselves and to be seen in ways that are meaningful to them within the context of their families and communities. We must listen to participants when they express what is meaningful to them and how we as researchers may design researchers in a manner that honors who our participants are and brings them not equally but equitably into the role of co-creators of knowledge in their own quest for deeper meaning.

Future Research

Present research has been conducted in the rural Southwest with four Mexican and Mexican-American female educators living and working 60 miles from U.S/Mexico Border with predominantly Mexican, and Mexican-American students and their families. Future research will focus upon Mexican/Mexican-American female educators living and working within a Mexican immigrant community situated within an urban context. Identifying a larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that

transcends geography, residential status, and native language informs a larger practice of education rooted in esperanza [hope] (Anzaldúa, 1983; Moraga, 2011) and equity for Mexican/Mexican-American communities. Expanding this research across rural and urban spaces and across diverse ways of being Mexicano further challenges 30 years of apolitical, humanistic, maternal, and moral White liberal ethic(s) of care (Gilligan, 1982; Larrabee, 1993; Noddings, 1992, 2003; Thompson, 1998) not strong enough to make change in the lives of young people still struggling to survive at the intersection of contested identities.

Seeking connectedness to a larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care offers a means by which educators and researchers of all backgrounds may better serve the needs of rapidly growing Mexican/Mexican-American communities who continue to struggle for educational access and economic equity (J. González, 2011; Pew Research Group, 2011; U.S. Census, 2012). A larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care rooted in creating spaces of healing and resistance offers a more complex and contextualized framework and ultimately the means by which to equip Mexican/Mexican-American young people across the country, and all historically and continuously marginalized young people, with the means to survive and thrive within and beyond the structures of education (Knight, et al., 2006; Oesterreich, 2007). Naming a larger, transcendent Mexicana/Mestiza Critical Feminist Ethic of Care provides all educators and researchers with a powerful framework from which to build curriculum and pedagogy whereby students may find the critical care to academically equip them to take their rightful place in the world in body/mind/spirit.

Conclusion

The Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care revealed by these four Mexicana/Mestiza educators has implications for educators and researchers of all backgrounds. It challenges *Revolucionista* educators and researchers of all backgrounds to reframe notions of social justice revolution for those at the crossroads of subjugated social identities. A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care roots curriculum and pedagogy within diverse *Testimonios* of struggle and ultimate survival and resilience, and in doing so calls us to move beyond deficit frameworks of oppression. A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care has implications for seeing all students not as marked within the struggle but as *sealed* in the complexity of being. It likewise has implications for speaking back to mainstream notions of success by adopting a lens of 'goodness' of being and doing. A Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care likewise provides methodological and ethical implications for academic researchers.

As tightly wrapped within the *hoja*, the corn husk, of her *being* as Anzaldúa's (1987) *mestiza* are Luis Urrea's (2005) characters Huila, equal parts Godmother/healer/teacher/mystic and a young Teresita who Huila is preparing to follow in her footsteps. The elder Huila emboldens Teresita's practice by calling her to plant herself into the earth below her, and within her call a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care of word, flesh, and spirit likewise calls. Huila speaks:

> Stand inside the earth...connect with the earth, nothing can move you...Say it. *I am in the earth...And the earth is in me*...Push into the earth. Then you

have roots...Plant them. Deep in the soul...Let your heart shine. (Urrea, 2005, pp. 268-269)

These Mexicana/Mestiza female educators never cease to be *Revolucionistas* for their Mexicano students' dignity and rightful place in this world even though they construct their practice, ethic of care, and themselves outside of the frameworks of social justice revolution we have been taught to see and recognize. They do not speak revolution—like Urrea's (2005) Teresita who is one with the earth in heart and body, these four female educators' Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care is woven into the flesh and fiber of their very beings. Their intergenerational *Testimonios* are inextricable from who they are for the young people in their classrooms. For Penélope, the interwoven essence of her Ethic is expressed as "taking who we are out there and bringing it back and constantly growing and coming back." *These four female Mexicana/Mestiza educators are the Revolución:* they stand firmly in the soil of uprising, nourished by intergenerational *Testimonios* of struggle and ultimate survival. If we as educators and researchers of all backgrounds can tune our eyes and our ears to recognize their *Revolución* and to let our hearts shine with theirs, we will hear them calling us to join.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP 1 PROTOCOL: SITUATING THE STUDY

