How do we come to understand the very meaning of heterosexualism as tied to a persistently violent domination that marks the flesh multiply by accessing the bodies of the unfree in differential patterns devised to constitute them as the tortured materiality of power?
— Maria Lugones, *Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System*

My lesbianism is the avenue through which I have learned the most about silence and oppression, and it continues to be the most tactile reminder to me that we are not free human beings.
— Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years*

RESISTANCE ACTS UNTIL WE ARE FREE: Transforming Heteropatriracial Violence in/and Chican@ Studies

Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo

From 2008–2012, Chican@ feminist students and faculty resisted and challenged heteropatriarchal institutional violence at California State University, Long Beach (CSU Long Beach), particularly within Chicano Studies and the La Raza student organization.[1] We fought against a series of unrelenting attacks that escalated the everyday hostilities that we endured in these heteropatriarchal institutional structures. The

term *heteropatriarchal* speaks to the interdependence of patriarchal and heteronormative social imaginations and structures.[2] This paper considers heteropatriarchal formations in light of their colonial roots and contemporary colonial institutional ordering; it focuses on the ways they produce unmitigated violence in our communities, social movements, and in the institutions outcroppings that derive from them, particularly Chicano Studies. I argue that these formations and the violence they produce deeply threaten our community's sustainability. The liberatory politics and possibilities aspired to by Chicano and Latino Studies will weaken if they are unable to center and sustain being shaped and informed by Chican@/Latin@ queer and trans–feminist knowledges. Moreover, any discussion of decolonization is futile rhetoric if it fails to put into praxis a meaningful and continuous commitment to feminist, queer, and trans–Chican@s/Latin@s. The practice of decolonization in the twenty-first century requires a formidable accountability to these communities.

In the twenty-first century, the precariousness in which our imagined safe havens of Ethnic and Chicana/o Studies find themselves is constituted not just from external attacks—from the university, the state, the market and neoliberal/corporatist intensification—but also from the convergence of external *and* internal attacks against queer, feminist, and trans–Chican@ Studies. Indeed, racial and colonial attacks against Chicana/o Studies and our communities also manifest as heteropatriarchal attacks within Chicana/o Studies and within our communities, including social justice movements and organizations. These attacks hinder our abilities to survive, let alone thrive as a people, as communities, and as an academic field, limiting the transformative social change that is possible.[3] Most importantly, these attacks harm the hearts, bodies, minds, and spirits of our communities.

As Chican@ feminists and queer Chican@s at CSU Long Beach, we endured a tremendous ordeal that taxed and disparaged our sense of ourselves and

sought to strip us of our dignity. Institutional structural organization and power derided us, divided us from our collective strength, sowing the seeds of fear inside our hearts. Cornered, we found ourselves in that familiar feeling of powerlessness people under attack know so well. We writhed through the brutal blows of our oppressors. Caught in the heteropatriarchal practices of these institutions, we witnessed our acquiescence in our own capturing; although the terms of the sequester were not determined by us, loyalties to careers and jobs made us complicit, as did the social and institutional protections we accepted when we delivered our subordination.

I wrestle to find the words inside heartbreaks that would rather not speak. Deep into the threshold of dawn, I walk away from sleep; words beckon. In the depths of night, I am never alone. In the quiet, the spirit breathes, listens. Many surround. The voices are of the ones who did not make it; they remind us that there is work to do—their lives not forsaken. The stolen lives of Latinas and of queer and transgender Latin@s—from Juárez to Tucson, San José to the East Bay, and to East L.A.—their voices, their bodies, and their lives were taken.

The stories of their lives and of their catastrophic suffering are not separate from the long continuum of everyday violence many of us endure, rather it is through the stitching of everyday heteropatriarchal violence that feminicidal violence against Latin@s in the material realm is made possible. Feminicide is rooted in and ordered by routinized quotidian complicities that reproduce colonial heteropatriarchal structures in Latina/o communities in what appear to be everyday practices (Castañeda 1998; Fregoso and Bejarano 2010). Stories of violence intertwine across geographies of time and space. Our lives and our ancestors' lives forge an unseen network of resistance acts, offering up the wisdom and imagination of centuries of struggle.

Together, our voices merge to contest heteropatriarchal violence; they spell out the ways colonialism inextricably orders sex, gender, sexuality, and race, promulgating racialities that structure and are structured by heteropatriarchal sociocultural ordering. Colonialism relies principally on Chicanas/os and Latinas/os who internalize heteropatriarchal colonial subjectivities. Disciplined in the university and beyond, we bear the markers of inferiority in these terms and are thus recruited into the practice of violently reproducing the markers. When Chicanas/os participate in and reproduce heteropatriarchal logics, we are complicit in and fortify the colonial and racial project against our communities. As this essay asserts, from the Spanish conquest to coloniality in the present, colonization deploys and structures social ordering through heteropatriarchal imperatives.

In the Place Where Our Blood Still Spills

Heteropatriarchal violence serves to consistently remind women of color, trans– and queer people of color that we are not free. Soul wounds dug up trenches of fear that crawled up hearts and bodies that brought us here—to this place where our blood still spills.

> how callous your heart
> to betray us so willingly?
> you took sacred words
> brandished them like knives.
>
> slashing hearts and spirits,
> you called for our deaths.
> we gathered to speak our truths,
> to reclaim ourselves,
> tell herstories

and you called for our deaths
ones that may be our brothers,
our sisters, even.
twisting spain's colonial torture
and disdain for indigenous bodies
indigenous ways
you scrawled Chicano imaginary
onto Nahuatl words
deploring the queer
obeying colonial dictates.

You called for our deaths.

"Las mariconas son unas cochinas.
Deben ser destruidas y eliminadas.
A los jotos y a las malfloras les cortan la cabeza….
Homosexualidad, empalamiento para el sujeto activo;
extracción de las entrañas,
por el orificio anal, para el sujeto pasivo….
Lesbianismo, muerte por garrote."[4]

how colonialism
teaches us to hate ourselves.
you called for our deaths.
each stroke of the pen
a strike
at your own heart.

xthere are many ways to die.
and, we all died a little then.
buried a piece of ourselves, there.
what is left
when the heart has been slashed?

