THE PROBLEMATICS OF METHOD: DECOLONIAL STRATEGIES IN

EDUCATION AND CHICANA/LATINA TESTIMONIO/PLÁTICA

by

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ABSTRACT

Atravesada: the traveler, the scholar inside and outside research, inside and outside the academy; an identity taken up to survive the contradictions associated with research. Drawing from Chicana/Latina feminist, anticolonial, and queer of color thought, this study examines the *testimonios/pláticas* of eight Chicana/Latina feminist education scholars who actively disrupt research methods. The *testimonios/pláticas* alongside a review of key texts shed light on the problems that can occur while conducting research in academic spaces. The problems identified and theorized through the *testimonios/pláticas* include: construction of knowledge, modes of representation, issues of voice, and researcher roles. While these issues are familiar, the *testimonios/pláticas* exposed feelings and emotions associated critical research practices. These feelings—including passion, fear, and pain—allow and support reimagining of research through alternative forms of mentorship practices, community-based research, and accessibility that support processes of healing and critical reflexivity in research. Data are displayed through thick textual narratives and narrative reflections of the author. This study adds nuance to a growing body of research on Chicana/Latina epistemologies and methodologies and contributes to critical qualitative research discussions by raising challenges to data analysis and representation and reimagining researcher subjectivity.

Dedicated to my mother, Gloria Huante, and my daughter, Cataleya Amor Tzintzun

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PREFACE

My first exposure to *reportes de investigaciones* (investigation reports) came from watching *Univision.* I used to take what was on T.V. as truth. It was mostly quantitative research that made it into *Univision*. I was not always critical about whether or not these *investigaciones* (investigations) impacted my family unless my parents mentioned it. Thus, the context in which I became aware of research was purely passive. I was not an active listener or participant. I did not know I could change the way knowledge was created or presented. I just knew I could rely on *investigaciones* and trusted them.

As a graduate student, I began to interrogate how research and knowledge is formed during my experience working with different university-school-community partnerships and as a teaching assistant for an *Introduction to Multicultural Education* course taught through my department. During this time I had just moved to Utah for graduate school. For the most part I enjoyed the move and forms of engagement that took place. However, as I became more involved with research and teaching I began to grapple with the differing expectations of the university and the communities I was working with side by side.

For example, the university-school-community partnership particularly raised concerns about research accessibility, knowledge construction, representation, issues of voice, and community-based research. The partnership mission and vision was to develop different ways of engaging with students and parents. The collectives I worked with

recognized that the public school system operates from a deficit framework that blames students and families for their inability to achieve academically. Thus, these partnerships were partly created in response to this type of deficit thinking. The partnership created and fostered colloborative relationships based on *respeto*, trust, and *cariño*. Through these trusted relationships the partnership aimed at bringing awareness to the power of families and students to lead projects and movements contributing to the work in social justice education.

The partnership felt it was important to make these experiences known to the extended community. Thus, throughout the year, the partnership documented these different movements and expriences. One way the partnership did this was through community and academic panels, and presentations. However, through personal conversations and educational community-university research panels I started to listen to and understand the complexities of using the university as a resource for documentation, visibility, and voicing of the partnership experiences. I began to question, who owns research? Who or what benefits from the exposure and knowledge produced within this type of collective work? A key component of these questions is what it means to do research with communities with whom the researchers shares attributes such as race, gender, language, etc.

My experience as a teaching assistant at a White institution raised similar questions. Students in the *Introduction to Multicultural Education* course were required to spend 15 hours in a Title 1 school. Log-in hours were tracked and each student wrote a short narrative about their service hour experiences. As a teaching assistant, I began to see the requirement to spend time in a Title 1 school as "service hours" fulfilling yet

another university requirement. Theoretically we are asking students to unlearn deficit models for teaching and conducting research, yet in practice we provide no pedagogical and methodological tools to sustain the process of unlearning and unpacking the self and the other. Moreover, I began to understand what happens when critical scholars pose questions, use critical concepts/ideas, and critical methodologies to interrogate the ways the knowledge is created within diversity courses in education such as the *Introduction to Multicultural Education*. Although this experience is not directly related to the role of research in education, it did help me understand how critical scholars negotiate their different positionalities and experiences within the institution.

Critical and Indigenous scholars (Cajete, 1994; Gallegos, 1998; Grande, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Smith, 2012; Villenas, 1996) conceptualize their experience by theorizing about the role of research and the different methodological shifts. My initial research and teaching experiences coupled with the work of the above scholars have pushed me to rethink the way I engage with research on both an individual and collective level. Influenced by the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, I began to see my researcher role as an active *atravesada* (crosser), trying to transgress research boundaries (a feeling and state of being discussed in Chapter 1). The process of unpacking how research and knowledge is formed is both debilitating and liberating at the same time. Reflections of unpacking, of *atravesada*, represent moments of weakness and deep contradictions— unexamined spots pointing to multiple reengagements with research that respect, reclaim, and heal a diverse set of practices. As critical researchers work to decolonize and reenergize the role of research that resonates with our lives, it is useful to look at how this work is occurring and what it yields. *The Problematics of Method: Decolonial Strategies*

in Education and Chicana/Latina Testimonio/Plática reflects a mapping of careful and thoughtful steps Chicana/Latina education researchers take to address their methodologies and concerns about construction of knowledge, relationships to knowledge, modes of representation, issues of voice, and their role as researchers.

This dissertation is the result of a collective energy among many individuals. I am grateful for my family who supported me spiritually and emotionally through the writing process. Special thanks and dedication to my mother, Gloria Huante, for her endless love and patience though this educational journey. Her stories and experience were a great source of inspiration in my writing and activist work. I love you mom and appreciate all of your hard work and dedication to making sure I pursue my educational passions. I thank my siblings, Iliana Huante and Alfonso Huante Jr., for your ongoing support and endless *pláticas* (conversations) of cariño. Special thanks for the hearts, good energy, and creativity of my extended family of nieces and nephews. I would like to acknowledge my partner, Christian Tzintzun, who supported much of my writing and thinking process. He showered me with the love and support needed to finish this dissertation. He also put up with my moodiness through this process. Your patience and love has provided me with the courage to finish. With love I also thank my daughter, Cataleya Amor Tzintzun, for being patient and bringing joy to my educational journey. Cataleya, your love reminds me that healing is possible, te amo chaparrita!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chicana scholars are engaging personally with research by inviting emotion and personal experiences as well as resisting the disembodied nature of research. Furthermore, they attempt to fragment the dichotomous lines that are inherent in qualitative research such as researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer (Saavedra & Nymark, 2008, p. 264).

Saavedra and Nymark (2008) invite researchers to trouble and reflect on the "disembodied nature of research…to fragment dichotomous lines" by linking experience and emotions to the research process. Drawing focus to multiple dichotomous lines such as researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer, emphasizes the importance of attending to the ways critical researchers can unintentionally become implicit in the reproduction of uneven power relationships and hegemonic models of doing research (Saavedra & Nymark, 2008). While this contradiction has been reflected on by scholars across disciplines (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Gallegos, 1998; Grande, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Patel, 2014; Smith, 2012; Spivak, 1993; Villenas, 1996, 2000), Saavedra and Nymark's (2008) invitation to trouble and reflect can get lost in the discourse and world of research for even the most critical researcher.

I take up the challenge to attend to dichotomous lines to guide my reading,

inquiry, and analysis of qualitative research in education. Chicana feminisms (Anzaldúa, 2007; Burciaga, 2007; Calderon et al., 2012; Cruz, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2009; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Delgado Bernal & Elenes, 2011; Facio & Lara; 2014; Flores Carmona, 2014; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga, 1983; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Rendon, 2009; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas, 1996, 2000) and Chicana feminisms in education (Calderon; 2014; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Espino et al., 2010; Prieto & Villenas, 2012; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Villenas, 1996, 2000) are integral to seeing, understanding, and interrupting dichotomous lines of inquiry in research.

Alongside Chicana feminisms, I also think with anticolonial (Calderon, 2016; Patel, 2014; Smith, 2012; Spivak, 1988; Tuck & Yang, 2012) and queer of color critique (Muñoz, 1999; Perez, 1999; Soto; 2010; Tanaka & Cruz, 1998). Developing a framework of Chicana/Latina feminist in education, anticolonial, and queer of color critique extends understanding and appreciation of the intersections of discourses in qualitative research by highlighting how researchers address methodological concerns about constructions of knowledge, modes of representation, and issues of voice and researcher roles. This scholarship informs knowledge of the shifts within what in this dissertation I term "critical qualitative research."

As a learner and critical scholar I am not antiresearch, rather I am interested in confronting research practices in order to extend and contribute to a body of work that asks us to reimagine what research could be. In an effort to fragment the dichotomous lines in qualitative research, I explore the following research questions:

1) What methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within

institutional university research?

2)   What is at stake for the *atravesada* researcher in choosing critical qualitative research methods in research and practice?

These questions identify the possibilities of building on theories and tools that interrogate power, truth, ethics, and social justice research and reintroduce the struggles, resistances, empowerments, critiques, hopes, needs, goals, and invitations that may be possible in critical qualitative research.

<u>Research focus and design</u>

This research includes two methodological approaches: individual *testimonios/pláticas* (testimony/conversation) of eight Chicana/Latina education scholars (including myself) and a content analysis of critical qualitative research in education over a 20-year period. While the above methods are explicitly discussed in Chapter 3, a challenge at the beginning of the study initiated a shift in approach to *testimonio* (testimony) that is important to introduce here. When conceptualizing this research project, I started with a solid understanding that I would do qualitative research utilizing *testimonio*. During the participant invitation process and initial *testimonios* some issues were raised that invited me to step back from the *testimonio* approach. As a result, I reconceptualized my approach as a *testimonio* and *plática* (conversation), which I represent as *testimonio/plática*.

Testimonio/plática is utilized throughout the dissertation to signal the methodological and theoretical shifts that occurred during the research process. Primarily, the initial shift was due to questions about the lines of anonymity/visibility and

interpretation of *testimonio*. Over the course of conducting research and writing, *testimonio/plática* also became a way to challenge and interrupt tropes of research (introduced below) and raised questions about how to analyze and illustrate *testimonio* data. *Testimonio*/*Plática* methodology emphasizes collaborative theorizing (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Espino et al., 2010). Attempting to show collaborative knowing in research is challenging. Several modes of data representation are tried on as a way to think with the impetus of Chicana/Latina feminist in education, anticolonial, and queer of color critique.

Providing thick individual narratives side by side visually and metaphorically, for example, underscores *testimonios/platicás* as both individual and collaborative reflections on critical qualitative research. *Testimonios/pláticas* enabled an interrogation of how to do, and what it means to do, data analysis while making meaning and expanding and embracing alternative ways of knowing and being. *Testimonio/plática* influences me as a researcher seeking information about the multiple *travesias* (crossings) in academia. When I use *testimonio* and *plática* methodology it signifies two key methodological implications: 1) researcher and contributor engagements with reflexivity and 2) acknowledgement and allowance of potential space(s) for healing. Entering this process means researchers need to understand how to practice being in relation to others and ourselves in research (Calderon, 2014a & b; Cruz, 2012; de la Torre, 2008).

As a process of rethinking critical research, this dissertation is one part of what will be a multifaceted and multiphase project. My exploration in the dissertation began with and focused on Chicana/Latina education reflections about their engagements with qualitative research. This focus exposed the importance of centering emotions and

feelings in research. It displayed concepts and terms of engagement, extending how researchers can reimagine qualitative research. Lastly, it showed how reevaluating mentorship practices, community-based research, and accessibility can support the process of healing and critical reflexivity in research. The content analysis of research tropes and *testimonios/pláticas* adds nuance to a growing body of research on Chicana/Latina epistemologies and methodologies. This project contributes to future research on critical qualitative research by offering the development of methodological possibilities for educational researchers, raising challenges to data analysis and representation, and reimagining researcher subjectivity.

<u>Tropes in critical qualitative research in education</u>

In a content analysis of critical qualitative research, detailed further in Chapter 2, I identified the following set of prevalent tropes:

- Lack of dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies.

- Researcher investment in colonial and imperial frameworks despite its claim and/or use of critical methodologies.

- Educational research and practice for the most part still reads, locates, and produces a colonial relationship to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production.

- Production of research continues to function from an "erasing to replace" and pathologizing gaze framework.

- Research and the overall institution of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities that have multiple ramifications for researcher and researched.

These tropes offer an explanation for the dichotomous lines that Saavedra and Nymark (2008) point to. As noted above, despite over two decades of work and discussion about power, reflexivity, and social justice in research, critical qualitative research continues to think through and reproduce dichotomous lines. At stake in this current moment in research is who or what remains objects and the struggle of historically marginalized communities to tell their own stories (Daza & Tuck, 2014). Thus, a re-evaluation of research tropes is vital to the contested places we are in and in addition to a reconceptualization of method which also requires a rethinking of research subjectivity as *atravesada*.

Atravesada researcher

Being part of the academy as a graduate student-teacher-researcher-activist at times makes me feel like an *atravesada* (crosser). Influenced by Anzaldúa, I began to see my researcher role as an active *atravesada* trying to transgress research boundaries. During this research project, I constantly grappled with multiple insider and outsider positionalities associated with researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer. I tried muting questions and concerns about how research and knowledge is formed within the university. The questions made me doubtful, fearful, and angry of the research process. I tried to reject those feelings because I did not want to show that I was doubtful, afraid, or wrong in my thinking.

However, muting my fear did not mean those feelings were not there. The contradictions and the dichotomous lines inherent in qualitative research were always there; they have only become heightened and swollen as I move sideways, in circles, forward, and backward through the doctoral program. Calling myself an *atravesada* is a bold move supported by a long line of Chicana/Latina feminist thinkers within and outside the academy (Anzaldúa, 2007; Cruz, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Delgado Bernal & Elenes, 2011; Flores Carmona, 2014; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Lara, 2002, 2005; Lara & Facio; 2014; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Rendon, 2009; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas, 1996, 2000).

Being an *atravesada* is typically connected to something negative, deviant, depressive, and repressive guided by a history of aggression and violence regarding intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in research. It is also rooted in the history of colonialism and imperialism. For example, Chicana/Latina feminists (Anzaldúa, 2007; Elenes, 2011; Lara, 2002; Moraga; 1983) talk about how traditional historical interpretations of iconic figures such as *La Virgen the Guadalupe*, *La Malinche*, and *La LLorona* portray them as traitors and *atravezadas* in the context of national politics. Chicana/Latina feminists reinterpret and reintroduce these iconic figures as resisting multiple forms of sociohistorical colonialism. Being an *atravesada* is a sign of resistance. Reading me as an *atravesada* is risky but I hold on to new articulations of *la atravesada* to actively unthread how researchers are implicit in reintroducing dichotomous lines.

I reimagine the process of crossing multiple boundaries in research when I read Gloria Anzaldúa *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Meztiza* (2007) and other selected

works (Anzaldúa, 1990; Anzaldúa & Moraga, 1981). Anzaldúa offers language and metaphors that I now utilize to navigate my feelings and reflections about qualitative research. Her experiences are not my own nor do I claim them as such. However, Anzaldúa's reflections about her *travesias* (crossings) offer several entry points and examples where I can recognize my own crossings as a researcher-teacher-activist and become aware of what is possible. For these reasons, I suggest Anzaldúa can be used to trace and identify the problematics of doing educational research in the academy. Anzaldúa's (2007) concept and praxis of entering into the serpent and *la facultad* are helpful to understanding the *atravezada* researcher. Anzaldúa's entering into the serpent demands engaging with different forms of consicousness. She explains that entering the serpent "facilitates images from the soul and the unconcious through dreams and the imagination" bridging with the physical realities (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 59) that allow us to listen differently to what is in front of us. For her, engaging with this process does not always bring clarity or change. What is important in this engagement is the process of uncoupling what and how one comes to know.

Anzaldúa's (2007) entering into the serpent is also a creative and healing womb recognizing the shadows within, the silence, and the unseen/unknown. Thus, here for me, entering the serpent means we do this at multiple times and the serpent may look different every time. When critical scholars interrogate different moments and shifts in qualitative research we enter the serpent. The *atravezada* researcher operates from this concept, putting to question our internalization of dichotomies—in this case those associated with research. Moreover, the *atravesada* researcher has *facultad,* a sort of second sight. Anzaldúa (2007) describes that *la facultad* is the—

capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep   structure below the surface. It is an instant 'sensing,' a quick perception arrived without concious reasoning…When we're up against the wall, when we have all sorts of opppressions coming at us, we are forced to develop this faculty so that we'll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away…It's a kind of survival tactic that people caught between the worlds unknowingly cultivate. (pp. 60-61)

Walking through this process breaks those interfaces, adding depth to what one understands, further opening and shifting perception.

The following chapters trace how Chicana/Latina feminists utilize their *facultad* or other key concepts to identify and negotiate the tropes that are common in critical educational qualitative research. As an *atravesada* researcher my intentions are to tease out those splits within social justice research by questioning and analyzing different moves, *travesias*, feelings, and deep pauses (Anzaldúa, 2007). I use the following excerpt to close this section as a way to move us through the rest of the chapters. Here Anzaldúa talks about the *Coatlicue* state which is a process that stresses one should rip open old boundaries within and beyond our selves. Anzaldúa (2007) states:

> Why does she have to go and try to make 'sense' of it all? Everytime she makes 'sense' of something, she has to 'cross over' kicking a hole out of the old bounderies of the self and slipping under or over, dragging the old skin along, stumbling over it. It hampers her movement in the new territory, dragging the ghost of the past with her. It is a dry birth, a breech birth, a screaming birth, one that fights her every inch of the way. It is only when she is on the other side and the shell cracks open and the lid from her eyes lifts that she sees things in a different perspective. It is only then that she makes the connections, formulates the insights. It is only then that her consciousness expands a tiny notch, another rattle appears on the rattlesnake tail and the added growth slightly alters the sounds she makes. Suddenly the repressed energy and a new life begins. It is her reluctance to cross over, to make a hole in the fence and walk across, to cross the river, to take that flying leap into the dark, that drives her to escape, that forces her into the fecund cave of her imagination where she is cradled in the arms of *Coatlicue.* Who will never let her go. If she doesn't change her ways, she will remain a stone forever. *No hay mas que cambiar.* (p. 71)

Anzaldúa (2007) lays out that being an *atravesada* researcher is part of reclaiming space in research, but that does not mean researchers have to stop making "sense." As an emerging scholar I am aware how mainstream/whitestream research (Grande, 2004) continues to relegate fields like critical qualitative and critical Indigenous methodologies to the margins (Daza & Tuck, 2014; Patel, 2014; Smith, 2012). And so with this reflection in mind I want to slither on to the next section by asking that research scholars (re)awaken the *atravesada* in you.

<div align="center">Presenting the chapters</div>

Chapter 1 is followed by seven chapters: "*Atravesada* Research: Merging Chicana Feminism with Anticolonial and Queer of Color Critique," "*Atravesada*: Process of Selecting a Methodology," "Chicana/Latina Feminist Scholars: Introductions," "Feelings of Passion, Fear, and Pain as a Source of Empowerment," "Entering the Serpent and Letting Go: Reimagining Research," "Implications for Researcher and Community: Individual and Collective Connections," and "Reentering the Serpent: Putting the *Atravesada* to Task." Chapter 2 focuses on a review of literature in critical qualitative research in education through the following theoretical areas: Chicana/Latina feminist in education, anticolonial, and queer of color critique. The next chapter explains methodology and approach to analysis. Chapter 4 is a personal introduction to the *testimonio*/*platicá* contributors, providing initial stories of their encounters with research.

The analysis component of the dissertation begins in Chapter 5. This chapter focuses on sharing and interrogating dichotomous lines of research by centering the divide between thought and feeling. Throughout the *testimonios/pláticas*, many of the

contributors talked about practicing and reflecting on relationships in research. To honor and learn from their reflections and praxis, Chapter 5 presents key emotions that bridge the *testimonio/pláticas* and literature on relationships in research: 1) love, 2) passion, 3) fear, and 4) pain. Analyzing educational qualitative research from this angle allows for healing and it points to specific concepts/ideas/paths that educational researchers are reimagining in critical qualitative research. The chapter ends discussing *emotion* within a relational framework (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Discussing emotion within a relational framework helps researchers visualize how using this framework provides possibilities for the use of emotions in critical qualitative educational research, moving from being focused on visibility and recovering voices to changing methodological tools (Calderon et al., 2012; Soto, 2010).

Chapter 6 provides a description of two key themes: 1) decolonizing research side by side and 2) intersectionality and research. The discussion on these two key themes suggests we read and practice extensively outside of what we know in order to create and foster a strong community of critical scholars. In Chapter 7, the *testimonio/pláticas* guide thinking about how places that foster a strong community of scholars can be created and sustained while also supporting processes to interrogate and critically examine this work. Inviting researchers to think about what this looks like in theory and practice allows a focus on what actual processes of preparing emerging critical scholars may look like.

The work engaged in this dissertation speaks to a set of challenges and struggles that continue to shape the way scholars of color approach research, particularly when conducting research and practice in historically marginalized communities. It expresses the ways in which Chicana/Latina feminist scholars negotiate and interrupt these

challenges and struggles within critical qualitative research in education. The *testimonios/pláticas* begin to open up how the arena of research can expand and rethink itself in theory and practice. Chapter 8 offers some paths and processes which enable researchers to continue to cross, shed, and hope in critical qualitative research. Second, Chapter 8 highlights why researchers must pay attention to concepts and themes such as *la atravesada*, emotion, decoloniality, and intersectionality in critical qualitative research. Keeping these topics at play in research offers possibilities to approach research differently. In conclusion, this dissertation offers not so much answers as room for discussion, expansion, and opportunity to come full circle with/in the dissertation—for readers to see and claim their own *atravesada*. Here then, join me on this journey. Let's enter the next chapter; *te invito a caminar conmigo* (I invite you to walk with me).

CHAPTER 2

ATRAVESADA RESEARCH: MERGING CHICANA FEMINISM

WITH ANTICOLONIAL AND QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE

The first Chicana/Latina experience course I took was in 2005 titled *La Mujer Chicana*. The class experience, the professor, reading material, and environment were unique, challenging, and powerful. Similar to other Chicana/Latina introduction courses, this one spoke through and back to structural inequalities as well as engaged with critical *pláticas* that sought to decenter several layers of dominant ideology attached to institutions of power. I began to *escuchar* (listen) differently, con *corazon* (heart) y con *confianza* (trust). I began to learn the language that helped me theorize my experience as a Chicana/Mexicana from places that are not validated in academia. For example, theorizing from the body was a form of theorization that challenged my deepest ideas about how the body is connected to mind and spirit. For our final paper the professor had us use *auto-historia* (Anzaldúa, 2007) to analyze the readings and topics of the class. This was one of my first memories of learning to approach research from my own lived experiences. I use this memory as a point of departure to underscore how every aspect of my study is guided by personal experience and established theories.

This chapter explores the literature that informs this research project. Influenced by the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, I use the concept of *atravesada* (crosser) researcher to put into conversation three fields of research: Chicana/Latina feminist in education,

anticolonial, and queer of color critique in order to develop a framework that guides this study. All three fields of academic inquiry focus on centering the "living" theories and rewriting narratives of specific marginalized groups. Chicana/Latina feminisms in education committed to exploring the social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality, underscoring their own histories of knowledge, power, epistemologies, and power. Similarly, anticolonial thought examines names and opposes multiple colonial logics and practices of institution, highlighting researchers' complex relationships to these projects. Queer of color critique draws from a body of feminist discourse to examine genealogies of queer theory, rewriting their own histories as lesbian and gay writers of color showcasing how they oppose standardized protocols of research. Chicana feminist, anticolonial, and queer of color critiques in education have much to offer in the way of centering methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within institutional university research and revealing what is at stake for the *atravesada* researcher in choosing critical qualitative research in research and practice.

In Chapter 1 I suggest Anzaldúa can be used to trace and identify the problematics of doing educational research in the academy. Specifically, Anzaldúa's (2007) concepts and praxes of entering into the serpent and *la facultad* are helpful in understanding the *atravesada* researcher. Anzaldúa's entering into the serpent demands engaging with different forms of consciousness, healing paths, and feelings. Anzaldúa (2007) describes that *la facultad* is the —

> capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep   structure below the surface. It is an instant 'sensing,' a quick perception arrived without concious reasoning…When we're up against the wall, when we have all sorts of oppressions coming at us, we are forced to develop this faculty so that we'll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away…It's a kind of survival tactic that people caught between the worlds, unknowingly

cultivate. (pp. 60-61)

For this study, recognizing researchers' different crossings brings awareness to the ways critical researchers can unintentionally become implicit in the reproduction of uneven power relationships and hegemonic models of doing research (Calderon, 2014b; Patel, 2014; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Villenas, 1996). But it also provides how the *atravesada*, the traveler, the scholar inside and outside research, inside and outside the academy, negotiates and survives. The *atravesada* (crosser) researcher concept then is useful in this literature review in two important ways: to build on the research that examines how researchers grapple with multiple insider and outsider positionalities associated with researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer and put these fields into conversation; and to expand on the multiple possibilities and imagining of critical qualitative research. What results from this merging is a Chicana feminisms, anticolonial, and queer of color critique framework that recognizes *bodymindspirit* as an important source of inquiry and analysis; research as a settler colonialism locating specific colonial logics, practices, and trappings; and the process of queering research as an integral component in the reading, building of inquiry, and analysis of qualitative research in education.

In this review, I provide literature by Chicana/Latinas feminist scholars and discuss the ways in which Chicana/Latina epistemologies helped me theorize and trouble educational qualitative research. My intent is not to cover extensively the different theories (this would mean a much larger project) but rather to open up conversation about the ways Chicana/Latinas are pushing, troubling, and extending my way of approaching this dissertation project, specifically attending to how the *bodymindspirit* is useful to

interrogating research practices. I follow with a discussion on why and how situating research within a colonial context allows us to identify the current colonial relationships to knowledge production. I engage with this discussion through a settler colonial lens. After, I review how queer of color scholars are involved in a similar project of naming specific colonial trappings in relation to gender and sexuality through the process of queering the research. I move through this conversation of queering the research through the concepts of the queer gaze and disidentification. The last discussion reviews the tropes and problematics of critical qualitative research providing multiple moving pieces for the analysis of the dissertation. Merged together, I offer that a Chicana feminist in education, anticolonial, and queer of color critique framework provides a foundation and lens which help us trace and better understand what methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within institutional university research as well as what is at stake for the *atravesada* researcher in choosing critical qualitative research in research and practice.

<div align="center">Chicana/Latina feminist perspective in educational research</div>

For Chicana/Latina feminists in education there are profound interconnections between method, methodology, and epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). Doing research is much more than an investigation but rather these profound connections are about centering and rewriting histories as women of color. The interconnection for method, methodology, and epistemology illustrate the "living" theories (Calderon et al., 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2012b; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Villenas, 2000). Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) explain "Chicana feminist scholars have been talking about Chicana/Latina feminist methodologies and

epistemologies that emerge from specific colonial heteropatriarchal histories and experiences for quite some time" (p. 101). More specifically, scholars such as Villenas (1996) help researchers address their methodologies and issues relating to the construction of knowledge, modes of representation, issues of voice, and researcher roles. Like Calderon et al. (2012), I believe that Chicana/Latina reflections on research provide different concepts that researchers could use to—

> confront the research process with our total selves—our grief, our fears, our desires, and our love. It means that we anchor our body, whether we are *prietas* or *güeras*, butch or fem, or someone more ambiguous, we accept and reconcile who we are and how we have come to be. This process encourages us to embrace a transformative consciousness, a queering of how we see the world in order to embrace alternative ways of knowing. (p. 534)

In this section I draw focus on a particular concept, *bodymindspirit,* as a concept that has shaped and influenced research in education. Making theory from the body is a painful and transformational process. It engages the most intimate moments in your life with those moments which are considered to be public to build a critical analysis of the sociopolitical experiences. Anzaldúa (2007) invites us to use the body as a site of knowledge production, conflict, and transformation. She infuses spirituality into her writing and invites researchers to incorporate it into our theories and processes of research, writing, and teaching. This way of engaging the body recognizes that the body is also nourishment for the mind and soul. The body, mind, and spirit are important elements that if not balanced do not allow researchers to engage fully with the work and commitments. Moraga (1983) and Anzaldúa (2007) invite researchers to reclaim the female brown body and to recognize it when producing new knowledge. Specifically, Moraga's (1983) theory in the flesh reflects a sensibility that allows researchers to make sense of colonial logics and practices in research. Moraga's (1983) "a theory in the flesh

means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity" (p. 23).

