

Concientización:
A Journal of Chican@ & Latin@ Experience and Thought
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Concientización is an interdisciplinary, refereed student journal dedicated to promoting the study of Chican@ & Latin@ experience and thought. We are committed to creating alliances across boundaries of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. In that spirit, we incorporate in our mission the study of Latin@s and Chican@s in diaspora; the study of racial, ethnic, class, sexual, and gender identities; and the study of community and nation building.

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CONTENTS

	Editor's Note to Reader	5
Section One	Chican@/Latin@s and Language in the U.S.	6
Una Longinovic	“Listen and talk to me <i>por favor</i> : Being multilingual in the United States	7
Dominic James Ledesma Perzichilli	Language Support Services in the Public Schools: A Framework for Including the Underserved Parents of Public Education	10
Section Two	Transnationalism & Latin@ Immigration	23
SarahMaria Donohue	The Permeation of Cultural Borders: A Further look at the Role of Transnational Motherhood within the Latina Community	24
Joel Meyerson	Glenn Beck's America: A Frightening Place	30
Alida Cardos Whaley	the story of this country Birdlike Ships	35
Section Three	Poetry from CLS 332 Latinas: Self Identity & Social Change	41
Ashley Sanabría	We the Women	43
Cortney Paulson	The Strong One	44
Jessi Indresano	Achilles Complex	45
Ashley Sanabría	Hardship Is Not my Mother	46
Cortney Paulson	Family	47
Edgar Cevilla	Canela	48
Megan Hall	Grandma	49
Mariana Berbert	Lavender	50
Ashley Sanabría	Beep Bop	51

Mariana Berbert	Lace means womanhood	53
Jessi Indresano	Family Portrait	54
Section Four	Reflections in Thirdspace: CLS 330	57
Cassandra Ramos	“Allies ≠ Saviors”	58
Rachel Hoogasian	On doing “hood” work in an academic institutions; Allies ≠ Saviors	59
Michelle Johnson	On emotional work in social change efforts	62
SarahMaria Donohue	The Injustices within Research	64
Angelica Salinas	On being accountable to the communities and organizations that we work in support of	66
Dario Parra	On Self-determination, and A Letter to a Loved One	67

Editor's Note to Reader

The works contained within this volume represent not only the scholarship of students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but also their passions. This past year has been marked by the largest protests the state of Wisconsin has ever seen, signifying a rise in political activism by Wisconsinites of every political persuasion—most notably, those in favor of worker's rights. It may come as no surprise that many of the essays included in this volume of work reflect the greater political climate and purposely advocate for change.

The scholarship in this year's issue can be read as fitting into two broad topic areas: 1) Chican@/Latin@s and Language in the U.S. and 2) Transnationalism and Latin@ Immigration. We also have the pleasure of including two special sections: "Poetry from CLS 332 Latinas: Self Identity & Social Change" and "Reflections in Thirdspace: CLS 330," both collections of works emerging from CLS courses. A broad theme that materializes from reading this volume as a whole is an understanding of how the individual and the institution affect each other in powerful and often cyclical ways.

The journal's cover, as well as the covers of several past issues of *Concientización*, is a detail photograph from the mural in the Chican@ & Latin@ Studies Library. The mural was painted by renowned Chicano artist, Malaquias Montoya with the help of Deborah Vasquez and other students. It seems fitting that this issue's cover features a skeleton, or *calavera*. It was a skeleton that served as the voice of social and political commentary within the iconic work of the late nineteenth century Mexican printmaker, José Guadalupe Posada. We hope the reader finds that the essays in this volume continue in the tradition of such social and political discourse.

This year we would especially like to thank the Writing Center, especially Rebecca Lorimer, for her help in guiding student scholars within the CLS Program this year and in years past.

Section One: Chican@/Latin@s and Language in the U.S.

In this section, the authors offer informed analyses and reflections about language and policies surrounding language inform the political, educational, and social position of Latin@s in the United States. Each author takes on the issue of bilingualism from both a personal and academic perspective.

Una Longinovic introduces this theme by sharing a personal examination of “English Only” policies. Her synopsis of current language policies—both de facto and de jure—points out how such policies contribute to the construction of a marginalized identity for bilingual and multilingual individuals. She proposes that we work towards a greater acceptance of all languages within our borders because the acceptance of a language contributes to the acceptance of a people.

Dominic Ledesma Perzichilli surveys the language support services program within a local public school system in which he worked. His essay illustrates how language, among other things, can create a significant barrier that prevents families of non-native English speakers from being fully involved in their children’s educational institutions. His essay concludes with policy recommendations for improved language services to parents of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.

Listen and talk to me *por favor*: Being multilingual in the United States

Una Longinovic

As a child of parents who did not grow up speaking English, I always felt fortunate to be bilingual. When I was younger, my sister and I had our own “secret language” that we could use when we wanted to point out a hairdo gone wrong or to complain about slow service in a restaurant without being understood. As I became older and moved out of my parents’ home, the need to use my “other” native tongue of Serbian diminished and intertwined more and more with ever growing number of English speakers. At the same time, the two languages of my early childhood were supplemented by a third linguistic code I learned in school: Spanish. It is this particular language that for the first time in my life made me long for a community that would allow me to be able to switch from one language to another without pausing to consider if the listener would be able to follow along.

I felt proud that I could communicate in the words of my ancestors as well as with the words of my birth-country; yet it was puzzling to me why the country of my birth did not accept and understand me unless I spoke solely in their “official language” of English. It caused me to think back to when I first entered kindergarten and was sent to a special class for foreigners, so called English as a Second Language. Although I was brought up bilingual and English was one of my first languages, my linguistic skills were questioned when I somewhat mischievously spiced up my otherwise perfect American accent with some “less than common” words. Neither a social security number, birth certificate, nor U.S. passport were enough to place me with my “less ethnic” *compañeros*.¹ Since my ability to communicate was doubted and questioned, I was finally exiled from my classroom and sent to a “special class.”

Now, as a trilingual student in higher education I ask myself why this supposed “melting pot” country of immigrants does not accept the various languages of its own citizens in the public realm of society. My academic as well as personal interests and research have led me to look into the rapidly growing discrimination against the Spanish language in work and school environments in the United States, as well as the emotional wounds and displacement that it brings to Latino/as in this country.

In fact, Latinos are now the fastest growing “minority” group in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center). They are not only contributing immensely to this country’s work force and economy, but also enriching its culture with their various arts, cuisines, and customs. According to the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) from the US Bureau of the Census, there are 35 million U.S. residents (5 and older) who speak Spanish at home, meaning that *hispanohablantes*² make up 12% of the people living in the United States. Furthermore, over half of these Spanish speakers report that they manage English “very well” (Korzenny). I am astonished by the blatant discrimination in the mainstream American workforce, education, and media that exists despite these statistics. It urges me to ask why American society (and while I understand that the USA has appropriated this term for its own use it should be referring to both continents: one

¹ schoolmates

² Spanish-speakers

mostly English and the other *mostly* Spanish speaking) rejects such a huge part of its (fast-growing) self. How can we consider ourselves a destination of endless opportunities when we cannot accept the native tongue of our Latino/Chicano citizens? The linguistic discrimination in the United States is especially conspicuous in the regions that lie along the Mexican border. Historically, this is related to the fact that my birth country at one point in its past “took over” a vast portion of its Spanish speaking neighbor.

Specifically, I have chosen to examine the recent propositions in the state of Arizona to better understand “English-Only” idealism. According to the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, propositions of English-Only laws “provoke the wrath of those who view concessions to linguistic diversity as fundamentally un-American” (Bratt 1). Bratt continues by pointing out that English-Only policies reduce the status of Spanish speakers in the public realm of society, thus perpetuating an increase in racism, hatred, and discrimination. The border becomes not only a geographical and political marker that separates two pieces of land, but also a division of people who share similar concerns in their well-being: education, health, and shelter. These divisive policies create enemies out of populations who should instead work together. The discrimination against US-born Chicanos and Latinos not only contradicts the declared ethos of our country, but also creates a climate of “estrangement and mutual negation” between those sole English-speakers and the rapidly growing multilingual community (Bratt 1).

Looking at current trends, the picture becomes even bleaker: not only have privately owned businesses begun adopting such English-Only rules, but Arizona itself has been pushing for permanent, statewide policy changes in the past ten years to both language and related anti-immigrant policies. In 2000, Proposition 203 banned bilingual education. In 2004, Proposition 200 proposed banning public services to undocumented immigrants and threatening public servants with jail time for providing assistance to undocumented immigrants (Wilgoren 1). The situation seems to have worsened with the addition of the new immigration (SB1070/HB2162) and anti-ethnic studies (HB2281) laws signed by Governor Jan Brewer on April 30 and May 11, 2010 (Robbins 3). SB1070/HB2162 allows police to determine if a person is in the U.S. legally based on one’s physical appearance and accent (further perpetuating racial profiling and discrimination) in the absence of documentation. In the educational realm, HB2281 legally prohibits ethnic studies programs in Arizona state schools (Robbins 3).

As an undergraduate at a public university I am appalled by the proposal of this law. It is an example of the close-mindedness and xenophobia which makes ethnic studies so important in the education of all young Americans. Broadening students’ knowledge of other cultures, ethnicities and “worlds” is not only fundamental to teaching basic respect of individuals who come from a different part of the world, but is crucial in the fight against linguistic (as well as other forms of) discrimination. Law professor and scholar Juan Perea asserts that “Educators who care about linguistic and cultural diversity must educate the public about why languages other than English matter, and why it is foolish to squelch, rather than nurture, the linguistic resources extant in the various heritages of Americans” (Perea 137). I believe that without acceptance of bilingualism in the United States there can be no real progress in the integration and sustenance of a country made up of immigrants.

Bilingual speakers on the borderlands are victims of political consequences beyond their control as they are ostracized and disadvantaged from the time they enroll in

formal schooling. As a result of voter-mandated language discrimination in Arizona, English-speaking students may develop a mentality that they are better than Spanish-speaking students. Solórzano and Yosso write that Chicana and Chicano children attend schools whose “educational conditions are some of the most inadequate in the United States” (37). They argue that the elementary schools that serve most Latino and Chicano children emphasize remediation, the slowing of instruction, and rigid ability grouping (37). These schools generally do not have quality programs for second-language students and they use books that either exclude or reinforce negative stereotypes of Latinos/as. In addition, schools with mostly Latino/a population receive less money per child than the national average (Solórzano and Yosso 38). The new ban on ethnic studies takes away the chance for many Latino students to gain any positive reinforcements of their own culture within the educational system.

Children who work alongside their parents in the fields and attend public school find that neither their rights as laborers nor as learners are protected (Valenzuela 2). The institutions of the US border regions invest their interest, time, and funding mostly in the majority population, thus putting those young adults of Latin American descent at a huge disadvantage to succeed as they attempt to enter the workforce. Despite the fact that businesses often require bilingual workers, their need for these workers does not trump their need to keep power out of the hands of the bilingual population (Bratt 1). How can someone who knows more, who speaks two languages instead of one, be punished for it, I keep asking myself? In the borderlands region, schooling is not only reproductive, in the sense that the school functions to support and normalize the status quo (existing social order), but it is also detrimental in the way that “it divests these youth of important social and cultural resources, leaving them progressively vulnerable to academic failure” (Valenzuela 3).

This struggle with of identity, of feeling caught in the middle of a fight between two linguistic worlds, is a very prominent theme in Chicana literature. Chicana author Gloria Anzaldúa has captured the hardship of struggling between the “worlds” of the English and Spanish language in her piece appropriately titled “Linguistic Terrorism.” She begins by referring to herself as a *deslenguada* (one without a tongue). Chicanos identify with this mentality because growing up speaking Chicano Spanish (a sort of English/Spanish mixture) causes the feeling of neither fitting in to the English nor the Spanish worlds. The female narrative voice in this piece finds herself in a sea of ambiguity and mixed messages since it seems that to she was not good enough for either, whether it was a matter of her accent or lack of one: “Racially, culturally, linguistically *somos huérfanos*- we speak an orphan tongue” (Anzaldúa 293).

