MY LIFE IS IN THEIR HANDS: LATINA ADOLESCENT BORDER-CROSSINGS, BECOMING IN THE SHADOWS, AND MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

Alycia M. Elfreich

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Doctoral Committee

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Chalmer Thompson, Ph.D.

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Barbara Dennis, Ph.D.

_____

Robert Helfenbein, Ph.D.

_____

Monica Medina, Ph.D.

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MY LIFE IS IN THEIR HANDS: LATINA ADOLESCENT BORDER-CROSSINGS, BECOMING IN THE SHADOWS, AND MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

This project endeavors to move beyond traditional conceptualizations of voice in conventional qualitative research and instead focuses on embodied, liminal experiences of Latina adolescents, the intersections of identity, gender, spirituality, ethnicity, etc., how these junctures broadly impact mental health, and more specifically, how we perceive mental health and well-being within educational institutions. The study draws upon an intervention pilot study that sought to increase resiliency and self-mastery in Latino adolescents while simultaneously reducing their depressive symptoms. However, this project aims to take these findings and focus upon the complex and multiple factors that influence depression, including citizenship status, trauma in crossing the border from Mexico into the United States, and racial and gendered oppression specific to the experiences of Latina adolescent immigrants. Thus, this project explores ways in which four Latina adolescents make sense of their lived experiences through a critical feminist theoretical framework that integrates post/anti colonial feminism. The framework provides a nuanced conceptualization of power, oppression, and marginalization that creates opportunities to explore alternative notions of thinking that encourages new paths to transform interdisciplinary, university, community, and family relationships surrounding mental health concerns within educational institutions. Finally, theory, research, epistemology, and ontology are interwoven to inform a methodology that is fluid, interchanging, and always becoming.

Chalmer Thompson, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> One must start by leaving open spaces of experimentation, of search, or transition . . . with our desires, and our desires are that which evade us, in the very act of propelling us forth, leaving as the only indicator the traces of where have already been, that is to say, of what we have already ceased to be. (Braidotti, 2001, p. 1435).

> I can't remember; I don't remember; I think you're mixing things up; I didn't understand; That is all I remember; Just a few things we remember; I don't know who….; It's all really blurry to me; I remember bits and pieces . . . [1]

Often our memory eludes us and words escape us to fully describe the recollection of experience. Yet, our past often entangles itself through our emotions, our senses, and our conceptualizations of the present. MacLure (2013) further suggests thought (via memory) is "difference, movement, change and the emergence of the new" (p. 659). How we connect and make sense of our past is very much a part of our present.

> I'm learning… surrounding yourself with people who have good energy, who are going to propel you into the future.

Indeed, our "voice[s] come from elsewhere" (p. 660) and are sensed and felt in the present moment and are often out of "our conscious or intentional control" (p. 662). They emerge as our experiences, which are derived by chance "as a *description* [italic in original] that can, has been, and will be rewritten" (St. Pierre, 2009, p. 230).

> And we were on that bus for a long time. I don't know if it was days, I don't know if it was hours. It was just kind of, I don't remember. But I do remember that we went . . . we would go from bus to bus and we would find different people to go with . . . there was a small house. There was no

[1] Indented and single-spaced words and phrases are taken directly from the meetings with the girls, their mothers, and the mentors (unless they appear with a citation). They are meant to exemplify theoretical and methodological onto-epistemologies with(in) the text and do not distinguish between voices, but instead embody entangled notions of becoming. Furthermore, the manner in which I share our meetings together is not bound by a temporal linearity, but instead acknowledges an ontological voice. Finally, these words are sometimes the lone words of one girl and other times I have mixed pieces to exemplify the intra-action of the girls' experiences.

> couch, no blanket, there was literally nothing, just carpet. And we had to sleep there without anything because we were trying to cross.

This project endeavors to move beyond traditional conceptualizations of voice in conventional qualitative research and instead focuses on embodied, liminal experiences of Latina adolescents, the intersections of identity, gender, spirituality, ethnicity, etc., how these junctures broadly impact mental health, and more specifically, how we perceive mental health and well-being within educational institutions.

> I started thinking no one liked me. I was like why am I here? No Hispanics want me, no Americans wants me, where do I go? I felt so depressed. I'm the different one, the rare one.

However, I want to think about this differently. As I think about my own onto-epistemological considerations and the influences it has on this research project, I am drawn to what Haraway's (1991) "view from somewhere" as opposed to a "view from above" (p. 196). In particular, she refers to moving away from Westernized concepts of rational knowledge and objectivity into spaces that recognize the (feminist) subjective position of partial views, embodiment, and indeed, honors a larger vision "to be somewhere in particular" (p. 196).

> Bringing us here has been the best choice she has ever made. It has been really hard for her living in this country without family, but one has to keep on going without losing who you are.

It is extremely difficult to escape and delineate "the view of above," which is situated in traditional training for doctoral students. As such, I have struggled to frame this project until I realized it was not fully my responsibility or choice.

> I see myself as a feminist . . . and it opens up your eyes to see that things are similar, yet so different in so many ways.

However difficult this process has been, the more I talk to these girls, I feel this is the right approach for this project regardless of the ambiguity about how to go about this work.

> There's people who want us to be independent, yet they limit us.

Thus, the manner in which I approach this project is the information shared by Elizabeth St. Pierre (via email) and the chart she and another doctoral student created in order to think through post-qualitative research (see Appendix). I use this as a framework to think about my research as I highlight what St. Pierre suggested: (1) theory/concepts that will guide my inquiry, and (2) what I'm interested in thinking about (E. A. St. Pierre, personal communication, September 8, 2015). Below I highlight the primary facets St. Pierre offers in the chart she created with the intent of moving beyond conventional humanist qualitative research and moving towards post-qualitative thought and method (see Appendix), which is decidedly left open to interpretation.

Consequently, in chapter two, I structure this project in a manner that embraces post-qualitative theory and onto-epistemology and draws upon philosophy that embodies a feminist becoming and acknowledges that we are always entangled with everything.

> Even though we were going through similar things, I think what we went through made us even closer than we were before we came here.

Indeed, human beings are decentered and the more-than-human, post-human, not-quite human, not-only human is acknowledged (see Appendix). Nevertheless, I offer a "view from somewhere" in that I cannot escape who I am and my own becoming in relation to this research project. As I cannot remove myself and my partial, limited, contrived view, I only hope to elucidate a space in which to explore different orientations for thinking through not only research, but also in how we approach mental health and well-being in

adolescent Latina girls. As such, I use promiscuous feminist research, diffractive methodologies, and rhizomatic thinking that highlight differences that matter (Barad, 2007) in an effort to push boundaries, thought, and conceptualizations pertaining to mental health, Latina adolescent experiences, and education.

In chapter three, I explore an embodied feminist becoming which embraces the mutual entanglements of the spirit.

> It's just like this peaceful feeling you get inside, you know when nothing is going on that will hurt me or anybody else, you just kind of enjoy the moment.

Indeed, the phrase, 'mutual entanglements of the spirit' is redundant, as Somerville (2013) defines as a collective, emotional and spiritual storyline that is a generative representation, of becoming-other, in in-between spaces that articulate our own entanglements of knowledge production. I also exemplify material entanglements that conjure affective memories from the girls' border-crossing journeys. Finally, I draw upon affect theory to explore happiness as attachments to objects of desire (Ahmed, 2010a; Ahmed, 2010b) and Berlant's (2010) notion of cruel optimism, as both of these theoretical premises suggest our affect may actually hinder our perceptions of oppression and marginalization.

In chapter four I situate post/anti colonial theory within the post-empirical, new material mangle in an effort to draw upon the ontological becomings of the girls who participated in this project. Although feminist material work tackles issues of power and offer critical interpretations of the marginalized and oppressed, the messy, irrational spaces lie within and in-between Latina feminist thought. Therefore, feminist Chicana/Latina cultural studies (for example Anzaldua, 1990; Villenas, 2000) emphasizes

alternative notions of thinking about Latina adolescent mental health, counseling practices, well-being, and schooling that challenges the superficial and disconnected conceptualizations of these girls lives within context of conventional research. But I will say more about this later.

Nonetheless, my role as a researcher and the subjective space I enter into this work is not to inform my own agenda or to claim I speak for or through the voices of these Latina girls. Instead, I move away from traditional research that seeks to interpret voices of people in which they "do" research on in an attempt embody the "contradictions, ambiguities, and struggles that defy simplistic categorizations and dichotomies" (Villenas, 2014, pg. 212) and ultimately more fully expose their becoming-other on their terms, in their (liminal) space, not mine. Of course, it is impossible to remove my own white privileged space a researcher within this context, but situating this project beyond discourse more fully addresses "the problem for speaking for others" (Alcoff, 2009), which I spend some time working through in chapter five. Nonetheless, it is precisely the critical Western-based feminist lens I wish to move away from that often focuses on oppression that contributes to depression, and instead carves out a "Xicanista space that is one of faith, spirituality, and beauty" (Villenas, 2000, p. 88) that nurtures well-being and furthers "other voices that speak beyond the limit of our knowing" Mazzei, 2009, p. 49).

In order to create a space that embodies alternative conceptual practices of thinking, talking, and recognizing the entanglements "of the given and self-evident" (St. Pierre, 2015, p. 92) that are often overlooked for the new and different, it is necessary to deconstruct traditional methods of research pertaining to first-generation Latina

adolescents and overall mental health, acculturation, and gender constructions within and between traditional Latino family structures and the navigation of American culture. Therefore, in chapter six, I begin by providing a brief historical analysis of Western conceptualizations in mental health and illness, as well as power and societal constructions that influence the trajectory of mental health and how we approach diagnosis and treatment today.

Next, I outline the current literature encompassing Latina/o adolescents. I also include current research on border-crossing specific to Mexico and the trauma experienced on these journeys, as well as research concerning undocumented youth and the impacts in educational institutions. Most of the research resides in quantitative studies that create dualisms and do not reflect the complexities of these girls' lives. Consequently, it is my contention to exemplify much of the current empirical research targeting Latina adolescents and mental health as a Westernized body of knowledge that focuses on theories of individual cognition and development that does not take into consideration contextual factors. Thus, people are often excluded from being seen from a holistic perspective with nuanced factors that shape their needs (Patel, 2013). Both these conceptual and contextual factors that embrace the ordinary practices of these girls and how they make sense of themselves and the world around them in the mutually entangled moments we create together contributes to the literature, but does not necessarily assume incrementalism (see Appendix).

Indeed, I am not trying to fill in gaps in conventional research, but instead ethically *live* the research with my participants that further:

> each relation as researcher and respondent negotiate sense-making by foregrounding their theoretical frameworks, but risking confusion, by

> determining to read harder when the text begins to seem inaccessible, and by being willing to attend to the absences in their own work that are made intelligible by the difference of the other (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 186).

Chapter seven entangles traumas of the spirit, becoming, and educational assemblages in an effort to begin thinking differently about research, mental health, schooling, and the impact of oppressive and colonizing practices on undocumented immigrant youth in this country, especially for Latina adolescents. As such, the suggestions made are not just to enhance fields of educational research and impact Latino communities to further Western, white dominant cultural values, but to instead further egalitarian entanglements of difference. Indeed, we "are not intertwining of separate entities, but rather irreducible relations of responsibility" (Barad, 2010, p. 268).

Finally, I clearly do not offer this research project in the conventional qualitative structure, but instead interweave research, theory, epistemology, and ontology to inform methodology and to illuminate feminist becoming that elicits "possible futures via new thought and present-day practices of everyday life." (Lather, 2015, p. 111). As I have attempted to depict in this the first part of this introduction, traditional "data" is foregrounded within as opposed to separate and distinct from every aspect of this project. Indeed, I am intentionally moving away from the theories and practices that have been ingrained in my doctoral work and am ready to "trust [my]self and get to work" (St. Pierre, 2015, p. 89). I am choosing something that has chosen me. As St. Pierre (2015) reiterates, "we cannot *not* put it to work. It has transformed us—we cannot think and live without it. *We will be living it."* (p. 91) [italics in original]. In this way, any method I offer will be out of date and "always come at the end, too late, when we think back about what we did and why and what we might have done instead and will try next time" (St.

Pierre, 2015, pg. 92). I am very honest in that I embrace "the importance of a stance of [methodological] unknowing" (Somerville, 2007, p. 234) as I simultaneously brace myself for the "gravitational pull of humanism that allows us to do things we don't even know we do . . ." (Lather, May, 2015, ICQI Conference).

Nevertheless, I begin thinking about alternative thinking in relation to mental health, education, research, and the current perspectives we choose to think about Latina adolescents' lives as static and fixed as opposed to fluid and always becoming. Thus, I begin this with a description of the project itself and move directly into how I frame my research methods. I choose to focus on method first because understanding the project is paramount to understanding how I have gone about simultaneously theorizing and analyzing the data collected to capture the mutual entanglements among us all.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PULL OF HUMANISM[2] AND THE ONTOLOGICAL TURN

The Genesis of the Project

At this point, I take some time to describe the derivation of this project as well as offer a more conventional description of the research and methodology in order to show how I conceptualize and attempt to pull away from humanistic approaches to research, interpretation, and voice in data and begin to work towards an ontologically entangled becoming of all involved in this project. As such, the project drew upon an intervention pilot study, conducted in 2012-2013 by research colleagues in the Indiana University School of Public Health that sought to increase resilience and self-mastery in Latino adolescents while simultaneously reducing and/or preventing depressive symptoms.

> It got me so depressed because I was treated differently . . . I don't like guys telling me what to do, so that got me depressed. And not being able to fight back.

The pilot study's aim was to assess Latino adolescents' levels of acculturative stress and the relationship with mental health outcomes. A community- based organization invited several university partners, including the Indiana University School of Education—Indianapolis, to help address issues affecting Latino adolescents. The study began with a weeklong interdisciplinary camp and continued with monthly resiliency-building sessions for 30 Latino youth who were determined to be at risk for depression. The study revealed that nearly 60% of study participants had some form of depressive symptoms, and that they were seven times more likely to have depression if they suffered from moderate levels of acculturative stress. Percentages were even higher among Latina adolescents, which is tend to have higher indications of well-being than adolescent girls.

[2] (Lather, May, 2015, ICQI Conference)

> I feel like me and my sister have been able to keep our cultures, or we try to do good in school because we know we're not from here. If we want something we have to work hard for it . . . I kind of wish [our brothers] would realize how important our culture is, and if we want something we have to work for it.

Although the pilot study found that Latina adolescent girls had higher rates of depression of boys, I was particularly interested in following up with a qualitative study that would further the embodied, liminal understanding of these girls. Thus, I worked with Monica Medina, Ph.D. and two student mentors from the summer camp to begin thinking about 1) who might be interested in participating, and 2) how to begin thinking about the conversations to be had with these girls. The two student mentors are both Latina undergraduate students and had developed strong relationships with these girls over the course of two years. Thus, they were integral in explaining the project to the girls and their parents and getting initial participation. Nonetheless, it can be a daunting task moving in and out of conventional qualitative research into post-qualitative conceptions of what research can/could be. However, to appease IRB requirements in regard to consent and assent procedures to conduct any research, I explained the project as focus groups and interviews that would be conducted on Saturdays over the course of a month. We would meet for four hours and would spend 90 minutes in a focus group-like setting, we would take a break and eat lunch together, and the girls would work on an art project.

The Girls

Four sixteen-year-old Latina girls from Mexico participated in this project. Two of the girls are identical twins and three of the four girls attend the same high school. Although they all participated in the same camp two summers ago, they did not know

each other well. All of the girls are first-generation immigrants who crossed the border from Mexico to Texas between the ages of four to eight and they and their families are all undocumented. They are all fluent in both English and Spanish. Two of the girls have quite heavy accents, while the other girls have accents, but less noticeably so. All four girls took care in their appearance and they all had long, dark hair to the middle of their backs. When we were in less structured conversations, most of the dialogue revolved around standard adolescent dialogue regarding boys, social media (Snapchat and Facebook in particular), and clothing (they would often comment on the clothes, jewelry, etc. each girl was wearing). One girl stated she did not like "girly" clothes and preferred to wear 'emo' outfits. Two of the girls were very into fashion and make-up, and always had their hair perfectly styled. Another girl dressed much more conservatively than the other girls and wore oxford shirts and argyle sweaters to each of the sessions. She also brought a different stuffed animal backpack to each of our meetings, which included a stuffed unicorn backpack and a blue 'Stitch' backpack from the Disney movie, *Lilo & Stitch*. They all got along well and seemed to very much enjoy the time spent together.

They were all very honest in the difficulty their families have financially and the struggle of their parents finding well-paying jobs. They all expressed their devotion and close relationships to their mothers, which will be explored further in later sections. Three of the four girls' fathers live with them and the other girl's father is in Mexico and was physically and emotionally abusive to both the mother and the children. Finally, all of the girls have sibling and they are all brothers. The twin girls have twin brothers a few years older than them and another girl has a younger brother who is autistic. Finally, one

girl has six brothers and she is the third oldest. The girls share that they carry a lot of the responsibility of taking care of their younger siblings.

Mentors

The girls' mentors were also a part of our sessions. Although this was not necessarily planned and as I mentioned previously, they initially reached out to the girls and their parents to tell them about the project. As they had established relationships with them from the camp, they continued communication with the girls through text and social media. One of the mentors was also fluent in Spanish and could explain the project to the parents. It was planned they would at least attend the first session to greet the parents, help with the consent process in Spanish, and spend some time visiting with the girls. Within the first few minutes of the meeting, it became clear they seemed to naturally fit in very well, and the girls wanted (and asked) them to stay. Although neither mentor participated in the focus group part of the project, they did participate in the art project and the girls really enjoyed having them to talk to during the less structured moments in our meeting. The mentors also met with me afterward to reflect on the sessions and offered observations I may have missed or needed to address for the next session.

Both mentors are Latina women between the ages of nineteen and twenty years old and are undergraduate students at the Indiana University School of Public Health. Both mentors are second-generation immigrants from Columbia whose parents are either medical doctors or have earned their Ph.D. One is extremely outgoing and could be described as "bubbly." Her personality tends to be contagious in that she appears to be the one responsible for getting the girls talking and participating in the less structured

conversations. She would often ask about where the girls shopped, where they got their clothes, and who they were dating. The other mentor was much more laid back, and tended to observe the setting more than participate in it. The girls clearly liked both of them and were happy to spend time with them as they would always greet and depart each other with big smiles and hugs. Finally, both mentors met with me after each of the meetings to debrief on the day's conversations as well as offer suggestions in what we should talk about next time or an important piece of the conversation I may have overlooked and should go back and revisit.

Undocumented Status

After I finished conducting the meetings with the girls and I was talking with my dissertation chair about all four girls being undocumented, she suggested I find an undocumented woman to help get a better understanding of the consequences of being undocumented in the US, especially because sixteen year old girls may not fully understand the ramifications that may come as they get older. Another professor at IUPUI introduced me to a young woman who is twenty-three years old, a Mexican immigrant (she came to the US in the eighth grade), attends IUPUI, and is open about her status of being undocumented. She is very active in the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance and describes the experience of being undocumented as "being in the shadows." She further suggested that "being in the shadows" is the metaphorical manner in which the undocumented community in Indianapolis refers to the phenomenon of immigrant status in this country. She suggested that one of the hardest but most important pieces that has helped her cope with the trauma of being undocumented is to advocate for herself, which is why she chooses to be very open about being undocumented in the U.S.

She does have DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which is documentation that allows her to stay in the US for two years. She describes DACA as an identity for many undocumented immigrants and many think they have full rights as citizens. Additionally, there are many misconceptions of laws in the community surrounding DACA because no one (meaning the government) takes time to explain them the fundamental aspects of the program, such as there is no path to citizenship through DACA. She further suggests the undocumented community *doesn't know how to identify laws that don't want you here.* Throughout this project, I will return to both the mentors and this young woman's perspectives in order to further interrogate my own positionality as well as my interpretation of what the girls shared during our conversations.

Conventional Qualitative Method

Focus Groups

The focus groups were held over the course of five Saturdays from 10:30-2:30pm at the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), located on the IUPUI campus. The focus groups were audio-recorded. Although questions and prompts were submitted to IRB, I had full intent to initiate a casual conversation that allowed a space for the girls to explore topics that were of interest to them. I had discussion points that focused on their affect and emotion related to their gendered experiences and understandings, navigating both Latino and American culture, and general conceptions of mental health and their experiences with depression. However, I was very open to taking the conversation where they wanted to go. For the second focus group, I asked the girls to ask a woman they admire to attend the second focus group with them. The girls all brought in their mothers, which added a unique layer to the conversation and also

provided context in which the girls could explore their relationships with their mothers, their own identities, and their navigation between American culture and Latino culture. Finally, both the mothers and the girls chose to speak to each other directly about both the challenges and the successes they have had in their lives and how much they meant to one another.

At the end of the third focus group, I suggested the girls come up with what they would like to discuss the next time we met. They unanimously suggested they wanted to talk about their personal stories of crossing over the border from Mexico to Texas and their struggles with being undocumented. The girls also decided they wanted to continue meeting, so we actually met a fifth time and currently plan to meet monthly with locations changing according to their suggestions. Finally, two of the four girls attended all five of our meetings, one girl attended four of the five meetings (she missed our second meeting), and one girl attended three of the five meetings (she missed the second and fifth meeting). Thus, I spent at least twelve hours with each of the participants. When the girls were unable to attend focus group sessions, they told their mentors they had familial responsibilities, e.g., a funeral and taking care of younger siblings. Although in conventional research it may be viewed as problematic that one of the girls missed the focus group, in this case, I would suggest for lack of a better description, that the conversations, artwork, and collective experiences happened organically. Consequently, these entangled understandings would not have happened otherwise under strictly controlled conditions often reserved for humanist qualitative research. In other words, if I chose to manage who did and did not attend the focus groups and rescheduled them based on participation, the girls' experiences and relationships with one another may

have looked very different and the forced structure of the project may have hindered building trust for them to share their border-crossings. It is also worth noting the girls did not have a relationship outside of our initial meetings, however they started to communicate with one another via social media and text by the end of the fifth meeting.

Art Project

At the beginning of our first session the girls were given the opportunity to create a piece of art, blog, drawing, book, etc. that answers the prompt, "What I know now and would share with my younger sister…." I quickly learned that none of the girls (nor their mentors!) had younger sisters so we collectively altered the statement to include talking to a younger cousin or next door neighbor. I focused solely on the advice they chose to share with younger girls because I was interested in how they recognized their gendered understandings and experiences in their lives thus far. I was also hopeful the girls would be able to express themselves outside of language and discourse within a focus group setting. Again, I wanted to be very open to the direction the girls wanted to take the art project, as I offered to bring in any supplies they needed for whatever they wanted to create. It turned out that all of them chose to draw, use phrases from magazines, and develop artistic pieces that resembled a mix between sketched art and collages.

Furthermore, the art project became a conduit for the girls to develop friendships and learn from one another, which was not a factor I accounted for. It was during this time the girls talked, listened to music, and talked about what was going in their lives, such as prom dates and the best Mexican restaurants. The mentors also created a collage of sorts they wanted to share with the girls and we all spent a lot of time laughing and smiling during this time. I video-recorded the girls while they worked on the art projects,

which was part of IRB consent. In particular, I was interested in their embodied conversations with one another, such as laughter, silences, and just generally watching how they interacted with one another—thus furthering assemblages of representation in these meetings.

Casual Conversation

Because we spent sometimes longer than four hours together in one session, there was time that we all just talked without any agenda or conscious thought behind the outcome of the conversation. This most often occurred when we first met in the morning and at lunchtime. The discussions were spontaneous, funny, sarcastic, and always circled back to Donald Trump[3], the growing number of Trump supporters, and the next presidential election. As a side, I think initially the girls were trying to get a sense in where I stood in terms of support of Trump, but I quickly reassured them that I would not and did not support Trump's rhetoric and would not be voting for him in any election. We also talked about typical adolescent concerns, but they were all quite interested in my take on the election and what would happen if Trump actually became president.

> He doesn't just offend immigrants, he offends LBGTQ, women . . . If he does get elected president, I swear I'm moving to Canada . . . We've [her family] got an exit plan to leave the country . . .

Two of the girls even mentioned their families have come up with "exit strategies" in case he forces all immigrants, but especially Mexican immigrants to leave the US.

Finally, the group concluded,

[3] As Donald Trump is a candidate in the Republican party for the 2016 presidency and is increasingly gaining supporters throughout the country, the girls have voiced increasing concern for what this means for the immigrant community broadly, and specifically for their families. Trump has made strong statements concerning immigration laws that specifically target Mexican and Central American immigrants. These statements include constructing a wall between Mexico and the US border to prohibit "illegal" entrance into the US, as well as the forced deportation of undocumented immigrants currently residing in the US.

> I don't think Donald Trump really knows what he's talking about. Because I know if he would have been in our shoes he wouldn't be saying the same thing. And other people that are supporting him, they don't know what it's like to go through all of this because they've never had to go through it before . . . I don't know . . . I feel like people . . . it they knew how much it took and how much effort people have to go through.

Clearly the girls often felt as though it was their job to explain to people their hardships and struggles, and if they could get that across perhaps Americans would not be so negative towards immigrants, especially from Mexico. Nonetheless, these conversations were often where I took a backseat and just listened to the girls interact with their mentors and with each other. Of course I would participate if the conversation pertained to me, but most often they spent this time learning about each other, as teenage girls do.

Towards a Methodological Unknowing

It is an interesting place to begin thinking about post-qualitative research while simultaneously upholding humanistic policies and procedures through dissertation work. Above, I have offered a very brief glimpse into a conventional qualitative research framework I wrote for IRB. And although at the moment it may have seemed a waste of time, with the work I wanted to do, it actually allowed me to more fully explore how I would like to go about this project with these girls. To be honest, I have always struggled a bit in providing such a detailed methodology in qualitative work before the project even began. I even found it a bit presumptuous to have research questions and methods laid out before I ever met my participants. In the back of my mind, I always questioned how I could develop preconceived understandings about people based upon other published research and feel as though I could accurately describe and represent participants in a study. But I figured I would just work through it when the time came, as I was unaware of (at this point) of any other options.

When I was introduced to post-qualitative methods, I felt it was a much better fit into my own onto-epistemological understanding. I tend to be inwardly insightful and reflective and am very aware of things around me that exist outside of familiar discourse. Indeed, I have always been told that I am keenly aware of people's emotions and embodied expressions, and often I may pay more attention to these expressions as opposed to what is often said. Finally, I do not naturally process the world around me verbally. Embodied notions of communication and expression make much more sense to me, often when I am at a loss for words. Nonetheless, Butler (2005) reminds us, "the very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and to others are not of our making" (p.21).

Thus, the socially constructed dualistic tendencies of humanist research do not take into account the other ways of which we interact, think about, and communicate with others (human and post-human). In other words, I intend to move beyond humanistic qualitative research that resides within dualistic thinking that reinforces binaries and does not allow us to think beyond codes, transcriptions, and interpretation of interviews and voice. Instead post-qualitative research embraces spaces that recognize the multiplicity of our interactions, our complexities, and our embodied understandings of how we interact with the world. However, as post-qualitative research critiques the dangers of dualisms and the impact it has on mariginalized groups of people, it is also relevant to acknowledge post-colonial (see Fanon, 1967; McCaslin & Breton; 2008; Wadener & Mannuelito, 2008) and feminist anti-colonial work (see Canella & Manuelito, 2008) that addresses the same concerns, but does so in a way that is anchored in onto-epistemological Latina understandings. I explore this in more detail in chapter four.

It is very helpful for me to begin thinking about this project through post-qualitative inquiry that acknowledges the onto-epistemological entanglement that decenters the human, interrogates binaries and their relationship to power and privilege, and views language as a mode of action instead of representationalist thinking. For St. Pierre (2015), thought does not need a method nor does data have a separate existence from *human*, that is, it can never be collected and is unthinkable in an entangled image of thought (see Appendix). It is here I begin an "ontology of becoming" that fully acknowledges the "unfolding, the embodied, and the messiness of research engagement" (Somerville, 2007, p. 240) and meaning is created from an "assemblage of representations" (Somerville, 2007, p. 239).

The Ontological Mangle of Research Methodology

St. Pierre (1997) further reminds us that language often fails us and thus confounds ideas of truth and representational knowledge. MacLure (2013) furthers representational thinking is standard in qualitative research methodology. She states, "the subject is radically decentred in the collective assemblage of enunciation . . . Language, already collective, social and impersonal, pre-exists 'us', and my voice comes from elsewhere" (p. 660). Additionally, post-qualitative interpretation does not exist outside of "the data," but data have a way of "making themselves intelligible to us" (p. 660). Indeed, the data are seen, felt, and sensed as comments, prolonged silences, or beginning to think about,

> writing up a piece of research where something not-yet articulated seems to take off and take over, effecting a king of quantum leap that moves the writing/writer to somewhere unpredictable. On those occasions, agency feels distributed and undecidable, as if we have chosen something that has chosen us (MacLure, 2013, p. 661).

As I 'write up' this project, I begin at the end. Without question, something has chosen a collective us. After spending almost twenty hours with these four girls, I think at some point I actually stopped thinking as a researcher and embraced the ambiguity and tension both discussed and embodied, while also acknowledging the silence between tears of sorrow, tears of admiration, and tears of support. So how do I think about (and actually do) this differently? How do I challenge my own privilege and power as a researcher as I attempt to interpret entangled understanding of themselves and each other? Again, MacLure (2013) references a certain 'event-ness' (p. 662) that is both pre-personal and pre-conscious and belongs to "the region of potentialities, real but abstract, outside of determinate time and space, that may or may not be actualized in specific forms, according to chance alignments and divergences . . . that are not within our control" (p. 662). The event itself is not devoid of the senses, and thus has an intensity that allows us to arrive somewhere else (MacLure, 2013).

> It was kind of scary because it was like I don't even know these people . . . They're going to protect me, but I have to somehow kind of trust them. Because If I don't then what's going to happen to me? We were only eight or nine . . . and for us I think it was good nothing bad happened to us. Our (crossing the border) was just easy . . . I think still coming over here we're still dealing with it because we are still not legal.