Extending our thinking about how engaging *bodymindspirit* is essential in understanding colonial ontologies and researcher relationships to them is Delgado-Bernal et al. (2012). They explain how one must "pay attention to the manner in which colonial ontologies are inscribed onto contemporary bodies" (p. 524). They further explain that this colonial wound imprinted on the body desires healing and transformation. Similarly, Cruz (2001) the "scholar in possession of a brown and lesbian body, or in this case, the body inscribed as 'messy text,' is not only disruptive to the canon, but is also excessive in its disorderly movements and conduct" (p. 659). Cindy Cruz (2001) explains that "the messy text of the body is made a political liability in our movement toward a standpoint of Chicana critical practice" (p. 660). For Cruz (2001), theorizing and troubling educational theory and practice means to understand the brown body from a political standpoint. Centering the experience of the brown body helps researchers understand knowledge production, more specifically how new knowledges are created and transformed. Understanding that the brown body creates and transforms knowledge reclaims the knowledge production process. Cruz (2001) states that this understanding—

> for the Chicana social agent, is not only a strategy to make visible Chicana voices and histories, but is also the struggle to develop a critical practice that can propel the brown body from a neocolonial past and into the embodiments of radical subjectivities. (p. 658)

Here Cruz (2001) expresses that Chicana/Latina experience through the body is not centralized just for the sake of inclusion, rather the goal of speaking through these

narratives is to continuously trouble the knowledge production process. She specifically talks about the brown body inviting one to trouble other ways of embodying a Chicana/Latina identity (language, body, spirituality, etc.).

Medina (2011) is helpful in rethinking spirituality by providing an analysis of how contemporary Chicana/Latina feminisms and other theories reinscribe discourse surrounding theological emancipation and indigenous epistemologies. Her analysis re/works the meaning of the concept of *nepantla* used by Chicana feminists which represents a concept of "in-between-ness." Medina (2011) bridges the concept of *nepantla* with spirituality and calls it *nepantla* spirituality. She invites us to examine the constant fluidity in spiritualism. I remember engaging with spirituality very rigidly. I embraced it only through religion. I didn't understand that spirituality could move through the body and mind without an attachment to religion. Becoming aware of my spiritual activism through Chicana/Latina feminisms encouraged this *conocimiento*. Now I use an analysis of the *bodymindspirit* as an entry point to challenge Western ideology and practice in educational research. Spirituality can assist researchers in "challenging racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of material psychic oppression in their research by moving past rigid definitions of spirituality" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 516).

The work that engages the *bodymindspirit* has made this analysis excessive. This excessiveness has "opened possibilities to suture the *bodymindspirit* split common in positivist and so-called 'objective' forms of research, as well as to examine the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, and other identities" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 514). This quote highlights that the goal of theorizing

experience from the body and tongue(s) is essential in fragmenting the dichotomous lines in research. The body points *heridas* (wounds) within the dichotomous lines outlined by Saavedra and Nymark (2008). Attending to these wounds help researchers un/learn and re/learn the body—its imperfections, limitations, and possibilities in research.

Anticolonial thought

The first time I deeply engaged with anticolonial and decolonial theories in education was when I participated in the *Postcolonial Studies, Decolonial Horizons Summer School Program*. The experience was challenging—mainly because the theories were difficult to understand. Perhaps it had to do with my inability, and for some time refusal, to read outside what I knew. I realized after going through the course that I knew little of how coloniality functions and its pervasiveness for me and others with/in educational spaces (Quijano, 2000). Thus, this project is largely the continuation of understanding and responding to how multiple forms of coloniality and imperialism in education is present, owned, and produced. It is also a call to continue to "unsettle the boundaries of post-, de-, and anticolonial theory and practice, while exploring the limits, possibilities, and specificity of terms" (Daza & Tuck, 2014). There are many areas I could focus on, for example curriculum and/or pedagogy. However, I am drawn to how multiple forms of coloniality function in critical qualitative research. I see this area as a place that influences all that we explore in education. Engaging with research at different capacities has challenged my activism, teaching, and learning. Thus, as an *atravezada* researcher I situate my research questions and my analysis with/in a colonial context.

The foundations of qualitative research are largely intertwined with the foundations of education in the U.S. and the overall schooling structure of the West.

These foundations are based on: 1) owning knowledge for retention of power over epistemic, economic, ontological, political, and spatial projects (Calderon, 2014; Coloma, 2013; Grande, 2004; Grosfoguel, 2007; Patel, 2014; Quijano, 2000); 2) learning as an assimilation process (Grande, 2004; Patel, 2014; Tuck, 2009); and 3) suturing the body-mind-spirit—privileging the mind for the purpose of maintaining power with/in specific populations (Anzaldúa, 2007; Daza & Tuck, 2014; Lara, 2002). Scholars uncover the ways in which the latter supports colonialism in education; many of them explicitly explain how educational research is an example of colonization and colonialism in education as it relates to marginalized communities (Daza & Tuck, 2014; Patel, 2014; Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). To describe colonization concisely and clearly, I quote Calderon (2014): "coloniality refers to the manner in which modern systems of colonialism operate epistemically, economically, ontologically, politically, and spatially" (p. 314). Like Calderon (2014), I agree that situating educational research with/in a colonial context helps educators' understanding and response to the tropes with/in educational research. Drawing focus on the multiple colonial logics and practices assists researchers to locate their relationship to knowledge and the construction of knowledge.

Daza and Tuck (2014) explain that "in the early 2000s, de/colonizing, (post)(anti)colonial and Indigenous studies, theories, and issues were not part of mainstream US education, and were just beginning to be conceptualized as projects by Indigenous scholars, Third World scholars, Chican@s/Latina@s, and African American scholars" (p. 308). Daza and Tuck (2014) underscore how these conversations generally are engaged in subfields such as critical and ethnic studies, with education rarely engaging with mainstream/whitestream education (Grande, 2004). The issue is what

many of these tropes speak to—how do we have a continuation of this dialogue and how do we as colleagues re/examine unsifted ideologies? I sit with this a lot, like Patel (2014) I take "deep pauses" on how the language of imperialism and colonialism shapes my ideologies. Its pervasiveness requires us to be reflexive and responsive. Similarly, the perspective of Rhee and Subedi (2014) on this reflexivity offers a process that helps researchers be answerable to the unsifted ideologies. Rhee and Subedi (2014) suggest researchers move "beyond doing/being constant, repetitive, or obsessive critiques of the empire/West…It is important to remember how our decolonizing work, identities, and political imaginations are more than oppositional stances " (p. 353). Doing this type of work within our research praxis demands much more careful listening but it also provides fruitful theories in education.

In continuing the re/examination of critical qualitative research through a anticolonial lens, the scholars in this area introduced me to discussions regarding decolonial thought pointing toward different perspectives and forms of theorizing. My reading on decoloniality was framed largely by Chicana/Latina feminisms. I slowly began incorporating the language in decolonial thought. However, after reading and rereading Tuck and Yang (2012) and Smith (2012), adopting a decolonial lens became more complicated and challenged my overall notions of understanding pedagogy and research in education as decolonial. I became more confused and uncomfortable using the term, especially with/in research. My positionality and experiences also played a part in feeling uncomfortable. Indigenous critique of social science research is one of the first that made mainstream scholarship, thus it is what drives me to push my own *conocimientos* (knowledge) as a Chicana educator about research praxis (Daza & Tuck,

2014; Smith, 2012). Tuck and Yang (2012) talk about "moves to innocence" in social justice projects, they invite one to reflect on the way one moves to innocence in research. I feel like this article is one of many conversations that triggered that confusion and discomfort. I notice that most of my discomfort comes from trying to define what is decolonial. Perhaps it's because there are different readings and interpretations of decolonial thought. Perhaps it is my strong internalization of White hetereonormative theories of research.

Smith (2012) and Tuck and Yang (2012) complicate our understanding of "revolutionary" research by introducing decolonial research in qualitative studies in similar ways. Both explain that most qualitative research continues to be driven by a colonial gaze and maintains communities in the margins even when approached from/with/in a social justice framework. Smith (2012) and Tuck and Yang (2012) explain that decolonial research allows them to respond to that colonial gaze and to approach qualitative research more holistically without resettling researchers and participants into rigid dichotomies that center imperialist and colonial thought. They explain that engaging with a decolonial process requires one to fully understand the history of colonial, settler, and imperial theorization and practices. Moreover, they guide the research process with a critical analytical lens regarding the land, sovereignty, and indigenous knowledge with/in qualitative research. Smith (2012) reminds us that these memories are essential in conversations about knowledge production in research, and names what elements need to be present in the process of decolonizing research methods. I appreciate Tuck and Yang's (2012) thorough explanation of what and how the metaphorization of decoloniality, if not engaged correctly, is problematic and repositions us further with/in settler colonialism.

Towards the end of their article, Tuck and Yang (2012) point to unsettling themes we should decenter in order to move forward in creating "more meaningful alliances." I do not think that this debate has been centered in the discipline of education. It is not centered enough that it requires researchers to step back and radically listen about the ways in which issues of representation, power, and knowledge construction continue to operate under a Western ideology even when approached from a social justice framework. This debate over what research is decolonial and overall "revolutionary" leaves out many scholars who are trying to negotiate these colonial boundaries in qualitative research. Thus, I want to investigate how scholars are negotiating this binary that is set up when scholars talk about decolonial research and understand how it is shaping educational research, more specifically, qualitative research in education.

Chicana feminists scholars such as Perez (1999), Sandoval (2000), and Cruz (2001) suggest that we think of decolonial moments and/or possibilities in the scholarship we produce or interrupt. Chicana feminists explain that in these decolonial moments we are creating a nuanced understanding of that in/between space in colonial/decolonial processes in education and other disciplines (Alberto, 2012; Perez, 1999; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Sandoval, 2000). They are naming those contradictory experiences associated with being an underrepresented scholar in academia. This approach is similar to how Smith (2012) goes about thinking through decolonization. However, based on Tuck and Yang's (2012) critique of the usage of decolonial thinking, most practices of decoloniality by Chicana/Latina feminists are still implicated with/in a settler colonial structure and indigeneity erasure despite efforts to create a Chicana/o Latina/o epistemology of the body, land, and spirituality that responds to those internal conflicts

and paradoxes (Alberto, 2012; Grande, 2004; Saldaña-Portillo, 2001). Taking Chicana feminist work and other critical studies to the task is a difficult process but it is a necessary one to take. Alberto (2012), Grande (2004), and Saldana-Portillo (2001) draw attention to how the work of Chicana/Latina research is not immune to these colonial trappings, and most importantly, express how they negotiate the tensions that arise when conducting research. The articles featured take the opportunity to examine and interrogate the internal conflicts that exist within Chicana/Latina scholarship in regard to decolonial thought.

The work that I am doing through my dissertation is part of a larger response to an invitation by many indigenous and nonindigenous qualitative researchers who propose that "it is time to dismantle, deconstruct, and decolonize Western epistemologies from within, to learn that research does not have to be a dirty word…to think through the implications of connecting indigenous epistemologies, as well as theories of decolonization, and the postcolonial with emancipatory discourses, with critical theory, and with critical pedagogy" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p. ix). In developing a Chicana/Latina feminist, anticolonial, and queer of color critique framework I have to carefully rethink my understanding of decoloniality. It is important that what is decolonial is defined before introducing the analysis, because for one it is embedded in one of the research questions, and two it informs the process of fragmenting dichotomous lines. Thus, my definition of decolonial is guided by the conversations in anticolonial thought, understanding that decolonial means particular things, one of those being relationships to land.

Like Patel (2014), I understand—

it is not my place to easily participate in a conversation about how to free indigenous land from its settler colonial structure, as I am part of the history that has secured status and such a discussion is not resonant with how my histories have been implicated in a settler colonial project. But neither is it my place, or anyone's, to refuse the responsibility. (p. 359)

<p style="text-align: center;">Queer of color critique and critical qualitative research</p>

The work of Moraga (1983) points to areas that are often pushed aside in educational research, for example the use of the body and a queer critique. Currently there are only a few Chicana/o scholars who address the performance and embodiment of the flesh and queer perspectives in education (Cruz, 2001, 2008, 2011; Muñoz, 1999; Perez, 2003; Revilla, 2010; Soto, 2010). Their work pushes the boundaries in the creation of knowledge and deconstruction of power. By this I mean that scholarship that centers the body/flesh goes beyond giving voice to the marginalized. This scholarship advocates and recognizes that voice as theory and practice. It reclaims power, it allows researchers to pull from our body/flesh and reimagine different histories and narratives to understand race, class, gender, and sexuality. I am channeling my inner and outer body. The idea of the body speaking with/in and through experience has not only developed my understanding of the body, it has taught me how to theorize and trouble experience and it has challenged the ways I think about education. The body is used as an entry point in academic discourse, to challenge hegemonies and create paths for transformation.

I argue that Moraga's analysis of the "queer gaze" is useful to understand the dynamics of race and gender. Moraga (1983) helps us do this by reclaiming the female brown body as a racialized, queer body. This is important for Moraga because the female brown body is used largely to organize, regulate, and oppress women. There are policies and social practices that define how the *mujer* speaks, thinks, and moves. It is a narrow

movement that places *mujeres* with/in a virgin/whore dichotomy. It is both implicit and explicit with/in institutions of power, like education. Overall, it is power that Moraga speaks back to. She speaks to power by underscoring difference and privilege. By queering the flesh and the body, one further interrogates systems of privilege and difference as they relate to politics of gender, class, sexuality, and race in education. Merging the body and the flesh allows for deep reflection about one's experience. Moreover, it gives experience agency and opportunities to rebel creating a more nuanced understanding of gender, class, sexuality, and race. The body without flesh is empty and means nothing.

Moraga (1983) reclaims the stories of *La Chingada*, Malinche, and ultimately of all passive women through a queer lens to provide an alternative to how we understand *la mujer*. She complicates the virgin/whore dichotomy by contextualizing moments of desire and lust with/in this larger conversation about race and gender. Moraga's reading through a queer lens has denaturalized the meaning of sexuality, class, race, and gender. She moves away from containing in contempt the fluidity of these identity markers. This way of thinking requires us to go back and rework the moments in which sexuality influenced the way we make sense of the word and world. Her piece makes things excessive. By this I mean to be more explicit about how one interprets sexuality individually and collectively—making visible the choices and consequences associated with a conservative and deficit view of sexuality in institutions of power. The reader is part of that queering and is responsible for making excessiveness happen. Moraga's (1983) perspectives on queering can be used to examine how researchers have internalized this ideology that is driven by heteronormative, racist, and sexist discourse.

She invites researchers to pull from our body and flesh to analyze and speak back. This is important for those of who want to be critical of how gender, class, race, and sexuality influence institutions of power such as education.

Part of queering the researcher requires one to examine how colonial history, research, and practice are embedded in the research process. Perez (2003) unravels colonialist ideology in research by decolonizing history. She argues that the colonial imaginary is present "always as we interpret our past and present" (Perez, 2003, p. 123). The concept of decolonizing history offers a different way to look at research. Perhaps we can think of decolonizing research as a way to revise the unsaid, the silences, contradictions, gaps, and possibilities (Perez, 2003). She invites us to pay attention to that rupturing space—which she calls the decolonial imaginary. To decolonize research requires researchers to interrogate the White colonial heteronormative gaze with/in the research process as well. It is present in our performance as researcher and in our interpretation of the Self and Others. Queering the research(er) then means engaging with decolonial imaginary process to honor difference and allow for different possibilities and interpretations. It means interrogating the inherited colonial White heteronormative gaze and "retraining ourselves to confront and rearrange a mindset that privileges certain relationships" (Perez, 2003, p. 124). Perez (2003) proposes that one "trains the eye to see with a decolonial queer gaze that disidentifies from the normative in order to survive" (p. 124).

Like Muñoz (1999), I recognize that perhaps queering, decolonizing, and disidentifying with the research(er) may not be an adequate strategy to unsettle the research process. However, this work is worth taking up because it's opening up

possibilities to engage with research more deeply, by troubling what we think we have "mastered" in educational research regarding race, class, gender, and sexuality. Integrating a Chicana queer of color critique on educational spaces puts Chicana/Latina theories and educators to the task by inviting us to unsettle our *conocimientos* about gender and sexuality. In my case, I always felt protective when speaking about my desires. Maybe because I couldn't, and I think I still think of desire in these very conventional ways. Moreover, I think of desire very separate from learning and knowledge production despite my use of and connection with Chicana feminisms.

Perez (2003) really connects with the work of Muñoz (1999). Muñoz's (1999) concept of disidentification is helpful in understanding what it means to queer the research(er). He does not speak about research or the researcher. However, his analysis about queer performance art as a disidentification act unveils how the research process is also a performance. In other words, scholars of color use research as a tool to negotiate majority culture. The researchers negotiate this space not by affiliating themselves with or against a White hetereonormative gaze but rather by changing their perspective on heteronormativity for their own cultural production (Muñoz, 1999). Disidentifying with the research process then is conducting research and practice that works on, with, and against dominant ideology. This "working on and against is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always laboring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance" (Muñoz, 1999, pp. 11-12). Muñoz (1999) explains that "important acting did not change the actor but instead transformed the world" (p. ix). Researchers as actors make that impact on the world, especially when unsettling the expected role of

researcher. I argue that researchers should engage with disidentification in their research. Doing this really pushes one to recognize and negotiate the conceptual and political meanings of categories such as race, class, gender, and sexuality in our work. Thinking of research as a performance allows us to be more critical about the new social relations we are creating. Also, what I like best about Muñoz's (1999) disidentification concept is that it helps us problematize the object/subject by reworking the contradictory components of identity. Disidentification "is about cultural, material, and psychic survival…disidentification is about managing and negotiating historical trauma and systemic violence (Muñoz, 1999, p. 161). Muñoz (1999) asks us to "read oneself and one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject" (p. 12). Reading in this way helps us rework our energies in research. My question is, what would happen if we taught qualitative research in this way? Scholars like Perez (2003) offer us theoretical tools to develop this type of re/training for educators. However, I feel that the struggle is practice. I am not arguing we should create a step-by-step manual on how to develop this practice, but I do believe that we should be more excessive about the ways we practice these theories in research.

Tanaka and Cruz (1998) also urge "researchers to move away from methodologies and systems of analyses that derive from white liberal discourse and ironically serve to maintain the status quo by leaving in place conservative structures and reward mechanisms" (p. 137). Moreover, I like how they explain the notion of queering the research(er). Tanaka and Cruz (1998) state that "while the notion of 'queering' social science research is not new, the application of a 'queered position' in educational

research to effectuate a multiplicity of strategies necessary to change academe is relatively recent…queering becomes more than the insistance of inclusion but a means to interrogate 'heterosexist models'" (p. 146). I feel that this is a process that we usually neglect—especially among educational research about the k-12 system. What I find most interesting in this queer analysis of research is Tanaka and Cruz's (1998) emphasis on examining "pluralities of desire and knowledge" (p.146). How would research look, smell, sound, taste, and feel if researchers examined the latter in educational research? I feel like the work of queer of color critique has begun this process for researchers. However, most of the work is embedded in other fields such as gender studies and rarely does this discussion inform educational research. The process of queering the research(er) speaks back to the argument that Spivak (1988) proposes in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* because it offers possibilities to understand the relations between desire, power, and subjectivity in order to articulate a theory and practice that decenters dominant ideology and that allows the subaltern to speak. Furthermore, it offers different strategies to listen and speak for or with the subaltern—for example, the use of *testimonio* or polyphonic text in research. Transforming the research by exploring how identity is implicated in conducting research and theory in education attends to questions of representation. Spivak's (1988) analysis of representation in research proposes that "radical practice should attend to this double session of representation rather than reintroduce the individual subject through totalizing concepts of power and desire" (p. 279). Queering the research reconceptualizes the subaltern by complicating it even more so that it makes our brain hurt (in a good way).

<u>Tropes in critical qualitative research in education</u>

This section reintroduces the tropes to remind readers what was identified across the review of literature. These tropes also function as moving pieces guiding my analysis. I identified the following set of prevalent tropes:

- Lack of dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies.

- Researcher investment in colonial and imperial frameworks despite its claim and/or use of critical methodologies.

- Educational research and practice for the most part still reads, locates, and produces a colonial relationship to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production.

- Production of research continues to function from an "erasing to replace" and pathologizing gaze framework.

- Research and the overall institution of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities that have multiple ramifications for researcher and researched.

These tropes offer an explanation for the dichotomous lines that Saavedra and Nymark (2008) point to. As noted above, despite over two decades of work and discussion about power, reflexivity, and social justice in research, critical qualitative research continues to think through and reproduce dichotomous lines. At stake in this current moment in research is who or what remains an object and the struggle of historically marginalized communities to tell their own stories (Daza & Tuck, 2014).

Thus, a reevaluation of research tropes is vital to the contested places we are in and to a reconceptualization of method as *testimonios/pláticas*, which also requires a rethinking of research subjectivity as *atravesada*.

My exploration in the dissertation begins with and focuses on critical Chicana/Latina feminist education theorists scholarly reflections about their engagements with qualitative research. The content analysis of research tropes and *testimonios/pláticas* add nuance to a growing body of research on Chicana/Latina epistemologies and methodologies. This project will contributes to future research on critical qualitative research by offering the development of different methodological possibilities for educational researchers, raising challenges to data analysis and representation, and reimagining researcher subjectivity.

CHAPTER 3

ATRAVESADA: PROCESS OF SELECTING A METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the research methodology and maps out how analysis is informed by the practice of *testimonio* and *pláticas.* I discuss *testimonio* and *plática* separately in order to review the genealogy of each and discuss their unique intentions. At the end of the chapter, I place them alongside each other as *testimonio/plática* analysis. I started with a solid understanding that I would do qualitative research utilizing *testimonio* and a content analysis as methods for data collection. As I started the participant invitation process and during a few of the *testimonios* I received critical feedback that invited me to step back on my approach and revealed questions about visibility/anonymity and interpretation. These concerns caused me to reconsider my methodology as *testimonio/plática.* I use the slash to highlight the overlapping qualities but also unique standpoints of each. The slash also signifies a way to hone in on these similarities and different possibilities of *testimonio* and *plática.* Before reviewing the literature on *testimonio* and *plática,* I want to highlight some of the feedback that was useful to helping think through how to engage in a critical methodology with scholars who think with Chicana feminist indigenous theories.

The first concern—the first pause in my methodology—was a question of visibility/anonymity raised by two participants. A direct excerpt from one of the participants, used here with permission, describes what is embedded in this concern.

It seemed different to agree to be one of 12 or 20 participants, than to agree to be one of four or five. Being one of 4 or 5 total participants to me signals more in-depth engagement, which translates into more interviews, more biography, more in-depth study of the scholarship, and thus more visibility (not anonymity). Researchers engaging with Chicana/Latina or indigenous thought are few, and our specific biographies, publications, and scholarly trajectories make it easy for the public to discern who we are. Making us visible with our full names is one option, but I was asking you to think about these issues. I need to discern the stakes and benefits involved in making myself vulnerable to a public—surely questions that all participants think about and are most likely part of your research interests.

Although this conversation at first flustered me, I let go part of my attachment to controlling methodology. Ultimately, I realized such questions and provocations are exactly what I hope to address in this research—especially this idea of risk and vulnerability as researcher/participant. What made it difficult at that moment was feeling like I had designed a bad research project. The initial conversation on the phone was a lot of that "good" and "bad" language regarding the quality of research. I kept thinking about my choice of topic, my selection of methodology, and my overall educational journey. At that moment I just envisioned the red pen comments that signaled the bad rather than an opportunity to walk through the concerns with me. After speaking with some *colegas* regarding this situation, I realized I had made assumptions about in-group mentorship expectations. There were a few more phone conversations and emails exchanged between the professor and I which made concerns clear and invited me to carefully develop an analysis during the writing phase. I take this lesson to the core and both the *testimonio* and *pláticas* as a methodology help me set a process of analysis.

The second concern was about the how *testimonio* is interpreted in the *testimonio* genre. I noticed in journaling notes that I began to use the word *testimonio/pláticas*. I was no longer referring to the contributions as *testimonios* alone but rather *testmonio* engaged with *plática*. The collection of *testimonios* would turn into *pláticas*, except for the e-mail

prompts—those matched the use of *testimonio* elements. After the third *testimonio* I had a conversation with one of the participants about how my methodology was shifting based on the *testimonios* I had so far. Below is the excerpt of our conversation:

> Nancy: I collected three *testimonios* so far and they are not really in the definition of *testimonio* or even in the ways Chicanas use *testimonio* in their work. It's really not a *testimonio* anymore it's more like a *platicá.* Are you okay with that? I did come in saying it was going to be a *testimonio*. Based on the definition there is urgency and all of that is still true. I feel now that it is more of a conversation.
>
> Lupe: Well you know…I think that would be a good distinction or at least an issue that would show complexity in your research. You started saying it was a *testimonio* but then you realized that maybe you're not. Maybe it's not as faithful to the definition. But I'm wondering if this is the redefined *testimonio.* We are both in academic spaces and there is a difference. But there is urgency. We are not being chased by the military government you know what I mean but our lands well we are on outside land you know so I guess you can even…is there a redefined *testimonio* for people who are in these places? My *testimonio* is not like Rigoberta Menchu's. I'm still going to go home. I'm drinking a freakin latte and we are having this conversation…so you know I think you can speak to that in your dissertation but I think that's an interesting development theme emerging how *testimonio* shifts and changes based on spaces—energy! You know…I mean *testimonio* as taking an occupied land third world women in you know all that stuff can come into play that will give us direction. This is more academic advice but this is how we change terms to fit us instead of us having to fit under a term that has already been defined *testimonio.* I can point to these tensions and shifts that occur in *testimonio.* We don't have that yet I don't see it, I mean we talk a little about it but not much. What I'm seeing in [Chicana feminist use of] *testimonio* is that we are still part of it because we are still kind of like a colonized positionality or subaltern right. I agree and then I disagree to think I am subaltern at all *[laughs]* I just can't go there right and that's one of the things I'm trying to make sense of.

Here I want to underscore the encouragement to take a risk in unsettling what we know about *testimonio*. The above participant's push to unsettle my fear of stretching the boundaries was powerful and deeply impacted how *testimonio* and *pláticas* can be utilized as a form of inquiry and analysis.

Testimonio methodology

When I first learned what testimonio was I was in my second year as a doctoral student. I had the privilege to take a course on *testimonio,* so far one of my best experiences as a graduate student. The course made research intimate and valued the political in my lived experiences. There are, of course, separate chapters and books that also informed the practices of *testimonio*. The work of *testimonio* has traveled the world and its practices influence scholarly work in areas across critical studies. Generations of Chicana/Latina scholars and/or writers have used *testimonio* as a way to demonstrate and expose the workings of oppression, marginalization, and resistance across time and space. In their work they situate themselves as holders and producers of knowledge while at the same time creating bridges between a collective experience and their own.

Exploring the historical roots helps the reader navigate the writing of *testimonio,* but most importantly such exploration maps out the ways *testimonio* has contributed and reshaped research. *Testimonio* is rooted in Latin America and although there are no set dates on its exact establishment, it is generally agreed that it emerged around 1970 (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012). Reyes and Rodriguez (2012) explain that "the main feature of the testimonial text is the construction of a discourse of solidarity… [*testimonio* also is] a result of the liberation efforts and the geopolitical resistance movements to imperialism in the Third World nations…" many of the *testimonios* write across difficult and particular social events such as military interventions, oppressive governments, etc. (p. 526). As North American scholars begin to use and reshape *testimonio,* the particular social events expand to include more experiences such as those within the institution of education. As a methodology,

testimonio provides the necessary language and tools to situate my exploration and analysis of qualitative research in education.

In reading about the contours of *testimonio,* this kind of writing is intentionally a voice from the margins or from the subaltern documenting the struggle, resistance, and to a large extent the recovery of knowledge production. *Testimonio* functions as a product and process challenging "objectivity by situating the individual in communion with a collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression, or resistance" in research (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 363). Chicanas/Latinas using *testimonio* shift understandings of who is considered subaltern or marginalized. This continues to be an important and challenging conversation across qualitative research. Delgado Bernal and Elenes (2011) explain:

> [S]ome scholars point to the idea that the very possibility of "writing one's life" (Beverly, 2005, p. 548) implies that the narrator is no longer in the situation of marginality and subalternity that her narrative describes. Part of Gayatri Spivak's (1998) argument is that "being subaltern means…not mattering, not being worth listening to, or not being understood when one is heard" (Beverly, 2005, p. 551). Stated another way, if the narrator has attained the cultural status of an author (and general speaking middle or upper class status), she has transitioned from the subaltern group identity to an individualized identity. We argue that for most Chicana/Latina scholars this is not the case: A group identity and group marginalization continues to exist in academia even when we have attained a relatively privileged status. (p. 111)

This interpretation challenges dominant notions of who can speak and create knowledge. *Testimonio* as a methodological tool unveils tensions, contradictions, and possibilities for investigating how we use research to analyze educational inequities. For example, further unpacking and negotiating the dichotomous lines in qualitative research (researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer) extends our understanding of using *testimonio* as a methodological tool. *Testimonios*

definitely provides a space to speak to contradictions and allows for methodology to retool itself.