1. What would you say a teacher's *job description* is?
2. What do you think is required of *you* as part of your job as a teacher?
3. Can you tell me about a time when you feel like you went beyond that job description? Can you tell me about a time when you resisted it?
4. Can you recall a time when you had to fight for a student or their family?
5. How do you see yourself in the lives of the young people you teach?
6. Can you describe a teacher you have witnessed in your school who you feel like interacts with the students and/or their families in a way that feels good to you?
7. What is it about this approach that feels good to you?
8. Does this approach feel similar to or different from school experiences you yourself have had? What aspects stand out to you as being similar or different?
9. Have participants bring a passage (self-authored or from another) that is meaningful to them in regards to their teaching

   What is your reaction to this passage?

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED *TESTIMONIO* PROTOCOL INTERVIEW ONE

How are personal, familial, community histories of education and the particular *testimonios* of survival and uplift embodied by Chicana educators of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students?

> **What are the personal and community histories that have drawn participants to the teaching profession?**

General Background

1. Where are you from?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. Who you would you say was instrumental in raising you? Who were the adults in your home growing up?
4. Who would you say was responsible for holding it down in your immediate family or wider community? Who was the backbone and why?
5. How are you like or not like that person?
6. Could you point to any of the things you say or do with your students that have been influenced by people in your upbringing? Could you point to any specific person or persons who have affected the things you do or don't do as a teacher?
7. How did you/your family come to live in this area?
8. How would you describe your background or ethnicity or race?
9. How would you describe your family's financial circumstances growing up?
10. Where is your family from?
11. How would you describe your family's relationship to English?

Family Background and Schooling

12. What would you say was your family's biggest challenge?
13. What was your greatest strength?
14. How would you describe your family's experiences with schooling?
15. What level of education did your parents complete?
16. How did their financial situation impact how they were viewed or treated by others?
17. Were there ways that the *Mexicano* identity of your family impacted the way members of your family were treated by others in society?
18. Did you ever feel like there was a link between your family being *Mexicano* and their financial circumstances? Were there any ways these were related?

19. How would you characterize the way males and females were treated within your family? What were or are your feelings connected to being a female within your particular family?
20. Could you describe a time when being female affected how you or female members of your family were treated *outside* of the family?
21. Of any of the things you have just described, could you describe your level of awareness while growing up?
22. Did you ever feel like your identity limited opportunities that were available to you? Could you name anything specific that made this the case?
23. How would you describe your teachers' understanding of your home dynamics in relation to school or your being a student? How did their understanding of these dynamics make you feel?

Participants' Schooling

24. What was school like for you growing up?
25. How would you describe yourself as a student?
26. In terms of school, can you describe aspects of school you felt good about? Why do you think this was the case?
27. Can you describe aspects that you struggled with?
28. Why do you think you struggled in this way?
29. Who do you think was there for you at school? What did that look like?
30. What do you think teachers thought about your potential or ability? How did what teachers thought about you make you feel?
31. Could you describe any aspects of who you are that may have influenced how teachers saw you? In other words, what were the ingredients that made the "cake" of their opinion of you, do you think?
32. Can you describe one teacher in particular who you think did *not* see your potential or ability?
33. How are you either like or unlike this particular teacher?
34. Could you describe a teacher who really *saw* you for who you were? What did s/he think about your potential or abilities?
35. How were you made aware of their opinion of you or your abilities?
36. How are you either like or unlike this particular teacher?
37. Did you think teachers were fair to you? Was there ever a teacher who you felt treated you differently than other students? Why do you think this was so?
38. In what ways did you feel like your identity influenced the way you were seen or treated outside of school?