Rising to the Surface

The event that MacLure (2013) draws from Deleuze (2004) occurred in our fourth meeting. The girls all made the choice they would like to talk about their experience of crossing over the border from Mexico to Texas and their subsequent journey to Indianapolis (all girls were present for our fourth meeting). MacLure (2013) further suggests a "welcome of the event the senses inaugurate" when we begin to "sense

humour, mockery, disgust, fascination, unease or resistance, in ourselves and others" (p. 664). Indeed, the power in this this event was because of the emotion felt among the group, the embodied support of the group, and space that was created that for the first time in their lives, they shared their recollection of crossing the border with someone outside of their immediate family.

> That memory, once somebody honestly asks about if you're going to feel it, you're going to feel every last emotion that you had of that memory.

However, the power in this event is not in the four separate stories (although the twins traveled together and were never separated, they had very different memories of the journey), but in the collective moment of sharing, listening, crying, laughing, supporting, and embracing all that each of the girls went through.

Therefore, as I have done above and will continue to do, I share the girls' individual selves (and what they chose to share) within a collective framework that acknowledges the entangled intra-actions that would not have happened in isolation. In line with Hekman (2010), mangles are everywhere and "construct the world we inhabit in all its complexity" (p. 126). Furthermore, what the girls chose to share ultimately influences how they constructed knowledge, which was in part due to the intra-actions of the girls themselves, our conversations, our embodied participation, and connections made within the group that developed beyond language and voice. Because of the relationships they developed with one another and the trust and familiarity they had with their mentors, the girls chose to talk about personal events in their lives and their undocumented status. I do think trust developed amongst myself, the girls, and their mentors because they also thought I was someone who could "get the word out" and explain what it truly meant to be a young Latina girl in this country. However, it is

important to note that I do interrogate my own positionality within this research and with the girls in chapter three in more detail, because even "getting the word out" implies a position of power. As I am innately a part of these entangled moments, I interweave my own ontological and contextual entanglements within this project in chapter five in the effort to make this project more accessible to the reader.

The interweaving of conversations, embodied understandings, affect, and visual art is done so within the theoretical conceptualizations of this project. Theory has always been the foreground to this work and where I began in terms of thinking about research, and ultimately is where I end up at the conclusion of this project. I also hope to get away from 'truth-telling' of the girls and what was shared in our meetings. There are always the entanglements of truth, power, and desire evident in how we all represent ourselves to others. Thus, the goal is not a true, full or complete story in post-qualitative research, but instead acknowledges the irrelevance of conscious truth as a foundation for meaning (Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, Jackson suggests the lived experiences of the girls as represented through voice may betray our words and our memories as we "cannot speak of our present without inciting what had to be absent (or silenced) to make possible truth telling about the present" (p. 168). It is within the collective event of crossing the border from Mexico to Texas these young, Latina adolescent girls recognized the silence in much of their truth telling and knowledge construction that had to be absent because they and their families were undocumented immigrants in this country. Although these silences exist in their everyday lives, McCaslin & Breton (2008) remind us that "hearing these stories is where healing begins" (p. 525) and the refusal of silence "recognizes the ongoing silence of history today" (p. 527). In other words, having the opportunity to

share their journey for the first time allowed this silence to dissipate and supported new entanglements to emerge that transform oppressive spaces (of silence) into movements toward healing:

> Once you start talking, you never know that they've [other people] gone through . . . but telling our story was good for the four of us, because it makes us realize that we are so different in so many ways, yet we are kind of dealing with the same things every single day.

Thus, as crossing over rose to the surface as an integral piece of the girls' becoming, it simultaneously deconstructed and constructed meaning that recognized "social relations, cultural meaning, and histories assembled together to create truth by a desiring voice, a discursive voice, a performative voice" (Jackson, 2009, p. 172).

The Journey

Of course, the manner in which I present their stories is my interpretation of the experience and is impossible to avoid. As such, this is not to be a representation of actual truth, but instead a context in which we can begin thinking differently about these four girls' border-crossing experiences and how they make sense of their lives in the aftermath. I do, however, provide the pieces of their stories that they physically exhibited or verbally said were the hardest memories to talk about with others. I provide context in terms of the emotional responses of the group, the silence, and the mutual support felt throughout almost two hours of sharing their stories of crossing over from Mexico, to Texas, and making their way to the Midwest. Outside of brief explanations of affectual responses, I rely on the entangled words of the girls, and the group as a whole. And to note, the sections in which I talk about embodiment and emotional moments are not my understanding, but are a summary of the conversations we had as a group after they shared their journeys. I chose not to interweave theory here outside of my own

reflections on this particular event primarily because the power of their stories lies behind the ontological mangle that exists on its own. Thus, I do not present four separate stories, nor do I distinguish between voices. Instead, it is my intent to illuminate the liminal spaces in which these girls presented themselves in relation to their journey from Mexico. These stories are not complete, but instead are messy, irrational, and nonetheless the most important foundational experiences of their lives.

Finally, it is not my intent to ignore of erase the individuality of the girls or experiences. On the contrary, I would like to suggest the power that lies within their experiences was a collective one not solely on my own interpretation of the event, but rather, in listening to them talk about the experiences with each other. I also had this conversation afterwards with the mentors as they each expressed they wish they would have had a similar opportunity when they were young girls. Each mentor said (on separate occasions) that of course the individual stories and experiences were extremely important to the lived understandings of these girls, but the transformation lied within (and between) the sharing of their border-crossings. Their relationships visually changed; their embodied communication with one another changed as well as the topics of conversation after this meeting. They hugged every time they saw one another, they worked more collaboratively on their art projects as they shared ideas and thoughts on one another's work, and they shared more personal information about their families, and even their desires then they had previously. Indeed, I hope to elucidate voice here as an entanglement of the girls' reciprocity that acknowledges the collective as a manner in which to challenge patriarchal and colonial oppression and recognize the relational and

the connected (Canella & Manuelito, 2008). I begin with what I ask the girls and follow with their reiteration of their journeys:

> I know that specifically you had mentioned talking about what it means for you to be not legal in this country, and also what you remember about and what you've been told about coming to the United States from Mexico. I thought today I was going to let you lead, what you would like to talk about that we haven't covered.
>
> I don't remember. But it was that thing at the border between Mexico and the United States. And I guess from there they crossed us to the United States so we could be in Texas. But in that time we stay a month I think, probably less than a month with a lady. But once we got in that house they separated the four of us, all of us, they took us with different families. We were eight . . . I was about four. It's all really blurry to me. But I remember Monterrey . . . it was very close to the mountains. And from the house we drove over to a beach for a while, just to say goodbye to everybody. Somebody drove us straight to the airport and it was nighttime. We always stayed together, we never had to separate, we just got on a plane. It was really easy for us because we had visas, it was a smooth transition. I think I was around six, seven. My grandma grabbed us and she layered clothes, and she took us to a bus station, and gave us some food, and my grandma was crying. I did not know what was going on, and there was a man with us. She told us to go with him. I was asking my brother, why is she [grandma] not coming with us? I started crying and then the bus started to pull [away]. And I just cried, and I cried, and I cried on his arms until I fell asleep.
>
> We were on the bus for a long time. I don't know if it was days, I don't know if it was hours. I think that following morning my two oldest brothers were taken away . . . so literally me and my [little brother] were just holding onto each other because we didn't know where we were going. They took my brother somewhere and we stayed in the lady's house. She asked us if we wanted anything and we asked to watch Cinderella. From there I remember being in a car I think. I remember my brothers saying that when we [left], he remembers they took him to McDonald's. The people he was with, they had to leave so the other people could come and pick him up. They left him behind a trash can by himself until the other people came to pick him up. He tries to remember the happy things like he went to McDonald's. We lived with them in an apartment for a while, but we didn't have anything really. We just had our suitcases and that was it.
>
> The first thing they told us just listen to what they're telling you to do, and you have to repeat everything they tell you. She would yell at us. It was kind of scary because it was like I don't even know these people, and I

> don't know then what's going to happen to me. I remember being in a car, and they asked something. Then you hear this and all of us are going to say it and have to repeat it. I didn't even know what I was saying, but I knew it was in English. I just remember saying something I didn't understand. I remember saying it softly because I was scared. So they [customs] ask you, you have to say this . . . my brothers took some time [to learn the English phrase] so they separated us again. He couldn't remember what he had to say so he stayed a little bit longer. At one point, she told us to memorize where I had a different name, and I had a different age, and I remember my brother couldn't memorize it, so she started screaming at him, and he just broke down. And I just really hated her. And I remember a woman that called [on the phone] . . . she was the one asking us questions. And then I guess my brother thought that was my mom on the phone. And then the woman started yelling at him because he couldn't get it down. And I never could get his expression out of my head, because he really did thought that was my mom. And he broke down, he grabbed me, he told me that my mom doesn't love us. And I just held onto him and I told him that's not my mom, she would never say anything like that. And he just kept crying and I couldn't do anything about it.

After the girls shared their experiences up to the point of having to be able to say phrases in English in order to pass through customs, the girls' journeys bounced off one another. Without question, all the girls agreed the tone of their exchange changed when one of the girls shared the story about her younger brother and not being able to console him about his mother. What triggered seemed to be a sense of abandonment, as if they all questioned at one point whether their mother's would really be at the end of this passage. As she shared,

> and he just cried and I couldn't do anything about it,

she cried as well. It was to the point she had a hard time talking so there was a long silence before she could go on. There were tears in the girls' eyes, as one of the girl's mother explained,

> people like her, she can cry with everybody's story . . . few people has that feeling. As soon as they start talking she puts [herself] in that place and she starts to have the same feelings.

Indeed, the tears became an ontology of becoming, as they produced something different, something more meaningful than words, and created no need to speak. Witnessing this moment, an observer could physically see the girls move closer to the one who was sharing her account of crossing the border. There was such a strong sense of support (and the girls later described as a "safe space") that seemed to escape the need for any verbal understanding.

I will spend more time discussing this chapter four, but it is also important to note that the general feeling of our meetings changed as well. I no longer suggested any questions or discussion points from here on out. This was their meeting and their opportunity to explore these experiences with each other. Of course I was still there, but the girls no longer made eye contact with me (including the mentors) and they were completely engrossed with one another; not just on their words, but in every aspect of their becoming as they shared this journey together.

> So we just got on the plane . . . and we said we were just there to visit for about six months, and then we had to come right back. From there, from Mexico we went to Texas and from Texas we just flew to Indiana where we had just one friend with her husband that were living there. And then we went to this man . . . no, I'm sorry I messed up. We were with this woman . . . and we were sleeping on bunk beds . . . and then we went [drove] to this man and I think we were nearby Indiana. The experience we had was not as bad as other people. The first lady that took us from Mexico City to the border of Mexico and the United States, I think you could see she really didn't care . . . I think she was the coyote. There's people that just do it for the money. I think they [parents] had some trouble with her . . . she didn't want to take us from Mexico City to the border of Mexico, so they paid her a little bit more. We got new clothes, we took a shower, we were clean and it was time for us to go to sleep. Again, I had nothing but a carpet and a blanket. We went to sleep. I remember telling him it was hot. And he told me take your pants off. And I said no. So I just switched to the other side [of her brother] so he would be in the middle. But when I woke up I remember I didn't have any pants on, and he was right next to me. And I don't know what happened.

To explain in writing this moment is almost impossible to express. As these girls talked about their journeys, it was incredible to watch them support each other. There was a bond created among them by sharing what they remember of their experiences. Clearly, the memories of their journey were inconsistent, and there were times when one twin would correct the other as she remembered a particular event quite differently. However, when each girl arrived in Indiana and they concluded their journey in one sense, they very much opened other possibilities for exploration into their entangled lives. All of their stories had such an impact on one another even though they had varying degrees of difficulty in their border crossings. When these girls talked about the how scared they were and how fearful they were going between people, houses, and transportation to get Indiana, tears flowed from all of us. As emotional as it was to talk about being sexually abused, there was a sensitivity in this moment as almost cathartic for all of the girls. The other girls told her how brave and strong she was after everything she went through, but even more powerful was the silence that ensued after everyone finished their story. The girl who was abused was the last to share, which was extremely painful, emotional, raw, and yet I would strongly argue (and legitimate in the next chapter) the emotion and the tears we all felt was in this collective moment of vulnerability, ambiguity and the liminal space in which these girls had previously not been allowed to talk about their experience because they are undocumented.

Thus, it is within and between this moment I explore the rest of our conversations and discussions. It is here, for the first time, guards were let down and an inspirited understanding of body, mind, and spirit were foundational in the girls' innate ontological understandings. Therefore, I situate their collective and entangled experience as a

manner in which to illuminate their struggles and successes, but also to suggest their border crossings have very much shaped who they are, who they think they should be, and who they will become(ing) as they are constantly creating, transforming, and negotiating their identities between contradictory cultures, families, and within themselves. Therefore, as I move towards Latina feminist becomings, I do so by providing a short description of how I am thinking about the inquiry process, but constantly remind myself of Mazzei's (2009) transparency that, "[As researchers] we admit that we don't know the precise direction to take, and yet we continue on, uncertain of the destination, left with the certainty of uncertainty that impels us forward" (p. 59). Nonetheless, I hope to situate this work in a more egalitarian, feminist methodology that draws upon the considerations of promiscuous feminist research, rhizomatic perspectives, and diffraction.

Further Into the Mangle

Even though I have talked with these girls for many, many hours, I still feel as though I am headed into uncharted territory when I think about how to put this together and write about it. There are so many different directions this project could take, and I am always questioning my interpretation, method, positioning, etc., even alongside the mentors and talking with an undocumented woman to further negotiate my own power and privilege. But once again, as I revisit the audio recordings, the transcriptions, the videos, or just close my eyes and recall our time together and the visceral reaction I get when I think of the girls and what they shared, have a few guiding thoughts that may lead me through this inquiry process. I think about promiscuous feminist research (for

example, Childers et al., 2013 & Huckaby 2013), rhizomatic perspectives pertaining to feminist theory (Braidotti, 2001) and diffraction (Haraway, 1992 & Barad, 2007).

I am particularly interested in these notions as I work to break out of conventional research designs because they offer new insight into not only thinking about things differently, but truly reframing how we individually connect with and make sense of the world in a way that promotes divergence and heterogeneity over sameness and homogeneity. There are connections here that I also find within Chicana/Latina Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS), which I reference later, and feel they very much complement one another in terms of embracing notions of ontological becoming as well as post-qualitative research methodologies. I find this integral in thought as I move forward, as I am not looking toward similarities with myself and my research participants, but am interested in difference and how that in and of itself creates entanglements that foster new ways of thinking about education and mental health. Outside of a general understanding of the topics I wanted to begin the conversation for each meeting, it was my intention for the girls to focus on what they deemed important. I did not want to assume that I knew how to frame, suggest, or prioritize their lives according to my standards or agenda as a researcher and as a white woman. Thus, I did not have many (if any) preconceived notions of how this project would unfold, and I could have never fathomed this is where we (collectively, as a project) are now. Finally, it is within this in-between space I examine my embodied role as researcher within and amongst the relational understandings of myself and the girls that participate in this project. I work towards thinking differently and embracing promiscuity and disruption as Lather (2013) describes

> . . . to work within and beyond the reflexive turn, to problematize inquiry, to redefine objects as more in networks than in single sites

> (Barad, 2007), to trouble identity and experience, and what it means to know and tell. Most importantly, it means "no methodological a priori" (Marcus, 2009, p. 5). The actual design and practice of the fieldwork of the future are up for grabs. "What is usually thought of as method" (p. 6) shifts to a sort of "running away" from traditional models, especially the holdover of research as a mirroring/objectivism where "despite fierce resistance," destabilization has happened. (p. 638)

Promiscuously Feminist Research

It is not my intent to define promiscuous feminism, but instead to acknowledge the critical interpretation of feminism as both practice and theory through a promiscuous lens. As such, a "promiscuous[4] feminist methodology" (Childers, et. al, 2013, p. 513) furthers the methods of Patti Lather (2000) and others to "do it and trouble it simultaneously," perform the "doubled move," "work the bind," "work the ruins," "work the hyphen," "do good enough research," and "work within and against" (Childers, 2013, et. al., p. 513). Indeed, Voithoffer (2013) reiterates promiscuous feminisms as always becoming. Childers, et. al. (2013) further exemplifies promiscuous (use of) feminist methodology as manner in which to depoliticize and limit "the politics and ways of living, being, and working . . . beyond gender" (p. 517). Embracing the complexities of understandings and representations of learning all the while highlighting its limits and limitations is where the most interesting findings of a promiscuous methodology lie (Voithoffer, 2013). Furthermore, promiscuity in research is to take on research, theory, philosophy, ontology, etc. in an era that supports accountability and productivity and acknowledge the messy practice of

[4] The term "promiscuous feminist" is defined as "mixed and indiscriminate" from the 1600s. It was not a sexual pejorative until the 1900s (Childers, et al., 2013)

methodology as "in the making" and "already ahead of what we think it is" (Childers, et. al., p. 508).

Indeed, promiscuity is sexy and attention-seeking, but the focus of the attention is on the constant and arbitrary intersections of other ways of thinking, living, and being in relation to the work. These new inquiries are often wild and illicit and they may very well "transgress, displace, and change our subjectivities," (Childers et. al., p. 514) but always trouble our notions of gender.

> They [parents] want us to be very . . . not independent, but . . . how to say what you believe in. But they also limit us because they're just like, you're a woman, you can't say this or that.

It is through our failures these liminal spaces manifest, as "feminist methodologies re-politicizes these theoretical and methodological strategies (ways of knowing and naming what is becoming that is embedded in lived practice) beyond gender" (p. 517). Promiscuous is to be simultaneously overwhelmed with the desire to be accepted and not fitting in.

> I want you to see me, what I am capable of doing, and how I was able to do it, and not just because you're the first Hispanic to do this . . . you need to understand people have done it way before me, not just because I'm Hispanic. I love my culture . . . [but] you need to look at me.

The goal is not to exist in the margins (or in-between), but rather seeing ourselves through our work, how we think, and how we live. Childers et. al. further reiterates this:

> Our promiscuous feminist methodologies emerged . . . where the interplay of ourselves, others, and the world were inseparable and simultaneously constitutive of race, ethno-linguistic affiliation, class and socioeconomics, gender, sexuality, nationality, and so on . . . In this way, gender cannot simply be gender. (p. 514)

Huckaby (2013) asserts promiscuous as a manner in which to describe women who reside outside of traditional boundaries. Specifically she claims "feminism in and of

itself is rendered promiscuous for theorizing our lives and the existence of the world – as people (female, male transgender, transsexual, intersexual) who claim feminism" (p. 569). For Huckaby, this is through a promiscuous positioning of power and vulnerability. Through a socio-historical Western gaze, power is positive and beneficial to obtain, while vulnerability is negative and a signifier of the powerless. Indeed, "the powerful can ignore their vulnerabilities and the vulnerable their powers" (p. 573). Furthermore, Huckaby reminds us when we speak as though our truths are our experiences, we can oftentimes make differences seem natural that do not challenge privileged assumptions, ideologies, and practices. Thus, the experiences of marginalized groups become natural, and we perceive them as more vulnerable, ignoring the processes at work.

> Even though we are females, we still fight just as much as men do, and we still carve to have the freedom that is offered here. Of course, we have to work hard for it, probably harder than anybody else, than the men because there's still that separation between men and women . . . So it takes a lot of courage for a mother to decide where she's going to take her kids, how she's going to take care of them. Sadly not many fathers always stay . . . There are those that do, but the mothers usually care about the daughters and the sons more and that makes them really brave. They're risking everything. They're risking losing their lives for their own kids.

In order to truly be vulnerable, we must become mutually entangled with others, our world, and our environment. As women, we all share a vulnerability that has the potential to reveal the "dynamics at play in shaping our experiences" (p. 578).

As I begin this research, the promiscuity in which Childers (2013), Huckaby (2013), and others approach their research, and their lives, is one that embodies their experiences in relation to the experiences of other. Furthermore, there is a vulnerability in this work that promotes the space in which to truly look at research differently, and thus explore spaces of discomfort, of messy, emotional, even irrational and contradictory

circumstances that embrace a mutually entangled spirit. Indeed, this work can only truly be represented in how we all think, live, and make sense of our everyday lived experiences. Yet in the mundane, we often ignore our vulnerable entanglements as the dominant socio-historical forces at work are reified in an unacknowledged silence.

> Telling our story was good for the four of us because it made us realize that we are so different in so many ways, yet we are kind of dealing with the same things every single day.

So this is where I start. Promiscuity transcends traditional paradigms of research methodology and theory and enters in to a space that moves away from sameness and interrogates the intra-actions, the mutual entanglements that unearth our own lives and contradictions, no longer in the margins, but in the process of becoming-other.

> I feel like it's kind of difficult, but they [parents] try to put it together [English and Spanish language] . . . When we are speaking to our parents we'd say something in English and they'll answer me in Spanish. We have this whole conversation in two different languages. They know English has become important to us, but it is difficult because you have two different cultures in the way that have things different in the way they think . . . talk.

Thus, as I explore embodied feminist becomings of the spirit, I will do so within a promiscuous feminist vision that embraces an interconnection of the process of being simultaneously vulnerable, of wanting to fit in, and inevitably failing.

Finally, by troubling the complexities in our own lives that push us to move beyond gender into spaces of healing and well-being, promiscuity promises to push into liminal spaces of discomfort that challenges our notions of who we are in this world. In particular, this project promiscuously takes on embodied feminist becomings of the spirit as a framework to begin looking at mental health practices among Latina adolescents differently, or at least from a "view from somewhere" that acknowledges the inherent

ontologies of Chicana/Latina women. It is precisely this "view from somewhere" that lends itself to a promiscuous, embodied becoming of the research process that embraces the exclusions, the instability of our intra-actions, our contradictions, and our interrelated, intertwined spaces that honor the "relationalities of becoming" (Barad, interview by Dolphign & van der Tuin, 2012, p. 69).

For these girls, exposing their vulnerabilities was sharing the most traumatic and fearful moments in their lives. Their forced silence regarding coming to this country illegally and remaining in the US undocumented meant they left out an event in their lives that has shaped how they think and live in the world. Thus, in embracing promiscuous feminist research, I hope to forefront the messy and the emotional entanglements that challenge traditional paradigms surrounding patriarchy and mental health. Furthermore, in sharing their stories of crossing the border, they embraced their vulnerabilities, supported each other unconditionally, and challenged privileged assumptions about acculturation, gendered differences in Latino (and American) cultural values, familial relationships, and religious ideologies. For the first time, these girls saw each other through each other's eyes, as they worked within and against the entanglements they created with one another, and the entangled notions that are often prescribed to Latina adolescent girls. This was evident in one of the girl's statements, as the other three girls whole-heartedly agreed,

> I feel like immigrant is a bad word, they're stealing this job, or people will get here and do it better than us. I want them to know that it doesn't define who I am, and it shouldn't who I am . . . they say they don't know what we've been through, but it serves as a motivation . . . you're always striving to do better because you now where you came from, and you know whatever you've gone through isn't going to stop you from doing this.

The liminal space of being an undocumented immigrant in this country acknowledges the liminal space these girls often reside as they want to fit in, but clearly also pave their own way as they negotiate between cultures, values, and relationships. Promiscuity in research allows the girls to identify the dynamics at play, the oppressive obstacles they face every day, and encourages them to experience discomfort and acknowledge themselves outside of the traditional boundaries they believe they should exist with(in), in order to embody a becoming-other.

Rhizomatic thinking in methodology. Rhizomatic thinking parallels promiscuous feminist research as it creates new images of thought and redefines theory though a "nomadic, disjunctive self" (Braidotti, 2001, pg. 1419). More specifically, Deleuze's notion of the rhizome is particularly helpful in thinking differently about feminist theory as it offers the opportunity to redefine and reinvent theoretical practice that are both active in its urgency and necessity of reconfiguration in the embodiment of "the living process of transformation" (p. 1418). This is paralleled in Deleuze's account of the embodied subject as a process of intersecting forces that are characterized by a transitory and changing nature. In an attempt to establish connections among multiple forces, he de-emphasizes the Western concept of one and the same, where difference is acknowledged as a "normative idea of a being that remains one and the same in all its varied qualifications and attributes" (p. 1418). Thus, Braidotti suggests the point is not to create binaries of "difference" and "sameness," but instead of the numerous possibilities of differences that may arise through new images of thought that further change and transformation. The rhizome itself is exemplified as redefining these new images of thought as ideas falling within lines of intensity, the stronger the force or level of

intensity, the more the idea attributes to the "affirmative power of life to a higher degree." (p. 1420). In other words, Deleuze moves away from traditional ideas as "just" and illuminates the value of the idea. Thus, the rhizome is what lies behind the proposition of the idea itself and unearths another layer that represents "the affective force, level of intensity, desire or affirmation" (p. 1420).

In this rhizomatic framing of thought and ideas, a kind of "thinking difference" is unearthed, which recognizes a "multiplicity of possible differences" (p. 1419) that takes into account oppression and exclusion. In thinking about my research project with Latina adolescents, foregrounding rhizomatic thinking is advantageous as it acknowledges not only difference, but the "positivity of difference" (p. 1419). For Braidotti (2001), rhizomes also complement feminist thought as it moves away from phallo-logocentric images of thought that acknowledge self-transparency and privilege the masculine construction of meaning. In other words, critical thought is not bound by traditionally constructed paradigms of thought and meaning, but instead embodies the process of inventing new ways of thinking that are unique and fluid to experience, thus an emphasis on becoming finds new images that foster transformation.

In listening to these girls and spending so much time with them talking about their lives, school, family, etc., rhizomatic thinking is an integral part of 1) how they think about the world; 2) how they naturally gravitate towards "positivity of difference;" and 3) exemplifies how they challenge, integrate, embrace, and resist the pull of multiple cultures in the construction of their own meaning. Because the girls are often caught between acknowledging their differences, not wanting to fit in, acceptance, and fighting for their independence and individuality, rhizomatic thinking is easier for them than

someone like me (as a white, non-immigrant woman). For me, there has been a tendency to find sameness amongst women who are different than me in a way to connect because I am trying to connect to what I already know – thus constructing and reconstructing traditional paradigms of thought and meaning. Instead, these girls have invented new ways of thinking amongst themselves that have transformed how they look at their fluid experiences. Furthermore, I witnessed how they evoked potentialities with(in) themselves that lie dormant without the intra-actions of our meetings, their conversations, the art they created, and the emotional support they all embodied for one another.

Ultimately, both the research and method will lie within the intra-actions of our conversations, our embodied responses, and the assemblages that occur within the present moment. It is here the connection between these girls' experiences and the manifestation of depression may be portrayed in their most authentic and vulnerable forms. Consequently, I hope to create a space that embodies a more than human world, that recognizes the intra-actions in in our relationships with others, with the material and natural world, and in all of the spaces (in)between, but also acknowledges the ontological value of an idea through its affective force (Braidotti, 2001). What these girls choose to value, their "level of intensity, desire, or affirmation . . . ultimately governs its truth-value" (p. 1420), and thus, plays an integral role in their mental health and well-being. Furthermore, rhizomatic thinking also places myself (as the researcher) in a position that does not have make connections and exemplify sameness among the girls (or me) in terms of embodiment, experiences, the spiritual, or anything else that may arise. These are inherently different and clearly what I value is not always valued by others, but instead highlights the possibility of difference. Finally, as we often are told that

researchers should be reflexive, when thinking through method at this time (and is bound to change many, many more times) diffraction also highlights difference over sameness, which is often reminiscent of reflexivity in theory and methodology (Barad, 2007).

Diffractive Methodologies

For Haraway (1997), diffraction is an "optical metaphor to make a difference in the world" (p. 16), as it highlights the difference in patterns useful to both method and practice that pays particular attention to engagement with the data and "relations of difference in how they matter" (Barad, 2007, pg. 71). Furthermore, Haraway (1997) suggests

> Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about heterogeneous history, not about originals. Unlike reflections, diffractions do not displace the same elsewhere in more or less distorted form . . . Rather, diffraction can be a metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness. (p. 273)

Diffraction, in this sense, does not attempt to replicate, reflect, or reproduce sameness, but alternatively points to interference. This "mapping of interference" (Haraway, 1992, pg. 300) does not focus on where differences appear, but instead maps where the effects of difference appear. In other words, diffractions allows us to move away from the illusion of an essentialized, static positionality and move towards more fluid patterns of difference and heterogeneity (Haraway, 1992). However, it is also important to note that difference is not situated in opposition to sameness, but also as a difference within and in becoming. Thus, difference exists beyond traditional boundaries of both theorizing and method. Diffraction expands traditional notions of reflexivity, as matter and meaning are constantly intra-acting (Barad, 2007).

In terms of method or methodology (i.e. a diffractive methodology), diffractive mattering is quite subtle and is an "ethico-onto-epistemological matter. We are not merely differently situated in the world; 'each of us' is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering" (Barad, 2007, p. 381). In other words, diffraction is not just about differences, but about differences that matter. Diffraction is what pushes boundaries and permanency we come to know as nature/culture, human/non-human, epistemology/ontology, etc (Barad, 2007). Similarly, Haraway (1992) states "diffraction is a narrative of graphic, psychological, spiritual, and political technology for making consequential meanings" (p. 273). For me, this is much more helpful in thinking through my own positionality with(in) the research process, because it creates a space to explore thoughts and ideas outside of traditional boundaries of research that rely heavily upon reflexivity.

Barad (2007) suggests feminist scholars critique reflexivity as it 1) ignores social factors such as gender, race, class, religion, etc. and 2) reflexivity is problematic as it founded on representationalism and ultimately is a "self-referential glance back at oneself" (p. 88). Therefore, reflexivity views the world at a distance as practices of representing suggest we have insight to representations but not to the objects of investigation themselves. It only accounts for the separate entities of words and things, not the intra-active entanglements that diffraction recognizes. Again, diffraction lends itself nicely in expanding notions of difference that parallel earlier discussions of mutual entanglements of the spirit (which Haraway (1992) alludes to), as well as Chicana/Latina FCS tenets. Although I only begin to briefly discuss promiscuous feminist research, rhizomatic thinking, and diffractive methodologies, and as I do not have a definitive

method in which I am moving forward with this research, they definitely impact how I am methodologically thinking through my research. The manner in which this takes place remains to be seen. Finally, as I describe my thoughts on the research process itself, I am thinking through the lens that embraces difference that thinks beyond static notions of knowing, and instead embodies the entangled process of becoming.