There are several approaches to writing a *testimonio*. Some examples include poetry, cultural boxes, and speeches. Technology influences different forms of *testimonios*, such as Benmayor's (2012) digital *testimonios*. The writing process of most *testimonios* involves two or more people. It is written and/or audio recorded in first person. Often the writing and the collection of the *testimonio* is done between an interlocutor and *testimonialista*. The interlocutor is the person who is an "outside activist and/or ally, records, transcribes, edits, and prepares a manuscript for publication" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 365). The interlocutor works closely with the *testimonialista* to highlight the *testimonialista's* community experiences. The *testimonio* is based on their own account or experience with a particular social event but it circulates back to those whose lives been affected as well. It is a critical reflection of their lived experiences.

Like most scholars who use *testimonio* in their work, Chicanas/Latinas place focus on the silences, revealing the critical reflections of the *testimonialistas* within education in the U.S. (in many cases themselves). All of them create bridges between their experience with educational equities, systemic oppressions, and *papelitos guardados* (protected papers) in other areas of their lives like those having to do with *familia* (family), chronic health problems, migrations, etc. (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). At the core they underscore how *testimonio* engages others to "understand and establish a sense of solidarity as a first step toward social change" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 364). The "cornerstone of *testimonio*, like oral history, is not the speaking of truth, but

rather, the telling of an account from an individual point of view whose conscience has led to an analysis of the experience as a shared component of oppression" (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 528). I also want to add how it differs from oral history or autobiography and extensively other forms of qualitative research practices in that it requires that the *testimonialista* engage with a critical reflection of their lived experiences. This engages the individual and the listener further than just a retelling of their story (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012).

It is an intentional and political performance and its objective is to "bring to light a wrong, a point of view, or an urgent call for action" (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012, p. 525). My intentions to collect *testimonios* of Chicana/Latina scholars in education emerged from reading the research reflections of the last twenty years that spoke to the tensions and contradictions associated with conducting research along with students, families, teachers, and administrators. My goal is to explore what methodological tools are available to navigate educational research that is rooted in colonial and imperial dynamics. Furthermore, I am exploring what is at stake for researchers when we decide to act from our critical frameworks. *Testimonio* allows me to bring awareness to this type of investigation. In this case, we are all familiar with the process of conducting research. As the interlocutor and *testimonialista* my goal is to document those experiences to build on the larger collective response to the tensions and contradictions associated with conducting educational qualitative research. *Testimonio* is one of the most appropriate methodologies for answering my dissertation questions because one of their main intentions is to convey an urgent call for action. It is also asking that researchers take action by being consistent with practicing critical qualitative research. The other urgent

call is in regards to healing. *Testimonio* functions as a process of healing and process of *reflexion* (reflection). This goes back to the connection Chicanas/Latinas have to the *feminista* tradition of theorizing from the brown female body, breaking silences, and bearing witness to both injustice and social change (Anzaldúa, 1990; Cruz, 2006; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). *Testimonio*, then, can be understood as a bridge that merges the brown bodies in our communities with academia as we employ *testimonio* methodology and pedagogy in educational practices" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 364). This type of language is not exposed in many of the practices of qualitative research in education. To have an approach available that clearly states its linkage to healing, and more specifically healing through the body, is huge. It continues to build on the different healing pathways for our fragmented bodies, minds, and spirits in research.

It is important to note that there has been an increase in the use of *testimonio* within the field of education in the last two decades and a considerable amount of that is produced by Chicana/Latina feminists (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012). This is significant because this scholarly work shifts the possibilities in qualitative research by introducing *testimonio* as another way of collecting "data" and possibilities for analysis. This is a reason why I gravitate to *testimonio*, it is a process that creates space for many ways of knowing and learning with/in communities and it has strong links to *feminista* traditions revealing an epistemology of truths and the process of understanding them (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012b). In the following section I dive deeper into how and why relationships are important to a *testimonio* methodology, and how might relationships with *testimonialistas* interact with the issue of narrative authority, interpretive conflict, and interpretations of truth.

Importance and complexities of *testimonio*

The significance of exploring the meaning of relationships in my research is twofold: 1) Understanding these complexities about *testimonio* helps me build on my understanding of how *testimonio* is different with/in the other types of qualitative methodologies like storytelling and different types of ethnography; 2) Beginning to move from comprehension to reflexivity—namely the application of *testimonio* in my own work—guides me through my analysis.

Testimonio places a lot of value and responsibility on the concept and praxis of relationship building and development. Scholars who use it as a methodology explain why relationships are important and how it impacts the analysis (Benmayor, 2012). In this section, I share my understanding about the reasons of how and why relationships built and developed between interlocutor, *testimonialista*, and reader or *testimonialista* and reader are important and central to *testimonio* work. Based on the literature (Benmayor, 2012; Borland, 1991; Cruz, 2012; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Haig-Brown, 2003; Prieto & Villenas, 2012; Russel y Rodriguez, 2007; Yudice, 1991) the following five reasons explain their significance: 1) *confianza*; 2) speaking back and for; 3) solidarity; 4) call to action; and 5) praxis of listening.

Confianza

Relationships are what make the *testimonio* possible. There has to be a level of *confianza* built between the interlocutor and *testimonialista*. Even when there is no interlocutor, a relationship between the *testimonialista* and the people or space supporting the process of creating and sharing a *testimonio* is needed. Haig-Brown's (2003) concept of "impossible knowledge" helps me understand why relationships with/in *testimonio* are

about *confianza.* She explains that impossible knowledge is "knowledge that is beyond our grasp because of the limits of our language and our lived experience" (Haig-Brown, 2003, pp. 415). *Confianza* is built when we begin to grapple with "impossible knowledge" and *testimonio* does this when the *testimonialista* speaks. When the *testimonialista* speaks there is an invitation to trust the other and for the other to trust the *testimonialista*. However, I don't want to essentialize this process. This process has contradictions because many speakers, writers, and listeners are still conditioned to work through and from master narratives and practices. *Testimonio* challenges one to speak, write, and listen differently and you have to allow yourself to have *confianza* (Haig-Brown, 2003).

Speaking back and for

Relationships are also essential in the speaking back and for those to whom the *testimonio* is dedicated. Relationships beyond interlocutor and *testimonialista* may or may not include the collective experiences of those whom the *testimonialista* feels a (dis)connection with. The relationships that are built are those that allow for the speaking back to oppressive discourses about marginalized communities and for those who are marginalized—an ongoing process. I like how Benmayor (2012) talks about this ongoing process. She states, "for many Latina writers and scholars that have followed, theorizing and constructing new understandings meant breaking the silences, speaking out, talking back, 'writing back' and ultimately 'writing for'—a voice that is both oppositional and propositional" (p. 509). Many times one thinks of relationship building as always being positive and bound to building on a particular commonality. However, *testimonio* offers us a space to trouble these relationships by focusing on difference in order to transform

and build on commonalities. Moreover, Borland (1991) also speaks to this when she interprets and troubles her experience as interlocutor. She goes on to say that "the stories stimulate reflexivity about research practice." Furthermore, she explains that as we "renegotiate our sense of self, our narratives will also change" (p. 63). I can see how renegotiating ourselves, *testimonios*, and the readers also helps us renegotiate our sociopolitical positioning and how this positioning enables a different access of power (Borland, 1991; Yudice, 1991).

Solidarity

Relationships are also bound by solidarity between interlocutor, *testimonialista*, and reader. *Testimonio* as a methodology provides a space for analysis that is collaborative and which embraces multiple truths. Delgado Bernal et al. (2012) state that *testimonio* partly relies on these relationships of *testimonio* to "establish a sense of solidarity as a first step toward social change" (p. 364). Moreover, they explain that "*testimonio* as a methodology provides modes of analysis that are collaborative and attentive to myriad ways of knowing and learning in our communities" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 364). The key is that *testimonio* relationships allow for both the individual and collective identities to be questioned and transformed into a movement that can merge "the brown bodies in our communities with academia" (Beverly, 2005; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 364). Moreover, Prieto and Villenas (2012) explain that *testimonio* has an overtly political intent that is not only for an individual but is also part of a collective matter. *Testimonio* invites the reader to "bring their own histories and experiences" to the hearing (Cruz, 2012, p. 468). These relationships are a dialogical process. Benmayor (2012) explains that "it is a shared result of the interaction and

agendas of two or more interlocutors" stimulating "a concientizacion, of becoming aware of and situating one's own struggles in a larger social context" (p. 511). A call to action then is also an element that is recognized in *testimonio* relationships.

<p style="text-align:center">*Call to action*</p>

Testimonio relationships work to both strengthen and trouble the call to action or that urgency to articulate a truth and being in connection to the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality. As Prieto and Villenas (2012) explain, the relationships between the *testimonialista* and interlocutor "impel others to take some form of action…their call for change is urgent" (p. 415). This is why relationships are important in *testimonio* work. It goes beyond just reading a *testimonio.* Instead, reading is activated because narratives are connected thus emphasizing agency. This agency to call to action contributes to the "reframing of authorial power" and politics (Russel y Rodriguez, 2007, p. 97). Russel y Rodriguez (2007) explain how *testimonio* relationships trouble the "disciplined and undisciplined" structures of methodology by placing ourselves at the center of the complex web of discipline (p. 99). She helps me understand that the call to action or the urgency to articulate truth should not be placed within a binary (i.e., insider/outsider, etc.), but rather placed in "relationship to questions of power, authority, and the histories of colonialism and racism" (Russel y Rodriguez, 2007, p. 99). Like Benmayor (2012), Russel y Rodriguez (2007) explore why "understanding our own place within this web urges us to winnow out the dominant forces subjugating us, and our own possible subjugation of others" (p. 100). In other words, how is one silencing the self and others in the process of producing research that calls for voice, emancipation, and deconstruction?

Praxis to listening

Listening is central to developing different critical pedagogies but I feel that is also central to *testimonio* as a methodology in regards to relationships. This trusting relationship creates a much deeper understanding and places a much stronger sense of responsibility on the researcher and audience (Haig-Brown, 2003; Leyva, 2003). Scholar Leyva (2003) explains her experience with *testimonio* and how "listening to and telling stories began [her] healing from trauma of history that [she] had carried inside of [her], as had [her] parent, and their parents, and their parents before them" (p. 5). With Leyva (2003) one can see there is an active listening component that goes beyond only describing her experience with historical trauma because she includes the memory of her parents and *abuelos* (grandparents). Moreover, she listens beyond the text because Leyva (2003) explains how the historical trauma is something she experienced spiritually, through the mind and body. Thus, her listening is without the exclusion of the *bodymindspirit*. It is an exchange that guides us to *emparejarnos* (to pair). Cruz (2012) also builds on this idea of listening and *emparejarnos* when she talks about how *testimonio* offers "an opportunity to 'travel,' positioning a listener or an audience for self-reflection. Under certain open circumstances; a listener or an audience member is given the opportunity to be complicit as an observer and as a witness" (p. 462). We travel within/across relationships. This idea helps me think about how relationships are important for *testimonio*. However, there are times when there is an inability to listen and travel because of one's complicity to Eurocentrism—namely individuals like Stoll who refuse to travel in his reading of *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (Cruz, 2012). Thus, this is one of several challenges that *testimonio* encounters when making *testimonio* accessible within

academia.

<u>Narrative authority, representation, and notions of truth</u>

Russel y Rodriguez (2007) help unthread thoughts about how *testimonio* relationships interact with the issues of narrative authority, interpretive conflict, and interpretations of truth. As I mentioned previously, Russel y Rodriguez (2007) explain that it is important to place yourself as an interlocutor and/or *testimonialista* at the center of the complex web of (un)disciplining. It is a displacement and a renegotiating of each and it challenges traditional narratives of truth (i.e., historical, social, and political analysis). In the following section, I describe and further extend how *testimonialistas* and interlocutors interact with issues of narrative truth, interpretative conflict, and interpretations of truth. While the discourses overlap, I separate each of them for the purpose of clarity.

Narrative authority

Narrative authority establishes who has power to narrate a story or a narrative that engages with the individual and the collective identity. It focuses on who has the authority to narrate. *Testimonio* questions this narrative authority in the process of creating the *testimonio*. In the process, the interlocutor and *testimonialista* look both inward and outward, especially when it comes to questions of interpretation and representation (Borland, 1991). The role of the researcher is repositioned within concerns of "voice, representation, truth" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012b, p. 365). Because *testimonio* is "reclaiming authority to narrate, and [disentangle] questions surrounding legitimate truth," I think *testimonio* work does run into challenges that come from those

writers and scholars who work from a traditional research framework. Both for the interlocutor and/or the *testimonialista* there are questions about data misinterpretation, for example, misinterpretation of language or the misrepresentation of individual and collective identities (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012b). *Testimonio* offers writers and scholars a way of working with/in and through this debate because it does reposition "authorial power by asking, who has the authority to narrate?" (Russel y Rodriguez, 2007, p. 97; Beverly, 2005; Yudice, 1991). Russel y Rodriguez (2007) states that *testimonio* does this repositioning of interpretation by challenging "the concept of 'native informant'—seeing interviewees as capable of their own political analysis—and reframes the author's self-story that moves in and between gathering and analysis" (p. 97). I feel that the interlocutor and/or the *testimonialista* goes through this consistently before, during, and after the text or digital media is out to public print because, depending on the audience, they are asked about the validity of the interpretation. This questioning can be both explicit and subtle. This moves me into talking about interpretive conflict.

Interpretive conflict

Interpretation is the description and analysis of a particular event or trauma. Thus, interpretive conflict is that process by which different people have different interpretations of the same event and trauma but might back it up through different means. Borland (1991) shares her experience with interpretive conflict in her work with her grandmother's narrative. She explains what happens when there is disagreement between the interlocutor and *testimonialista*—namely, the process of going back to the *testimonialista* to make sure that what the interlocutor is interpreting is a direct translation in intent and purpose. Beyond this, I think that Borland (1991) brings up an

important question—"how, then, might we present our work in a way that grants the speaking women interpretive respect without relinquishing our responsibility to provide our own interpretation of her experience?" (p. 64). The key idea from this question is the understanding of respectful ways of interpretation; it helps me understand this conflict and the ways in which *testimonio* tries to ameliorate it. For example, including both the *testimonialista* and the interlocutor in the process of interpretation helps this conflict dissolve.

Interpretations of truth

An interpretation of truth is a dialogue that complicates the ideas of truth in general. It goes along with the discourse surrounding the concept of interpretive conflict and narrative authority because it questions collective identities and epistemologies. According to *testimonio* all truths are validated within the postmodern definition or interpretation of truth (Tierney, 2000; Yudice, 1991). However, *testimonio's* understanding of truth is unique from both a modernist and postmodernist conception of truth in that although all truths are valid under *testimonio*, they are still connected to a collective identity (*testimonio* validates a fragmented identity as a collective one). Furthermore, Yudice (1991) states that "testimonial writing, in this respect, coincides with one of the fundamental tenets of postmodernity: the rejection of what Jean-Francoi Lyotard (1984) calls grand or master narratives" (p. 16). By insisting "on the collective identity of the narrator, by avoiding appealing to universal human experience and insisting on the specificity of experience; by challenging traditional assumptions about what constitutes knowledge…" *testimonio* challenges the traditional ways of collecting narratives and construction of knowledge in research (Brabeck, 2003, p. 255). Truth is

troubled but not erased (Tierney, 2000). Tierney (2000) explains that truth is being troubled because it is "against the creation of modernist nostalgia of the romanticized identity," however, its intention is not to offer another one truth but to offer several truths. Yet, these multiple truths do not always speak to a collective identity. Lincoln (2000) helps me think about truth when she talks about the discourse surrounding historical and narrative truths. It does so because she goes back to the question of who decides what truth is or not. Furthermore, she asks one to theorize on the reasons why research validates historical truths over narrative truths. Lastly, she helps us think about which truths we position in our own writing. This dialogue helps one understand that *testimonio* then is not based on observing the other and showcasing data that generates themes about how individuals and groups of people experience a particular event or live in a particular community. It is a truth that talks back to the master narrative. The issue then is more or less between what *testimonio* offers differently about truth in qualitative research and those scholars who still follow and work from a master narrative. Moreover, the issue with interpretations of truth also includes the debate on how writers and scholars can use *testimonio* as a strategy without jeopardizing the process and the *testimonialista* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). However, this debate is ameliorated with understanding how *testimonio* gives agency to the *testimonialista* as "the holder of knowledge thereby disrupting traditional academic ideals of who might be considered a producer of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 365).

The conversation about the importance of relationships in *testimonio* methodology only asked that I intentionally use *testimonio* because scholars in this area are in many ways asking questions similar to the ones I pose for my dissertation.

Testimonio methodology provides me the language and the tools to approach my study. However, as I explained at the beginning of the chapter, when I started to collect the *testimonios*, the process also mirrored the work of *pláticas*. *Pláticas* is part of a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). While in many ways I see *pláticas* linked to *testimonio*, each has its uniqueness. In the following section I introduce the work of *pláticas* and explain how it influenced my analysis approach.

<u>*Platicás* as a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology</u>

The following questions posed by Gonzalez (2001) during her research exploring the development of womanhood among young Mexicanas in Sacramento, California asks—"How does the researcher account for the place of *cultura* and *educación* in the lives of young people, and what are the socializing messages? Who is writing the research and what are the claims?" (p. 644). These questions highlight the importance of researcher reflexivity in *pláticas*. Moreover, these questions show that at the core *platicás* moves research beyond extracting information. Rather, *platicás* is another form of inquiry and analysis on the interrogation of schemas of knowledge and social power (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). This section is guided by Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) who trace the genealogy of the use of *platicás* as a way to explain the role of *pláticas* in research, and conceptualize *pláticas* as a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016).

The first use of *plática* was introduced in the 70s with the work of Valle and Mendoza (1978) and Valle (1982). Starting in sociology, the use of *plática* expanded into other research areas such as mental health and social work. Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) explain that "the use of *pláticas* in 'Hispanic'-focused research emerged as a

result of researchers believing that traditional models of research, particularly ethnographies and surveys, did not work well with 'Hispanic' participants" (p. 6). Reading through Valle (1982) and other scholars (Applewhite, 1995; Bensussen & Valle, 1985; Mckean Scaff et al., 2002; Valle & Mendoza, 1978), there is an indication that their use of *plática* was seen as a preinterview protocol. By this I mean *plática* was not approved as a data collection strategy (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). The information collected before the actual interview was not used. *Plática* was then more a formality of researcher introduction of the researcher and topic of research. Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) observe that for scholars like Valle and Mendoza (1978) "*pláticas* are a more appropriate methodology with Latin@ populations because of their cultural focus on cultural formalities of the interview process" (p. 103). Using *pláticas* in this way highlights several limitations. For instance, using *plática* as a preinterview protocol makes cultural identity static, and as a result eliminates the possibility of engaging with conversations that interrogate Western colonial assumptions such as the notion of neutrality in research. Early citations of *pláticas* underscore the importance of relationships in research. However, they also point to limitations such as the ones pointed above.

The new wave of Chicana/o and Latina/o scholars (de la Torre, 2008; Espino et al., 2010; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Gonzalez, 1990, 2001; Guajardo, 2008; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2008; Guajardo et al. 2014; Saavedra et al., 2009) who use *plática* in their research reexamine those limitations discussed in the previous paragraph. For example, Gonzalez's (2001) study with young Mexicanas in Sacramento, California explored the power of engaging Mexicanas as *pensadoras* (thinkers) in education. Her exploration on

the meanings of cultural knowledge and identity in education brings attention to the importance of braiding multiple ways of knowing, teaching, and learning in the formulation of holistic educational policies and practices. Gonzalez (2001) uses critical race feminisms and Latina critical theory interpretive frameworks to explore young Mexicana critical meanings of cultural knowledge and identity. To guide Gonzalez's (2001) inquiry and analysis, she utilized *trenzas y mestizaje* methodology. Through *trenzas y mestizaje,* Gonzalez (2001) lays out what *platicás* (popular conversations) is and what it enabled her to do. Her interpretation of *pláticas* recognizes and brings awareness to researcher epistemologies. Gonzalez's (2001) research process allows *pláticas* to develop relationships of reciprocity between participants and researcher (Gonzalez, 2008; Gonzalez & Portillo, 2012; Guajardo, 2008; Guajardo & Guajardo, 2008; Guajardo et al., 2014). Using *pláticas* in ways similar to Gonzalez (2001) allows researchers to weave the personal memories and stories with the academic adding complexity to the historical and theoretical colonial hetereopatriarchial histories and experiences. For the purpose of my dissertation I conceptualize *pláticas* in this way—more specifically, I use *plática* as a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology.

Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) map out the contours of *plática* as a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology. They identify the following five principles in *plática* methodology: 1) scholars draw upon Chicana/Latina feminist theory, 2) participants are viewed as coconstructors of knowledge, 3) scholars make connections between everyday lived experiences and research inquiry, and 4) these connections can be potential spaces for healing. Finally, 5) scholars rely on relations of reciprocity, vulnerability, and researcher reflexivity in inquiry and analysis (Fierros & Delgado

Bernal, 2016). The five principles highlight important components that make up *plática* Chicana/Latina feminist methodology. The remaining section on *plática* methodology features two particular examples of scholars who highlight these five principles in their utilization of *plática* methodology and were helpful in my selection of methodology process.

Espino et al. (2010) theorize their experience and examination of challenges and success using *testimonio* and *pláticas*. For Espino et al. and other scholars (Burciaga & Tavares, 2006; de la Torre, 2008; Flores & Garcia, 2009) *pláticas* represents a "collaborative process comprised of sharing stories, building community, and acknowledging multiple realities and vulnerabilities in an effort to enforce strong bonds among the members of that social network" (p. 805). *Plática* as a collaborative process provided Espino et al. (2010) opportunities for them to share their multiple truths as a way of connecting across difference; they pull from the concept of "sisterhood pedagogy" in their analysis of truths (Burciaga & Tavares, 2006). Emphasis on the collaborative process underscores that the making of knowledge involves a multiplicity of experiences and stories. This is an appreciated emphasis because they explain using *testimonio* alone challenged their idea of collaboration by the individualistic context of *testimonio*. The negotiation Espino et al. (2010) engaged in to find a balance between sharing an individual and collective *testimonio* was helpful in my process of combining *testimonio/plática.*

The last piece draws attention to how *plática* functions as a healing process. Flores and Garcia (2009) talk about their reflections regarding, and process of, a collective group called "Latinas Telling Testimonio." They explain through *pláticas* the

importance of having a Latina space on campus. Through this space Flores and Garcia (2009) felt they could share their feelings of isolation in relation to other Latinas at the university. Moreover, it was important to center the joy and *sabiduria* (wisdom) of engaging with critical research and pedagogy. Similarly to Espino et al. (2010), Flores and Garcia (2009) draw focus on the collaboration process that was at the core of their Latina space. During their meetings and *plática*s the mujeres shared stories about their experiences with birthing, health challenges, and stories of multiple crossings. *Pláticas* then provided a bridging between the *bodymindspirit* because they merged their intellectual being with their lived experiences allowing them to *convivir* (come together) with those aspects not welcomed in the institution such as the body.

Information gathering method

I am doing qualitative research utilizing *testimonio/plática* methodologies and content analysis as my methods.

Testimonio/plácticas contributor selection

I used a purposeful snowball sampling method. I used this method because I am interested in a very particular collection of voices regarding qualitative research in education. Purposeful sampling is a nonrandom selection of participants whose identity is particularly important to the research focus and questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Contributors selected were those who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the problematics under study. This method worked well because it allowed me to locate those who are interested in this particular project. Also, this method of sampling was helpful for the collection of a small sample. Lastly, this method engages

with the depth of nuanced *testimonios/pláticas* rather than creates generalized conclusions to a specific population.

Decisions regarding selection were based on the research questions, theoretical perspectives, and evidence informing the study. Here are the criteria for participants:

- Interested in the research methods (i.e., interrogation of theory and practice of qualitative methods, has published for QSE or related journals).

- Use anticolonial, decolonial, and/or Chicana feminist epistemologies as theoretical frameworks in their research.

- Contribute to research in education (could be interdisciplinary).

I felt that these critera allowed for an appropriate selection of contributors and for important facets and perspectives related to the exploration of this topic to stand out. I decided to select a total of eight, including me. I felt this number of contributors would be representative of the group of scholars I want to describe. Most have decided to remain anonymous with the exception of two. Accordingly, I used pseudonyms as a way to distinguish their narratives from each other.

Testimonio/pláctica process

I contacted all contributors through email. The email informed them about my project and asked for their participation. I then coordinated with each to set up a date and time where I introduced myself and answered any questions they had. This first conversation was important for me because most were new relationships. Establishing an introduction through conversation over the phone, or in some cases several conversations, allowed for trusting relationships to develop. After these initial conversations, I collected their *testimonios/pláticas*. I collected most *testimonios/pláticas* through online

communication such as Google Hang-Out or Zoom. On one occasion I collected *testimonio/plática* over the phone. To guide and transition us through different moving pieces within my exploration of the topic, I created a *testimonio* protocol (Appendix B) that listed themes and questions. These themes are a reflection of the moving pieces I introduced in Chapter 2. All *testimonios/pláticas* were audio recorded and transcribed. Each participant was given a copy of their own transcription.

In addition to the one-on-one *testimonio*, I asked contributors to respond to two email generalized prompts: 1) Coloniality, Education, and Research Praxis; and 2) Through the body I/we speak: The body Re/members in Research. Once again these themes are a reflection of the moving pieces I introduced in Chapter 2. Their responses were not timed. For 2 participants the responses to the email prompts happened over the phone. Thus, their responses were not limited to writing. Participants were able to upload images and/or audio to respond to the prompts. The email prompts functioned as a form of free-write or what Benmayor (2012) calls memory-writes. These were also coded along with their *testimonio/pláticas*. I continued to check in throughout the writing of the analysis. I did this to create opportunities where unanswered questions were recorded and answered, and provide the contributors additional space and time to add or remove anything from their *testimonio/plática*. I now move on to discuss the specifics regarding the contribution of the content analysis.

Document/content analysis

In order to identify, review, and explore the debate in the field of qualitative research and link the *testimonios/pláticas* to what is being said in the scholarship, I provide an analysis of the presence of these debates in education research journals such

as *Qualitative Studies in Education* and *Equity & Excellence in Education*. In addition, I use chapters from the multiple volumes of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* by Denzin and Lincoln and *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Methodologies* by Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008). I focused on the discourse published in the last 20 years (1995-2015). The tropes and problematics identified in Chapter 2 help center a critical analysis of theories of power, knowledge production, and representation in qualitative education.

I want to go over my process for coding and unpacking themes for *testimonio/plática* and content analysis. I used Word document coding glossaries for both methods. In addition to the coding glossary, I utilized a *sentipensante* (Rendon, 2009) journal (analytic memo) as a way to track and negotiate relationships with/in and across overall themes with *testimonialistas/pláticas*, articles, and books. This type of journaling allowed me to be reflective during the moments when I had important questions and/or comments that would expand my exploration of critical qualitative research. It was also a writing tool to help me make note of the relationships that were unfolding. The problems identified and theorized through the *testimonios/pláticas* include: construction of knowledge, modes of representation, issues of voice, and researcher roles. In the following paragraph I discuss my coding process of identifying themes for the analysis chapters.

In the first cycle of coding I identified the following themes: resistance, pedagogies of the home, culture of the academy, feelings and emotions, reclaiming space, ideas of mentorship, honesty, negotiation in academia, rethinking community, shifts in research, critical methodologies, researcher identity, spirituality in education,

rethinking/reinventing critical qualitative research, and decolonial thought. From these themes I developed several subcategories such as thought and feeling, conversations on identity, power and epistemology, historical erasure, and community activism/academic demands. In the second cycle of coding, I combined the list of themes and the review of literature to help narrow down my selection of themes. The list of dichotomous lines (researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer) reminded me that the research wanted to answer what methodological tools are available in university research and what is at stake for the *atravezada r*esearcher. Thus, selecting themes reflecting how scholars negotiated those splits led me to identify specific concepts and themes that guided their negotiation. The list of tropes reviewed in Chapter 2 required that the selection of themes build discussion on the problematics of research.

For example, what themes provide discussion on why there continues to be a lack of dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies? The discussion regarding the problematics of these tropes guided my selection of themes by asking to think through implications of the research. The comparison between the coding glossary and the review of literature prompted the merging of themes and subcategories. Thus, I decided to draw focus on the following general themes: dichotomous line thought/feeling (Chapter 5), reimagining/reinventing critical qualitative research (Chapter 6), and mentorship (Chapter 7). The following section talks more about how and why the *testimonio/pláticas* are illustrated thickly through the chapters.