A barrage of violent language was launched at those who dared insurrect against colonial heteropatriarchal practices in Chicano Studies and Chicano student/movement organizations at CSU Long Beach. These attacks, like prior ones, spoke through the university and its relevant institutional organizations. In the less than two years since my hire, my welcome to a tenure-track position in Chicano Studies fused to produce a barrage of barriers to my success, as it did for other Chicana and queer Chican@ faculty. At a time when more than half of the jobs for which I applied were closed as a result of the neoliberal defunding of Ethnic Studies, I was fortunate enough to have accessed a tenure track position, but also blindsided by the terms of my hire as attacks against our Chicana/o Studies emerged from inside Chicano Studies.

In the Spring of 2010 we gathered with generations of Chicana feminists whose struggles and presence brought movement lessons, ones learned at great costs, and together we began building and growing an intergenerational community of Chicana feminists. Anna Nieto Gomez, Hijas de Cuauhtémoc, ¡presente! They were the ones who withstood prior violence at CSU Long Beach to forge the future of Chicana feminisms. Cherríe Moraga, ¡presente! You, maestra of queer feminist subterranean movements-in-the-making.

They wielded words aimed at us all—organizers, allies, and speakers—launching specific attacks on Alma Lopez and Moraga. Lorna Dee Cervantes writes in

a poem that speaks to institutional racialized attacks on our dignity, "There are snipers in the school…the bullets are…designed to kill slowly (1990)." In metaphor, she speaks to the psychic toll of the ideological violence perpetrated against people of color in educational institutions. These words offer language to understand the casualty of the newspaper comments. While Cervantes addresses racial violence in the poem, her words resonate with my experience and elucidate the ways in which heteropatriarchal attacks against us are racially coded and organized at the university.

To further illustrate this, I want to signal that the heteropatriarchal attacks against the Chicana Feminisms Conference organizers and speakers appeared in the university's newspaper, *The Daily '49er*. Chican@ students and faculty have repeatedly struggled to change both the title of the newspaper and its content, arguing against racial hostility as expressed, for example, in a name that euphemistically memorializes Anglo settler colonizers of the Southwest. As an atom of the state, the university manages racial hierarchical categorization and notions of belonging to and exclusion from these categories. This work is performed and routinized in its institutional structures, through admissions procedures, housing decisions, statistical methods, and the campus newspaper. Chicano comments in response to the Chicana Feminisms Conference mimicked the state and university's authority to determine racial categorization of belonging, marginalization, and, as Cervantes suggests, even murder. Chicanas/os who wrote the comments did so in accordance with the long history of the university's racial and heteropatriarchal organization of institutional spaces that would grant permission to post such comments in the first place, and furthermore to keep said comments posted.[5] Thus we witnessed firsthand the ways in which racial and heteropatriarchal violence converge in Chicana/o communities within institutional structures of the university.

The heteropatriracial violence that took place at CSU Long Beach early in the twenty-first century has roots in the very formation of Chicano Studies. In 2011, at a roundtable at the second Chicana Feminisms Conference we hosted, and forty-two years following the founding conference of the Chicano Movement, a Chicana scholar narrated her experience with rape at the National Youth and Liberation Conference in Denver in 1969. It was at that conference where *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, considered the basic plan of Chicano liberation, emerged. A month later, *El Plan de Santa Barbara* was presented at the University of California, giving rise to MEChA and Chicano Studies. Both of these documents articulate self-determination as the path to justice. The principles of the latter state: "We believe that higher education must contribute to the formation of a complete man who truly values life and freedom." *Whose lives, whose freedom, and whose self-determination is imagined as valuable in these Chicano nationalist imaginaries, I ask?* Cynthia Orozco, referencing Mary Pardo's evaluation of *El Plan*, argues that, "[N]ot once did it make reference to women, female liberation, or Chicana studies. Indeed, 'El Plan' was a 'man'-ifesto" that did not even consider Chicanas (Orozco 1986, 164). Building on their work, I suggest that this ideological occlusion blocked women's knowledges and subjectivities from shaping the Chicano liberatory agenda; further, as it exiled women, it positioned men as the sole Chicano subject. This demonstrates how heteropatriarchal epistemological and ideological violences produce material violence against our bodies through the use of social structures.

If we consider systemic rape as the acting out of everyday heteropatriarchal social order, rape as an enactment of the politics of domination, then what types of knowledges, subjectivities, and communities were imagined that made it possible to rape at a conference espousing liberation? In *¡Chicana Power!* (2011), Maylei Blackwell argues that the possibilities for Chicana political commitment

were narrowed in measurable terms by their sexual availability to Chicano students, citing a habitual sexual initiation of Chicanas into CSU Long Beach's Chicano student organization, UMAS. These were not isolated events—I have written about this elsewhere, and in the more than twenty years since I first began studying Chicano and Chicana Studies formations as an undergraduate, I have repeatedly encountered stories of assault (Rojas 2012).

Indeed, for over forty years, a heteropatriarchal order embedded in colonial logics has produced and sustained rape in the structuring of the Chicano Movement on and off campus.[6] This logic continues to inform contemporary sexual attacks against Chicanas as it did the campus newspaper attacks and other misogynous and heteronormative violence. Further, these forms of violence together buttress the colonial institutional orders of Chicano Studies and the university. *El Plan de Santa Barbara* imagined the Chicana/o community as benefitting from the resources of institutions of higher learning (Mariscal 2005). It did not imagine or account for the ways these deeply heteropatriarchal institutions would continue to divide our communities by subjecting us to differential patterns of violence or recruiting some of us into delivering the violence through the heteropatriarchal institutional social order of the university.[7]