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED *TESTIMONIO* PROTOCOL INTERVIEW TWO

What pedagogies and practices rooted in *testimonios* do Chicana, Mexican and Mexican-American educators utilize to sustain, nourish, and challenge their Mexican and Mexican-American students?

a. **What are their philosophies of teaching and learning and how are they enacted pedagogically and curricularly?**
b. **What perspectives do participants hold of their students, and how does this impact the educational and interactional approach that they take in the classroom and beyond?**
c. **What do participants view as their role within the classroom?**

1. In what ways are you the same or different from some of the kids you teach? What are the ingredients of this being the same or different?
2. Is there anything that you do in your classroom or with your kids and their families that you feel you do *because* of some of the experiences you have described throughout this inquiry? How would you describe those aspects of your teaching?
3. If you could change something about school or your own teachers growing up, what would that be?
4. After participating in this research study, do you believe there are particular things you do in your classroom because of what was or was not available to you in your own schooling?
5. Could you describe anything that you do in your classroom consciously that addresses a certain need you believe some of your students to have? What is that need and how do you address it?
6. Can you describe one student who you could describe as similar to you? Can you describe why you think this?
7. Who is this student and what does he/she student teach you about working with kids?
8. Can you think of a student who you would describe as different than you? Why is he/she different? Can you give an example?
9. What does *this* particular student teach you about working with kids?
10. Is there anything about the way you see your students or their families that is different from how you believe they are seen by others? How might you describe this difference?
11. What do you think creates the view that you see your students and their families through?
12. How does this perspective you have of your students show up in the classroom?

13. In what ways does your approach to teaching differ from some of your colleagues? Why do you think there is a difference?
14. In what ways does your approach parallel that of some of your colleagues? Why do you think this is the case?
15. What would you say you have learned about yourself as a teacher from this study?
16. What is something you learned from another participant in this study about working with Mexican/Mexican-American kids?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Please take or bring photographs that reflect or communicate any of the following: 1) who you are as a teacher, 2) what you do in your role as teacher, and 3) any of the motivations behind the teacher role you have chosen and the particular choices you make in your teaching.

You are free to take bring as many photographs as you wish. You will ultimately choose two photos that will be sent to me to print and be discussed within our larger research group. Discussion will take place within our 3rd focus group, the exact date of which will be decided by members.

Individual Reporting of Photos to the Group

1. Tell me about this photo. What do you see? Why did you take this picture?
2. What does this photo tell you about yourself as a teacher?
3. Can you describe an educational choice reflected in your own photo that is a reaction to or is here *because of* what you yourself have experienced in your own schooling?

Group Interactions About the Photos

4. Can you describe something that you see in another's photo that reminds you of something in your own school history?
5. When you look across these pictures, tell me something that you think they might have in common?
6. What does this photo tell us about what is important in terms of teaching and kids?

APPENDIX E

METHOD DESCRIPTION

Research Questions:

1. What is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care?

2. What are the *testimonios* of struggle, resistance and survival that inform Mexicana and Mexican-American educators?

3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?

Method of Collection	Research Question	Who is Collecting	Method of Recording	Frequency
1. Field Observations throughout the duration of the research **Subject of 2nd and 4th FG**	1. What is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care? 3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?	Mia	Written notes	I observed each of the four teachers for three hours per week Total: 12 hours/week

2. Visual Imagery of own classroom (Guiding questions: Appendix D) **Subject of 3rd FG**	1. What is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care? 3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?	Participants	Photographs	Participants took photographs of classroom curriculum and pedagogy and also brought their own family and personal photographs from home. I printed and provided 5x7 copies of each photo for sharing within Focus Group 3.
3. Ongoing Self-reflections by participants	1. What is an Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care? 3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?	Participants	Ongoing self-reflections	Participants engaged in ongoing self-reflection throughout the research. They reflected upon observational notes, individual semi-structured *testimonio* interviews, photographs they brought for sharing, focus group meetings, and conversations that took place during the duration of the research. Participants wrote their ongoing self-reflections into the margins of observational notes, all interview transcripts, and verbally communicated them throughout the research with each other, myself as researcher, and with family members.