To many native Spanish speakers, Chicana Spanish is perceived as an illegitimate, bastard language while to Americans, Chicana Spanish is still seen as foreign and imperfect. Anzaldúa discusses the uncomfortable feeling many Chicanas have when speaking Spanish with Latinas since they are “afraid of their censure.” (Anzaldúa 293) Her point is simple: “Their [foreign-born Latino/as’] language was not outlawed in their countries,” and they had a whole lifetime to be immersed in their native tongue. This idea, I feel, is fundamental to understanding the cause of linguistic discrimination in the country of my birth: the great division of two worlds, on either side of *la frontera*³, that

³ The border

refuse to mix. Yet, there was a mixing which created a new, third language and culture that both dominant groups choose to devalue. That is why Gloria Anzaldúa and countless Chicana authors continue to give the power of words to this *deslenguada* group, creating a new voice in literature and education, healing the emotional wounds of the past and embracing the Chicana/o identity. As Anzaldúa states so perfectly, we are our language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. We must all embrace our own voices to stop such propositions and laws like those in Arizona (sadly the state whose own name has clear Spanish echoes of *zonas áridas*⁴), for if we do not we will lose countless stories, poems, ideas, and points of view that are so crucial in the education of a young Americans: those *Americanos* whose own ancestors had to fit into a new realm of language on which this country is built on today. And as for me and my story, I will keep telling it in all three languages of my identity. After all, we are our languages!

About the Author:

Una Longinovic is a fourth-year student at UW-Madison majoring in Spanish and Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies. Una works for the Madison School District at a Spanish language-immersion elementary school, where she hopes to further her mission to educate bilingually and teach acceptance to the next generation of American students.

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⁴ Dry areas

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Language Support Services in the Public Schools: A Framework for Including the Underserved Parents of Public Education

Dominic James Ledesma Perzichilli

Abstract

Language support¹ services are used in some public schools to address existing linguistic and cultural barriers that inhibit the involvement of non-native English-speaking families. This essay identifies such services used in the Minneapolis Public School system and explains how language support successfully promotes involvement by empowering parents to have more direct participation in their children's education. Despite current efforts to combat existing linguistic and cultural barriers, there is still a need for concrete policies aimed at reducing these barriers. Recommendations for improving language support services within the public schools are also provided in this essay.

Introduction

While children of Spanish-speaking immigrant families tend to show significant growth in their English language skills as a result of public education in the United States, the linguistic abilities of their parents are often more limited. In 2007, Shirin Hakimzadeh and D'Vera Cohn published a report for the Pew Hispanic Center on English language usage among Latino immigrant families which concluded that “for most immigrants, English is not the primary language they use in either setting [work or home], but for their grown children it is.” My own observations and experiences while working within the Minneapolis Public Schools uphold the idea that language, among other things, creates a significant barrier that prevents families of non-native English speakers from being fully involved in their children's educational institutions. This idea is also supported by a recent study that relates specifically to Latinos and education (see Turney, Kristin; Kao, Grace, 2009). When language is a limiting factor and effective services for removing existing linguistic/cultural barriers are lacking, non-native English-speaking parents become disempowered within the schools and are forced into the role of passive observers. This essay is based on a review of scholarly articles, interviews with district representatives, and the author's personal experiences as a member of a bilingual/bicultural support staff serving as an interpreter and a translator in the public schools of Minneapolis.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students constitute nearly one-quarter of the total student population within the Minneapolis Public School system (MPS, 2009). Educators recognize that the education of LEP students also requires a functional methodology for appropriately and adequately including their non-native English-speaking parents. This essay addresses three topics. Firstly, it identifies language support

¹ The term “language support” is defined by this essay's author as the necessary resources that are utilized to bridge an existing linguistic and cultural gap.

services and shows how they serve as a practical and necessary means for providing parents of English Language Learners with equal access to participation in every phase of their children's public education. Secondly, it identifies and categorizes three different forms of language support (i.e. interpretation, translation, and the employment of bilingual/bicultural staff) currently used in the public schools of Minneapolis and elsewhere. Thirdly, it discusses the widespread lack of uniform implementation strategies for including non-native English-speaking parents with language support services. Finally, it offers suggestions to educational administrators as to which strategies are best for ensuring that language support services are being implemented and administered with the utmost effectiveness. I conclude with recommendations for how to provide a well-developed language support policy that includes structured strategies for successful implementation that will in due course bolster involvement on behalf of the non-native English-speaking parents and improve the overall performance of LEP students. It is hoped that the findings in this essay will not only raise awareness about the importance of effective language support services within public school systems like the Minneapolis Public Schools but also help improve policy development and implementation in other school systems throughout the United States.

Language Support Services: Enabling Parents to Fully Access their Children's Education

The main objective in developing policy and outlining solid implementation strategies regarding the use of language support services within the public school systems is to place non-native English-speaking parents on an equal footing with their children's academic institution. Parent involvement is critical to a child's overall academic success (Chen et al., 2008), allowing them to engage in direct dialogue with school administrators and be active participants in their children's education. Within Latino communities, parental education and language are among the many variables that affect the progress of youth in schools today (Suárez-Orozco, 2009). Enhancing parent communication through language support services is likely to positively impact the role parents play in their child's education. It is essential that language support services and other family involvement practices are provided (Chen et al., 2008).

The Communications Department of the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), which handles interpretation and translation requests district-wide, supports this stance. One of the goals listed on its website is "to improve student learning through enhanced parent communication" (MPS, 2010). One of the ways MPS enhances parent communication in a multilingual setting is by having three bilingual communicators who specifically focus on communications in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali, which are the three most spoken languages in the district after English. By understanding the practicality of sound language support services for non-native English-speaking parents, school districts like MPS can encourage and sustain parental involvement among a diverse population of parents.

The Minneapolis Public School District: Addressing the Need for Language Support Services

As stated previously, the Minneapolis Public Schools has an undeniable need for language support services — especially in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. There is a great diversity of languages spoken by students and families in the Minneapolis Public Schools and its sister district of Saint Paul. At the start of the 2008-2009 academic year, enrollment data from Minneapolis Public Schools and Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) showed that over 40% of the families in both districts (with a combined student population of 73,000+), speak a home language other than English. Spanish is one of the top two languages in both districts (16% of families in MPS and 11% in SPPS).

This essay examines this need for the Spanish-speaking population, which represents the largest group of MPS families that speak a home language other than English. Furthermore, language support services in the Spanish language are the most developed in the Minneapolis schools with regard to availability and effectiveness. While this essay shows the need for Spanish-speaking populations, a relevant language support policy and a plan for implementation should be considered by any school district that has LEP students and non-native English-speaking parents.

School enrollment that reflects linguistic diversity and the topic of language support services needs to be dealt with proactively. The strong presence of non-native English-speaking families reflected in the enrollment records of the Minneapolis Public School District has not gone unnoticed. In fact, it has prompted some institutional changes in recent years regarding the availability and delivery of language support services. In spite of the challenges that still exist for properly utilizing language support services within schools, efforts to better reach out to non-native English-speaking families are improving as certain institutional changes have come about. Within the past six years, the MPS has done the following: it has designated a department to handle district-wide requests for translations and interpreters, it has created bilingual/bicultural family liaison positions for specific cultural communities, it has also made it a priority to hire bilingual/bicultural professionals, it has actively sought to broaden its interpreter pool to include underrepresented or “high-need” languages, and lastly, it has invested in professional technical equipment that assists in the delivery of language support services (V. Lor, bilingual communicator, August 9, 2010). These are all of the ways that MPS has tried to provide better language support services to engage and involve a broader more diverse parent base. Without analyzing the effectiveness of these changes in detail, what is evident is that crucial steps are being taken toward bridging the existing communicative barriers between non-native English-speaking parents and the schools.

The Types of Language Support within the Minneapolis Public Schools

In general terms, “language support” encompasses the necessary resources that are utilized to bridge an existing linguistic and cultural gap (Ledesma, 2010). The concept of language support, while perhaps not an entirely standardized term in the lexicon of educators, is better known within schools as the utilization of interpretation, translation, and bilingual/bicultural support staff. Currently within the Minneapolis Public Schools and elsewhere, these language support services are employed to address and combat existing linguistic/cultural barriers that inhibit relations between non-native

English-speaking parents and the school. The public school system of Minneapolis currently utilizes these three different forms of language support to carry out this task.

Direct vs. Indirect Language Support

While most educators validate the importance of language support, there is often confusion and/or misunderstanding surrounding the specific role of different services and how they are to be administered. For organizational purposes, I will not only define these three forms of language support but will also organize them based on functionality. The two primary types of language support are direct language support and indirect language support; the former includes bilingual/bicultural staff, while the latter includes translation and interpretation services.

Language Support in the Minneapolis Public Schools	
<u>Direct Language Support</u>	<u>Indirect Language Support</u>
Bilingual/Bicultural Staff (administrators, educators and paraprofessionals)	Translation Interpretation

Employing individuals who possess the additional linguistic/cultural competencies needed to effectively handle administrative services for non-native English-speaking families is one of the ways in which some schools are improving their inclusiveness of different cultural communities. Direct language support is utilized any time a staff member at a school assists a student or his or her family in a language other than English (Ledesma, 2010). Some of the ways bilingual/bicultural staff members assist non-native English-speaking students and parents are by walking them through enrollment procedures, general school communications on updates and resources, explaining policies, translating written materials, and interpreting during school events (C. Roiz, bilingual parent liaison, April 20, 2010). In most cases, bilingual/bicultural staff members serve as contact persons *in situ* who can directly address the needs of non-native English-speaking students and their parents regarding academic and school matters. With bilingual/bicultural staff on hand, the potential for linguistic or cultural barriers impeding communication is greatly diminished if not eliminated altogether. Bilingual/bicultural staff persons who can provide direct language support are most likely to be found in schools that have significant percentages of non-native English-speaking families within a given cultural/linguistic community.

Whereas direct language support is ideal and may be an effective way for schools to serve a higher percentage of non-native English-speaking families, it is not without its limitations. Depending on the school location and their relative number of such families, efforts to hire someone with this specific skill set may be at the mercy of an already restricted budget or a local applicant pool with limited skills. Hence, offering direct language support *in situ* may not always be the most viable and cost-effective measure. For these reasons, among others, schools that wish to improve services for non-native English-speaking families may explore indirect language support services as another option.

Indirect language support means using any intermediary resource, such as an interpreter or translator, to assist in the communication process (Ledesma, 2010). The proper employment of indirect language support possesses all the necessary potential to effectively meet the needs of a school's linguistic and cultural communities — regardless of their relative numeric representation when considering the population as a whole. In addition to this, it also has a high potential of being carried out in a financially responsible manner.

Trained Interpreters and Translators: Beyond Bilingualism

When it comes to providing interpretation and translation services, what is often overlooked is the specific skill set required to carry out each task effectively. If every chef is a cook, does that make every cook a chef? The answer is no. Interpretation (oral linguistic transference) and translation (written linguistic transference) are two similar but different tasks that need to be provided by professionals who have technical training. Delivery of language support services by qualified individuals ensures that interpretations and translations are carried out with the utmost effectiveness. Aside from being fluent in two languages, it is also imperative that interpreters and translators possess the basic professional capacities that are demanded of them. Understanding cultural nuances in both languages, having an extensive vocabulary in both, being able to express thoughts clearly and accurately, being able to make sound decisions, and having a good memory are all qualities that are demanded of both interpreters and translators (Piper, 2010). Not all individuals hired as bilingual/bicultural staff in public schools are capable and qualified to translate or interpret in a variety of situations. Individuals trained to interpret and translate are better able to achieve “invisibility” during the communication process (Venuti, 1999). This means that when indirect language support services are handled effectively by qualified individuals, they have the potential to make the communication process seamless. Effective language support services do not interfere with the relay of messages, despite the fact that both constituents are communicating through an intermediary.

Policies regarding Language Support Services in Public Education: A Shadowy Concept

Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) clearly and directly states legal accountability at district, state, and federal levels for involving non-native English-speaking parents. However, legal accountability for including them through the implementation of language support strategies does not exist. My contention is that if no policy explicitly states the importance of language support services and no guidelines for implementation are given, parents are commonly left uninformed and inadvertently excluded from important school matters that affect their children's education. There is currently no policy at the federal, state or district level affecting the Minneapolis schools that explicitly and comprehensively communicates the importance of language support services or how they should be implemented effectively. While policies and guidelines at the federal and state levels may recognize and even mandate the promotion of parental involvement initiatives within schools, institutional efforts fall short of the target when it

comes to uniformly addressing the issue as they fail to include functional guidelines and strategies for implementation of language support services at all levels. Given this problem, a great need exists to develop a uniform policy that directly supports and clearly outlines the provisions of language support services.