Method in the Present Moment

Thus far, my goal has been to begin my project by using theories and concepts that create different orientations for thinking and asking questions. I have described what I am thinking about in terms of exploring the everyday experiences of Latina adolescents with depression. I have drawn upon an onto-epistemological becoming-other grounded in Chicana/Latina FCS that specifically focuses on the mutually entangled spirit. I am particularly interested in the liminal spaces that embrace contradiction, and ambiguity that moves away from dualisms and creates a more complex understanding of these girls' experiences. Indeed, I hope to create a space that embodies a more than human world, that recognizes the intra-actions in in our relationships with others, with the material and natural world, and in all of the spaces (in)between. Promiscuous feminist research, rhizomatic thinking, and diffraction are helpful in thinking about method. So it is here I will briefly discuss what it is I think I might do at this time. But as St. Pierre (2015) reminds, method always come too late.

I am primarily interested in how these girls embody depressive emotions as a result of their connections to their identity as Latina adolescents. In other words, I want to understand how they talk about their lives and how their bodies express themselves in conjunction with both their words and silences. I would like to give them the opportunity

to talk with another Latina woman they admire and help them create questions they would like to ask these women. After the conversation, I would like to hear them talk about the process itself, how they felt, and what they learned (or did not learn) from these women. And, depending on what happens at this point, I would be very interested in adding a creative component to this inquiry project. I would like to work with the girls to create, a book, a blog, a song, or whatever they choose to describe the lessons they have learned and would like to share with a younger sister or cousin. And of course, these are only initial thoughts. I fully understand (and intend) that this may go a variety of different directions.

However, Mazzei (2013) suggests that interview practices are not methods themselves, but triggers to new assemblages. Thus, it is the theorizing behind what we do with the interviews, the material and the discursive, our bodies and the bodies of those whom we interview, and our own ontological and ethical understandings that drive the method. Indeed, it is what is produced beyond the interview, the transcripts, the voice itself that evades the binaries of the discursive and material. Again, it is within the liminal spaces of my own silenced/silent voices and that of my participants the realization of the limit of voice is realized as we engage in the process of *listening to ourselves listen* (italics in original). If we are listening to how we listen, we very well may move away from the focus of language all together. MacLure (2013) further suggests, conventional qualitative research does not account for feeling and sensations in and among research encounters, and are instead treated as bias or poor interview techniques. However, she argues "speakers need no bodies, no unconscious, no social fabrication, or historical entanglements, in order to function as the mere emitters of signals or carriers of linguistic

universals" (p. 664). This is how I am thinking about interviews as part of my inquiry. But indeed, I am uncertain of how this project will progress until I am in it. And even then, I am fully aware of the difficulty of falling back in to old habits. As St Pierre (2013) states, "we surely have our work cut out for us as we try to set aside a system of thought, an order of things that is so powerful we can slip back into it with a single, telltale word" (p. 656). Yet here I am, and I do not know how to do this work any other way. Writing this proposal has furthered my own ontological becoming and what it means in relation to working with Latina girls. It cannot be removed from who I am, and as such it will always influence the work I will do in the future. I honestly feel this project has the potential to explore mental health and well-being in relation to schooling and learning in a way that fully recognizes and forefronts these girls' experiences from perspectives that are not often acknowledged in conventional research. Thus, I hope it offers insight into alternative notions of thinking that highlight 'difference that matters,' but more importantly, expands boundaries of how we currently think about mental health, counseling, and educational practices.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL ENTANGLEMENTS: AN EMBODIED, INSPIRITED AFFECTIVE BECOMING

> Our (intra)actions matter—each one reconfigures the world in its becoming—and yet they never leave us; they are sedimented into our becoming, they become us. (Barad, 2007, p. 394)

A Feminist Becoming

The ontology of becoming provides a space to generatively and critically expand notions of feminism where new ways of knowing have the opportunity to emerge.

> We just expected to come here and talk and that was it. You didn't expect there to be actually something revealed to you.

Something new is continually occurring in a space of becoming. Indeed, Voithofer (2013) defines the process of becoming as "open-ended and emergent in space and time, an ontology of transformation and change (p. 530). Furthermore, all becomings are interconnected, and thus render it impossible to separate from the theoretical, the conceptual, and the methodological (Voithofer, 2013). Childers (2013) further reiterates the process of feminist becoming as not a manner in which to center herself or experience,

> but to use it to narrate methodology as ontology, or as entangled practice that slip and slide against personal histories, ways of knowing and the lived experiences that collide with and wreck preconceived notions of what counts as feminist research" (p. 600).

Additionally, feminist becoming is no longer about the study of women, gender, or sexuality (Childers, 2013), but focuses on the onto-epistemological practice of knowledge production that embraces a materiality of "intra-actions" where "there are interactions through which subject and object emerge, but actually as a new understanding . . ." (Barad, interview by Dolphign & van der Tuin, 2012, p. 69). Indeed,

Barad's feminist material framework and notions of becoming "expand realities of existence and physical conditions" (Atkinson, 2013, p. 612) as integral to meaning making. Other feminist material considerations refer to these "intra-actions" as "entanglements," "assemblages," and "mangles." In this entangled state of being, independent objects are abstract notions" (Dolphign & van der Tuin, 2012, p. 61). Bennett (2010) further explains "assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within" (p. 23).

Barad (2007) furthers these new understandings as they elicit a relational and ethical becoming in which we are always intertwined (Barad, interview by Dolphign & van der Tuin, 2012). Finally, Hekman (2010) refers to the mangle as a useful tool to stop describing the world in terms of separate elements, but to embrace that we are always in the mangle. Indeed "women *are* their bodies," (p. 25) and as such, it is impossible to separate the linguistic, social, political, and biological factors. Instead, the mangle exposes the interaction in an effort to "accept it as the way the world is" (p. 26).

> Being a teenager in American culture, you kind of get lost trying to fit in . . . but once you have these conversations it reminds you of who you are . . . For me it give me a little sparkle. I'm so proud I am Mexican.

It is this relational acknowledgement of the material that provides a space in which to explore an embodied, interrelated, intra-action of feminist becoming.

Thus, I share each of the girls' stories as a collective entanglement. Their understanding and their truth about coming to the United States from Mexico is not necessarily the accurate truth (as they were all young and admit to getting the chronological facts wrong), but instead the power of these stories and their understanding

of themselves, in this moment, rely upon the intra-actions in-between, within and beyond their collective stories:

> It's important to know to other people . . . Because a lot of people, they think that we're always happy, but once we get to share our stories maybe people understand why we are the way that we are, or the things that we say, or maybe the things we don't say

A Embodied Feminist Becoming

Embodiment (both organic embodiment and via technological mediation) has been integral in feminist theory. Irigaray (1977) talks of the female imaginary as an embodiment of female sexuality as a manner in which she "retouches herself constantly" (p. 429) in order to fully understand oppressive systems and everyday social practices upon which "her pleasure depends" (p. 431). Indeed, if the social imaginary was fully revealed, women would always be multiple assemblages in a "universe in expansion for which no limits could be fixed" (p. 430), never just one. Through her bodily pleasure, a woman exemplifies her differences, her complexities, as she moves away from "one and the same" (p. 429). Instead, she is "indefinitely other in herself" (p. 429) as she does not separate from all that is around her and turns within and embraces the silent, the multiple. Thus, she experiences multiple points of pleasure and pain, but learning how to listen to an (italics in original) *"other meaning" which is constantly in the process of weaving itself; at the same time ceaselessly embracing words and yet casting them off to avoid becoming fixed, immobilized"* (p. 429). Immobilization furthers the exclusion of the female imaginary and invites patriarchal ideologies that fragments women from their bodies, thus situating a woman's desire in hiding.

> Other people view Latino girls . . . they're loud, they're hypersexualized. I remember a male calling me exotic. Well, I'm not exotic.

Finally, the "pleasure" in becoming relies in the embodied assemblages of women that acknowledge the silent, the multiple, "the other meaning" the turning within.

Similarly, Haraway (1988) reminds us we "need to learn in our bodies . . . in order to name where we are and are, in dimensions of mental and physical space we hardly know to name" (p. 190). Indeed, she further states that Western cultural norms govern the relations of "what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility" (p. 190), and we are most often "not immediately present to ourselves." Thus, self-knowledge requires a "semiotic-material" (p. 191) technology to link our meaning-making and knowledge. For Haraway, embodied knowledge advocates for a transformation of current "systems of knowledge and ways of seeing" (p. 192) that expand our perspective in ways that we can never know in advance, that is unmarked, distorted irrational and "truly fantastic" (p. 193).

> She can have any kind of friends or people around her, or surrounding her situation, because she can be in a bubble. But I wasn't preparing for her to be in a bubble and untouchable from everybody. I wanted her to be touched. And she know how to react from that touch. She knows when to say no and when to say yes. And it's up to her.

Furthermore, she argues for epistemological positioning that supports rational knowledge claims that integrate "the view from the body" (p. 195) that embrace the partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position that promises a vision of the means of ongoing finite embodiment, of living within limits and contradictions . . . " (p. 196).

> Girls struggle to look nice, to wear a nice dress, to be always pretty because sometimes my mom used to be really hard about it. If we're going somewhere you need to get ready, you need to get pretty. But she [mom] has changed her mind on that, like she would probably at least tell me to put my hair up . . . It's really hard.

Halting voices and partial views are apparent in listening to the girls talk about how they are supposed to keep up appearances. The conversation continued in which other girls acknowledge they are unable to wear shorts or pajama bottoms outside of the house, as it is seen as inappropriate to even go to the grocery store without making sure you are "put together" in appearance. There are also conversations about how American girls go out in clothes they look like they would sleep in or shorts that are too short, and therefore, they must not care about how they look or take much pride in their appearance. The girls clearly articulate how they live within embodied limits and contradictions of their parents, their bi-cultural positionings, and their own ontological becoming in which they challenge traditional notions of what it means to be a Latina adolescent, but are not fully accepting of American cultural, embodied norms as well. Here, the "view from the body" (Haraway, 1988, p. 196) recognizes the collectivity of the moment in which the girls interrogate their own contradictions, what they are willing to challenge and what they are willing to accept, and how they create meaning through these intra-actions.

Grosz (1995) furthers the discussion of becoming as bodily thought as we constantly "change, invest, and invent" (p. 134) new bodies through transformation of the whole. Additionally, thought starts in the middle, as it embodies the "encounter between" (p. 134) that is not singular, but is an assemblage of organism or object that enables transformational possibilities. It is the instability and disjuncture of our expectations, control, and organization to produce the slightest wavering within these everyday occurrences.

> I used to self harm myself . . . Our scars that we have . . . the worse we've gone through, [we] come out of them stronger . . . The pain, it's so big. But after the pain is done. . . even though you think it helps, it really doesn't.

Thus, "thought may actively function passively to interrupt habit and expectation by allowing something already there in the series, in the subject or object to become" (pg. 135). It is here we break from dominant modes of knowing and allow the body to (dis)embody itself from habitual performances and acknowledge what the body is truly capable of, and truly embraces all transformational possibilities, the body's "moment of actualization" (pg. 135).

Butler (1997) furthers this notion of embodiment as a performative act, and one that holds cultural meanings through an "active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities" (p. 463). Indeed, Butler draws upon the understanding of the body as both a historical idea and unlimited possibilities to be fully and continually realized. In other words, we create embodied meaning through material and "historically mediated" (p. 463) expression. In *Giving and Account of Oneself,* Butler (2005) offers the "historically mediated" body as incapable of having a memory of life. In other words, we are aware of what our bodies do and do not do, but our bodily experiences are still narratives of "exposure" (p. 39) that

> constitute the way in which my story arrives belatedly, missing some of the constitutive beginnings and the preconditions of the life it seeks to narrate . . . my narrative begins . . . when many things have already taken place to make me and my story possible in language." (p. 39)

Here, Butler (2005) suggests that we are always reconstructing our narratives in ways we are not consciously aware. Consequently, we are not able to fully conceive our own definitive stories as they are always under revision, yet the acknowledgement of the liminal provides new spaces of possibilities.

> Because it [depression] is something that you don't know . . . It's after you're over it, and you think oh my god, I really needed help at that time .

> . . and the emotions left are something we don't even remember why we did those things. But it affected [me] somehow in a different way.

Indeed, the connection is made between embodiment and becoming in an emergent, transformative space where possibilities are infinite (and full of contradictions) between the materiality of the body, mind, and spirit.

Furthermore, Butler (1997) suggests the body is a materiality that carries meaning not just as matter, but a "*materializing* [emphasis in original] of possibilities" (p. 464). As such,

> The "I" that is its body is, of necessity, a mode of embodying, and the "what" that it embodies is possibilities. But here again the grammar of the formulation misleads, for the possibilities that are embodied are fundamentally exterior or antecedent to the process of embodying itself. As an intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying *of* [emphasis in original] possibilities . . . (p. 464)

However, Barad (2007) posits Butler does not fully unearth the intra-actions of embodiment and offers limitations of Butler's perspective on materiality. For Barad, Butler does not move far enough beyond the "passive-active, nature-culture dualisms;" (p. 191) she does not analyze how "*matter* comes to matter," but only how "*discourse* comes to matter." (p. 192). On the contrary, Barad (2007) does state that Butler's account of materiality is helpful and paved the way for feminist understandings of the body as performative, but it is Barad's intent to move away from discursive dimensions into intra-actions that always "entail particular exclusions, and exclusions foreclose the possibility of determinism, providing the condition of an open future" (p. 214).

Exemplars: Materiality and Border Crossing

The girls in this project, as if almost on cue, embody how "*matter* comes to matter" in their reiterations of immigrating to the United States. Indeed, the girls all

referenced their stories, at one point or another, through assemblages of emotion, thought, the senses, embodiment, and objects. Furthermore, as the girls shared their stories, and when their memory eluded them, they relied upon material entanglements to manifest their affective, embodied, sensory recollections of their journeys. In some cases, it was a positive memory that she told to hold onto in response to the fear and uncertainty felt as she jumped from one stranger's house to another on the way to Indiana. In another case, it was a memory of Mexico and a time that brought back memories of family left behind. However, the intra-action of music, emotion, memory, and verbalization of her travels brought back traumatic recollections of paralyzing fear, trauma, and abuse. Although each of the girls have unique perspectives in which they describe their "crossing-over" stories, each also draws upon material entanglements that revive the senses and literally send them back into that memory.

> I'm really grateful that we got to meet that woman because she made a difference . . . The only memory I have was a blanket. She gave me was a Tinkerbell blanket. I think it was her daughter's blanket, but she gave it to me. I love that blanket so much. There was a smell. It was just a simple smell that I can smell sometimes . . . It was an expensive perfume and she couldn't bring it with her . . . That was the last time she wore it until my grandfather came over this year, but when I smell it I can remember almost everything I went through. There was this one bag [backpack] shaped like an elephant. I didn't want to use it because I didn't want to ruin it, but I think my mom took it . . . because she didn't remember [me] using it ever. I just remember the lady gave it to me . . . because that's the image I have . . . It kind of somehow represent[s] the way that I came here to the United States. It was just both of us together [with her brother]. And that's when we went to the man. And I think we were nearby Indiana, and he drove us to his house. He was living with his brother, his brother's wife, and his brother's wife's kids . . . and he sent us to . . . I do remember this one song playing in the background [in the car] . . . it reminds me and my brother, we've never forgotten it. It's Contrabando by Jenni Rivera. We started driving again and it was my first time tasting a hamburger . . . he told me it was cow and I started crying because I had never eaten cow before . . . I was like, what if it had children, you know? So after that I hated hamburgers [and] I don't like hamburgers now.

Another example in which embodied becoming and materiality were evident in our meetings is from a journal entry I had written in our fourth meeting together. I was reflecting upon the mood of the girls as I noticed a shift in the girls' affect when they arrived for our meeting. I describe this below:

> Thus, the embodied anticipation for the girls as well gathered for our fourth meeting together was *felt*. Escaping the apprehension of sharing their stories was impossible, but there was also excitement exhibited on the girls' faces as well as in the quiet space of the room. Usually, the girls come in quite ready to talk to each other. Today was different. It was not an uncomfortable silence, but more of a mutual respect of what was to come, almost a deference to their individual and collective crossing. They all sat very still and did not take any of the snacks on the table. After a few minutes, one of the mentors got a text that one of the girls was going to be about fifteen minutes late. Everyone agreed we wanted to wait for her to arrive so she could participate in the conversation. We spent some time talking about food – we actually talked a lot about food and we ate a lot. I always had snacks and drinks available and we all ate lunch together. Indeed, our intra-actions with each other and with food created a familiar, and even comfortable space to talk about difficult topics with young women and women we did not know very well. From our conversations, it is a fair statement we all found food as a manner in which to heighten the senses, build a sense of community, and yet another mutual entanglement in our lives that we could all relate to separately. As we individually understood our relationships to food, and our connections to history, culture, family, and community, we nurtured these familiar entanglements and invited them to become a part of our embodied becoming within the context of these meetings.
>
> Clearly, this was also something we all had in common and eating and talking about food created a space for a lot of laughter, funny stories about experiences with different foods. Many times, the girls would go in and out of English and Spanish to explain their relationships and experiences with food. We talked about eating rabbit, how to correctly pronounce "gyros," and that if you fall asleep with pineapple in your mouth, the acids in the fruit could actually dissolve your tongue (this was news to me!). But on this day, we talked about our favorite restaurants in the city. *Have you heard or been to the Cake Bake Shop in Broad Ripple? It is beautiful! A little French Bistro.* A cell phone gets pulled out to look up the restaurant. *Oh it is. Look! It is a cute little house!* Laughter ensues. In fact, much of the conversation was almost inaudible through audio or video recording because of the laughter. There is also an embodied understandings of food, The Cake Bake Shop, and the wonderful pictures of cakes and other desserts on other websites. The girls were constantly engaged with one another, smiling, and leaning together to look at the images on the phone. The moment was easy, joyful, and did not require much discourse. The laughter, smiles and embodied

> connections said it all. These moments nurtured communal connections to begin talking about difficult topics. Food as one exemplar built trust and rapport amongst the group that created the space to explore places within themselves they have never been able to talk about before.

Although I highlighted one moment in which food became an embodied entanglement in uncomfortable conversations, food also became a point of common ground in which we all could relate, talk about equally, and as a result, such common conversation aided in building trust amongst the girls, the mentors, and myself as a researcher.

Embodied Becomings of the Spirit

As I have chosen a theoretical perspective of feminist becoming as a framework for this post-qualitative research, it is what best helps me understand myself within the work I (hope to) do. Although I do gravitate towards feminist materiality, I do so with caution. As I feel much of this work resonates with how I make sense of the world, Somerville's (2013) conceptualization of mutual entanglements and postmodern emergence provides another layer that elucidates becoming situated within my own onto/epistemological considerations. Its foundations reside within feminist materialism and conceptualizations of becoming; however at least in my interpretation, Somerville's articulations reside in the transcendent. Somerville overlays mutual entanglements and postmodern emergence as both theoretical and methodological approaches to her work. Mutual entanglement represents not only the intertwining of people but also the intertwining of selves in place. Through these unique entanglements, each instance is a process of representation that has its own truth in "which meaning is formed relationally, dynamically and intertextually" (p. 15). Specifically, she draws upon "the sensing body" (p. 77) as a place to connect the body to "more than the human world" (p. 77) as a

reciprocal relationship with objects, landscapes, animals, and plants. An example Somerville (2013) depicts in *Water in a Dry Land* is (italics in original):

> *thinking through water as an essential constituent of all human and other-than-human living bodies*, *water functions as a literal and metaphysical connector between nature and culture. The exchange of water between and through human and all other living bodies intensifies the meaning of water as omnipresence on the metaphysics of knowledge systems.* (p. 79)

In referencing water as containing omnipresent and metaphysical properties, Somerville moves away from Western scientific knowledge and acknowledges the "transforming and transformative power that constitutes the sacred." (p. 81). Thus, the entanglement does not separate the body and spirit that metaphorically flows through the water, but instead connects water to our own material, emotional and spiritual storylines that collectively come together to clash, merge, or grow into new knowledge.

Furthermore, this knowledge is always emergent, which emphasizes a stance of unknowing, and the "irrational, messy, embodied, and unfolding nature of our participation as bodies in the "flesh of the world" (p.14). Thus, Somerville (2013) describes a postmodern emergence, which is about the process of undoing preconceptions and responding differently to the logical, rational understandings we already hold. Epistemologically, postmodern emergence generates new subjectivities and new knowledge from in-between spaces of binary notions. It integrates alternative conceptions of time that challenge the logic of cause and effect. Furthermore, this temporal becoming is found in concepts of chance, randomness, and open-endedness, as these all represent the impossibility of the same event through repetition. Thus, through iterative processes of representation and reflection, new knowledge emerges (Somerville, 2007). In other words, it is possible to generate new knowledge from old knowledge being retold in

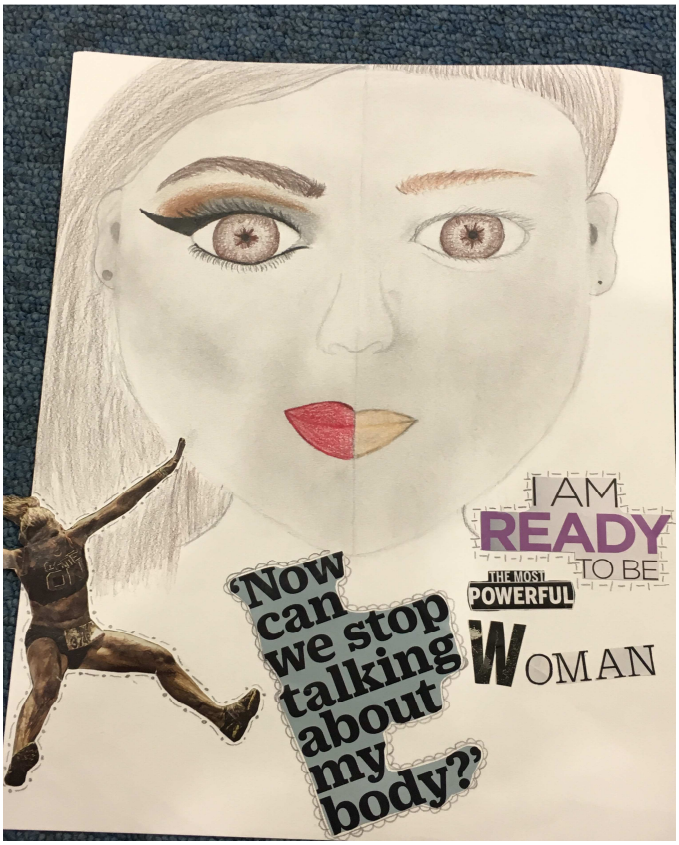
understanding the mutual entanglements of the moment and creating meaning from "an assemblage of representations" (p. 239). It is here where knowing takes on new meaning and is dynamically embodied based upon representation. It can be dismantled and reassembled each time to create a new space for generative knowledge. Postmodern emergence embraces conditional representation that recognizes the in-between space for concepts that are not quite there, but enacts a coming into being to further explore the assemblage of representations. Through representation, engagement, and reflection (Somerville, 2007), we offer a manner in which to reframe current counseling and educational approaches that embody messy, silent, in-between spaces that acknowledge the representation of truth as formed "relationally, dynamically, and intertextually" (Somerville, 2013, p. 15) in a process of mutual entanglement of the spirit.

Finally, this emergence supports an ontological becoming in which we embody a space of creation and transformation. These ontological understandings are founded in the "bodies of things" (Somerville, 2007, p. 234) as these bodies recognize relationships with objects, landscapes, trees, and the material, as we see the mutual entanglement of our existence with(in) relation to one another. This requires the undoing of subjectivity and moves into the liminal spaces of becoming-other that "incorporate elements of our past, who we imagine ourselves to be, and our embodied relationship with others" (Somerville, 2007, p. 234). Butler (2005) parallels this liminal space as "partial, haunted by that which I can devise no definitive story . . . in me and of me for which I can give no account" (p. 40). It is precisely the space of becoming-other, the space in-between, that new knowledge is generated with the intent to uncover what is often neglected as we attempt to unravel the self and prior

knowledge and embrace the uncertainty of what the future holds in relationships that have not yet become.

Inspirited becomings for the girls parallel Somerville's (2007; 2013) postmodern emergence through their discussion of their art projects. In particular, one girl considers herself an artist and described the tension and stress that was often released when she drew. She particularly liked charcoal sketches and even described the enjoyment of getting her hands dirty in the creation of her drawings. As she describes her drawing [Image 1], her entanglement with the piece she created as well as the conversations that ensued regarding other artwork, she begins to depict the irrational, messy, embodied moments in her interpretation of her own experiences:

Image 1:



> You can be girly or not and still be able to do things. You can be comfortable not wearing makeup . . . It's not always about your body . . . It's your time … I am ready to be the most powerful woman, now can I stop talking about my body? I'm trying to do things as a woman, to be able to achieve my dreams. It doesn't matter your weight. Just be somebody that you're going to be proud to say in the future to your children . . . something that will make you proud to be you. Because in the end . . . the only person that can really judge you is yourself, nobody else can really judge you, so be proud of what you judge.

In this image of thought, in the hopeful lies the sacred, the transcendent. Furthermore, this piece of art and the description behind the work entangles her past and who she imagines herself to be, all the while embracing meaning within an assemblage of representations that acknowledges her embodied relationships with others. For her, there is transformation in moving away from representational truths that, indeed, she "can give no account" (Butler, 2005), as she continually engages in creative conceptualizations that honor new (and inherently changing) ways of knowing. Finally, through these new understandings and liminal spaces, moments are created in which interactions and intra-actions occur outside of boundaries of theory and methodology that explore and illuminate generative spaces in which they interrogate their understandings as well as explore the tensions between their onto-epistemological understandings alongside the embodied, affective, gendered understandings of culture, family, school, and community.

An Inspirited Affectual Becoming

Affect resides in the liminal spaces where an inspirited becoming recognizes the transcendent. As such, our becomings allow us to explore our embodied "belongings" and "non-belongings" (Siegworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 2) and maintain the subtlety of pushing through what already is into encounters of affect's "not-yet" (p. 3). Affect

compliments a material, embodied, inspirited ontology because, as Siegworth & Gregg (2010) further state:

> Affect, at is most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend is (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability (p. 1)

These visceral forces were evident in the girls' understanding of the world around them, based on their past experience as well as their future circumstances. They affectively engaged with each other through conversation and embodied understandings of what it means to be affected and affective (Siegworth & Gregg, 2010). Furthermore, the girls consistently exhibited an affective "ongoing process" (p. 5) throughout our conversations as they became more comfortable with the direction our meetings began to take, their collectivity in verbal and embodied experience, and with each other as a whole.

Thus, as the girls explore their in-between, "as expansions and contractions of affectability arrive almost simultaneously . . . something emerges, overspills, exceeds" (Siegworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 13) and there is "always a chance for something else, unexpected, new" (Clough, 2010, p. 234). Additionally, affective theory does not only apply to the girls, but furthers the demands of social scientists and critical theorists to extend beyond linguistic understanding and necessitates the thinking body and mind, while further recognizing the social, the technical and the myriad of other objects of study (Clough, 2007) which produces a complex uncontainability and the "inexpressibility of affect itself" (Brown & Tucker, 2010, p. 238). In staying with affect theory and the understanding there is no generalizability of the affective (Siegworth &

Gregg, 2007), I would like to frame concept as affective method that recognizes these girls "know" [their] body from within" and has "primary access to his or her feelings and thoughts" (Brown & Tucker, 2010, p. 242), thus allowing them to reclaim expertise over their experience in general.

In particular, I draw upon Lauren Berlant's (2011) *Cruel Optimism* and Sara Ahmed's (2010 a,b) *The Promise of Happiness* to exemplify the girls' border-crossing from Mexico to the US and the affective considerations that influence, shape, and interpret who they are (and will be) presently and in the future. I have chosen these two theoretical entanglements because they each challenge dominant conceptions of how we thinking about happiness and the "object of our desires" and the ways in which we have traditionally viewed trauma in the social sciences. Both authors acknowledge the process of an affective becoming, as happiness is always something we are following (Ahmed, 2010a) and trauma is not necessarily a crisis in an isolated situation, but rather, trauma that unconsciously exists in our ordinary existence (Berlant, 2011). Finally, Ahmed (2010) specifically offers affective consequences of happiness directly from a migrant perspective (as she herself is a second-generation immigrant). Thus, I examine the girls' journeys through an affective lens to further understand the influence of the girls' journeys across borders, but also to reinforce the idea that they have primary access to their thoughts and may reclaim their expertise over their circumstances and experiences (Brown & Tucker, 2010). Finally Brown & Tucker suggest what affect theory has to offer is an

> understanding of experience beyond subjectivity toward the forging and unleashing of a plurality of highly particular and individually tailored concepts that explicate the complexities of experience threaded through socio-cultural settings (p. 249)

Below, it is my intent to "explicate the complexities of experience" that acknowledge social constructions of affect and the impact it has on how the girls choose to talk about their journeys and make sense of their lives.

Cruel Optimism

Berlant (2010) suggests when we talk about the object of our desires, we are acknowledging a cluster of promises we hope someone or something makes possible for us. These clusters of promises acknowledge the illogical in our attachments, as the clusters within the promises may be things we recognize and others we are not aware, but still impact our attachments. Berlant further suggests that all attachments are optimistic even if they don't feel that way, noting that such attachments are subject to "the surrender to the return to the scene where the object hovers in its potentialities is the operation of optimism as an affective form" (p. 93). Furthermore, cruel optimism represents the attachment as "compromised conditions of possibility" (p. 94) where the realization of the attachment is impossible or too fantastic to obtain, or too easy to grasp.

I want to do the best for myself . . . I can't really mess up.

What becomes particularly cruel about these attachments is that we often do not realize we maintain attachments to objects and promises that most often threatens our sense of stability and well-being, yet we strive to maintain the attachment.

I can do it if I just believe in myself.

Finally, cruel optimism "is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object *in advance* [italics in original] of its loss" (p. 94). If someone recognizes the cruelty of a particular attachment, a fear of loss of the object sets results and is often displayed in an incapability in handling upsetting or surprising situations.

After reading Berlant's (2010; 2011) description of cruel optimism, I think about how the girls talked about coming to the US from Mexico, the sacrifices made by their family to get them there, and their conceptions of what they need to do to be successful in this country. In particular, the girls talk about

> everything they have gone through, if we want something we have to work for it, and to do better and reach my dreams.