Self-Reflections were present during all Focus Groups.				
4. Individual semi-structured interviews one and two (Interview protocol: Appendix B and C)	Interview 1: 2. What are the *testimonios* of struggle, resistance and survival that inform Mexicana and Mexican-American educators? Interview 2: 3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators?	Mia	Audio recording, note taking, and subsequent printed transcripts	2 semi-structured *testimonios* were conducted for each participant. All interviews were conducted at the time and location of participants' choosing. Recorded interviews were immediately transcribed by me as researcher and shared with participants. Total: 8 interviews

5. Focus Group (FG) Interviews Appendix A: Protocol for FG 1, Situating the Study Appendix C: Protocol for FG 3, Photographic Representations Focus Groups 2 and 4 did not utilize protocols as they were guided by the observational data and self-reflections of said data by participants. Focus Group 5 was guided by the culmination of all collected and analyzed research data participants' and I had up to that point.	2. What are the *testimonios* of struggle, resistance and survival that inform Mexicana and Mexican-American educators? 3. What pedagogies and practices of Mexicana and Mexican-American female teachers of predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students are manifested and infused into their roles as educators? <u>Ultimately…</u> 1. What is a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care?	Mia	Audio Recording and note taking	5 Focus Groups served as data collection and analysis throughout the duration of this research. I indicate below the main focus of each as well as the research question that they were intent upon answering. 1: Situate study (1,2) 2, 4: Observational data, began to notice and name emerging themes (1, 3) 3: Photographs (1,3) 5: Culmination of themes, self-reflections, (1,2) Total: 5 focus groups

Method Descriptions

1. My observation Field Observations took place throughout the entire duration of the research Total: Three hours per week per teacher for a total of 12 hours	Field observations took place with each teacher for three hours per week, per teacher. I spent a total of 12 hours observing each teacher within the classroom, within school spaces, as well as outside of the school day and outside of what is typically considered curricular and school spaces. I observe things teacher participants said, did, where they stood, the language(s) they used and when, the kinds of things they had on their walls, how they dealt with behavior issues, the content they were teaching, the materials they used, how they introduced the material, and the way they interacted with students who asked for help. I also observed participants as they went about their day and interacted with students, students' families, colleagues, and administration in varying capacities in order to determine who these teachers are, how and why they teach, and how their practice may be rooted in their understanding and experiences with schooling and education and how their identity as a *Mexicana*/Mexican-American plays in. I took freehand notes throughout classroom observations and also recorded recollections within a researcher journal that I kept throughout the research.
3. Visual Imagery	During the first focus group meeting in which we set up the schedule and general focus of the research, I discussed with participants how the photographic data collection was to take place and what role participants would take in the research. Participants were informed that the purpose of this visual and photographic method of data collection was to reflect their curriculum, classroom practices, and pedagogies and ultimately each of their ethics of care and a larger Ethic of Care that they shared as Mexicana/Mexican-American female educators. Participants were asked to take photographs of anything that they felt conveyed who they are as Mexican/Mexican-American teachers of Mexicano/Mexican-American students. Participants were asked if they themselves had cameras with digital capacities on them that they could use for photography and the subsequent sharing of digital photographs with me. I informed them that if they did not, I would provide these for them. They each later

	informed me that they had Smart Phones that were able to take photographs that could later be emailed or sent in text message. I informed participants that they could take as many photos as they wanted and that they would be asked to share at least two within our third focus group. After our first meeting, I quickly received both text messages and phone calls from each participant asking if they could likewise share photographs they had in their collection that conveyed who they are as Mexican and Mexican-American female educators for predominantly Mexican/Mexican-American students. I agreed to this request and restructured my methodology accordingly. Participants shared family photographs dating back several generations their families had framed and displayed in their homes. They also shared printed photographs of themselves as children, their siblings, and their children that were part of their own collection I made 5x7 copies of photographs that had been sent to me via text message. Two photographs total were taken by participants during the research itself while vast majority of photographs shared during our third focus (thirty-one in all) were brought to share that night and I made copies to share with participants after the fact. Photographs served as a site of ongoing self-reflection for participants and myself throughout the study. Participants regularly referred back to them within our later focus groups and within the last semi-structured *testimonios*.
4. Ongoing Self-Reflections	Participants engaged in self-reflection throughout the duration of the research. Their self-reflection took many forms and blended with my own as researcher. Participants communicated their self-reflections in many forms including within Focus Groups, within informal conversation with each other, myself, and within their homes and with family members. They likewise wrote their self-reflections into the margins of the data that was made available to them within this study. Self-reflections into their individual ethic of care continually informed our understanding of a larger Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and created a space in which participants were co-creating knowledge and deepening theirs and my understanding of who they are as Mexicana female educators for predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American students and their families.