The history of violence with which we have had to contend continues to this day. At CSU Long Beach, the violence in response to our 2010 conference was the most recent and it would not be the last. Attacked not only with words but also with the entire social order we face every day, Chicanas at CSU Long Beach negotiated ideological and structural configurations that are the foundation for the deployment of material violence. In countless ways, male leadership in the department used institutional power to structure and deploy inequities, oppression, and violence. Kept out of decision-making

roles and processes in departmental matters after more than a decade without a Chicana as chair of the department, not only did the male leadership withhold mentoring Chicanas for leadership roles, but also their demographic outnumbered the women's votes when a senior Chicana ran for chair. Kept out of course offering decisions, which affected our ability to teach queer and feminist content, courses that focused on Chicanas were regularly cancelled, and appeals to teach courses with a queer emphasis were stymied. Whereas Chicano faculty taught high enrollment core courses, Chicana faculty were seldom assigned to core courses, making enrollment more difficult and cancellation more likely in the courses they taught. Our research and ability to work effectively with communities outside the university were also affected; while male faculty frequently taught an average of three courses on a two or three day weekly teaching schedule, we rarely had less than a four course load and a four day teaching schedule, leaving little time for anything else. Departmental resources, such as course releases, were unequally distributed alongside department labor, while advising responsibilities, which call for more one-on-one intensive student contact, were assigned to Chicana faculty.

Additionally, faculty meetings were often hijacked into relentless attacks on Chicanas who were berated with snide comments regarding the quality of our work. The recollection of a senior Chicana faculty was called into question, even ridiculed repeatedly at meetings, and the work of other Chicanas on campus was often characterized as failure. There was repeated use of gaslighting—a form of mental abuse to make victims question their own memory or perception of the violence—thus turning Chicana concerns into discussions of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or lack of loyalty to the department. They criticized queer Chicana student organizations and used language that framed their presence as a looming and growing threat. There was also little interest, if not altogether disregard, of Chicana faculty

accomplishments, and juxtaposed with an unbalanced congratulatory attention bestowed at even the minutest of male faculty achievement. When a senior Chicana faculty published a book, it barely registered mention, let alone praise or the creation of an event to recognize the accomplishment. Yet, male faculty achievement received exaggerated praise for minimal effort, often receiving gloating references that nearly turned into standing ovations. As Chicana/Chican@ faculty, we faced a structured everyday violence that slowly eroded our sense as worthy contributors to Chicano Studies, and at every faculty meeting the message was conveyed that we were marginal, violable, and expendable.

Displays of violence escalated after contestations by Chicana/Chican@ faculty. When we spoke up, the attacks intensified. While these institutional structures demonstrate a clear pattern of structural violence against Chicanas, trans– and queer Chican@s, the violence escalated when we refused to accept the institutionalized terms of our submission and instead demanded an alternate vision of Chican@ Studies. When we dared to talk back and fight back, a hostile attack ensued. Deterritorialized through the chair's abuse of power, we were rendered office-less, and our doors were vandalized on multiple occasions. With framed investigations and interrogations, the students with whom I worked were harassed and intimidated. Although my teaching evaluations regularly ranked among the highest in the department and college, my teaching was belittled and sabotaged by colleagues and colluding administrators. The institutional structures of faculty meetings were used as tools of institutional power and as vehicles to deride and devalue women of color. When I raised concerns about sexism or other inequities, my loyalty to the department was questioned and I was literally brandished irrelevant and labeled a threat to Chicano Studies. Pernicious rumors pervade to this day that my "airing out" the department's dirty laundry would lead to the department's

demise. Their attacks presumed a need to protect the safety of their perceived community from white supremacy, as they imagined Chicanas fighting for their rights in an alliance with white supremacy. Like the violence in the newspaper, faculty failed to recognize that violence against women of color bolsters white supremacy and that women's safety is central and should not to be delayed or minimized because we are also members of the community.

Like all the other forms of abuse and structural inequities we endured, the newspaper's display of violence became another attack in a long line of colonially-rooted violence that has historically organized racialized genders and sexualities through conquest. The campus newspaper addressed the many ways to deride and kill Chican@ feminists, lesbianas y "jotos," foregrounding the heteropatriarchal organization of Chicano Studies and La Raza. This was but one of many attempts to symbolically kill us, through what Conciencia Femenil named "chronic erasure" and the "cycle of zero," silencing mechanisms that obliterated our voices, our classes, and curricular content along with her/stories of Chicana feminist struggle at CSU Long Beach (Conciencia Femenil 2010).

From Spanish Empire to Chicano Studies: Tracing the Heteropatriracial

According to María Lugones, a framework that fails to critically recognize gendering/sexualizing structures as incumbent in colonial and racial processes inhibits the possibility of understanding or fully seeing the violence that women of color confront (Lugones 2007). This analysis is also critical for understanding the violence queer and trans–people of color endure. The CSU Long Beach Chicano Studies department and the university newspaper comments reenacted the politics of the Spanish Empire. They invoked los moralistas, who conjured notions of a criminal queer sexuality labeled "las mariposas," those they described as driven by sin who as a result would face

an unavoidable demise (Carvajal 2003). This discursive formulation pivoted on a social scientific project of obsessively categorizing behaviors, gestures, desires, and sexualities that deemed indigenous practices unnatural. Under the pretext of these legal and moral discursive references, the Spanish Empire used extreme demonstrations of torture that used public spectacles, garroting and burning as a means to tame the excesses of indigeneity, sexualities, and genders beyond capture (Carvajal 2003).

Spanish imperial tactics of violence, the layers of meaning and violence, and their correspondent implications for an imperial social ordering of indigeneity by ranking genders/sexualities haunt the modern nation building projects that gave rise to Latin American nation states. As Lugones suggests, "[C]olonialism imposed a new gender system. It introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, cosmologies and ways of knowing" (Lugones 2007, 86). Ramón A. Gutiérrez argues that "the very concepts that we now take for granted to describe the realm of the sexual simply did not (exist) then" (Gutiérrez 2010, 14). He follows that the "revulsion over male same-sex sodomy" largely formulated a rejection of the male feminine sexual subject. Expressions of female sexuality outside of the passive missionary position invoked heavy punishment and regulation in Church doctrine in California's missions (Gutiérrez 2010; Taylor-García 2010; Castañeda 1997).