The girls further explained that doing better consists of being good daughters at home, which means helping with chores and younger siblings, doing well in school, and being involved in church (all four girls agreed with these characteristics). Furthermore, one of the girls suggest:

> The things they [parents] have told us that they believe true, I believe has helped me a lot to learn that I appreciate what I have, like my education . . . Whatever they [parents] have gone through has helped us to do better. When I feel like giving up I remember what my parents went through . . . at least I should give it a chance and keep on trying . . to have our education and our dream job. So that really motivates me to do good in school, and show myself that I can do it too, and make my parents proud. [To] tell them that all you went through is worth it because I am here; I was able to do what I wanted to do.

In the girls' statements about their responsibilities toward their parents and their futures, they clearly value a strong work ethic and an education in order to achieve their dreams and be successful in American society. And although the "American Dream" may be attainable for these girls, it will not be without obstacles that include their undocumented status in a patriarchal society that also maintains a white, dominant narrative (see Alexander, 2012; Friere 1970; Feagin, 2010). Thus, the attachment to values of hard work and education for immigrants in this country become cruelly optimistic.

Friere (1970) states that the oppressors (in this case white, male, heteronormative society) *having more* (i.e. achieving the American Dream) are an inalienable right that is

acquired by "effort" and the "courage to take risks" [italics in original] (p. 59). Furthermore, "if others do not have more, it is because they are incompetent, lazy, and worst of all is their unjustifiable ingratitude towards the 'generous gestures' of the dominant class" (p. 59). This understanding of the difficulty of obtaining their dreams, and that hard work and values do not always pay off are not conversations any of these girls are able to have because, as Berlant (2011) suggests, it is impossible to let go of the attachment of the American Dream and is cruelly optimistic. As the girls keep reaching for success in this country, the difficulties in obtaining it threaten their well-being and perpetuates traumatic experiences in their everyday lives.

Berlant (2011) further exemplifies cruel optimism through an examination of trauma through an affective frame. She suggests that cultural theorists most often recognize trauma through Caruth's model (in Berlant, 2011, p. 80) in the humanities, which suggests trauma is a subjective experience that results in "self-shattering loss" (p. 80). In this understanding of trauma, Berlant suggests traumatic events are recognized because "we know it when we know it" (p. 80) and that we have no control over trauma, but are fully possessed by it. Instead, affective trauma describes just one or two approaches among a myriad of ways in which to manage feeling overwhelmed and acknowledge that although the emotions vary in response to trauma, the affective structure remains. What the traumatizing event does is recognize the crisis in response and create a new "habitation of history" (p. 81). Yet, it is possible to feel emotions that are felt in traumatic events that do not provoke traumatic responses, as affectivity is the intensities of the situation that penetrates into our becoming.

Thus, there is "a diffusion of trauma through the ordinary" and the connection to cruel optimism is evident through affective trauma. Trauma is no longer a singularly life-altering event (although these do occur), but a happening that exists within our often ordinary attachments we are not fully conscious of, and therefore, do not claim these desires as attachments. Finally, Berlant (2011) suggests,

> Trauma forces its subjects not into mere stuckness but into crisis mode, where they develop some broad, enduring intuitions about the way we live in a now that's emerging without unfolding, and imagining a historicism from within a discontinuous present and ways of being that were never sovereign. (p. 93)

It is reasonable then, in understanding affective trauma, there is the possibility that people live in a perpetual crisis mode. Indeed, the processes in our responses to traumatic events stay with us even after the event is over and very often may shape our emotional and affective responses in the mundane.

As the girls described their journeys, they described many emotions such as fear, sadness, loneliness, isolation, etc. One of the girls in particular experienced what social science considers a traumatic event (sexual abuse) as she crossed the border, while the others generally described a stressful event that produced overwhelming emotions in response to their experiences. Thus according to Berlant (2011), affective trauma may be a life-altering event, but it also recognizes attachments that are made in "crisis ordinariness" through "the spreading of symbolizations and other inexpressive but life-extending actions throughout the ordinary" (p. 81) and remains as affective structures often not recognized. As three of the four girls admitted to cutting, none of the girls had a clear understanding of why they chose to self-harm and described it in this way:

> I started to self-harm . . . It was probably better if we had never come here or anything . . . I don't know why . . . Everything that happened was my

> fault . . . it was to take away the pain . . . people who don't know . . . [think] you were crying for this little thing . . . [no one] knew what we were going through . . . we didn't want to harm ourselves.

The manner in which the girls speak of self-harm, they describe something that is out of their control, not fully realized, yet affective in their internalization (and externalization) of experiences. Both cruel optimism and affective trauma acknowledge manners in which to explore experiences that permeate everyday lives, emotions, and affective responses that create discontinuity in our attachments. Therefore, as one girl never disclosed self-harm via cutting, affective trauma seemed to manifest in cruelly optimistic ways that put increased pressure on her to succeed according to white cultural standards. Finally, Berlant (2011) provides a framework that acknowledges a critical perspective of affect that is not always beneficial and actually hinders well-being. Affective trauma exemplifies cruel optimism as a manner in which to reconceptualize how we define and think about trauma, but more importantly, how attachments we think serve us may actually be more problematic than helpful.

The Promise of Happiness

Ahmed (2010b) describes the affective turn towards happiness as the "object of human desire" that we all aim for, as it "gives us purpose, meaning and order to human life" (p. 1). Furthermore, happiness involves affect, intentionality, and evaluation or judgment. If you are happy, you are affected by something, if you are happy, you may be happy about something, and if you are happy about something, it makes you feel good. In particular, Ahmed (2010a) explores happiness and the manner in which it functions as a promise that "directs us toward certain objects, which then circulate as social goods" (p. 1). Indeed, happiness may often look like the face of privilege and those who are not

privileged encounter the world as resistant, alienating, and therefore, experience unhappiness. Happiness furthers both moral and social norms and the "right people" get to experience happiness, thus, where we find happiness teaches us each what we value (Ahmed, 2010b). But happiness is also precarious, as the feeling appears and is easily displaced by "not only other feelings but even by happiness itself, the how if its arrival" (p. 26). Thus, there is intentionality in happiness, often as an endpoint.

The allure of happiness also suggests something positive lies ahead of us, especially if we do the right thing, but if we desire happiness, we also are aware of what is not happy in our lives or around us. Indeed, happiness is a "question of following rather than finding" (p. 32).

> Be happy and successful . . . be happy no matter what . . . be happy [with] whatever you do in life . . . [you] are going to be happy.

Happiness also makes waiting easier—the longer you wait the more you will have to look forward to in the end. Finally, we are affirmed by happiness through our social and familial relationships that subscribe to the need to stay on the right path.

> Good values . . . they're going to get everything in life no matter who [are] around.

One you get off of this path, happiness falters and we become disoriented and even disturbed, the "affect alien." (p. 49). Thus, in her chapter entitled *Melancholic Migrants,* Ahmed (2010b) suggests multiculturalism makes people unhappy because it "becomes a threat to national survival" and happiness becomes a promise of "loyalty to the nation" (p. 122), which involved a "nostalgic vision of whiteness" (p. 120). In other words, there is unhappiness, even a mourning of what once was, which reinforces white norms

without the integration of diversity and the "unalike" (p. 122) to live together. Thus, alien affects suggest,

> To be alienated from happiness is to recognize not only that you are the one who is out of place but also that you cannot make yourself be in place, that you cannot make yourself belong 'anywhere.' Such recognition involves an alienation from the abstract potentiality of the individual, premised on the belief that you can do or be whatever you want to be . . . We are reminded that the freedom to be happy, even as fantasy, might evoke 'somewhere,' as a where that only some can be. (p. 157)

Finally, Ahmed (2010b) explicitly states that feeling out of place and feeling as though you do not belong is not solely related to generational and cultural differences between family members. They are most often used in instances of conflict and are overprescribed as parents' hopes for their children are following traditional cultural standards, while the child's desire for happiness lies within the new culture in which she lives. Instead, Ahmed suggests migrants and "would-be citizens" (p. 158) must integrate into a kind of national happiness that does not support racism, the unhappiness of colonial histories, or "of attachments that cannot be reconciled into the colorful diversity of the multicultural nation" (p. 158). Thus, the story of arrival for migrants must be good and they ultimately have the "duty not to be hurt by the violence directed toward you, not even notice it, to let it pass by" (p. 158).

> Ours [border-crossing] was actually a good experience. We didn't suffer anyhow . . . A lot of people had it worse than us. I think it was really good thing that nothing bad happened to us.

The desire for happiness and the objects that represent and reinforce happiness in a nation with migrants suggests the need to place happiness in the same things and ideals. If this is the case, then the desire for happiness requires the avoidance of past histories and buries thoughts of unhappiness and puts cultures in direct opposition with one another.

Image 2 (below) exemplifies "alien affect" and the desire for happiness that reinforces dominant norms.

Image 2:

This piece of art was described in the following manner:

> It looks like a bunch of words . . . I think are really valuable now. If you don't ask, then you won't receive. It's so important to know, to identify when you need help and ask for it . . . finding people that propel you into your future . . . "Shut up in there! Quiet negative thinking" . . . everyone has doubts so being able to identify when you're having those feeling and smashing them . . . I know what I can do, I know I believe in myself . . . and keep moving forward . . . it's ok to have all these dreams . . . be better than something in your past.

Here, I highlight what was discussed with just one piece of art, but as the girls were asked to share "Knowing what they know now, what they would share with a younger girl . . .," in some ways they offered a map to happiness. Or in Ahmed's (2010 a, b) conceptualization of affective happiness, the girls (including the mentors) reinforce a national happiness that embraces planning for your future, independent thought, asking

for help (but not too much), living both fully and humbly, finding your inner self (and peace?) in order to accept doubt, and living in the moment. Although I have summarized here what the captions in the artwork say as well summarizing how they talked about this art. Happiness, then, very much reinforces the face of privilege, as the prompt for this artistic creation never directly asked about happiness, what was chosen teaches us what happiness values (Ahmed, 2010 b). On the contrary, the risk of the alien affect for migrants in the premise that "you can do or be whatever you want to be" (p. 157) leads to unhappiness. For both the girls and their mentors, inscribing to dominant social and cultural understandings of who they should be and the fallacy they can be whoever they want to be may not motivate, but actually diminish the promise of happiness.

Finally, as both Ahmed and Berlant (2010; 2011) take on affective notions of becoming, both embodied and inspirited, they create spaces to further explore entanglements of race, gender, culture, and power. In the next chapter, I take feminist material assemblages and provide yet another layer, which may further explicate the experiences of these girls as young, undocumented immigrants through a post/anti-colonial feminist perspective that resides in a Chicana/Latina Cultural Studies framework.

CHAPTER FOUR: POST/ANTI-COLONIAL ENTANGLEMENTS, CHICANA/LATINA CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE POST-EMPIRICAL, NEW MATERIAL MANGLE

> She learns to be an Indian in a Mexican culture; to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality. She operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she survive contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79)

In May of 2015 at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI), I sat in a post-qualitative/new material session with Elizabeth St. Pierre, Patti Lather, Lisa Mazzei, and Alecia Youngblood Jackson talking about much of what I have been thinking and writing about thus far. However, at the end of the session, Wanda Pillow stands up and asks the panel (and I am paraphrasing) what women of color are contributing to this work and how does this "new materialism" acknowledge the work done by feminists of color before this topic became trendy? Specifically, Pillow's argument suggests there are feminists who have already contributed to this thinking, but are unacknowledged by post-empirical, new-material conversations showing up within educational research. This in not to say that these feminist, post-empirical scholars are not critical, but instead, I think Pillow's critique is in acknowledgement of indigenous thought that ontologically embody meaning-making that integrate materiality alongside embodied and inspirited knowledge.

In my proposal, I felt like it was not the right time to take on this particular argument, but after spending so much time with the girls, I feel like an integral piece of this work is to further complicate post-qualitative, feminist materialism with post/anti-colonial feminist onto-epistemologies that have historically acknowledged

this line of thinking and method. Furthermore, new materialist entanglements heavily align with Chicana/Latina Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS) in that it naturally embodies the liminal space that sees beyond binaries and colonial agentive thought.

At the 2016 ICQI Conference, Pillow not only asked the question, she situated post-colonial ontologies within feminist materialism and called for a "deep analysis of entanglements of colonialism." She also suggested researchers have responsibilities outside of epistemic research, and therefore, must acknowledge the 'whited-out blank ontologies' because what counts as research is already colonized and grounded in Euro-centric thought. For Pillow, there is still much humanism in the post-humanism landscape through epistemic privileging and much of the new materialisms have narrowed the field of research. Instead, she calls for 'parallel genealogies of thought' that recognize the complexities of all matter and mattering of histories and conditions of the marginalized as integral to the conversations of entanglements (Wanda Pillow. "What does data matter? Putting the work to work in policy futurities." University of Illinois. Champaign, IL. 20 May 2016).

Thus, Pillow's challenge recognizes the ambiguity and the messy, irrational spaces we all inhabit as we constantly intra-act with the discursive, the material, the natural, the social (Hekman, 2010), and the soul. Our realities are collective, relational, emotional and spiritual as we are constantly becoming-other. For this reason, as we collectively become together, in this chapter I further complicate new materialist intra-actions from a framework that parallels assemblages grounded in postcolonial work that often is unrecognized (and innately evident) in this line of inquiry. I do so by mirroring chapter two with a postcolonial focus to further

entangle post-qualitative, research and feminist new materialism. I also build upon the same conversations I had with the girls to highlight postcolonial understandings within and between the words of white feminist scholars (see Butler, 2005; Grosz, 1995; Somerville, 2013). I revisit their words from chapter two and include another piece of art within the same framework of feminist embodied becomings of the spirit, but add postcolonial entanglements as another layer of interpretation in understanding the complexities of the girls' lives and aims to parallel and further "liminal cosmologies" that can always be reimagined and reorganized (Wanda Pillow. "What does data matter? Putting the work to work in policy futurities." University of Illinois. Champaign, IL. 20 May 2016).

Feminist Postcolonial Thought

Broadly speaking, postcolonial studies challenges colonialist structures that still exist by studying the experience of "colonialism in its past and present forms" (Urrieta, Jr., 2014, p. 112). Furthermore, postcolonialism attempts to speak from the margins as it aims to decenter dominant narratives and further validate voices of the 'Other' in response to colonial constructions. Most often, postcolonial theory, practice, and process offers a critical "analysis of literary text, social cultural and power inequalities" (p. 112) that also challenges nationalism and the idea of citizenship as these often encourage assimilation and acculturation (or deculturation) of marginalized groups and champions the colonial elite (see Bhaba, 1994; Fanon, 1967; Rosaldo, 2003). Finally, Fanon (1967) suggests oppressive factors are more than just physical, but also psychological and mental colonization leads to feelings of inferiority in the face of elite, nationalistic standards.

Specifically, feminist post-colonial theory and method naturally embraces the entangled notions of the body, mind, and spirit. Positivist understandings of research, and the world, are not recognized in feminist post-colonial thought. However, this work has been historically marginalized and essentialized among scholars and within feminism as a whole in the US until the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, Chicana feminism emerged in response to the Chicano civil rights movement, which targeted oppressive structures that existed within Chicana/o communities and included racial and sexual stereotypes and better working conditions (Moya, 2013). However, Chicana women who fought for equal rights in this movement soon learned their own communities unfairly distributed rights along gender lines, thus Chicanas became more vocal about their frustrations in submission and service to their "Chicano brothers" and a "discourse of nationalism that emphasized the value of family loyalty in the project of survival" (p. 574). In response to their dissatisfaction, cultural nationalists adopted three female cultural icons (La Virgen de Guadalupe, La Malinche, and La Llorna) that embodied traditional characteristics for Chicana women and sexualized their identities. As Chicana women were trying to break away from traditional roles, Chicano nationalists were purposefully centering them in these roles to honor the values of family and cultural survival (Moya, 2013).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a handful of Chicana feminists began to work with white women's liberation movements, but much of the same privileging and oppressive structures they initially fought against inherently existed within these organizations. Thus, they aligned themselves with other nonwhite racial groups and

together they began to theorize their own uniquely oppressive experiences. "Third-world" feminism arose and challenged white American feminism and sexism of other national movements while allowing Chicana feminists to forefront the "interrelationship of race, class, gender and sexuality in explaining the particular conditions of their lives in the United States" (Moya, 2013, p. 575). Historically situating postcolonial feminist thought is foundational in beginning to think about the positioning of the girls' experiences that acknowledges post-qualitative, feminist material work, but also further integrates and creates opportunities to acknowledge postcolonial feminist onto-epistemologies of becoming, embodiment, and the spirit.

Finally, as Chicana feminism grew in solidarity with other third-world feminisms, such as Latina (Chicana/Latina) feminisms, indigenous feminisms, and other marginalized feminisms, these diverse perspectives challenged conventional theoretical and methodological approaches in the social sciences broadly and educational research specifically.

Spivak (1988) further challenges both theoretical and methodological approaches when she asks the question, *Can the subaltern speak?* further complicates the colonial impact on women as she suggests there is no simple answer to the oppressed being able to speak for themselves, as their speech "may not be necessarily be either liberatory or reflective of their 'true interests,' if such exist" (Alcoff, 2009, p. 128). Nonetheless, Spivak (1988) engages in a Foucault-Deleuze conversation in which she suggests a "postrepresentationalist vocabulary" (p. 80) that ultimately hides essentialism as the subaltern are situated as different and deviant from the ideal (the elite), and within the context of colonialism, the subaltern female is "more

deeply in shadow" (p. 83). Deleuze and Foucault also ignore the "epistemic violence of imperialism" (p. 84) as they provide an analysis that,

> shows again that the Third World can enter the resistance program of an alliance politics directed against a 'unified repression' only when it is confined to the third-world groups that are directly accessible to the First World. This benevolent first-world appropriation and reinscription of the Third World as an Other is the grounding characteristic of much third-worldism today. (p. 84)

This is an important argument in regard to post-qualitative, feminist materialist research because much of the work is based upon Deleuzian theoretical concepts and some of the work may very well be viewed by indigenous (Third World) groups as an appropriation and reinscription of their work (and as a side, was very much the argument made by Wanda Pillow at the ICQI conference). Therefore, in this chapter, my intent is to situate many of the feminist theoretical and methodological concepts I have already used into acknowledge postcolonial feminist thought that very much parallels, and also strengthens ontological considerations of these girls' lives and experiences. In other words, the impact of imperialism and colonialism is foundational in feminist postcolonial thought and further complicates entangled notions of becoming, embodiment, and the inspirited understandings of colonial issues, such as immigration, undocumented status, and border-crossings. Finally, although Spivak (1988) is in support of US feminism becoming more theoretical, she also cautions against the subaltern woman being reduced to an "'essentialist' (identical to positivist) search for lost origins" that "cannot be served by the call for more theory in Anglo-America either" (p. 91). In this project, it is impossible to

remove the mangle of colonialism in the girls' lives, and therefore is situated in postcolonial feminist becomings, embodiment, and the spirit.

Postcolonial Feminism and Becoming

Mohanty (2003) acknowledges the intersections of the feminist struggle as she states,

> In this country [US] I am, for instance, subject to a number of legal/political definitions: "postcolonial," "immigrant," "Third World" . . . Movement *between* [italics in original] cultures, languages, and complex configurations of meaning and power have always been the territory of the colonized. It is in this *process* [italics in original] . . . reterritorialization through struggle allows me a paradoxical continuity of self, mapping and transforming my political location . . . The struggles I choose to engage in are then an intensification of these modes of knowing—an engagement on a different level of knowledge. (p. 469)

Here, Mohanty exhibits a similar becoming (Childers, 2013; Voithofer, 2013) as she recognizes her own personal history as transformational in the political struggles she engages in as a result of the impact of colonization, which are ultimately driven by her ontological insights. She also acknowledges a "temporality of struggle" (p. 468), which challenges linear understandings in order to recognize multiple, simultaneous, and interconnected space and time in order to decolonize.

Decolonizing/anticolonizing feminist becoming also embraces concepts of ethics, voice, and empowerment in promotion of egalitarianism. Indeed, indigenous feminist onto-epistemologies are interweaved and recognized as integral pieces of theory and method. This indigenous feminist thought parallels Barad's (2007) ethical becoming as a responsibility to the "differential patterns of mattering" (p. 384) that give way to both an accountability and responsibility to what matters, but also in what is being excluded. Ethics, relationships, and becoming are not separated from the other.

> It's important to know other people . . . Because a lot of people, they think that we're always happy, but once we get to share our stories, maybe people understand why we are the way that we are, or the things that we say, or maybe the things we don't say.

For example, Canella and Manuelito (2008) suggest the use of anticolonial research because it moves away from colonization completely and "highlights and advocates for the ending of both discursive and material oppression" (p. 34) by resisting binaries and fostering hybrid identities. Furthermore, postcolonial/anticolonial theory and method moves past decolonization and entangles collaboration and social justice models that aim to reconstruct the "many forms of knowing, communication, and being [becoming] in a complex and persistently oppressive world" (p. 41). In an effort to further the assemblages of becoming and truly embrace the intra-actions that exist, it furthers the post-qualitative, new-materialist conversation to purposely overlay the feminist colonialized oppressions as ontological considerations to further transformation and change by resisting binaries and locating the spaces in-between that push for solidarity in difference.

I use this example in chapter three to highlight the mangle:

> Being a teenager in American culture, you kind of get lost trying to fit in . . . but once you have these conversations it reminds you of who you are . . . For me it give me a little sparkle. I'm so proud I am Mexican.

However, in the postcolonial mangle, resisting dualistic notions are also integral to the onto-epistemological understandings of these girls, but acknowledgement of existing colonial structures are necessary in understanding the impetus to fit into *either* American culture *or* Mexican culture. Behind this statement lies the acknowledgement of uncertainty in being Mexican, as she is reminded of who she is in the midst of negotiating two cultures and constantly trying to fit into one place or the other, there is

always an oppressive, dominant American narrative that reveals itself and further complicates the entangled understandings of these girls' lives.

Postcolonial Embodied Feminist Becomings

Postcolonial/anticolonialist embodied feminist becomings continually challenge conventional theorizing, method, and practice and are portrayed through decolonizing practices in which "decolonization is about the process in both research and performance of valuing, reclaiming, and foregrounding indigenous voices and epistemologies" (Swadener and Mutua, 2008, p. 31). Saavedra and Nymark (2008) refer to the "anticolonial third space moments" that "struggle for recovery and survival from the symbolic and literal rape by those who have silenced and maimed" (p. 266). These liminal, or third-spaces create critical dialogues and conversation that integrate the body, sexuality, and other embodied experiences into epistemologies that further egalitarian and anticolonial feminist work.

> Other people view Latino girls . . . they're loud, they're hypersexualized. I remember a male calling me exotic. Well, I'm not exotic.

This work defies the Cartesian mind/body split and furthers the body to "speak through work, writing and practices, possibly even engendering new counter carnal discourses" (p. 266). For Anzaldúa (1990), carnal discourses suggest,

> "Face" is the surface of the body that is most noticeably inscribed by social structures, marked with instruction on how to be *mujer,* macho, working class Chicana. As *mestizas*—biologically and/or culturally mixed—we have different surfaces for each aspect of identity, each inscribed by a particular subculture. We are "written" all over, or should I say, carved and tattooed with the sharp needle of experience. (p. xv)

The mestiza woman's body challenges dominant discourse by ambiguously moving within and between fluidity and fragmentation as she negotiates multiple sociopolitical

locations that create potentialities for new ways of knowing and theorizing spaces (Saavedra & Nymark, 2008).

> Because it [depression] is something that you don't know . . . It's after you're over it, and you think oh my god, I really needed help at that time . . . and the emotions left are something we don't even remember why we did those things. But it affected [me] somehow in a different way.

After this statement was made, the girls talked about what caused their depression, but at this point we had not yet talked about their undocumented experiences and border-crossings. In an entangled, postcolonial perspective, it would be necessary to reconceptualize this statement that recognizes the historical and patriarchal colonial oppression that contributes to depressive factors, what kind of help was needed, and the emotional toll the dominant narrative concerning undocumented immigrants has on the girls. Nonetheless, there exists resistance in this statement as well, but one that is still ambiguous in nature. Between the fluidity and fragmentation, a third space is created, and new ways of knowing are revealed even if meaning is not fully realized yet.

Finally, the body also has the opportunity to disrupt Westernized approaches to theory that lead to different ways to approach research, "where dominant discourses can dialogue with marginalized discourses in order to forge new mutated discourses of resistance" (p. 268). These "mutated discourses of resistance" become an integral piece of feminist new materialism and post-qualitative work as they combine dominant discourses but also entangle the marginalized and oppressed positionalities that are not present in this up and coming work.

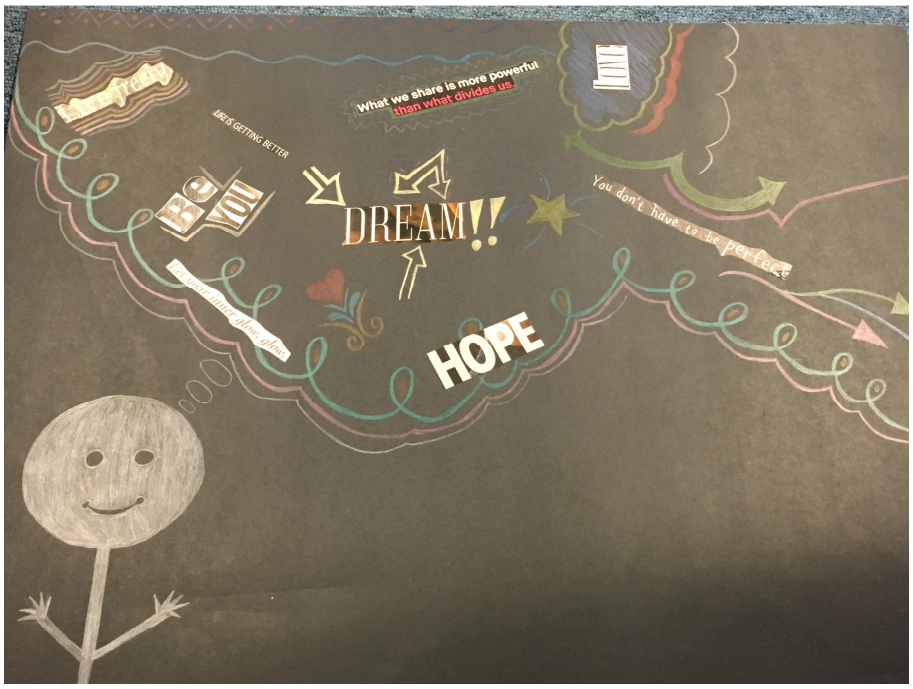
Postcolonial, Embodied Becomings of the Spirit

Jaimes (2003) describes indigenism as "to live in relationship with the place where one is born" (p. 66). In particular, there is a connection to the land manifest

through cultural beliefs and rituals. Furthermore, Jaimes links the subordination of women to the degradation of nature as the result of patriarchal colonialism "that has been imposed on Native peoples and others in the process of conquest as part of the imperialist agenda" (p. 68). In other words, women's connection to nature, or Ecofeminism, exemplifies the interconnections "between human and non-human, life and nonlife" (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008, p. 53). This epistemological stance also avoids dualisms and individualistic perspectives, and instead embraces an ethic of care that involves social justice and egalitarian, collective, reciprocal relationships that acknowledge the sacred (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008). Indeed, the sacred is not separated from the materiality of the feminist, indigenous experience, and an embodied native spirituality is yet another mangle in which to view the postcolonial, female experience.

In this artwork, the spiritual is interconnected in her becoming as a young woman as well as what she would like a younger girl to understand as she gets older.

Image 3:



> For us Latinos, the connections that we have are more important than races. Because we are Latinos, there are so many races, but our similarities, the way we came here, or the things we've been through are more similar that races or the countries we come from, which is really important for us Latinos to stay strong and come together. So if I was telling this to a little girl I want her to get the idea that it's okay for her let all of these things out of her mind, to dream, to hope, to let her express herself the way she is . . . It's okay to open up to other people . . .

In this articulation of what she created, the sacred and the spiritual lies within the collective Latino perspective and the mutually entangled immigrant experience as a way to unite and build reciprocal relationships that strengthen who they are as a collective whole. She further acknowledges the assemblages of power in the US via both immigrant (and undocumented immigrant) status as she situates the social construction of race to create difference as opposed to solidarity. Finally, this piece of art also depicts the connection to body, mind, and spirit. Her dreams and hopes

encourage her to participate in a world that she can express who she is on her terms, by building supportive relationships with others.

Anzaldúa's (1987) work also closely speaks to the mutually entangled spirit I am so interested in exploring further. Therefore, in my mind, new materialist feminist thinking most closely resides in mutual entanglements beyond matter and enters into the becoming-other of mind, body spirit connections. Furthermore, Anzaldúa herself does not claim new materialism, feminisims, or any other "isms," but her work, to me, very clearly embraces many of the same thoughts. For me, when I make sense of "intra-actions," "assemblages," "entanglements," "mangles," and any other words that usually apply to feminist new materialism, her words are often how I make sense of these images. Anzaldúa is so strongly connected to embodied notions of becoming and the innate, ontological understanding of the connection of body, mind, and spirit, she furthers the notion of "interstitial material existence" in order to "expose the work the soul performs" (Saldivar-Hull, 1987, p. 9). Indeed, she offers the very kind of vulnerability through the mutual entanglements of our world, others, and the environment when Anzaldúa describes the new *mestiza.*

Anzaldúa (1987) exemplifies this new *mestiza* notion when she acknowledges her entanglement with the material world as a young child. She recalls "listening to the wind as a child and understanding its messages" (p. 58). Anzaldúa further recalls her futile attempts in identifying patterns and cycles in her life connected to an external reality that embraced the colors of a snake, "moods" of trees, and the whispers of the wind. However, she inevitably denied these occurrences and inner

senses, thus reinforcing the "white rationality" (p. 58) that buried the existence of the "other world" (p. 58) and accepted the Westernized reality of the dichotomy of consciousness. This duality of consciousness denies the simultaneous existence of the world of the soul—the spiritual—and physical reality. Thus, objectivity was ingrained in Western culture and separated understandings between the body, the soul, and the rest of the world. Anzaldúa (1987) exemplifies this by acknowledging how we are supposed to forget otherworldly events:

> We're supposed to ignore, forget, kill those fleeting images of the soul's presence and of the spirit's presence. We've been taught that the spirit is outside our bodies or above our heads somewhere up in the sky with God. We're supposed to forget that every cell in our bodies, every bone and bird and worm has spirit in it. (p. 58)

Anzaldúa (1987) further describes the world of the soul, and what she (1987) terms *la facultad*. She defines this as the need to explore and understand the deeper meaning or reality as an instant "sensing," a quick "perception arrived at without conscious reasoning" (p. 60). It is an awareness that does not communicate through words, but in images and symbols behind where feelings reside. Thus, it is a developed sensitivity that is more apparent in people who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world . . . "the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign" (p. 60). *La facultad* represents a sixth-sense of the oppressed, of the abused, of those who constantly experience physical and mental anguish; as their senses become heightened, shifts in everyday modes of perception occurs. Furthermore, this shift changes the way we view our entanglements with people and concrete objects as well as the realm of the soul. Indeed, *la facultad* illuminates a new way of seeing that especially pays attention to the soul, and an

awareness to the "experiencing of soul (Self)" (p. 61). However, Anzaldúa (1987) warns that in the process of awareness of the spirit that leads to *la facultad*, the comfort of "safe and easy ignorance" (p. 61) is loss, fear, depression, and illness that arises and provokes in order to remain in the comfortable split of body, mind and soul. Finally, for Anzaldúa (1987), what causes the most pain and anguish is being caught between the innocence and ignorance rather than fully embracing *la facultad*. As this is the liminal space in which I would argue most of us reside, the possibilities of becoming are infinite in challenging and transforming our subjectivities.