5. Indiv semi-structured *testimonios* 2 interviews per participant Total: 8 interviews Conducted at the beginning and end of semester	Participants were interviewed individually anywhere from 60-90 minutes in the location and at a time that was most convenient for them. *Testimonios* in most cases took place within participants' classrooms after their school day had ended. In other cases, we utilized larger school spaces including conference rooms and lunch area. *Testimonios* were guided by interview protocols (Appendices B and C) but flexibility was maintained as I utilized my own intuition and was continually informed in my understanding by field observations within participants' classrooms and beyond. 2 Interviews informed this research, one which took place at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. The first *testimonio* focused on participant background, family background, motivations for teaching, and the connection between classroom practice and their own or familial experiences. It likewise focused on the connections participants were making in the study between their *testimonios* of struggle/survival and their classroom practices and ethic of care with their students. The second interview took place at the end of the study was emergent and focused on connections or meanings that participants made as a result of their participation in this inquiry. This second *testimonio* made connections to their first interview as well as other data that was collected throughout the semester. All interviews were recorded digitally, immediately transcribed by me, and provided to participants. Beginning in our second Focus Group which treated preliminary observational data, participants and I began seeing and naming nascent emerging themes. In my subsequent observational data, I built upon these themes and created a system of codes that participants and I began to use in subsequent Focus Groups and within our interactions regarding our growing understandings of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care.Transcripts

	were provided to each participant and were likewise coded by me as researcher and reflected upon with participants individually, within my observation notes which were shared with participants, and likewise within Focus Groups.
6. Focus Group Interviews	Participants and I will met five times over the course of this research. We alternated between the two schools in which these four participants worked. I provided dinner and drinks for all Focus Group meetings. Focus group meetings served as a means of further data collection as well as a means for analyzing the data that was collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, photographs, and self-reflections. Focus group meetings were audio recorded and immediately transcribed and shared with participants.
Focus Group 1: Situate study (1,2) Conducted: Mid August	The first focus group meeting situated the study and provided a place for all of the participants to meet each other formally and know who is participating in the study. In this first focus group meeting, I: 1) Introduced and described each of the data collection methods and the role that each participant would play in the collection of it, should they choose to participate. 2) Scheduled subsequent focus group meetings that averaged once per month, barring scheduling conflicts between participants. 3) Collected email and other contact information for each of the participants
Focus Groups 2 and 4: Observatio (1, 3) Conducted: Mid September and Mid November	The 2nd and 4th focus group meetings were focused on field observations that took place within classrooms and outside of school spaces by me, the principal researcher. During these two focus groups, we identified our ongoing understandings of tenets of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care that helped us to understand emerging themes that were revealed throughout the rest of the study. At the end of the 4th focus group (which is the second meeting dedicated to observation data), participants were asked to identify some recurring themes they are starting to see emerge—they were asked what the observational data showed them about who they were as Mexicana/Mexican-American female teachers for Mexicano students. They discussed patterns they continued to see emerging with all data sources as well as within their own classrooms in my absence.

Focus Group 3: Photographs (1,3) Conducted: Mid October	The 3rd focus group was intent upon the collection and analysis of photographic data that participants brought primarily from their homes and their families' homes. Participants responded to nine questions drew their attention to aspects of the photographs and the ways in which they relate to their own *testimonios,* their own ethic of care, and their growing understanding of a larger Ethic of Care. Through these questions as well as the discussion that emerged among the four participants and myself, we informed a greater understanding of the tenets of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care reflected. For a list of focus group questions that guided our focus group discussion, please see Appendix D. As each participant looked upon photographs provided by their fellow participants, our assembled Focus Group continued building upon themes that were continuing to emerge from the data and within participants' and my own self-reflections.
Focus Group 5: Culmination (1,2) Conducted: Mid December	The 5th Focus Group was a culmination of our growing understanding of a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care as revealed throughout the duration of this research. Participants and I brought together the knowledge we had co-constructed regarding a Mexicana/Mestiza Ethic of Care and its manifestations in their classrooms as well as its rootedness within their intergenerational *testimonios* of struggle and ultimate survival as Mexicana females. Participants discussed their individual, semi-structured *testimonios*, past Focus Group discussions, their self-reflections of ongoing observational data, and the manifestations of the Ethic of Care we were learning to see within in their classrooms. They discussed photographic data and what it continued to reveal about who they were as Mexicana educators for Mexicano kids, and they recounted conversations that this research had inspired with parents, siblings, friends, colleagues, and the meaning they themselves were continuing to make.

