

PASSING THE SAGE: Our Sacred Testimonio as CuranderaScholarActivists in Academia

Alejandra Gonzalez, Irene Lara, Carolina Prado,
Sophia Lujan Rivera, and Carmen Rodriguez

This collaborative essay addresses the theories and practices of the “CuranderaScholarActivist” (CSA) femtoring seminar, a holistic undergraduate research program founded in 2009 by Professor Irene Lara through the Faculty-Student Mentoring Program at San Diego State University. Drawing on Anzaldúan autohistoria and other Chicana/Latina testimonio methods, the authors (four student participants and the faculty “femtoring”) reflect on their experiences in the CSA program, which is geared toward first generation Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous women college students. They explore what it means to be a CuranderaScholarActivist and the potential of CSA praxis as a liberatory tool to decolonize and heal themselves and academia. The CSA’s vision of a decolonized academy insists that the production of knowledge be participatory for the purpose of social justice and collective liberation. Using feminist pedagogies and Chicana/o, Latina/o, and Indigenous theories, the CSA model addresses the need for further holistic femtoring models that acknowledge the bodymindspirithearts of students and faculty.

Key Words: autohistoria, Chicana/Latina/Indigenous, curandera, education, feminist pedagogy, scholar activism, spiritual activism, spirituality, testimonio

May our words, beginning with our collective prayer, serve as does a tobacco offering or a sacred song. In offering our words, we acknowledge their life force, their ability to impact hearts and minds. May our words guide us so that what we say and do may be for the greatest sacred good.

We invoke the nonhuman beings on our planet to keep reminding us that reverence and respect are due not only for those who look like us. We invoke the spirits of the disempowered and the empowered, and we offer this work with the intention of honoring all those who have been kept quiet and have

been made to feel ashamed for being different. We invoke the words and the voices of those who have been ignored or silenced: this is for you. To our maestr@s, we pray that you continue blessing us with your teachings and helping us to always speak and listen with open hearts and minds.

As Chicanas with different topographies and herstories, the five of us—Alejandra Gonzalez, Irene Lara, Carolina Prado, Sophia Lujan Rivera, and Carmen Rodriguez—came together with several others in the CuranderaScholarActivist (CSA) femtoring¹ program to fulfill several interrelated goals: engage in a holistic femtorship model that helps us remain grounded in our communities, herstories, and bodymindspirithearts as we journey through academia as students and professors, foster femtor/femtee relationships that encourage individual and collective growth and wellness in service to social justice, and learn and teach Chicana/Latina/Indigenous Studies theories and research methods. Collectively, we work in the pursuit of our goals, while acknowledging the ways our social locations and experiences both overlap and differ among us. Poet Susan Guerra says it best: “I am because we are. Without expecting sameness” (Keating 2002, 519). Indeed, we occupy varying positions of privilege and oppression: some of us are first generation high school graduates, most are first generation college students; some are community college transfers, others started as first year university students; one is returning to college after taking time off from higher education to focus on motherhood; some grew up in the San Diego–Tijuana borderlands, while others grew up elsewhere and moved to this region for college; some are immigrants, while others are US-born. We all have different abilities, and we carry varying levels of emotional, physical, and/or financial caretaking responsibilities toward family members. Our ages range from early twenties to fifties, and four of us were current or recently graduated undergraduate students when we began writing this essay while one was and still is a tenured associate professor.

Situating CuranderaScholarActivism

Professor Irene Lara created the “CuranderaScholarActivist” program and neologism in the summer of 2009 while designing her ongoing dream seminar—part research training, part activist involvement, and part femtorship support circle—titled “CuranderaScholarActivists in Academia: Becoming Future PhDs,” for the Faculty-Student Mentoring Program (FSMP) at San Diego State University. She drew on her fields of expertise to organize a curriculum that focuses on interdisciplinary Chicana/Latina/Indigenous decolonial feminist approaches to epistemology, research, pedagogy, and creative and activist work. Thinking about what *conocimientos* she wanted to pass on to the next generation, Lara originated CSA as a term that integrates the valued qualities and actions of the *curandera* and scholar-activist into one dynamic positionality.² Being a scholar-activist refers to “the tradition of radical, politically engaged scholarship” that consciously challenges “the politics of academic elitism, which insist that academics should remain above the fray of political activism and use only a disembodied, objectified language and a ‘properly’ dispassionate professorial demeanor to establish our intellectual credentials” (Thobani cited in Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2009, 2). Inspired by her interdisciplinary Ethnic studies doctoral training, which was rooted in the 1960s social movements’ legacy of activist scholarship, as well as by her decolonial feminist femtors, research, and personal reflections as a student and professor, developing CuranderaScholarActivism was Lara’s response to the need to elaborate on the scholar-activist model in ways that attend to individual and social healing and (re)claim ancestral healing knowledges suppressed or delegitimized by Western secular modern-colonial thought.³

Lara explicitly signals taking a decolonial feminist healing and spiritual approach to education by using the term “*curandera*,” a healer who largely draws on indigenous and *mestiza/o* worldviews, including philosophical,

spiritual, ecological, and medical knowledges that assume an ultimate “wholeness” of being and a relationality between all aspects of the self and among all living things (Avila 1999; Castillo 1994; Gonzales 2012; Pérez 2007). While scholar activism emphasizes the mind and body and the human capacities to think and act within social and global contexts, *curanderismo* emphasizes the whole bodymindspiritheart and the additional human capacities to feel and intuit. Moreover, it provides strategies and tools “to keep all of the elements of our being in balance” (Avila 1999, 19) within spiritual and ecological, as well as social, global, and cosmic contexts.

The CSA seminar began in the fall of 2009 with six undergraduate femtees and a master’s student. This first generation of CSAs, including the four student authors—Rodriguez, Gonzalez, Prado, and Rivera—met each other in classes, Association of Chicana Activists (AChA) meetings, or work. Some met Professor Lara during her research or workshop presentations on spiritual/sexual activism or Chicana healers. Another femtee met Lara during her first day at a transfer student orientation session. However, it was in one of her Women’s studies courses, the “Latinas in the Américas” seminar, where the CSA intellectual and emotional support group evolved. As undergraduates, Rodriguez, Gonzalez, Prado, and Rivera had the necessity for a space where their bodymindspirithearts were respected and acknowledged, and Professor Lara provided that space in her class. This enabled them to encourage her to pursue her longtime goal of creating a femtoring group. As she observed during the roundtable presentation given about the femtoring circle at the 2011 National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) conference, “It wasn’t until I shared information about the FSMP with some of my students and they persistently encouraged me to apply to lead a group that I finally did. In many ways, the CSA program came to be because I put my intent out to them and they held me accountable for following through.

Then and now, they hold a mirror up to me that reminds me to maintain my integrity and live out my purpose as an educator committed to feminist social justice pedagogies” (Gonzalez et al. 2011).

The purpose of the CuranderaScholarActivist program is to create a space where our learning and teaching integrates the strengths of CuranderaScholarActivist praxis in order to empower students and faculty with skills that will help us thrive within and outside the university. A typical seminar began with a check-in exercise where we discussed how we felt in bodymindspiritheart, bringing together our scholarly and personal identities. This helped us acknowledge and reflect on our needs, allowing for a process of *conocimiento* about our individual and collective goals. We often commenced by burning sage as a method to ground our bodymindspirithearts and connect us to the sacred within us and in the natural world. Other grounding activities we engaged in included yoga, deep breathing, meditation, a *conocimiento* walk, or a writing exercise, followed by “storytelling and listening” in pairs or as a group. Culled from the National Latina Health Organization’s co-counseling praxis, learned by Irene while a graduate student in the California Bay Area, we would each take turns storytelling and listening to one another without interruption, agreeing to maintain confidentiality and withhold judgment to help us be brave, honest storytellers and attentive listeners (Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara 2006, 262–63). After moving on to discuss our assigned readings and updating one another on our research projects, we concluded each seminar addressing questions such as, “What are your work intentions this week?” or “How are you going to take care of your bodymindspiritheart this week?”

This form of social justice pedagogy is informed by scholarship that attests to the significance of engaging culturally relevant and holistic approaches

to education, health, and spirituality, as well as to using a methodology of healing in the teaching and construction of knowledge (Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara 2006; hooks 1994, 2003; Lara 2002, 2008; Levins Morales 1998; Pizarro 2004; Rendón 2009). Utilizing a healing methodology in the classroom means to both consciously and lovingly work to understand and tend to the *sustos* caused by the institutionalized violence inflicted upon our bodies, minds, spirits, and hearts. This *curandera praxis* works alongside scholar-activist praxis to foreground the damaging fragmentations and overemphasis on the rational mind and individualism imposed on us by the western academy. We address the need to heal and decolonize these fragmentations by creating a sense of *bodymindspiritheart* “wholeness” that affirms our relationship to each other and the social and ecological world (Anzaldúa 2002a; Lara 2002; Rendón 2009).