Sodomy laws assisted the legitimation of colonial invasion and missioanization by enacting cultural and material genocide of Indigenous peoples under the auspices of saving them (Gutiérrez 2010; Taylor-García 2010). As Andrea Ritchie reminds us, in the Americas, the legacy marking us into queer bodies and graves through violence are replete with the colonial hegemon (Ritchie 2012). These colonial processes are inherently racial projects that play out

colonial politics through the organization of genders/sexualities, conjuring abject bodies as indigenous/queered/gendered others (Guidotti-Hernandez 2011). As Andrea Smith, Antonia Castañeda, and Ramón A. Gutiérrez have all argued, the colonization of the Americas was (and is) a sexual conquest that imposed particular gender/sexual knowledges through systematic sexual violence and institutionalized surveillance/criminalization of sex/genders/sexualities (Ritchie 2012; Gutiérrez 2010; Smith 2005; Castañeda 1998).

After independence throughout Latin America, new nation states were organized through heteropatriarchal structures that continued to exile queer and transgender subjects and queer indigenous gender formations through a cultural logic that defines queerness through criminality, immorality, and illness (Quiroga 2000). The heteropatriarchal organization of the Mexican nation is not separate from its racializing processes; Mexico as an independent nation gave rise to the emergence of Mexican citizen subjects through organizing, surveilling, and exiling racialized genders/sexualities. Still, Mexico as a singular nation–state formation, which, though undeniable in scope and hegemonic ordering, has been contested and resisted historically and in the present by multiple indigenous knowledges and social organizations about/of gender/sexualities throughout Mexico.

In her work on the Latin American revolutionary imagination, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo discusses the limits of a liberation struggle that hinges on reproducing racial heteropatriarchal order in the Americas. She argues that Che Guevara, other revolutionary figures, and movements continue to enact "the racial residue of colonialist desire" to represent indigenous subalterns in feminizing and primitivizing frames cast through the revolutionary heroic subject's own imagined compromised masculinity (Saldaña-Portillo 2005, 152).

Within these heteropatriarchal colonial and revolutionary frames of Mexican revolutionary movements, the Chicano Movement emerges in conversation with both Cuban revolution and Mexican heteropatriarchal social orders. Additionally, their masculinist subjectivities inform an analytic frame that imagines white supremacy in the United States and racism as a castrating phenomenon. The very idea of racial emasculation affirms dichotomized gender categories through which the loss of a dominant masculinity imagined as feminization is understood as the ultimate victimization, thereby reanimating the sexual politics of colonization.

Following this epistemological misstep, the Chicano Movement casts liberation in hues of heteropatriarchal dominance through mythologized narratives of heteropatriarchal traditional cultures as envisioned in, for example, the movement motto: "la familia es la cuna de la cultura"—an imaginary that posits the heteropatriarchal family as the seed of the nation. The heteropatriarchal family motif appears in other institutional structures including Chicano Studies.[8] As Emma Pérez articulates in *The Decolonial Imaginary*, the apparent Chicano contestation to white supremacy, colonialism, and empire, when exposed, is in clear collusion and promulgation with the colonial project through sexism and homophobia (Pérez 1999).

It is in this historical context that the newspaper comments posted by Chicanos in and through the university at CSU Long Beach invoke the Spanish Empire's obsessive use of behavioral categorization. Accordingly, they discursively frame queerness and non-normative genders as dirty and unnatural/contra natura: "cochinas/pigs" is addressed twice; "disgusting" is referenced twice; the phrase "no es normal" is followed by extreme descriptive detail of penis in anus, tongue in vagina, and other such commentary. Consistent with the discourses of the Spanish Empire, references to religion

abound: "abomination" appears twice followed by "immoral deviants, "demonic dyke," and "dykes are daughters of the devil."[9]

Lastly, as a way to invoke the legacy of conquest that organizes bodies and subjectivities through behaviors and heteropatriarchal adherence to colonial politics, male allies are constituted as jotos. Throughout the comments, the remarkable obviation of the possibility of polymorphous sexualities and genders, of a symphony of being, of living and loving, is instead mapped as a threat to the Chicano project. Understood as the enemy's project, queerness is framed as intent to destroy the Chicano family. This demonstrates the way Spanish colonial knowledges conceptualize non-heteropatriarchal sexes, sexualities, and genders as a criminal threat to the colonial body politic. These ideologies inform Chicano imaginaries in the formation of social institutions that emerge through the Chicano Movement, including Chicano Studies.

Chicano Studies, as formations conversant and emergent through Chicano social movements *and* the university, signal a particular convergence of structures of heteropatriarchal and racial organization. The term *heteropatriracial* facilitates consideration of the ways colonial racial organization implicates heteropatriarchy and vice versa. It builds on what Lugones understands as the inseparability of these historical processes and formations (Lugones 2007). Interrogation into the heteropatriracial organization of racialized genders and sexualities, at the site of Chicano Studies and the university, shifts the method of inquiry through which we can name and understand the violence that queer and Chican@ feminists endure in Chicano Studies and the university, as well as the violence deployed, and its potential transformation. Let us consider the university as an institutional site of heteropatriracial violence.

On Violence and the University

> Institutional violence is revealed in the ways social hierarchies of power are affected in the daily practices in all of our institutions. Institutional Violence is structured into normalized processes and procedures that produce relations of domination.
> —MALCS Sub-Committee on Institutional Violence

In the last five years, more and more conversations—in print and in cyberspace—have taken place across the United States that critically assess our stories of survival as women of color in the university. Our stories speak of the continuum of exclusion: from the premised exteriority of our communities and our relevant knowledges, to the routine extinguishing and compromising of subaltern insurgencies, to the blatant expulsion of our work, of our contributions, and of our lives (Córdova 1998). In the twenty-first century, women of color feminisms continue to be apprehended as illegible subjects by the university's suspect surveillance of the complex cosmology of decolonial subjectivities. A growing movement of scholarship and protest from women of color feminists is echoing the lasting refrain still deeply relevant even in the post–Civil Rights era university cloaked in its neoliberal multiculturalist inclusionary garb: "we will never sit at the table, none of us are at the table, it is not our table"[10] (Barceló 2011; Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Rodriguez 2009). Discussions of exclusion surface amidst consideration of the deleterious conditions of our employment and relationship to the university as women of color, as Chicanas (*Campus Lockdown* 2008; Córdova 1998). Further, the tide of scholarship is also growing with regard to the limits and disconcerting compromises that liberatory projects such as Ethnic Studies face as they attempt to survive the neoliberal university (Carmichale and Hamilton 1967; Ferguson 2012).