<u>Illustration of analysis chapters</u>

Providing thick individual narratives side by side visually and metaphorically, for example, underscores *testimonios/pláticas* as both individual and collaborative reflections on critical qualitative research. *Testimonio/pláticas* enabled a questioning of how to do, and what it means to do, data analysis while making meaning and expanding and embracing alternative ways of knowing and being. *Testimonio/plática* influenced me as a researcher seeking information about the multiple *travesias* (crossings) in academia. When I use *testimonio* and *plática* methodology it signifies two key methodological implications: 1) researcher and contributor engagements with reflexivity and 2) acknowledgement and allowance of potential space(s) for healing. Entering this process means researchers need to understand how to practice being in relation to others and ourselves in research (Cruz, 2012; de la Torre, 2008).

Testimonio/plática also helped me listen for different visual and textual forms of analysis. In the following chapters I include visuals and textual representations that the contributors shared with me during the collection of *testimonios/pláticas*. I introduce key phrases, words, and/or full excerpts. I use the metaphor of the passing cloud per my conversation with Lupe, one of the participants, to think with the excerpts. Lupe explained:

> these questions [from dissertation protocol] are really probing and make me think but at the same time, as I'm talking or telling you what I believe at this moment at this time I am only but making sense of it. So ask me that next week and it might change. That's what I think about data. But what the hell are we really collecting at that moment…it's like a passing cloud thing, where are we really?

When I heard Lupe say this I was immediately drawn to that because everything we contribute to projects are of the moment. Our ideas and concepts are constantly

changing based on our daily experiences and positionalities. The passing cloud allowed me to illustrate those ideas in that way. Moreover, most traditional research in education usually states facts as facts. Thinking with the metaphor of the passing cloud lets ideas coalesce, breath, and interrupt some mainstream practices in educational research. The analysis chapter introduces words and excerpts to signify this metaphor.

<center>Testimonio/plática inquiry and analysis</center>

In this section I explain what *testimonio/platicá* means in terms of inquiry and analysis. As an *atravezada* researcher it was important for me to draw from methodologies and epistemologies that guided me to explore and analyze the problematics and tensions in conducting qualitative research in education. *Testimonio/pláticas* enabled me to question while making meaning and expanding and embracing alternative ways of knowing and being. They influence me as a researcher seeking information and *travesias* in academia. Moreover, they provide me with a long history of Chicana/Latina feminist scholars (Anzaldúa, 2007; Delgado Bernal 1998; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Perez, 1999; Saldivar Hull, 2000; Sandoval, 2000) who talk about Chicana/Latina feminist methodologies and epistemologies to challenge colonial hetereopatriarchial histories and experiences. Thus, offering more than strategies and tools to collect data, instead *testimonio/plática* allows one to theorize our lived experiences. Calderon et al. (2012) state that we should move "not to recover the silenced voices by using hegemonic categories of analysis but to change the methodological tools and categories to reclaim those neglected voices" (p. 60). *Testimonio/plática* allows me to practice this type of inquiry and analysis. Both consider the epistemological framing of the researcher and contributors in relation to the research inquiry and analysis.

When I use *testimonio* and *plática* methodology it signifies two things: 1) the researcher and contributor engage with self-reflexivity and 2) it allows for potential space(s) for healing. To be reflexive requires the researcher and contributor to listen with raw openness and be vulnerable. To enter the process means one needs to understand how we practice being in relation to others and ourselves (Cruz, 2012; de la Torre, 2008). Reflexivity then lays a platform for healing paths. After each *testimonio/platicá* I felt, as some say, *como que me quite un peso de encima* (I took a heavy load off me). The *testimonio/plática* and the following *encuentros* (meetings) always felt therapeutic (Avila, 1999). In some occasions it did feel overwhelming, traumatic, and painful. But those moments were few compared to the overall process. However, they are worth mentioning because from those moments there were opportunities to (re)evaluate and retool our ideas so that we could extend connections between everyday lived experiences and research inquiry. If I had used traditional interview models I would have risked the dismissal of these two processes. I also do not want to claim that each *testimonio/plática* enagaged fully with both. That would essentialize and romanticize the processes. There were moments when I did not gain a contributor's trust at different moments or at all. Perhaps it is associated with the power differential and/or the fact that for half of the contributors our relationship was new. However, no matter how long established or new our relationships were, our *testimonios/pláticas* were grounded in *respeto* (respect; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). If I had used a traditional interview model for inquiry and analysis I know that I would not have been able to honor that trust, respect, and healing. This is because the traditional approaches to qualitative research objectify and serve to extract information from individuals and groups. For me, *testimonio/plática*

invited me to be critical of the latter and honor the research participants' epistemological

positions by engaging with reflexivity and healing practices.

CHAPTER 4

CHICANA/LATINA FEMINIST SCHOLARS: INTRODUCTIONS

A Mindful Invitation

Una invitacion consiente

Ines Talamantez (2014)

It is the sun with its *bitole,* rays, that brings us new life
It is the moon's radiance that watches over us during the night
It is the female rain that gently washes away our fears
It is the breeze that caresses our skin making us strong as we walk on the
 Land
On this sun day I offer my thoughts for all of our journeys to succeed.
This is hard labor
The ancestors knew we were coming
They left work for us
Now we carry their wisdom forward.
Know who you are, *sabe quien eres*
Know your land, *conoce tu tierra*
Learn your language, *aprende tu idioma*
Follow the beliefs of your people, your spiritual culture
Do not let spells affect you.
Like every other achievement of human thought
We have emerged culturally and religiously
We are still exploring the possibilities for future growth
Seeking and testing, we take time to measure our generations and know
 that through working together we continue to build decent conditions
 for our people
This is our obligation
Never give up. (p. xi)

I ended my methodology chapter by expressing how *testimonio/platicá* methodology allowed an engagement with self-reflexivity and healing practices and how it provides a set of tools and epistemologies providing a vision for critical engagement to

develop an inquiry and analysis which reclaims neglected voices. With that in mind, the goal of this chapter is to honor each participant's epistemological position and illustrate relationships that are always unfolding. Talamantez's (2014) "A Mindful Approach" poem lays a platform to introduce the participants' epistemological positions and the analysis chapters. Talamantez (2014) invites researchers to engage with who we are by unpacking experience and positionality. Through this invitation, she suggests that the process of understanding who we are in relation to each other, land, and language is a moral obligation since "we are still exploring the possibilities for future growth" (Talamantez, 2014, p. xi). This process of critically tracing who we are goes back to the process of *la atravesada* researcher who constantly unpacks multiple *travesias* and relationships to research. Grounded in Talamantez's (2014) invitation and the concept of *la atravesada*, this chapter introduces the 8 Chicana/Latina feminist education scholars illuminating how they walk through this unpacking of experience and positionality. I let each participant introduce themselves highlighting how they identify, what connections they have to research, and most importantly what experiences and encounters fuel their desires to do research. I invite the reader to attend to their own *travesias* as a way of engaging with the introductions. The visual representation of the excerpts below illustrates powerful images, gestures, and/or words that introduced the participants to research as well as their (re)connections with research (see Figure 1).

Cecilia

Well I probably most identify as a Chicana feminist sociologist. Let's see yeah that would probably be my central identification…well I'm Mexicana born in the Imperial Valley in Brawley, California and to a large working class family and I would

Figure 1. Image represents a summary of the participants

really claim my working mom and dad very traditional, my dad was almost as twice old

as my mom when they married. So there was definitely a generational gap there. My

mother was born in Kern County. My dad was born in Mexico and he came here in 1921

and he was born in 1904. I was number six out of eight.

Nancy: Alright. The next part is about the item that reminds you of your

introduction to research. It doesn't have to be related to the academy but I want to know

if there is anything that really brings it home and reminds you how you thought of

research in this way type of thing.

Cecilia: The publication of "La Chicana" by Alfredo Mirande and Evangelina Enriquez right. This was published I want to say 1980 maybe…but this was before Anzaldúa's work before you know a lot of the Chicana feminist work that we are so familiar with now. At that time I was an undergraduate and I was working with Richard Valencia and Gene Matuban here at [the university] as an undergraduate research assistant and I just remember how powerful it was for me to see a book with the name about us you know… about Mexicans and I recognize all the critiques that have been done about this book but nonetheless it was a first. And that really for me established a connection between knowledge and research and production and just the idea that you can be a part of creating a body of knowledge.

Some of the things that I've been really happy about and pleased about is the work that I've done here in our community it was a project that came to me out of the activism with issues of education and higher education and as it turned out I ended up working with the historical society and conducting oral histories with familias who had lived in these cotton company towns here. What we did was video tapes, we put together photo exhibits, film based on oral histories, organized reunions, I worked with high school students on another project. So for a period of five years there I was actively engaged with community and I loved that. That's the one thing that makes me say at the end of the day I'm thrilled about the choices I've made in my career there are many things I would do differently but working in the community…you know… that will be part of my legacy, is documenting the stories of a community that otherwise wouldn't take place so how can you replace that [laughs and smiles].

<u>Lupe</u>

I identify as a Chicana you know…and sometimes I do the slash Latina [laughs] *right. But ever since an undergraduate and I first read Gloria Anzaldúa not the whole book but we read some chapters in my Mexican American writers class and I loved that work. For the first time I felt like someone else understood the ambivalence and the ambiguity and all of that living in two cultures. Even though I wasn't Mexican, living in Texas people just assumed I was Mexican you know. And it was funny because at first it used to bother me but later when I realized the politics of that, that it is a form of racism to be so bothered…because you know you don't want to identify with that right. But then in graduate school I didn't think much of it. My advisor encouraged me to look at some of the Chicana feminist work she was herself White woman who does poststructural work or postcolonial, somehow I brought it up and she kind of just encouraged me so I read the first pieces. I read a special issue from Dolores and Cruz many of the other ones that are on there from Gonzales and Elenes. I just fell in love with the work, for there was the idea that yes there is oppression but that there is also this sort of navigation and negotiation that happens within communities and that's what's missing in a lot of the work that looks at inequality is how* tambien we are sobreviviendo. *Using Galvan's, Trinidad-Galvan's work right it's that to me that was missing and I found it in the Chicana feminist.*

From there I just started using Chicana feminist and one of the epistemologies. I used in my dissertation Chicana feminisms to examine sort of the history of what's been written about teaching. After that I just started using that. I felt so comfortable you know and I also used it prior to the dissertation I wrote a chapter in a book that looked at a postmodern mestizaje. It looked at language advocacy…so we were examining even like

second language acquisition…and how all the theories are very White and middle class and how they apply to children and what it mean. So that's when Alejandra Elenes contacted us it was a coauthored piece to present in a Chicana panel and that was the first time coming out [we both laugh] *it was at AERA…I was so taken by these theories and that is sort of how I came…to sort of feminisms. I don't think I've written anything that does not somehow have some grounding in or some reference to Anzaldúa* [laughs] *so yeah it is where I feel I am home I guess theoretically.*

Libertad

I guess my self-identification… I always talk about… I'm queer I'm a Chicana from a working class background but I also talk about my lens, theoretical lenses and so a big one is U.S. third world feminisms right. And then I talk…I also talk about decolonial feminisms and so those are always the frames around me. And I know that I use multiple frames or whatever frames I need… I have I access to them.

You know it depends on who's asking, for tenure recently…I had to be really I really had to hone in an identity and hone it really carefully like with these different kind of frames used for my programmatic of research things…the mentors that I've had, great close mentors had asked me to use language like that and I guess in some ways it was really reviewing all the work that I've done with schools, with youth, with teachers, and really asking myself what is it that I do? That's some of the hardest things that I've ever done, hone that hone that identity. Because seriously the advice that I got… if I don't do it… if I don't hone my identity correctly in the way that I want to be seen someone else is going to do it for me someone else is going to define me and we don't want that at all. So it's very detrimental, especially for faculty of color especially for women of color. Like

for us we have to be careful on how we hone that identity. So it's interesting how that works you know there is me and then there's all these research identities I have based on all these relationships that I've built overtime so it's an interesting process you know.

One time I had this kid trying to commit suicide and he was on the top of floor of a building… I was like you know what screw it you know? I got up and got dressed I was like 45 minutes late and I drove in and saw him sitting at the edge of the building I was like at the edge of the building and I was like oh my god how come no one noticed that this kid is at the edge of the building, right? I was thinking, the elevator doesn't work so we will have to use the stairs…I was like oh my god this kid is on the roof right so sometimes adrenaline kicks in and I went up and I blew the barrier and then I went through the barrier and I went to see him and he was crying and crying so hard that he was really red. He was always this immaculate smart kid you know he always had a great grades his clothes were always totally pressed like well pressed…but he had been homeless now for a week. He was African American he was a bigger kid and he tried to bang but he didn't have any money which is why he was trying to bang but no one really gave him money. I don't know that it would have helped and nobody helped him…he knew why that was. It was because he was black you know this is what he said he said "you know those queens like they didn't even help you know and they didn't even help me"…they had a project due but I sat on the edge with him and said you know tomorrow is another day and you don't know what's going to happen and I said the sun is going to come up but you know this whole experience I said why don't you put this in your portfolio [laughs] *in your video project you know so you can tell people about this…then he was put away and you know there is a 72 hour hold for that ugh risky behavior and so*

later on you know like…and then it was over.

Later on that afternoon I had to meet a friend and I was driving in my car and all of a sudden I had to pull over I had to get sick… so yeah it never hit me till later you know and I was like what am I doing you know? What am I doing at this place? What am I… you know is anything that I'm doing helping you know? Is collecting a story somewhat like… is it like helping? Sometimes I've had episodes like that, where a couple of times that happened. I don't want to say that I despair but I definitely feeling like wow what am this doing here right? What good is it is it going to help in the short term of these kid? And so [Nancy: agrees] *that sometimes would happen where I would think is the work that we are doing…how is it impacting their everyday lives? I've never shied away of saying I'm here to do research um but for a long time I was like super teacher you know like the best teacher in the world and my identity was all wrapped around it and it started, it started to change you know. You have to own your identity as a researcher that's what you are. You are no longer that teacher you are a researcher but you know I had to make sense you know. But I also had to have the tools to deal with the everyday day of what was happening with youth but also it was about the shifting identity it was about owning that. I'm here to record and watch and I'm also here to intervene.*

<u>Esperanza</u>

I am…I want to be recognized as a scholar of education and before when I was in education I guess I wanted to be recognized as a researcher scholar and teacher of education and equity issues and gendered issues in an ethnic setting. In academia I want to be considered as a scholar focused on the particular topics that I focus on right. And that's what is hard at first because the time I came into it was in 96'…it was not very

much common amongst people to be using critical research or like race scholarship wasn't really legitimated and so trying to find a place that used race scholarship was difficult and so I think those are the ways I've tried to identify and you know of course I was grounded in Latino Studies.

Nancy: Alright. The next part is about the item that reminds you of your introduction to research. It doesn't have to be related to the academy but I want to know if there is anything that really brings it home and reminds you how you thought of research in this way type of thing.

Esperanza: If I think of the people walking into my office it's very interesting right. Because every office is different and people often try to make their offices look like their personal space and in my office I have pictures of my kids when they were babies, feminist posters like the Gloria Anzaldúa conference [in Santa Cruz]...I have little boxes of students from students in Latin America. I have book shelves with the work of women of color and I have something I was thinking of getting rid of it I kind of go back and forth...it was a gift from somebody it's a picture of the Virgen de Guadalupe from Yolanda and this one is when she is an athletic virgen stepping on the serpent yeah so I kept that. So those are the things that are in my office. I also have something that represent Ecuador represent feminisms represent my children and also education [pause] *yeah so I think that yeah I think the office can be that representation [of research].*

<u>Luna</u>

I identify as Chicana. Is that what you are looking for? (Nancy: yes) okay yeah Chicana how did I come... I was raised by Chicanos so there was never a discussion around it. There was a few moments around my adolescence where it wasn't that I didn't

identify as Chicana I just wasn't as connected to a place where I felt like I could. I went to a predominately White high school which was a big change from my diverse…from a diverse I mean Mexicano Filipino and White K-8 school but I think that high school was an interesting sort of a slap in the face I didn't realize how White that was. It's not that I didn't identify as Chicana it's just I just felt like I didn't have a place to…and I didn't want to explain so yeah I think I identified as a Chicana my whole life. There are times when you know I say I am Latina but it's usually depending on the company how much energy and how space and how much I assume people know and don't know because the last thing I am going to have to do is explain my identity to somebody so yeah.

The poem…it's a great poem by Marianne Williamson it is awesome. It's something to the effect…"our deepest fear is not that we are not inadequate our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure is our light not our darkness that most frighten us. We ask ourselves who am I to be variant gorgeous talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not? You're a child of god, your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. It is not just in some of us it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." Umm well as an identity I think that generally women are taught to be submissive and subservient quiet and to shrink a little bit in presence of others so that other people you know can eat first so people can you know… "No no you go ahead first" and I think that I still hold on to those values. But the problem in these environments that we work in is that if we continue to act like that we are not going to be able to make space for the people…the people who

we got into this for. So if we continue to let others go first or you know "no you go first and apply to this grant" then all the work that it took us to get here is delayed I guess for lack of a better term. I think that at the core you know despite the fact that we are told "no no" all of us know that we have these really important and powerful driving forces around who we are and who we want to become that we ignore a lot. And so for me this poem is about reclaiming internal power reclaiming that internal voice.

I mean if we think of Gloria Anzaldúa let's be honest she was out there but she was doing herself right and a lot of the feminist work that we think about…it's crazy to think someone went against the grain you know because they really believed in the liberation of woman. The United Farmworkers all the people that I look up to followed their conviction. It is just a reminder. I am going to make change in the way that I want to. I need to be willing to follow my conviction because in doing that hopefully other people will be inspired to do the same right. So the last line says "so as we are liberated from our own fear our presence automatically liberates others" so that's a core of how I try to live my life you know. It's not always easy. Not always you know worry free but it is in the service of others. Not always but I think I am trying to be more and more about that.

<u>Flor</u>

I identify as a first generation academic who comes from a working class background women of color very generally is the way I identify. And depending on the context and I think more on… I would say that as a scholar from the border who comes from mixed ancestry as Mexican and Pueblo. There is actually a book called…I had the book right here too let me pull it out here it is it's called "La Lucha: The Story of Lucha

Castro and Human Rights in Mexico." *She wrote what do you call those…ethnographic novels basically in Chihuahua and along the border across Juarez and featured a lot of people I know. When I was home this summer I was able to kind of talk to everybody…family who has fled and family who has stayed on the other side. So I think that this book is my connection… so yes this book it helped me resituate my thinking as a researcher because for a long time I had a tenuous relationship with Chicana feminisms and Borderland studies because again I think my positionality was outside of a lot of the discourse there that they talk about. Then over the summer right after talking to everybody I was like wow why have I felt marginalized myself from this area when I think I have one unique perspective about research and two that I think it's important for people like myself to claim spaces in the academy and so it* [deep breath] *it created a shift in some of the work I do in Border Studies. So I think that I am still kind of nervous about that simply because some people have claimed the space in a particular way that I am not comfortable with. That's how that item represents what I am going through right now.*

<div align="center">Anita</div>

Well you know I think that I identify the same anywhere I go but definitely those identities come out. So everywhere I go I am Chicana, I'm Tejana, I'm a feminist Mujerista, and Queer you know. I am a first generation academic college student. I have a working class consciousness. I grew up in poverty and you know I always tell people when I get my positionality like there are all these pieces. But my business card does say I am an associate professor director of Gender and Sexuality Studies and now I am the director of interdisciplinary degree programs. But you know I very much feel comfortable or willing to feel comfortable to say who I am to the dean and to larger meetings at the

university. So I do tell them my ethnic identity, my queer identity even growing up in poverty I think it's important to say that. Even this week or maybe it was like last Friday I said to the people hiring a new provost, as a person who grew up in poverty and first generation college student I have more in common with my students than I do with my peers. So I say it and I think it inter mingles as many places as I think it's necessary.

The way I do my research is...I always...become a part of the space that I am studying. So I like to study Chicana Latina feminist or queer activist organizations either the actual movement or organization or the people that create that community. Part of my...you know...at least the action research approach is that I become a part of it. And one of the things I've learned from UCLA was as people of color activist, people of color who have this history of infiltration, where people have infiltrated our organizations and pretended to be in solidarity yet been out to destroy the movement. So when I first went to that organization they were like who is this woman [laughs] *because I would show up with my notebook and take notes and wanted to start interviewing people wanted to start being in ethnography with them and they are like no we don't know you and they were nice. But you can tell there was like this one eyebrow up and so what I decided is I had to put away the notebook. I had to put away the recorder and not do interviews and first be a part of the space be part of the space commit to it you know develop a sense of trust from me to them and them to me. So my first study ended up being five years long because I spent all this time with them. All of a sudden they were telling me Anita take out your camera, take out your recorder and you got to put this in your dissertation. And you know similarly when I came to Vegas I did the same thing I didn't know what I would study but I knew my thing was I want to change the world. I want social justice.*

So my research is a constant journey towards documenting peoples path towards social justice that's basically what I do. And so when I came to Vegas I was like I didn't know what I was going to study because people think of Vegas and they think of the strip they think that you know what happens here stays here. And so you don't know that there are real communities not only in struggle but also in resistance here and they are also actively trying to create a more just environment for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Nancy

*I am a first generation Chicana Mexicana mujer woman of color "*ni de aqui ni de aya*." I am the first in my immediate and extended family to attend a four year university, get masters, and first to pursue a Ph.D. If I were asked this identification question before I went to college I would have said Mexican American because that is all I knew. I knew I was born in Mexico so then I was Mexican and I know that we lived in "El Norte" so I was culturally American. I did not really understand if I was exactly half-and-half but I thought I was. I didn't know much about history at least not as it directly impacted my family and I did not know about the war or migration not as told by my history lesson. I just knew why we had to migrate when I was 9 months. At the age of 13 years old I learned I was undocumented. I also learned I was working class and that my parents had to work long hours plus extra shifts to make sure we made it through the basics. Right before my parents divorced they were able to buy a house, take summer trips to Mexico, and lastly throw me a huge Quince! After they divorced things got ugly and my mom has been the one keeping the home together until this day. So long story short my identity has fluctuated now I am much more intentional with how and who I share the way I identify*

myself. In academia I make it a point people understand how I identify because I don't want others to do it for me. I am sure my self-identification will change multiple times after this.

When I was a freshman in college I was part of a college success/mentor program called College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). So CAMP had this class that met once a week for the entire first year of our college experience. On one of those weeks we had an assignment that asked students to develop a presentation that represented our first year experience and that mapped out us moving forward. This is a loose description of the course because it's been almost 12 years since that first year [smile]. *So I chose to do a painting. That painting starts at the left hand side of the corner of the canvas. It has a green tree with hues of yellow and brown and out of that tree is a hand reaching to a disappearing American flag it then transitions onto a road and there are many stops on that road. Each stop represents the places I want to go and multiple pieces that make up who I am. The road really has no ending it does however end because the canvas has no more space. At the center of the painting, there is what I call a kind of transparent image of myself.*

I use to hang it at my apartment when I was an undergraduate and in the process of moving to San Diego for graduate school it stayed with my mom. My mom since then has moved 8 times from house to house so the interesting part is that piece of art work has traveled with her. At the moment it's hung in the living room of her one bedroom casita. She has nothing else hung except for that painting. So where do I start? This painting represents so much of who I am. It connects to my corrido because it illustrates the different spirals of my life and it continues to travel 12 years later. So although the

painting has had no additions, the meanings attached to it carry a lot of sentimiento, dolor, resistencia, orgullo y cariño. It also represents my curiosities with research.

CHAPTER 5

FEELINGS OF PASSION, FEAR, AND PAIN AS A

SOURCE OF EMPOWERMENT IN RESEARCH

> The quest for Chicana visibility can only take us so far. We need more broad based, substantive, and innovative techniques and methods in order to interrupt the inherently limiting and strongly gendered bifurcation between old and new, political and sexual, authentic and ersatz, thought and feeling, and revolutionary and burgeois. When we queer our feminist strategies—finally letting go of those a priori criteria discussed by Bruce-Novoa, which is also to say letting go of our reliance on mastery—we can read like a queer the most commanding figure in Chican@ Studies. (Soto, 2010, p. 88)

Soto's call to push boundaries of comfort and trust in our analysis of the word and the world through a queer framework is gripping because she puts to task our current techniques and methods. She does this by suggesting that we move beyond visibility toward projects that provide tools researchers could use to further interrupt and rethink the split bodies of relationships. Soto (2010) explains queering our feminist strategies is one way of interrupting the list of multiple splits. In mainstream/whitestream educational research this engagement is not fully present and excessive. Queering makes these split bodies excessive, making emotions and feelings associated with research difficult to ignore. Thus, this chapter is dedicated to answering Soto's (2010) invitation to interrupt the split between thought and feeling in research.

This chapter focuses on thinking with and interrogating dichotomous lines as well as the tropes in research by centering the divide between thought and feeling. Throughout

the *testimonios/pláticas*, many of the contributors talked about practicing and reflecting on the complexity of research relationships by expressing their emotions. To honor and learn from their reflections and praxes, Chapter 5 presents key emotions that bridge the *testimonio/pláticas* and literature on relationships in research: 1) love, 2) passion, 2) fear, and 3) pain. My intent is not only to highlight their expressions and emotions about their overall engagement with research, but also to suggest that there must be emotion present in the process of responding to the dichotomous lines and tropes in research (see Chapter 2 for complete list). I conclude this chapter by discussing emotion within a relational framework to contextualize the manner in which the collaborators in this study discuss love, passion, fear, and pain. (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Discussing emotion within a relational framework, I argue, helps researchers visualize how using a relational framework provides possibilities for the use of emotions in critical qualitative educational research, moving from being focused on visibility and recovering voices to changing methodological tools (Calderon et al., 2012; Soto, 2010).

Unpacking love in educational theory and praxis

As an *atravesada* it is possible to detach from research emotionally and, as a result, mute important perspectives, ideas, and questions about the research process. Researchers are told that emotions are unreliable in the inquiry and analysis process. Chicana/Latina feminists (Anzadúa, 2007; Behar, 1995; Facio & Lara, 2014; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981) remind researchers to resist detaching emotionally from research because emotions are a big part of what drives the inquiry process. Chicana/Latina feminist scholars as well as other critical scholars (Darder & Mirón, 2006; hooks, 1994; Pelias, 2004; Sandoval, 2000) spend time unpacking love in

their research and pedagogy. Before introducing the role passion, fear, and pain has within research relationships, I want to spend some time talking about love. It is important to unpack love before introducing the other feelings because it is a popular emotion that many critical scholars depart from and rework in their social justice and education work (Darder & Mirón, 2006; hooks, 1994; Pelias, 2004; Sandoval, 2000). Love has led critical scholars to engage with their research emotionally reminding researchers the need to unpack the liminal space between feeling and thought. Analyzing critical qualitative research from this angle allows for healing by pointing to specific concepts/ideas/paths that are helpful for educational researchers who are in the process of reimagining in critical qualitative research.

Scholars who discuss love as a theoretical and methodological tool argue that emotion is a source of empowerment (Darder & Mirón, 2006; hooks, 1994; Pelias, 2004; Sandoval, 2000). The conversations about love in research and pedagogy are growing. However, this research on love remains contained within specific disciplines such as Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies. It is rare to read methodological and theoretical discussions about love in educational research. Educational research also infrequently uses emotion as a methodological tool. This is why in this section and throughout the chapter I find it important to show how researchers' engagement with research weaves through emotion. Research begins by expressing a set of emotions, it is through emotion that researchers think, write, cocreate, and share multiple frameworks. Using emotions, and in particular love, as a methodological tool allows researchers to grapple with the dichotomous lines outlined by Saavedra and Nymark (2008) as well as Soto (2010). Emotion allows researchers to think through and perhaps respond to the dichotomous

lines and tropes in research (see Chapters 1 and 2). Thus, I begin with an analysis of love.