As evident in higher education literature, students who are supported by programs that help them build close mentoring/femtoring relationships with their professors are not only more likely to graduate, they are also more likely to feel fulfilled by their educational experiences.⁴ While SDSU and other universities have other necessary and effective programs, such as McNair Scholars, the significance and urgency of Lara’s distinctly structured program is derived from taking a holistic Chicana/Latina/Indigenous feminist approach to education that centers Chicana/Latina/Indigenous women’s lives and specifically works toward healing the racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized fragmentation of our bodies, minds, spirits, and hearts (Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara 2006).⁵ That is, this CSA manifestation of the Faculty-Student Mentoring Program geared toward reaching first-generation Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous women students consciously infuses femtoring with Chicana/Latina/Indigenous studies content and practices, including methodologies and epistemologies that value our multiplicity, our

complexity, our wholeness, and our relatedness.⁶ With only seven out of 100 Chicana/o elementary school students projected to achieve their undergraduate degrees, the significance of such culturally relevant student enrichment programs led by culturally proficient professors is self-evident (Yosso 2006, 102). With the aim of harmonizing all who we are and are becoming, we teach and learn how to apply these *conocimientos* (Anzaldúa 2002a) to our research as well as to our personal lives, believing that doing so makes us emotionally, spiritually, and physically healthier and thus sustains our will to continue to work toward making social justice contributions in spite of the challenges and dangers we confront.

Indeed, integral to the CuranderaScholarActivist curriculum is the work of decolonization. Shunning cultural deficit theories (Villegas 1991) that presume that a student of color's cultural background, such as their language, family structure, and spiritual worldviews, will negatively impact their educational success, CSA participants critically recover and adapt their cultural knowledge, and do so "without apology" (Torres 2003).⁷ This is a decolonizing process that heals internalized oppression and empowers individuals and their communities. In line with Laura E. Pérez, the CSA program asserts that "a decolonizing politics resides in an embodied practice rooted in lived and liveable worldviews or philosophies and is therefore in decolonizing relationship to our own bodies and to each other as well as to the natural world" (2010, 123). We see the CSA program as part of the broader movement to decolonize the academy. Such an educational system would not see the body/mind/spirit/heart as separate from each other as deemed within post-Enlightenment modern-colonial thought, but rather insist that the nourishing of one's mind be inseparable from feeding one's body, spirit, and heart holistically, as presupposed within indigenous knowledge systems (Gonzales 2012; Rendón 2009). Furthermore, the CSA vision of a decolonized

university is built on recognizing that knowledge is not exclusively the domain of so-called experts and research with communities should not be an extractive process, but rather a collaboration for justice.

Structurally, the CSA program is one of about twelve unique Faculty-Student Mentoring Programs across the campus funded by the Division of Undergraduate Studies.⁸ The FSMP invites faculty to submit proposals for their own individually designed program based on their disciplinary expertise. Selected faculty are awarded a course release to work with seven to nine “protégés” for forty-five hours per semester for up to four semesters. The mentoring can take many forms, such as a seminar, field work, lab work, conference or other academically related trips, and one-on-one meetings, as long as it works to fulfill the FSMP’s mission “to support student engagement and development through undergraduate research, scholarship and creative initiatives.”

Every year since its inauguration in 2009, Lara has invited students to apply to the CSA program. She recruits femtees using a SDSU list provided by the FSMP director and from students she has met in her courses and through campus involvement. The only participant requirements established by the FSMP are being from low-income backgrounds and having junior or senior status. Lara established the remaining flexible requirements: being a Women’s studies, Chicana/o studies, Latin American studies, or Spanish major or minor, or having some foundational knowledge of Chicana, Latina, or Indigenous studies; having a GPA of 3.0 or higher or committing to raising one’s GPA; planning to pursue graduate study or open to the possibility; committing to deepening their knowledge and practice of Chicana/Latina/Indigenous studies; and being able to devote the time and energy to attend weekly two-and-a-half-hour seminars, complete the regular reading and writing assignments, and participate in additional related events, colloquia, conferences, and workshops.

Similar to other FSMP programs throughout the University of California and California State University systems, the rigorous and intimate graduate school-style CSA seminar incorporates readings that help students acquire several academic skills. For example: critical analysis, developing strategies for reading scholarly texts, learning interdisciplinary research methods, writing an annotated bibliography, literature review, or research paper, presenting research, writing personal statements, successfully applying to scholarships, graduate programs, and the Institutional Review Board, and working with multiple mentors/femtors. Participants also read and discuss Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous feminist scholarship that deepens an understanding of the politics of knowledge construction, the challenges faced by women of color in the educational pipeline, and the interweaving of scholar-activism and *curandera* praxis. In addition, with the aim of supporting the development of each CSA's research and activist interests and teaching skills, femtees integrate their own readings and curriculum ideas into the syllabus, which varies with each cohort. Finally, participants are taught critical and compassionate dialogue skills that help them to express their ideas and feelings, as well as to deeply listen to, understand and/or support others.⁹

In this essay, we offer our personal and communal experiences as possible models for other students and faculty to use on their own paths through academia. Articulating our testimonio into written word is rooted in our desire to expand our teaching and learning experiences beyond our smaller, private group and into a more public community (The Latina Feminist Group 2001; Pérez Huber 2009). By creating and participating in a seminar such as ours, not only have we become more familiar with the academic process, we have been able to engage our academic work with a conscious focus on decolonial, feminist, liberatory, and spiritual *conocimientos* in service to our communities. As widely documented, academic culture is especially dehumanizing for students of color; this is materialized through

experiences of isolation, alienation, lack of support, discrimination, and more (Castellanos, Gloria, and Kamimura 2006; Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez 2011; Llamas and Consoli 2012; Wei, Ku, and Liao 2011; Yosso 2006). These experiences add to already stressful academic expectations, which undoubtedly take a toll on mental health as it is. We believe that success in higher education should not be measured only by achieving milestones, like graduation and tenure, but also by the ability to survive and thrive, to *sobrevivir* (Galván 2006), on our path through education *con armas para proteger y sanar* our whole selves—bodies, minds, spirits, and hearts as one.¹⁰ Embodying a CuranderaScholarActivist identity makes it imperative that we act on our *conocimientos*, by documenting what we have learned and working to inspire others to forge their own CSA consciousness, identities, praxis, and pedagogies that draw upon ancestral spiritual ways of knowing.

Through several conversations and individual and collective writing practices from 2011 to 2013, we dug deep into our femtoring seminar memories and critically reflected on the impact our participation in this seminar had, and continues to have, on our lives. While we write from our experiences, we are informed by the collective experience of other CSAs with whom we have shared our *testimonio* drafts. In engaging the interrelated *testimonio* and “*autohistoria-teoría*” or “*autohisteorías*” methods (Betancor 1995, 242–45; Keating 2009, 319), we follow in the footsteps of many women of color writers, such as the Latina Feminist Group and Gloria Anzaldúa, who argue for the importance of using our personal voices and culturally informed stories as instruments for constructing *conocimientos* and challenging *desconocimientos* (Anzaldúa 2002a).¹¹

The CSA seminar has empowered us with tools for the continued re-membering of our selves through *plática* and the written *testimonio* of our

stories (Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara 2006; Godinez 2006; Chabram-Dernersesian and de la Torre 2008). While there have been a growing number of important studies interpreting the voices of Chicana/Latina/Indigenous undergraduates (e.g. Delgado Bernal 2002; Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez, and Villenas 2006; Hurtado 2003; Pérez Huber 2009; Revilla 2010; Yosso 2006), our contribution is unique in that four out of five of us were undergraduates or recent college graduates when we started writing this essay. Like the Latinas Telling Testimonios collective, “we reclaim our authority to narrate our own stories rather than use an interlocuter. In doing so, we reclaim testimonio as a text that can be told by, written by, and published for Chicanas/Latinas” (Delgado Bernal 2009, 4). Resisting dominant cultural deficit models that assume our cultures are deficient and instead taking to heart the reality that we are indeed “holders and creators of [valuable cultural] knowledge” (Delgado Bernal 2002, 105), we are telling our own stories and offering our own theoretical interpretations of nuestros caminos académicos.

We begin with the telling of our autohistorias as the groundwork for the medicine we are creating. Then, we take you into the heart of some of our most precious memories of a seminar session that particularly impacted our lives. We then discuss how the seminar affected our perception of our undergraduate experiences and how it forged new visions of graduate school. Finally, we share with you our challenges and accomplishments and we conclude by discussing the ways we hope to expand our CuranderaScholarActivist círculo.

**Autohistorias/Nuestras Raíces: Our Paths to CuranderaScholarActivism
How have your caminos led you to become a CuranderaScholarActivist?**

SLR: I, Sophia Lujan Rivera, am the great-granddaughter of Natividad, a mujer warrior who came to los Estados Unidos after her parents were murdered during

the Mexican Revolution. Separated from her parents and her homeland, she kept her story of loss and survival hidden in the deepest parts of her heart. I still remember the first time she told me her story. Her cuentos and words live in me; they flow through me, como la sangre corre por mis venas. My story begins with her. I am a third-generation Chicana feminist of the working class. As a woman of color, I am from neither here nor there because I choose to consciously work toward un mundo sin fronteras. I carry with me the fierceness of my great-grandmothers and grandmothers. I hold in my own spirit the strength of my mother. Having been raised by a community of strong loving mujeres, I knew that my survival in the academy would be dependent upon finding a community of fierce loving gente that would be there for support and to help me grow.

When I found the CuranderaScholarActivists, or rather when we all found each other, it was a beautiful encuentro because I realized that I wouldn't have to be alone, and that I, too, could participate in supporting others, helping others grow, and helping others heal. Thus the many communities of familia, including friends, fem(men)tors, and maestr@s from which I come, propel me and affirm that the work I choose to do matters. I am a CuranderaScholarActivist on a path toward healing, transforming, and decolonizing the academy. I am a daughter, amiga, comadre, prima, sister, tía, and lover. I am a pen wielding "bruja-curandera" with a story to tell (Lara 2005).