In 1967, in *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, Kwame Ture—formerly Stokely Carmichael—and Charles Hamilton exposed the ways in which

dominant groups organize racism with their notion of "institutional racism" to better understand the structural production of racism and racial violence (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). They warned about the covert means through which institutional racism systematically delivers deadly, pernicious blows through a surreptitious manner that makes it difficult to assign responsibility. Institutional analysis is pertinent to the study of the social organization and the production of violence because it shifts focus from an individual racist act to the structural processes that produce racism. Thus, we find that institutional racism and racial violence run rampant even when the individuals effecting policy feel they harbor no racial prejudice (not about intent, but about effect, practice, institutional obligations). Unlike an Althusserian frame that might posit some institutions, namely those he labels ideological, such as educational, as safer than those he labels repressive, such as law enforcement, *Black Power* documented the genocidal violence that all social institutions have the capacity to wield. Further, Assata Shakur's autobiography, for example, reveals the ways the institution of medicine repeatedly collaborated with law enforcement and the prison industrial complex to deliver a number of violations she endured (Shakur 2001). We can understand social institutions as interdependent, collaborative, and historically malleable entities that buttress and maintain, mirror, and recreate the social order. Social institutions are the vehicles through which the state organizes, makes contact with, and produces and constitutes people, violence, and knowledge (Lazzarato 2006; Scott et al. 2000; Delueze 1984; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). Inherently coercive and regulative in their aim toward accomplishing social reproduction, institutions necessarily deliver violence.

Patricia Hill Collins asserts black feminist thought in what can be read as a conversation with an Althusserian sense of interpellation. Interpellation as the way we come to internalize that which is against our very survival, that

which is intent on producing our subordination, how we are conditioned as the subaltern subject to be complicit in our own subalternity, and to be complicit with violence (Althusser 1971). She warns that consciousness of the conceptual tools—a free mind—to contest oppression is critical to ascertain freedom because power annexed from the bottom serves the purpose of establishing domination (Hill Collins 1990). It is, after all, people who people institutions. In her insightful reflection of her struggles in the university, Antonia Darder warns that we never forget "the power of loyal institutional gatekeepers, men and women of every color and persuasion, who safeguard the doors of the empire, refusing to surrender the unrighteous power wielded over the lives of so many" (Darder 2011, 442). She reminds us to consider the imperial politics of the university's tactical reproduction beyond the markers of identity to deepen our understanding of the political scope of subjection, the usurping of oppositional consciousness, and the policing of dissent. Darder invites us to consider the systemic processes delivering an abuse of power endemic in university institutional structures. The university organizes and acquiesces us into the structures and confines of colonial organization, seeking to recruit or exterminate the recalcitrant (Córdova 1998). Teresa Córdova's incisive telling of colonial violence in the university, "Power and Knowledge: Colonialism in the Academy," considers the university's structuring through a colonial frame. Through our acquiescence, we accept fitting roles in the institutional hierarchy, we accept our own subordination and our duty to subordinate others and thus become legible subjects, gaining promotion and status as we play this out. Tenure-track assistant professors shall not speak until after tenure, an interesting convention that, when one considers the disproportionate rate of denial of tenure for women of color, reveals the racial/sexual politics of subordination at the university and our invited participation in our own muzzling (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Cotera 2010).

Faculty must continue a tradition of unjust relations with students, seeing and treating students as unequal, severing our connectedness across the continuum of life, the intersubjectivity of our being, and in particular regard to insurgent bodies and subjectivities, fracturing our power and the potential of our collective resistance in the university. The language faculty commonly used to discuss students invokes a relationship of domination through possession: "my student" implies ownership, invoking a legacy of colonial relations and slavery/encomienda systems. A simple shift to the phrase "a student I work with" suggests a mutually collaborative relationality.

Violence continues to emerge on campus. In 2013, a string of media reports surfaced documenting university cover-ups and mishandlings of rapes on campus. The shock and dismay expressed in the reporting and response hinge on a presumption of the university as a site free of heteropatriarchal violence, or a site we should presume is inherently interested in interrupting said violence. The ivory tower shrouds itself as a safe haven, but reports on the pervasiveness of date rapes on college campuses began surfacing in the 1980s and shattered this myth (Fisher et al. 2010). When universities deny, silence, and censure such acts of violence on campus, university administrations turn to discourses of criminality and psychology to perform a protective rescuing of the university, deeming individual students with aberrant psychologies as the culprit, marking sexual and domestic violence as anomalous.[11] Assault is the second leading cause of death for college-age women in the United States, yet in a move that denies the magnitude of violence, as it configures the politics of the university with particular imperial, racial, class, and gendered interests, the university and public lexicon ask, dumbfounded, "How could such things happen here?"[12]

Paulo Freire clarifies a connection between relationships of oppression and the production of violence that can be useful in understanding the ways in which violence unfolds in the university. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire observes that, "with the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun…there would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation" (1982, 37). Here, relations of oppression are understood as requiring violence for their very existence. Violence is also seen as the past and present of oppressive structuration, as requisite for the possibility of a future oppression because without the deployment of recurring polyvalent violence, the oppressive relation cannot come into being. Without the violence of torture, containment, control, surveillance, representation, poverty, and feminicide, and without the tactics of belittling, demeaning, humiliating, minoritizing, exteriorizing, and exterminating, the potency of oppressive structures dwindle. Thus, violence appears as the necessary ingredient in establishing and maintaining a politics of domination. It appears as a seemingly exhaustive map of profoundly unjust and deleterious social orders routinized into the daily practices of socially institutionalized-state organized violence, into the intimate corridors of our love-making, baby-rearing, living-making, into all our relations with all living beings, the elusive fiction of non-violence in the current historical era in the West as an illusive imaginary.