This section extends our imagination regarding love in research by unpacking how Chicana/Latina feminists and *testimonio/pláticas* practice love in relation to ethics in research praxis. Prieto and Villenas (2012) do not explicitly talk about an ethics of love. However, their urgency to engage and embrace different feelings associated with research—such as love—*nos encamina* (guides us) to think of ethics as "mining the liminal and dialogical moments of connection and caring as we relate across difference and privilege" (Prieto & Villenas, 2012, p. 412). Prieto and Villenas (2012) explain that "enacting and fostering *cariño* (care), involves cultivating students' wholeness and inner selves and not disconnecting the intellectual from the emotional" (p. 426). The challenges associated with the insider/outsider and researcher/subject position in research prevent researchers from fully cultivating this *cariño*. Aleman et al. (2013) speak to this *cariño* when they talk about building relationships that are strong and reciprocal. They explain that researchers "must seek to cultivate meaningful, caring, and ethical relationships with students and their parents or family members" (Aleman et al., 2013, p. 333). Understanding an ethics of love through authentic care is perhaps the most important piece because it unsettles the current mainstream/whitestream principles of research. The discussion about *cariño* as a form of love exhibit how there is a constant push in research protocol to disconnect emotionally from research. Prieto and Villenas (2012) and Aleman et al. (2013) show how they resist this disconnection between thought and feeling in research. Their discussion on building relationships with communities they work with challenges the ethical principle of neutrality in research. Moreover, conversations about *cariño* as a form of love in research and pedagogy also speak back to the fifth trope

which argues that the problematic relationships research continues to foster with vulnerabilized communities have multiple effects for researcher and researched. Aleman et al. (2013) and Prieto and Villenas (2012) confirms this trope in research exists but, more importantly, they show how they are answerable to the trope. They seek stronger relationships that create and foster opportunities to cultivate emotions such as *cariño* as a way of shifting power within research.

 Muñoz's (1999) concept of disidentification is helpful in understanding how centering emotions like love can reveal ways of shifting power within research and why using emotions as a methodological tool is essential. Muñoz's (1999) concept of disidentification is the process of detaching from practices that work with dominant ideology. It is also a process of unpacking what it means to work against and resist dominant ideology. In this case, the process of disidentifying is particularly interested in recognizing and negotiating the conceptual and political meanings of categories such as race, class, gender, and sexuality within research. Muñoz's (1999) disidentification concept is one way of problematizing the object/subject dichotomy by reworking the contradictory components of identity by asking to "read oneself and one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject" (p. 12). Thus, an ethics of love is perhaps about the ethics of self (Muñoz, 1999).

How we as researchers perform our research has a lot to do with how we show love and desire for research. It is about investing energy on understanding the self and how researchers construct the other. Similarly, Perez (2003) and Soto's (2000) idea of queering (in this case our research strategies) asks that researchers unsettle how we are

implicit in reproducing colonial violence by unpacking gender and sexuality. Muñoz (1999), Perez (2003), and Soto (2000) invite researchers to unthread, open, and share how we think about researcher relationships within research. For these reflections to fully open, researchers must engage with desire, love, rage, and overall emotion. Concepts such as disidentification and queering highlight forms of resistance and bring forth opportunities to expand and complicate research praxes. Moreover, Muñoz (1999), Perez (2003), and Soto (2000) move researchers to think about love as an emotional presence that shifts theory, social change, and justice.

Engaging with the power of emotion, and more specifically love and *cariño,* requires researchers to allow for pain and fear to be conceptualized and reworked into something that helps shift or cocreate bodies of knowledge (Cruz, 2012). Moreover, to theorize with emotions and feelings requires that we as researchers perform multiple gestures, practices, and procedures that challenge colonial and problematic research relationships (Sandoval, 2000). In other words, for critical scholars such as Sandoval (2000) and Valenzuela (1999) to build relationships of love and *cariño* in research and pedagogy means complicating the role of research and researcher. For social justice advocates and women of color scholars such as Chicana/Latina feminists engaging with the power of emotion also means developing new ways of relating with one another outside of the colonized/colonizer frames of reference. Love and *cariño* guides the work we do as Chicana/Latina feminists. Thus, emotion and feelings such as love are essential in the inquiry and analysis process. The following sections continue to expose feelings and emotions that must be present in the process of conducting research.

Passion

> We discovered that our own passions for reading and learning, for stories, and for knowing more about our heritages and communities had led us to become researchers and writers. (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 13)

As an *atravesada* researcher mainstream/whitestream education leaves little or no room to discuss the moments of joy, passions, and desires that fuel our research. The research tropes and dichotomous lines remind researchers why losing sight of the fire and passion that led us to become researchers is common. This process of forgetting or muting researcher passion for inquiry and analysis comes from these fragmented lines in research. For example, in the culture of the academy there is a consistent push to separate our commitments in academia and the community (Villenas, 1996). This separation often results in feeling like we are living and navigating two separate worlds (Anzaldúa, 2007; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Villenas, 1996). I return specifically to Trope 5 which states that research and the overall institution of education continue to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities having multiple effects for researcher and researched. In response to these types of fragmentations in research, this section highlights what fuels researchers' desire to do research. Similarly to the discussion about love and *cariño,* research that is led by passion and desire allows researchers to perform multiple gestures, practices, and procedures that challenge these colonial and problematic research relationships (Sandoval, 2000). Thus, in this section I want the researchers to pay attention to the passions and fire within that fuel their desire to ask questions, learn, and cocreate knowledge.

I start with Cecilia. During the collection of her *testimonio/plática* we talked

about what her current research was about and what continuously motivates her engagement with research. She explained that in the last five years she and others worked on developing an oral history project where they closely documented the stories of the people who lived in these cotton company towns. Cecilia also described the power of tracing historical documents and other sources and bridging them with the stories of those who lived in the cotton company towns. Through her description of the project her joy and excitement was noticeable. She smiled and repeatedly explained that the challenges she encounters in academia are all worth it because at the end of the day she had the opportunity to create spaces for new and different stories to be told. Below is a brief narrative and photograph (Figure 2) that shows her joy and excitement about her current research project.

> Some of the things that I've been really happy about and pleased about is the work that I've done here in our community. It was a project that came to me out of the activism with issues of education and higher education. And as it turned out I ended up working with the historical society and conducting oral histories with familias who had lived in these cotton company towns here. What we did was video tapes, we put together photo exhibits, film based on oral histories, organized reunions, and I worked with high school students on another project. So for a period of five years there I was actively engaged with community and I loved that! That's the one thing that makes me say at the end of the day I'm thrilled about the choices I've made in my career. There are many things I would do differently but working in the community…you know that will be part of my legacy…is documenting the stories of a community that otherwise wouldn't take place so how can you replace that. [laughs and smiles]

Cecilia's narrative also shows researchers her ability to see possibilities for dichotomous lines such as activism, community work, academia, and scholarship to merge. In this particular narrative she does not go in depth about the challenges she encounters in the process of merging these different aspects associated with conducting critical qualitative research. However, on another occasion Cecilia does talk about the

difficulty of merging her desires and passions for doing community work and expectations of academia (see Chapter 6). However, for this particular chapter I specifically focus on what continuously motivates her passion to be a researcher. The engagement and movements across dichotomies are powered by her desire to create spaces where community members are invited to tell their stories.

Similarly, Anita talks about creating spaces where new and different stories can

Figure 2. Photograph of Cecilia's recent oral history project.

be documented when she describes what it means to be in a relationship with the communities in her research. For Anita, her desire to grow and learn as a collective with *Raza Womyn* is an important aspect that shapes her research. She is definitely challenging and stretching the researcher/subject fragmented line by interrupting traditional colonial and imperial relationships to learning and research. Anita is intentional with her relationships, as you will read in the narrative below. For her it is important to establish a relationship that moves beyond research with Chicana/Latina feminists or queer activists. Thus, her passion for collecting stories traditionally omitted or made invisible in mainstream/whitestream education is central to the work that she does.

> These are photos of Raza Womyn, which if you've read my dissertation these are the womyn who I wrote my dissertation about and today they are like my best friends. People who I've grown into consciousness, you know. They are my community, my virtual community, my in-person community sometimes, and they are the people who have helped define who I am as an academic.

Cecilia's and Anita's narratives remind researchers that enagaging with emotions such as passion can lead to the development of new ways of relating with one another outside of the colonized/colonizer frames of reference. Cecilia and Anita place emphasis on making research a collaborative reflective process (Espino et al., 2010). Using emotion and, in particular, allowing researchers' passion and desire to be weaved through research allows for this type of collaborative process. Emphasis on a collaborative process allows research to reveal those particular intimate stories that fuel passion for research. For example, Flores-Ortiz (2001) talks about what fuels her passion for teaching and learning when she wrote—

> My father's hands and my mother's swallowed tears fuel the passion that informs my teaching and helps me survive institutional violence. And the memories of home, ocean breezes French lace curtains and ocean smells finally free my voice. (p. 38)

Rarely do researchers have the opportunity to talk through what our passions are and what or who fuels them. Flores-Ortiz's (2001) piece is part of a collection of *testimonios* in *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (2001). This collection extended an opportunity to many Chicana/Latina feminist scholars to share their passions for learning and research. A collective group such as the Latina Feminist Group is an example that answers how researchers could integrate emotion in research. Methodologically, these examples that share what elements fuel their passion for research were reflected through specific methods and methodologies—namely auto ethnography, oral history, *testimonio*, and *platicás*. Groups such as the Latina Feminist Group allow multiple ways to rethink the practice of doing research. I talk more about the practice of creating, fostering, and advocating for collaborative research groups in Chapter 6. Thus, I return to the emphasis on what it means to weave through researcher passion and desire in research. To engage and embody a passionate relationship with research means research becomes a tool and an opportunity to trace the historical, political, and lived realities of marginalized communities. The following section on fear continues to think with the idea of using emotion as a methodological tool. It also poses questions such as what are the potential vulnerabilities in using emotion? This is especially important because now I am asking researchers to depart from fear and pain. Another question that I ask researchers to think through is what does it mean to put the personal process of doing research on paper? I move to the next section with these questions in mind.

Fear

Smith (1999) stated, "From the vantage point of the colonized...the word 'research'…is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). I start with Smith (1999, 2012) because she reminds researchers of the historical trauma and violence that the process of research imposed on different colonized communities. The research that traces the betrayal and harm associated with the practice of positivist research talks about fear as a common emotional response (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Smith, 2012). Thus, exposing and unpacking the reasons why we fear engaging with research allows for healing and a reimagining of research as something more than a colonizing tool. Allowing researchers and community contributors to speak though their fear can help unsettle researchers' answerability to the tropes in research. By unsettling fear, research can be used as a tool to share multiple truths and perhaps complete stories once misrepresented or erased from history. The following two examples remind researchers that unpacking fear can be a starting point for reimagining different version(s) of critical qualitative research that are based on respect, a willingness to listen, and a commitment to do research that does not harm. Speaking through and back at fear is also an opportunity to trace the role of power, truth, and ethics in discourses of social justice research. Speaking loudly and intentionally is not easy and not widely accepted in academia. Thus, I do not want to simplify the process of sharing and letting go of fear in research. It is a healing process that is both individual and collective. Shedding fears in research is complex and thus provides possibilities to imagine scenarios where researchers can enter the serpent—perhaps making research less dirty, less harmful.

The Latina Feminist Group (2001) describes their initial process in creating a space where they could share their experiences and concerns as Latina feminists in higher education. For them this collective signified an opportunity to disclose and bring awareness to their *papelitos guardados* (hidden pieces of paper). As they explain throughout the book this was not always easy. Through their *testimonios* they speak to certain fears that prevented them from translating their emotions in academia. Members of the Latina Feminist Group talked about their fears of public storytelling. Some the group members felt that because they did not know everyone it was difficult and frightening to disclose private moments about themselves. The Latina Feminist Group (2001) also talks about how women feared being vulnerable and exposed in the process of sharing their stories. The women in the group seem to be grappling with the Western model of relationships to learning and knowledge. As a group, the Latina Feminist Group seeks to interrogate the Western model of relating in research and, overall, the academy by encouraging the value of emotion and expression. However, in practice some of the women still struggle with exposing their stories and experiences. This struggle to be vulnerable can be traced to the old and current positivist research. I appreciate that there are groups of critical researchers who are interrupting and resisting positivist research. Yet, the fact that there is still fear in sharing our stories within critical healing groups such as the Latina Feminist Group invites researchers to be more intentional and careful about the politics of emancipatory discourses and critical methodologies.

This reflection reminds me of a particular conversation I had with one of the contributors, Luna. All the contributors were asked to respond to a set of prompts through email. One of the prompts asked the contributors to reflect on how the body re/members

in research. Luna expressed to me that she felt discomfort in answering through email. When we spoke over the phone she explained that for her this was a sensitive topic that required an intimate relationship between us. For her it was important that we knew each other better. Although she did not mention a fear of sharing her reflection on the prompt, she did mention it was difficult and spoke to feelings of mistrust. This conversation made me reflect about my own process in establishing relationships between the contributors and me. I assumed a connection and a common experience because we individually identified as Chicana. It was interesting to discover that I had romanticized my relationship with Luna, especially after reading the work of Chicana/Latina feminists (Espino et al., 2009; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Villenas, 1996) who caution researchers on this process of essentialism. This experience speaks to the dichotomous line of colonized/colonizer. In developing and locating what methodology to use for the project, I searched for a set of practices and tools that interrupted colonial relationships to research. However, despite using these critical tools and trying to disidentify with the way positivist researchers perform research, I ended up reproducing those colonial relationships—bringing back fear and mistrust.

Speaking through and back to fear in these particular examples pushed researchers to unpack why, despite using critical theories and tools, members/contributors to research still felt uncomfortable and fearful in sharing their stories. Paying attention to fear led the Latina Feminist Group to unpack what steps they had to take as individuals and as a collective to reject or move further away from producing colonial relationships to learning and research. In my experience with Luna it brought to the forefront issues of vulnerability in research. Considering the historical tracing of research and its

relationship to deception and betrayal, can research ever be a safe process committed to communities who want share their stories about a particular problem in education? I argue that research can be a safe process and that being vocal about emotions such as fear in research allows for research to be reimagined as something more than an extraction tool. The following two examples remind researchers that unpacking fear can be a starting point for reimagining different version(s) of critical qualitative research that are based on respect, a willingness to listen, and a commitment to do research that does not harm. Speaking through and back at fear is also an opportunity to trace the role of power, truth, and ethics in discourses of social justice research.

<div align="center">Pain</div>

Looking back at the historical field of research one can see the linkages to colonialism and imperialism. Similarly to the narrative about fear, these linkages wounded and pained many who were represented in these colonial and imperial projects. Research became a key tool in classifying and representing the "other" to the West and the world. Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) stated—

> qualitative research in many, if not all, of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography) serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth…this close involvement with the colonial project contributed, in significant ways, to qualitative research's long and anguished history, to its becoming a dirty word. (p. 4)

Many critical methodologists and indigenous scholars continue to map out the colonial and imperial relationships in research. But most importantly, they interrupt those relationships by practicing research that addresses concerns about equity, healing, and social justice. Exposing deeply painful moments and events such as those related to the institutional and personal abuses described above guides Chicana/Latina feminist

research (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Pain guides Chicana/Latina interpretation of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Their interpretations of pain are grounded in specific practices and relationships. By locating and tracing this pain, researchers can begin to heal the wounds in research. Thus, the goal of this section is to show how developing research projects that unpack moments of pain can lead us closer to creating research that rejects positivist research practices.

I begin by sharing Luna's process of unpacking pain and anger. Her narrative is an example of how rage and pain can be a motivational emotion that ignites a desire to do research differently. Luna shared:

> I think part of the challenge for me as a graduate student in the doctoral program was trying to figure out how people did what they did despite their commitment to so many players. And particularly women with children and commitment to marginalized communities that they serve…that they are part of. I remember having a question at a forum that was supposed to be for senior scholars. There was a postdoc there, a male and he was on this panel. I asked the panel…it was social justice educators' panel I wanted to know how you use the work that you do. What sustains you in the academy? How do you regroup? What do you do to revive yourself? How do you stay in the game? What do you do when you get tired?

> Nancy: Yeah those are good questions

> Luna: Right. *[laughs]* But I asked them. I said this out loud. I am actually asking the women who have children who are responsible for multiple communities and [the young male scholar responded]… 'it was a privilege to be tired and that many people work in the fields. That you know, I don't know about you but I am grateful for the work that I do. You know when I get tired I just think about the people working in the fields.' You know and at one level absolutely I would not be here if it weren't for my grandmother my great grandfather and my many people who have jeopardize their life so that I could be here. And of course I will never forget that. But I think what really pissed me off about that was that he was the most junior scholar that spoke for the… that's what he said the first thing he said 'I don't know about being a woman but I do know that it's a privilege to be tired.' I have seen him do that to a couple of people that is what he is known for it was just a good reminder that okay I know who you are now I don't want to be anything like you and that's the kind of shit I am not going to put up ever so that's the conversation that spurred my dissertation…the dissertation was really about

my own…finding my place and I think that that helped me find that, helped me acclimate that helped me not feel alone when I came to the academy.

Her work speaks back to the barriers that confront faculty members, feelings of isolation, anger, fear (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Luna wants to know how Chicanas/Latinas in particular navigate and negotiate those barriers in academia. This excerpt highlights her rage about the violent workings of patriarchy even when researchers operate from a critical lens. A particular moment further fueled that fire and provided a stronger motive to focus on how Chicana/Latinas *survive* this type of violence in academia. Much of the work within Chicana/Latina feminisms is born out of this rage and pain. Similarly to Luna, the Latina Feminist Group (2001) explained—

> in becoming women of accomplishment, we have had to construct and perform academic personas that require 'professionalism,' 'objectivity,' and 'respectibility' in ways that often negates our humanity. Acknowledging pain helped to unveil the workings of power in institutional culture, its human costs, and the ways individuals can and do overcome the ravages of power dynamics and abuse. (p. 14)

Experiences regarding the struggles within educational institutions and the labor of academia can be traced through our bodies, ultimately telling stories of resistance and survival (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). The Latina Feminist Group acknowledges the pain in that process. They also rework the meaning of pain by developing research projects that draw focus on the politics of resistance and survival. For Trinidad Galvan (2001, 2015) centering forms of resiliency despite the immense barriers associated with oppressive structures is important to document methodologically and pedagogically through *supervivencia* (survival stories). Trinidad Galvan explains that her battle with cancer created a space for her to revise her research approach and the relationships she had with the *campesinas* (rural women) by drawing discussion on such questions as, how

do people coexist? What forms of survival strategies are employed?

Similarly, Prieto and Villenas (2012) use the concept *sobrevivencia* (survival and beyond) to write their *testimonios* about teaching Chicana/Latina prospective teachers in predominately White institutions (PWI). They document who they are and how they come to know by mapping the ways they survive the workings and abuse of the institution of education.

Here I invoke the collective work of women of color scholars who understand that talking about different forms of negotiation and reflection in academic spaces is needed to oppose research that is deficit, painful, and harmful (Burciaga & Tavarez, 2006; Prieto & Villenas, 2012; Sandoval, 2000; Trinidad Galvan, 2014). For instance, Lupe, one of the participants, explained that most research in education misses the opportunity to draw focus on how communities who witness oppression survive. Lupe says—

> I read a special issue from Dolores and Cruz umm many of the other ones that are on there from Gonzales and Elene's and all of that special issue. I just fell in love with the work for there was the idea that yes there is oppression that there is also this sort of navigation and negotiation that happens within communities and that's what's missing in a lot of the work that looks at inequality is how tambien we are sobreviviendo. Using Galvan's Trinidad Galvan's work right its that that to me was missing and I found it in the Chicana feminist.

Esperanza, similar to Lupe, believes that research should highlight how communities of color respond to oppressive forces. Esperanza explained—

> I want to model to students what it means to be culturally responsive in education…it is always an experiment for me. I try to tell the class not to focus on 'oh look at all that oppression' but instead how do we learn from communities of color, look at the community lives cultural wealth. So I try to make that the focus I try to challenge and focus more on cultural affirmation.

Lupe and Esperanza's comments about survival and resilience in research are a response to making research function as a healing tool. Pain is an upsetting feeling often

caused by an intense motivation to harm—in this case colonial and imperial relationships in research. It is a difficult emotion to depart from in any situation. Pain usually motivates individuals or groups of people to detach or withdraw from situations that brought pain. In most cases it is a way of protecting the damaged self as a form of healing. In conversations about fear and pain in research, researchers can see how detaching or withdrawing from challenging situations that scare and harm is easier than exposing as well as confronting those emotions. What Chicana/Latina feminists show us is that it is time to heal and that researchers should draw on emotions such as pain to relocate and retrace the ways in which colonial and imperial frameworks continue to shape research relationships. Pain enables researchers to grapple with multiple insider and outsider positionalities associated with researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer. It also empowers researchers to recognize the painful crossings within research as a researcher-teacher-activist and become aware of what is possible when conducting critical qualitative research. As an *atravesada* researcher I understand pain can assist researchers tease open those splits within social justice research by questioning and analyzing painful *travesias*, feelings, and deep pauses.

<center>*Emotion* within a relational framework</center>

> *La facultad* the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep   structure below the surface. It is an instant 'sensing,' a quick perception arrived without concious reasoning…When we're up against the wall, when we have all sorts of opppressions coming at us, we are forced to develop this faculty so that we'll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away…It's a kind of survival tactic that people caught between the worlds, unknowingly cultivate. (Anzaldúa, 2007, pp. 60-61)

> *La facultad* guided the writing of this chapter by pointing to areas in research

where emotions and feelings reveal power. Across these selected articles, books, and *testimonios/platicás* there is a sense of political urgency to address issues of inequity in the field through emotion. Each key emotion illustrates Chicana/Latina feminist "sensibility and attempts to situate the researcher-participant in a relationship where genuine connections are made between the researcher and community members" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 366). The Latina Feminist Group (2001) relational theoretical framework and the concept of *convivencia* (praxis of relating and living together) by Delgado Bernal et al. (2006) are terms that signal how researchers can engage with this process more fully while doing research. Creating tight networks within communities of research makes fruitful projects and programs that serve as a platform to do work that centers emotion in research.

As an *atravesada* researcher I argue that emotions must be present in the interruption of dichotomous lines and tropes in research. For researchers to practice queering research through concepts such as disidentification unpacking emotions such as love, passion, fear, and pain are necessary steps. To theorize with emotions and feelings invites researchers to perform multiple gestures, practices, and procedures that challenge colonial and problematic research relationships (Sandoval, 2000). For social justice advocates and women of color scholars such as Chicana/Latina feminists, engaging with the power of emotion means developing new ways of relating with one another outside of the colonized/colonizer frames of reference. Using emotion to build on inquiry and analysis provides opportunities to trace the role of critical qualitative research. The following chapter continues to think through the dichotomous lines and tropes in research by inviting researchers to engage with discussions about decolonization and

intersectionality. Chapter 6 explains how conversations about decolonization and intersectionality inform the concept of la *atravesada* and the process of queering through concepts such as disidentification (Muñoz, 1999) and demastry (Soto, 2010). Emotions blended with conversations about decolonization and intersectionality provide researchers the opportunity to unsettle research boundaries, to be answerable to the tropes in research, and to cocreate methodological tools that move research toward decolonial strategies.

CHAPTER 6

ENTERING THE SERPENT AND LETTING GO:

REIMAGINING RESEARCH

"Letting Go"
It's not enough
deciding to open.
You must plunge your fingers
into your navel, with your two hands
split open,
spill out the lizards and horned toads
the orchids and the sunflowers,
turn the maze inside out.
Shake it.
Yet, you don't quite empty.
Maybe a green phlegm
hides in your cough.
You may not even know
that it's there until a knot
grows in your throat
and turns into a frog.
It tickles a secret smile
on your plate
full of tiny orgasms.
But sooner or later
it reveals itself.
The green frog indiscreetly croaks.
Everyone looks up.
(Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 186)

Anzaldúa's *Letting Go* sets the tone for what *testimonios/pláticas* suggest

researchers do in (re)negotiating what methodological tools are available for decolonial

strategies within university research. The invitation suggests researchers shake up what is

known to reveal the unknown. Reimagining critical methodologies means allowing the research be swallowed by the unknown so that it is recognizable. *Testimonios*/*pláticas* and the literature offer themes and key concepts extending an understanding on how researchers can plunge their fingers into the navel of critical qualitative research. Chapter 5 began to reimagine critical qualitative research by unpacking the possibilities behind using emotions as a methodological tool. I explained how using emotions such as love, passion, fear, and pain as tools in research are necessary in responding to the dichotomous lines and list of tropes in research. As an *atravesada* researcher I find engaging with emotion, disidentification, and the invitation to queer research an opportunity to letting go and shedding old skin in research. These processes are necessary to employ decolonial strategies. Chapter 6 builds on this conversation by introducing other necessary key concepts from the literature and *testimonio/pláticas* that help move research towards the decolonization of the field.

In this chapter I highlight some of the ways Chicana/Latina feminists education scholars theorize the problematics and shifts in research by providing an analysis of the following two themes: 1) decolonizing and 2) intersectionality. The discussion on these two key themes builds on the discussion about what methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within university research. Similar to using emotion in research, I argue that unsettling the ways researchers understand and use the terms such as decolonization and intersectionality in research matter. Concepts such as these are essential in fragmenting the dichotomous lines and being answerable to the tropes in research. These terms also help researchers think through the importance of using emotions as a methodological tool and the process of queering in research. Unpacking

how we theorize decolonization and intersectionality in research requires researchers to dialogue between/among/within different theoretical frameworks that commonly are not in conversation. Moreover, unsettling how research theorizes with these terms can be used to build on educational inquiry and analysis that invites researchers to unpack how we may be complicit in the investment of colonial and imperial frameworks. Lastly, talking through decolonization and intersectionality invites researchers to unveil moments where research omits, erases, or silences communities who contribute to research. In the spirit of being an *atravesada* I invite researchers to open excessively their own research *conocimientos* and put them in play with decolonization and intersectionality. The purpose of this chapter is not to arrive to any conclusion about what are the best methodological tools available for decolonial strategies within university research, rather the intention is to reveal different ways of doing research.

<p style="text-align:center;">Decolonizing research side by side</p>

In this section I reintroduce Tuck and Yang (2012) who argue that when decolonization is used metaphorically in research and pedagogy researchers run the risk of maintaining colonial structures and practices. Patel (2014) provides a great summary of Tuck and Yang (2012) explaining how the metaphor secures colonial structures. She describes that "keeping relationships among being and land abstract and vague, paradoxically and dysfunctionally enabling an erasure of the roots and tendrils of coloniality" (p. 359). Here I also want to engage if and how does Chicana/Latina feminist thought fit into this conversation?

Explicitly naming decoloniality in their work is Emma Perez (1999) in her discussion of the *decolonial imaginary* and Chela Sandoval (2000) in her oppositional

consciousness. Perez (1999) and Sandoval (2000) suggest that we think of decolonial moments and/or possibilities in the scholarship we produce and interrupt. Perez (1999) is critical of coloniality in history—more specifically confronting the systems of thought used to write Chicanas into history while Sandoval (2000) interrogates the postmodern moment by critiquing hegemonic feminism. The frameworks of Perez (1999) and Sandoval (2000) suggest that in engaging with decolonial moments in the *mestiza/indigena* way there is an opportunity to create a nuanced understanding of that in/between space in colonial/decolonial process in history as well as other fields such as education (Perez, 1999; Sandoval, 2000). However, does this conceptualization of decolonization through a Chicana/Latina feminist lens run the risk of maintaining colonial structures and practices? Furthermore, in this section I am interested in exploring how conversations about decolonization shape and interrogate critical qualitative research praxes in education? Therefore, this section carves space to present *testimonios/pláticas* on this topic in order to assess the above questions and consider how decolonization helps me think through using emotion in research and what dis-identification as well as the overall process of queering educational research looks like.

During the collection of the *testimonios/pláticas* I asked contributors, *"*In what ways do conversations regarding decolonization play a role in how you imagine research?" I include some of their responses in this section. I draw focus particularly on the way the Chicana/Latina feminist researchers I interviewed define decolonial work and on how they think about decolonial approaches in their research.

The *testimonios/pláticas* demonstrate that the discussion about decoloniality require careful and thoughtful reflection. The narratives highlight that decoloniality is

composed of very specific things and that our research provides different paths that lead to decoloniality. For instance, Cecilia's *testimonio/plática* suggests that decolonial research cannot not happen if the research is being developed from within the institution. Cecilia said—

> Well it seems like that there is a contradiction to be in a position to participate in decolonalizing research. You know methods and practices means that you're inheritantly part of… What does it mean to be a part of an institution that you are also partly benefiting…while you are claiming to decolonize? I would ask is well are you really, you know does your work result in any change to the conditions in which people live under, which people thrive under, which they make everyday life? And it would be a pretty arrogant researcher who could make that claim.