While some framework is typically in place to address existing barriers between schools and non-native English-speaking parents, it is my opinion that the appropriate policies are often lacking. Based on my participation within the system, schools that lack a framework for effectively carrying out language support services are more than likely to be destined to fail, despite having meaningful objectives. Without a clear policy regarding these services and their effective implementation, schools are left with the choice of either not providing them or providing them in a fruitless manner. Failing to deliver language support services in an effective manner provides a disservice to non-native English-speaking families and is a poor reflection on the schools' efforts to include the parent community as a whole.

Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2005) explicitly identifies non-native English-speaking parents as ones who may experience "barriers to greater participation" and calls for schools and local educational agencies to "design strategies for more effective parent involvement." It recommends doing so after a thorough evaluation of existing parent involvement policies. What it does not do, however, is provide specific direction in outlining a concrete plan for language support services, let alone identifying them as a tangible and practical parent involvement strategy. While states echo requirements and standards mandated by this federal program, only the states and schools that qualify for and accept federal funding are held accountable. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is responsible for reviewing Title I parent involvement plans for schools as part of the NCLB. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) mirrors certain policies stated by the NCLB, especially the promotion of parent involvement. At the state level, resources for language support services are confined to the English language learner (ELL) department. While the state offers essential information for staff members and schools about working with interpreters and document translators, a specific policy framework for the uniform implementation of language support services has yet to be solidified. The guidelines and resources made available by MDE are important but do not adequately address the need to validate and enforce language support policy at the district and school level. The Minneapolis Board of Education upholds policies regarding parent involvement and communication, yet there is no specific district policy regarding the provision of language support services for families who need them (MBE, 2010). The MPS English Language Learner (ELL) Department is prepared to provide multilingual services during enrollment, but the district should also take ownership and more responsibility for making sure multilingual services are being utilized effectively in all schools and in a variety of settings.

Developing a structured plan for properly identifying, outlining, and implementing effective language support services is necessary for school districts to make sure non-native English-speaking parents are not being kept at arm's length from their children's education. For the benefit of the schools and parents alike, it is essential to draft a concrete policy that not only states the importance of language support services but also provides structured guidelines for implementing such services effectively.

Writing a specific policy at the district level for language support services will ensure that they are respected, implemented, and supported by all schools in a uniform manner.

Suggestions for District Administrators regarding the Development of Policy for the Implementation of Language Support Services

A policy regarding language support should not be seen simply as a “language issue” nor should it be simply left to an English language learner (ELL) department to resolve. A comprehensive policy for validating and implementing language support services should be adopted out of a school district’s own sense of responsibility; school districts need to hold themselves accountable for their schools in striving to meet the needs of *all* of their community’s families.

While data pertaining to the MPS may be in some ways unique to Minnesota, it may very well serve as a model for other districts seeking to pursue similar institutional initiatives that aim to provide and improve services for non-native English-speaking parents.

- 1) School districts should draft and adopt specific policy for language support services that:
 - a. recognizes the importance of language support services,
 - b. defines the language support services that are to be used by the public schools as needed (e.g., bilingual/bicultural staff, interpretation and translation),
 - c. states the important role language support services play during the educational process,
 - d. specifies the goals of language support services with regard to improving involvement among non-native English-speaking families,
 - e. outlines the parameters by which schools are to administer language support services for non-native English-speaking parents, and
 - f. designates a person at each school responsible for implementing language support services and ensuring their effectiveness.
- 2) The district administrators should collaborate with their employees, translation and interpretation professionals, and community leaders to draft guidelines for the effective implementation of language support services within the schools (e.g., a plan for schools to provide interpreting services effectively during conferences).
- 3) Bilingual/Bicultural staff should be trained and continue to benefit from professional development regarding the specific skill set required of a professional interpreter and/or translator.
- 4) The state and districts should work together to develop certification criteria for current bilingual/bicultural staff and external interpreters who accept interpretation/translation assignments within the schools. In addition to a foreign language proficiency exam, certification criteria should assess and evaluate the technical skills and ethics necessary for carrying out interpretation and translation assignments.
- 5) The district administrators should support collaboration between bilingual/bicultural staff and professional translators and interpreters to develop tools that promote uniform implementation strategies for effective interpretation

- and translation (e.g., a uniform bilingual glossary of school terms, a binding code of ethics, a designated translator for all school communications and policies, etc.).
- 6) The district should work to build professional partnerships with local translation/interpretation agencies. This would complement its existing bilingual/bicultural staff to ensure a sustainable pool of interpreters in a variety of languages. Building a professional partnership with a local agency could also lead to contractual agreements on discounted or fixed service rates without jeopardizing the provision of qualified persons to deliver language support services.
 - 7) The district should publish information regarding all language support services and resources on its website. The information should be easily accessible and kept current for the schools and community.

Conclusion

Language support services (via interpretation, translation and bilingual/bicultural staff) offer an extremely practical way to break down inhibiting linguistic and cultural barriers that exist between schools and non-native English-speaking families. It is extremely important that school administrators consider language support as a crucial tool in promoting diversity and parent involvement. Opening up a dialogue on how to better implement language support services through policies and implementation strategies will improve and build upon the delivery of a school's existing educational services. Ultimately, the administration must hold itself accountable for meeting the needs of their schools' families. Developing visible policy and a comprehensive plan to provide appropriate and adequate forms of language support is the best way of satisfying this accountability.

What is happening in the Minneapolis Public Schools is worthy of note, even though it does not explain the circumstances of every school district in the United States. While Spanish-speaking immigrant families may not account for 100% of the population in the United States that experiences linguistic and cultural barriers, the challenges experienced by this population within the public schools can be easily applied to other groups who find themselves in a similar situation. Likewise, what is happening to the demographics of the Minneapolis Public Schools may not speak entirely for all other school districts around the state, region, or nation. However, institutional responses due to shifting social demographics and an influx of non-native English-speaking families may encourage other districts and states to examine, adopt, or develop new policies based on experiencing similar circumstances. Lastly, there are important considerations that need to be taken into account when implementing language support services at an institutional level. While there are existing language support initiatives in the MPS and other public schools systems, there is still plenty of room for improvement. This can best be achieved by reevaluating, revamping, improving, and solidifying current implementation strategies. The better our schools reach out to today's generation of non-native English-speaking families, the better prepared their children and future generations will be to work toward a brighter and more promising future.

Acknowledgements

This essay is dedicated to Luis García Tovar:

Even in the face of grave challenges and uncertainty, you decided to cross that border to pursue your dreams. That decision has made all the difference in your world in all the same ways that it has in mine.

Un agradecimiento especial va dirigido a Richard Finks Whitaker, director de la Maestría en Traducción e Interpretación Español-Inglés de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, México.

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After graduating from UW-Madison with a BA in Spanish and Italian along with a certificate in Chicano Studies, Dominic pursued a master's degree in translation and interpretation Spanish-English from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara. His current research efforts and interests lie in the development and implementation of sound language support policies within the public schools. He believes that such policies have a positive impact on involvement between LEP parents and their children's respective school communities.

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Section Two: Transnationalism & Latin@ Immigration

Section two contains articles that explore the impact of transnationalism and Latino immigration on the United States. While immigration is not a part of all Latin@s' experience, it continues to be a very relevant part of the Latin@ experience in the United States.

SarahMaria Donahue summarizes the phenomenon of transnational motherhood, including the major challenges a transnational mother faces. She concludes by asking the reader to support local organizations that support transnational mothers, vote in local elections, and seek out and celebrate the triumphs of these persevering women.

Joel Meyerson tackles the issue of the media's reaction to immigration with an analysis of the rhetoric used by TV pundit Glenn Beck. His examination shows how Beck systematically defines and/or redefines "American-ness" and uncovers how Beck "uses Mexicans as an outsider group in order to stir up fear" within his audience members and ultimately promote a racist mental framework for understanding transnational migration.

Alida Cardos Whaley offers the reader two poems that question the very definition of borders and nationality. In "the story of this country" she laments the loss of history, and therefore identity, of immigrants and their descendants as they become assimilated to US culture. She eloquently states, "We can't pronounce our histories/Doesn't mean they don't belong to us." In "Birdlike Ships" she speaks to the intrinsic connectivity between European, African, and indigenous peoples who share a common, intertwined history.

The Permeation of Cultural Borders: A Further look at the Role of Transnational Motherhood within the Latina Community

SarahMaria Donohue

Abstract:

This article examines the role of U.S. immigration policy in relation to the development of the contemporary cultural phenomenon of transnational motherhood. Throughout the article I will discuss the defining characteristics of transnational maternity as seen within the Latina community and identified by: cultural isolation, ethnic prejudice, depression, and financial burden. Drawing from a literature review of articles that incorporated fieldwork and interviews with Latina transnational mothers, this article seeks to provide a brief summary of a modern approach to a societal issue. I conclude by calling the community to action in demanding immigration reform and holding our local and national government responsible for its laissez-faire business policies.

“To be a mother is beautiful but it is very hard, because one has to work and care for the children. The mother is the one who suffers most. To be a mother is beautiful when a woman has everything and she can dedicate herself only to her children. She doesn’t have to work and lacks for nothing. But many mothers who are Latinas, we have to leave our children to work to give them what they need. That is the most difficult thing because she cannot attend to her children, cannot give them her time. That is also the most difficult to have to earn money so they can study, provide food [for them], because a child wants everything.”

-Rosario, a Guatemalan transnational mother¹

Migration is a natural human tendency evident throughout the colorful history of cultural and societal development. Yet the twenty first century has been plagued by the forceful utilization of physical, conceptual, and metaphysical borderlands to denote the end of one civilization and the start of another, thus enforcing restrictions on natural migration patterns. National borders serve as barriers to multiculturalism and the ethnic mosaic that pluralism constructs. They can also divide families.

Over the course of its long history, the United States has faced an influx of illegal immigration. With an estimated 10.8 million undocumented immigrants living within the United States today, it comes as no surprise that the American public is becoming increasingly interested in the demographics of this border crossing population.² However, it can be noted that Americans have transformed their fear for “illegal aliens” into a dehumanizing form of hatred for anyone who doesn’t blend into the predominantly white

¹ Ernestine M. Avila, “Transnational Motherhood and Fatherhood: Gendered Challenges and Coping,” (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2008), 103, accessed December 4, 2010, <http://digitalibrary.usc.edu/assetserver/controller/item/etd-Avila-20080715.pdf>.

² Steven Camarota and Karen Jensenius, “A Shifting Tide: Recent Trends in the Illegal Immigrant Population,” *Center for Immigration Studies* (2009): 3, accessed December 2, 2010, <http://www.cis.org/illegalimmigration-shiftingtide>.

mainstream culture. Such racially driven abhorrence leads to false assumptions and misconceptions concerning undocumented immigrants, specifically centered on their reasoning for border crossing.

It has been estimated that 35% of the undocumented immigrant population currently living within the United States are adult females and primarily Latina. From these projected numbers, it has been further hypothesized that the vast majority of these Latinas are victims of maternal migration.³ Forced to leave the familiarity of their homelands for social, political, or economical reasons, many Latinas cross the U.S.-Mexico border in hopes of finding work in order to financially support their children and families who remain in their country of origin. The stringent laws of U.S. immigration policy have bred a new form of motherhood known as transnational maternity.

Defined as “women migrating to other countries and mothering from afar,” transnational motherhood is an evolving practice witnessed among Latina immigrants within the past few decades.⁴ However, as sophisticated and eloquent as the term may sound, transnational motherhood is an arduous and complicated lifestyle that forces Latina women to experience cultural isolation, ethnic discrimination, depression, financial burden, and fear of deportation. Transnational motherhood is anything but eloquent; it is a life of personal sacrifice and cultural struggle in order to ensure greater opportunities for the future generation.

Transnational Latina mothers typically migrate to the U.S. due to the high poverty rates and deficient job opportunities in their country of origin. As one Latina explains, “Poverty makes us walk to this country...there is no choice when there is so much need...being poor makes us look towards this way...makes us be strong and keep walking”⁵. Yet fleeing poverty in a developing country to find suitable work in a developed nation is not easy. Without legal documentation it is extremely difficult for Latina women to encounter work that provides a safe operational environment, reasonable hours, and a minimum living wage. The archetypal job of transnational Latina mothers consists of live-in domestic work, placing further burdens on Latinas as the line separating work and personal time is constantly blurred.⁶ In the words of one transnational Latina mother,

“I needed money for my daughter and for my house in Honduras. So I started working in the house of an American Jewish woman. It was horrible. She paid me \$100 a week. I worked five days. I had to clean the house. I had to do everything. And she didn’t give me food. It was hell. But my daughter is so important. For her I would have done anything.”⁷

³ Ibid., 7.