If we build on Freire's observations, the erosion of violence emerges as we practice the creative and/or re-membered practices of just relations, of communities organized by something other than structures of domination. We can consider prison, for example, as an institution unmistakably organized through structures of domination, replete with violence that is haunted by a system of slavery. Angela Davis argues that the erosion of this kind of institution necessitates the transformation of the extent of our social arrangements, setting into motion a different way of being, of relating and understanding each other, of organizing our society (Davis 2003).[13]

Time for Us All to Clean House:
Decolonizing Heteropatriracial Chicano Studies

My recent years in Chican@/Latin@ Studies have offered profound lessons in some of the shaky foundations and rumblings, in the types of violence capable of emerging in and through these formations at the site of the university. I turn my attention inward, to the part of me that imagined Chican@ Studies as a kind of home, a refuge in the university. It seems our attempts at revolutionary change have piles of dirty laundry to clean and air out. This time, concerns for the community's safety invite the airing and cleaning of dirty laundry because every member of the community's safety matters to the whole. This time, unlike the early years of Chicano Studies, where women of MEChA at CSU Long Beach—and many more—were expected to clean the Brown House where Chicano students lived; this time, everybody has cleaning to do. One of the vital lessons Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa offer us in the introduction to *This Bridge* is the reminder that "the revolution begins at home" (Chen et al. 2011; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, lvi).

Decolonial work cannot be parceled out, divided into structures of hierarchies reminiscent of persistent colonial orders. None of us is exempt from responsibility. I invite us all to sort and assess the piles—our piles—to get funky with the funk, to detox from the colonial poison we drank and the poison wells we stir, to hone our skill for sensing colonial violence, to be ever cognizant of the ways injustice brews renewed violence in the university. The energy of this decolonial era is vibrant, unavoidable, and we are all being asked to uproot the birthing moments of violence from every aspect of our lives. There was a time we went against ourselves; that time is dwindling. We have learned to run from or attack that which liberates us—that training we are finding less useful.

He sat in front of me. He was deeply afraid.

Pummeled by centuries of abuse and a colonial understanding of power, he was unaware of his own poder. I say it in Spanish because it means something different, the sense of being able. The short-term reference we often link to abuse does not emerge as readily in the way I came to learn the many meanings of poder en español. Something got in the way of his possibility for accessing greater communion with the recognition of the gifts he was capable of bestowing. These distractions caused him to bring harm to many around him. The tools and training were readily available in the kinds of structures, narratives, and practices that coalesce to produce violence, to produce empire, to produce the university. He was after all, the Chair of Chicano Studies.

He is a representation of the many embodiments of all who drink from the poisoned well of the colonial project's canals of the university—he certainly did not act alone. I position myself as also implicated. I am still figuring out if it is possible to remain spiritually clear, perhaps in the way about which Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes, to remain true to decolonial praxis in the current formation of the university (1999). I am not convinced that it is possible to build a liberatory space in the public university because I am concerned about the limits of liberatory projects within the university.

Does a heteropatriarchal version of Chicano Studies persist in the university because, perhaps, a true liberatory model that challenges such a heteropatriarchal organization has the capacity to dissolve the institution? A generative practice of just relations, such as community accountability, has the capacity to morph the institution, perhaps even dismantle it; how does a social institution, after all, survive a decolonial practice of justice? Something else might emerge in its place. We have the most abundant generative power in our communities to create and envision something else. We should not fear this. It is not the institution for which I fight, after all, it is not

institutionalized Chicano Studies. At CSU Long Beach, Chicana feminists and queer organizers survived and we grew stronger through our collective organization and resistance. We organized, and I organize, believing in and working toward a sociality of justice, a creative sociality that nurtures love as the fountain of our potential and strength, and reimagines community, learning, and social movement as emergent through the practice of growing souls not harming them.

Community Accountability: Soul Wounds Revisited

Community accountability offers a possible tool we may use as we move and begin to practice social transformation away from violence in and beyond the university. *Community accountability* is a term that serves as an umbrella for a variety of approaches to transform violence in ways that do not reproduce colonial violence and its many manifestations. There is a long history of communities intervening in violence and in the last twelve years, communities of color and social justice movements dissatisfied with or critical of law enforcement/ICE responses have intentionally begun crafting strategies that respond to violence against these communities from within these very communities. In their pursuit of social justice and transformation, community groups are developing new methodologies and practices of accountability that recognize and respond to both the violence of the aggressor(s) and the violence of the state/social institutions, highlighting their interconnectedness while working toward a goal of transforming both.

Two texts offer examples of case studies and applications: *The Revolution Starts at Home* (Chen et al. 2011) and *Emerging Movements in Community Accountability* (Rojas et al. 2012). INCITE's website shares several reports and documents that offer further lessons in the practice of community accountability. INCITE's *Color of Violence* anthology includes the first

publication on the topic written by Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA). The current mainstream responses to violence in the United States do not address the core historical and contemporary causes of violence, nor do they seek social transformation. Instead, these approaches seek to maintain the social order/status quo, allowing for the social conditions that produce violence to remain unabated while positing violence as an individual matter of some aberrant psychologies that can be punished through criminalization. Community accountability is a strategy to respond to violence from within a community with the goal of social transformation. The following tenets may facilitate the process to:

- Respond to violence and move toward accountability without reproducing additional harm for anyone involved; encourage safety, support and accountability.
- Center survivor voice(s), safety, and self-determination in the process while also considering the harm done to the extended community through violence.
- Consider community responsibility for the violence, how might the community be rearranged to prevent future violence? How can the community (and community-members) continue its own growth and transformation away from violence?
- Commit to transforming the political conditions that produce violence.
- Seek to humanize aggressor(s) and create a process for accountability; offer those responsible opportunities to learn, grow, heal, and transform, instead of blaming, shaming or criminalizing aggressive behavior or an individual.