The questions show how Cecilia reflects about the contradictions associated with research. For example, for Cecilia it is important to be careful not to claim research as decolonial. Her words help me think about being an *atravesada* in research by putting into question the internalization of dichotomies. As researchers, Cecilia explains, we benefit from the institution that creates all these insider/outsider dichotomies. Her narrative is a reminder to be careful of the relationships that are built around the idea of decolonization and research. Cecilia looks for possibilities for critical engagement within the challenges researchers' face. Those moments of engagement for her eventually lead to decolonization. According to Cecilia, the role of the researcher in this collective decolonization project is to look at data and theories as tools for new ways of thinking and reflecting. She explained:

> I can say yes I am part of all this decolonizing research. In my take I can say that I managed to make a dent into something that's about as good as it gets. But I'm not going to leave this earth and say I was part of this master collective decolonizing project right with all these critical scholars. Because my guess is that every time I look at the data anyway it looks like the bifurcation just gets worst and that there are more people suffering. There are more and more people who will never have access to the kind of education some of us have been able to gain. Social change and change that really moves forward justice and condition and

ideology…it's a constant it doesn't go away. It's you know…I can't imagine the work will ever be done. So to me it just feels a little over stated. It doesn't mean it's not a worthwhile thing to pursue but I've been around the academy enough to know that people love to spin themselves in certain constructs you know. And I take issue with that. I take issue with anyone who is too in love with a particular ideology or a particular school of thought you know. I think that the job of the intellectual, the job the scholar is to remain open to new ideas new ways of thinking and make sure there is enough space for the people who are in the process of forming their own ideas and thoughts do so.

Cecilia's narrative is a reflection of the first trope in research which states that there is a dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies. She talks about how people in academia "love to spin themselves in certain constructs" and tend to fall "in love with a particular ideology or a particular school of thought." Perhaps this is a reason why there is a lack of dialogue between frameworks—especially those who claim to decolonize. Returning to the metaphorization of decolonization in research, perhaps what Cecilia describes above is what sets a platform for even the most critical researchers to vaguely and abstractly theorize and use the term decolonization.

Similarly, Esperanza and Anita understand decolonial as a set of processes. For Esperanza it is about developing processes that assist Latina mothers and the Latina/o community to imagine their power as a way of decolonizing. Esperanza described her research—

With Latina mothers and the Latino community and now locally it's always been about imagining our power right and have determination you know affirming our lives and the importance of our knowledge for solving issues in the world. Umm and so yeah so some things are explicitly called decolonization other are not. And so my work emerges from that. All the women of color and Chicana feminists work is decolonization. It's about healing right especially the feminist work. It's about in the way we read Moraga and Anzaldúa you know all the Chicana feminists you know. It's about affirmation of your lived experiences and that fact

that you can hear life from those experiences and extract knowledge from this experience. And that it's valuable and that you can use that knowledge to understand the world. So I think I've always maintained that.

Esperanza explains that the process of collecting and sharing stories of the Latina mothers' experiences is power and it is a powerful process that works toward decolonization of multiple institutions. This idea of stories as medicine for healing and constant reflection is helpful when thinking about being an *atravezada*. I return to the *atravezada* in Esperanza's conversation about the meaning of decolonization in her work because she reminds researchers that there need to create opportunities to heal and that research can be a tool for healing. Healing as a process for decolonization for Esperanza also signals how she grapples with the dichotomous lines and tropes in research. Esperanza believes that documenting and sharing the lived experiences of Latina mothers and the Latina/o community is a way of building new relationships to learning and knowledge. Similarly, Anita places power and focus in research and pedagogy. She explains that as a professor and researcher she looks to research as a way to build different journeys to critical consciousness. For Anita the process that takes researchers closer to decolonization are the research and pedagogical practices, she said—

> Truthfully I don't use the word decolonization much it's jargonized, but it's not what I do, right? My whole thing is critical consciousness but building a consciousness that is in the process of decolonizing. So for me, what I am trying to answer through my research is what the process of building consciousness and slash decolonzing for the research participants. Because I think one of the things also as a teacher is I am actively trying to teach students to deconstruct to decolonize but they don't know how to do it sometimes right because there are real challenges. It's depleting it's messy. Your education suffers sometimes because you're trying to be this amazing social change agent. So what I do through my research is try to show other peoples journey towards that consciousness raising social change process slash decolonization right. And so I like to show how some people deconstruct patriarchy, how they deconstruct racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, citizenism, ageism, and ableism so that multidimensional consciousness develops. That's the conversation that I have.

When I am doing research everything I study…I am looking at all of those because we as activist we as academics say that it's possible but there are very few examples of how to actually do that without burning out, right? And how to do that for the benefit of yourself and your community. So that's the main thing when I am doing the research, I show how folks are doing it. I show their challenges and their ideas on how to overcome those challenges.

Anita's description of the decolonization process in her work helps me think through what it means to negotiate as an *atravezada* researcher. When she talks about showing "others people journeys towards that consciousness raising social change process slash decolonization" she illustrates how researchers enter the serpent. For Anita, entering the serpent is about gaining the multidimensional consciousness and constantly reflecting about the challenges associated with the process of building a critical consciousness. Perhaps this is her way of responding to the tropes in research. Anita is aware of the colonial trappings and can locate those colonial and imperial relationships to research and pedagogy. Thus, she is intentional with her research and pedagogical practices. Anita's and Esperanza's work suggests there are processes and sets of practices that move us toward decolonization.

Flor's narrative poses a question that guides researchers on understanding decolonial work, she says: "I am always careful to frame whether my research is truly decolonizing or if it's going to get posed as a metaphor, is it really just a metaphor? Are we working towards something that challenges and that moves toward decolonization?" Flor later explains that for her decolonizing means very specific things; she says it is "contextual and land based." Discussing process, Flor explains, "I have to think about the place I am at the location I am and what are the politics behind that and that is not an easy thing to do as a researcher because a lot of times this means revamping of tools or getting to know the politics of a particular location and that takes time and the academy is

contrary to that." Flor's questions are essential for the *atravezada* researcher. As an *atravesada* researcher undoing my thoughts and practices about the process of decolonization through Flor's questions can help trace and identify the problematics of doing research in the academy. Asking what critical qualitative research works towards, or what are the intentions, helps locate what *travesias* (crossings) I am navigating within research. These questions and her narrative are also helpful in responding to the tropes in research. For example, when she talks about getting to know the politics of a particular location it helps researchers think through how research will build relationships that challenge colonial and imperial frameworks. When Flor comments on how the academy does not support the process of getting to know the communities researchers work with, she is suggesting this is an area that we as researchers need to challenge—which goes back to the process of revamping research tools. Moreover, it highlights the challenges associated with dichotomous lines such as researcher/subject and academia/community. Cecilia, Esperanza, Anita, and Flor share important questions and moving pieces that help researchers understand how these Chicana/Latina researcher *testimonios/pláticas* understand and use the term decolonization in their work. Their narratives also help researchers think through being an *atravesada* and responding to the tropes in research.

The final *testimonio/plática* by Libertad thinks about decolonization differently. Libertad acknowledges the critique offered by Tuck and Yang (2012) but states that she lacks understanding of their critique. Libertad's understanding of decolonialism comes from the global south and has to do more with understanding the colonial logics and practices while centering gender and sexuality. As Libertad talks through the meaning of decolonization she explained:

I don't know if I would call my work decolonizing. I don't use that word. I don't quite understand the implications. I don't understand how Eve Tuck and Yang talk about it as a metaphor. I feel like there is an element of purity that happens in the way they describe decolonization and it's tied to land. So that's a problem, right? And so, I know that my ideas of coloniality comes from the global south thinkers, those like Quijano, Maldonado Torres, and Roberto Muñoz, that say you can't talk about modernity without it happening through coloniality. And so there is a scale that they are talking about and then they don't deal with gender and sexuality at all.

Libertad is aware of Tuck and Yang's (2012) critique and understands that the decolonization process must invest time making connections to the land. However, after Libertad acknowledges the work of Tuck and Yang (2012), she underscores the disengagement between thinkers who break down coloniality and conversations about gender and sexuality. Libertad's focus on gender and sexuality suggests there needs to be a decolonization movement within those thinkers such as Quijano, Maldonado Torres, and Muñoz. Perhaps the disinvestment to consistently think through gender and sexuality in conversations about the different colonial movements is what prevents researchers from being answerable to the tropes in research. For example, in the review of the literature I explain how for many Chicana/Latina feminists and queer of color theorists there is an urgency to share how the system relegates their experience and ultimately their theoretical work to the margins in academia. In educational research I underscored the lack of dialogue between different frameworks such as those within gender and sexuality and education. Libertad helps me think about how the omission of gender and sexuality contributes to the shortcomings in critical qualitative research. For Libertad, theorists such as Maria Lugones and Laura Perez, in particular Lugones' idea of decolonial feminisms, is helpful in her thinking about the process of decolonization. Libertad described how the concept of decolonial feminism—

Sets a task of how they [theorists who unpack coloniality] are dealing with gender and sexuality that it is not raced but is racialized gendered system of domination that is part of the colonial projects in the Americas. She [Maria Lugones] provides important moving pieces for researchers to consider as they move through critical qualitative research such as resistance socialites and gestures. Also I was thinking through Laura Perez when she takes on the self and she has this question that asks 'when will liberation theorist take the theories and writings of queer of color and feminist of color thinkers,' right? She says something like that. And I just feel like she is not afraid to put that out there among thinkers like Maldonado Torres for not dealing with gender, right? And so yeah and so Maria Lugones, her idea of decolonial feminisms comes from U.S. third world feminisms. I have such an affinity because I am so invested in U.S. third world feminisms and the ideas of intersectionality and coalitional thinking and in trying to create new ways of relating with people now. It's evolving into decolonial feminisms that's probably the road that I ride and I'm still trying to attend it. But I don't understand it through settler colonialism. I understand it as trying to create these relationships. When you create these relationships that are not based on domination that reject that. That is a decolonizing act.

For me, Libertad adds to Tuck and Yang's (2012) conversation about the metaphorization of decolonization. Tuck and Yang (2012) remind researchers to be cautious about how research uses the term decolonization by paying close attention to land and context within the communities you are with. Thus, in my analysis Libertad says yes, researchers need to do what Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest, but there also needs to be a focus on gender and sexuality. Thus, Libertad shares how researchers can engage with an analysis of gender and sexuality. One way of engaging with gender and sexuality for Libertad is to focus on intersectionality and coalitional thinking. Libertad also invites researchers to think about "spaces outside the surveillance of power." For Libertad these are spaces that reveal small acts of resistance. Libertad explained:

Libertad explained:

That's why I talk about the small acts of resistance. I'm always looking for minimal gestures where you say no and when you say no through domination that's a major thing. Or that we notice that so I want to notice those little things that people do and say when they refuse power. That to me is very important. This generation, your generation needs to take these pieces and run with it. For me is about grabbing, resistance socialities and running with it. So we will see what you do with parts of decolonial feminisms. What people do is talk about theories but

what the practices are, that's what I'm looking forward to. Intellectually I want to think about coloniality as kind of an uncoupling because I don't think you can find a way out of it. But maybe you can find spaces where you could practice something else that's outside the surveillance of power. That's what I would like to think, right? Because then that gives young people agency ugh…it doesn't give it to them. I to recognize that as a researcher now I have a framework that says okay now I can prove that these kids have been resisting all this time. Because before I read theories of resistance but now we see it's in gestures, it's in the movement of the hands, it's little things, it's these little gestures. I need to be attentive to those small gestures of young people. You know it changes the way I talk to kids.

Decolonial feminisms for Libertad offer opportunities to understand the power researchers hold as individuals but also power as a collective. Libertad's explanation of decolonial feminisms helps me think about being an *atravesada* researcher. More specifically, when she talks about the practice of documenting small acts of resistance by looking at gestures, of grabbing and running with resistance socialites, she reminds me of entering the serpent and listening to my intuition. Being attentive to gestures offers new language and metaphors to consistently make sense, reflect, and theorize issues of power, representation, and voice in research. For a researcher, being attentive to movement that goes beyond theory moves research closer to decolonization. Libertad's focus on decolonial feminism—more specifically the idea of being attentive to gestures—can be an example of what it would mean to disidentify within research (Muñoz, 1999). When she talks about relating to others "outside the surveillance of power," I think about Muñoz (1999) when he stated that the concept of disidentification is the process of detaching from practices that work with dominant ideology. It is also a process of unpacking what it means to work against and resist dominant ideology. Muñoz (1999) also explained that the process of disidentifying is particularly interested in recognizing and negotiating the conceptual and political meanings of categories such as race, class,

gender, and sexuality—in this case with research. Thus, there is a strong link between Libertad's and Muñoz's ideas that adds to the critique Tuck and Yang (2012) share about the metaphor of decolonization. Engaging with decolonial feminisms and disidentification as well as the overall process of queering research with conversations regarding decolonization in research adds complexity to the way researchers develop research projects.

The last point I draw focus on is Libertad's invitation to create relationships "that are not based on dominations." When Libertad quotes Laura Perez and asks "when will liberation theorist take the theories and writings of queer of color and feminist of color thinkers?" her *testimonio/plática* suggests there continues to be an investment in colonial and imperial frameworks despite the use of critical methodologies. Libertad's uncoupling of colonial relationships also suggests a commitment to constantly reflect how we practice being in relation to others. Libertad's words led me to think about how the term intersectionality is used in research and thus I turn to this theme in the *testimonios/pláticas*.

<div align="center">Intersectionality and research</div>

Queer theorist engagement with queers of color, or with racial formation more broadly, is still too often contained in the tiny-font endnotes at the backs of the books. These usually refer back to acknowledgments of 'intersectionality' that often go something like this: 'thanks to women of color we now know that we have to address the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation.' (Soto, 2010, p. 4)

Libertad's *testimonio/plática* above reminds researchers of the importance of thinking through subjectivity and intersectionality. In thinking through the dichotomous lines and tropes in research, the tensions described within the section on decolonization

represent the type of movement that I consider necessary to using emotion as a methodological tool, queering educational research through disidentification, and unpacking being an *atravesada*. In using intersectionality, it must also be troubled, queered, unsettled, and shed of its old/new skin. Thus, this section centers on the concept of demastery presented by Soto (2010) to push the boundaries of intersectionality. Demastery (Soto, 2010) is a process I consider necessary for emotions to be used as a tool, to disidentification, and queer research. Moreover, Soto's (2010) demastery process is helpful in further fragmenting and being answerable to the tropes in research.

Demastery is an invitation to reject the containment of identity markers such as race and gender. According to Soto (2010):

> if the identification of gender as the primary variable for investigating sexual identity forecloses a consideration of the equally meaningful place of racial formation and class relations in our "sexual" lives, then the acceptance of race and ethnicity as the defining characteristics of the people of color prevents an adequate examination of the significant roles that sexual desires and sexual prohibitions play in racialization. (p. 1)

This practice of marking certain identity markers as "defining characteristics of the people of color" can be a reason why there is both a lack of dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies, as well as why there is researcher investment in colonial and imperial frameworks despite its claim and/or use of critical methodologies. Soto (2010) invites researchers to read different pieces of theoretical work with rich complexity and from different angles to prevent them from developing research that is what she calls flat-footed and rigid. For Soto (2010), refusing to engage with monological and monocausal approaches to identity and power means researchers can invest in research that theorizes from a place of desire, pain,

resilience, and much more.

The other part of the process of demastery that is helpful in thinking about critical qualitative research, and more specifically Muñoz's (1999) process of disidentification, is Soto's (2010) push to disrupt the desire for intelligibility. Briefly, disidentification proposes that one detach from theory and practice that works with dominant ideology. Muñoz (1999) suggests researchers "read oneself and one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject" (p. 12). Through the concept of demastery, Soto (2010) extends our understanding of what it means for researchers to disidentify in research. For example, when Soto (2010) explained why she prefers to use "Chican@" rather than "Chicana/o" or "Chicana or Chicano" or "Chicana and Chicano" she explained that the "at" unsettles "our desire for intelligibility, our desire for a quick and certain visual register of a gendered body the split second we see or hear the term" (Soto, 2010, p. 3). Later, Soto (2010) builds on this idea of making identity unintelligible when she talks about Cherríe Moraga's work. Soto's (2010) analysis begins and ends with the following question: "what would it mean to read Moraga's work not as obvious evidence of intersectionality or antiheteronormativity but as rich, sometimes confounding terrain compromising contradictory modes of self-racialization?" (p. 37). To demaster, then, is to commit to constantly reflect about our understanding of subjectivity, positionality, and power. Moreover, it is a process that requires an ongoing breakdown of flagged terms, concepts, and ideas about how people connect/relate. Thus, I focus on intersectionality as a key term because this was a term that came up in participants' reflections of researcher subjectivity and positionality.

Soto (2010) redefines intersectionality. However, rather than replacing it with another term, her remapping of intersectionality invites researchers to revise how critical qualitative research is using the concept. Soto (2010) stated that "intersectionality is perhaps too spatially rigid and exacting a metaphor to employ when considering the ever dynamic and unending process of subject formation" (p. 6). For researchers Soto's (2010) demastery concept asks that our research categories be wordier and less contained. She explained that analyzing categories such as race, class, and sexuality through an intersectionality lens—

> can end up stabilizing (not to mention rendering equivalent) the discursive and material concepts brought into a single view, making it difficult not only to question their apparentness in the first place but to apprehend the dynamic transformations of power relations and epistemologies. (Soto, 2010, p. 6)

Unpacking intersectionality is important for queering the research project because it helps researchers locate and trace research where perhaps they are reproducing colonial relationships to learning and research. Unsettling intersectionality through demastery also helps flesh out disidentification and *atravesada*. I turn to Chicana/Latina feminists who have considered this or other similar analysis in their work helping us understand the complex, contingent, and dynamic ways of race, class, gender, and sexuality in both individual and collective ways.

Some of these multiple constructions include discussions about the use of indigenous thought in Chicana/Latina feminist work. Conversations of how indigenous communities are involved in discourse interrogating colonial legacies is important to consider—especially because often indigenous presence is obscure and erased (Alberto, 2012). Alberto (2012) encourages Chicana/Latina feminist scholars to think about the ways they use indigeneity in research. I never quite questioned how I thought through

mestizaje and *indegenismo* until I read this piece by Alberto (2012). Through her analysis of how Chicana/o and Latina/o scholars use indigeneity in national projects (e.g., Chicano Movement or Chicana/o Studies) I can see that these practices speak about indigeneity as an antique or something frozen in time. For example, there is common use of Aztec mythology in Chicana/Latina feminist work such as Anzaldúa (2007). Anzaldúa (2007) weaves in gods and goddesses as symbols for an analysis of race, gender, and the border in very powerful ways. However, returning to Alberto (2012) and her critique on how indegenismo is misused theoretically, Anzaldúa (2007) perhaps can be an example of that. Although Anzaldúa is reclaiming the symbols and meanings of Aztec mythology, I can see moments where her representation of these symbols remains frozen in time. Perhaps if Anzaldúa (2007) had linked Aztec mythology to her own contextual experience within her border region her analysis and thinking about the borderlands would not reduce Aztec mythology to historical artifacts. Alberto (2012) does explain that Chicana feminists are revising the use of indigeneity in their work—she calls this work and process a decolonial indeginism. Decolonial indeginism helps researchers think about decolonial work as more than a metaphor. Alberto's (2012) concept of decolonial indeginism helps researchers rethink their reading and use of terms such as intersectionality and ultimately shapes how Chicana/Latina feminists theorize and trouble research.

Alberto's (2012) call to be cautious of the way researchers think with indigenous thought is part of the *atravesada* process. Being an *atravesada* requires that researchers revise the role of intentionality. In other words, researchers must constantly revise if and how our theories represent stories and critical reflections of lived experiences within

oppressive systems. Also, researchers must pay attention to how research connects and builds relationships to learning and knowledge. Here I immediately think about the fourth trope which argues that the production of research continues to function from an "erasing to replace" and pathologizing gaze framework. Alberto's (2012) decolonial ideginismo helps the atravesada trace why and how research continues to reproduce inquiry and analysis that dangerously keeps indigenous thought frozen or erased. Her concept informs the disidentification process (Muñoz, 1999). For instance, I see Alberto's (2012) invitation to interrogate how research engages with indigenous thought as informing the process of disidentifying with the process of detaching from practices that work with dominant ideologies. Returning to intersectionality, Soto's (2010) demastery process helps researchers engage with Alberto's (2012) invitation to be more intentional in using indigenous thought. For example, rather than insert indigenous thought as an endnote or included as a flat analysis of social categories such as race and gender, researchers should be more explicit about how these indigenous epistemologies inform their research process. This way of thinking about intersectionality is helpful for researchers to disidentify from previous representations of indigenisms in Chicana feminist thought.

From here I shift focus a bit to talk about how intersectionality using Soto's (2010) concept of demastery helps researchers think through researcher positionality. I return to Soto's (2010) analytical question regarding Moraga's work: "what would it mean to read Moraga's work not as obvious evidence of intersectionality or antiheteronormativity but as rich, sometimes confounding terrain compromising contradictory modes of self-racialization" (p. 37)? This question helps frame the conversation about positionality by asking that researchers resist using an oversimplified

version of intersectionality but rather commit to constantly reflect on subjectivity, positionality, and power in research. According to Soto (2010), this commitment provides a platform for better ways of connecting and relating. Unpacking intersectionality in this way allows for researchers to learn how we think about ourselves and how it impacts research. Coupled with Soto (2010), the *testimonios/pláticas* moved me to look at researcher positionality as a way to talk about intersectionality. For instance, Lupe talks about the importance of having her students unthread their positionality and intersectionality within critical qualitative research. Lupe explained:

> I think with positionality, if you don't have a deep understanding of that than you are not doing anything near critical qualitative research. But one of the things that I make them [students] do is understand that positionality in research is important. Like, there is no way you are not going to talk about Whiteness here I do not care what you are doing you got to acknowledge it. I think it plays a huge role and if you don't have that somewhat examined or reflected on it or theorized, theorized in the sense that you know like making sense of it kind of thing…if you have not done that work then you're kind of perpetuating that distant observer you know.

The first thing that stood out in Lupe's narrative is her urgency to have students commit to understanding their positionality in research. For Lupe, leaving positionality unexamined perpetuates "that distant observer" dynamic. Lupe works mostly with White students at her campus and so for Lupe it is essential that Whiteness is examined. Unpacking how Whiteness shapes research exposes colonial and imperial relationships that otherwise would go unnoticed. The invitation to reflect and examine positionality points to disidentification. Lupe wants students to disidentify with the "distant observer" practice within research. Thus, similarly to Muñoz (1999), Lupe works toward dislodging researchers from practices that work with dominant ideology. Similarly to Soto's (2010) interpretation on positionality and intersectionality, Lupe also advocates an engagement with inquiry and analysis that starts with the self rather than obvious evidence of

intersectionality. Focus on positionality in research is also an important marker for understanding being an *atravesada*. The process of uncoupling positionality offers several entry points and examples where researchers can depart from and recognize multiple crossings/contradictions as researcher-teacher-activist and become aware of what intersections are possible in research.

Libertad further extends the conversation about intersectionality as she explains what the role of positionality means for her research. Her articulation of positionality says that while it is important to begin with positionality it is also important to move beyond unpacking positionality. She explained:

> I want to say that I am more than my positionality, right? And I think for a long time I thought about my positionalities in interesting ways. I am always looking for the intersections and so in my research I'm always looking for intersections. I often look for that with the youth. I also want the youth that I work with to understand simultaneous, simultaneity of oppression. I want to think about the theories that help understand intersections. But I also hear Anzaldúa. There is a line she has in *Borderlands* where she says 'you talk shit about my nation and my language what about what you don't talk about' and I always feel like my politics cannot be separate from my positionality. I was thinking it has to be a coalition politics to be able to talk with and work with. And so I think about that all the time.

Soto's (2010) view on intersectionality and concept of demastery helps researchers think through Libertad's statement above. Soto (2010) invites researchers to read different pieces of theoretical work with rich complexity and from different angles to prevent developing research that is what she calls flat-footed and rigid. Libertad speaks to this different type of reading, she is constantly looking for intersections and theories that analyze intersections. This enables her to think through coalitional politics. This is representative of Soto's invitation to read for rich complexity. For Soto (2010), readings for complexity mean researchers, for instance, reject mastery or discipline identity

markers. Libertad's narrative signals that departure and disidentification from certainty and mastery of identity by arguing that researchers be critical of positionality and intersectionality. To focus only on positionality or intersectionality would return researchers to normative practices of legibility and visibility resulting in containment of social identities and systems of oppression. The last portion of her narrative on positionality centers on how positionality and intersectionality brings focus to relationships of power in research. For Libertad, there is a commitment to continuously create and foster relationships that are not based on domination, she explained:

> I'm really committed to work that is asking to be more than my positionality. You know to theorize to have that theory…I use to think it comes outward from me and now I think it is in relation to others and that's different. I think about a piece…that is about a relationship that is not based on a horizontal relationship. A relationship not based on domination. How few times we get to practice it and when we do we want more. It is like when Audrey Lourde talks about joy in ways that once you experience it you ask yourself why I can't have joy in more parts of my life. I think when you are in a relationship and you are working in coalition there is a lot of joy in that you are with people and that you're together in the research process. We are not here to badger you, question you, have power over you, and so it is nice to practice something else. I am aware of that so then this goes back to this thinking about positionality. Maybe it begins that way but it cannot end that way and I think a lot of work may not stretch the way it needs to.

Her thoughts about coalitional politics and relationships also help researchers think through being an *atravesada*. More specifically, when Libertad says "there is a lot of joy in that of being with people and that you're together," this reminds me of the resistance to maintain a separation between thought and feeling in research. I understand Libertad's process to unsettle relationships and power by unpacking positionality and intersectionality within research is her way of fragmenting dichotomous lines such as thought/feeling. Thus, as Libertad practices "something different" and stretches the boundaries of research through her analysis of coalitional politics in research she is also

entering the serpent. This is also an example of how she grapples with the tropes in research. More specifically, the trope that says the institution of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities which has multiple effects on researcher and researched. Libertad's invitation to go beyond positionality in research helps researchers understand how to begin to demaster, disidentify, and negotiate as an *atravesada* researcher. I think what is key in her conversation about intersectionality is that these processes that Soto (2010) and Muñoz (1999) encourage researchers to engage with are ongoing and necessary because of the multiple connections and rich complexities associated with conducting research. Thus, I move on to the last *testimonio/plática* by Anita which builds on the idea that processes such as demastery must happen if researchers want to be answerable to the dichotomous lines and tropes within research.

Anita unpacks intersectionality through her reflections on activism. Like Libertad, Anita looks for intersections as possibilities for growth in research relationships. She explains that in her work the "biggest piece is the intersectionality the multidimensional struggle." Examining the intersections of the multidimensional is possible for Libertad within the work of activism. I see Anita's work on activism and intersectionality unsettling the tropes in research, more intentionally the trope that speaks to how most research continues to create colonial and imperial relationships to learning and knowledge. For Anita, unpacking intersectionality reminds her that developing consciousness is an ongoing process that is contextual and requires a deep reflection of positionality. Anita said:

> What I learned about activism is people come in at different levels of consciousness, right? And that consciousness is developed by their personal

experience. What they are reading and learning and what community they are in. And so every space that I am going into, I know that I am learning something different. There used to probably be a time when I bought in to what I call *chingon* politics, right? Like, oh I am badass, I'm an activist I know this and that. I think that dispels for me in the research what I do with Raza Womyn because what I realize is this constant process of growth like you don't reach that upper level of consciousness and that you are done that it is like boom boom. It's a fluctuating fluid consciousness building.

Anita brings focus to the process of growing consciously in pedagogy and research. For Anita, underscoring intersections provides opportunities to make sense of personal experiences and develop different levels of consciousness. She reflects about the time she bought into chingon politics and how that resulted in a misreading of the process of growing consciously. Both her understanding of intersectionality and her shift in thinking about the process of consciousness building is a reflection of demastery (Soto, 2010). Anita realized that her idea of "badass activist" who knows it all worked against the research with Raza Womyn because that role of activist-researcher returned to colonial relationships of learning and research. Thus, her thinking now allows her to practice research differently.

I return to Anzaldúa's (2007) poem "Letting Go" introduced at the beginning of the chapter. The poem suggests researchers shake up what is known to reveal the unknown. Anzaldúa's (2007) poem said that—

It's not enough
deciding to open.
You must plunge your fingers
into your navel, with your two hands
split open,
spill out the lizards and horned toads
the orchids and the sunflowers,
turn the maze inside out.
Shake it.
Yet, you don't quite empty.
Maybe a green phlegm

hides in your cough.
You may not even know
that it's there until a knot
grows in your throat
and turns into a frog.
It tickles a secret smile
on your plate
full of tiny orgasms.
But sooner or later
it reveals itself.
The green frog indiscreetly croaks.
Everyone looks up.

Opening and linking multiple understandings about decolonization and intersectionality can allow researchers to open and listen to the way they negotiate contradictions within research practices. The discussion on decolonization and intersectionality builds on the discussion about what methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within university research. Concepts such as these are essential in fragmenting the dichotomous lines and being answerable to the tropes in research. Now as the chapter prepares to end and transition readers to Chapter 7, it is important to underscore participants' general thoughts about what researchers feel needs to shift in critical qualitative research and education (see Figure 3). Sharing the research participants' thoughts about what parts of research need to be reimagined and retooled lead researchers to think about the ways to create new methodological tools.