⁴ Rosa Maria Sternberg, “The Plight of Transnational Latina Mothers: Mothering from a Distance,” *Field Actions Science Reports* 2 (2010): 1.

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Leah Schmalzbauer, “Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The case of Honduran Transnational Families,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66, no. 5 (2004): 1325.

⁷ Ibid.,1326.

As a consequence of their undocumented immigrant status, transnational Latina women typically work long hours and live far below the U.S. poverty line while sending remittances to their children and family.⁸

The vast majority of transnational Latina mothers perform live-in domestic work for their main source of income and it can be noted that such work conditions propagate isolation, as women are in a sense captured by their employers and trapped within the confines of their job.⁹ Therefore, a common defining characteristic of transnational Latina motherhood is cultural isolation, in which women inadvertently become victims of modern day slavery. University of Southern California professor Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo finds that: “live-in domestic workers work and live in isolation from their own families and communities, sometimes in arrangement with feudal remnants.”¹⁰ Transnational Latina mothers are exploited and forcefully separated from society in an act of secrecy that violates basic human rights. This is a pattern that has been utilized and perfected by U.S. based employers in a capitalistic society, and whose victims are oftentimes transnational Latina mothers.

Mainstream U.S. society continues to be exposed to false information regarding the “dangers” of the Latin@ immigrant community. Driven by fear, the dominant U.S. culture targets Latina women and propagates unnecessary and racially driven segregation, which in turn leads to unfair standards within housing, employment, and conditions of living.¹¹ This causes entire communities and neighborhoods of Latin@s to emerge in the poorest and lowest quality locations throughout the U.S. Unjust standards also exist due to the inability of transnational Latina mothers to rightfully report unlivable conditions on account of their undocumented status within the U.S. A side effect of cultural isolation and racial discrimination, transnational Latina mothers are forced to endure a substandard and despondent lifestyle while in the U.S.

Ethnic prejudice can also lead to linguistic discrimination. Many Latinas enter the U.S. with little to no English background and are forced to assimilate quickly. Consequently, for those Latinas who do not undergo a process of societal acculturation, transition to the mainstream U.S. lifestyle is extremely difficult. Moreover, very few opportunities to learn and practice English are available to transnational Latina mothers working around the clock to support their children. Thus, language becomes yet another societal barrier in the lives of immigrant Latinas.

Emotional struggle and depression play a key role in the life of a transnational Latina mother. Whether stimulated by the separation of a mother from her child or simply the transition into a completely new atmosphere and culture, depression is a real threat to the wellbeing of Latina women.¹² Additionally, transnational Latina mothers typically feel as though they have failed to meet their own expectations and culturally constructed responsibilities of mothering. University of Southern California sociologist Ernestine Avila finds that for a Latina mother, her identity “Continues to be largely constructed

⁸ Ibid., 1326-1328.

⁹ Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, “‘I’m Here, But I’m There’: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood,” *Gender and Society* 11, No. 5 (1997): 551-553.

¹⁰ Ibid., 555.

¹¹ Leah Schmalzbauer, “Disruptions, Dislocations, and Inequalities: Transnational Latino/a Families Surviving the Global Economy,” *North Carolina Law Review* 88 (2010): 1858-1859.

¹² Sternberg, “The Plight of Transnational Latina Mothers: Mothering from a Distance,” 3-5.

around her role as a mother, and often her success is measured by her success as a parent.”¹³ Taking this into account, transnational mothers who leave their children behind are likely to feel some sense of failure when she cannot satisfy the societal expectations of motherhood including aiding in the nurturing and care giving of their children, witnessing their children grow and develop, or even such simplistic actions as preparing food for their children. This failure, often internalized, consequently results in emotional pain and suffering. Regardless of the cause, depression is a serious detriment to Latina immigrants who rely on their health in order to maintain a job and secure a better future for their children. Therefore, it requires an extremely strong, driven, and passionate Latina woman to become a transnational mother.

Beyond depression, stress is a common psychological effect experienced by transnational Latina mothers. Feeling pressure to support their children and extended families across the border, many transnational Latina mothers find themselves living within a constant cycle of anxiety and poverty.¹⁴ At times, the burden of sending remittances causes tremendous negative feelings associated with guilt, stress, and liability. As one Latina described her transnational experience, “And sometimes I just can’t do it. It’s hard. But you have to help by giving a little money so they can buy some clothes, buy some shoes. And for food, because now they don’t even have money for food, and it’s very tough.”¹⁵ As mothers divided from their children, many transnational Latinas feel their only direct connection to their children is through their financial support. Thus, the inability to send home adequate funds is a haunting reminder of their “failure” as a mother.

Fear of deportation is a real threat to the psyche of transnational Latina mothers. In some states, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids are commonplace among the Latin@ working communities, thus creating daily anxiety for undocumented Latina workers.¹⁶ As many transnational Latina women serve as the sole income for their children, deportation would result in the termination of such funds. Additionally, deportation can result in a legally mandated ban on a Latina woman, restricting her from entering U.S. territory for the next five to ten years.¹⁷ Consequently, transnational Latina mothers experience a great deal of legal vulnerability which subjects them to increased levels of fear and mistrust in the U.S. government.

Transnational mothering is the ultimate act of self-sacrifice and love for one’s children. As one Latina mother indicates, “The truth is that sometimes one deprives oneself of a lot so that her kids can have a better life. We can now give our kids things

¹³ Avila, “Transnational Motherhood and Fatherhood: Gendered Challenges and Coping,” 102.

¹⁴ Sternberg, “The Plight of Transnational Latina Mothers: Mothering from a Distance,” 3-4.

¹⁵ Schmalzbauer, “Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The case of Honduran Transnational Families,” 1326.

¹⁶ Julia Preston, “Illegal Workers Swept From Jobs in ‘Silent Raids,’” *The New York Times* (July 9, 2010), accessed December 6, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/10/us/10enforce.html?scp=3&sq=ice%20raids&st=cse>.

¹⁷ Amanda Gennerman, “Human Trafficking and Women’s Labor.” Lecture, University of Wisconsin- Madison. 2 December 2010.

that we never could have given them there.”¹⁸ Such a sacrifice would not have to be made if immigration reform could address the value of preserving strong kinship and familial ties instead of forcefully demoralizing poor Latina women for illegally entering the United States. Modern U.S. policies must be reshaped in order to allow hardworking and dedicated Latina women to legally migrate to the U.S. with their children. Immigration reform must adapt to the current situation our country is facing by substantially increasing the number of work visas issued to Latina women.

Furthermore, workers’ rights must be redefined to ensure that U.S. corporations and private employers do not force undocumented Latina immigrants into situations of modern day slavery. Employers must be held accountable for their actions. The U.S. government should be responsible for mandating private and public institutions on their policies regarding the treatment of undocumented immigrant women within their establishments. As U.S. citizens and advocates for the rights of immigrant women, we must hold our government responsible for its laissez-faire policies that allow large corporations to contract sweatshop-like work with undocumented Latina immigrants. Under such policies the subject becomes a social justice and human rights issue with Latina women at the forefront.

The reshaping of our system can also take place at the community level. We must support our local grassroots organizations such as Voces de La Frontera, the Workers’ Rights Center, and Centro Hispano so that their dedication to the Latina population continues to flourish. Community outreach and education programs can also extend to all realms and demographics of our population so that the issue of transnational motherhood is recognized on a widespread level. Additionally, as members of the Madison community and the state of Wisconsin we must vote in local and state elections in order to share the voices of those who cannot.

We must fight for transnational Latina mothers by celebrating their strengths and self-sacrifice. And we must do it now. Comprehensive immigration reform is likely to be addressed before Congress within the next year, and we must act immediately to secure the future of transnational Latina mothers and their children. Storytelling from the margins will play a large role in empowering transnational Latina mothers to share their experiences and be recognized for their triumphs. Women are the preservers of culture and tradition, now is the time to intertwine storytelling with immigration policy to ensure a better future for Latina women and children.

About the Author:

Sarah Maria Donahue is a senior double majoring in Spanish, Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies with a certificate in Gender and Women Studies. With a passion for women’s health and human rights advocacy, she hopes to one day open a Women and Children's shelter and medical center in Milwaukee. This piece was a reflection of current issues Latinas face in the United States and was written as a platform for change.

¹⁸ Schmalzbauer, “Searching for Wages and Mothering from Afar: The case of Honduran Transnational Families,” 1328.

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Glenn Beck's America: A Frightening Place

Joel Meyerson

Abstract:

A brief analysis of how conservative pundit Glenn Beck regards Latina/os. Through intermittent observation of his nightly news program and thorough investigation of his website, it seems that Beck regards Latina/os as fundamentally outside of his conception of the American identity. Rhetorically, he uses Latina/os as a tool to sustain a pervasive atmosphere of fear, ultimately benefitting his own commercial interests.

Political pundit Glenn Beck, in many ways, has become the mouthpiece of an emerging rightist movement. As the father of the Tea Party Patriots, he has a unique bit of sway over a relatively powerful segment of American politics. But, just like the Tea Party movement itself, Beck has come under fire for his supposedly bigoted or insensitive commentary. And indeed, almost everything he says, in one way or another, works towards a very orthodox definition of what it is to be "American." As Leo Chavez points out¹, this sort of rhetoric is not unprecedented—in times of internal instability, the American mass media often ostracizes immigrants (especially Latina/os), promoting images of their stark "otherness." For Beck, any concept that falls outside of his strict ideological framework is treated as a fundamental threat to the "American Way." Beck functions on fear. From his television rants to blog postings, almost every bit of content associated with him serves either to reinforce a hyperconservative definition of Americanism, or rally fears that traditional America is under attack. It is through this lens that Beck views Latina/os. Much of his content glorifies a segment of America from which Latina/os are simply absent, but when he does mention them, they are often regarded as a fundamental threat to American identity. By regarding Latina/os in this way, he is able to create an atmosphere of fear, which in turn makes his content more appealing to his top advertisers.

My analysis of Beck's rhetoric consisted of two phases. First, I conducted intermittent observation of his television program, *Glenn Beck*, which airs 5 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday on FOX News Channel. From October 25 to November 12, I watched two episodes a week and analyzed the rhetoric for racial content. Second, I conducted a more in-depth analysis of Beck's website, www.glennbeck.com, and analyzed the site's officially posted content, user comments as well as advertising.

By far, Beck's most popular media endeavor has been his television program. During his hour-long lecture-style presentations, his purported objective is fighting against "Big Government," which typically results in a criticism of all things liberal. Usually, this conversation leaves out any mention of Latina/os or Latina/o culture, but occasionally Beck will sneak in a reference in the margins. For instance, the opening monologue to his show on November 1² (the day before the midterm elections) sent out a

¹ Leo R. Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001).

² Glenn Beck, "Season 5, Episode 217," *Glenn Beck*. FOX News Channel. 1 Nov. 2010.

battle cry. This election, he declared, was a chance to “prosecute the lawbreakers on Wall Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the border.” Aside from that vague allusion, the program went without any mention of Latina/os—which is by and large the norm. Unless a large enough national issue like the Arizona immigration bill hits the stage, any reference to Latina/os usually comes in the form of an offhand knock on illegal immigration. During my span of observation, no such national issue arose.

In contrast to his program’s almost nonexistent discussion of Latina/o America, Beck praises rural white America as a beacon of hope for the rest of the country. During his episode on November 5³, Beck featured a segment on a man bringing “traditional” American values to his community by erecting American flags along its country roads. Certainly, there is nothing inherently wrong with the image itself—what’s problematic is the way in which Beck contextualizes the segment. He points to this image of a WASP community as an ideal for the rest of Americans to follow. But even this would not be problematic if not for the fact that Beck *only* uses examples of rural white communities as exemplary cross-sections of America. His television program seems to propagate a vision of America that is constantly under ideological attack—if you’re not among those defending the nation, then you must be bringing it down. By neglecting to discuss the value of urban or minority communities and instead referencing Latina/os only in the context of illegal immigration, Beck implicitly regards Latina/os as outside of his strict definition of what America should be.