Although I am not a Chicana or Latina, when I read this work I see a connection between new materialism/feminist materialism and that of the spiritual. Furthermore, Villenas (2000) acknowledges that modernism and even postmodernism has no name, no language that fully depicts the agential power received of the mind and spirituality connection of the Xicanista (Chicana feminist). Castillo (1995) even goes as far to suggest that spirituality is intrinsic to most women's sense of being, of which I do not disagree. Additionally, spirituality can reside in self-acceptance and is exercised in both personal and diverse ways. She further reiterates:

> The undercurrent of spirituality which has been with women since pre-conquest times and which precedes Christianity in Europe—is the unspoken key to the strength and endurance as a female throughout the ages. (p. 92)

When thinking about the girls' border-crossing experiences, I think about this concept of *la facultad* and their experiences as young girls caught between two worlds. I am not only speaking of the worlds between US culture and the traditional culture of their families, but also the worlds of physical reality versus the inner

knowledge that is "latent in all of us" (pg. 61). As Castillo (1995) reminds us, we all feel helpless in regard to the unexplainable, but it is within our own imaginations (the liminal) that we have the power to tap into our mental well-being.

The Mangle of Oppression, Colonialism, and Becoming

Post-qualitative research and feminist materialism exemplifies Chicana/Latina onto-epistemological thought but does not fully acknowledge the oppression of women via colonialism. This entangled understanding is essential in acknowledging Latina adolescents marginalized understandings as a result of their border-crossings, undocumented immigrant status, and the trauma they have experienced as a result of patriarchy and colonialism. Furthermore, new materialist onto-epistemological thought creates space for new understandings and transformation to occur, as well as explore tensions that exist as a result of dualistic and positivist thought. Diffraction, and rhizomatinc thinking is also helpful in acknowledging differences along a continuum in an effort to exist in the margins while acknowledging our becomings through our vulnerabilities, our irrational understandings, and the messiness of life. Nonetheless, in going back to Pillow's question at the ICQI conference, this frame of thought has existed in indigenous and Mestiza/Latina ontology before colonization. However, it is not acknowledged within a post-qualitative, feminist materialist framework. Indeed, it is not new.

My goal here is not to dismiss the work of feminist new materialists as I think it is helpful in thinking about moving away from representational truths, primarily discursive and performative theory and methodology, and towards concept as method and the inherent interconnectedness of humans as always becoming and in the

making. However, for this project in particular, adding the feminist postcolonial mangle creates more nuanced potentialities for Latina adolescent girls who always reside in the margins and live their lives amidst confining binaries that limit and essentialize their identities. It also situates Chicana/Latina onto-epistemologies within a historical framework that acknowledges the impact of colonialism, immigration, their undocumented status, and their border-crossing journeys. Thus, in moving towards new possibilities in thought and the impact of mental health and well-being within educational institutions, it is necessary to provide a framework that acknowledges the girls' becoming, brown epistemologies, and navigation of the borderlands through community solidarity.

Chicana/Latina Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS)

Chicana/Latina Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS) primarily focuses on previously ignored literature and creative thought that fosters dialogue and solidarity across communities through "borderland experiences about gender, sexuality, spirituality, family relations, and social movement" (Villenas, 2014, p. 207). Additionally, Chicana/Latina FCS resides in theory production that focuses on everyday lives, the mundane, that move away from universalized conceptions of humanity into spaces that embrace epistemologies and pedagogies of the body (Cruz, 2006, p. 206). However, Chicana/Latina FCS recognizes and supports specific geographies and histories of struggle that are unique to individual and collective experiences, while "creating tools to articulate borderlands living, and building solidarities in difference." (Villenas, 2014, p. 207). Thus, Villenas (2014) offers four tenets of Chicana/Latina FCS which include 1) intersectionality and global solidarity, 2) the dismantling of dualisms, 3) the embracing of

ambiguity, and 4) the project of tracking the diverse modes of decolonial agency. Villenas also warns these tenets are not with the intent to contain Chicana/Latina FCS, but rather an articulation of "one of a multitude of ways to express and re-imagine decolonizing feminist modes of being, knowing, and acting in the world" (p. 207).

Intersectionality and Global Solidarity

The exploration of ways in which knowledge and identities are constructed take into account the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class, etc. that are embodied through possibilities for solidarity across borders and difference.

> I think it does help you to learn more from other people from other place, and know that you have connections with them too.

Within the context of this research project, Chicana/Latina FCS perspective redefines, and thus allows a space to theorize how girls' multiple identities enacted as a result of creating lives in "response to and in spite of the contradictions of race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and nation" (Villenas, 2014, p. 210).

Indeed, it is the new consciousness that emerges as a third element that breaks down existing paradigms and reconstructs as "some of the fragmented pieces began to fall together—who we were, what we were, how we evolved. We began to get glimpses of what we might eventually become" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 85).

> I'm better than this . . . I'm proud of myself . . . I want to do the best for myself . . . I should give it a chance on keep on trying.

Indeed, Anzaldúa's work is centered on this new consciousness that is acknowledged through the complex intersections of being a Chicana woman who is "cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures

and their value systems," who constantly "undergoes a struggle of borders, an inner war" (p. 100).

However, Villenas (2014) builds upon Anzaldúa's (1987) new consciousness and claims it at a crossroads in not only theorizing the self in de-colonial and feminist terms, but also on a global level that acknowledges Chicana/Latina FCS as a space for community empowerment, transformation, and healing. In this transformational perspective, Chicanas and Latinas unite in de-colonizing struggles to other women and other cultures and other global struggles through a FCS perspective. Indeed, this "new consciousness at a crossroads" embraces the complexity of Chicana/Latina FCS and situates it within a global perspective that acknowledges the intricacies of the lives of Latinas and their families.

> It makes you realize you share a culture with other people, but just that culture is so different in so many ways. It opens your eyes to see that these things are similar, yet so different in so many ways.

Mohanty (2003) furthers this universal connection as she revisits *Under Western Eyes* (1984) and suggests the focus is not so much on the intersections of difference between the feminist onto/epistemological, but instead draws upon how they contribute to the connections and not differences as just "differences." Mohanty further explains,

> In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining. The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully. It is this intellectual move . . . allows women of different communities and identities to build coalitions and solidarities across borders. (p. 538)

Finally, through this embodiment of building relationships of (intra)connectedness and difference, the dismantling of dualisms are integral in approaching entangled structures of both oppression and solidarity across similarities and divergence.

Breaking Down Dualisms

As an integral part of Chicana/Latina FCS, breaking down dualisms creates a space in which to explore the complexities and intersections of Chicana/Latina lives that are often stifled through dualistic thinking. For example, binaries often reinforce many of the stereotypes that exist for Chicana/Latina women in the US and include "virgin/whore, man/woman, colonized/colonizer, tradition/change, and citizen/illegal" (Villenas, 2014, p. 211). Indeed, Anzaldua talks about the danger of dualisms through her own spiritual journey as she explains when Western culture began to embrace scientific thinking and objectivity, "objects" were created out of things and people, and the body-mind split further distanced human entanglements with the natural and spiritual world, ultimately losing touch with basic human ontological understandings. Thus, for Anzaldúa (1987), this dichotomy is the "root of all violence" (p. 59). She further states:

> A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, violence and war. (p. 102)

As such, Anzaldúa reiterates the Western Cartesian split point of view has cut most white people off from their spiritual selves and appropriates an ethnocentric perspective that does not offer opportunities to learn, exchange, and grow among and with other races, ethnicities, and cultures.

Additionally, Cisneros' (1984) *The House on Mango Street* exemplifies and problematizes the dichotomy of gender and cultural conditions in the US through the eyes

of Esperanza. Through the everyday experiences of this young girl, which are often contradictory and confusing circumstances, she grapples with her own identity that is very limited by male rule. Saldivar-Hull (2000) further explains these dualisms as she references Cisneros' work as that of "feminism on the border" as Esperanza explores female sexuality that only takes on dualistic forms of cultural icons such as the Virgin Guadalupe. Indeed, Esperanza's Aunt Lupe undergoes the "(dis)embodiment of a once vital woman with 'swimmers legs' into a bedridden invalid betrayed by her body" (p. 98). On the other end of the virgin/whore dichotomy, Esperanza's friend Sally wears tight skirts and hides make up from her father in order to rebel against the "virgin" perspective of female sexuality.

> It's difficult because they try to understand that we as teenagers are learning other things and we what to show these thing, but they want [us] to keep their traditions. It's difficult because if we were in Mexico we probably wouldn't even be speaking English . . . but when we are speaking to our parents we'd say something in English and they would answer me in Spanish. Then we have a whole conversation in two different languages. They [parents] try to speak English too because they know English has become important . . . It is difficult because you have two different cultures in the way and they [parents] are different in the way they think.

However, as Sally simultaneously refuses to submit to patriarchal prescriptions of virginity and wholesome values, she still reinforces patriarchal structures with tight skirts and make up that connote a man's possession (Saldivar-Hull, 2000).

Similarly, Valenzuela (1999) suggests dualistic thinking is reinforced between genders as strict parental monitoring of female behaviors push adolescent girls towards what they perceive as liberating spaces in schools that fosters individuality and independence. However, what most often occurs is the illusion of "independent thought

and action in a system of patriarchy" that leads to demanding and exploitive relationships.

> I'm in a construction class and I am the only girl there. I don't like it when the boys think I can't do what they can because I'm a girl. But some of the boys are teaching me. A woman can do the same things that a man can.

Thus, these girls take on the role of caretaker and offer safe havens for wayward males, as these are the socially constructed binaries at play for these Latino/a adolescents.

Finally, Castillo (1995) describes the hindrance on Chicana/Latina women, as they become bound by traditional roles of "procreator and nurturer" while automatically juxtaposing the male as "penetrator/protector" (p. 181).

> My mom made a comment that made me so mad. My brothers were outside playing . . . and I wanted to see what they were doing because it was a nice day. She [mom] told me to get inside. I was like why? She said only guys are allowed to go outside. Girls are supposed to stay home and clean.

She further challenges these dualisms as she asks the reader to think of the earth as not female, but as a planet, or nature as neither male nor female, but just as nature. With this refusal of learned "associations, dualism and metaphors" (p. 181), the introduction of images of concepts that were once unimaginable become possible. Here, thinking without dualisms, dichotomies, binaries, or the Cartesian split perspective, the unimaginable enters into spaces that more fully acknowledge Chicana/Latina spaces of entanglement outside of the Western gaze.

> I hate when people tell me what to do, but I hate it more when it's from a guy because I can do the same things you are doing.

Indeed, entering into the borderlands moves away from dualistic thinking that often interprets social inequality and struggle as that of oppressed and oppressor in a "static

oppositional stand" (Elenes, 2006, p. 216) and instead acknowledges the complex ways in which Chicana/Latina adolescents and women are always negotiating the many, contradictory positions (Elenes, 2006) nestled in ambiguity.

Embracing Ambiguity

Although embracing wholeness over dualisms empower Chicana/Latina women through their embodiment of the complexities of their everyday experiences, this is not done without the negotiation of ambiguity.

> We've been through a lot and we're still here.

It is through these ambiguities Chicana/Latinas may embrace their identities around middle class status, patriarchal structures, hybrid language practices, and nationalisms (Villenas, 2014). Anzaldúa (1987) elaborates on the ambiguous and often "uncharted seas" (p. 101) through *la mestiza* as a place in which she is caught between two cultures and undergoes "a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war" (p. 100). However, this stance also acknowledges the binary of subject/object, oppressor/oppressed. Thus the boundaries created are rigid and inflexible, unable to move out from underneath the multiple, and always opposing messages of the dominant discourse.

Furthermore, Anzaldúa (1987) describes ambivalence as an extremely intense, often very emotional, unconscious occurrence that either upsets or resolves the ambivalence. Thus, ambiguity allows the subject-object duality to disappear and what is left in its place is an embodied work the soul performs. There is no question this altered reality arises out of a state of pain and unrest,

> It made me feel like I was left out because my sister [wanted] to buy a dress and I would tell my mom, "Can you buy me clothes like a guy?"

> And she said, "No. Are you a lesbian?" I said no, I just like the clothes. I started feeling depressed because this is me, I like dressing in guys' clothes. I started feeling left out and it was hard for me . . . where am I supposed to fit in? If I don't fit in with girls or with guys, where am I supposed to be? I felt really depressed . . . they [parents] would treat my brothers differently and they would treat my sister differently from me.

However, it is an inevitable part of the ambiguity of the new *mestiza* that allows herself to be vulnerable to new ways of seeing and thinking that deconstructs, and then constructs, in order to transform. This transformation is more of a collision that creates a space that invites the "possibility of uniting all that is separate [to] occur" (p. 101). However, this assemblage is not just where separate pieces come together and it is not a balancing act between opposing powers. Instead, a third element is integrated that acknowledges the contradictions, ambiguity, and pain, but resides in the creative process of breaking down old paradigms that hinge on the constant negotiation between two cultures. This is where the "possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs" (p. 101) and creates the space to alter the perceptions of reality, thus changing the "way we see ourselves and the ways we behave" (p. 102). Finally, ambiguity resists dualisms that contradict, such as activist/sellout, resistor/assimilationist, and colonizer/colonized and begins to create opportunities to think differently about Chicana/Latina everyday lives and subjectivities (Villenas, 2014). These struggles are acknowledged as places in which agency is constructed.

Tracking Decolonial Agency

> Tracking decolonial agency is the last tenet Villenas (2014) offers in Chicana/Latina FCS. Once dualisms are deconstructed, the intersections and complexities of women's lives manifest in a way that is not held to the Western perspective and eliminates the simplification of women's lives, and instead, embraces the complexities.

> They don't realize it's a part of our culture and our values.

Perez (1999) describes this process as a "decolonial imaginary" in which she challenges and reconceptualizes Chicana histories.

> I need to be proud of who I am because nobody can change me.

The purpose of the decolonial imaginary is to situate it within the intangible as the "oppressed as colonial other becomes the liminal identity, partially seen yet unspoken, vibrant and in motion, overshadowed by the construction of coloniality where decolonial imaginary moves and lives" (p. 7). In other words, there is always a negotiation between the imaginary and a decolonizing otherness where all identities interact one way or another.

> Not everybody is going to like you and not everybody is going to accept who you are . . . but you always have to respect people.

And herein lies agency.

As Chicana decolonial imaginary is located in between colonialist and colonized, or what Perez (1999) calls an "interstitial space" (p. 7), that recognizes women's activities as historically unseen, and unthought, words "spoken and unspoken, survive and persist whether acknowledged or not" (p. 7). Indeed, they are "sexing the colonial imaginary" as women's actions and voices enact agency for survival that navigate through the unthought and unidentifiable spaces and into a "psychic terrain . . . a healing consciousness, where desiring devices can serve to free us and not obstruct, stifle, and limit identities" (p. 125).

> I look in her eyes and I know . . . I see pain . . . I see the scars, but she has given so much of her life to me. I owe her so much . . . she is my motivation.

Additionally, Villenas (2014) offers her interpretation of Perez's (1999) work that suggests women's activities, words, and silences are too quickly viewed as assimilationist rather than the interstitial space Perez referenced throughout *The Decolonial Imaginary.*

Villenas (2000) agrees that the subtle interventions of women are a method in which to track agency that illuminates new insights and possibilities in expressing Latina lives and subjectivities.

> I remember what my parents went through . . . and I should give things a chance and keep on trying . . . What they [parents] have been through has not only taught me to do good for them, but do good for myself.

In fact, the Western-based feminist perspective exoticizes the Third World woman by defining their lives in terms of an empowered "resistance." However, this becomes problematic as it highlights what Western feminists understand as agency, as opposed to understanding agency from the perspective of the Chicana/Latina women themselves. As a result, women's lives who fit the mold of showing resistance are the life histories and stories we most often hear. Consequently, the end result is an ethnocentric and often stereotypical perspective of Chicana/Latina lives that reinforce dominant discourse pertaining to the lives of these women. Therefore, tracking decolonial agency envisions a decolonial imaginary that creates the liminal space, or the "interstitial space" that embodies the "decolonial otherness" of women's lives in one moment,

> I want to take my parents to Mexico to visit their parents . . . I want them to quit their jobs and be at home . . . I don't want them to worry about anything else,

with the understanding that identities are constantly changing, interacting, and always becoming

> Girls in America are supposed to have lives . . . it gets me frustrated when I am expected to learn how to cook and wash dishes because he [dad] says so.

Chicana/Latina FCS offers a conceptual framework to complicate the entanglements of Latina adolescent lives and impact of colonialism on their lives. This framework acknowledges the intersectionality of borderland experiences and embraces epistemologies and pedagogies of the body (Cruz, 2006). Furthermore, Chicana/Latina FCS recognizes oppression and the impact of colonization on Latina becoming as it creates space for the girls to explore their lives on their terms and within, beside, and in-between of dominant feminist perspectives, as they constantly reside in the margins, in-between cultures and identities. Nonetheless, this framework acknowledges the messy and irrational spaces in an effort to support their individual and collective experiences. Thus, in an effort to recognize the postcolonial mangle within post-empirical, feminist material thought, I first have to situate myself within and between the mutual entanglements of this project, the powerful assemblages that occur as a result of research and my own privilege, and my own onto-epistemological understandings that frame who I am and why I am drawn to this work.

CHAPTER FIVE: POWERFUL ASSEMBLAGES, ONTOLOGICALLY SPEAKING

> In fact, nothing is more material, physical, corporeal, than the exercise of power. (Foucault, 1980, p. 57)

Ontological Emergence

In this chapter, I intend to acknowledge my own ontological voice and how it entangles with this project, the girls, my intentions and commitment to research and my dissertation, and finally, in fully acknowledging concept as method. Therefore, I begin by talking about my connections with the mutually entangled, how I think through these theoretical concepts in my own life, and how these assemblages impact my own onto-epistemological becoming. Furthermore, I also interrogate my own partial (most often embodied) view and fully realize that I can never fully remove myself from the humanist "I" in any representational structures. Nonetheless, I hope it is within difference— in different events coming together to produce something new—simultaneously lived moments—that will create a reconceptualization of (our)self. Therefore, as I am working through "spirit" conceptually and methodologically, I think it is first necessary to talk a bit about what I mean by the "spirit" and "spiritual." I talk about this in a frame of reference that ontologically speaks to me, but realize that this is not a word, or topic for that matter, that is mutually agreed upon discursively within the context of education or otherwise. As I think back to my interest and connection to the spiritual, for me it has always existed outside the traditional realm of institutionalized religion. Indeed, I am not talking about spirituality as a testament to any faith, but one which acknowledges the intra-actions with the world we may be totally unaware, as well as the embodied, mutual entanglements cultivated in any given moment. However, this was not always the case, as I was raised in a strong Polish Catholic family and my mother was a parochial school teacher for over 30

years. As such, I was raised with very strong Catholic values, went to church every Sunday, and went to all of the CCD classes since I was five until I got confirmed in the 8th grade. And as a side note, I honestly do not know what "CCD" even stands for, but if you are Catholic it meant you went to public school then you went to "Catholic" class every Wednesday night. During high school and college, as I had a little more autonomy about going to church, I did not go often, but still found myself in a Catholic church when I felt I was struggling with something, felt like I was missing something, or altogether felt I should ask for forgiveness. I did this throughout the years but with little sense of release or comfort in church, outside of the "Catholic guilt" instilled in my non-attendance and missed Eucharist. I felt like I constantly questioned Catholicism, my connection to the faith itself, and the role it truly played in my life. Furthermore, Anzaldúa (1987) parallels this sentiment of the Catholic Church and she states, "it and other institutionalized religions impoverish all life, beauty, pleasure . . . religions encourage fear and distrust of life and the body . . . they encourage us to kill off parts or ourselves" (p. 59).

Nevertheless, I knew there was something in connection to the idea of the "spiritual" I was drawn to; I just equated religion to the spiritual. As an adolescent, teenager, and young adult, I pursued this idea of the spiritual outside of the rituals of Catholicism by avidly reading primarily Buddhist and Native American texts. My first two years of undergraduate college, I was a religious studies major, but soon was deterred knowing I would inevitably have to find a job once I graduated and had to pay for any graduate schooling myself. At this point, I gave up on my quest for any transcendence, if indeed and, unbeknownst to me, this was what I was truly looking for! I changed my major to secondary social studies education. I figured this was a way to

further my interest in religious studies via world history electives and I would have a viable career path once I graduated. Once again, my spiritual interest was renewed in my junior year as I enrolled in the Cultural Immersion project in Bloomington and prepared to student teach on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Although it was an experience that I could have never prepared for, and I will be the first to admit I had romanticized visions of what this experience would be, the spiritual component of this journey was one in which I did not expect.

As a matriarchal culture, a few of the Navajo women "adopted" me and thought of themselves as protectors and guides while I was in New Mexico. As I was not the first student teacher out there, this is fairly typical for most students. However, because of the relationships I developed with them, they let me into their world more than most. What this really entailed is opening up about their own culture, their shared beliefs, and also their rituals. I was allowed to participate in some of these rituals, such as birthday ceremonies and a traditional sweat lodge, but what was most interesting were the everyday conversations and walks I took with two women in particular. As Navajo culture (like other Native cultures) is so strongly connected to the land in which they and their ancestors lived, it was in New Mexico where I first experienced a direct connection to the mutually entangled. Of course I did not have the words for it then, and even struggle to find the right words now, this was inherently spiritual. To be fair, this was less of a connection to the spiritual for me than it was to get a glimpse of what "spiritual" may mean outside of normative religious values. I truly was drawn to these stories and the embodied connections to the land, to the animals, and to the people. There was something about this way of thinking, and relationships developed that

expanded notions of binary thinking that has always been alluring to me. To be clear, I am not suggesting that I adopted any of these Native practices or ways of thinking because I do believe that Westernized constructions are not something I can fully remove myself from, but again, I also cannot fully remove these experiences as insightful and revealing either.

After I returned from New Mexico, over the course of the next 15 years, I moved to Chicago and then to Indianapolis as I subsequently taught for 10 years, got married, had two kids, got two masters' degrees, and entered into a PhD program. And, as life got busier and busier, religion, spirituality, etc. took a backseat. Or so I thought. What I now know is the connection for me to the spiritual is a sense of grounding, of inner self-guidance, and a sense of peace and well-being. It is not religion, it is not necessarily a connection to God, but instead a recognizing of the self in relation to embodied everyday practices that give me strength and create spaces for me to interrogate the tensions and contradictions of life. This is my becoming-other and a mutually entangled embodied feminist thought has helped make sense of the mundane. Indeed this is my "unremarkable fabric of everyday life" (Somerville, 2013, P. 46) and how I connect with the world around me, including the transcendent. I offer an example that draw upon two mundane acts I do every day in order to exemplify how I understand the mutually entangled spirit within my own daily experiences.

Entanglements in Writing

As a white woman, I do not claim to understand the experiences of Latina adolescent girls and have the capabilities of interpreting them in an accurate and just way. What I do offer is my onto-epistemological processes that have led me to this

point and why feminist becomings, mutual entanglements, and the spirit encourages "self-becoming-other in the space between the self and natural world" (Somerville, 2007, p. 235). It is with(in) the generative in-between spaces and "flesh in the world" (Somerville, 2014, p. 13) we push the boundaries of what we see as research, as learning, as mental health, as gendered notions of what it means to be women. Finally, I do not necessarily choose post-qualitative research, feminist embodied becomings, spirituality, mutual entanglements, or anything else I have discussed thus far for any other reason than providing a lens in which I "cannot not" think with, and a way of seeing the world that is "in [my] bones." (Childers, 2013, p. 607). I come from this place because this is how I see the world, this is what is in me. These are the generative spaces in which I make sense of the world.

All that being said, this is a fairly new revelation. I had forgotten. In fact, although I do not know how I've ever separated the two, I have never acknowledged my own mutually entangled embodiment and thoughts within my personal worldview. But it has always been there. Indeed, what St. Pierre (1997) calls the "physicality of theorizing," (p. 184) and later describes how she goes for a walk or weeds in order to get "unstuck" when she is deep into a project (St. Pierre, 2015, pg. 91), unearths my own memories. Similarly, Haraway (1991) discusses the lessons learned through walking her dogs (and thinking about their sensory neural processing through smell) that ultimately encourages her own "partial way of organizing worlds" (p. 190). This partial organization fully acknowledges difference and attempts to see from another's point of view through an embodied and situated knowledge instead of "unlocatable" (p. 191) knowledge claims that have a "way of being nowhere while claiming to see

comprehensively" (p. 191). Personally, both of these conceptualizations of the entanglements of theorizing as well as the partiality of knowing have a powerful impact on my own ontological becomings, or at least providing a lens in which to begin thinking about what is already in my life and how I make sense of it in relation to the impact it has on both theory and research. Thus, I have provided an example from my doctoral studies in which I first gravitate towards a certain way of thinking through writing and research. This was not the first time I felt an embodied, entangled connection to writing, however this was something I abandoned years ago.

Approximately two years ago I read Gloria Anzaludúa's (1987). *Borderlands: La Frontera.* As a Chicana woman, Anzaldúa has had many experiences that I do not relate and will never fully understand her experiences or what constitutes the "borders" she inhabits. However, there are pieces in her writing and her work that have never left me, and I still revisit often. For example, I have never forgotten her description of the process of writing. Anzaldúa describes it as a sensuous act in which she is

> picking out images from the 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 the fingers and hand. (p. 93)

Anzaldúa (1987) further describes the process not only as an embodied connection to the soul, she also describes writing as a dark, anxiety producing space. She further reiterates:

> Looking inside myself and my experience, looking at my conflicts, engenders anxiety in me . . . a lot of squirming, coming up against all sort

> of walls. Or its opposite: nothing defined or definite, a boundless, floating state of limbo where I kick my heels, brood, percolate, hibernate and wait for something to happen . . . Then out it comes. No more discomfort, no more ambivalence . . . That's what writing is for me, an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be. (pp. 94-95)

I feel this discomfort now as I write this. Where do I want to go with this? What do I want to say? How deep and vulnerable do I really want to go? How do I claim this sameness in affect, but also represent in my writing that I am drawing upon "self-critical partiality" (Haraway, 1997, p. 192)? By no means do I claim to have the same dark anxieties and offer sameness in feeling and affect nor do I suggest the same written talent as Anzaldúa. She touches upon issues I have never gone through and truly have no understanding, but writing is how I tend "to make things better" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 95), always make things worse, and in-between the better and the worse, I eventually find some meaning.

Thinking diffractively, writing is where both Anzaldúa and I have similar understandings of writing as meaning-making, but from there we diverge. The topics we choose to write about, the connections it makes for us, writing as an onto-epistemological act, writing as grief, writing as redemption are all different, constantly changing, but highlight differences that matter. These differences are an integral part of partial worldview, my privilege, and the power I have in some instances (and not in others). Nonetheless, I am drawn to her words, for Anzaldúa's words offer writing as mutually entangled and always messy, challenging, depressing, cathartic, irrational, and embodied, while fully recognizing how I am differently situate in the world from Anzaldua and the girls in this project.

Until recently, I have all but abandoned this embodied entanglement of writing. I am very naturally a quiet, introspective person who spends a lot of time making sense of things in my head first. Writing is a strength of mine, as it is much easier for me to express myself on paper than it is out loud in a conversation. Although I never lost the connection to writing that helps make sense of my thoughts and my life, I acknowledged the act of writing as a separate and distinct act, even though I made embodied connections to thought and writing my entire life. Indeed, it is the everyday, mundane experiences of my life that I value more than anything and simultaneously do not acknowledge as a part of my onto-epistemological understandings of becoming-other in the world. I think a long time before I ever write a word. I randomly read and then I walk away for a while. I know when I have hit my limit and it is no longer helpful or sometimes "healthy" for me to keep writing. Writing is a creative outlet, but consequently, it is a lot of work on my part. It is an interwoven piece of my existence, but it is not the writing alone. I draw my strength mostly from being alone first, then I have the ability to build relationships with others. Indeed the mutually entangled for me is not solely built upon human relationships, but more in embodied, physical moments for me.

Inspirited Embodiment in the Mundane

As St. Pierre (2015) and Haraway (1997) both allude to, the physicality of theory is deeply embedded in my everyday experiences and helps me ontologically think through "stuck" places. Furthermore, "stuck" places do not just refer to my writing, but to many aspects of my life. I get unstuck by literally making some connection to my own body. I run. Sometimes I am running away and sometimes I am running towards

something, but I always run. I run to escape pain, I run to feel pain, I run to get a hold of my emotions, I run because I feel great. I run to feel better. I run to have clarity. I run to write. Writing and running are inherently interconnected. I cannot do one without the other. These are an interwoven piece of my existence that primarily rely upon my embodied, physical moments. Indeed, there is an intra-action between my body and writing in how I learn, understand, communicate, teach. It is how I make sense of the world. Both writing and running are cathartic, and tortuous, and things I cannot live without. Sometimes I feel like I could run a marathon, the next day I feel like my lungs will explode. Metaphorically, writing is the exact same- I am indelibly running the best race of my life or sure I am about to pass out from exhaustion.