The last point suggests a move away from more punitive tactics that may not necessarily inspire the person responsible toward accepting or understanding

accountability and shifting their actions. Instead, an approach that invites opportunity for growth, reflection, and healing may produce greater transformation. For example, I think of a time when in preparation for a faculty retreat, the curriculum committee in the department suggested that the faculty read and discuss a recent assessment of the limits of Chicano Studies in terms of gender. Faculty agreed to participate in two retreats to discuss the issue of sexism in the department. These were important steps but they did not produce the kind of change we were after; although Chicana faculty were able to express their concerns, albeit in a less threatening space with outside facilitators, we were still undermined, belittled, and derailed. These retreats emerged from a growing partnership with an activist woman of color who worked in the university's Office of Equity. She also began attending faculty meetings, and her presence inspired better behavior from male colleagues. I think the real difference takes place when structural shifts occur. An effective strategy may be to create new spaces of accountability and shift prior spaces of permissibility into spaces of accountability in the person's life and in the community. Survivors and community members can create all kinds of incentives and/or expectations for the person(s) to accept accountability, but for the process to be successful there has to be some degree of willingness to seriously participate. Some communities limit access to that community as an incentive that works when the desire for community membership is strong.

In the essay, "In Our Hands: Community Accountability as a Pedagogical Tool," I suggest that the practice of community accountability can be practiced in the classroom as an extension of liberatory pedagogical approaches in Ethnic Studies (Rojas 2012). This intervention is rooted in Freirean critical/liberation pedagogies' paradigm-shifting offerings. It is a shift suggesting that liberatory educational processes have the potential for

greater social transformation through "concientizando," or Hill Collins' "consciousness" potential, or consciousness-raising toward social justice praxis and away from violence. Citing the indivisibility of practice/action and thought, Ethnic Studies and critical/liberation pedagogy scholars have sought to reunify the separation of Enlightenment-ordered educational models. In these forms, Cartesian bifurcations of the body and mind prevail as they emerge through colonial, racial, sexual, and capitalist configurations that order the laboring body and the learned subject/knowledge and policy-producing subjects hierarchically.

Learning in praxis challenges institutional hierarchical orders, such as the presumed knowing subject of teacher and unknowing subject of student. When one considers the racial/sex/gender demographics at CSU Long Beach, it is a challenge to the hierarchical ordering that, for example, would place women/people of color almost exclusively as unknowing subjects. The practice of community accountability pedagogically shifts us from studying violence to actively eroding violence in the classroom; we all become agents of social change as we practice and hone our intersubjectivities with the recognition of our interconnectedness. By teaching class sessions or a course on community accountability in the classroom, or by applying it in student organizations, we can begin to familiarize ourselves with the practice while developing relevant skill sets so we can turn to it when we encounter situations of violence. It also shifts the classroom to a space of accountability where we can extend a growing map of contiguous spaces of accountability.

Community accountability works inside and outside the university, but it is vital to consider the particulars of each context. The process should be well thought out with agreements made by all members of the process to commit to not producing harm to anyone involved. Community accountability in the

university disrupts the hierarchical order that predisposes some members of the process to punishment through employment repercussions or grades/grad school admissions—and other members of the process to the potential abuse of power—for example, abusing administrative powers or those accessed by seniority. Chican@ Studies or Ethnic Studies units and relevant student organizations can apply community accountability models autonomous from the university and determine the process in a manner consistent with self-determination practices.

It is important to consider the ways engaging the university administration may help or hinder the process. Communities might choose to consider reporting laws that differ by states and institutions that could affect a community's ability to apply community accountability internally. What is key to remember is the inherent colonial and heteropatriracial order that may cause further harm and violence or waste precious community resources. Consistent with the university's symbiotic relationship to the prison industrial complex, criminalization of violence against women and LGBT and queer folks in the university pivots on the logic that violent response is in its sole jurisdiction, as a campus police officer reminded us at a LGBT Climate Committee meeting. Often, reporting laws have gray areas worth investigating that make room for communities to deal with these issues without necessarily filing a university or police report.

The criminalization of hate violence and violence against women in the university setting can co-opt grassroots political movements toward reliance on the university, limiting our abilities to conjure our own transformative intra-community responses to violence. When we turn to the police, we risk losing our safety and respect as people of color and migrants. We also lose survivor and community agency. We risk losing the humane treatment of the

survivor, aggressor, and their community. A prison setting will most likely only increase an aggressor's tendencies toward use of violence. Undocumented students and their loved ones may be particularly harmed when reporting incidences. The practice of self-determination and the potential toward social transformation away from violence may also be lost.

In an institutional setting, when the group, following the lead of the survivor(s), sets up their goals and establishes a process for community accountability, the goals should address the institutional mechanisms that fostered or organized a predisposition toward violence. In other words, community accountability seeks to transform the social landscape away from violence by considering the ways the institution—the university, field of study, or student organization—needs to change so as to further prevent violence.

Growing Souls: Decolonial Praxis Toward the Transformation of Chican@ Studies

I write this conclusion on November 20, 2013, recognized as the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. TransRespect-Transphobia.org, an international monitoring Internet research project, recently released the 2008–2013 numbers of reported transgender people murdered, in time for the vigils, memorials and events held on this day. Mexico and Brazil had the highest numbers, although Honduras and El Salvador had more murders per capita. Latin American countries altogether reported 1,100 killings out of the total 1,374 worldwide. The report states that these numbers are highest in countries where they also have the strongest LGBTQ movements collecting and assessing this information. Reports in the United States also document disproportionately high numbers of reported murders of Transgender Latinas in the United States.

I sit and meditate on the juxtaposition of two members of our communities whose lives and deaths compel us to reconsider the epistemological basis for the project of Chican@ Studies and the dangers we take on with the work of producing knowledge in a public university at this particular historical moment. How can our knowledge production make visible those lives taken by this feminicidal violence? Ruby Ordeana, an undocumented Nicaraguan transgender sex worker was found dead, naked, and strangled in 2007, in the Tenderloin streets of San Francisco. Rubi Freyre Escobedo, a young woman age sixteen was found burned and dismembered in a trashcan in 2009, near Juárez, Chihuahua. These murders were not individual aberrations, but premised on a logic that sutures our conceptual and material heteropatriracial formations within and outside of Chican@ and Latin@ Studies. Their killings would be unimaginable if not for the terms that organize heteropatriarchy in the twenty-first century.