While his nightly television program is his most widely known endeavor, Beck is a man of many media. Perhaps it’s because his entire opus of radio transcripts and exclusive online video clips are fully searchable through his website, but I was able to find much more material discussing Latina/os online than I was while watching his program live. By typing in a few key words like “Latino,” “Mexican,” and “Immigration,” I uncovered a great deal of content. Whereas his television program seems more likely to merely leave Latina/os out of the discussion of what it is to be American, occasionally taking a jab at illegal immigrants, the content I found online was much more blatantly offensive.

In a video from July 29⁴, praising the Arizona immigration bill, Beck exclaimed, “It was already working... already people are self-deporting.... They go away!” For a man who sees Nazism in any possible representation of “big government,” he seems to have a rather easy time endorsing a law that actually encourages police officers to utilize racial profiling. Why is it that Beck condones this? He calls it a legitimate effort by the government to stop people who are breaking the law. If a few people who “look illegal” get stopped in the process, what’s so bad about that? They’ve got nothing to hide, right? I checked Glenn’s opinion on the TSA’s controversial new screening processes⁵, and it would appear that his stance changes when invasion of privacy affects *all* Americans. He used his wife’s experience at an airport to illustrate how “our freedom doesn’t belong to us” anymore. When the government invades the privacy of everyone, Beck says, it’s a big problem—if it’s only Latina/os, he seems say, they just need to suck it up. His stance

³ Glenn Beck, "Season 5, Episode 221," *Glenn Beck*. FOX News Channel. 5 Nov. 2010.

⁴ Glenn Beck and Pat Gray, “Glenn Beck: Arizona Law Was Already Working,” *Glenn Beck*, last modified July 29, 2010, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/43617/>

⁵ Glenn Beck and Pat Gray, "TSA Controversy a Union Ploy? – Glenn Beck." *Glenn Beck*, last modified November , 2010, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/48558/>

on the Arizona Immigration law in contrast to his opinion on the TSA procedures reinforces the notion that he views Latina/os as outsiders, apparently unworthy of the rights to which he personally feels entitled.

In other segments, he more directly uses Mexicans as an outsider group in order to stir up fear. The most shockingly racist and generally calloused material I found on the site was in a video clip entitled “Cinco de mayo! Viva La Mexico!”⁶ The introduction features Beck on a mocking rant about how much fun he had on Cinco de Mayo while drinking Corona, watching soccer, and waving the Mexican flag around. At first, it actually had the potential to be a legitimate criticism of Americans’ views of Mexico. “I Love it there,” he said ironically, “Other than the out of control drug violence, kidnappings, failing economy... who would want to leave a place like that?” He then acknowledged that, in fact, there were legitimate reasons for a rational person to want to leave Mexico and make a new life in the United States—the situation is bad. Then he changed gears. “But Mexico isn’t the only country struggling,” he said, referring to the United States. “That’s why I buy gold.” Yes, that’s right. Beck used Mexico’s struggling economy and very real social problems to plug Goldline, one of his top sponsors. He then compares the United States to a liferaft. And what happens when too many people try to cram into a liferaft, he asks? It sinks. His closing remarks on the subject: “Gosh, I wish we had a fence!” In this segment he recognized that Mexico is struggling, then in the same breath advocated that we should turn our backs to their plight. If anything, this hints at an underlying conception that Mexicans are fundamentally inferior to American Anglos, and thus unworthy of America’s consideration.

In fact, in my scouring of the Glenn Beck website, I only found one article that portrayed any Latina/o in a positive light. The headline reads, “Violent Mexican town has 20 year old female police chief.”⁷ The story is about a brave young girl who decides to take on the entrenched powers of drug cartels in a dangerous town known for its violence. According to Beck, both the mayor and previous police chief had been murdered. He uses this young woman as a beacon of hope, and a standard that we as Americans should strive for. Is this a positive representation of a Latina? Without a doubt. But taken within the larger context of Beck’s opinions, it’s still incredibly problematic; the only Latina to which Beck pays any respect just happens to still be in Mexico, not in the United States. Implicitly, this says that Mexicans are totally fine, upstanding people—as long as they’re not in America. Once they cross the border, they’re menaces.

If Beck’s goal is to create a culture of fear, then he seems to have done an excellent job. Viewing the online discussion (which has since been removed) under a segment on the Arizona law⁸, the boards are flooded with comments like, “It is clear that Obama is putting the interests of the minorities in front of those of the majority and creating another race war.” Or another, claiming that “The [federal] government won’t do

⁶ Glenn Beck, “Cinco De Mayo!” *Glenn Beck*, last modified August 27, 2009, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/videos/?uri=channels/338017/544097>

⁷ Glenn Beck and Pat Gray, “Violent Mexican Town Has 20 Year Old Female Police Chief,” *Glenn Beck*, last modified October 25, 2010, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/47109/>

⁸ Darrel Ankarlo, “The Unacceptable Cost of America’s Failure to Control Its Borders – Glenn Beck.” *Glenn Beck*, last modified October 13, 2010, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/46617/>

it's job because ... it's part of the plan to destroy America, the great Republic we knew it to be." At one point in November, the number-one most popular item on his website was "Be Prepared: An Introduction to Food Storage,"⁹ which outlines how Americans should ready themselves for a potential societal collapse.

But why would Beck (or anyone) want to create an atmosphere of fear? Because it sells. Just like Goldline had an underwriting spot in the "Cinco De Mayo" piece, almost every bit of online content is underwritten. On the Glenn Beck homepage, before the reader can reach any content, they have to wade through advertisements for Goldline, Carbonite, Lifelock, and Beck's own book, "Broke." One thing each of these has in common: they thrive on fear. Goldline markets itself as the last resort for solid currency if you're afraid the economy is tanking. Lifelock is a company that supposedly protects against identity theft (although in 2009 a federal judge ruled that the company had been scamming its clients)¹⁰. Carbonite is a company that protects important computer files should something catastrophic happen. "Broke" is about the supposed sorry state of our country, and what we can do to fix it. The bottom line: the more insecure a consumer is, and the more they believe that America is going down the wrong path, the more likely they will be to buy these products and services. Even the message boards have been taken over by fear-mongering corporate interests. The discussion underneath the food storage article is hopelessly spammed with links to "eFoods Global," a site that claims the only way to survive the global recession is, essentially, to buy and store large quantities of their food.

Rhetorically, Beck uses Mexicans as a tool to further enforce an atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity. Ideologically, Beck claims to be against only illegal immigrants. Legal ones, he says, are part of what makes America great. It seems nearly impossible, though, that Beck's views can be at all reconciled with cultural tolerance. It's entirely unrealistic to expect to have minority support of any kind if every reference to a culture outside of rural WASP America is negative. While the numbers show that FOX News' audience is predominantly white, this divide is most strikingly apparent on Beck's online message boards. Anglos account for the astoundingly vast majority of these comments (each tied to a Facebook profile). Of those few comments posted by minorities, they are, almost without fail, arguing against a point made by Glenn or another Glenn-supporting reader.

Ultimately, Beck seems to use Latina/os as a foil against which he can define the "real" America. In his exaltation of American greatness and exceptionalism, he lauds the patriotism and work ethic of rural whites, but has little to say in praise of urban or minority cultures. On the contrary, Beck uses Latina/os to stoke the populist fears of instability and (most frighteningly, of course) a changing nation. With seemingly no attempt to capture the Latina/o viewership, Beck uses the tragic experiences of many Mexicans as opportunities to gain advertising dollars. Take a quick glance at Beck's website and you will have no doubt: fear sells, and he's selling a lot of it.

⁹ "Be Prepared: An Introduction to Food Storage," *Glenn Beck*, last modified November 21, 2010, <http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/48306/>

¹⁰ Kim Zetter, "Judge Rules LifeLock's Fraud Alert Service Illegal," *Wired.com*, last modified May 27, 2009, <http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2009/05/lifelock/>

About the Author:

Joel Meyerson is a senior at UW – Madison, studying Political Science and Communication arts, with a concentration in radio, television and film. He was born and raised in Oak Park, IL, bordering Chicago's west side. Joel hopes to combine his interest in politics and media, aiming ultimately to work for an NGO or nonprofit media outlet.

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the story of this country

Alida Cardos Whaley

Today I met another seashell,
We exchanged our stories
Of how we got the grooves in our backs,
From which land we trace,
What current brought us here

But then they left me.

The tide pulled,
Pressured us to watch
As the other became invisible.

How do you explain
Invisible

--

For near 20 years of her life
She didn't know she was indigenous
She didn't know
She wasn't Norwegian
She wasn't French
Or Canadian
Or Polish

--

We don't know we're indigenous
We don't understand that just because
We can't pronounce our histories,
Doesn't mean they don't belong to us.

There is no one teaching us
That we have rights
To demand
To see
Every root that we have ever been connected
To

Some of us know how we got here.
To this place.
This moment.

And some of us have no clue.
Have no one to ask.
No document tucked in a special place.

No
Nothing.

Author's Statement:

This piece came out of hearing over fifteen individuals speak to how they/their family lineage arrived to the United States of America. I used all of the stories to write this piece but, especially focused on one by an adopted woman who recently found out her mother and father are Quechua, Indigenous to Peru. Along with her story, I speak to immigration in general. I use the metaphor of seashells to talk about the ways in which we come and go; the ways in which some are welcomed here and others are greeted by the pulling tide.

Birdlike Ships

Alida Cardos Whaley

At one point in the vertical timeline we call progress,
My people were seeing their first ocean
With sailing ships
And white men.
Objects of legend,
Terrible would come later.

At a point before this
My peoples' family in Africa
Were seeing their first ocean
With sailing ships
And white men.
The ships would return,
What was cargo,
Would not.

--

I bet they didn't know what 40 tons,
Or 80,000 lbs,
Or 400 bodies,
Of displacement per birdlike ship
Mistaken for angel
Would look like.

But they must have known
What waking up at dawn,
To catch the offshore breeze
And diminish alarm,
To set out on the transatlantic voyage;
The Middle Passage;
The Death of a human too dark to not be African,
Felt like.

They must have known
What placing an advertisement,
In the biweekly Royal Gazette,
As soon as slave ships entered Kingston Harbour,
Felt like.

Because a slave knows how to be a slave
And that means, they know how to be

FOR SALE

On Wednesday the 8th of May next
323 Choice, Young, Healthy CONGO
NEGROES
Imported in the ship BENJAMIN Captain Thmas
Mullineux, from ANGOLA

They must have known
Like they must have been born knowing
What would later be used on cattle,
Was meant first for branding skin
Darker than their own

They must have known
Like they must have been taught,
That names mean nothing
To skin darker than their own,
So arbitrary ones are okay

I'll call you
Duke,
Clarissa,
Raveface,
Gamesome,
Register,
Prattle,
I'll call you.

You will recognize my conch shell
And crackling whip.

--

And I find it ironic
That now, in this land
That belongs to my people,
White men still have points
In the vertical timeline they call progress,
Where they see my people,
For the first time.

It's like they don't know
That Their land
Was, is Our land.

It's like they don't know

That we're not new,
We didn't get here by way of their birdlike ships
Mistaken for angel
And it wouldn't matter if we had.

Our family from Africa
Owns this land, too.
Because if you bleed here,
You're home here.

It's like they don't know
We're not dead,
We are just waiting,
For them to leave.

Artist Statement:

I wrote this piece for my community and all the communities that are connected; because we are all connected, with our brown. I speak to the White Men who displaced generations from Africa to Las Americas; to White Men who did the same to the Indigenous people upon their arrival. I seek to challenge the very existence of these White Men by mocking their routine and the morals they hold sacred. Near the end of my piece, I transition into bringing in my own experience here at UW-Madison with having my communities' collective identity questioned; as if we did not home here before the White Man.

About the author:

Alida Cardos Whaley hails from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This year she will be graduating from the LACIS and CLS departments. She is an artist, educator and organizer and plans to return to Milwaukee this coming fall after doing an Internship in Oaxaca, Mexico with C.A.C.I.T.A., C.A.S.A. COLLECTIVE & Multimedia Cooperative of Mutual Support. From there she hopes to begin a school in the City of Milwaukee that uses Hip Hop, Spoken Word, and Theatre to engage and educate young people in the Milwaukee-Area.