AG: I, Alejandra Gonzalez, am a first-generation immigrant from México City. My family and I traveled to the United States lured by the dreams and hopes to have a better life, but like many others, we were rapidly woken up from the American Dream. I have received many opportunities that I would have been denied in México; however, it has come with a price, one that is never paid in full. Crossing the border is just one of the many crossings that we encounter as immigrants. One of those borders was found in my educational path. From

an early age, I was made to feel like a burden to my professors who were not trained to deal with Spanish-speakers. When I asked for help, their frustration was visible in their faces, and soon I stopped trying to seek help. Reflecting back, that experience dictated the route I took toward education. I knew that I wanted to continue, but I tried to do everything by myself, without asking for help, without being a burden. Once in community college, however, I found the first Latino professor, which made a huge difference in the way I perceived myself in relation to the academy and educational system. His Chicana/o Studies class taught me that I was not alone, it made me feel part of a community, and it validated my presence in a place where I felt I did not belong. Many years after my arrival to the US, I can say that I have found great mentors and femtors who have believed in me, and who have made me believe in myself. Being part of the CSA femtoring program has served as a reminder that I too belong here.

CR: I, Carmen Rodriguez, have indigenous roots from the Tochos in Guadalajara on my mother's side and the Mayos from Sonora on my father's side. I was born in Tijuana and spent my early childhood there. I remember, as if in a dream, the privilege of having my dad drive our family across the San Ysidro border on a cold and foggy morning in the early 1970s; I was ten years old and had no idea of where we were going or how much my life was going to change. Even though my dad never wanted his family to live in the United States, "porque las mujeres se echan a perder allá," my persistent mom defied him and pressured him to take the family pa'l otro lado because one of my sisters was ill and mom believed an American doctor would cure her. Her illness was eventually diagnosed as developmental delay. It still hurts to remember when people on the street would rudely stare at us and sometimes even make unwelcome comments about her condition. Hers was a "body deemed inferior [and] became [a] spectacle of otherness while the unmarked

[were] sheltered in the neutral space of normalcy” (Garland-Thomson 1997, 8). Since I didn’t have any tools to process this situation, I internalized great feelings of blame, guilt, and shame; these negative feelings contributed to periods of deep depression throughout my life.

Growing up, I always felt like a social and academic misfit; I always loved reading and learning but wasn’t aware of why it took me longer than other kids to complete assignments. I finished high school through the GED program and planned on going to la universidad. My dad had different plans for me; he told me, “mija, now that you are done with high school, you can stay home and help your mom around the house, maybe you can even learn to make good tortillas.” Instead I left home, married, divorced and remarried, and raised a family of four boys. Every year I took a few college classes and assumed that the classes were so hard because they were college classes. At the age of forty-five, I finally looked for a diagnosis and academic help. I was told I had chronic challenges (CC), among them depression, fibromyalgia, and a learning difability, my preferred term because the word disability assumes that there are non-normative abilities and also connotes deficiencies.¹² All my childhood feelings of shame and guilt about normalcy came back to sink me into a very deep depression that led me to quit my academic and activist aspirations.

I took a year’s leave of absence from college, and when I came back to school I learned of the FSMP/CSA opportunity and promptly applied to the program. I felt this was the opportunity that I needed to succeed academically and personally. I found a safe space where I could take off my mask and be accepted as a ChicanaMestiza undergraduate scholar with CC—a space where my bodymindspiritheart could BE. In joining the CSA circle I was seeking support and understanding from other women of color who were also pursuing higher education and activism.

I'm a thriving first generation high school and college graduate, difabled Chicana, wife to Ricardo, who I can always lean on, mother of four wonderful boys, scholarly bookworm, feminist activist, and brujanderapist.¹³ As such, I feel it's important to share my story because the present ableist framework sees different abilities as an error or a failing, rather than a simple production of human diversity; its goal is for people with different abilities to become what it considers to be the norm. This view needs decolonizing; social models have to be challenged. It's time for the holy trinity of class, race, and gender (Trujillo 1998) to be expanded to include the social category of disability into the analysis of ChicanaLatina oppressions.

CP: I, Carolina Prado, am a first-generation Chicana, born to migrant parents raised in a town on the outskirts of the beautiful Bosque Primavera in Jalisco. I navigate life with pride in my tongue's spouting its familiar Spanglish, of my ties to both Tlallán, the pueblito that lives in my family's everyday cultura, as well as my love for the Southern Californian sol y tierra that have nurtured me since birth. I am driven through life by commitment to the work for transformation in the realms of Chicana feminism, and food and environmental justice.

My seemingly different interests were part of the reason I looked for guidance in the CSA círculo. I was interested in engaging in research and considering graduate school, but I knew that my interests were too broad and this círculo would help me identify what interests I wanted to pursue in a nurturing environment. The CSA círculo helped me make strong commitments regarding my research goals, and helped define the kind of scholar I want to be. I strongly felt the need for this círculo, for I was looking for a support system to anchor me through the layered experiences I was going through. I knew this group could be a place for me to vent and also to get honest

feedback from mujeres I respect and trust. This círculo has been, is and will continue to be, at the center of most of my academic, spiritual, and emotional growth. From here, I go forward on my path toward the dreams of being a college professor, a responsible community organizer, and a role model for my beautiful hermanit@s.

II: I, Irene Lara, am Mexican-born, with ancestors with racially mixed lineages that extend across the Atlantic and throughout the so-called Americas. A first-and-a-half-generation immigrant to the United States, I am conscious of the privileges of having a US-born, feisty, compassionate, hard-working mother and a Mexican-born, self-taught, unionized, hard-working father who have always supported my education, mi educación within and outside the home, from pre-school to a PhD and beyond. I am blessed to have a loving compañero, a true partner and co-parent, and an immensely caring extended circle of family and friends. I also recognize my lineage as connected to the original ones, to human abuelas and abuelos that go back to la primera Madre, and to the very first sparks of Life. I acknowledge all of my relatives, including the plants, the sea, the stars, tata sol y nana luna. I know myself to be an ancestor as well, to mis hijas preciosas, Belén and Xóchitl, to my students, and to future generations.

Although I can probably trace my path to initiating CSAism and becoming a CSA back to my earliest educational experiences, mi camino most directly began during my undergraduate years when I became conscious of the yearning for a healthier, more empowered way to be a student (Lara 2002). The wisdom of my body and spirit broke through my disciplined and disciplining mind to insist that I needed to focus on healing my internalized oppression as part of challenging oppression in all of its insidious forms. Through studying, self-reflection, individual and group counseling, forming intellectual and emotional support groups, and participating in social justice organizations, I

deeply worked on this ongoing process of liberation through my undergraduate and graduate school years. I deliberately chose to pursue a doctorate in Ethnic Studies as a field built on resisting the historical legacy of systematic oppressions and its social and personal manifestations. However, situated within a hierarchical institution of “higher learning” invested in maintaining its power and reputation, my training did not consistently provide the transformative and healing tools I sought. It was through my collaborations with a few professors, peers, and the National Latina Health Organization, a community organization grounded in holistic approaches to activism, advocacy, fem/mentoring, and education (Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara 2006), that I found spaces and tools to develop my emotional and spiritual intelligences.

Once I officially became part of the professoriate, I was promptly confronted with the challenges of institutionalized power dynamics, as well as structural and internalized racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and other intersecting oppressions (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012). Busy with negotiating the expectations that would earn me tenure, I often felt my path was more like an uncharted labyrinth than a course grounded in fulfilling my purpose in life as a whole person committed to liberatory teaching and learning through my scholarship, creative writing, activism (including through social justice interventions in the university), curriculum-building, femtoring, and parenting. Nevertheless, the priority I strove to give to utilizing the *sobrevivencia* tools I gathered, created, and remembered through my process helped me maintain my spirit as intact as possible given the often toxic context of the academic institution. It was my success measured by this sense of integrity that mattered more, or just as much, as earning tenure.

While I taught and femtored from this holistic approach throughout my life, I recognize that it wasn't until I was tenured that I was able to institutionally enact

my vision for passing this CuranderaScholarActivist consciousness and “spiritual activist” (Anzaldúa 2002a) praxis on to others. It is my desire for the collective wellbeing of our planet and of the next seven generations that motivates me to continuously remember my life’s purpose, infuse it with love and ganas, trustingly embody it, and be true to my core, ever-emerging, fluid self. As a professor, I have learned to take off my professional máscara. I hope that sharing part of my story humanizes me as being more than a professor and humanizes professors in general. I am a Chicana who is informed by her experiences as a daughter, mother, and partner. My path to CSAism is as a Chicana professor who loves to teach, write, listen, femtor, dream, heal, and weave.

Weaving a Web of Memorable Seminars

What was one of the most memorable seminars for you and why?

SLR: There is one specific CuranderaScholarActivist seminar that has become a permanent memory I keep in my heart. During my last semester at SDSU I was working, taking five classes, and applying to several graduate programs. I was overwhelmed and just barely surviving, day-by-day. I was also having an extremely difficult time writing my personal statement. I set a goal to have a second draft by a specific seminar meeting date. The disappointment I felt in myself when I did not meet this goal only brought to the surface that I was at my breaking point. As I walked into the seminar, I literally had a physical reaction to the energy in the room. Instantly, I felt my eyes welling up with tears and I felt ready to release the carga that was weighing heavy in my bodymindspiritheart.