APPENDIX F

INFORMATIONAL COVER LETTER

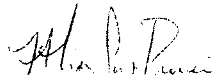
Estimadas Maestras y Colegas,

My name is Mia Angélica Sosa-Provencio and I am a native Las Crucen. I was a public school teacher of seven years before I began my PhD program at NMSU in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. As a *Mexicana*, Chicana, Hispana, and/or Mexican-American (depending on the day!!), I have always wanted to know how to best serve our *Mexicano* and Mexican-American kids within our public schools, and my study reflects this ongoing question. The purpose of my study, *Cultural Armor and Living in the Crossroads: Surviving and Thriving through Mexicana/Mestiza Critical Feminist Ethic(s) of Care*, is to examine the educational approaches that Mexican and Mexican-American female teachers take when working with mostly Mexican/Mexican-American students. I want to know what it means to you to be a teacher of Mexican/Mexican-American kids. I want to know how you as a teacher define education, how you interact with your students and their families, and why you do what you do with students. I also want to know the particular experiences in your life and education that have influenced the kind of teacher that you are.

Participation in this research carries with it some benefits. I hope that you will benefit from the shared space that will be created with other educators as we delve into what it means to be a teacher of Mexican/Mexican-American students. You will also have the benefit of having a community to speak with about the challenges you face as well as a space to talk about the ways in which you have been successful over the years. Participation in this research does pose the potential for emotional risk and possible discomfort—it will require ongoing observation of your classroom spaces and interactions with students. It will also require getting to know you, your experiences, and your thoughts and feelings regarding your teaching. This process of inquiry will involve recorded your own self-reflections in many forms, photographs that you will take and share, and group and individual interviews. Much of this research will involve meeting in a group of no more than five people (including myself as the researcher) to discuss the particular experiences and life stories that have shaped you as teacher. All that is shared within the group will remain confidential and protected at all times, and if at any time you feel uncomfortable with any part of the inquiry you may choose not to participate.

If you have any questions regarding this research project and/or wish to participate, please feel free to contact me, Mia, by phone at (505) 452-6677 or by email at miaangel@nmsu.edu or mia_angelica@hotmail.com. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Heather Oesterreich, Associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction at NMSU with any questions or concerns. She can be reached by phone at 575-646-2194 or by email: heathero@nmsu.edu

Con Todo Respeto,



Mia Angélica Sosa-Provencio

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Study:

Cultural Armor and Living in the Crossroads:Surviving and Thriving through Mexicana/Mestiza Critical Feminist Ethic(s) of Care

Researcher:

Mia Angélica Sosa-Provencio
Graduate Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
New Mexico State University
(505) 452-6677

Description of Study:

The purpose of this research is to observe, document, and more deeply understand the curriculum of no more than four Mexican and Mexican-American female educators teaching and working within predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American communities. It also seeks to understand the experiences and historical realities that are foundational to these classroom practices and educational philosophies.

Ultimately, what I want to know is how an educational approach that acknowledges and honors students' educational needs, cultural/linguistic backgrounds, and knowledge/strengths may better meet the needs of historically underserved students, specifically those from Mexican and Mexican-American backgrounds.

Time Commitment:

Participation in this research study will require a time commitment on your part over the duration of one semester. Should you choose to be involved in this study, you will be asked to participate in two individual interviews totaling about one hour each. You will also be asked to participate in six focus group meetings ranging from 60-90 minutes each. These will be held outside of the school day and will be scheduled according to participant requests. In addition, you will be asked to take photos of your classroom spaces and reflect upon your classroom approach and role as teacher; however, both the taking of photographs and the recording of reflections will be accomplished individually and according to your own time schedule.