Special Section: Poetry from CLS 332 Latinas: Self Identity & Social Change

Introduction:

“Picking out images from my soul’s eye, fishing for the right words to recreate the images. Words are blades of grass pushing past the obstacles, sprouting on the page; the spirit of the words moving in the body is as concrete as flesh and as palpable; the hunger to create is as substantial as fingers and hand.”- Gloria Anzaldúa

Cuentos- Stories of fact, of fiction, of exaggeration or of wishful thinking; whatever it may be, these articulations of feelings and sensations are pertinent for self identification and actualization. In spite of this, the art of storytelling is often left out of academia. In a highly acclaimed university such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we, as students, are expected to fulfill academic requirements within a vast number of disciplines. We are asked to recount scientific principles, formulate mathematic equations, and dissect theories of prevalent philosophers. While crucial to enhancing one’s education, traditional coursework obscures those vital processes of personal reflection that allow us to see, as we journey toward self-discovery, our shifting roles as cultural beings.

As a senior embarking on graduation, I can honestly say that I was allowed to critically reflect on my life, and the people involved in my upbringing, once. This experience allowed me to create my own voice and encouraged me to tell my own story. My story- a story that may have never been heard, had it not been for this opportunity. As a Latina pursuing a Gender and Women’s Studies degree and Certificates in LGBTQ Studies and Criminal Justice, it is easy for me feel misplaced and uncomfortable in classes that are predominantly centered around Anglo-American thought processes and scholarly work. It saddens me to say that this opportunity did not come until recently.

During the fall semester of 2010, fifty students enrolled in Chicana & Latina Studies 332, Latinas: Self Identity and Social Change. Some enrolled to fulfill an “Ethnic Studies” requirement, some to learn about current social issues, and some to connect with others and explore shared experiences. Although enrolled for different reasons, we all quickly realized that this class was going to challenge us—challenge us to think in a way that was totally new for some of us. We were expected to discuss articles on topics from critical race theory to current immigration policy. Dr. Consuelo López Springfield, the professor of the class, introduced us to the work of prominent Latinos we had never heard of, such as Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora, and Richard Delgado. She challenged our minds with theory, poetry, law reviews, and much more; most importantly, she challenged us to reflect on our own lives.

Midway through the semester, we examined the importance of intergenerational dialogue and the importance of female relationships within the family. At the end of one class period, Professor Springfield asked us to take some time and reflect on our relationships with the females in our own families and free write what we felt. She asked us to focus on our sensory perceptions and use that as guidance to connect us to our memories past. I have to admit, I was taken aback by this. What? I get to free write my feelings? This can't be. No class that I have ever taken on this campus has ever required me to do such a thing. Great!

For the next week, I thought about all the women in my family and lyrically articulated little poems and prose pieces. I came to class ready to share and eager to hear what some of my classmates wrote. To my surprise, I was surrounded by very talented writers who shared memories of women in their families that were similar to mine. Some shared recollections of their *abuelitas*, of their *tías*, and their *madrinas*. There was admiration, respect, and anguish shared by my classmates. As class rolled on, I realized that no matter what different paths of life we came from, we were all here, together, sharing our fondest memories with complete strangers.

“Through these writings and the opportunity that we had to share them we learned more about each other and saw similarities in each other that we may have been unaware of previously,” says one author.

On a campus as large as the University of Wisconsin Madison, it is easy to feel isolated and insignificant. Easy to feel lonely, to feel lost, to feel out of place. However, on that day we put our races, ethnicities, and gender variations aside to come together and share our personal connections to the women in our families. That day, for the first time ever, I felt connected to my classmates. I felt like we shared the same lives, the same experiences, and the same memories.

Encouraged to explore our relationships with the women in our families, most of us stepped up to the plate and through poetry, prose, and storytelling shared our experiences. Among us, a select few took an extra step. We decided to put together a collection of our best poems for this special section of *Concientización*. The poems here point out the importance and influence of all women in our lives. While evoking love, admiration, and pain, they expose vulnerable parts of our personal lives. We have chosen to share these poems with the intention of putting forth a body of work that will encourage deep thought and reflection upon our readers. Regardless of your age, gender, and racial identity, we hope you find solace in our personal thoughts and reflect on your own experiences with the women in your family.

Introduction and conclusion by Ashley Sanabría

We The Women

Ashley Sanabría

We the women of our family

Are strong, brave, and courageous.

We have had secrets, had our differences, and told our lies.

We the women of our family

Are mothers, daughters, and sisters.

We have been tired, scared, and lost.

We the women of our family

Are wives, girlfriends, and lovers.

We have searched for love, looked for acceptance, and yearned to be needed.

We the women of our family

Are weak, vulnerable, and defenseless.

We have let the men we love tear us from each other.

We the women of our family

Aren't what we used to be.

The Strong One

Cortney Paulson

The strong one.

She who is always there to push us, make us stronger.

There

to tell us how proud she is of all of our accomplishments no matter how small.

Always

the first to show us that disappointing glance when we do something wrong.
(but always so quick to forgive.)

There

to show us about values and morals by the way she lives her life.

There

to revitalized and motivate us when we are feeling down.

Always

the strong one, never letting her emotions get in the way or cloud her judgment.
Mother, mommy, ma.

Always there

When I need her.

Hardship Is Not my Mother

Ashley Sanabría

She knows what hardship is, and she has told me.
Hardship is not knowing when or where your next meal will be.
Hardship is being forced to assume grown up responsibilities before puberty.
Hardship is marrying a man in the military at the age of fifteen to relieve yourself from poverty.
Hardship is having a child at the age of sixteen.
Sixteen, she was still a child herself.
Hardship is taking care of six kids with an absent husband.
Hardship is juggling multiple jobs and being screwed over in a divorce.
Hardship is being disillusioned by two men in one lifetime.

Hardship has impaled my mother's life.
But hardship is not my mother.
My mother is my mother.
You see, that's just that.
Motherhood defines my mother.
It's sad in all actuality.
Eleven kids.
She will be fifty-eight when my little brother turns eighteen.
Fifty-eight.
Forty-two years of motherhood.
Forty-two years of changing diapers, cooking meals, doing laundry, and doing what any good mother should do.
Forty-two years of motherhood- now that is hard.
I guess hardship is my mother.

Family

Cortney Paulson

Sacrifice.

A mother putting her life on the line every day, struggling to make it,
no help but the cheese to feed her daughter.

Hoping that on this day her daughter isn't that hungry
so she has the opportunity to eat.

To try and make something of herself.

To support that child with the innocent gleaming eyes.

The child that had no idea the hardships of this world or the starvation of her
mother at the cost of making the child's life better.

Opening the daughter's world to opportunity.

Endless opportunity.

A world at her grasp ready to prove herself to the one woman who sacrificed everything
in hopes that she would be able to enjoy life a little more than her mother.

The daughter wanting to make something of herself
just to prove to her mom how thankful she is for those sacrifices made in her honor.

For the suffering and starvation I will rise above,
make something of myself.

I will be your support for all of that time that you supported me with unconditional love,
inspiration to do something and change the world.

Change this life into infinite opportunity.

To share my love with those around me.

Young, old, different.

Open this world to universal love.

Canela

Edgar Cevilla

Waiting for the bubbles to start forming. The sense of heat coming off the pot as I stare through the glass lid. A bubble. Finally! "Abue. Abue!" I shout as I run to look for my Abuelita. "El agua. El agua ya está lista. Ven." I take her hand, soft as any grandmother's touch and she follows me down to the kitchen. Picking up the bag where she keeps all of her spices, handy little thing, she tells me to choose a mug. I do and then stand right under her as she breaks the cinnamon sticks down to size. The sweet, full scent. "Splash." One piece. "Splash. "Two pieces." "Otra, no?" I ask waiting for a nod. "Otra? Está bien. Una pieza mas."

As the pieces fall to the bottom of the pot, the water rises with air bubbles, then stops. Her hands reach for the sugar container and she takes four large spoon fulls of sugar and adds them to the pot. "Cuánto tiempo más?" I ask, eagerly. "Espera, No falta mucho." She responds reassuringly.

Just as the water begins to boil again, a cold cup of water is added. "Para que nos sepa lo mejor posible." She winks. Not knowing that the cold water actually locks in the flavor, I get more anxious. "Why does it have to boil so many times!" I wonder to myself. "It's hot enough." What seems like a lifetime goes by, but it is finished. I hand her my mug and she pours me a cup. I try to wait for it to cool down, but I've been waiting too long. I take a sip. "Hot!" I bite my tongue and after the sensation goes away, all I am left with is the soothing taste. Canela.

Grandma

Megan Hall

My grandmother is
The creaking of an old,
Memory-filled rocking chair
In the back sun room
Where the bright hands
Of the early morning sun
Reach through south-facing windows,
Warming,
Soothing the entire room.
Grandma is in the center,
With her book in hands,
Sun hat flopping over her eyes,
Black poodle, Sally,
At her feet. Always.
Peacefully waiting here till
The sounds of the first woken child
Alarm her to make breakfast.

When I think of
My grandmother,
I smell moth balls.
Protection
For the
Piles of delicately
Hand-spun,
Knitted, and
Woven wool—

Sheared from her own
Farm-loved sheep, Cleaned by her own
Small, wrinkled hands.
I smell vinegar-
Food-coloring-dye
To make the vibrant Purples, blues, oranges,
reds.
Woven into a blanket of
Kansas sunset
On the Flint Hills.

When I think of
Grandma,
I hear the clinking, tapping
Of metal, wooden
Knitting needles.
Creating the fabric of
Motherhood,
Grand-motherhood,
Love. In her hands.
Intertwining yarn strands to hold together
A new hat, pair of mittens, socks
As warmth and reminder
Of childhood.
Family.
Love.

Lavender

Mariana Berbert

The scent of lavender reminds me of the days
When I fought with my cousins for the privilege
Of washing my aunt's hair
Arm deep into a bucket of conditioner
Painting her long dark hair purple
Sticking it to her back,
Her flat chest,
Finally, curling up against her curvy hips.

I run my fingers through my hair,
Tangled and foaming
Feeling the tug of my grandmothers wooden comb
Her pruning fingers rubbing the back of my ears
Hearing her tongue clicking
 "do you EVER brush your own hair?"
Her low chuckle
 " amor, you'll look like this someday"

I compliment my mother,
wash away my insecurities,
thanking her for giving me her thighs,
My aunt's hips,
My grandmother's breasts.
Letting the warm water and lavender
replace self consciousness.

Beep Bop

By: Ashley Sanabría

Beep Bop. Beep Bop.

What's the number?

The sound is embedded in my head.

The Numbers crowd my mind.

45...

Too low, but that wont hold her down.

245...

Too high, but she's still optimistic.

I recall her story.

Her numbers.

18...

Dropped out of college and married.

21...

First son.

22...

Back to school and divorced.

What's a single mother to do?

25...

Hamline Law School.

28...

Diabetes.

29...

New life.

Her story amazes me.

Her courage inspires me.

Her health scares me.

But who is she?

She's not my mother, not my sister, nor *mí Tía*.

In fact, we aren't even related.

But still, she is part of *mí familia*.

The funny thing is, she was my boss.

She believed in me at the age 17.

I guess that is where my numbers begin and hers become mine.

Beep bop. Beep Bop.

The obsession begins.

She gave me a chance.

She gave me inspiration.

She gave me strength, but most importantly...

She gave me ME!

Lace means womanhood

Mariana Berbert

Lace followed Raquel everywhere
And I imagined the best part of womanhood
were the beautiful loops and twists I did not possess.

Lace followed Raquel everywhere
covering the table in my grandmother's kitchen
the bra Tía Raquel wore on Saturday nights
the white dresses she wore to church on Sundays.

Lace meant womanhood.
It filled her drawers,
wrapped around her braids
hung framed on the wall,
the delicate fabric forming religious symbols in the living room.

Lace followed Raquel everywhere
covered her windows
during the days she refused to come out.
Disappeared from the clotheslines
When she wasn't around.

Tia Raquel's womanhood hung limp
dripping on the red tiles of grandma's backyard
And she collected it before sundown,
While the lace was still warm,
Smelling like afternoon sun.

Lace followed Raquel everywhere
White, clean, delicate, strong
Wrapping around her wrists, ankles
Braided like rope,
Sterile.

Lace surely, meant womanhood
And Raquel offered it to me
in two small pieces,
one red and one tan,
when I was thirteen years old.