As a check-in to bring our whole selves to our encuentro, Dr. Lara asked us to close our eyes and to take deep breaths, while visualizing our breath flowing through our bodies; using our breath to release whatever we needed to. As soon

as I had closed my eyes, listened to my own breathing and my compañeras' breathing, warm tears came. When it was my turn to speak I smelled the sage that was passed to me and let the aroma comfort me. I cried and I cried hard, all while trying to speak. And it was okay for me to let go and to be vulnerable. I am so grateful to all the mujeres in the room who bared witness to that, even if they might not have understood what I was trying to say, they heard me and I felt it. I was able to voice my frustration over writing the personal statement, asking aloud, instead of only in my head, "Why do I have to keep proving myself?"

The difficulty of writing the personal statement came about because I felt that I had to keep proving myself to an institution that was already expecting me to fail. When I sat down to write my personal statement, I had initially imagined graduate admissions committees that would decide whether or not I could make it in graduate school based on my ability to convince them of my worthiness. You see, during my undergraduate career, I walked around with an incessant fear of doing something wrong and failing. I could not risk messing up, because even just one misstep would prove I was an impostor and that I was never supposed to be on the university campus in the first place. Beginning to write the personal statement meant that I had to directly confront this anxiety, and the voice telling me that I would never be intelligent enough. The institution's pressure on students to perform is overwhelming at times, for anyone. However, looking back, I also recognize the pressure I placed on myself. This pressure to always perform perfection according to the academy's rigid definition of success had hurt my body. I was exhausted, depressed, and sick. This also manifested itself in me not being able to write.

Yet, being in the hogar that as CSAs we had created and built for ourselves helped me to re-imagine the process of writing the personal statement; not as a means of proving myself, but really as a process of writing my story, for

myself, for the community from which I came. They guided me in finding a way to humbly honor the person I had become and the work I had done. Furthermore, the mujeres reminded me that to break my writer's block, I could re-imagine my readers as being them, people who genuinely wanted to support me and truly cared.

After my body released the tears I had for so long held onto, I took a deep breath and looked around the círculo. I stopped to look at every single mujer in the room. This memory/vision of everyone looking back, seeing me, and listening, has become so powerful for me. For the first time I didn't feel like I was being judged for expressing my emotions. The mujeres let me go through my pain, and they did so in loving support. Even more, I felt that although this was my personal struggle I knew that I was not the only one, because when each of our eyes met, we felt it and we understood. For me it was witnessing In Lak'ech at work in the academy. It was sacred for me. Now when I feel scared or overwhelmed I invoke this memory/vision of the mujeres looking back at me, smiling, and I know that I am going to be okay.

AG: A CSA seminar session is like a spiritual retreat where I can find peace, tranquility, and most importantly, where I can find myself when I feel that I'm getting lost and when I can physically feel the fragmentation between my body, mind, spirit, and heart. The CSA seminars allowed me to re-center myself every week, and reflect on each and all aspects of my life (student, daughter, caretaker, girlfriend, sister, femtee, among others). The most memorable seminar for me was the first time we had a storyteller-listener exercise. Throughout my life, I have always been the listener, and I had not exercised my storytelling abilities; therefore, this exercise proved to be challenging as it demanded a deep analysis of myself.

The first day that we practiced the storyteller-listener exercise, I spoke very little. I did not feel comfortable talking about myself, and I felt overwhelmed by the attention I was receiving from the listener. In other words, it was difficult to be my honest self when I had lived my life putting up máscaras, being silent, and avoiding visibility. It was in that moment, in that deep silence, that I realized that I had lost the ability to speak, the ability to tell my story. In the days following the session, confusion and sadness filled my mind, and I reflected on why I could not speak as easily as my other compañeras. After much thought, I realized that I was so used to being quiet that I had forgotten about my voice, about my need to speak and be heard. I became aware of the unconscious things that we do that prevent us from speaking, from being open, and from expressing ourselves. From the way that we carry our friendships to the way we interact with others in our daily lives, all of that impacts our storytelling ability, and our perception of ourselves. Drawing back to my autohistoria, I believe that the day I decided to stop asking for help, due to feelings of frustration from the teachers, was the day that I began to silence myself. Fortunately, I found people that were able to guide me through the process of healing and decolonization. Although it is not easy to unravel many years of silence, I try not to let others silence me, and most importantly, I try not to silence myself.

The methods used by the CSA mentoring group challenges ideas of teaching that commonly use the banking method as a primary form of acquiring knowledge. It is that banking method that perpetuates the feeling of inferiority, and that feeds the supremacist idea that people of color are not intelligent. We use critical pedagogical methods, like the storyteller-listener, to challenge linear forms of thinking. According to Kimberly Huisman, who engages the work of Paulo Freire, “Critical pedagogy [like the one utilized in the CSA] challenges the ‘banking method’ of education, a method whereby students are viewed as passive recipients of knowledge deposited by the

knower or teacher” (2012, 107). Freire theorized that this method is a tool utilized to oppress others, to hinder and control the capabilities of students who are only considered containers whose knowledge is dependent on the data that they are being taught in the classroom (2000, 77).

Overall, resisting the banking method and the internalization of the “impostor” is a continual process. For me, learning to speak up and opening myself to others in settings where I was not accustomed to doing that, allowed me to bring my whole self to the academy and heal the silencing of my voice. Anzaldúa’s essay, “Metaphors in the Tradition of the Shaman,” parallels my experience in the CSA seminar. As Anzaldúa theorizes, metaphors can be used to resist change, protect ourselves, and share our inner experiences, and by sharing them we can, like a shaman, transmit from the imaginary to the physical in order to create healing. If that is accomplished, she claims,

we may give others access to a language and images with which they can articulate/express pain, confusion, joy and other experiences thus far experienced only in an inarticulated emotional level. From our own and our people’s experiences, we will try to create images and metaphors that will give us a handle on the numinous, a handle on the faculty for self-healing, one that may cure the depressed spirit, the frightened soul. (Anzaldúa 2009, 123)

For me, the storyteller-listener exercise, as well as other methods used in the CSA seminar, allow for self-healing to occur. They help us bring out our fears and dissect them so that we are able to acknowledge them and, hopefully, eradicate them.

CR: Writing about a most memorable seminar meeting is not easy, as each meeting was a building step for the next one. An important composition of

our seminars was the physical aspect of sitting in a circle, making us all equally vulnerable and thus accessible for healing to occur. After checking in we would review the syllabus and proceed from there. Sometimes corazón would take over and we would digress from the syllabus, but digressions were always lessons meant to be. I remember one particular seminar where I became very upset at the reading of an assigned article about how women of color are portrayed in literature. Like many articles read before, this one also talked about several locations of oppression but did not mention the location of difabledness.

Suddenly my own blind spots were visible to me and I was angry; not at my fellow CSA for having us read that article, but at myself for not realizing sooner what had been missing from my scholarship and activist work. I faced my truth at that one seminar and began to set myself free: I was different abled! Soy difabled, una atravezada con la Facultad, described by Anzaldúa as “the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities” (2007, 60). This capacity has become most liberatory and precious to me. Whenever the aroma of sage wafts toward me I immediately remember my compañeras’ encouraging voices on that day and it’s such a warm feeling to remember that I’m not alone.

CP: We begin our chair yoga, a relaxing exercise where we use meditation and physical movements to ground us in our bodies once again. We place our bare feet flat on the blue conference room carpet, place our arms loosely on the arms of our office chairs, breathe evenly, roll our shoulders forward and backward, and take in the smells, sounds, sensations around us. This chair yoga, the union of body, mind, and spirit, begins dissolving all of my stress from the final papers and exams that are coming around the corner in two weeks. For a couple minutes I forget about my long to-do list and I begin to listen to my hungry tummy and tired legs. I begin to feel more and more present in this cozy room, filled with my favorite mujeres and the sweet smell of sage and rosemary. The

check-in process continues to ease my stressful body and mind, and it gets easier to stop thinking about what I need to do right after the seminar.

We collectively plan the day's agenda by deciding whether to discuss the readings first and also voice our needs for other *plática* topics. The freedom to decide as a group what we wanted to get done during our class was a truly precious quality of our seminar. We find that most of us want to spend some time brainstorming about the term papers we have been vigorously working on for the last weeks. That day, like many others, I was relieved that we would have some time to dedicate to what I had been so preoccupied with! I had been working on a final paper for my first graduate-level class and was having issues deciding what evidence I was going to use for the last half of my paper. My paper was on the racial and class dimensions of the distribution of farmer's markets in San Diego, and I shared with the group what I was stuck on. I expected that the *mujeres* would sympathize with me, but not be that interested in the details since we have different research interests. They surprised me in how enthusiastic they were about helping me sort through specific ideas, how to present my data and what kind of analytical questions I could answer. This was such an important lesson for me in envisioning my future as a graduate student and as a collaborator within the academy. By the end of our seminar, I felt a surge of affirmation and reassurance in knowing this group of supporting *mujeres* was going to anchor me in my difficult path through graduate study.

IL: After asking the *femtees* to read aloud a few chosen verses from Anzaldúa's essay, "now let us shift . . . the path of *conocimiento* . . . inner work, public acts" (2002a), to inspire us, I invited everyone to take a brief *conocimiento* walk around campus. Like Anzaldúa, we were going to work on fully engaging our *bodymindspirits* as sources of *conocimiento*, knowledge that "comes from

opening all of your senses, consciously inhabiting your body and decoding its symptoms” by being outside, closer to *la madre tierra* (2002a, 542). I told everyone that we were to walk without speaking so that we could better listen to the natural world around us and within us, in order to see what *conocimientos* emerged that we might otherwise not hear if we stayed indoors and went straight to our tongues, papers and pens, or keyboards. Given that our seminar topic that week focused on personal statements and the writing process, the guiding question that we were to meditate on and hold in our *bodymindspirthearts* as we walked was, “What gets in the way of me writing from my authentic voice?”¹⁴ Whenever we felt like we were straying from our intent or getting too distracted from the present moment, we were to return our awareness to our breathing and initial guiding prompt.