There is a transcendence in both running and writing. I never listen to music when I do either as I feel it is a distraction from the experience. Running is not only beneficial for my health, they are also integral part of my own personal well-being. The physicality of these practices are also interrelated to the entanglement and intra-action between the body, mind, and soul. For example, when I visit a new city the first thing I do is go for a run. It is a great way for me to geographically learn the city, but it is also how I make personal connections to the unknown. When I close my eyes right now, I can remember exactly what a city sounded like, what it smelled like, and how I felt in that moment of running. Alternatively, I can recall the breeze, the salty air, and the densely packed sand under my feet when I run along the beach the last time I went on vacation. At any moment, I can again close my eyes and draw upon the complete calm that comes over my body. Again, I draw upon my breath and my senses to further connect inward. These lone activities help me connect to the rest of the world in ways I

am aware I don't fully understand as they integrate the transcendent and the mundane. The connection to the outside world, the power or (sometimes) wheezing sounds of my breath, and the surge of my heartbeat entangles my emotions and my thoughts. Profoundly spiritual, it creates a space for me to think clearly, to languish emotionally, to introspectively understand myself and my feelings with others. Indeed, running is an embodied spirituality that when I think about it brings a calmness over me, but also discomfort in sharing this intimate, personal, messy, and vulnerable space. Yet even in the discomfort, I fully explore those feelings on my run in order to move on (or deal head on) with them. And then I write.

Again, writing often enters into dark spaces space that challenge conceptions of who I think I am, yet Anzaldúa (1987) suggests the dark spaces move us into those embodied, generative in-between spaces:

> When I write I'm carving bone. It feels like I'm creating my own face, my own heart-- . . . my soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself through my body . . . I ponder the ways metaphor and symbol concretize the spirit and etherealize the body . . . For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have this transformative power, they must arise from the human body—flesh and bone—and from the Earth's body—stone, sky liquid, soil. (pp. 95-97).

As I have previously mentioned, writing can often be tortuous because it is so closely tied to who I am. But it is not all that I am. In fact, by acknowledging the mutual entanglements that Anzaldúa (1987) does so eloquently above, I begin to make sense of my embodied becomings through her words. Nonetheless, I am aware that I can only rely on my nuanced perspective as a result of my interpretation of her words. A perspective from any point of view "can never be known in advance" and has the potential to "promise something quite extraordinary, that is knowledge potent for

constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination" (Haraway, 1997, p. 192). Indeed, my description above is spiritual. Thus, I wrestle with my own desires of fitting in, of being accepted through my words, by the vulnerability of being honest about who I am, how I think, and how I live all the while knowing it is never enough. But it is always a space of becoming that embraces randomness, change, and open-endedness, thus igniting difference over homogeneity of thought and experience.

Intuitive Entanglements of Mental Health and Well-Being

In thinking back to my first experiences of teaching and beginning my career as an educator, I am particularly reminded of my student teaching on the Navajo Indian Reservation and my first year teaching in Chicago. I specifically remember having a sort of hypersensitivity to my students' well-being and very much almost feeling their emotions and affect they carried with them into the classroom. I particularly remember thinking how little I understood in reference to their everyday experiences at home, with their families, and within the communities in which they lived. However, I also remember thinking and having conversations with non-educators that I had no idea how my students could come into the classroom and put aside everything going on in their lives—especially because of the their circumstances of living in poverty, sometimes not eating until they back to school the next morning (Chicago), substance abuse and addiction issues within the home, living in gang-ridden neighborhoods, and playing football next to the old boarding school built by the federal government when they pushed Native Americans onto reservations (New Mexico). For example, one of my students in Chicago had emotional outbursts in the classroom and was getting outside therapy for trauma he

had experienced as a child. I was very drawn to this child because I remember feeling he had already endured so much at a young age, and I intuitively recognized the emotional distress this child was feeling, and in turn, effected his mental health and well-being.

When I was in New Mexico, I knew the history behind the boarding schools and how missionaries would beat Native children if they spoke English, cut off their hair, and would not let them dress in traditional Native clothing. My students also went to boarding schools, but their school and dormitories were all attached and built directly behind the original boarding school. The students would be out playing soccer and tell me about a grandparent that went to the original boarding school (which was now nothing more than a boarded building) and the cruel, often tortuous things done to them while they attended school. It was almost told as an after-thought, but I remember thinking how much that must affect them looking at the school every day and knowing the oppressive history of their people and the impact (if even unconscious) that must have on their well-being.

All of this being said in terms of how mental health and well-being (or the struggles with) have influenced my teaching and career path, I have come to the realization that it is probably important to explore why I recognize, empathize, or have compassion for the emotional toll life can sometimes take on people. Indeed, we are always entangled in our past, as it always impacts the present and the ways in which we move towards the future. My heightened perceptions of affectual and emotional sensibilities in people most likely result in my own experiences with mental health and well-being. Furthermore, although I have never experienced long

bouts of depression and have not been diagnosed with mental health issues, I have watched the effects that depression, suicide, substance abuse, bi-polar disorders, co-dependency, poor coping skills, trauma, death, and anxiety have had on many of the people I love.

Although I am aware this is not unique to just my family, I will say that generally speaking, my family does not handle the stress and tensions of life in healthy ways. At a young age, I understood the emotional impact an ugly divorce between my mother and father can have on three young children. Growing up (middle school into adulthood), I watched a good friend go through diagnosis upon diagnosis of what would turn out to be bi-polar disorder. I remember her staying with us for weeks on end because her mother would be hospitalized with having manic episodes, as she was bi-polar as well. I lost my closest friend in college as a result of an accident. My brother was arrested and served jail time as he was charged with vehicular homicide while drinking and driving. My sister has experienced anxiety for the past few years. My brother's substance abuse and my sister's anxiety are a direct result of the intra-actions of our family dynamic and communication, how they perceive and react to the events of their life, as well as how they situate themselves in the world.

Nonetheless, as I write this and focus on the effects of our collective childhood and entangled relationship as siblings, nearly two weeks ago my husband and I lost a good friend to suicide. And here I am. I do not disclose any of this for any reason except to further understand the entanglements of this work, my own becoming, and the necessity in my commitment to mental health. However, before I

began my dissertation, I would agree with most of my family that I am usually the rational and practical one and am often the confidant in our family. I am the one that can handle the burdens of my family. Yet the girls in this project have opened my eyes to something in myself I was never aware. My strengths, in many ways, contribute to my weaknesses.

Indeed, the entanglement of the girls' stories and diffractively examining my own experiences that acknowledge the irrational, messy, pieces of my life were most easily contained by an embodied sense of control and drive. I don't think I would have ever seen this in myself, and although I see the similarities with myself in the need to display strength and motivation, we vary in "intensity" (Braidotti, p. 1420) as new images of thought arise in all of us and further transformation in ourselves. In particular, Berlant (2011) furthers rhizomatic thinking in understanding trauma as a "habitation of history" (p. 81). For me, the emotional trauma of the situations I described in my family have become ordinary affects for me.

As I was reading Berlant's *Cruel Optimism,* it is as if I was reading my response to my life's events as I would agree that I often remain in a constant state of "crisis mode," always on heightened alert, always extremely intense, and am sure I unconsciously have learned to react this way as a part of my everyday affective existence. I remain in a trauma-induced affective state even in ordinary daily occurrences that have long gone unrecognized. But I also now recognize that life is not about just sameness and difference, but true change occurs when we recognize where the intensity lies for each of us. As our conversations slowly unfold and the trauma in these girls' lives are revealed, I also recognize the mangle in this research

as the trauma in my own life. The mangle of trauma, even though it manifests in different ways in each of our lives, impacts our pursuit of happiness (Ahmed, 2010b), which often ignores our own unconscious biases.

Bias and Misinformed Conceptualizations

Clearly, post-qualitative, feminist theory and method speaks to me and makes a lot of sense in the type of work I would like to do. However, I feel like if that was the only space in which I view this research project, I would be missing much of what informs the girls' worldviews and how they make meaning in their lives. Therefore, a Chicana/Latina feminist perspective becomes essential as it further complicates and illuminates the experiences of these girls in ways that were not a part of my original research proposal.

In some ways, I must have thought a critical feminist perspective was enough, but now fully realize it was a perspective in which I was comfortable in thinking about, talking about, and working through as a researcher. Even in the first couple of sessions as I reflected (or attempted to be reflexive) after our meetings, I would agree that I did not fully take into account the representations of these girls. To me, on the surface I thought these girls "had it together." They were intelligent, articulate, responsible, and caring adolescent girls. From the research I had done and based on the pilot study conducted at the IU School of Public Health, I expected the girls to talk about negotiating cultural worlds and gendered differences in their lives. I expected them to exhibit "typical' behaviors of teen girls, which they did. We talked about boys (all of the girls identified as heterosexual), clothes, prom, etc. To be honest, I am not sure what I expected to find in relation to depression they would

share with me, but I hoped it would be empowering for these girls. It turns out, my conceptualization or empowerment was nowhere near where this journey, literally and metaphorically speaking, would take us.

I write about diffraction (see Haraway, 1997; Barad, 2007) promiscuously feminist research (see Childers, 2013; Huckaby, 2013; Voithoffer, 2013) and rhizomatic thinking (Braidotti, 2001) and the need to think about the possibilities of difference and in meaning-making, yet it is probably the hardest undertaking for me thus far. I'm not sure if it is a natural inclination to want to find similarities with people you are trying to build relationships, or if it just me. In our initial conversations, I thought back to when I was a 16 year old girl and tried to connect with them on that level. I then tried as a former teacher and counselor to connect in experiences I was familiar with in order to get some grounding as I attempted to find my place in this research with the girls and the already established relationship they had with their mentors. Finally, I tried to relate with them on a motherly level. As a mother, I was proud of who they were, how the successfully negotiated school and their families and remained active in the church. They offered a perfect representation of the immigrant rhetoric in this country and who Latina girls should be as first-generation students in the US. They and their parents were successful contributors to society, they were not in trouble with the law, and they were getting an education. They explained this to me in these words when talking about the importance of church:

> Well I think the confidence comes from knowing that there's always going to be somebody that can actually accept you for who you are, and how you are. Of course your parents, they will know that you're going to make mistakes, but it doesn't mean that they're going to stop loving you. So God

> won't stop loving you either if you commit the worst mistake in the world. And that gives you the confidence to even try out new things. They might not always be the best choices that you do, but you could try out for different things. Of course some kids, they go into things, and in the end they'll regret it. But just knowing I'm okay, I still have somebody who loves me, I'm not alone.

Here, the girls spend a lot of time sharing with me how involved they are with the Catholic Church, how it keeps them out of trouble, allows them to make friends with good values, and they will always have someone who loves them no matter what they do. As I mentioned earlier, I am all too familiar with the Catholic religion, and this is what I tended to gravitate towards when the girls talked about church (they were all four actively involved in different churches). However, as I was attempting to relate with these girls, I overlooked a big piece of the role of the Catholic Church, which, in my own partial and situated perspective, I missed completely.

Lather (2009) states:

> Refusing the liberal embrace of empathy that reduces otherness to sameness within a personalized culture, casting doubt on our capacity to know, it refuses the mutuality and dialogue that typify an empathetic approach to understanding. (p. 19)

I also would fully identify with the 'liberal embrace of empathy' as I, again, situated myself as a mother in hearing their border-crossing stories. I couldn't imagine my own kids having this experience as well as being a mother who would sacrifice everything to being their children across the border in very dangerous circumstance. As I tried to align myself in feelings of empathy and compassion, I missed the other assemblages that created this experience for the girls and their families. Thus, self-reflexive subjectivity that often embraces empathy forces "understandable identities [that] overlook identities for the sake of a comforting, self-justifying rush of identification" (p.19) that further

eludes a pluralizing subjectivity. It is in the rest of this chapter that I move away from my own (partial) ontological understandings and explore my entanglements within this project, how it influences my interpretation in writing and in representations of the narrative itself, and finally, the assemblages of power, privilege, and oppression that are always intra-acting forces within research and beyond.

Power, Privilege, and the Problem of Speaking for Others[5]

"It is an illusion that I can separate from others to such an extent I can avoid affecting them" (Alcoff, 2009, p. 127). This quotation is particularly helpful as I think about the role of power within qualitative research, within entangled notions of becoming, and within notions of trust within the research process itself. Therefore in discussing roles of power, privilege, oppression, and trust in relation to my intra-actions as a white, female researcher with these girls, I do so within this frame of thought:

> We are collectively in an intricate, delicate web in which each action I take, discursive or otherwise, pulls on, breaks off, or maintains the tension in many strands of the web in which others find themselves moving also. When I speak for myself, I am constructing a possible self, a way to be in the world, and am offering that, whether I intend to or not, to others, as one possible way to be. (Alcoff, 2009, p. 127)

I would also suggest that as I am constructing myself to these girls, what I think I am putting forth may not be what I am exhibiting at all. This was most visible in our first and second meetings as we were all getting to know one another and we were getting a better understanding of why I wanted to talk to the girls, why their mentors supported my work, and how they were building relationships with one another.

[5] (Alcoff, 2009)

Political Rhetoric

Inevitably, the first relief came when Donald Trump's campaign was mentioned for the first time during our first meeting.

> Donald Trump, I don't really think he knows what he's talking about. If he was in our shoes he wouldn't be saying the same thing.

I say relief because I think this project would have stalled if this political conversation did not take place. I did not audio-record or video-tape this conversation because it was during lunch and I wanted the girls to have time for more casual conversations. I did, however, journal about our conversation afterwards:

> I definitely think this conversation had to happen before the girls could move on. There is no way the girls would begin to open up to me if we did not have a political conversation (and in politics I mean Trump). It began by one of the girls talking about a group of videos that had gone viral where immigration and customs officials came to high schools to detain and deport undocumented students and their families. They were not sure if they were real or fabricated, but regardless, it scared them. What scared them even more was this was happening and Trump wasn't even president yet. It was almost as if Trump's presidency was inevitable. The way the girls talked about the rhetoric behind Trump's campaign was one of fear, anger, and the need to dispel the myths about Mexican immigrants in this country. I also got the feeling they felt most white Americans supported Trump. At this point, they were definitely testing the waters—they wanted to know where I fell politically in terms of immigration, undocumented status, and deportation.

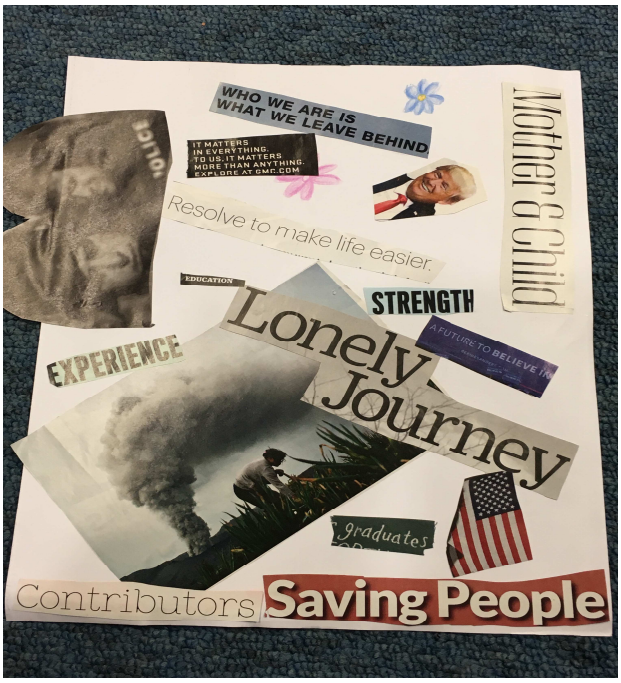
This journal entry gets to the crux of establishing trust with the girls and acknowledges most of the silence they experience in their lives, specifically regarding their border-crossings and their undocumented status. Finally, one of the girls asked what I thought about Trump and whether I supported his stance on immigration and deportation in this country. As I explained to them my thoughts on Trump, I could visibly see the relief on the girls' faces and the smiles on the mentors' faces (the mentors were already aware of

my views on Trump and were smiling because of the girls' reactions to my admission that I would not be voting for Trump in the presidential election).

> There was this woman who said well maybe if they would have crossed legally . . . I can't obviously just pull out this much money so I can get a visa and come here legally . . .

Additionally, the art created by the girl who asked me if I supported Trump is also quite telling in her understanding of political power and how I represent myself not only politically, but in building relationships with these young girls:

Image 4



> Having the ability to carry on those memories, even if they are painful has really helped me and a lot of us [immigrants] to strive to be successful . . . But when you remember the worst has probable already passed . . . we are still together, in the end we're still together [even though] we might not know every immigrant here. But in the end we're all pretty much like a big family, because we've all struggled to survive in a way that people in America just don't understand.

As this was a few sessions after our initial conversation around Trump, we talked about the possibility of his presidency either during lunch or when they were working on their art projects at every single meeting. At this point, she (and the other girls) became more forthcoming about their political positions and the impact it has on their families and community as a whole, which was evident immediately after I disclosed my political position on Trump. From this point on, there was a sense of relief (as I mentioned before), but also a sense of freedom in being able to express themselves in a manner that did not silence their experiences around being an undocumented immigrant in this country. In particular, my disclosure about Trump seemed to portray my interests in a way that may mutually benefit the girls—by *getting the word out.*

An Invitation to Speak for Others

Out of the conversations regarding Trump and his political and social viewpoints came the recognition that

> people in America just don't understand

the experiences and consequences of coming to the US as an undocumented immigrant. Again referencing the art,

> lonely journey and who we are is what leave behind

became a mantra of sorts among the girls as they talked about what they want American to know about them. They all agreed that I was someone who could do that for them because (and I am paraphrasing) I "liked" that immigrants were a part of our country and most of the time they

> can't tell their full story because you just don't know what other people will say about it.

Thus, the girls ended up wanting their stories to be shared to remove the stigma put on undocumented (or documented for that matter) immigrants in this country.

> What I want other people to get out of this is that immigrant is [not] a bad word. People use it as they're doing this, they're stealing this job, or immigrants will do the job better than us [American citizens]. I want them [Americans] to know that it doesn't define who I am . . . We've all struggled to survive in a way that people in America just don't understand. They don't understand how somebody can go through these things at such a young age. They don't understand that it takes a lot of work just to even get through the pain that someone has to go through . . . Just to know that you manage to get all your family together is the biggest and the greatest memory you'll ever have. Don't let them [Americans] say what you're going to be for the rest of our lives. Try to be better than your past.

Clearly, living in the shadows takes a toll on the girls as they live with the emotional pain and trauma of crossing the border, but the trauma is ongoing and always present as they negotiate their lives as undocumented immigrants. They do not feel they can tell their story, but hope that I will be able to at least counteract the stigma that exists in this country, even on the smallest level.

In listening to their conversation and how they talk about feelings of being judged by others and not being able to share their whole selves, Villenas' (2014) Chicana/Latina Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS) creates space to acknowledge agency. I am a conduit to other white, middle class US citizens and can create a different picture about Latino undocumented families and the community as a whole, but particularly about Latina undocumented adolescent girls' experiences. Indeed, this "subtle intervention" (Villenas, 2014, p. 213) is a start and acknowledges the power structures involved in research, but also points to the liminal spaces in which new insights and possibilities are cultivated in understanding Latina subjectivities through the sharing of their experiences with me and with one another. The girls constructed their own spaces, recognized my situated power

as a white woman and researcher, and as a result of my political standing (i.e. anti-Trump) found an ally in their fight to be understood.

Motherly Entanglements

In the second meeting, new insights were discovered through the acknowledgement of power structures between the mothers, the girls, and myself. Again, my goal was to hear the girls talk about (and with) a woman they admired in order to get a better understanding of the values and ideals they respect and would like to emulate in their own lives. I remember an uncomfortable feeling when we first started the conversation. The girls did tell me later they were a little nervous talking with their mothers, but I also think the mothers were initially uncomfortable in talking with me. I say this because at the beginning of our meeting, none of the mothers made eye-contact with me. I also had breakfast out on the table as we talked and neither mother initially touched the food (all of the girls ate immediately). One mother was fluent in both Spanish and English, and she chose to speak in English. The other mothers were fluent in Spanish, so their daughters translated for them. They did speak English, but did not feel confident in the language. This was brought to my attention because one mother in particular apologized numerous times (in English) that she could not speak English very well. The mothers did not know each other beforehand and had a few minutes to meet and talk, which also seemed to alleviate some of the initial uncomfortable feelings.

However, once I introduced myself and explained what we were going to talk about today, the tension resurfaced in the room. I started off by asking the girls why they chose to bring their mothers here and the values they admire as daughters.

> I value her because she is brave . . . because of how she raised me and my six brothers . . . she puts her feelings aside to make us comfortable and

> happy . . . She's my motivation. Every time I feel like I can't do this anymore, I think of my mom. She's the one who gives me strength to keep doing what I'm doing.

Again, the girls were nervous in sharing these things with their moms at first, but once the conversation began, the tension dissipated. After the moms had the opportunity to share what they would like to learn from them, the uneasiness in the room completely lifted:

> I want her to be strong, I want her to be happy. To learn to respect herself in order for everybody to respect her. That's the only way . . . To never lose your values and always value yourself . . . to keep going without losing who you are.

For the rest of the meeting, I did not ask any other questions as part of the protocol, but just allowed the conversation to take place between the mothers and daughters. I asked questions for further explanation or clarification, but the intra-actions of the mothers, the daughters, the mentors, created a place for communication that never existed before our meeting. In fact, all of the mothers and daughters said they had never talked like this before with one another, and the girls said their mothers shared part of their lives they were completely unaware of before this conversation.

> Even though we are close, this somehow made us closer, and knowing a bit more about her [mother]. My mama got to know us a little bit better to and I think it was emotional . . . I had a bonding moment with her that I've been needing for a while. Because you get so distracted with different things in life where you need that moment with your mom. And it comes so unexpectedly. We just expected to come here and talk . . . you didn't expect there to be actually something revealed to you . . . I think it was powerful.

The mothers stayed for lunch and ended up staying for the rest of the meeting. They sat on a set of couches and talked within one another for the remaining two hours. They all thanked me at the end of our meeting. The meeting ended very differently and with much more openness in dialogue than when it began.

Indeed, as power structures existed throughout this meeting, they changed as the conversations changed. In the beginning, I was the researcher who was affiliated with the large university, asked the parents to sign consent forms, and only spoke English. The mothers clearly were uncomfortable with me initially. Once the girls broke the ice and began talking about why they admired their mothers, the *awkwardness* eased a bit. When the mothers began to talk about their daughters, it no longer had anything to do with the questions asked and had everything to do with an affective event. It was an emotional moment for the girls, a proud moment for the mothers (all moms talked about how proud they were of their daughters), and a bonding moment for both. Finally, new, revealing insights manifested within each of the girls' mother/daughter relationships that recognizes agency that was important to them, not Westernized conceptualizations of empowered resistance (Villenas, 2014). In becoming closer to their mothers and having conversations they suggested that they did not have in their homes, mothers and daughters embraced ambiguity in their lives in order to further a solidarity that recognize oppressive structures and simultaneously constructs agency within their family.

Privilege in Citizenship

As I mentioned in chapter two, at the very gentle nudge (or maybe a gentle push), my dissertation chair suggested I talk to an adult who is undocumented in this country and the impacts this has on the girls' lives that they may not even realize at their young age. The young woman I spoke to was a twenty-three year old student at IUPUI who was actively involved in the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance and openly talked about her undocumented status. She gave a lot of insight into the roles of the Catholic Church as a kind of safe-haven for undocumented families. Here, resources were given (as much

as possible) without question, and there was a sense of safety in numbers at primarily Latino Catholic Churches because of families' undocumented status. When the girls spent time talking about the role of the church in their lives (both the positive aspects and the contradictions referenced in chapter four), this was before their disclosure of being undocumented as well as the trauma experienced by crossing the border from the U.S. to Mexico. Thus, I was completely unaware of this relationship at the time, but clearly the church had another role in the girls' lives before they shared they were undocumented. Most likely, I would have never made that connection without speaking with this young lady. For me, this example cautions against positionality that forefronts reflection as a basis for bias in research. In particular, Alcoff (2009) suggests that if we are truly going to interrogate our "location and context on what it is we are saying, this should be an explicit part of every discursive practice we engage in" (p. 129). Therefore, researchers engage collectively with others in order to further understand our situated and partial views that may remain hidden without a nudging from another perspective (Alcoff, 2009).

The collective conversations I had with the undocumented young woman were an invaluable part of the process in order for me to recognize fundamental pieces of the girls' lives that might have remained in the shadows because of my own situated power and privilege.

> What I want other people to get out of this is that, I feel like immigrant is a bad word, because I feel like uses it as its bad. They're doing this, they're stealing this job, or people will get here and do better than us.

She explained the constant trauma of being undocumented that can be dehumanizing for families and the community as a whole. This conversation illuminated pieces of the

conversation I might have overlooked or explained the trauma of their experiences as a result of only the silencing of their border-crossing journeys. Instead, engaging with this young woman explained the impact of being undocumented as another layer of trauma that, in Berlant's (2011) framework, is a natural part of their existence. However, I am not entirely sure the girls realize this yet. For them, the trauma lies in not being able to tell their stories, their journey, and everything their families have endured as a result of being (becoming) in the US. This is, at least, what I gathered from them in our meetings and was reiterated by the undocumented woman I spoke to after our meetings.

> I want them to know that it doesn't define who I am, and it shouldn't define who I am. Because other people, they say they don't know what we've been through. But you're always striving to do better, because you know where you came from, and you know that whatever you've gone through isn't always going to stop you from doing this.

Yet another undocumented layer acknowledges the complexities of these girls' lives that may only be visible as they get older. Engaging with an undocumented woman provides insight into the powerful assemblages that exist that I was not aware of in my partial viewpoint and furthered my understanding of not only where the girls are situated now, but also furthered conversations and implications of being undocumented as they get older.

Although the mentors are not undocumented, they also offered an interesting perspective in which to think about the girls' experiences. They specifically focused on being undocumented currently, in the wake of the political landscape in the US.

> I can imagine not having a good understanding of the political system (which I still don't), and also being undocumented, and being younger, how terrifying.

Without question, this provides yet another layer to undocumented immigrants as the negative rhetoric is particularly strong and particularly targets Mexican immigrants (among others). From my privileged position, I do not have to think about what is going to happen to my kids or my family in terms of being deported or living in a constant state of fear.

> I don't know how parents explain to the kids, or make them feel safe . . . if they support Trump then this is how many people don't like me . . . and don't want me to be here.

Again the powerful assemblages that are created as a result of current dominant ideologies, media, politics, etc. pertaining to immigration in this country is extremely tense, fear inducing, and traumatizing in undocumented communities throughout the country.

> Trump has a way of pushing people back in the shadows.

And although I am aware of the rhetoric, I cannot fully understand the impact it has on the girls and their families. All three of these women helped me to collectively think about my location within these conversations and offer different perspectives in which to think about unearthing silences in a more dialogic, ethical, and equitable approach to research.

In this chapter, I have spent more time on my own positionality than is usually seen in research projects. Often, positionality is included in the "spirit of 'honesty' autobiographical information about themselves, usually at the beginning of their discourse as a kind of disclaimer" (Alcoff, 2009, p. 129). This acknowledges our own embodied understanding and a specified location, but often does not offer a "critical interrogation on what is about to be said" (p. 129). Often, the reader has to do the work

that needs to be done and make the connections to the work presented. As such, I have chosen to interrogate my location in this project with the intent that I do the work that exemplifies the mangle in which we all make sense of the world around us. I do not want my position to become a disclaimer used to acknowledge my own obliviousness, but instead pushes my own accountability and responsibility through an openness in criticism that recognizes all of our entangled notions of what it means to be an undocumented Latina adolescent in this country and the impact it has on our conceptualization of mental health.

CHAPTER SIX: HEADED INTO THE UNKNOWN: THE INTERSECTION OF ENTANGLED ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGIES OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT LATINA GIRLS, MENTAL HEALTH, AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

> It is as if the forces of knowledge and power cannot tolerate difference, the new, the unthought, the outside, and do all that they can to suppress it, force it to conform to expectation to fit into a structure, be absorbable, assimilable, and digestible without disturbance or perturbation. (Grosz, 1995, p. 130)

This chapter begins by framing mental health within a westernized historical context. It is first necessary to understand how mental health has traditionally been examined in order to move past traditional conceptualizations that integrate postcolonial, feminist thought that more closely aligns with the experiences of the girls in this project. Next, I provide a brief review of the literature that explores contributing factors of depression in Latinos, which include acculturation, self-efficacy, and discrimination. I also examine the literature regarding Latina adolescent mental health, including suicide ideation and behaviors, maternal relationships, and the stress involved navigating of cultural worlds. In an effort to construct new knowledge and support the complexities of the girls' lives, I also provide current literature regarding the psychological impact of border-crossing trauma and research on being undocumented in the US. I am particularly interested in implications psychological trauma has in educational institutions, such as the impact it has on academic success, educational attainment beyond K-12 schooling, as well as the toll it takes on well-being. Very little of this research recognizes gendered differences, but when the study allows, I highlight the Latina experience.

Finally, I integrate the girls' words throughout the literature as they do speak to the issues and concerns raised by current research. I do not incorporate their words in the

beginning section as I frame Foucault's (1965) historical analysis on mental health primarily because it was not a focus of our meetings, but it is integral in how Westernized conceptualizations of well-being influence the girls' understanding of themselves within (and between) both US and Mexican cultural ideologies. Also, when discussing the research surrounding therapy and counseling implications for undocumented immigrants, I am also a little lighter than in other sections in incorporating the girls' words when I discuss the research surrounding therapy and counseling implications for undocumented immigrants. This is because I did not counsel the girls nor did I ask about counseling they had received prior to our meetings (only one of the girls had previous counseling, which she openly shared with the group when we collectively discussed definitions of mental health). Additionally, I simultaneously challenge this research to embody the fluid entanglements of becoming that exist in the girls' lives in order for spaces to emerge that nurture creation and transformation. I make this more explicit at the end of this chapter.