Family Portrait

Jessi Indresano

My aunts, huddled
‘round the photographer, staring
their children into submission. My uncle
says, "Just let him take the picture."
My mom stands proud
her kids know how to behave
in public. I'm happy
I got to wear a hat.
My brother happy to hug grandma.

My mom and her siblings want perfection.
This is for grandma.
Who's dying for the second time.
A weed of her life, a vine
slowly taking her oxygen.
Never cut into full remission.
She's not afraid.

Step outside the camera room. Four
other families - their children properly
dressed for adult audiences
they're not yet a part of
A boy in a tuxedo. A girl, short of three, dressed for prom.
Stare at their feet hanging off the chair
Dreaming of toys. Ignored.

My family is chaotic. Like the bustling
shoppers in mall surrounding. Oblivious
of a thousand others who might
feel we're in the way. We're shopping
for memories.

Not the latest addiction, gotta-have-don't-need sweater marked down 10%
so it's ok to buy
and let the perfectly good one I used to love
hang
rotting the wardrobe.
Last year's temporary place keeper.

Conclusion:

All of us who contributed to this small anthology are being published for the first time. We are not part of the lucky few who have familial or acquainted connections to publishing opportunities. Most of us are first generation students trying to make a name for our family and struggling with schoolwork, jobs, and extracurricular activities. We are from all walks of life. We have unique stories, shared experiences, and we support each other in our endeavors. These stories we shared are depictions of our reality, of our truth, some good, some angry, and some gentle reflections. With this body of work, we hope to prompt a discourse on the importance of storytelling in academia. There is much to learn from storytelling and intergenerational dialogue and we hope this is the beginning of something new. Let this not be our last. Readers, we hope our stories will resonate with you and encourage you to tell yours. This is our cry to tell stories.

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***Special Section: Reflections in Thirdspace:
CLS 330 students discuss their learnings about social justice action scholarship***

In Fall 2010, I had the incredible opportunity to offer a new class on community-based action research through Chican@ and Latin@ Studies. The goals of CLS 330 were: 1) To build an in-depth understanding of local social justice issues and their root causes in institutional racial and economic justice trends; 2) To offer students training and experience in community-based action research; and 3) For students to produce research outcomes that support the community organizing efforts of the course's local organizational partners. We worked with three community organizations, Freedom Inc, Operation Welcome Home, and Centro Hispano's COMVIDA program, to develop what are now becoming long-term community-based research initiatives.

For the 18 students in the class and myself, the concept of *thirdspace* was important; that is, like the youth participatory action research collectives from whom we drew initiative, we sought to create "space[s] and practice[s] of reclamation and recovery..., thirdspaces to many of the binaries in our own lives such as work/home, teaching/learning, talking/listening, ... reproduction/resistance, success/failure, and reality/hope.¹

Here, I am pleased to share some of the reflections that CLS 330 students wrote in our effort to intentionally articulate and share what we learned as individuals, groups, and a class community in thirdspaces of negotiating how to be scholars and activists, at work and in family, oppressed and privileged, ally researchers and learners. Some of their reflections close with advice to future CLS 330 cohorts and others seeking to do similar work.

Most of these writings were submitted as part of their final assignments. The last entry, "On Self-determination, and A Letter to a Loved One" was written midway through the semester in response to some class readings. As an instructor, and also as an ally to community efforts for social justice and self-determination, I learned a great deal through this first semester of CLS 330. The student reflections helped me learn how to better accompany them on their path to developing skills, agency, and consciousness to do this work, however it shows up in their futures. I am excited to offer this class again in Fall 2011!

Cynthia Lin is a social justice educator at the UW-Madison Multicultural Student Center, and became an associate lecturer in Chican@ and Latin@ Studies to offer CLS 330, thanks to the support of Chair Sandy Magaña. Cynthia can be reached at clin@studentlife.wisc.edu with any inquiries about this class and the broader efforts that frame its context.

¹ Tuck, E. et al. (2008). PAR Praxes for Now and Future Change: The Collective of Researchers on Educational Disappointment and Desire. In Julio Cammarota & Michelle Fine (Eds.), *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*. New York: Routledge, 68.

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“Allies ≠ Saviors”

Cassandra Ramos

As a college student, I have the privilege of knowledge, connections, etc among other things. I realize most of the privileges I have especially working with the COMVIDA youth. Being part of the organization, MEChA, we are all constantly checking our privilege. We allow each other to know when we must acknowledge our privilege and how to use it for the advantage of the community and not ourselves within the community. From the work and organizing I have done, I know that my assistance to the community is not to be looked at as a “hero.” Part of community organizing is learning. Whenever I work with a group of any kind I realize that I am learning more than what I am giving. I observe how people talk and interact with me not to judge them, but rather to understand them and how I can be of service. I learn what it means to listen, to learn, to act, and to organize/mobilize. Colonization has painted a romantic picture to the public of what activism or community organizing is about. They implement this heroic persona. Somebody who saves the community and does it selflessly. This image is wrong and does not consider how the people of the community are the real heroes. They are the ones who save themselves.

Allies may assist the community, but that does not mean it is them who is a “savior.” This idea of a “savior” is just another component of power that reflects top-down structures and activism of a colonized definition. A community is a group and acts, mobilizes, organizes, and fights as one. There is no MVP or hero in effective community organizing. If someone is organizing and helping a community just so they can feel helpful or purposeful, then they should not be organizing in the community. One of my mentors asked me why it is I wanted to do community work. At first I wondered if he asked me because he doubted me and my motives. I explained that my reasoning for community work is something innate and due to my want to work with the community to learn, to give whatever skills I have, and because I owe it to my community to give back what they have given me so much of. Without my community I would not be the person I am and I cannot forget about them by graduating and only worrying about making money. I want to take the privileges I have and my knowledge and give it to the community. What they decide to do with this privilege is completely up to them not me. Many of the community partners have repeatedly told us in class that we have privilege as students but that does not mean we deserve or are entitled to the respect or trust of the community members. The community does not have to prove itself to us, but rather we must prove ourselves to the community. Trust will take time and so will change, but all we can do for now is listen, learn, and be open to the different people and issues we may encounter during this process.

About the Author:

Cassandra Ramos is a sophomore majoring in Social Welfare and Criminal Justice with a CLS certificate. She worked with Centro Hispano’s COMVIDA program, which diverts Latin@ youth from the juvenile justice system.

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On doing “hood” work in an academic institutions; Allies ≠ Saviors

Rachel Hoogasian

Doing “hood” work as a part of an academic institution that oppresses and exploits communities is a difficult endeavor for me and I’d assume everyone else in the class. I never really had personal contact with what people characterize as the “hood” growing-up (although, my family was lower-income). Later in life, however I did have a chance to live in a “hood”-like community as a volunteer. My experience as a volunteer is much like the experience I have had so far in class doing community-based action research. This volunteer mentality permeates the way I see my work and interactions with those we “partner” with. This semester it was hard to build this “partnership” because of the volunteer mentality I work from. That is, we can never really be true partners to these persons because we, unlike they, have the privilege of choice.

Their lives are intrinsically connected to the processes, outcomes, and implication of the work, while we have the privilege of going home, virtually unscathed by the victories and defeats for which we fight. As if adding injury to insult, our position as volunteers within the university at times runs counter to the de-colonization process we hope to achieve. That is, we are continually feeding the beast (oppressive institutions) with our existence and work within the university. The university literally founded upon on the desecration of indigenous holy places and hearts, serves as a credentialing body toward the work we set out to do. Even today, this power of credentialing serves to obstruct or hinder the type of work we and communities find meaningful.

In the types of research that is respected and possible, we find the first difficulty. CLS 330 being the first class of its kind speaks to the types of work that the university finds worthwhile. Funding in the university, for research based classes, is often channeled into departments that focus on “scientific” and objective measures of issues that exclude the unique voices of marginalized groups. I imagine the difficulty the CLS department had in pitching this class to administrators, as the Third Space attempts to center indigenous agendas, voices, and knowledge in spaces where the unknown and uncomfortable is encouraged to arrive at wisdom.

Similarly, there lies an indirect difficulty from our entrenched work in this oppressive institution. It has been difficult to reach out to community members because of the distrust they have for our affiliations. They have been (and continue to be) used as guinea pigs in research initiatives from the university and beyond. I hope that this class will become an outlier to this pattern with our continued presence and humility within communities. I hope that new cohorts will adopt the same sense of humbleness and patience that we have taken on throughout this semester.

In this, I have a few recommendations around expectations and comfortability. This class will push you to think about the ways you view research and communities of color. Even if you come from a low-income background, or are yourself a person of color, you will be asked to reflect upon your privileges and the ways these obstruct your work with communities. It has been my experience that this uncomfortability leads to growth and new understandings about yourself and those around you that you might not have considered before.

Allies do not equal saviors, in other words, privilege and humility in my work toward justice and liberation is essential. This has been a difficult balance for me throughout this class, working in the third space. I have been continually confronted with the question of balancing my knowledge, talents, and expertise with the wisdom, needs, and experiences of communities. In all the social justice work I have done so far throughout my life this has always been the toughest question. In specific instances throughout the semester I have learned important lessons about this balance.

Toward the beginning of the course I felt compelled to take on an active role in the research that we were starting to undertake. I had my hand in a few group's projects and even wanted to do a side project with one of the community partners. This drive, I realize now after many hours of reflection, was around my need to feel needed. I was entering this class as a self-pronounced expert and wanted to share this with others. At the time I couldn't imagine anyone not wanting my help or talents and when I was encountered with just that, I took it as a personal blow. I think that many people who find themselves doing social justice work many have the same difficulties as me in this. We want to share and be needed because it makes us feel important. This is a very deep psychological and emotional hurdle that impacts the way myself and others approach this work. Entering this work for personal gratification runs roughshod to the liberation we hope to support. In developing dependent relationships between ourselves and communities we forever perpetuate this cycle of colonization.

Centering indigenous/community wisdom over our own and taking our place as allies rather than saviors also becomes difficult when our knowledge conflicts with their own. An example of this arose when Vanessa and I facilitated a workshop at LaFollette high school this past week. In our meeting with these high school youth, who we approached as experts in their own right (being involved in the juvenile justice system before), we wanted to document their thoughts about community programs. We were hoping for them to divulge about their struggles and apprehensions about community programs that failed to meet their culturally specific needs. Throughout our discussion, however, it became clear that they did not share the same thoughts and feelings as us and the research collective. They spoke about themselves as the problem and individual's responsibility to make the right choices to avoid getting arrested.

After this, I started to question the work that we were doing. Is it in the best interests of these youth to understand that the cards are stacked against them and that the system wants them to fail? Is it ethical or advantageous to strip them of what self-determination they have (as individuals with choices) to lump them with statistics that show their inevitable powerlessness? Do we center their voices if they run counter to our collective agenda? Even if their voices, beliefs, and opinions have been shaped by forces of colonization and internalized racism; is it our job to breed critical consciousness in them? If we take on the teacher role, how does this perpetuate the cycle of colonization and dependence discussed earlier?

My recommendations for later cohorts revolve around the above questions. Right now I do not have any hard advice to give you as far as finding your own answers. But that, in itself, might be a sign of progress. Not having all the answers makes a person humble. This course and these questions have made me humble; I wish the same for you.

About the Author:

Rachel Hoogasian is a first-year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology. Rachel worked as a part of a group partnering with Freedom, Inc. to map and document local juvenile justice system trends.

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On emotional work in social change efforts

Michelle Johnson

Personal stories have all taught me a lot about the system, our communities, and myself, based upon the emotions and thoughts that have come up throughout this work. I have felt at times really frustrated that in many ways this research work needs to fit into a certain format, like statistics and facts, to be accepted into a system (like to the bureaucracy we hope will one day give more funds to COMVIDA). It's upsetting that figures are given so much value, while emotions are often discredited. I walked away from COMVIDA the day of the fight *feeling* that the space was necessary, yet how can feelings be made into a commodity and who really cares about whether or not something feels right? Can it be proven? It seems that is what people want to know. How come it isn't important to a lot of folks whether or not you feel safe, comfortable, respected in a space if there is no factual information to back it up?