As we walked in silence across campus, I felt invigorated. Not only was this enlivening *conocimiento* walk for my students, I needed it too. I also felt a renewed connection with my surroundings. I still recall the wind tickling my skin, the gently intensifying warmth, and smelling the fresh morning dew. With equal pleasure I remember appreciating the work of the socially invisibilized gardeners who help make the campus beautiful and delighting in the little turtles drinking in the sun as they perched on the rocks in the pond. Particularly savory memories were all the moments I met the gaze of fellow human beings and we held on, connecting. When we returned to our seminar room, I asked everyone to free write about what they heard, what they saw, what they smelled, what they tasted, and what they felt. Taking Anzaldúa’s lead, we are reminded that *conocimiento* is more than knowledge—it is also “that aspect of consciousness urging you to act on the knowledge gained” (2002a, 577). Afterward, everyone shared what insights came to them during our walk and how that awareness was going to impact their actions.

Integrating a *conocimiento* walk into our pedagogy helped us be more aware of ourselves in the university, as part of the university, as belonging in the university—including me as a professor. From a CuranderaScholarActivist perspective, this awareness is related to being able to see ourselves as connected to the social and natural world around us and in us. By contradicting feelings of alienation and isolation, it became part of our healing process. Personally, this seminar reaffirmed for me at a very tiring time in my life that I was doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing y me dio una gran energía para seguir adelante.

Challenges: Reconstructing the Bodymindspiritheart Puzzle

What challenges have you worked through as a CuranderaScholarActivist?

IL: As a professor, I faced the initial challenge of trusting enough in myself to go for it and create my dream FSMP seminar proposal. Given the historical skepticism toward Chicana/Latina Studies as a legitimate field in academia, it can be difficult to garner institutional support to integrate one's research, teaching, and femtoring in general, not to mention to do so through a curandera's spiritual lens. As many scholars address, the legitimacy of the interdisciplinary methods, knowledge, and forms of writing utilized by faculty of color is often questioned by mainstream academics (Córdova 1998; Delgado Bernal and Villalpando 2002). One's authority as a researcher and teacher is further suspect if you address spiritual epistemologies and explicitly center an activist, community-based, holistic approach (Keating 2000; Keating 2002; Rendón 2009). Interestingly, as much as I have written and taught about this approach and have personally worked on healing my internalization of such beliefs, I still felt fear and hesitated about putting myself and my ideas about the need to holistically center healing, love, and the whole student and teacher in the classroom out there in such a public way. It was a very conscious coming out of the spiritual closet for me that made me feel vulnerable and bold.

Once we got underway, I also faced several challenges in my role as faculty mentor. For one thing, as I strove to model a CuranderaScholarActivist pedagogy, I was confronted with how best to encourage and hold the students accountable to the seminar's goals and the aims they themselves determined and voiced for themselves.¹⁵ In addition, it was a challenge to find the right balance between maintaining the integrity of the syllabus and revising it as we moved along in a way that attended to the most pressing needs of both the students and myself. Ultimately, I determined that it was important to maintain a certain degree of flexibility and be open to addressing each situation as it arose. Thus, the significance of participating in CuranderaScholarActivist pedagogical exercises—such as deep breathing meditations, yoga poses, storytelling-listening in pairs or in the larger group that we discuss earlier—that helped us feel awake and grounded in our bodymindspirithearts, rather than scattered and distracted, is all the more clear. We, the faculty and students, benefit by investing time and energy on our check-ins; working to be fully present (beyond simply showing up) enables us to be more clear about what are the best ways to proceed, which should largely be collectively determined.

I recall several instances when students voiced deep sadness and concern related to their “sentipensante” responses to our particularly heartbreaking readings that raised awareness about inequities related to illness, employment, education, housing, violence, other family issues, and their personal impact in our own lives (Rendón 2009). Akin to the experiences of Jennifer Ayala, Patricia Herrera, and Laura Jiménez, who were confronted with what kind of professors we were going to be when a student started crying in our “Redefining Latina Health” class, I, too, have been at the crossroads of needing to choose whether to move on with the day's agenda or take time to pay attention to the emotions being expressed. Like my colegas, I have decided that I am not “going to be the kind

of [instructor] who just continue[s] with the lecture of the day,” as discussed in Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara (2006), but instead stops “and acknowledge[s] what has happened” and guides the students to engage painful topics “socially, as a community” in relation to the broader frameworks of power, oppression, and privilege that we are studying (270). Yes, it is challenging to maneuver this nepantla (Anzaldúa 2002a) path, personally and in the face of dominant pedagogical models. But this is what CuranderaScholarActivist femtoring and pedagogy looks like. And its healing potential is worth it.

AG: During the CSA seminars I was confronted with several challenges. During the initial meetings I was incited to trust and be open to the other CSAs. Being in the círculo compelled me to be honest with them and myself, and to face feelings of shame, discomfort, and fear. I think the first time I cried was the moment when the shield that I had used to protect myself for many years finally came down. As a caretaker, I keep a lot of emotions to myself. Dealing with illnesses and seeing the person you love the most experience pain and adapt to difability is emotionally and spiritually draining. Being able to let my guard down and desahogarme was the first challenge I overcame.

However, as my identity as a CSA began to flourish, so did the challenges. Positioning myself as a curandera also requires challenging the dominant ideologies regarding curanderas and indigenous pedagogies. At times I lacked the proper words to describe my forging identity as a CSA, and in certain occasions I avoided using the term curandera in order to evade explaining the spiritual and indigenous aspect to people that did not understand this form of teaching, learning, and engagement. As time went on, I learned to take pride in reclaiming the curandera identity by being able to express pride in indigeneity, something that was often repressed due to historical and current constructs about race that frowns upon indigenous identity, methods, and conocimientos. It was not easy

explaining to most people the spiritual and holistic aspect of the program because they have been trained in restrictive oppositional binary forms that makes it impossible to bring your whole self to academia. Many people, I believe, are in need of a similar space where their experiences and social locations are taken into consideration; a place where their autohistorias are valued, where they can be themselves without fear of hegemonic impositions, and a place where they can find support and cultivate their different knowledges.

CP: As an organizer and a student, being able to balance the intensive CuranderaScholarActivist seminar with my other classes, regular meetings, and spending time with my loved ones, was a constant challenge. I remember stacking things on my seminar to-do list at the beginning of every semester, then realizing throughout those months that it was going to be impossible to complete assignments and write term papers for four other classes, a required twenty-five-page research paper for the seminar, and the other creative projects I had set up to do collaboratively with my fellow CuranderaScholarActivists. However, I definitely think that having to navigate these different responsibilities truly helped me prioritize better and work on improving my time management (i.e. reducing procrastination).

Another challenge that was inherent for me in the structure of our seminar was the commitment to be fully present and honest with each other and ourselves about how our bodymindspirithearts were feeling. For example, I know that I truly had to push myself to follow through on saying everything that I was feeling during our check-ins, whether I thought it was going to make me feel uncomfortable or not. Sometimes when there were so many things for me to finish for class, organizations, and the seminar, I really wanted to push any feelings of exhaustion, romance, or any non-academic preocupaciones to the very back of my mind. However, because of the space we constructed during

our seminar, I had to challenge myself to come forward with my whole self and to speak with honesty in order to fully engage the CuranderaScholarActivist praxis. At times this meant that I had to give in to feelings that overwhelmed me into rage or tears, which may not have been exactly what I wanted to do during finals week. Yet, although I thought otherwise at the time, it was these desahogos that allowed me to survive in the midst of hectic semesters during which it felt like I could never rest or pay attention to myself.¹⁶

SLR: The major challenge I faced as an undergraduate was finding the ganas to keep going in a toxic environment that promoted the spiritual, emotional, and physical violence that both the institution and I inflicted upon myself in order to meet the expectations of academia. For example, I would punish myself for not meeting due dates by forcing myself to stay up for days on end, and I would purposely starve myself as an incentive to finish my work and to do it well. By the time I had found my co-authors, I was at a point in my life where I was genuinely questioning my ability to continue to survive the academy. I found myself constantly questioning my existence in the university, thinking, *do I really belong here?* These feelings were also heightened by the guilt that I had, knowing that while I was off at school my family was struggling. It became strenuous to maintain harmony between the challenge of being away from home while my family was going through difficult financial and emotional turmoil. I knew that I was needed at home, but in order for me to fulfill my academic and personal goals I also needed to be away.

The CSA seminar was where I had the opportunity to voice these challenges and to understand the profound connections between the personal and political that was reflected in my own “self-actualization” (hooks 1994). Like the other CSAs, I also had to face the obstacle of letting my guard down and being vulnerable in front of the other mujeres. I had become accustomed

to wearing the everything-is-fine mask and suppressing any kind of visible expression of how my personal life was also adding to the pressures of academia. The challenge was to be honest with myself and the mujeres in the CSA seminar. How could I expect the CSAs to be honest and open with me, if I did not open up to them? Looking back now and reflecting on the beautiful relationships built on trust, love and support I have developed with the CSAs, the act of challenging myself to be vulnerable, to be open and honest was worth the fear I had to go through. Individually we all have endured our own unique challenges within and outside of the academy. Yet I especially want to acknowledge that through everything we have encountered, we began a healing journey while surviving and thriving through these challenges in solidarity. The CSA círculo provided un hogar for me, a space where I could gather the strength to keep going and heal.