This chapter highlighted two key themes that Chicana/Latina feminists in education find themselves retooling and rethinking: decolonization and intersectionality. Their words reveal how they are answerable to the dichotomous lines and tropes in research. The discussion on these two key themes also builds on the discussion about what methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within university research. Similar to using emotion in research, I argue that unsettling the ways
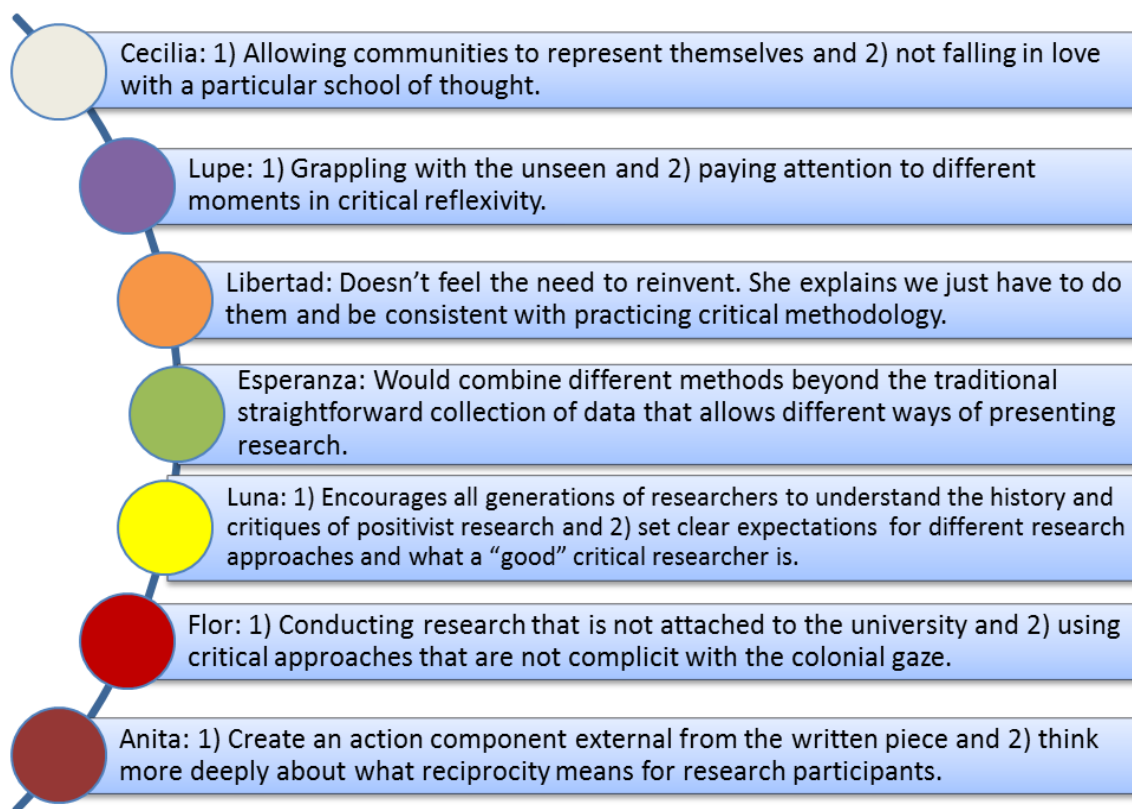
Figure 3. Participants on reinventing critical methodologies

researchers understand and use terms such as decolonization and intersectionality in research matter. For the section on decoloniality, I used Tuck and Yang's (2012) conversation about the metaphorization of decoloniality to understand how it shapes research theory and practice. The section on intersectionality was guided by Soto's (2012) understanding of intersectionality and her demastery concept. These concepts and conversations coupled with *testimonios/pláticas* also helped think through Muñoz's (1999) work on disidentification and being an *atravesada* in the research process. Lastly, talking through decolonization and intersectionality invites researchers to unveil moments where research omits, erases, or silences communities who contribute to research. In reflecting about these multiple concepts, themes, and ideas a few questions

come up: How do researchers practice engaging emotions within research? How do researchers disidentify? How do researchers demaster? How does being an *atravezada* look when thinking with disidentification and demastery? Thus, Chapter 7 speaks to how researchers can begin to practice consistently doing research in ways these concepts suggest. Using demastery (Soto, 2010), disidentification (Muñoz, 1999), and the *atravesada* process, Chapter 7 makes sense of the *testimonios/pláticas* that think through how to create places that foster a strong community of scholars, where critical scholars can share different frameworks around educational qualitative research, but also interrogate and critically examine theory and practice.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS AND COMMUNITY:

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CONNECTIONS

Researchers are constantly invited to expand their thinking, to decolonize, to rethink, interrupt, and deconstruct. However, based on the literature and *testimonos/pláticas* there is a lack of extensive and consistent support for researchers moving through excessive rethinking and retooling of research. Here I also want to ask how researchers can practice engaging emotions within research. How can researchers disidentify? How can researchers demaster? How does being an atravezada look when thinking with disidentification and demastery?

In this chapter the *testimonios*/*pláticas* guide researchers thinking about how to create places that foster a strong community of scholars, where critical scholars can share different frameworks around educational qualitative research, but also interrogate and critically examine theory. Using demastery (Soto, 2010), disidentification (Muñoz, 1999), and the *atravesada* process, the chapter points to key practices that can lead researchers to continue to trace and respond to the dichotomous lines and tropes in research. The *testimonios/pláticas* and readings invite researchers to think about how to work through some of the complex layers of research praxis by looking closely at the actual processes of preparing emerging scholars. In addition, the work draws attention to the processes of the relationships established once scholars are in their respective fields. It focuses on

those processes which allow researchers to check-in. I approach this chapter from Lisa

Leigh Patel's (2014) idea that invites us to shift from ownership to answerability, she

explained that—

> settler colonization trains people to see each other, the land, and knowledge as property, to be in constant insatiable competition for limited resources…responses involve speakers and listeners…Answerability mean we have responsibilities as speakers, listeners, and those responsibilities include stewardship of ideas and learning, not ownership. (pp. 371-372)

I found certain repeated topics which point to creating a more answerable

responsibility to critical qualitative research: 1) training and mentorship of emerging

scholars, 2) unpacking the researcher, and 3) community-based research and

accessibility. Fleshing out these repeated topics is a process I consider necessary to using

emotion as a methodological tool, disidentification, demastery, and being an *atravesada*.

I argue that strengthening mentorship practices between generations of researchers,

continuously unpacking the researcher, and reexamining community-based research can

be useful in the process of developing anticolonial and decolonial research.

<u>Training and mentorship of emerging scholars</u>

The literature underscores specific challenges and tensions that researchers of

color experience while conducting research and practice in Latina/o Chicana/o

communities. As Aleman et al. (2013) stated:

> these tensions are not the result of the many beneficial and rewarding relationships we've forged with parents, students, educators, and community. Rather, they result from being in spaces where theory and practice clash and from wrestling with ethical responsibilities as members of this community and as scholar activists striving to develop trusting and reciprocal relationships. (p. 325)

Thus, it is not my intention to resolve any of these tensions described by Aleman

et al. (2013) but rather explore them to generate dialogue for approaching research

differently. The Chicana/Latina feminist literature and *testimonios/pláticas* showed that having close mentors and supportive groups helped flesh out tensions within research. Thus, this section then proposes some of the ways researchers could strengthen training and mentorship of emerging critical scholars. Neither the *testimonios/pláticas* nor the literature explicitly states that we have broken processes for the training and mentorship of emerging scholars of color. However, based on the *pedacitos de memoria* (pieces of memory) and the *recuentos* (retelling of stories) about qualitative research, I argue that strengthening mentorship practices between generations of researchers can be useful in the process of developing anticolonial and decolonial research (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Moreover, critically thinking about training and mentorship of emerging scholars in education helps researchers think through using emotions as a methodological tool, disidentification, and demastery in the research process. The *testiminios/pláticas* show how their mentorship experiences fragment dichotomous lines such as activism/scholarship and academia/community. Moreover, the excerpts on training and mentoring emerging scholars suggest that through mentorship researchers can be answerable to tropes in research.

The *testimonios/pláticas* shared information about the participants' most intimate networks. They spoke about the different moments when close mentors guided them and provided them with helpful tools to navigate academia, more specifically the process of conducting research. At the core they wanted me to know that those networks, no matter how small, meant *sobrevivienciá* (Trinidad-Galvan, 2010) and knowledge. However, they also mentioned how these relationships are lacking and misinterpreted despite all the awareness and critical dialogue surrounding mentorship. Thus, I start by presenting

excerpts that recount how key professors and/or *colectivas* (collectives) offered inspiration, *cariño* (care), and feasible and concrete support. Cecilia, for example, says *"*I was in a good position to kind of be mentored. In a *testimonio* I wrote in a co-written book…I realized the critical role that Richard Valencia and Gene played in shaping my own aspirations and my own interest." The mentorship relationship Cecilia describes reveals that the connections made with Richard Valencia and Gene influenced her research interest. From this statement one could also draw a sense of closeness with her mentors that opened an opportunity to share her passion and desires about research, teaching, and learning. Cecilia's excerpt is an example of how we could begin to unsettle some of the tropes in research. With the help of Muñoz (1999), I see Cecilia's narrative as pointing how researchers can disidentify from researcher practices that foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities. Similarly, Libertad's mentorship experience is an example of how mentorship can help researchers be answerable to the tropes in research. Libertad shared the following about her mentor:

> She's ugh she was a major professor mover and shaker at the university. So she's one that would say okay every Wednesday you're coming to my house from 12 to 3 o'clock and we will write together. And I'm like sure you know. I love that we didn't write anything together but we physically wrote together at her house at her table. That was really fabulous just writing with someone or the support that was just so simple. Come over and write with me you know.

For Libertad the simple act of getting together to write with her mentor changed the way she experienced the academy. Libertad's narrative is an example of producing relationships based on community, care, and love. In a colonial relationship to pedagogy and research Libertad's mentorship experience would not be encouraged. However, Libertad and her mentor show how this mentorship relationship creates opportunities of growth, support, and *convivencia*. Thus, Libertad also speaks back to how researchers can

disidentify from researcher practices that foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities.

Building on Cecilia's and Libertad's narratives, Luna extends our thinking by sharing how one of her mentors brought awareness to how her thinking and knowledge contributes to the production of knowledge. She also talks about how meeting and talking with Aida Hurtado motivated her to be part of academia.

> The first class I felt listened to was, probably Aida Hurtado's class, Chicano Psychology and she's a tough teacher. She has very high expectations. I remember her highlighting some of her work analyzing both visual images of women of color and the appropriation of costumes. One of them was of a White woman or girl feeding a burro in Mexico and an old man who was using the burro to work! She broke it down and I think I mentioned something like we also have to look at how we commodify people and labor…she stopped the class and said you know I haven't thought about that. It was the very first time I was like yeah I can think too *[smiles/laughs]* my analysis are good. And that was the very first time that I can do that. She happened to come out to Boston we had lunch and she said you really need to think about going on she said you're too smart to not go back to school and I just thought how weird that somebody would tell me that I'm smart. That I would hear it in a way that was empowering, right? It's a comment that can be borderline not offensive but the comment could be taken out of context but it was again another example of yeah I can do this.

Here I want to return to the trope that says that educational research and practice for the most part still reads, locates, and produces a colonial relationship to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production. Luna offers how researchers can create relationships that reject colonial and imperial practices. Luna explained that when Aida Hurtado acknowledged her analysis on the class topic she felt good and empowered to produce and share knowledge. As Luna described, her experience was a stepping stone towards becoming part of the academy. Thus, this is another example of how researchers could practice creating relationships that are not rooted in coloniality. Similarly, Anita's *testimonio/plática* shows researchers how her mentorship experience responds to colonial

relationships.

> I went to a Chicano Studies conference, NACCS probably in 1997. There I met Danny Solorzano who was doing a presentation on CRT and education. I was like this is what I want to do. I remember going up to him and saying I want to apply to your PhD program. And by that time I had applied two years in a row and not gotten in. I went up to him and I said you know I want to apply to this program. I think I would be able to do the things that I want to do. And he is like sure apply and sure enough I think I was the only PhD he took that year. I remember asking him why did you accept me out of many applicants. 'Well because I met you at NACCS and I knew that what you wanted to do was what I could mentor you in and what I was connected to.' So to me, Danny, besides the student activist, Danny is the single most important person to this day in my academic success. I'm a woman and I'm queer. You know all these other things and he is not those things but what he does is he fosters and nurtures these differences. He says to you, I will help you succeed, he didn't quite say it like that that. But he…I will tell you the little story he told me. One time I was telling him, well you know activist in academia we always feel insecure. Like what am I doing here? Am I selling out? *[laughs]* You know what he said to me? He's 'like you and I have the same vision we have different ways of getting there. But we have the same goal.' He's like my job is for two things, you have a fire lit inside of you that is your passion he's like my job is to make sure that you finish this program and that this fire stays lit, right? And it's so powerful, so beautiful because I was like I don't know what I am doing here you know. Is this even going to make a difference? And then he is like you know whatever you want to do I am here to support you. And you know he is one of the best models of how he gets upset but he has this sense of peace that is internal and doesn't get caught in the drama *[laughs]* of academia. Every other person that I know gets all crazy about competition, about people talking about them, about students, about competing, and he didn't have that you know. He was like I'm here to support you, he modeled how to teach, he used visuals, and he talked from his heart.

Anita's excerpt shows researchers how building critical relationships to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production that are not based on domination is a form of disidentification. As researchers, engaging with this type of supportive relationship allows us to go through the processes that help detach our research from practices that work with dominant ideologies. It is an opportunity to unpack what it means to work against and resist dominant ideologies. Moreover, when Anita says, "I'm a woman and I'm queer you know all these other things and he is not those things but what he does is

he fosters and nurtures like these differences" she points to demastery as a process necessary to disidentify. Anita then is speaking to how redefining identity to be more about difference rather than similarities opened up the opportunity to work through some of her fears and conflicted expectations in academia and ultimately her research.

I shift the focus now to talk about the challenges associated with training and mentoring emerging researchers. Bringing focus to the challenges helps researchers locate the moments where our mentorship practices always need to be in a place of reassessment and reexamination to guard against falling back in to practicing dichotomous lines and tropes in research.

Each excerpt points to significant and real lived experiences across generations of scholars of color. They highlight that providing support and a consistent reciprocal relationship between students and professors of color is difficult. For instance, Cecilia and Esperanza speak to in-group mentorship dynamics. Cecilia described:

> Let me say a couple things about that [mentorship] because and it kind of depends what hat I am wearing. Whether I am speaking as the subject or speaking from my faculty hat. Also with an understanding of how it works once you get inside [the academy]. It's…I wish *[laughs]* that sometimes there was a little more frankness about just what it takes ugh…because in the end you are really alone. You really want to have to do this. You really have to be moved to answer these questions and explore investigate and um do the best job you can and um. And then in some ways the idea of mentorship is good. Ideally that's how it works the realities is that we are so few that um that it's difficult with all the sort of demands by the institutions by the department. I think to do that kind of mentoring that would be ideal…and sometimes I mean in my sort of harsher moments I think we really do a disservice to students. We give them the impression that we are really available to mentor when we are really not, right? When we are barely swimming ourselves, right? And I've seen that happen and I think it especially happens with in-group dynamics. You know with Chicanos' and Chicanas' expectations of other Chicanas and Chicanos. In the one hand it's you know it's a positive thing right because having someone to talk to about your work whether you're a student or a faculty member is a great thing. But in the end I mean it's like it's the institution doesn't really value it. It doesn't really count for much. What I've learned, what I've learned really works is publication, publication you know if

you really want to go further in your career it's all about the publishing and I've seen it.

Cecilia's excerpt shows how she grapples with the contradictions associated with mentoring Chicana/o students and colleagues. For Cecilia it is difficult to engage consistently with mentorship practices that meet the expectations of Chicana and Chicano students. Unfortunately, the university does not value mentorship practices that are invested in creating healthy and trusting relationships. The university values production, the institution values publications, not relationships between students and faculty or within faculty. The other example comes from Esperanza, she says, "one thing you should…again this is where we need to have each other's back…I mean we have to be good at what we do right and be able to take advice and especially it's real tricky and this is in regards to mentorship it's real tricky to mentor students of color." Similar to Cecilia, Esperanza has a difficult time creating and maintaining that balance between university and students' expectations. She specifically grapples with the process of mentoring graduate students. She said:

> What's tricky about it is how to be there for you guys without graduate students interpreting as umm as 'oh I'm trying to be silenced' or 'my voice is being challenged,' *[laughs]* right? How do you discuss work that…you can…so umm yeah and I have some trouble…like I'm not going to lower expectations I have high expectations for my students. And that gets interpreted as you know as 'I can't have my voice I can't' so it's very tricky in the end. Yeah this is not good, your dissertation is not good, and here are some recommendations and so how do you do that without umm not having the student feel how would you say it like without having them lose their confidence, right? Yeah, so one thing that I would say is, listen to those critiques. Listen to what they are asking take the challenges and make them interesting questions. And so that's one recommendation but it is tough doing that mentoring.

This "tricky" relationship to mentoring Cecilia described is an example of how everyone, not just researchers, needs to reevaluate mentorship practices. Drawing focus

on mentorship makes us vigilant of the ways we might be reproducing dichotomous lines outlined by Saavedra and Nymark (2008) as well as the research tropes in research. Both Cecilia and Esperanza critique those expectations placed on them by the university and offer a response. Their stories are reflections of the process of *la atravesada* in research. How they make sense is symbolic of their process of entering the serpent. Their process of entering the serpent has allowed them to access tools to negotiate contradictions associated with research such as the aspect of mentorship.

The last *testimonio/plática* excerpt from someone who enters the serpent is Libertad. Libertad's excerpt is focused on the mentorship amongst professors and her experience. She expressed, "I just wish that the mentorship style of people in my department was a little bit more developed, was a little bit more realistic, a little bit more empathetic than like a hazing. I hated that and I'll never forget that." She is in an education department and in her experience she has had to search for supportive spaces externally. Libertad says:

> My relationships with women of color in other departments have been great! But relationships within my own department have been very drier, very hard to maintain. It's been hard to understand the logic of administration. I always say we are run by monkeys here *[we laugh]* but it's been the outside always supporting me.

Libertad is very happy about those relationships outside her department but also very honest about the lack of mentorship amongst education scholars at her university.

Later in her *testimonio/plática* Libertad expresses her urgency to engage in a coalitional relationship which connects to her experiences with mentorship. Libertad explained during our *plática*:

> We could talk the talk all we want in critical methodologies. It really is like the practice. How do you practice that? You know we have such cool faculty in our

department, on paper and yet every day the way they act with people… I go back to Lugones…can you have a relationship with someone else that isn't based on domination? And I think you know, that every day practice matters.

Her statement challenges educational researchers to think how they connect with the work that they do and the people they engage with every day. As she continues to unpack critical methodologies she talks about a wonderful metaphor that I found useful in thinking through what coalitional relationships in research can look like. Libertad stated:

> I'm a really competitive person you know. I like to win. I was an athlete for a long time and yet playing ball [rugby] has been one the few times that I get to practice with my teammates this kind of coalitional relationship. That is the craziest thing. When you're playing you know, you're not allowed to throw the ball forward you can only throw latterly. You can only throw horizontal. There are always people around you and so when someone else wants the ball they say 'with you.' I always knew my friend Sue was always on my left side. I always knew….so that's a very interesting relationship. That was one of the few times I got to practice this relationship that is reciprocal, coalitional, that is not about power over you. That was a beautiful thing about our team. I think those have been the times I've been able to practice this relation that Lugones talks about and so you know that's my thing. Can we be consistent in our…can we be as…can we practice this in many places in our lives from your research to your working group in your department as a mentor as a teacher for your students and the other parts of life and relationships can you do it as much as possible? That's so hard you know. So I think that's why I think in research sometimes we talk the talk but I don't think we do the walk very often. I think about that all the time. Can I have these relationships? Can I try this? Can I do this in all parts of my life?

Libertad returns researchers to the concept of disidentification (Muñoz, 1999) and demastery (Soto, 2010) by asking that we reassess the role of intentionality within research relationships. When Libertad talks about her rugby experience she offers a metaphor that helps researchers visualize how to detach our research from practices that work with dominant ideologies. Like Muñoz (1999) and Soto (2010), Libertad suggests that researchers unthread, open, and share how they think about researcher relationships. Concepts such as disidentification and demastery highlight forms of resistance and opportunities to expand and complicate research praxes.

Esperanza talks about a way that can enable researchers to practice coalitional relationships more consistently. During my conversation with Esperanza, we talked about creating spaces for mother scholars to share their joy, struggle, passion, and love for research. Esperanza explained:

> I think we have to believe that these things can be institutionalized as well. So one great thing about us [our university], is we got this key person who says, you know I'm going to support mentoring and I'm going to be aware that mentoring across ethnicity across race women of color groups Latina women, right, that those are important. So at the university level there should be money for that. That's a great thing that at our university, that our Provost supports that work of Latina scholars from different disciplines. You know, we have been getting together regularly to work, to write and we get support from the office. I think it's important. What I would say to you, I think that we should never be embarrassed to be a scholar, right? To love books and to love learning and to love writing and publishing and that it doesn't always have to be participatory action research *[laughs]* that we can work from our own curiosities and then of course we have our actions our interactions with community. I think we need to get ourselves support, if you chose to be an academic, you know a scholar, we need to be good at that, we need to push each other to have the spaces to talk about our work and everything that comes.

This is a great idea that needs to be replicated across universities. There is a lot of research on mentoring and much of that research highlights writing support groups such as the one Esperanza is part of. What I want to capture from her story is this process of believing that these things could be institutionalized. The concept of believing could be coupled with understanding the steps to get the institution to listen and be answerable to the dichotomous lines and tropes in research.

Unpacking the researcher

> As ethnographers, we are like colonizers when we fail to question our own identities and privileged positions, and in the ways in which our writings perpetuate 'othering.' (Villenas, 1996, p. 713)

Unpacking researcher subjectivity and positionality can also be useful in the

process of developing anticolonial and decolonial research. The content analysis shows how unpacking the researcher helps fragment dichotomous lines such as researcher/subject and colonized/colonizer. Moreover, unpacking the researcher can also be answerable to the tropes listed in Chapter 1. Villenas (1996) is one of the authors who invites researchers to examine their experience, positionality, and theoretical frameworks. As a Chicana educator-researcher-activist I constantly feel that there are limitations to the work that I engage with. I have worked with several university partnerships in the past that have taught me the complexity of doing research—especially when the research I do involves working with Chicana/o and Latina/o students as well as their families. At times I feel that I can share and relate memories of my experience with schooling and structural inequalities. Other times I fail to make that connection. It is not because the families and I do not share a connection. It is because I wear an institutional identity. As much as I can say I experienced a schooling experience similar to the Chicana/o students with whom I work, my role as university graduate student/researcher interrupts that organic connection. There is one component that complicates partnerships between university-run research teams and students and families involved—an analysis of privilege and marginalization for the researcher. Researchers in education do not spend enough time theorizing about how the researcher is privileged and marginalized in the research process or how this complicity and marginalization has damaged the researcher (Patai, 1991; Villenas, 1996).

Villenas (1996) theorizes about privilege when she discusses her experience working with Latina mothers. She explains that "this 'native' ethnographer is potentially both the colonizer, in her university cloak, and the colonized, as a member of the very

community that is made 'other' in her research" (p. 712). It is important to point out that the challenge is admitting that as researchers of color one is part of the university institution. Researchers are not vigilant on how their research relationships reproduce problematic relationships that perpetuate "othering." Villenas (1996) explained that "as ethnographers, we are also like colonizers when we fail to question our own identities and privileged positions" (p. 713). Researchers protect their role and identity as researcher from this privilege by claiming the use of *radical theory*. According to Patai (1991), feminisms or any type of theory cannot protect us from this researcher/researched contradiction. I think we try to become immune—especially when we talk about our marginalized experiences. However, it is the dialogue about privilege that researchers tend to omit during our research process (Patai, 1991).

When Patai (1991) talks about researcher experience of privilege and marginality in academia, I know that she agrees this contradiction exists. She explains that this contradiction gets worse the moment researchers think they are reimagining research by merely engaging with discourse of change—she uses feminism as an example. Patai (1991) argued that researchers always run the risk of becoming the oppressor when working with groups less privileged.

Patai (1991) also explained that researchers' privilege has a lot to do with economics by arguing that despite efforts to create a methodology where "native informants" maintain possession of their stories and experiences, the production of such texts are still a commodity (Spivak, 1988). It is a commodity that benefits the publisher and the professor (e.g., promotion and salary increases). She goes further into this economic analysis by stating how the researcher then functions as a capitalist and laborer

whose time and effort is rewarded. Thus, these roles that are easy to slip in "prevent us from developing a suitable model for understanding, analyzing, and assigning rights and duties" (Patai, 1991, p. 146). Patai's (1991) analysis about research ethics asks that researchers think about how communities are used in research and invites researchers to rethink the procedures and purpose of research.

Rethinking community, accessibility, and qualitative research

The other point I want to make regarding privilege is the question about accessibility. This is a conversation that I see play out a lot—especially when we are trying to publish work we do with students and community. In other words, "how is the research returned" (Patai, 1991, p. 147; Spivak, 1988)? Who are we writing for or back to? Who is the audience? Patai (1991) pushes one to think about ethics here. For example, she asks one to analyze if our research is really purporting empowerment or "affirming just another psychological surrogate." I see this tension mostly coming from with/in researchers of color—especially during conference panels and presentations. Villenas (1996) explains that we are like colonizers when "the professional and intellectual gatekeeping structures (e.g., university admissions to graduate studies, journal publication referees) from which we gain our legitimacy and privilege remain 'highly inaccessible to those on whose behalf we claim to write'" (p. 713). The accessibility of research between university faculty/graduate students and lay people is a gap that is present in conducting research. This is a big challenge for scholars of color. There is both a celebration of the work we are doing while at the same time a realistic view of how accessible our work can be outside of classroom/researcher walls. This issue on accessibility continues to be a challenge. The scholars I am thinking with have spent 20+

years theorizing how we could make these theories and changes in educational equity discourse available for students outside the academy. Why is this still an issue and what does this mean? Perhaps it is because we are swimming across waves of internalized colonial practices and it is going to take us a longer time to break through. This is why it is important to continuously examine both our privileges and marginalized experiences to set the context of our research and develop other possibilities.

I think we also need to reimagine how we understand the process of making "change." Aleman, Delgado Bernal, and Mendoza (2013) ask "how should we as researchers confront our emotions and feelings of powerlessness when we are unable to respond to meaningful ways with strategies that might actually alter the oppressive conditions that parents and students encounter?" (p. 333). Often researchers talk about making change in education by imagining large projects that in theory are great. However, realistically I don't think we are thinking about the liminal spaces in creating change. Conversations about change are static; we need to further trouble this area. I think a lot about community-based research such as Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). YPAR is an example that stretches the boundaries of research by challenging traditional notions on the production of knowledge. This helps us rethink the process of creating change. However, bringing back what I said earlier on about accessibility, we have done this type of research for 20+ years why is it that our notion of change remains disconnected from how researchers practice critical qualitative reasearch? Why is it that we continue to circulate failed expectations of mentorship and accessibility? The following section continues to think through what it means to rethink conversations about accessibility and change. It tries to unpack what bodies of thought and practices are

necessary to crack open even with/in critical qualitative research education.

How are we defining community? What do our interpretations of community say about the research we produce and engage with? How does our research reach communities beyond classroom and research walls? What opportunities do we give students and families to engage with research? I start this section posing questions to get us thinking about some of the mechanisms and abuse that happens in this area. This is a rigorous and heated discussion because it puts to task our critical concepts and ideas. It is a necessary one that needs to play with the concept of being excessive. I also appreciate this section because it exposes navigation paths that underscore the different ways scholars are rethinking accessibility in qualitative research. Thus, I move forward to share the literature and *testimonios/pláticas* in this area.

The first common theme that comes up is on how communities are defined and by whom. Flor highlights some of the answerability behind understanding the complexities of community identity formations in relation to conducting research. Flor's mentor invited her to rethink her Chicana identity, as she explains in her excerpt below.

> I was trying to be very careful with negotiating the Chicana identity and the American identity and he [her mentor] advised me to not do that. He was like no you have to speak from your lived experience what it meant for you and your community. Because how else are you going to attend to the daily or the lived realities of communities you are trying to work with. I had an instance where people had questions about my identity. I would tell them how identity was shaped in my community and I offended well not offended but I guess some people were offended. I was just explaining, how to be considered by a person in my community you have to go back and visit. Otherwise you are not considered a person from the indigenous community and so that offended a lot of people.