This has been one topic that has come up for me a lot, that being emotions, and reexamining how they are viewed. In our society I have seen emotions thought of as being a weakness, particularly in leadership, and that so often people in our culture go through their days being numb to their surroundings because that's apparently what strength looks like, or at least its seen as good that you're not emotional. I am starting to reconstruct my ideas of this and believe emotions to be more and more of a strength, something that allows for authentic connections to be made, something that allows you to really be present to what is going on around you and within yourself. I take away a lot from this semester (learning strategies of being an ally, figuring out how to enter new spaces in a way that is respectful, etc.) but right now what sticks with me most is that I need to continue checking in with myself and others and that I need to take care of myself. I was not able to give as much as I would have liked to this project, nor connected with the folks in my group as well as I desired, and in many ways I think it was because I was not able to share much. I was emotionless, or afraid to share emotions at times. All of this is also closely tied to a fear of vulnerability, which our society is also terrified of because we are obsessed with being in control. It wasn't until the end of the semester that I took it seriously that I needed to take more significant steps to changing aspects in my life that were not working for me, and hindering my full involvement in this project and other things. I feel that I haven't said enough throughout this process to let folks know where I'm really at. This leaves me feeling like right now I need to say everything, but I can't and all I can do is hope that conversations will continue and that putting something out there is better than nothing.

Summary: Give yourself space to feel how you are actually feeling. You have a right to your own emotions, both happy and angry, sad, whatever . . . Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open up, but I acknowledge that it is easier said than done. If nothing else, recognize if you are not able to open up and start thinking about why that is the case. Also throughout all this work, allow yourself to be angry at yourself if you screw up, or realize that you carry more oppression than you ever knew existed within you. Feel that anger, but don't dwell on it forever. Violence to yourself will never teach you to love

others, nor yourself. As ugly as you can be at times, there are things about you that are still beautiful.

About the Author:

Michelle Johnson is a sophomore majoring in Spanish and History with a CLS certificate. Michelle worked with the COMVIDA project.

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The Injustices within Research

SarahMaria Donohue

The term research has always angered me. When mentioned it typically becomes associated with scientists, doctors, or engineers. But what about the rest of us? What about those who perform research at a local and community level? Do we ever receive recognition and celebration within academia? No. Which is surprising because we are actually the largest advocates of change at a tangible level.

Our society values discovery. Yet discovery has narrow limitations, meaning we value the unearthing of vaccines, such as the HPV vaccine, by undervaluing the community workers teaching young women about cervical cancer prevention. Thus a disconnect exists within the principles of our society, placing science and discovery beyond community work.

Perhaps it is an act of cultural masking. As a society we are too ashamed to recognize the work done at the community level because it would expose the injustices that currently exist. The racism, sexism, discrimination, hatred, fear, bias, poverty, and disparities may just be too much for our society to handle. However, to the communities plagued by such injustices, this disconnect is yet another barrier that exists between mainstream U.S. society and communities of color.

By placing science driven research at the top of the hierarchy, our society is dictating who holds the power within academia. Through the utilization of such a hierarchy, our culture demonstrates to the masses that those who gain an education in the sciences are the sole dictators of control (which is particularly visible within our institution). However, if we were to alter the ranks and recognize the importance of our teachers, community leaders, grassroots organizations, and those working from the bottom of the tiered system, our society would (hopefully) modify its values and equilibrate its power.

Community-based action research deserves a place in academia and modern day U.S. society. The movement is progressing, but it needs a powerful voice behind it; a voice that can express to the public how beneficial community-based action research is in solving tangible issues within the heartland of our country and across the world. The movement needs to advance by branching into the work of government and non-profit agencies in order to have a larger say in how our country is functioning and how things need to change. Additionally, more “training schools” within and outside of academia need to be created to house the brilliant minds of community organizers.

Research doesn't have to be a fight between the disciplines. It doesn't have to be a rivalry based on who can write the most grants, receive the most funding, discover, and publish the fastest. Research simply needs to be a continuum, transgressing fluidly from one ideology into another. Researchers must work together to educate one another of the opportunities that lie within all disciplines and how interrelations can benefit the entire community.

Research is a truly beautiful tool used to understand how our world functions and why, we simply need to bridge the gap between research methodologies and disciplines to create a harmonious relationship. Community-based action research needs to be rightfully valued and understood as a discourse aimed at improving the lives of those marginalized by dominant white society. Now is the time to fight for the voice of community organizers and grassroots leaders.

About the Author:

SarahMaria Donohue will graduate from University of Wisconsin-Madison this spring with a BA in Spanish and LACIS and a certificate in Gender and Women's Studies, and she intends to go to medical school. SarahMaria worked with a group on a Food & Gardens Justice project with Freedom, Inc.

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On being accountable to the communities and organizations that we work in support of

Angelica Salinas

The first thing that I learned about accountability to our community members, and our community organizations was how important it was in being honest, direct (cutting out the BS) and being wholehearted. I learned that the people who have given their lives to this kind of work have invested their whole selves. Conflict and differences arise when people are passionate about the work they do, but even then conflict does not mean a bad thing; conflict is a time for growth, communication, clarity, and then reflection. I think our class ran into conflict, but since everyone was concerned about the issues that were brought up it ended up being a learning experience.

Accountability also means being able to share a part of yourself, a part of your personal life. When you are able to share intimate details about your own life it builds trust. I remember when we did the circle and everyone had to draw/write about their lives and then share what we had created. The purpose of the activity was to close the disconnect that people were feeling. Our community partners and the class felt that we needed to know more about the people we were working with. I feel that at the end of the activity we as a class grew to understand and support one another in a deeper richer way.

Also, when I interviewed [a homeless activist], he expressed nervousness about sharing his life with Beda and me. Throughout the interview he repeated “I don’t know if you understand what I’m talking about” and the truth was I was able to relate to how he described feeling, thinking, doing about a lot of what he shared. I told him this after the interview and I shared that I am a single mother of kids who have different fathers. I felt that it was important to share this with him because I sensed that he was ashamed about sharing parts of his life experiences and I wanted him to see that nobody is perfect and everyone has things in their lives that could be looked down on by society. I wanted him to understand that I was not there to judge him but to hear his story and to use the information he gave me in our research that we were doing. I think that people’s stories are one of the most powerful tools that people can use because otherwise there is no understanding of where the person is coming from. The one of the learning that I would like to pass on to the next cohort of CLS 330 is to share themselves while also allowing the stories of others (community, community partners, classmates, people you meet on the street, your own family) into your life, space, hearts, and soul. The importance of doing this will be evident at the end of the course.

About the Author:

Angelica Salinas graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison in December with a BS in Rehabilitation Psychology and a CLS certificate, and she intends to pursue graduate studies in rehabilitation psychology. Angelica worked on a Madison Political Economy Mapping Project with Operation Welcome Home.

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On Self-determination, and A Letter to a Loved One

Dario Parra

In the last few years, I have been attempting to fully grasp the concept of self-determination while simultaneously trying to understand my own personal context in this concept. I recall the first time hearing the term self-determination. I only vaguely understood the concept, knowing that it was a tool, method, or philosophy for creating a reality which included justice for marginalized people. I remember my freshman year of college, reading El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan, El Plan de Santa Barbara, and the Philosophy of MEChA, all of which spoke on self-determination for the Chican@. I began to read more on self-determination and began a process of understanding what this idea means. I can say that to me, the concept of self-determination has greatly helped me develop myself, my way of understanding, and my political ideology, as well as recognizing my privileges and consequently, my responsibilities. Five years later, however, I can say that although I've learned a lot about determination, I still have a long way to go in understanding what it truly means and how I play into the concept of self-determination.

Although 'self-determination' can have various meanings depending on its context, I have been trying to find out what it means to me from my perspective as a first-generation immigrant Chicano who grew up in an urban setting exclusively around working/ "lower-class" people of color. The simplest way that I can explain my current understanding of self-determination is this: the ability of a community to have control and security over every aspect of their lives in order to secure true and absolute justice for their and other communities'. This does not only mean that these communities should have resources or help to make justice happen, but that the community should have the right to be able to use those resources themselves and not need anyone, especially government, authority, or any other power figure to execute proper justice and provide for themselves to ensure a just quality of life.

Both *Towards Land, Work, and Power* and *Take Back the Land*, have helped my process of understanding self-determination. *Towards Land, Work, and Power* is such an amazing and exciting book in that it provides a direct and solid explanation of the contexts that create the need for self-determination such as neoliberalism, U.S led imperialism, and larger and local political economies. It helped my solidify my understanding of the power relationship between these oppressing factors, the people they oppress, and how we can fight against them in a more general level. In short, I believe that *Towards Land, Work, and Power* helps provide a setting and context of the struggle of the oppressors against the oppressed. I also enjoyed and learned a lot from *Take Back the Land*, specifically after reading *Towards Land, Work, and Power*, because I feel that it helped me explore the concept of being an "organizer" with privileges and attempting to be in true solidarity with less privileged communities.

The relationship between Max and the other organizers and the community members of the Umoja village helped me understand the complexity of the relationships between organizers and community members. I believe that what I learned from the Umoja village book can help us not only in similar situations, but in all situations that involve checking our privilege and potential power that we may have over someone.

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Querida mamá,

Te escribo para compartir contigo lo mucho que he estado aprendiendo en mi clase de justicia social. Me gustaría compartir en especial, una manera de entender este mundo que previamente no podía entender. Yo sé que tú y mi papá entienden muy bien las cosas malas que tiene este sistema social en el que vivimos, ya que ustedes han sufrido bajo él desde la niñez y continúan a hacerlo a lo diario. Pero lo que me gustaría decirles es que las cosas no tienen que ser así. En la universidad he tenido el privilegio de leer muchas cosas que me han ayudado a entender al mundo, y a la misma vez buscar soluciones a los problemas que los afectan a ustedes, mi familia, y a otra gente de nuestra comunidad. Aunque las cosas no son tan fáciles como decirles, quiero decirles que en verdad las cosas sí pueden cambiar.

He aprendido que la causa del sufrimiento tuyo, de mi papá, nuestra familia, nuestra comunidad, igual a las familias y comunidades de otr@s, es causado por un sistema que ha diseñado una jerarquía que propone escurrir ganancias egoístas de la sangre, dolor, y sufrimiento de nuestra gente. Este sistema es aquel del neo-liberalismo. El neo-liberalismo es un sistema global que ordena las economías, sociedades, leyes, y como efecto, las vidas de la gente del mundo. Este sistema es creado por gente rica de alto poder, de quien la mayoría son dueños de corporaciones, negocios, oficiales del gobierno, y banqueros. Este sistema se propone alcanzar los más altos niveles de ganancias para las corporaciones, y para que esto sea posible, tiene que haber alguien quien trabaja y sacrifica su calidad de vida. El sistema neo-liberal ha forzado a gente como nosotr@s a ser esa gente que trabaja demasiado con una baja calidad de vida o muere por otras causas del sistema.

Bueno mamá, sé que esto no suena nada feliz, pero la esperanza tiene que seguir, y me gustaría decirte por qué. En nuestra clase hemos leído dos libros, llamados Hacia Tierra, Trabajo, y Poder, y Reclamando la Tierra. El primer de los libros me ha ayudado a entender al sistema neo-liberal. El segundo me ha dado esperanza de la determinación de la gente. Este libro se trata de gente sin hogar que vive en la calle como resultados de las situaciones que ha creado el neo-liberalismo. El libro es una recolección de una comunidad llamada Umoja Village, una pequeña vecindad de casitas hechas por la gente sin hogar y otros organizadores comunitarios. La autodeterminación de la gente de esta comunidad me recuerda de las maneras que ustedes y mi propia comunidad se han organizado para ayudarse un@ al otr@. Me acuerdo cuando estaba en la primaria y tú y las otras mamás iban a todas las juntas de padres y maestr@s, aunque l@s maestr@s y

la administración solo hablaban inglés y ustedes apenas lo entendían. Sin embargo, ustedes resistían y seguían participando en las juntas, demandando que l@s estudiantes recibieran la educación que merecen. Pensar en esto me ha ayudado a comprender que aunque las cosas son difíciles para ustedes, ustedes siguen luchando. Me ha inspirado a cumplir con mis responsabilidades de usar mis privilegios para asistirte a ti y mi papá, y también a nuestra comunidad.

Bueno, tengo muchas cosas que decir, pero mejor las guardo para la próxima vez que nos veamos, que ojalá sea pronto.

*Sinceramente, tu hijo,
Dario*

About the Author:

Dario Parra graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison in December 2010 with a BA in History and a CLS certificate, and he now works as a full-time youth programs coordinator at Centro Hispano in Madison. Dario worked with the juvenile justice system documentation project.

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