CR: Being part of the CSA circle and claiming a CSA identity wasn't easy. To fully integrate myself into the círculo and to commit to self defragmentation I had to release the fear of letting the other mujeres into my trust zone; other times I did not have the safety of the circle because 'curandera' is a very spiritual and emotionally loaded word for many. For example, during my first undergraduate presentation at UC Berkeley titled "Curanderas in Academia," I felt verbally and publicly attacked by a professor who disagreed with my personal CSA definition and identity. Claiming a CSA positionality is a very individual, very personal position that I do not impose on anyone.

However, one of the hardest things that I have ever had to deal with was the issue of difabledness. I knew I had to confront my "shadow beast" (Anzaldúa 2002a; Anzaldúa 2007) for healing to take place, for this self-acknowledgement to allow me to integrate bodymindspiritheart. As hard as it was, and as afraid as I was of being unwanted and undervalued as a scholar

and human being, I sought the help of Student Disability Services. At our NACCS presentation I unmasked myself and shared with the audience that I have learned and accepted that I do walk an academic path, and that due to the “social distancers” of having a learning difability, chronic depression and chronic health conditions, I walk at my own pace, and it is all right (Castañeda 2008). I told them I was coming out about my difabilities because I hoped for others to see that they are not alone.

Student Accomplishments: Ambulando Nepantla as CuranderaScholarActivists

Being CuranderaScholarActivists has been extremely rewarding, both academically and personally. We have had the opportunity to be part of a network where we encourage each other’s own unique research interests and individual graduation, graduate school, and professional roads, despite the pain of navigating an oppressive higher education system, one that often forces us into a nepantla state. “Nepantla,” Anzaldúa says, “is the site of transformation, the place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas . . . Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it” (2002a, 548–9). Academic and personal equilibrium is what we collectively strive for. We have met all of the official learning objectives established by the FSMP despite the obstacles we face as women of color. We have learned to write annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, and research papers about issues that we truly care about, an opportunity that not many undergraduate students have. In addition, many of us have successfully applied for scholarships, research programs like McNair Scholars and the Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Grant, and MA and PhD programs, as well as earned Institutional Review Board approval for our research projects. Most of us have also presented at undergraduate research conferences and national academic conferences throughout the program’s

time. Moreover, of the first six undergraduate CSAs, all have graduated, three were selected as the Most Outstanding Seniors of their departments, one started her master's in social work at the University of Southern California in 2010, and three started graduate school in the fall of 2011: in an environmental studies doctoral program at UC Berkeley, an English doctoral program at UT San Antonio, and a Latin American studies master's program at SDSU. Thirty-five more undergraduates have participated since the original cohort of six; of those forty-one students, twenty-eight have graduated and thirteen are on their path to graduation.

We celebrate all of these accomplishments; however, it is important to emphasize that we are achieving these goals while consciously working toward wellness and balance in our lives. We honor this process of *ambulando nepantla* as an integral aspect of our success, which is no longer limited by mainstream definitions. We have been able to visualize and achieve our dreams with our whole selves intact. Throughout the process we have supported each other, built community, and shared our resources and *conocimientos* with one another. We have acquired the knowledge, the language, and the tools to *sobrevivir* while striving to maintain our whole selves as scholars, activists, mothers, sisters, daughters, lovers, and more. Indeed, we have created a circle of support that we will continue to nurture and take with us wherever we are, creating new CSA circles along the way.

Looking back on our journey through academia as undergraduates considering graduate school, we now recognize that our perceptions of higher education and our relationship to the university have changed. As undergraduates we, collectively and individually, had feelings of not belonging. We experienced the reality of the academy as a wounding place for Chicanas and other women of color, for differently abled bodies, for working class, first generation college

students—for those of us who are *other* (e.g., Castellanos and Karimura 2006; Gutierrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Lara 2002). As we navigated the alienating academic system we became aware of the risk of losing our fundamental beliefs about social justice (Córdova 1998). Though we continue to face ongoing struggles with the ways we stand in relation to the academy, these *conocimientos* have given us a base from which to confront the hurdles that come our way. As Audre Lorde passionately articulates, “When [we] dare to be powerful, to use [our] strength in the service of [our] vision, then it becomes less and less important whether [we are] afraid” (1997, 13).

Besides providing *un hogar* and shifting from fear to courage as undergraduates, being CSAs profoundly impacted our visions of graduate school. Prior to the seminar, many of us did not or could not imagine ourselves as graduate students. However, the CSA seminar helped manifest our visions of graduate school by altering the particular ways that we each live out our *conocimientos* and perceive ourselves in the academy. We are no longer concerned with exerting precious energy proving whether or not we belong. Rather, we are owning and claiming our presence in academia, and the presence of the communities and knowledges we bring with us. We now understand that as academics with *conocimientos* we have *el deber* to pass on the knowledges that we have cultivated in our CSA paths while we continue to engage in healing, decolonization, and spiritual activism.

Through our work together, we have all participated in bringing healing to ourselves, to the university, and our communities. In Gonzalez’s words, “being a CSA has empowered me to continue in the path of decolonizing academia and challenging hegemony by reclaiming my identity and being fearless of the limitations imposed by oppressive structures.” For Prado, another critical accomplishment was her individual redefining of spirituality, a complex part of her

life that she very much wanted to leave behind: “I equated taking care of the spirit with repression of my body and mind . . . through this seminar I have reflected on my linear way of looking at spirituality and found a middle ground for myself. I now can practice a spirituality that is balanced with my body and mind, based on decolonization and freedom to be myself.” Rivera reflects, “by reclaiming what has sustained our ancestors and by bringing the spiritual to the academy, I truly feel we have begun a form of decolonizing and healing not only for ourselves, but for our communities as well.” Rodriguez testimonea, “The CSA seminar has been truly sacred to me . . . enabling me to acknowledge that my pains and struggles have made me into the person that I am, which fuels my need to embrace a new ‘conciencia de la mestiza,’ as Anzaldúa nos anima a hacer” (2007).

Passing the Sage:

The Future of the CuranderaScholarActivist Femtoring Program

The CSA program began with the desire to help guide students into research and to teach students the CuranderaScholarActivist model as a healthy personal and collective way of creating positive social change. Indeed, throughout the seminar, we aimed to co-create what it means to be CuranderaScholarActivists, a positionality that values the development and embodiment of one’s intellectual, activist, and healing qualities. Coming together to write this paper as equals, and not as part of a hierarchical relationship, has truly been a sacred and healing process. As we prepare to seguir adelante into new paths in our lives we cannot help but feel the mending of the susto and wounding we endure in academia. Sharing our testimonios with one another and with you, our readers, although at times challenging, has been a reflection of a beautiful journey que caminamos juntas.

As mujeres who play different roles in academia and life, being able to balance the intensive weekly CSA seminar with other classes, social activism, research papers, work, and spending time with our loved ones was a constant challenge;

however, the extra responsibility also taught us to prioritize our time and reduce procrastination. At the beginning, in addition to the work load, some of us felt challenged by the brave space we created to openly speak about our feelings because, as Elena Avila manifests, “Every one of us has, at one time or another, lost a part of our soul because of the cultural values we have been forced to embrace,” values that split our whole selves into pieces of a puzzle that is often difficult to reconstruct (1999, 186). Many of us find ourselves constantly asking why am I here? Or do I even belong here? But being part of this group has helped to ground ourselves and validate our existence in the academy. The CSA círculo has opened our eyes and hearts to the possibility of confronting all these challenges and healing our wounds instead of ignoring, denying, and blaming our bodymindspiritshearts.

Reflecting back on our personal and collective challenges as CuranderaScholarActivists, we are reminded of Anzaldúa’s essay, “Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers,” and her painfully honest words: “I wanted to call the dangers ‘obstacles’ but that would be a kind of lying. We can’t transcend the dangers, can’t rise above them. We must go through them and hope that we won’t have to repeat the performance” (1983, 165). We have learned through our experiences as CSAs that while “we must go through” the “dangers,” such as ignoring, hurting, and fragmenting ourselves, and questioning our intellect, while also dealing with the harsh realities of financial issues, we can do so as a community of supportive, loving, and fierce mujeres. We got through and addressed our challenges by being there for each other, actively listening, checking in, writing, crying, and laughing together.

Because of these experiences, in the future we want to see many more programs like this in academia. Ongoing state budget cuts and increasing privatization of public higher education potentially demoralize faculty and students. Under

these conditions, mentoring/femtoring programs and one-on-one traditional mentoring relationships are at risk. This in turn limits Chicana/Latina/Indigenous women's access to college and the ability to graduate, not to mention the likelihood of attaining an education that is culturally meaningful and teaches us to be politically, historically, and socially engaged.

As of fall 2013, only Chicana, Latina, and/or Indigenous identified women students had participated in the CSA program. In 2014, the first Chicano and the first black woman joined the CSA seminar. Forty-one undergraduate and nine master's students have participated in total. Irene successfully continues to bring together new generations of CSAs from a variety of educational levels and disciplines, including majors and minors in Women's studies; Chicana/o studies; Spanish; Latin American studies; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies; English; social work; anthropology, child and family development; political science; psychology; sociology; and environmental studies. CSAs are taking what they learned to many professional fields as they plan to be educational administrators, K-12 teachers, professors, community organizers, researchers, writers, social media entrepreneurs, therapists, social workers, and counselors, while remaining connected to social justice activism. In whatever ways the CSA evolves, Chicana/Latina/Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy will always be at the heart of our work.