Historical Assemblages and Western Conceptions of Mental Health

In *Madness & Civilization*, Foucault (1965) examines mental health from a historical framework that does not focus on past medical and psychiatric contributions that furthered these fields, but instead draws upon an analysis that creates opportunities to think differently about mental health, both historically and presently (Barchilon, 1965). Foucault retraces the disappearance of leprosy from the Western world by the end of the Middle Ages. He highlights leprosy as an exemplar of diseases that warranted both rites of purification and exclusion. Indeed, leprosy did disappear, but this was most likely a result of physical segregation as well as the end of the Crusades and interaction with the East, both possible sources of infection. Nonetheless, exclusion was not just physically

removing lepers outside city walls, it also reinforced social implications of lepers were seen as "fearful figures" (Barchilon, 1965, p. 6) that can only reach salvation through abandonment and exclusion. Thus, as leprosy disappeared, the structure of dealing with the mentally ill remained "essentially that major form of a rigorous division which is social exclusion but spiritual reintegration" (p. 7).

During the Renaissance, spiritual reintegration was also masked in exclusions as madmen[6] were housed on boats (Ship of Fools) with criminals and others who warranted exile as they floated up and down the rivers in Europe. No treatment was given to madmen and there was little interest in cure. Instead, madness was viewed as interesting and often articulated as the death of the mind, or folly (unreason), which alluded to,

> Stigmatizing vices and faults as in the past, no longer attribute them all to pride, to lack of charity, to neglect of Christian virtues, but to a sort of great unreason for which nothing, in fact, is exactly responsible, but which involves everyone in a kind of secret complicity. (Foucault, 1965, p. 13)

Here, madness and unreason replaced the leper and furthered segregation and subhuman characteristics of the mentally ill. Madness, then, is not represented with "truth and the world," but instead points towards "man and whatever truth about himself he is able to perceive" (p. 27).

By the middle of the seventeenth century, or the classical period, confinement became standard procedure in dealing with the mentally ill. Confinement was enacted through hospitals or houses of confinement, "establishments of religion or public order, of assistance and punishment, or governmental charity and welfare measures" (Foucault, 1965, p. 43). Confinement during this time also helped organize many of society's ills

[6] 'Madmen' and 'madness' are the terms Foucault (1965) uses in reference to the mentally ill and mental illness in *Madness & Civilization*. Male (man, madmen, etc.) references used throughout his book also refer to both genders.

beyond madness, which included poverty, unemployment, moral (religious) obligations, etc. Thus, madness was no longer exiled, segregated, and excluded, but instead, obligation was established in which basic human rights were met (i.e. food and shelter), and physical and moral restraint was inscribed through forced labor and increased economic gains. Finally, what came with confinement of madness was shame.

Confinement hid madness and unreason and kept it at a distance in an attempt to organize it. Insanity, however, embodied discipline, punishment, and brutalization. In the eighteenth century, madness was reduced to animalistic behavior that "dispossess man of what is specifically human in him" (p. 74), thus inscribing madness to "inhuman" (p. 75) practices of confinement. Madness endures cold, chains, cages, darkness, whipping, and other bestial forms of confinement. Also during the eighteenth century, passions and delirium begin to provide explanations for madness. Passions and delirium include the desire to maintain control in relation to being overcome with emotion and corporeal vices, which included eating or drinking in excess and connected the mind, body and spirit. Foucault (1965) further stated:

> Passion continued to be the meeting ground of the body and soul (p, 86) . . . If it is true that there exists a realm in the relations of soul and body, where cause and effect, determinism, and expression still intersect in a web so dense that they actually form only one and the same movement which cannot be disassociated except after the fact; if it is true that prior to the violence of the body and the vivacity of the soul, prior to the softening of the fibers and the relaxation of the mind, there are qualitative, as yet unshared kinds of *a priori* [emphasis in original] which subsequently impose the same values on the organic and on the spiritual, then we see that there can be diseases such as madness which are from the start diseases of the body *and* soul, maladies in which the affection of the brain is of the same quality, of the same origin, of the same nature, and finally, as the affection of the soul. (p. 88)

Thus, the body, mind, and soul were not split from madness as they were in constant communication with one another and were inherently interconnected in both madness and sanity. Passion is still recognized as the rational unity of body and spirit, and when it becomes irrational and no longer resembles reason, delirium begins to take hold and creates the "cycle of non-being" (p. 93).

Delirium is described during the classical period as that of "both body and soul, of both language and image, of both grammar and physiology that all cycles of madness conclude and begin" (p. 101). As a result, aspects of madness in classical thought were recognized as mania and melancholia and hysteria and hypochondria. These aspects were thought to be maladies of the body, mind, and soul. In particular, madness became gendered and women were thought to be more prone to particular types of madness, such as melancholia, as it was often described as a malady of "feeble agitation," "without power or violence," (p. 122) and was often characterized by embodied immobility (i.e. thickened blood in the brain, retention of nervous system fluids which causes fatigue, etc.). Hysteria was often a female malady as well as it was perceived an "internal heat" that spread throughout the entire body and had an "effervescence" (p. 139) that manifested in convulsions and spasms. Furthermore, "this heat [was] related to the armorous ardor with which hysteria was so often linked, in girls looking for husband and in young widows who lost theirs" (p. 139). Hysteria was also linked to the womb and menstruation. In order to restore a sense of sanity, it is necessary to restore the mind, body and soul. Treatments and therapy existed during the classical period, but towards the end of the eighteenth century, caring for the soul was no longer a priority, as the focus became on the body and mind.

However, moving into the nineteenth century, madness becomes a pathology in which the recognition of truth behind mental illness is now possible through scientific experiments and positivist inquiry. Thus, the classical understanding of madness that acknowledged body, mind, and soul became a "strictly moral perception of madness" (p. 197) that furthered the need for a cure. A moral perception of madness created fear around unreason as it (for the first time) became visible within society and was "marked now by an imaginary stigma of disease which added its power of terror" (p. 205). Indeed, Foucault (1965) suggests the irrational terror behind madness and the confusion it caused was a result of misunderstanding leprosy and the confinement of unreason. Particularly in modern culture, confinement protected, segregated, and served as a social function, while fear and unreason simultaneously grew and marked the end of confinement and the beginning of imprisonment.

Throughout the history and evolution of madness and mental health, churches reinforced moral perception of madness as a protectors and nurtures of salvation and in disciplining the insane. However, in modern conceptualizations, religion is often considered the means to a cure. Indeed, "religion constitutes the concrete form of what cannot go mad; it bears what is invincible in reason . . . Religion safeguards the old secret of reason in the presence of madness (p. 244). Religion is central to the birth of the modern-day asylum as it refocused the fear of madness into a morality of unreason through punishment. With the asylum, fear dissipates and good sense acknowledges truth, and morality that shifts madness:

> The madman, as a human being originally endowed with reason, is no longer guilty of being mad; but the madman, as a madman, and in the interior of that disease of which he is no longer guilty, must feel morally responsible for everything within him that may disturb morality and

> society, and must hold no one but himself responsible for the punishment he receives. (p. 246)

The science of mental disease also develops within the asylum in an attempt to organize, classify, and observe madness. Furthermore, Foucault (1965) suggests a patriarchy of madness is "revived around the bourgeois family" (p. 253). In other words, mental health in the name of science is situated within a dominant, patriarchal framework that clearly inscribes power and authority over the patients who enter the asylum, such as women and the poor. Furthermore, the asylum was organized so the madman knew he was constantly being "watched, judged, and condemned" (p. 267), punished, and made aware of his guilt. Thus, current conceptualizations of madness are "imprisoned in a moral world" of silence in which there is no freedom or release.

Foucault's (1965) analysis of *Madness in Civilization* provides a framework in which current Western models of mental health derived as a direct result of historically dealing with madness through confinement, punishment, moral obligation, fear, and guilt. Madness also represents social constructions of mental health and illness that exist on the margins and further silence, stigmatize and literally segregate human beings from the rest of society based upon a positivist, pathological framework that reinscribes patriarchal power and authority. Thus, as I discuss current literature pertaining to Latina adolescent mental health specifically in reference to depression, trauma in border-crossing, and trauma in undocumented status, Foucault sets the stage on which to critically challenge current understandings of mental health, especially for women and girls. In particular, women were reduced to embodied understandings of madness that include weakness, fragility, and hysterical behavior. Modern, positivist conceptualizations have changed a bit surrounding women and mental health, but they still revolve around a "cycle of non-

being" (p. 93) instead of a process of becoming. Nonetheless, Westernized mental health is historically entangled within the current research that exists around Latina adolescent mental health, the silence and stigma concerning depression, and the ways in which we think about mental illness and approach therapeutic interventions as a society broadly and specifically within educational institutions. Thus, Foucault (1965) provides a lens in which to acknowledge the complexities of the assemblages of power, history, and socially constructed understandings of mental health that inform the current research regarding Latina adolescents.

Finally, as Foucault (1965) situates Western perspectives of mental health, 'parallel genealogies of thought' (further the mangle of well-being for Latina adolescents that recognize Mexican values around mental health alongside, within, and in-between Western understandings. For example, Mexicans often handled mental illness through *Espiritualismo* (Hernandez-Wolfe, 2011) that is often connected to spiritual healing practices, such as the use of herbal medicines. Other traditional Mexican values that may contradict Westernized therapeutic approaches to mental health include familism, religiosity, and fatalism. Familism plays an important role in traditional Latina values as it suggests all problems and issues should be kept within the family and not shared with others in an effort to avoid shame on the family. Religiosity (which is primarily Catholicism in Mexico) instills the belief in God and prayer as a method in healing. Similarly and reinforced by religiosity, fatalism suggests people have little control over their lives (Ramos-Sanchez & Atkinson, 2009). Therefore, the pathways to care for Latinas are further complicated as they negotiate between Western conceptualizations of

mental health and traditional Mexican values of approaching well-being. I spend some time exploring this entanglement further later in this chapter.

What is Recognizable, What is Already Known[7]

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the literature that exists surrounding Latino depression and anxiety as well as coping strategies that have been empirically examined. Below, I highlight either causal or inferential triggers of depression depicted in Latino adolescents and have organized them into the most prevalent themes throughout the research. The most frequently cited triggers of depression for Latina(o) adolescents are acculturation, self-efficacy, and discrimination. This research was most evident in both boys and girls, and was most often discussed as Latino adolescents as a whole. Research that focused specifically on Latina adolescent girls is most often presented within the context of Latina suicide and ideation, maternal relationships, and balancing different cultural worlds, specifically in the conceptualization of *marianismo.* Therefore, this section provides a brief thematic discussion of depression and anxiety generally referencing the Latino population as a whole and moves into research specifically pertaining to Latina girls.

Latino(a) Depressive Risk Factors and Coping Strategies

Acculturation. Zayas & Pilat (2008) suggest acculturation and acculturative stress, which they define as the process of adapting to a new culture and adopting the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the new culture while still maintaining elements of their traditional culture, may contribute to suicidal behaviors in Latina adolescent girls. Lorenzo-Blanco et. al. (2012) add to the research as they indicate the risk for depression

[7] St. Pierre, 2015, p. 85

and suicidal behavior increases by acculturative stress, where Perez, Dawson, and Suarez-Orozco (2011) further suggest the relationship of acculturation and depressive symptoms induces stress as a "result between the person and environment and is influenced by the resources available to the individual" (p. 431). Perez et. al. (2011) also suggest that higher levels of acculturation lead to increased rates of depressive symptoms as adolescents try to balance their lives of incorporating their new culture along with their traditional values, which are instilled and maintained within their family structure. Furthermore, there are varying levels of acculturation that family members experience, thus having different integration and assimilation outcomes that can both positively and negatively influence Latina(o) mental health.

> Cultures are different . . . it is difficult because you have two different cultures.

Further research (see De Haymes, Martone, Munoz, & Grossman, 2011) indicates acculturative stress reveals itself by affecting physical health, decision-making, occupational functioning, role entrapment (i.e. stereotypes and expectations imposed by the dominant culture), strained and ineffective counselor-client relations (when seeking counseling services), lack of role models within the Latino community, and minimal rewards for learning English.

Although acculturative stress may take on many symptomatic forms, Gonzales, Deardorff, Formoso, Barr, and Barrera Jr., (2006) suggest it most often is attributed to differences between parent-child acculturation levels when parents retain their traditional values more than their children. Thus, values surrounding parenting practices are often influenced by varying levels of acculturation by the parents, a clash of values and expectations between parent and teens ensues, and this is often hard to resolve.

> I think we went to more of the American culture . . . girls are supposed to have lives. If we were in Mexico it would be different. Quinceanera's [in America] is the girl with her friends, partying, but my parents wanted it as traditional as they could . . . [I am] thankful for those things.

In particular, the mothers are often the primary disciplinarians with Latina adolescents, and consequently, this can create conflict and tensions within the mother-daughter relationship. For Latinos who have family members still living in Mexico, family cohesion directly influences levels of acculturative stress experienced by immigrants. Additionally, Dillon, De La Rosa, and Ibanez (2012) found this tended to be particularly evident in Latino families as they highly value the loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity accompanied by close relationships with both nuclear and extended families. Nonetheless, another study (Driscoll & Torres, 2013) suggests Latina(o) adolescents who reported high active coping skills exhibited lower severity of depression symptom severity compared to Latina(o)s who reported low active coping skills. However, many of these coping resources are situated within white American cultural frameworks and do not necessarily focus on Latino cultural characteristics such as emotion-focused coping and family support (*personalismo* and *familismo).*

> She gives me strength to keep on going . . . we [girls] are very emotional about things and I know you've tried to give me and give our family everything we've wanted.

As such, a more nuanced understanding of the interrelationships of acculturative stress and coping resources would further clarify the association between of which acculturative stress and depression and how coping styles influence the relationship between the two.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is also referenced in reducing depressive symptoms in Latina(o) adolescents, as it emphasizes "cognitive beliefs and expectations that one will successfully overcome obstacles and challenges" (Driscoll & Torres, 2013, p. 374).

> You have to be proud because you are you . . . It makes me very strong, everything we went through . . . I did this for myself . . . I'll never forget where I came from.

Thus, self-efficacy focuses on internal self-regulation such as self-reflection and planning that may help regulate cognitions that influence cognitive stressors and are perceived as threatening. However, this particular study also suggests that high levels of coping actually reduced depressive symptoms more so than self-efficacy (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Nonetheless, self-efficacy and resiliency are often cited as cognitive resources associated with lowering acculturative stress and may further mediate the influence of discrimination on depressive symptoms (Umana-Taylor and Updegraff, 2007).

Discrimination. Torres, Driscoll, and Voell (2012) cite discrimination as another factor that has a deleterious impact on Latino adolescent mental health. Indeed, Latina(o)s who value acculturation experience more psychological problems in perceived discrimination because they have a stronger desire to be a part of the mainstream US culture. This places acculturated Latinos at a higher risk in experiencing discrimination than Latinos who choose to maintain traditional cultural values.

> I think it's really hard right now for young people because there are so many stress[es] at school and with friends. They push them to do or to act in different ways than they act at home, just because they dress different, or they decide to have a religion, or they decide not to be intolerant. Some [youth] may be bullied because they think we're weird, or they're like, why are your parent so strict? And they don't realize it's a part of our culture, and our values. We value our kids no matter if it's men or women.

Discriminatory practices may also arise as a result of language barriers due to American society's expectations of assimilation. In other words, the stronger the desire to "fit in" to (in this case) US culture, the more acculturative and psychological stress

Latina(o)s who have not yet achieved fluency in English experience. Furthermore, Ferdman, and Gallegos (2001) suggest discrimination may also be experienced due to race, particularly in the variations of skin color among Latina(o)s. Indeed, with the heterogeneity among Latina(o)s in terms of both ethnic and racial backgrounds, there are a multitude of ways in which they identify themselves, and thus multiple levels of perceived discrimination among Latina(o)s. Therefore, discrimination against Latino youth and adolescents may result from both environmental conditions as well as individual characteristics, such as identity and self-esteem.

> It makes me really upset because I want you to like me for me . . . I am my own person. Just because we are twins doesn't make us the same.

Finally, Russell and Doucette (2012) cite acculturative stress, stigmatization, and discrimination as socially constructed based on social status and treatment within the US. Nonetheless, these factors contribute at varying levels to poor mental health (Umana-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

Latina Adolescent Mental Health

As Latina adolescents are at very high risk for depressive and suicidal ideation and behaviors, little research is specifically devoted to their experiences. Some of the quantitative research categorizes findings between genders, but most is presented together. Below are the current discussions surrounding Latina adolescent mental health that directly addresses gender differences within the Latino community.

Latina suicide ideation and behavior. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), Latina adolescents have the highest rates of suicidal ideation, plans, and behavior as compared to other adolescent ethnic/racial and gender groups in the country The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010) also reports

13.5 percent of Hispanic females in grades 9 through 12 admitted attempting suicide and even more experience depressive symptoms. However, Zayas and Pilat, (2008) suggest the reasons for these high rates of depression and suicide are empirically unknown, and most often, they are attributed to a "complicated convergence of forces—developmental processes, social and peer groups factors, cultural traditions and bicultural challenges, unique individual characteristics, and family dynamics and relations" (p. 335). According to Zayas and Pilat (2008), relatedness and autonomy are particularly difficult for Latinas as they struggle between developing their own independence from the family (i.e. parents) and their desire to also maintain their connection to them. This tension is often derived from traditional cultural values associated with gender and the family structure itself.

> Values should be the same for boys and girls . . . but girls get more things . . . girls need hair ties, ribbons . . . I'm a little bit more spoiled . . . they [brothers] don't complain about what they don't have but they don't get the same kind of attention that I get.

In return, intrapersonal conflict such as confusion and guilt manifest and cause psychological turmoil. On the other hand, the Surgeon General's Report (2001) on mental health suggests there are many diagnostic and testing issues that do not take into account culturally responsive recognition, diagnosis, and therapy for Latinos. Therefore, factors related to mental health are not always well-researched or understood.

Maternal relationships. Often, Latina girls have greater responsibilities and roles in the family as compared to boys, and therefore, spend more time supporting and meeting family obligations (Umana-Taylor& Updegraff, 2007). According to these authors, this can often cause conflict and tension within the family unit as teenage girls still have the desire for recognition and validation from their mothers.

> I value my mom the most. I feel like she's the one that I respected most out of everybody in my life. Mainly because of how she raised me, and how you [the other girls] have gone through a lot of stuff, and the hard stuff . . . for me and my six brothers, which makes us seven. All of the kinds of abuses she went through . . .

Indeed, these studies show that the more support given to daughters, the more successful daughters were in school (adaptive school functioning) and the higher their grades. Umana-Taylor and Updegraff (2007) further suggest Latina girls in particular who displayed mutuality in maternal relationships exhibited higher self-esteem and positive coping, while lowering levels of depression and suicidal behavior. Therefore, Turner, Kaplan, and Badger (2006) recommend treatment programs for Latina girls that focus on the relationship between mothers and daughters. They state furthermore that if the mother feels supported then she will be more empathetic and supportive of her daughter, which increased overall mother-daughter well-being.

Between cultural worlds. Gulbas and Zayas (2015) describe research specific to Latina adolescents suggests these girls reside between two cultural worlds. Throughout their daily experiences, they are constantly receiving contradictory messages about their engendered identities, which often contributes to simultaneous feelings of isolation and lack of meaningful connections with others.

> Every girl has thoughts in her mind about boys, and I can't discuss those kind of things with my dad and he thinks' it's very inappropriate to discuss boys with your friends. But of course I do it at school.

Thus, they are unable to obtain resources that support their subjective needs. Manago, Brown & Leaper (2009) provide an example of Latina adolescents straddling cultural worlds through the concept of feminism and how they make sense of who they are as women in relation to white adolescent girls and women. The authors suggest as a result

of more discrimination in their lives, Latinas may be drawn towards structures that oppose inequalities, such as feminism. However, feminism may manifest itself differently for Latina girls and women than for White girls and women.

For example, *Marianismo* (the Catholic ideal of virginal, martyring mother) does not strive to gain personal achievement, but instead fosters dependence on men in maintaining traditional family roles. By Western feminist standards, this may seem in direct contrast to aspects of feminism that focus on women's individual rights. Consequently, this could lead to negative perspectives of feminism in Latina adolescents and women, specifically because *Marianismo* idealizes (or essentializes) feminine qualities in which women are united with other women to support men and families. This depiction focuses on cohesive ties within the family, as well as strong bonds between mother and daughter. Furthermore, *Marianismo* inscribes a strong sense of female empowerment through support and equality among women.

> This girl at church was always smiling and trying to be nice . . . we found out that she needs help from the church too. We connected with her because . . . we were going through similar things,

but is also in direct contrast to the Western concepts of feminism that support individualism as empowerment (Manago, Brown, & Leaper, 2009). However, in Martinez and Meijia's (2015) qualitative study, two young Latinas suggest that feminism provides a lens in which to make connections between their individuality, their relational understandings, and the impact *Marianismo* had on the acculturative process they experienced growing up. Ultimately, they felt they were able to "blur the borders" (p. 28), acknowledging their own subjective intersections as they move between their homes, their families, American culture, and their own conceptualizations of feminism.

As I highlight three studies in particular that begin to think about the intersectionality of being female, Latina, and the pressure of meeting Western cultural norms, much of the discussion within this research is an afterthought. Furthermore, the conversation focuses on implications for future research and/or limitations of the project itself, as it does not directly address the nuances and complexities of the girls' lives (see Gulbas and Zayas, 2015; Manago, Brown, & Leaper, 2009; and Martinez & Meijia, 2015). Furthermore, Gulbas and Zayas (2015) suggest the integration of Latina girls' *being* as important to mental health, particularly depression and suicide, yet I am looking towards Latina becomings. Thus, I integrate the impact of both crossing the border from Mexico to the US and the ramifications of undocumented immigration as traumatic entanglements in the girls' lives that expand notions of acculturation, self-efficacy, and maternal relationships, to name a few. Finally, I am focusing on both Latino immigration and border-crossing specific to Mexico. However, as most mental health research is not specifically characterized by country, research regarding mental health pertains to immigrants of other nationalities as well.

Latino Border-Crossing, Trauma, and Mental Health

The National Center for Child and Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (2009) addresses mental health and trauma care to immigrant Latino families by incorporating cultural, socioeconomic, environmental, and political facets that are a part of these families' daily experiences. The NCTSN specifically focus on the US-Mexico border region, but do suggest Latino immigrant families in any location face:

> identity concerns, challenging socioeconomic and environmental conditions, vulnerability to trauma, stress, substance abuse disorders, depression, and other psychiatric disorders, and multiple barriers to obtaining needed treatment. (p. 5)

In particular, identity is a constant challenge of immigrant families because they often feel like they do not fit in with either culture.

> I started listening to rock music. And what I hated most, because my mom would [say] that's from the demons. It's not from the demons, if you listen to the lyrics you will get it. What I hated even more is I couldn't be who I really was.

Mexican culture often views immigrants as becoming too "Americanized," while American culture pushed them toward assimilation, and therefore, they never fully embrace them either and many experience discrimination from American citizens. Also, as mentioned above, discriminatory practices are related to poor mental health outcomes among Latino communities (Torres, Driscoll, & Voell, 2012). When dominant US values are adopted, immigrants may often feel guilt or shame in losing their cultural identity (NCTSN, 2009).

In addition, socioeconomic conditions, such as poverty, lack of resources, drug trafficking, violence, and the physical events of border-crossing also impact the mental health of immigrants. Poverty and lack of resources for Latino immigrant families may vary depending on where they are located within the US, but even Latinos who are US citizens often do not receive the same educational attainment and equal wages compared to native-born Americans citizens. Moreover, many immigrants who make the journey may experience trauma as a result of violent experiences, such as rape, crime, and seeing others murdered. Often, immigrant youth understand the dangers of making the journey to the US, but feel like the risks are lesser than the ones if they stay.

> They [Mexican drug cartels] will literally take young girls and put them in prostitution . . . sex trafficking. Or the drug cartel too. They threatened to kill a woman unless she delivered drugs. She had to wrap it in plastic and eat it. And of course the police caught her and they found it inside her. They also kidnap you and somebody has to pay for you . . . Most kids quit

> school. We have to pay for school. We have two cousins that quit school and I think he does drugs, he drinks . . . There is no government in Mexico . . . The violence . . .

Unaccompanied minor immigrants experience even higher levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This can be attributed to the journey itself and it is also a result of children being separated from their parent(s) (Collier, 2015).

> We had some trouble with her . . . my mom had to pay her a lot more money so she could bring us [even though they already paid once]. She was just looking for more money . . . it was a scam.

However, they do not seek therapeutic help in fear of being deported. Feelings of loneliness, isolation, and depression are symptoms associated with traumatic experiences (NCTSN, 2009).

Kramer and Lu (2009) further suggest Latino families do not seek out therapeutic help often because of the stigma associated with mental health illness. In fact, the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (2001) suggests stigma is a critical issue among Latino communities and is quite subtle as it often derives out of a lack of knowledge or understanding of Westernized mental health practices. Stigma is also reinforced through negative stereotypes of Latino immigrants in the media and the community, and often manifests in both conscious and unconscious processes (Kramer and Lu, 2009). Finally, stigma increases as a result of immigration and acculturation experiences. Immigrants immediately enter the US with different cultural values, language, economic, immigrant status, and social stressors that may cause any person to feel marginalized. Mental illness may further isolate Latino immigrants and "make the one feel more devalued both intrapsychically and in the context of family and

community" (p. 8). Therefore, mental health stigmatization and lack of therapeutic care contributes to immigrant experiences of trauma.

Such stigmas and traumas may lead to immigrants experiencing four stages of trauma. Premigration trauma recognizes the events that occurred that lead to the decision to relocate to another country. Premigration trauma often results in anxiety around learning a new language.

I'm so sorry I do not speak English good.

Many immigrants also do not talk about the circumstances regarding the border-crossing journeys or their need for a safer environment. In mental health settings, immigrants barely speak "fearing clinician/institutions as representatives of the group in power, shamefully experiencing themselves as the beleaguered 'other, and sometimes hiding their illegal alien status" (Perez Foster, 2001, p. 155). The second stage identifies the traumatic events experienced en route to the new country. Crossing borders are often very dangerous and even deadly. For women in particular, the journey may involve sexual assault and forced labor as payment for "coyotes" escorting them across the border.

> [For] my mother it was really bad. She was crossing with my uncle . . . and some coyotes will try to molest women . . . my uncle had to say she was his wife so they wouldn't do anything to her.

The third stage of trauma includes the experiences of resettlement. Immigration and resettlement in the host country is not always welcoming, as living conditions and lack of social networks contribute to psychological distress.

> My dad lost both of his parents [while he was in the US]. His mom died . . . and it was hard for him . . . because he couldn't go back to Mexico and . . . even go to her funeral.

Furthermore, many immigrants feel isolated and alone, which compounds their distress. Finally, the fourth stage of trauma acknowledges substandard living conditions in the new country as a result of unemployment, lack of resources, and discriminatory factors (Perez Foster, 2001).

> It's hard for them [parents] to have to pay the rent, to have to buy us clothes, to buy us food, to feed us . . . They still have debts to pay [border-crossing debts to coyotes].

Consequently, unsafe conditions and exploitation contribute to other types of psychological distress.

Both children and adults who do not feel safe in their homes and communities are more likely to try tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs and develop substance abuse issues. However, Latino youth are at higher risk than youth of other races for psychiatric disorders (NTCSN, 2009). In particular, Latino youth are more likely to express feeling feel sad or hopeless than White or Black students; they are also more likely to report attempting suicide than White or Black students; and Latino youth are more likely to report developing eating disorders compared to White and Black students (Eaton et al., 2006 in NCTSN, 2009). Although risk for psychiatric disorders is higher among Latino youth, access and availability of treatment is minimal due to either illegal status, lack of resources or both. In fact, immigrant mothers with US-born children will not seek public assistance for fear of detection, not realizing the resources available to them, or fear it may impact their application for citizenship (Padilla, Radey, Hummer, & Kim, 2006). There is often an intimidation factor involved in using US service systems, and often, consistent therapeutic treatment is difficult due to instability resulting from poverty, violence, and other socioeconomic factors, including undocumented status.

I don't know why, but she [mom] never got help for depression.

Undocumented Immigration and Mental Health

It is estimated that almost 80 percent of undocumented immigrants in the US arrive from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, although Mexicans comprise the largest group of undocumented immigrants in this country as 81.4% of the 37.4 million Latinos living in the US, which is about 4 percent of the total US population (US Census, 2007). As a result of discriminatory policies within the US, there little possibility for immigrants to receive legal status and other benefits, such as legal residency and social services (Abrego, 2014).

> The consequences of taking any immigrants out, they [Americans] don't understand your state's going to run out of work. The people who actually have papers get the good jobs, but somebody has to do the lower jobs no one else wants to.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) (2016), undocumented immigrants often experience, racial profiling, ongoing discrimination, exposure to gangs, immigration raids in their communities, arbitrary stopping of family members to check document status, being forcibly taken or separate from their families, returning home to find their families have been taken away, placement in detention camps of the child welfare system, and deportation. Furthermore, undocumented immigrants experience harsh, dangerous, and demanding working conditions that pay well below minimum wage.

According to the APA Task Force on Immigration[8] (2011), undocumented children and families may experience "anxiety, fear, depression, social isolation, and lack

[8] The American Psychological Association Task Force on Immigration (2011) is a report that 1) raises awareness about the increasing immigrant population; 2) derives evidence-informed recommendations for

of sense belonging" (APA, How does being undocumented negatively affect well-being? section, para. 3). Children who have been separated from their parents (i.e., unaccompanied, detained, deported) are particularly traumatized, experience withdrawal, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, anger, anxiety, and depression. In the long term, psychological distress can lead severe consequences and manifest in "post-traumatic stress disorder, poor identity, difficulty forming relationships, feeling of persecution, distrust of institutions and authority figures, acting out behaviors and difficulties in school" (APA, How does being undocumented negatively affect well-being section, para. 3).