Benefits:

As a participant, it is my hope that you will join me in reflecting upon your classrooms and curriculum to more deeply understand the educational approach that you use in your classroom and the experiences and histories that have helped create it.

This study looks to understand how female Mexicana and Mexican-American educators define ourselves as 'teachers' and how we define for ourselves and for our students what is knowledge, teaching, and learning.

It is my hope that you will likewise benefit from this study by being part of a reflective and thoughtful community of Mexicana/Mexican-American female educators who are also looking to more deeply understand their own practice (I include myself in this group as well) and the ways in which our unique and perhaps culturally and historically rooted approaches may benefit and serve our Mexican/Mexican-American students and their families.

Risks:

Professionally, this research bears no risk to you or your position within your school or district. All information collected within this research will remain strictly confidential.

Involvement in this research project may pose potential emotional risk. You as a participant will be asked questions regarding your teaching and your life experiences that may elicit an emotional response. You are in no way required to share information of a personal or confidential nature and may wish to decline the question or participation in the research at any time.

If at any time you wish to speak with a professional regarding any emotions that may emerge within the course of this research study, the Las Cruces Public School Employee Assistance Program has resources available to you.
Kathi Becker, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, is available for counseling support free of charge. Her contact information is kbecker@lcps.k12.nm.us and her work phone is 575-527-6028. Here is a website where you may find more information regarding services:
http://lcps.k12.nm.us/departments/superintendent/human-resource-development/employee-assistance/

Confidentiality:

At the beginning of this research project you will be given the opportunity to select a pseudonym. When I make copies of your writings or my own notes, I will remove your name from all documents and replace it with a pseudonym for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality. A codebook will be created that connects your pseudonym with your real name. The codebook will be kept in a locked location separate from the data. All data will be kept for three years following the completion of the study and will then be destroyed.

Withdrawal Privilege:

At any time during this research and any time afterwards, you can decide that you no longer want to participate in this study. Your decision to withdraw at any time from the study will carry no social or professional penalties or repercussions for you.

Voluntary Nature of Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.
If you sign below you are indicating that you understand the contents of this form.
If you have any questions pertaining to this research please contact me,
Mia Sosa-Provencio, by email at miaangel@nmsu.edu and by phone at 505-452-6677.

Should you have any concerns, you may contact my advisor, Heather Oesterreich PhD, by email at heathero@nmsu.edu or by phone at 575-646-2194. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Compliance at New Mexico State University at (575) 646-7177 or at ovpr@nmsu.edu.

New Information: Any new information obtained during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to continue participation in the study will be provided to you.

Signature: Your signature on this consent form indicates that you fully understand the above research study as well as what is being asked of you, and that you are signing this voluntarily. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to ask them now or at any time throughout the study.

Printed Name________________________________

Signature ____________________________________Date_______________

*A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

APPENDIX H

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH

I, ____________, Principal of _______________ School have met with Mia Sosa-Provencio, PhD Candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at New Mexico State University, and fully understand her research study, , *Cultural Armor and Living in the Crossroads: Surviving and Thriving through Mexicana/Mestiza Critical Feminist Ethic(s) of Care*. This research will be conducted during the fall 2013 semester beginning August 1, 2013 and ending December 20, 2013.

I have thoroughly read through her Informed Consent Form and Cover Letter that both describe her project in detail and will be used to recruit and inform participants of potential benefits and risks of her research study. I, as head principal of ____________, grant permission for Mia Sosa-Provencio to conduct her research on our main school campus located at ___________________________.

By signing below, I attest that I fully understand this research project. Furthermore, I have been made aware that this research includes her physical presence and observations within the school site, particularly in the classrooms of her chosen research participants. I also understand that I nor ___________________ School are contractually obligated to allow this research to take place on school grounds and that I may revoke privileges hereby granted at any point during this fall 2013 semester. My contact information is as follows, should there be any need for verification:

Contact Information:

_________________________/___________________________

Email / Phone Number

_________________________/_____________________________/_________

Printed Name / Signature / Date

Mia Angélica Sosa-Provencio, Principal Investigator
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(505) 452-6677