As part of our *crecimiento*, we also want to expand the way we position ourselves as *curanderas* to also positioning ourselves as "*brujanderas*," a concept that blends *brujas* and *curanderas* (Lara 2005). This simultaneously challenges the colonial-modern history of demonizing *brujas* and *curanderas* and reclaims the patriarchally maligned *bruja* as a figure connected to healing and spiritual *conocimientos* that also includes sexual, creative, and procreative/reproductive *conocimientos* and power, as Lara writes (2005). That is, we want to more

explicitly incorporate and develop *conocimientos* about our bodies and sexualities, the joys and the wounds, as we strive for erotic wholeness. This entails even more directly integrating an intersectional approach that complexly addresses the privileges and oppressions related to sexual identities and difabilities.¹⁷

Overall, the road to decolonizing and healing academia is still a long one. But if we begin by transforming our communities and ourselves, then resisting and changing the structures becomes easier. Sharing our experiences in academia is our collective envisioning of the transformation *que exigimos* in the academy. We envision an hourglass being filled with our *granitos de arena* that little by little are part of inciting change in academia and contributing to a paradigm shift. We cannot change the academy immediately, but we can begin by envisioning and embodying the change that we think is necessary, which includes creating support groups where our differences, multiple identities, herstories, and epistemologies are acknowledged and embraced.

The intention of the CuranderaScholarActivist group is to encourage people of color to view academia as a place where we do belong and to view ourselves as being core contributors to its *desarrollo*, in defiance of the obstacles. We belong in academia and we can navigate this system without damaging our *bodymindspirithearts* and fragmenting ourselves. Our CSA praxis has drawn out cultural tools and strengths that we continue to build upon. We invite you to envision alongside us what a decolonized university would look like, one that recognizes its role in perpetuating colonial structures of power and consciously works to dismantle many centuries of institutionalized racism, gender and sexual oppression, classism, ableism, nationalism, and other forms of domination (Córdova 1998; Tejeda, Espinoza, and Gutierrez 2003). This university will nourish the well-being of our *bodymindspirithearts* and value our social, cultural, and historical identities (Rendón 2009). Although

many may feel daunted by the tremendous work it takes to enact this radical dreaming, let us remember Anzaldúa's prophetic words: "Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in the society. Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (2007, 109). We offer our autohistoria testimonio as a medicine story (Levins Morales 1998) with the hope that you will apply some aspect of our CSA conocimientos to your own life. As CSAs, we have learned to *ambular en nepantla* and see that it is not a frightening place where we might drown, but instead a place where we can build community and emerge spiritually intact, ready to pass the sage along to you.

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank the MALCS 2011 writing workshop facilitator Karen Mary Davalos, and co-participants, Ariana E. Vigil, Cristina Herrera, Kandace Creel Falcón, Carolina Núñez-Puente, and Marisol Silva for all of their encouraging and helpful comments about our work. Please note, authors are equal contributors and are listed in alphabetical order.

Notes

¹ This neologism integrates the valued qualities and actions of the curandera, scholar, and activist into one dynamic positionality, as we flesh out in our paper. Following the example of feminist writers who taught us the political significance of language and its ability to help us create new liberatory images, we also created the family of words *femtor* and *femtee* (as both nouns and verbs), *femtoring*, *femtored*, and *femtorship* to explicitly name our feminist mentoring praxis. In using these terms, we challenge the male-centered western etymology of *mentor* (*Mentor*, after the ancient Greek advisor and guide who appears in *The Odyssey*). Identifying as *femtors* and *femtees* gives us visibility as women, and thus empowers us while challenging the historical legacy of academic mentors and mentees being men. Interestingly, in Greek mythology, Athena (the goddess of wisdom, among other valued attributes) disguises herself as the male *Mentor* to circumvent undesired heterosexual male attention and more effectively provide guidance (Hansman 2002, 1-3).

² We draw from Anzaldúa's elaboration of *conocimiento* to refer to knowledge, as well as self-awareness and consciousness, that comes from our *bodymindspirithearts*, Spirit, or nature, and not

only from our rational minds (2002a). Also see Rendón's discussion of the related *sentipensante* (sensing/thinking) pedagogy concept (2009). *Conocimientos* are intuitive ways of knowing and being, located in and constructed by the *bodymindspiritheart*. It is also another way of identifying knowledge or insight that can be subversive.

³ There are many writers, scholars, and healers who have been formative in our conceptualization of spirituality and healing and have guided our seminar goals and intentions. See, for example, Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981, Castillo 1994, Levins Morales 1998, Medina 1998, Avila 1999, Hernández-Ávila 2002, Ayala et al. 2006, Pérez 2007, Lara 2008, and Facio and Lara 2014.

⁴ Scholarship and testimonios attesting to the significance of mentors/femtors in student persistence and college completion rates abound. See, for example, Valdez 2001, Castellanos and Jones 2003, and Brownell and Swaner 2010. On the importance of mentoring and peer support networks specifically in relation to PhD programs, see Segura-Herrera 2006, Bañuelos 2006, and Gildersleeve, Croom, and Vasquez 2011.

⁵ One of about 200 national programs funded by the US Department of Education, SDSU's McNair Scholar's Program prepares first-generation, low income, and historically underrepresented undergraduates "for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities" (<http://mcnairscholars.com/about/>; accessed 3 February, 2013). It is presently discontinued at SDSU, thus underscoring the importance of university funded and institutionalized initiatives such as the FSMP.

⁶ The coauthors all identify as Chicanas; that is, women whose ancestry reaches back to within the Mexican nation-state borders, which includes Indigenous, Asian, European, and African roots. For us, to be Chicana means to acknowledge the ways that racist, patriarchal, colonial, and nationalist projects have problematically led to denigrating indigeneity, privileging whiteness, and centering Western-European systems and worldviews. The CSAs, in general, variously identify as Chicana and/or Latina and/or Indigenous. We acknowledge that these identity categories are a source of contention within Chicana/Latina/Indigenous studies, and merit further discussion, but that is beyond the scope of our essay.

⁷ Many scholars critique cultural deficit theories and instead refocus on the cultural wealth and cultural assets of Chicana/o communities that contribute to educational success. See, for example, Villegas 1991, Valencia and Solórzano 1997, Yosso 2006, and Castellanos et al. 2006.

⁸ "About F-SMP." 2013. Academic Engagement Programs. San Diego State University. (<http://fsmf.sdsu.edu/dus/fsmf/about.aspx>; accessed 3 February 2013).

⁹ To more fully understand the structure of the CSA seminar, you can contact Dr. Lara to request a syllabus at ilara@mail.sdsu.edu. Also, please do not hesitate to contact all of us through our email address if you are interested in further information and discussing strategies for integrating a similar holistic femtoring program on your campus at curanderascholaractivist@gmail.com. Although space constraints do not permit a complete detailing of the structure of this seminar, it is important to note that each semester Dr. Lara receives a course release from her usual 3/3 teaching

schedule to facilitate this program and has some staff and financial resource support, such as access to a copy machine and seminar meeting room and a \$1000 budget that can be used for conference travel, guest presenter honoraria, and buying texts or other materials. Having such forms of institutional support is very important for sustaining the CSA program.

¹⁰ There is a growing discourse community addressing this notion of “sobrevivir.” Ana Castillo asserts: “Survival should not be our main objective. Our presence shows our will to survive, to overcome every form of repression known to humankind. Our goal should be to achieve joy” (1994, 146). Galván (2006) discusses “sobrevivencia” in reference to her research with campesinas and their spiritualities and Vizenor (1999; 2008) forwards the notion of “survivance” within the context of Native American communities. For narratives reflecting on the need to approach academia in ways that attend to our whole bodymindspirithearts see, for example, Latina Feminist Group 2001, Lara 2002, Heredia 2011, Lopez-González 2011, Rendón 2009.

¹¹ “Desconocimiento” connotes erroneous or distorted knowledge and/or a reluctance to learn the truth (Anzaldúa 2002a).

¹² This neologism is a liberatory imaging that non-judgmentally focuses on having different abilities rather than on not being able. Also see Castañeda 2008 and Clare 2009.

¹³ From merging bruja, curandera and therapist, “brujanderapist” is a neologism inspired by Lara 2005.

¹⁴ This week in seminar we were covering personal statements that could be used as a draft for scholarship, research programs, or graduate school applications, and had read texts that addressed the politics of writing (e.g. Anzaldúa 1983; Smith 1999). Aware of the challenges of connecting with one’s voice faced by many women of color in the United States, particularly from working class backgrounds and/or whose first language was not English, Lara knew it would be important to take time to reflect on what gets in the way of our confident connection to self. As a tool for deeply engaging our feelings and thoughts, our sentipensamientos (Rendón 2009), the conocimiento walk is another manifestation of the check-in process.

¹⁵ This CuranderaScholarActivist pedagogy draws from many interrelated feminist, critical, and social justice pedagogies as articulated by, for example, Delgado Bernal et al. as “Chicana feminist [or feminista] pedagogy” (2006), Rendón as “sentipensante (sensing/thinking) pedagogy” (2009), and hooks as “engaged pedagogy” (1994). See their work for elaboration.

¹⁶ Literally meaning “undrowning,” Ayala, Herrera, Jiménez, and Lara define “desahogándose” as “releasing the emotions that can be suffocating” (2006, 263).

¹⁷ For example, see Revilla 2010 on sexual identities and Castañeda 2008 on difabilities.

References

Ávila, Elena, with Joy Parker. 1999. *Woman Who Glows in the Dark: A Curandera Reveals Traditional Aztec Secrets of Physical and Spiritual Health*. New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam.