It almost sounds like Flor's mentor asked her to disidentify (Muñoz, 1999) with positionality to approach research differently creating different methodologies and epistemologies. I can see how research can run the risk of creating an essentialized

identity. There are limitations to relating to others purely on identity markers. Her mentor

suggests it is better to associate based on the lived experiences of the communities one is

already living in rather than by socially constructed categories. I want to say this is a shift

for Chicana feminist methodologies especially now with the merging conversations such

as those about the processes of queering and indigenous methodologies. Qualitative

research in Chicana/o studies for example, was very nationalistic. In the 80s, the work of

Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, and a few others established a different discourse on

identity and community formation and what it meant to engage with activism.

Cecilia below builds on the conversations that rethink community based research

and accessability. Her narrative points to how researchers approach communities

historically discriminated against. It also speaks to the way even researchers are complicit

in making assumptions about communities that are faced with systemic oppression.

Cecilia explained:

> I think it's worthwhile to keep your focus on, you know, on sort of why you are
> doing something and what people are saying, you know. How are they framing
> themselves without us assuming we are entering community of subaltern
> individuals? I doubt that most of the people in communities that we are doing
> research in think of themselves as marginal or think of themselves as oppressed or
> would think of themselves as not having agency, you know. And that's kind of an
> operating assumption sometimes that people enter with, *como se dice* well-
> meaning. They are well meaning in the sense that you know…some of the people
> I have done interviews with who don't want to hear this exploitation stuff they
> don't want to be depicted or framed that someone somehow their whole life has
> been oppressed, right or marginalized. It's like you know with pride they do their
> work. They do the best they can. They make the best of everyday life and their
> opportunities and their children and you know so yeah its food for thought umm
> food for thought. Now it's different to say these are members of the community
> that has been historically discriminated. Yeah there is plenty of evidence to
> support that but that doesn't mean that that's how the community sees itself.

Cecilia is not clear on whether these researchers use critical qualitative research to

approach communities about participating. However, I have seen this happen in my

personal experience with critical qualitative researchers and in the classroom. I myself have responded to students and families from these operating assumptions Cecilia talks about. Some scholars decide not to engage with research beyond autoethnography and/or other approaches similar to autoethnography. For instance, for Lupe it is important to be cautious about the methodologies researchers use for inquiry and analysis. Lupe explained that:

> Most of the work that I have done has been looking more at the bigger picture and not so much data driven things. Part of it is how is it that we go and do research with kids? That's such a colonizing thing because they have no like really resistance to it, you know. We can't just take and leave. I really struggle that's why my dissertation was completely looking at text.

Lupe understands researchers must be cautious and vigilant of the research process. I understand Lupe's excerpt to be an example of how researchers can disidentify with colonial and imperial relationships within the research process. Lupe's example shows that she prefers to stay away from data-driven research because to her it is representative of a form of colonization. Later, during the *testimonio/plática,* I asked Lupe, "Do you think that sometimes this struggle to not be like the colonizer in research prevents you from getting involved?" Lupe responded and said:

> Yes! I avoid it. Really try to avoid it as much possible. If you have read some of my work a lot of my stuff is autobiographical, personal. This is my story and this is the only thing I can really tell you I know for sure because its mine and if you could interpret it, it won't hurt me if you interpret it differently. But other people stories, I don't want you to…and I don't know that I have the power to represent them in anyway.

I end this section and chapter with Lupe's excerpt. She and the other *testimonio/pláticas,* as well as the literature, remind researchers of the problematics associated with research. Moreover, the *testimonios*/*pláticas* guide researchers thinking about how to create places that foster a strong community of scholars, where critical

scholars can share different frameworks around educational qualitative research, but also interrogate and critically examine theory. I argue that strengthening mentorship practices between generations of researchers, continuously unpacking the researcher, and reexamining community-based research can be useful in the process of developing anticolonial and decolonial research. Fleshing out these repeated topics is a process I consider necessary to using emotion as a methodological tool, disidentification, demastery, and being an *atravezada*.

The following chapter is the final chapter of the dissertation. Chapter 8 offers some paths and processes which enable researchers to continue to cross, shed, and hope in critical qualitative research. The chapter highlights why researchers must pay attention to concepts and themes such as *la atravesada*, emotion, decoloniality, and intersectionality in critical qualitative research. Chapter 8 invites researchers to imagine different research processes and understand what it means for researchers to constantly engage with the process of shedding and crossing in research.

CHAPTER 8

(RE) ENTERING THE SERPENT: PUTTING THE ATRAVESADA TO TASK

> I write with the element of air, the wind, in my consciousness. The air teaches us
> to be fluid, to be flexible so that our strength and our stability do not become too
> rigid. We must be able to adapt when necessary, to flow like the wind, to be open
> to change, to be flexible with our plans, to be able to cleanse and renew ourselves.
> (Medina, 2014, p. 167)

Voy a donde me lleve el viento (I go where the wind takes me). I approach this last

chapter in this way. Medina (2014) points to a recurring theme in the literature and

testimonios/pláticas which is the urgency and desire to be open and flexible with our

theorizing. Flexibility for Medina (2014) means moving continuously with intention so

that "our strength and our stability" as researchers do not become rigid (p. 167). Similar

to the concept of *la atravesada*, Medina's (2014) understanding of air and wind invite

researchers to make sense of their multiple crossings and shedding by being open and

flexible to shifts and change. There were strong currents of wind that pointed to where

researchers can go as they enter the serpent. This chapter offers some paths and processes

which enable researchers to continue to cross, shed, and hope in critical qualitative

research. First, the chapter provides an overview of the content analysis and overall

themes that came out of the *testimonio/pláticas* as presented throughout the dissertation.

Second, Chapter 8 highlights why researchers must pay attention to concepts and themes

such as *la atravesada*, emotion, decoloniality, and intersectionality in critical qualitative

research. The conclusion is about inviting researchers to imagine different research processes and understand what it means for researchers to constantly engage with the process of shedding and crossing in research.

<u>Reflections: An open conclusion of crossing, shedding, and hope</u>

I used Saavedra and Nymark's (2008) invitation to trouble and reflect on the multiple dichotomous lines such as researcher/subject, academia/community, activism/scholarship, and colonized/colonizer, emphasizing the importance of attending to the ways critical researchers can unintentionally become implicit in the reproduction of uneven power relationships and hegemonic models of doing research (Saavedra & Nymark, 2008). I took up the challenge to attend to dichotomous lines to guide my reading, inquiry, and analysis of critical qualitative research. Drawing focus to these dichotomous lines from Chicana/Latina feminisms in education, and anticolonial and queer of color critique frameworks extends understanding and appreciations of the intersections of discourses in qualitative research by highlighting how researchers address methodological concerns about constructions of knowledge, modes of representation, and issues of voice and researcher roles. Moreover, focusing my research on dichotomous lines identified the possibilities of building on theories and tools that interrogate power, truth, ethics, and social justice research. The most important outcome of underscoring dichotomous lines in research was that it helped identity a set of prevalent tropes:

- Lack of dialogue, practice, and answerability between/among/with/in mainstream frames of educational research and fields like critical qualitative research and critical Indigenous methodologies.

- Researcher investment in colonial and imperial frameworks despite its

claim and/or use of critical methodologies.

- Educational research and practice for the most part still reads, locates, and produces a colonial relationship to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production.

- Production of research continues to function from an "erasing to replace" and pathologizing gaze framework.

- Research and the overall institution of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities that have multiple ramifications for researcher and researched.

These tropes offer an explanation for the dichotomous lines that Saavedra and Nymark (2008) point to. They also require that researchers think about how to tackle and further unpack each trope. Chicana/Latina *testimonios/pláticas* suggested that researchers must consistently practice and reimagine research practices in the training and mentoring of emerging scholars, the process of unpacking the researcher, and rethinking community and accessibility. In order to respond to these tropes and to continuously reimagine research praxes, the following concepts and themes such as, but not limited to, *la atravesada*, emotions, decoloniality, and intersectionality must be included. These concepts and themes are essential in the continuous shedding and crossing within critical qualitative research. They help researchers trace why critical qualitative research—despite over two decades of work and discussion about power, reflexivity, and social justice in research—continues to think with and reproduce dichotomous lines. These concepts and themes allow researchers to be answerable to whom or what remains objects and the struggle of historically marginalized communities to tell their own stories

(Daza & Tuck, 2014).

The following sections explain what it means to/for researchers to think with the concepts of *la atravesada*, emotions, decoloniality, and intersectionality in critical qualitative research. It also provides a reading on what next steps are possible for critical qualitative scholars in education when the *testimonios/pláticas* of the scholars in this dissertation are centered as challenges to methodologies of knowing. The work that I engaged with in this dissertation process speaks to a set of challenges and struggles that continue to shape the way scholars of color approach research when conducting research and practice in historically marginalized communities. It captivates the ways in which Chicanas/Latinas are negotiating these challenges and struggles. Moreover, it situates Chicana/Latina researcher experience with/in this larger web of negotiations. Coalescing these concepts and themes offers possibilities to approach research differently, continuously inviting researchers to cross and shed within research boundaries.

The list of tropes reminds researchers of the necessity to continuously shed, reexamine, reassess, and reframe the role of critical qualitative research. Guided by Anzaldúa (2007), this section reminds researchers of the concept of *la atravesada* as a way to explain why there must be an *atravesada* analysis in rethinking the role of research in education. Lastly, this section suggests that conceptualizing *la atravesada* within research provides multiple ways of being answerable to the list of tropes identified in the content analysis.

In the Introduction I explained that Anzaldúa's (2007) concept and praxis of entering into the serpent and *la facultad* are helpful to understanding the *atravesada* researcher. These concepts help trace and make sense of the multiple splits within social

justice research by questioning and analyzing different *travesias* (moves), feelings, and deep pauses in critical qualitative research (Anzaldúa, 2007). Anzaldúa's entering into the serpent demands engaging with different forms of consciousness. Engaging with different forms of consciousness asks that researchers engage in dialogue with multiple theoretical frames moving us beyond bridging and bringing awareness. By this I mean fully exposing ourselves as researchers to challenges and interrogations. Chapter 6 presented two themes that speak to this demand to unthread conversations about doing decolonial and intersectional research. The chapter challenged researchers to unpack what it means to do decolonial research, what it means to do research that is rooted in intersectionality. The literature and *testimonio/pláticas* offered a complicated discussion that pushes researchers to question how our different forms of consciousness may reflect colonial and imperial frameworks challenging our investment to those relationships within teaching and knowledge production. They interrogated how researchers, despite their use of critical frameworks, continue to produce an "erasing to replace" gaze.

In challenging how critical researchers are implicit in reproducing colonial and imperial relationships to research, researchers gain access to images "from the soul and the unconscious through dreams and the imagination" bridging with the physical realities (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 59) that allow researchers to listen differently to what is in the present. Anzaldúa's (2007) entering into the serpent is a creative and healing womb recognizing the shadows with/in, the silence, and the unseen/unknown. What is important in this engagement between consciousness, soul, and the body is the process of uncoupling what and how one comes to know. *La atravesada* helps researchers and the role of research continuously heal, shed, and go through a sort of rebirth and reimagining

of itself at all times. Entering into the serpent also activates *la facultad,* which is the—

> capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. It is an instant 'sensing,' a quick perception arrived without conscious reasoning…When we're up against the wall, when we have all sorts of oppressions coming at us, we are forced to develop this faculty so that we'll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away…It's a kind of survival tactic that people caught between the worlds, unknowingly cultivate. (Anzaldúa, 2007, pp. 60-61)

Walking through this process breaks those interfaces, adding depth to what one understands, further opening and shifting perception. The conversation regarding the power of emotions and feelings in Chapter 5 is an example of this access to images of the soul, the unconscious, and this deeper sensing. *La atravesada* signals researchers to pull from emotion as a way of healing in the process of conducting research challenging the traditional roles of researchers that ask us to detach from research emotionally. *La atravesada* reminds researchers to resist detaching emotionally from research as a way to further open and shift as researchers. Anzaldúa (2007) extends what it means to further open and shift perception when she walks us through the *Coatlicue* state. Anzaldúa (2007) talks about the *Coatlicue* state as a process that stresses one should rip open old boundaries within and beyond ourselves. Anzaldúa (2007) stated:

> Why does she have to go and try to make 'sense' of it all? Every time she makes 'sense' of something, she has to 'cross over' kicking a hole out of the old boundaries of the self and slipping under or over, dragging the old skin along, stumbling over it. It hampers her movement in the new territory, dragging the ghost of the past with her. It is a dry birth, a breech birth, a screaming birth, one that fights her every inch of the way. It is only when she is on the other side and the shell cracks open and the lid from her eyes lifts that she sees things in a different perspective. It is only then that she makes the connections, formulates the insights. It is only then that her consciousness expands a tiny notch, another rattle appears on the rattlesnake tail and the added growth slightly alters the sounds she makes. Suddenly the repressed energy and a new life begins. It is her reluctance to cross over, to make a hole in the fence and walk across, to cross the river, to take that flying leap into the dark, that drives her to escape, that forces her into the fecund cave of her imagination where she is cradled in the arms of

Coatlicue. Who will never let her go. If she doesn't change her ways, she will remain a stone forever. *No hay mas que cambiar.* (p. 71)

The concept of *la atravesada* as an analytical tool is helpful in responding to these tropes by making "sense" of the new and old boundaries in research. It invites researchers to play with the old skin as a process for renaming and reframing research. The *La atravesada* concept demands that researchers unpack our refusal and reluctance to reflect and respond to our *travesias* (crossings) in research. There must be an *atravesada* analysis within our research process if researchers want to be answerable to concerns about constructions of knowledge, modes of representation, and issues of voice and researcher roles. If researchers want to respond to Saavedra and Nymark's (2008) invitation to trouble and reflect on the "disembodied nature of research…to fragment dichotomous lines" by linking experience and emotions to the research process then they must attend to their *atravesada* moments. The concept of *la atravesada* is one way to imagine the process of doing decolonial research and survival.

Continuously shedding and moving in research

Why must there be emotion in critical qualitative research? Why should researchers weave through emotion to engage with inquiry and analysis? This section goes back to the list of tropes and dichotomous lines outlined throughout the chapters. However, I draw attention to the following two tropes: 1) Educational research and practice for the most part still reads, locates, and produces a colonial relationship to learning, knowledge, and knowledge production and research; and 2) The overall institution of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities that have multiple effects on researcher and researched. Expressing emotion

in research helps one locate how researcher relationships are engaging with colonial relationships to learning and knowledge production. Bringing awareness and allowing emotions to cross within research makes room for research to create different paths to healing from these problematic relationships. For example, Chapter 5 shares how recognizing moments of love, passion, fear, and pain led researchers to make sense of their experience but also assisted them in creating questions that further unpacked problematic educational policy, curriculum, and pedagogy. The second example is in Chapter 7. This chapter weighed heavily in sharing ideas on how researchers can continue to unpack and challenge researcher subjectivity and one of those ideas suggested that researchers continuously reevaluate how they are implicated in producing colonial relationships to learning and knowledge production.

The work of Chicana/Latina feminist scholars (Anzaldúa, 2007; Cruz, 2001; Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Medina, 2011; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981) who use the *bodymindspirit* in their inquiry and analysis is pivotal in helping researchers imagine those *caminos* (paths) be more excessive in educational research. Chicana feminist scholars ask that researchers pay attention to "the manner in which colonial ontologies are inscribed onto contemporary bodies" (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, p. 524). They also engage with their own reflections on the role of spirit and spirituality as educators. Chicana feminist scholars make sense of how their spirituality shapes their intellectual, political, and personal work and thus offer tools and terms of engagement for critical qualitative research. Although conversations about spirituality were not clearly reflected through the *testimonios/pláticas* as a guiding framework to map out qualitative research in education, there were hints of it when they shared their thoughts and feelings about

how they negotiated contradiction as researchers. In growing this discussion, it is important to flesh out how using *bodymindpirit* as a guiding framework could help us engage with qualitative research more carefully and purposefully. This theoretical work highlights why there must be emotion in the process of conducting research and suggests what methodologies researchers could employ to heal from these splintered relationships in research. Thus, I suggest that this is an area we consider expanding in educational research. Moving inquiry and research from the *bodymindspirit* invites researchers to release emotion pointing to moments of silence, shadows, and shed skin within critical qualitative research.

Speaking back to these tropes is an ongoing process that requires researchers to turn the mirror on themselves and work through their own shedding and crossings. I argue that using emotion is one way to support this ongoing process. Using emotion to build on inquiry and analysis provides opportunities to trace the role of critical qualitative research. The power of using emotion as a methodology provides a way to imagine different research processes that are rooted in merging and fragmenting the lines between thought and feeling within research.

The conversation about decolonization and research was guided primarily by Tuck and Yang (2012) who argue that when decolonization is used metaphorically in research and pedagogy, projects run the risk of maintaining colonial structures and practices. As a response to Tuck and Yang's (2012) observation, I wanted to understand and extend how conversations about decolonization shape and interrogate critical qualitative research praxes in education. Also, I wanted to explore how Chicana/Latina feminist thought fits into this conversation. For Chicana feminists such as Emma Perez

(1999) and Chela Sandoval (2000), engaging with decolonial moments in the *mestiza/indigena* way forges an opportunity to create a nuanced understanding of that in/between space in colonial/decolonial process in history as well as other fields such as education (Perez, 1999; Sandoval, 2000). Moreover, in the *testimonios/platicás* that were collected there was an urgency to unpack and be cautious of the way critical researchers use the term decolonial in their work. In unpacking the term and process of doing decolonial research, the *testimonios/pláticas* also invited researchers to locate what colonial logics and practices remain present even when drawing from critical theories and methodologies.

Chapter 6 spoke to the complexities associated with the dichotomous line colonized/colonizer. It posed questions and discussions that interrogate how researchers are in relation to others and what bodies of knowledge still retain a colonized discourse. This chapter suggests that as researchers we should continue to interrogate our theories and research practices. One way to do this interrogation is by challenging research notions about decolonization. The conversation about decolonization is necessary in critical qualitative research because it pushes researchers to rethink and reevaluate the intentions and power associated with their research projects. Moreover, talking about decolonization invites researchers to speak across disciplines and different research frames to question who or what becomes erased or invisible in the research process. Understanding decolonization in the context of research also highlights how researchers are further troubling and negotiating the reproduction of uneven power relationships and hegemonic models of doing research in practice. Thus, I return to the list of tropes. I find that unsettling conversations about decolonization push researchers to be answerable to

the tropes. This conversation is another way to challenge and interrupt tropes of research. Interrupting how researchers understand decolonization destabilizes concepts and terms of even the most critical researchers creating openings to center difference rather than sameness. Thus, I argue that opportunities for this ongoing shedding and crossing of tropes in research lie in unsettling what decolonization means within critical qualitative research.

Another theme that must be present within critical qualitative research is conversation about how researchers are rethinking intersectionality. Rethinking intersectionality is also an essential conversation when thinking about the tropes in research. More specifically the following two tropes:

- Educational research and, overall, the academy of education continues to foster problematic relationships with vulnerabilized communities that have multiple effects on researcher and researched.

- Problematics and tensions of positionality for researchers whose research is with/in home communities.

Some of the questions that these tropes lay out for researchers are: How is community being defined in research? What do interpretations of community say about the research being produced and interpreted? How does research reach communities beyond classroom and research walls? A few *testimonios/pláticas* explained that part of their reimagining of critical qualitative research has to do with practicing being in relation with each other daily. They spoke to the importance of supportive networks and individuals in their academic journey. They also spoke to the challenges in mentorship. For example, some spoke to the tensions that arise between faculty of color and students

of color mentorship relationships. Perhaps we need to uncouple some of those dynamics as a way to further theorize about mentorship practices, definitions of community, and accessibility. How are education scholars reimagining accessibility and collaborative practices in their qualitative research? One way to uncouple these questions and conversations about researcher mentorship and rethinking community and accessibility is through a discussion on intersectionality.

Chapter 6 shared a section on how Chicana feminist scholars are rethinking intersectionality in their projects. The chapter centered on the concept of demastery presented by Soto (2010). Soto's (2010) demastery interrupts our notion of being in relation to one another by asking one to let go of their mastery on identity. Very similar to Muñoz (1999), Soto (2010) is asking people to disidentify with their identity markers as a possibility to theorize and practice from different places such as a place of desire, pain, resilience, and much more. Demastery pays attention to the "something not yet come"—what Soto (2010) describes as the unintelligble (Soto, 2010, p. 2). Soto's (2010) remapping of intersectionality invites researchers to revise how critical qualitative research is using the concept and to retool it. For researchers, Soto's (2010) demastery concept asks that our research categories be wordier and less contained. So, how do we go beyond identity politics to engage with research that unsettles positionality or identity markers? This question is challenging given that as an *atravesada* there is a constant process of letting go and bringing back, shedding and bringing back of concepts, terms, ideas, etc. At what point(s) can researchers demaster? At what point(s) can researchers disidentify? Is it demastery of you as researcher? Is it demastery of research projects? Is demastery a myth? What is being assumed in the process of demastering and

disidentifying? Even when demastering and disidentifying—researchers are still editing, interpreting, representing, and performing mastery. Do we have to master the mainstream/whitestream tools of research to do something else? As an *atravesada* researcher these questions are important to consistently think through and rework within research praxes. These questions related to intersectionality allow ways to rethink practices of doing research. The concepts, demastery and disidentification offer possibilities to consistently unsettle, reframe, and reassess. I do not believe that these concepts are the answer to our methodological questions but rather they are concepts that remind researchers to continuously revise our intentions with research. For the *atravesada* researcher, each research project cycles differently and each moment of reentering the serpent by engaging with reflection looks different, thus I argue that there must be constant rethinking of intersectionality in critical qualitative research.

Conclusion: (Re) entering the serpent

Serpentine Writing

> Writing with the crooked lines of our lives against the grain of dominating cultures is a serpentine journey of embodied, increasingly aware, spiritualized being. It is a multiply sourced feeling-sensing-thinking-being of constant growth and fluidity that seeks to make harmonious connections across time and space, across cultures and geographies, across the span of the living and the discarnate, in search of deeper truths—the kinds of truths that will allow us to recapture the power and energy necessary to transform self, humanity, and society for the greater good. Shedding the old skins of profoundly wounded and wounding excessively profit driven and materialist culture, s/Spirit which is l/Life escapes moribund ideologies, with the heart as a compass, shifting in transformation, enacting the yes that lies within our powers. (Perez, 2014, p. 30)

The next steps in critical qualitative research are never ending. Thus, this dissertation project's intention is in line with Perez's (2014) idea of serpentine writing and thinking. The dichotomous lines and tropes suggest that research is continuously

shedding itself and goes through rebirth and a process of reimagining all the time. Creating different opportunities to support and mentor critical researchers, unpacking the researcher subjectivity, and rethinking community and accessibility are some of the ways researchers can be answerable to the dichotomous lines and tropes in research. The content analyses coupled with the *testimonios/pláticas* also suggest that researchers should continue to think with concepts and ideas such as *la atravesada*, emotion as a methodological tool, decolonization, and intersectionality. These key concepts and terms remind researchers to fully engage with their own serpentine process which is a "journey embodied, increasingly aware, spiritualized being" that perhaps will bring awareness to other concepts and terms helpful in unsettling research (Perez, 2014, p. 30). (Re)entering the serpent allows ways to rethink practices of doing critical qualitative research. It invites researchers to enter in dialogue with different conflicting and dangerous understandings of doing research, unsettling what is known, moving the research closer to recapturing "the power and energy necessary to transform self, humanity, and society for the greater good" (Perez, 2014, p. 30). Lastly, the content analyses and *testimonios/pláticas* make an urgent call to researchers to reclaim research as a healing tool. The literature and *testimonios/pláticas* invite researchers to shed the old skin, healing and (re)opening wounds as a way of tracing the history of research and complexing the research process.

As an *atravesada,* these research questions, tropes in research, and key concepts/terms presented are necessary in order to conduct research and practice that does more than critique existing power structures but rather creates space for new and alternative social relationships that are not focused on mastering (Tanaka & Cruz, 1998).

The possibility for researchers to conduct research is ripe with contradictions and limitations. However, researchers must continue to work through these limitations to create spaces and places that engage with possibilities that continuously transform the research(er).

APPENDIX A

CONSENT COVER LETTER

The Problematics of Method: Decolonial Strategies in Education and Chicana/Latina Testimonio/Plática

The purpose of this research study is to examine the *testimonio/plática* of eight Chicana/Latina educator scholars who are actively engaging Chicana Feminist Theories and/or Indigenous Theories in education and who use these theories to think through/trouble research methods. These *testimonios/pláticas* alongside a review of key text shed light on the problematics of conducting research in academic spaces.

I am doing this study because I want to identify and analyze the tensions of conducting research with/in education. To further understand research as a site and process of healing, critical reflexivity, and decolonizing *conocimiento* this study will add depth to the dialogue regarding the power relations within educational research. This investigation contributes to the work of all researchers in all disciplines and to the conversations around research paradigms.

The data collection methods will focus on the following research questions:

1) What methodological tools are available for decolonial strategies within institutional university research?

2) What is at stake for the *atravesada* researcher in choosing critical qualitative research in educational research and practice?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to:
Participate in two one-one collection of your *testimonio*. Our time in both of these meetings is between 1-2 hours. I will ask you to share your research and teaching philosophy, curriculum vitae, and any important materials that shape the way you conduct research and/or engage with research praxis. I may ask questions related to your educational and personal background. The *testimonio/plática* is guided by a questionnaire protocol. However, we don't have to follow questionnaire protocol. The protocol is designed to facilitate the discussion not to control the direction of your *testimonio/plática*.

In addition, to the two one-on-one *testimonio/plática* I will ask you to engage in two emails dialogue prompted by topics associated with the research questions. These take place promptly after the two one on one *testimonio/plática* sessions. These responses are not timed. However, I would ask that you respond within one week. They can be as long as you like and responses are not limited to writing. You are able to upload images, video, performance, or audio to respond to the questions and/or themes.

After the *testimonio/plática* sessions and email dialogue, I will set up a follow-up. Depending on your availability, these follow-ups will take place via phone, email, or if possible, in-person. Our follow-up will not go beyond 30 min. All signed consent forms, audio-recorded interviews and transcribed data will be stored in a lock and key filing cabinet in the researcher's office. I will separate any identifying information that you provide from the responses that you give.

If you have any questions complaints or if you feel you have been harmed by this research please contact Nancy Huante-Tzintzun at 209-670-5584 or Dr. Wanda Pillow at 801 587-7805.You may also email Nancy Huante-Tzintzun at nancy_huante@yahoo.com

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu.

You participation in this research project is completely voluntary. As a volunteer in this project, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions and still remain in the project.

Thank you for your participation in this project participation.

TESTIMONIO/PLÁTICA PROTOCOL

Institution(s): University of Utah
Testimonialista:
Guiding Testimonio Questionnaire Module:

    A. Background/Tu Academic Corrido

    B. Mentorship Training as an Instructor and Researcher

    C. Teaching and Research Framework

    D. Past, Present, and Future: *Y Que del* researcher *atravesada*

Other
Topics:_____
_____
____
Documents
Obtained_____
_____
____
Post Testimonio
Comments_____
_____
_____
Introductory Protocol
To facilitate our note taking, we would like to audio tape our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any timeif you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.
I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. The testimonio/plática and blog are guided by a questionnaire protocol. However, we don't have to follow questionnaire protocol. The protocol is designed to facilitate the discussion not to control the direction of your

testimonio/plática.

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Nancy Huante-Tzintzun, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Utah in the Department of Education, Culture, and Society. You were selected as a possible participant in this project because you are a higher education faculty member who is interested in research methods (i.e. interrogation of theory and practice of qualitative methods, has published for QSE or related journals); who's research interest involve decoloniality; who use Chicana/Latina and Indigenous feminist thought, anticolonial, and/or decolonial thinking in their work; and who contributes to the research in education (could be interdisciplinary). If you decide to participate, you are required to give your signed authorization to participate in this project. The purpose of this project is an effort to understand conversations around research paradigms in doing research in education.

A. Background/Tu Corrido

    Tell me how do you self-identify within academia? How did you come to this academic corrido?
    How does the item you brought with you today connect with your corrido and your role as a researcher?

B. Mentorship Training as an Instructor and Researcher (this is a working title)

    What were your experiences entering the academy? Student? Faculty?
    How do your experiences impact your teaching and research praxis?
    In what ways do your different positionalities play a role in research, activism, teaching and learning?

C. Teaching and Research Framework

    What are the key shifts in the field of research that you've experienced? What are the primary challenges?
    In what ways do conversations regarding decolonization play a role in how you imagine research?
    How do you perceive risk in educational research?

D. Past, Present, and Future: *Y Que del* researcher *atravesado*

    What would it mean to reinvent critical methodologies for you?
    Does the process of decolonizing conocimiento appeal to your re-articulation of qualitative research and overall methodological spaces?
    What about conversations about global alliances, do these influence your own philosophy? If so, how?

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