How can Chicano/Latino Studies move away from reproducing heteropatriracial logics that mobilize these and countless incessant violences against Chicanas/Latinas, against queer, gender queer, and feminist Chican@s/Latin@s? What must shift in Chicano Studies to understand the lives and deaths of these two Latinas so that they may become legible subjects, considered central to the project of Chicano Studies, not peripheral, marginal, irrelevant, and certainly not objects to be scythed. What other way to morph the process of violence into one of justice than by demanding that these women live in the center of our minds, guiding us toward liberatory knowledges that imagine future possibilities of social landscapes and structures that honor and respect difference? Further, how can Chican@ and Latin@ Studies become a space dedicated to the production of knowledge that prevents further violence against young Mexicanas, transgender Latinas and transgender Latina sex workers?

Gloria E. Anzaldúa theorized that, "in trying to become 'objective' Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them" (1987, 37). She argued that the dichotomy produced from this distancing results in objectification and is the root of all violence. Declaring an impartial universal knowledge, Western knowledges produce an imaginary of perceived gender dichotomization and countless other socialities ordered through the politics of domination that hinge on understanding "them" as separate from "us." How has the project of Chicano/Latino Studies assumed this logic deemed essential for the development, application, and imaginary of post-Enlightenment projects of knowledge production? How do we imagine, assert, and build a decolonial Chican@/Latin@ Studies in light of heteropatriracial logics that arm the colonial university project, our departments, and our communities? How can the practice of naming and assessing the deployment of imperial violence against and through our communities conjure the opening for healing and transformation toward greater justice and liberatory possibilities? These questions are consistent with the liberatory projects and visions that birthed and gave rise to Ethnic Studies and Chican@ Studies.

Our task for the twenty-first century is to open our capacity to listen to queer, transgender, and all who have been exiled, exteriorized, and exterminated, including Chican@ and Latin@ youth, undocumented, feminist and disabled people, and sex workers. These voices, visions, and politics are the teachers of our decolonial homework. It is up to us to revision Chican@ Studies from the roots. To eradicate institutional violence, it is up to us to slowly dismantle the university's heteropatriracial ordering and its corollary violence. As scholar activists, we must slowly, methodically, and thoughtfully begin assessing our departments, our student organizations, and ourselves. It is our responsibility to expunge the last trace of colonial violence, to commit to resistance acts until we are free.

Notes

[1] My use of Chican@ here signals an interruption of the notion that sexes/genders are inherently bifurcated and divisible. This use goes beyond an inclusive frame that represents women and men in a kind of additive way to a challenge of the very grounds on which those bifurcated roles and presumed socializations emerge and are reproduced. Chican@ offers decolonial and liberatory potential and praxis, a queering of sex/gender; it is a decolonial unknowing and becoming. See Sandra K. Soto, *Reading Chican@ Like a Queer* (2010) and Frank Galarte, "A Chican@ Transgender Poetics" in this issue. The pronunciation of Chican@ sounded out as a diphthong reminds me of Chicana feminist formulations of Chicana(o) Studies, as documented in the foundational collection *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender*, which suggests a clear feminist politic that centers women's experiences and subjugated knowledges.

[2] The term heteropatriarchy is now in wide usage. My use of the term references some earlier conceptual formations as discussed by Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (2004) and by Andrea Smith's "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy," in *The Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology* (2006). Although María Lugones does not use the term in "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," her piece suggests that colonialism itself brought not an intact European sex/gender system, but rather one that developed through colonial processes, as Antonia Castañeda signals in her article, "History and the Politics of Violence Against Women." In general, the term suggests that sex, gender, and sexuality are not organized separately from one another but imagined, articulated, and structured through one another. Seen another way, the patriarchal character and organization of the social present in the Americas is invoked and entrenched through colonial processes that heteronormatively order sex, gender, and sexuality. Another early reference is Adrienne Rich's notion of compulsory heterosexuality which conveys that lesbian politics are crucial to eroding patriarchal structures in that women's oppression is organized through heterosexuality in "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (1994).

[3] In her 1990 talk at the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies' first Chicana Plenary, later published as "Sexuality and Discourse: Notes from a Chicana Survivor," in Carla Trujillo's *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, Emma Pérez questions the possibility of achieving social change for Chicanas and Chicanos without the challenge to patriarchy.

[4] This stanza is a quote reframed from text that appeared in *The Daily 49er*.

[5] We appealed to the newspaper, to their faculty advisor, to the university president in efforts to have the comments lifted and prevented in the future, and they all granted initial permissibility to the comments remaining.

[6] I documented sexual assault at the 2004 MEChA Statewide Conference and students have shared stories of more recent sexual assaults at MEChA gatherings and Chicano activist gatherings and organizations. See "In our Hands: Community Accountability as Pedagogical Strategy." *Social Justice 37*(4).

[7] Anna Nieto Gomez shared in a discussion with me, as she has shared in public lectures, that the moment when the Chicano Student organization, UMAS, became institutionalized at CSU Long Beach, the patriarchal organization, structuring, and violence escalated.

[8] This has been well documented and analyzed by a long legacy of Chicana feminist contestation to the heteropatriarchal organization of the Chicano Movement. For a more recent treatment that centrally discusses sexuality as well, see Richard T. Rodriguez's *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics*, published in 2009 by Duke University Press, and for key historical documents in the development of this analytic see Alma García's *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*.

[9] This language is taken from on-going discussion inclusive of multiple articles and commentaries in the *The Daily 49er*.

[10] I have discussed multiple experiences with other women of color at CSULB and other campuses regarding university administration concealment and minimizing of violence against women.

[11] Heron, M. (2007). "Deaths. Leading causes 2004." Hyattsville, MD National Center for Health Statistics. Specifically reports that the second leading cause of death for women, ages 20–24.

[12] The 13th Amendment abolishes slavery except "for the punishment of a crime that has been duly convicted."

[13] See Julia Oparah's forthcoming article on the symbiotic relationship between the university and the prison industrial complex: "Challenging Complicity: The Neoliberal University and the Prison Industrial Complex" in *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent*, University of Minnesota Press.

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