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1983. "Speaking in Tongues: Letter to Third World Women Writers." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 2nd ed., edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, 165–73. Latham, NY: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.
- . 2002a. "now let us shift . . . the path of conocimiento . . . inner work, public acts." In *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 540–78. New York: Routledge.
- . 2002b. "(Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces." In *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 1–5. New York: Routledge.
- . 2007. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 3rd ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- . 2009. "Metaphors in the Tradition of the Shaman." In *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 121–23. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria E., and AnaLouise Keating, eds. 2009. *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2002. *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*. New York: Routledge.
- Ayala, Jennifer, Patricia Herrera, Laura Jiménez, and Irene Lara. 2006. "Fiera, Guambra, y Karichina! Transgressing the Borders of Community and Academy." In *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminist Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, 261–80. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bañuelos, L. Esthela. 2006. "Here They Go Again with the Race Stuff": Chicana Negotiations of the Graduate Experience." In *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminist Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, 95–112. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Betancor, María Henríquez. 2000. "Writing: A Way of Life. An Interview with María Henríquez Betancor." In *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 235–49. New York: Routledge.
- Brownell, Jayne E., and Lynn E. Swaner. 2010. *Five High-Impact Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion, and Quality*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Castañeda, Carmelita "Rosie." 2008. "Ni De Aquí, Ni de Allá." *Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social* 7(2): 20–48.
- Castellanos, Jeanett, Alberta M. Gloria, and Mark Kamimura, eds. 2006. *The Latina/o Pathway to the Ph.D.: Abriendo Caminos*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Castellanos, Jeanett, and Lee Jones, eds. 2003. *The Majority in the Minority: Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators and Students in Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Castillo, Ana. 1994. *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays in Xicanisma*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

- Chabram-Dernersesian, Angie, and Adela de la Torre, eds. 2008. *Speaking from the Body: Latinas on Health and Culture*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Clare, Eli. 2009. *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Córdova, Teresa. 1998. "Power and Knowledge: Colonialism in the Academy." In *Living Chicana Theory*, edited by Carla Trujillo, 17–45. Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, eds. 2006. *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores. 2009. "An Introduction: Our Testimonio as Methodology, Pedagogy, a Messy Work in Progress." In *Unidas We Heal: Testimonios of Mind/Body/Soul, Latinas Telling Testimonios*. Salt Lake City, UT: Self-published.
- . 2002. "Critical Race Theory, Lat Crit Theory, and Critical Raced-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as Holders and Creators of Knowledge." *Qualitative Inquiry* 8(1): 105–26.
- Delgado Bernal, Dolores, and Octavio Villalpando. 2002. "An Apartheid of Knowledge in Academia: The Struggle over the 'Legitimate' Knowledge of Faculty of Color in Academia." *Equity and Excellence in Education* 35(2): 169–80.
- Facio, Elisa and Irene Lara, eds. 2014. *Fleshing the Spirit: Spirituality and Activism in Chicana, Latina, and Indigenous Women's Lives*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniv. ed. New York: Continuum.
- Galván, Ruth Trinidad. 2006. "Campesina Epistemologies and Pedagogies of the Spirit: Examining Women's *Sobrevivencia*." In *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, 161–79. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. 1997. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gildersleeve, Ryan Evely, Natasha N. Croom, and Philip L. Vasquez. 2011. "Am I Going Crazy?!: A Critical Race Analysis of Doctoral Education." *Equity and Excellence in Education* 44(1): 93–114.
- Gonzales, Patrisia. 2012. *Red Medicine: Traditional Indigenous Rites of Birthing and Healing*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Gonzalez, Alejandra, Irene Lara, Carolina Prado, Sophia Lujan Rivera, and Carmen Rodriguez. (2011, April) *Curandera Scholar Activists in Academia: A Femtoring Model*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference, Pasadena, CA.
- González-López, Gloria. 2011. "Conocimiento and Healing: Academic Wounds, Survival, and

- Tenure." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria González-López, 91–100. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Godinez, Francisca E. 2006. "Haciendo que hacer: Braiding Cultural Knowledge into Educational Practices and Policies." In *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology* edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, 25–38. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gutiérrez y Muhs, Gabriela, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. Gonzalez and Angela P. Harris, eds. 2012. *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Hansman, Catherine A. 2002. "Mentoring: From Athena to the 21st century." *Critical Perspectives on Mentoring: Trends and Issues*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1–4.
- Hernández-Ávila, Inés. 2002. "In the Presence of Spirit(s): A Meditation on the Politics of Solidarity and Transformation." In *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 530–38. New York: Routledge.
- Herrera, Jessica. 2011. "My Path of Conocimiento: How Graduate School Transformed Me into a Nepantlera." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria González-López, 39–44. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Huisman, Kimberly. 2010. "Developing a Sociological Imagination by Doing Sociology: A Methods-Based Service-Learning Course on Women and Immigration." *Teaching Sociology* 38(2): 106–18.
- Hurtado, Aida. 2003. *Voicing Chicana Feminisms: Young Women Speak Out on Sexuality and Identity*. New York: New York University Press.
- Keating, AnaLouise, and Gloria González-López, eds. 2011. *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Keating, AnaLouise. 2000. "Risking the Personal: An Introduction." In *Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Interviews/Entrevistas*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 1–15. New York: Routledge.
- . 2002. "Forging El Mundo Zurdo: Changing Ourselves, Changing the World." In *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 519–30. New York: Routledge.
- . 2008. "'I'm a Citizen of the Universe': Gloria Anzaldúa's Spiritual Activism as Catalyst for Social Change." *Feminist Studies* 34(1 / 2): 53–69.
- . ed. 2009. *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Lara, Irene. 2002. "Healing *Sueños* for Academia." In *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 433–38. New York: Routledge.
- . 2005. "Bruja Positionalities: Toward a Chicana/Latina Spiritual Activism." *Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social* 4(2): 10–45.
- . 2008. "Latina Health Activist-Healers Bridging Body and Spirit." *Women and Therapy* 31(1): 21–40.
- Latina Feminist Group. 2001. *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Latinas Telling Testimonios. 2009. *Unidas We Heal: Testimonios of Mind/Body/Soul*. Salt Lake City, UT: Self-published.
- Levins Morales, Aurora. 1998. *Medicine Stories: History, Culture, and the Politics of Integrity*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Lorde, Audre. 1997. *The Cancer Journals*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.
- Llamas, Jasmín D. and Melissa Morgan Consoli. 2012. "The Importance of Familia for Latina/o College Students: Examining the Role of Familial Support in Intragroup Marginalization." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 18(4), 395–403.
- Medina, Lara. 1998. "Los Espíritus Siguen Hablando: Chicana Spiritualities." In *Living Chicana Theory*, edited by Carla Trujillo, 189–213. Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press.
- Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Pérez, Laura E. 2007. *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2010. "Enrique Dussel's *Ética de la Liberación*, U.S. Women of Color Decolonizing Practices, and Coalitionary Politics Amidst Difference." *Qui Parle* 18(2): 121–46.
- Pérez Huber, Lindsay. 2009. "Disrupting Apartheid of Knowledge: Testimonio as Methodology in Latina/o Critical Race Research in Education." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 22(6): 639–54.
- Pizarro, Marcos. 2004. "Searching For Curanderas: A Quest to Revive Chicana/o Studies." *Journal of Latinos and Education* 3(3): 145–64.
- Rendón, Laura I. 2009. *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice and Liberation*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Revilla, Anita Tijerina. 2010. "Raza Womyn—Making it Safe to be Queer: Student Organizations as Retention Tools in Higher Education." *Black Women, Gender & Families* 4(1): 37–61.

- Segura-Herrera, Theresa A. 2006. "Maintaining and Creating Familia as a Doctoral Student." In *The Latino Pathway to the Ph.D.: Abriendo Caminos*, edited by Jeanett Castellanos, Alberta M. Gloria, and Mark Kamimura, 221-232. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Sudbury, Julia, and Margo Okazawa-Rey, eds. 2009. *Activist Scholarship: Antiracism, Feminism, and Social Change*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Tejeda, Carlos, Manuel Espinoza, and Kris Gutierrez. 2003. "Toward a Decolonizing Pedagogy: Social Justice Reconsidered." In *Pedagogies of Difference: Rethinking Education for Social Change*, edited by Peter Pericles Trifonas, 9-38. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Thobani, Sunera. 2001. "War Frenzy." Accessed January 12, 2013: <http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/s11/warfrenz.html>.
- Torres, Edén. 2003. *Chicana Without Apology/Chicana sin vergüenza: The New Chicana Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Trujillo, Carla, ed. 1998. *Living Chicana Theory*. Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press.
- Valdez, Elsa O. 2001. "Chicanas in Higher Education: The Role of Family, Socialization Practices, and Mentors." *Voces: A Journal of Chicana/Latina Studies* 3(1-2): 177-213.
- Valencia, Richard, and Daniel G. Solórzano. 1997. "Contemporary Deficit Thinking." In *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*, edited by Richard R. Valencia, 160-210. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Villegas, Ana Maria. 1991. *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for the 1990s and Beyond*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Vizenor, Gerald. 2008. *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Wei, Meifen, Tsun-Yao Ku, and Kelly Yu-Hsin Liao. 2011. "Minority Stress and College Persistence Attitudes among African American, Asian American, and Latino Students: Perception of University Environment as a Mediator." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, American Psychological Association* 17(2): 195-203.
- Yosso, Tara. 2006. *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*. New York: Routledge.