Furthermore, the NCTSN suggests undocumented immigrants often experience guilt and shame as they consistently experience discrimination that may lead to depression and anxiety. Stereotypes are also consistent and unfavorable among undocumented immigrants and include images of Mexicans (in this example) as "lazy, oversexed, immature, aggressive, impulsive, dirty, and untrustworthy" (NCTSN, 2009, p. 7). When these stereotypes are internalized, especially among youth, self-hate and self-esteem are greatly impacted. The NCTSN suggests that achieving biculturalism is the best approach in supporting undocumented immigrant families because it addresses ethnic cultural pride as well as integrates the language, customs, and skills of the dominant culture. Within this framework, therapists can help families acculturate by 1) drawing attention to value difference; 2) contextualizing the differences; 3) reframing the presenting problem; and 4) previewing future family patterns. This helps families

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mental health services to immigrants; and 3) makes recommendation to improve education, research, practice, and policy affecting immigrants. I cite this report initially, but as it is entirely available online, anything referenced by APA throughout the rest of this paper comes out of the APA Task Force on Immigration Report. I cite the specific website for easier reference.

become aware of specific issues, how to normalize conflict in order to understand the choices available, and it allows families to visualize their responses to the challenges they face. Nonetheless, Cervantes, Mejia, and Mena (2010) suggest little psychological research addresses a comprehensive understanding of the emotional consequences of families immigrating to the US without any legal documentation.

> People get fakes . . . you pay someone to give you a social security number, even if it's not yours. You can get food stamps . . . but it takes a lot more work compared to just an American citizen that needs money because they don't have enough.

Therefore, the authors suggest it is important to recognize the unique experiences of each undocumented family and to avoid overgeneralizations about migrant histories.

In terms of implications for counselors working with undocumented students, Cervantes et al. (2010) suggest a comprehensive assessment including background and contextual information while building a trusting relationship in order for families to feel comfortable talking about issues pertaining to their immigration status. They also state, as part of the therapeutic process, that therapists should communicate in Spanish and integrate the cultural traditions and values of the students. Third, as a result of psychological distress associated with living in poverty and other oppressive forces, the therapist should acknowledge the family's strengths and resources. Fourth, as border-crossings can be violent and traumatizing, the therapist should not focus on the event itself, but how the journey affected the life of the client. Fifth, it is important to understand what the families left behind in their native country in order to pay attention to the separation, loss, and even mourning of their past. Therapists should also be aware of the unique stigmatizing factors undocumented immigrants face, such as limited English. As relationships change and develop among families once they get settled in

their host country, this may also cause stress as family dynamics change, so the therapist should be aware of these interpersonal dynamics as well (i.e. divorce, (re)marriage, blended families). Ninth, if a family decides to disclose their undocumented status, this may also cause stress and anxiety. Finally, therapists must remain ethical, professional, and culturally competent regardless of personal perspectives on undocumented immigrants belonging in this country.

Undocumented Status, Immigration, and Education

Abrego (2014) suggests Latino adolescents' educational success is crucial for Latino immigrants in order to achieve upward mobility in the US. In her study, she found that undocumented status become more apparent after high school, as educational expenses make college inaccessible for many undocumented youth. (they are ineligible for federal financial aid) However, US values and expectations are internalized as "they equate academic success to economic rewards and stability" (p. 327), which contradicts everything they were subsequently taught as they soon learn that despite their hard work and academic success, they are "barred from the opportunity to integrate legally, educationally, and economically in US society" (p. 327). Furthermore, if undocumented students choose to enter a community college or university, they constantly struggle financially and must balance their academics with working menial jobs. And most often, when undocumented students are admitted to universities, they are unable to attend due to the costs incurred without financial aid. Thus, undocumented youth are socially inscribed to US society as they are "educated in our schools, they speak English (often with more ease than Spanish), envision their futures here and powerfully internalize US values and expectations of merit" (p. 332).

> And they told us . . . leave the money to them [parents] and they'll work 24/7 for us to have our education and dream job.

Instead of viewing these youth as resources, current immigration policies create obstacles to achievement and to the potential to transform their communities (Abrego, 2014).

Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, and Cortez (2009) suggest undocumented immigrant students experience a fear of deportation, loneliness, and depression. Their study specifically focused on undocumented college students, and their experiences also reflected back to adolescence.

> We are always worried if we have to go back to Mexico what's going to happen . . . Being in the United States, it's better than being in Mexico. Yeah, they're afraid of a cop stopping them . . . Because you just don't know when somebody can just come in and take you away. People are in fear as to what might happen. You trust some of the people that you tell, I'm an immigrant just don't tell anybody . . . We are preparing for the worst and hoping for the best.

Some students were fearful of going to hospitals because they would be questioned about their immigration status, while other students struggled to maintain close emotional relationships because of similar fears and avoidance of questions around citizenship. Nonetheless, these students maintained some academic resiliency because they made it to college. As a result, for Latino undocumented youth in particular, personal, family, and school resources helped them navigate many of the stressors and trauma associated with being undocumented, allowing them to achieve academic success. Furthermore, the APA (2016) suggests immigrant children actually enter US schools with certain advantages. These include, "tremendous optimism, high aspirations, dedication to hard work, positive attitudes toward school, and an ethic of family support for advanced learning" (APA, 2016, a resilience perspective section, para. 2).

Although optimism and high academic aspirations are advantageous for immigrant students, the APA (2016) also acknowledges educational attainment for immigrant students is most closely related to parent educational levels as literate parents guide and support their children in the home. Assessment is also important, but should be culturally appropriate in order to avoid misdiagnosis or inappropriate interventions for the student. The APA also cites school belonging and parental involvement as an integral component of the success of immigrant students transitioning into US schools. A sense of belonging is defined as "attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief students have in the value of their school" (APA, 2016, school belonging section, para. 1). This sense of belonging increases motivation, school attendance and academic success for many immigrant students. Finally, parental involvement (i.e. volunteering in class, Parent-Teacher Organizations) is also helpful in immigrant adaptation in US schools. However, parents may not understand how US schools are organized, how to communicate with the schools, and the educational expectations of their children and this may hinder the parental involvement process. Therefore, APA suggests reaching out to immigrant parents under positive circumstances and making them feel welcome as opposed to waiting until there is a problem.

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) (2009) addresses particular challenges related to ethnicity and gender that serve as barriers to equitable access in educational institutions. Many gender and ethnic stereotypes and discrimination influence Latina adolescents as they may be viewed as "submissive underachievers and caretakers" (p. 2). Latinas may begin to doubt themselves academically, which decreases motivation and

engagements in schools. Furthermore, Latinas who live in poverty may have limited access to educational and career role models in their families and peers to help them set goals for their future. Latina adolescents also may feel their teachers and classmates treat them differently (subtle and blatant), which may affect academic performance, motivation, and engagement. They also have the highest teen birthrates of racial group, and consequently, lower graduation rates. Finally, Latinas may have other responsibilities within the home that do not allow them to focus on their academic studies and hinder their abilities to participate in other school activities, which are shown to increase engagement in school (NWLC & MALDEF, 2009). Thus, the NWLC and MALDEF suggest that, with the help of Congress and the Department of Education, the following as recommendations to be implemented for the academic success of Latina adolescents:

1) Invest in the Future of Latino Children (Congress should fund early childhood education; conduct outreach to Latino families; expand access to housing, healthcare, etc.)
2) Connect Latinas with Role Models and Engage Them in Goal-Setting—(mentoring and dropout prevention programs)
3) Ensure That All Students can Pursue and Are Prepared for Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities
4) Ensure That School Environments are Culturally Inclusive and Free of Race/Ethnicity and Gender Discrimination
5) Help Latino Parent Get More Involved in the Education of Their Children
6) Improve Efforts to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Including the Provision of Comprehensive Sex Education to Students
7) Support Pregnant and Parenting Students
8) Require Better Data Collection and Promote School Accountability (NWLC; MALDEF, 2009, pp. 3-4)

This is one of the few documents that specifically address Latina experiences within the context of education and academic aspirations. Nevertheless, while these recommendations are helpful for Latina adolescents both academically and socially, as

Cervantes, Meijia, and Mena (2010) suggest in their research in undocumented families, it is equally relevant here to avoid overgeneralizations for Latinas that may further contradictory experiences instead of embracing the ambiguity of these girls' lives. For example, as the NWLC and MALDEF found in their study there is a lack of role models among peers and family members, the APA suggests Latino students have high aspirations and are dedicated to hard work and often have an "ethic of family support for advanced learning" (APA, 2016, a resilience perspective section, para. 2). Within the scope of the four girls I talked with, I would definitely lean towards family support and an optimistic outlook towards educational endeavors. Again, this is not to diminish the work and efforts concerning understanding Latina immigrant adolescents, but to push the thinking in regard to mental health and education towards entangled notions of the girls' lives in relation to their undocumented status and the oppressive structures that exist in every aspect of their becoming. Therefore, I situate this last chapter within a postcolonial, post-qualitative, feminist materialist perspective that entangles the trauma of border-crossings, being undocumented, and the implications of mental health specific to these adolescent girls.

Traumas of the Spirit, Becoming, and Educational Assemblages

> We have forgotten, but it is not too late to remember. (Castillo, 1995, p. 230)

From the beginning of this project, it has been my intent to incorporate feminist onto-epistemological understandings to further examine the implications of mental health in educational institutions. As I situate myself in this work as a researcher, a middle-class white woman, a citizen of the US, and myriad of other privileged positions I inhabit, I draw upon mutual entanglements in an effort to challenge

binaries, dichotomies, and categorizations (Villenas, 2014) that are often visible in conventional qualitative research and in Western society as a whole. I also acknowledged our meetings as a process of becoming, in an effort to move away from representational truths, and into spaces that support creativity, difference, contradictions, and transformation in the making. For this reason, I wanted to represent our meetings, the girls, their mothers, the mentors, and myself within, beyond, and between, the mangle. I do not single out individuals voicing their individual truths. The conversations, the artwork, all of the girls choosing their mothers as someone they admire was not something to be planned, but happened because of our intra-actions. This is why I chose to capture these moments differently, in different locations, across time, by using visual artwork, voice, and embodied notions of becoming through video. These intra-actions fully situated themselves within and beyond power structures, historical narratives, our bodies, and our silences. Furthermore, the intra-action of voice, this project, and the limits of solely relying on voice in research forces us to start outside of human beings as a centered individual and acknowledges the messy, embodied construction of meaning through an "assemblage of representations" (Somerville, 2007, p. 239) that are constantly becoming.

Throughout this project and my writing, I have embraced concept as method, which allows theory to drive our ontological understandings and where we are positioned in our own worldviews. Clearly, I am drawn towards inspirited notions of post-qualitative, feminist theory and methodology and fully embrace entanglements, assemblages, and mangles—relationally, spiritually, and materially. However, as I

became more engrossed in this project, and particularly where the girls chose to take these conversations, I integrated my own perspective alongside the girls' becoming to further complicate the mangle. All four girls crossed the border from Mexico to the US at young ages and have since been living in this country as undocumented immigrants. Without recognizing and critically entangling their experiences and to begin truly troubling "identity, experience, and what it means to know and tell" (Lather, 2013, p. 638), I ran the risk (and still do) of oversimplifying their lives, not recognizing the privilege in mine, making sweeping generalizations, and missing the reflection of ourselves in our work, how we think, and how we live (Childers et. al., 2013). Consequently, our entangled understandings began to integrate a critical feminist materiality that acknowledged post-colonial feminist ontologies in order to begin thinking about emergent and transformative spaces in mental health, education, and society as a whole.

Of course, part of our intra-actions forced (and I use this word because it is never easy to go back to moments of discomfort, sorrow, and trauma) us all to revisit events in our lives that shape(d) who we are today. That also meant interrogating my own power and privilege within (and beyond) this project in order to acknowledge differences that are made through out intra-actions that also include contemplation and reflection. Finally, in order to truly evoke new potentialities in research, immigration, citizenship status, mental health, and education and schooling, historical assemblages of mental health in Western society need to be more fully understood, as they speak to the current literature concerning the Latino community as a whole and Latina adolescents in particular. In this next section, I do not interweave the girls' words, but

instead revisit them. I incorporate what we collectively discussed as the most meaningful moments in our time together and add ways in which we (as educators, counselors, and researchers) can begin to think differently about these girls' experiences individually, collectively, and communally. Nonetheless, this project was unique to the girls (and women) who participated in it. And even so, in becoming together, this is not a snapshot of the truth, but instead are assemblages specific to our ontological representations as fluid and changing. Therefore, in an attempt to exemplify the entanglements of this project—the girls themselves, mental health, counseling, education, border-crossings, and their undocumented status—I end this project by suggesting ways in which to move forward, to unearth a "thinking difference", which recognizes a "multiplicity of possible differences" (Braidotti, 2001, p. 1419) that take into account oppression, exclusion, and silence.

Traumatic Becomings

Affect. For our first few meetings, the girls presented themselves 'in the shadows.' Indeed, what was most important was what was left unsaid, the silences. This silencing became part of the mangle as we talked about school, relationships with their mothers, church, peers, acculturation, etc. Looking back on those sessions, in the process of their becoming, the girls were not ready to disclose their undocumented status and their border-crossing journeys, yet these were the differences that matter (Barad, 2007). As I framed the entire project through this lens, it was not the intent to essentialize the girls' experiences or to suggest the impact of these as static in time or space, but instead suggest how these traumas impact every aspect of their becoming.

For example, Berlant's (2010) conceptualization of cruel optimism suggests the sacrifices made by the girls, their mothers, and their families will never fully come to fruition because of the oppressive structures in place that will hinder them in achieving their dreams of social mobility, a college education (which is most likely attainable but unaffordable), and equity in status (socially and economically). Yet the girls hold on to it with all of their might—and further the cruelty in the optimism of attainability. When I talked with the young woman from the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance, she said that for her and many other girls in the Latino community in Indianapolis, doing well in school and high achievement is often a coping mechanism to defray from the constant reminder of being undocumented and navigating two cultures that that wreaks havoc on identity. When we were talking over lunch in one of our meetings, one of the girls said,

I'd identify as Mexican, but not really.

For her, there is the constant reminder that she exists in this liminal space, she is further silenced because she does not fit in to either culture, and the trauma of being an undocumented immigrant endures. Furthermore, affective trauma recognizes that we can affectively live in constant trauma. Trauma is not just a life-altering event (such as border-crossing), but creates a new "habitation of history" (Berlant, 2010, p. 81) in our ordinary response and affect. Therefore, the girls' trauma did not reside in just the telling of their stories, but permeated every aspect of their lives.

Oppressive trauma. As a result of being undocumented, the girls experiences are often that of exclusion. The oppressive circumstances in which they face do not allow them to bring their full selves forward, and reinforce silence and marginalization. Their intra-actions are ones in which they understand the power structures in which they are

involved, the constant negotiation of what they choose to show people for fear of judgment, or worse, and further complicates their becoming. Indeed, even embodying a *la mestiza* perspective that encourages ambiguity and dismantling of dualisms via identity (American/Mexican) and oppression (oppressor/oppressed), an "inner war" (Anzaldua, 1987, p. 100) takes place. This process is often painful, intense, and even traumatic. Through this process, transformation does occur, however if we build upon Berlant's (2010) affective theory of trauma, it may imprint into our ordinary experiences.

As I shared in other chapters, when the girls shared their artwork, dualistic thinking dissipated as they embraced their own contradictions and ambiguities. They talked about what it meant to be an undocumented Latina adolescent who is consistently stereotyped and judged based upon American standards, who does not know which country she belongs to, yet is still striving to follow her dreams and look towards a better future. Oppression further complicates trauma and the impact it has on the body, mind, and spirit and is ingrained in their becoming. Trauma can also illuminate new ways of seeing and knowing.

For Anzaldua (1987), the most pain arises out of being caught between innocence and ignorance, which these girls are neither. Yet moving towards an awareness of the spirit often causes loss, fear, and depression. Indeed, these liminal spaces are difficult to navigate because the intrinsic spiritual act of self-acceptance (Castillo, 1995) for the girls directly contradicts sociocultural norms of our society regarding immigrant and undocumented status, as well as the sexualized and exoticized Latina woman. As such, prescriptive norms may further affectual trauma as ordinary experiences for these girls and add another layer in which to explore how they cope with psychological distress.

Furthermore, Brown & Tucker (2010) suggest "psychological distress is produced by social conditions that emerge from the confluence of economic and political power" (p. 247). In this context, economic and political power in the US effect traumatic becomings for the girls in this project as a "plurality of highly particular and individually tailored concepts that explicate the complexities of experience threaded through contemporary socio-cultural settings" (p. 249).

Intra-actions of Mental Health and the Soul

All of the girls were currently experiencing and had experienced trauma in their lives. Again, undocumented status in this country was reiterated to me many times as the *constant trauma of being undocumented.* One of the girls was sexually abused by a coyote who brought her from Mexico to the US. Three of the four girls had self-harmed (cutting), although they had not done so in the past two years. Yet when I asked them how they defined or thought about mental health, all acknowledged agreement with the following disclosure:

> I don't know how to define mental health . . . I feel like it's for people who have gone through things, and they need help to get better . . . When people have gone through things that you didn't want to go through . . . it's for kids who are not capable of doing what we can . . . It [mental health] could have very different definitions . . . some people see it as a stigma, like there's something crazy about you.

Additionally, the young woman from the Indiana Youth Alliance talked about mental health as yet another silence in undocumented immigrant communities around the city. She said there are no conversations about mental health and the need to address psychological distress, stress, trauma, etc. There is a negative image, a stigma, around mental health in the community that should to be handled in the home. Interestingly, the girls talked about feelings of depression, self-harm, etc., but never equated it to mental

health. Again, this conceptualization of mental health very much ties into Foucault's (1965) analysis of mental health situated in assemblages of power and socio-cultural contexts that marginalize, stigmatize, and induce fear and guilt. These comments further highlight the complicated, ambiguous liminal spaces Latinas inhabit as they also attempt to maintain traditional Mexican values of familism, which reinforces the stigmatization of mental health as it is only to be discussed and handled in the home.

Fatalism and the Soul

Liberation psychologist Martin-Baro (1994) suggested Latino culture inherently has a fatalistic understanding of life. In particular, he referenced feelings of fatalism in Latinos, which include: 1) destiny is accepted as the inevitable and not something to an individual can change; 2) since events in life are unavoidable, everyone must accept their fate bravely and with dignity; and 3) life is tragic and full of suffering, and your destiny lies in the idea "you are born to suffer" (p. 201). In terms of behavioral tendencies of fatalism, Martin-Baro (1994) listed: 1) resignation to what destiny imposes; 2) passive behavior as there is no reason to take action to change your life, but instead accept your fate; and 3) the present moment is what counts since life is predestined, life's most immediate needs are the focus. And although fatalism is a part of Latino culture (and many others throughout the world), it often reinforces the stereotype of Latinos as lazy, unreliable and irresponsible. Fatalism was also connected to "low achievement motivation" (p. 207); something Martin-Baro challenges and points towards the paradox of fatalistic stereotypes, which redirects the idea that insufficient motivation is not an issue for marginalized groups. The larger issue is social systems are unable to meet the needs of the majority population. Therefore,

> The paradox lies in the fact these "marginal" majorities are indeed integrated into the system, but as marginal; not because they either lack the required values and attitudes, and not because they are motivated or unmotivated to accomplish great thing in their live, but because the lack the minimum opportunity and power to do so. (p. 208)

Martin-Baro's work seems particularly important here, as I explore intra-actions of mental health and the soul. The distinction then, is that religion (primarily Catholicism in Latin America and the religion in which all the girls actively practiced) and obedience to God's will reinforces and protects the "stability of the oppressive order" (p. 217). However, the "innermost spirit" recognizes "psychological domination over the colonized is never complete," (p. 217) and revolution is inherent in the spirit of the colonized. Therefore, in order to overcome fatalism and passivity as religious virtue, Latinos must make three important changes. These include a recovery of memory, popular organization, and class practice. In understanding a personal and collective past, having a consciousness of common interests that recognize if nothing changes it is a result of "individualistic isolation" (p. 219) and a revolutionary practice that leads to social change, including that of social psychology.

Espiritualismo

Hernandez-Wolfe (2011) furthers the mental health/spiritual mangle through *Espiritualismo*. Mental health illness, such as depression, are not thought of in Western contexts of well-being but instead may be viewed as spiritual tests that "allow healing through the exercise of agency" (p. 300). Indeed, the journey between (therapeutic) spaces "simultaneously transits the mind, the psyche, and the spirit" (p. 300). For Hernandez-Wolfe, as a therapist, she intertwines her own onto-epistemological understanding and that of her clients "as a way of thinking that place

me as a part of the living world, where the use of plants and the follow of the word have a spiritual dimension" (p. 302) of becoming. Furthermore, as she embraces all perspectives around her, she also acknowledges that these perspectives are a result of power embedded in the colonial process. In other words, there are spaces in between and beyond how we think about mental health, psychological distress, and trauma in a Westernized context that represent the uniqueness of both the individual and is grounded in cultural equity and humility. They both point towards understanding privilege and marginalization in a larger sociocultural context, but also in the interpersonal relationships of the therapist (counselor) and client.

Moving towards a transformative framework in counseling that acknowledges the fluidity, complexity, and ambiguity in our lives reframes our conceptualization of what mental health is and how it should be handled in the US. Within the lens of this project and the local Latino community's silenced understanding of mental health and the girls' detachment from what the concept itself means, revisiting depression and trauma outside of standard mental health categories may enrich instead of simplify and oppress the girls' experiences in a myriad of entanglements of the spirit—many we have yet to create.

Educational Entanglements

From our discussion, the girls situate education as the most fundamental component of their opportunity for success in this country. Throughout the girls' conversations, all four of them made it very clear that their responsibility is to get good grades and get into college. As I have mentioned before, embedded within our conversations around academic success is also the pressure of achievement.

Achievement for Latinos is further compounded in subtractive education models (Valenzuela, 1999) that aim to eliminate cultural heterogeneity and prioritize White, dominant cultural values and norms. Historically, Mexican immigrants in particular are portrayed as "outsiders, aliens, enemies, or outlaws" (Urrieta, Jr., 2014, p. 115). Stereotypes arise and students are depicted as "at risk," "slow learners, and "illegal." Additionally, Urreita (2014) suggests education systems that are built upon colonized ideology portray parents as uninterested and placing no value in education for their children. Thus, Mexican students and families who go through the American educational system often experience self-hate as a result of colonization, which devalues identity and results in feelings of inferiority. This, in turn, ensures colonization continues by "justifying the presence of the colonizer" (Urrieta, Jr., 2014, p. 115) by wreaking havoc on Mexican immigrants' identity, confidence, and well-being.

Within Latina/Chicana Feminist Cultural Studies (FCS), Villenas (2014) explores way in which Latino parents and youth "remake their cultural and linguistic practices across generations and borders in multiple and contradictory ways" (p. 216). In terms of assimilation and Americanization, she suggests using FCS as a perspective that embodied "complex negotiations of multiple identities and contexts" (p. 216) that privilege contradictions and ambiguity. As Urrieta, Jr. (2014) stated above, colonizing ideologies in education do not support intricate negotiations of the body, mind, and spirit. Therefore, situating Latino families as assimilated, Americanized, or even bicultural entraps them in dualistic notions that do not recognize the negotiations and agency within structural inequality. Much of the research regarding Latinos and

education only recognizes dualistic notions of identity and being, while Villenas (2014) embodies a space for Latina becoming that encourages educators to think about Latina subjects differently. Thus, educators reach outside of assimilation and Americanization that moves beyond the "good girl" reputation of Latinas and inspirits "race-gender-class-sexuality performances" (p. 220) to create authentic, generative spaces for teaching and learning that recognize the fluidity of lives, experiences, and education.

As the girls' negotiate their identities in the face of many oppressive circumstances, they never wavered about being "good girls" so their parents wouldn't worry and the importance of getting good grades. Indeed, current literature from the APA (2016a; 2016b) supports Latino immigrant children as being dedicated to hard work and having high educational standards. Honestly, I saw this as a way in which the girls showed resilience and exhibited agency based upon Western standards of success. In other words, I also attribute success via education and schooling in my roles as a teacher and counselor, but never complicated academics as an impediment in attending to ongoing trauma. Furthermore, in talking with the young woman from the Indiana Undocumented Alliance, I realized that the desire (and pressure) to get good grades were mutually entangled with the sacrifices made in coming to the US, in attempting to dismantle stereotypes about the Latino community, and a contributing factor to mental health illnesses. She explained to me that *she came to study.* This was her sole purpose since she arrived in the US. Focusing on academics, for her, was a way of ignoring situations that were hard to think about or deal with. This included being undocumented and negotiating her identity as a young Latina girl. As an

adolescent, she remembers feeling sad and getting depressed, but instead of dealing with what was causing these feelings, she would bury herself in school and work as a coping mechanism. She said she had a lot of friends who handled situations that took an emotional toll on them in the same manner. Clearly, these coping mechanisms that deflected emotionality were an integral piece in complicating the girls' experiences. If school achievement is situated as a necessary component for success in this country, we begin to lose sight of the other pieces of ourselves, and our lives that create mangles of mental illness, depression, and our ontological of our place in this world.

CHAPTER SEVEN: POTENTIALITIES IN THE MAKING: TRACKING DECOLONIAL AGENCY

Intra-actions Matter

Undoing preconceptions of the girls' lives in an effort to respond differently to logical and rational understandings in regard to mental health and education creates space that acknowledges new subjectivities and knowledges from in-between space of binary notions (Somerville, 2013). Above, I highlight a few of many intersections of the girls' lives that interrogate gender, race, trauma, citizenship and embody mind, body, soul connections to onto-epistemological feminist becoming. These entanglements recognize who we are, where we've been, and how we inherently intra-act with the world. Becoming acknowledges our inherent understandings but does not situate us in static positions where we are bound, caged, and forced to think in prescriptive ways that are, patriarchal, colonizing, and oppressive to many. Thus, the debate on objective/subjective representations of the self is delegitimized, as we are always intra-acting.

This research has changed who I am and will continue to as I revisit our conversations and continue to think about this work. I have been more open to my own processes of becoming through exploration of concept as method in an effort to think differently about mental health in educational institutions. However, I am also more cognizant of my own partial views and how it impacts the work I seek to do. Indeed, we are all mutually entangled in webs of silence, power, and oppression that further the complexities of this entire project. I found that I cannot even begin to

interpret the girls' lives without critically interrogating my own affective positioning, as it may essentialize or diminish the intricacies of the girls' lives. I am always constructing a "possible self" and "a way to be in the world" (Alcoff, 2009). However, who I thought I was and the work I sought to do within a post-qualitative, material feminist framework did not fully recognize an ontology of becoming, as Alecia Jackson stated at the 2016 American Education Research Association annual conference, "events that come together to produce something different—together." For example, how I think about mental health personally has profoundly changed as a result of this experience, not only in recognition of things I need to face in my own life, but also in how I approach mental health as an educator and practitioner. Our ontological entanglements created a process of collective transformation. We all are inherently different in the intra-actions of our words, embodied and affective moments of tears, frustration, laughter, pride, self-consciousness, vulnerabilities, that disrupt individuality and impel us towards an inspirited humanity. In this inspirited humanity, we acknowledge the complexities and fluidity in lived experiences, as they are always situated, never static and always becoming.

Furthermore, as we take on the challenge to come together to share, talk, create, complicate, confuse, and contradict in order to produce something different together, I revisit Villenas (2000) where she acknowledges the subtle interventions of women that track agency and illuminate new potentialities of becoming created in the liminal space that embodies the 'decolonial otherness' of women's lives in one moment with the understanding that the girls' lives are always changing, interacting and becoming. Therefore, their agency lies within their ontological understandings

and resistance is not by acculturation, education, or perceptions of mental health, but in the negotiation of their lives between and within Western cultural values, traditional Mexican values, and the trauma they experience through their border-crossings and citizenship status. As I draw upon entanglements of the past and present in order to think differently about possibilities of the future, ethical entanglements become central in how the future unfolds.

Entangled Futures

Therefore, in moving forward with this project and thinking about mental health and education for Latina adolescents differently than what is often articulated in educational research, I can only suggest what furthers the mangle for these girls within this project, and what was meaningful and empowering for them, their families, and their community as a whole. Nevertheless, in understanding liminality in research and the nuanced intersections of these girls' lives speaks to responsibility and accountability because our "(intra)actions matter—each one reconfigures the world in its becoming—and yet they never leave us; they are sedimented into our becoming, they become us" (Barad, 2007, p. 396). Therefore, this project impacts how we all move forward and we have an ethical responsibility to help shape the future.

Mental Health

Most importantly, if we ethically take on the responsibility of tackling Latina adolescent mental health, specifically depression, we will have to think differently about how we approach mental health both societally and within schools. As Foucault (1967) outlines in his historical analysis of madness in the Western world, at one point a mind/body/spirit connection was integral to understanding mental illness. We have

since lost that holistic integration not only in relation to mental health, but also in Western constructions of meaning as a whole. On the contrary, it is in what Anzaldua (1987) calls the "sensing" reality, or the sixth-sense of the oppressed, that is interconnected to the soul, that embodies the liminal space of possibilities of becoming, and further challenge and transform our subjectivities. This ontological perspective for Latina adolescents further seeks to create a more just society that challenges how we talk about mental health and well-being in a decolonizing manner that acknowledges the complexities of the girls' lives and experiences. It also deconstructs Westernized dominant epistemologies and embraces room to negotiate and explore spaces outside of binaries and dualistic thinking. Finally, as the girls suggested the stigma behind mental health in Latino communities by suggesting these issues were never talked about at home and no help was sought in terms of therapy or medication, this may have to be reframed entirely to better understand the impact of depression on Latina adolescents.

For example, the girls reiterated many times how important it was for them to be able to have a safe space in talking about issues that are often silenced as a result of trauma, oppression, and stereotyping regarding the Latino community. What could have been perceived as group therapy sessions actually became spaces for growth and exploration that were not defined or categorized into Western approaches to mental health. Instead, what became the most powerful were the relationships the girls developed, alongside their mentors, and even with me. As I mentioned earlier, they were not ready for our meetings to end, and subsequently, we are still meeting once a month. As the girls have now developed relationships they sustain on their own

through social media and at school, it is the group they want to keep together. This month we are meeting at their favorite local Mexican restaurant and they are bringing their families, as am I. As we are all becoming, their needs will change as well as what impacts their mental health and well-being. However, I would strongly argue (because the girls have all said in one way or another) these meetings have been spaces to explore and negotiate the ambiguous part of their lives that creates stress and tension as a result of the intersections of gender, ethnicity, culture, and immigrant and citizenship status. Of course, there is no solution and no easy answer here, but it does create a more fluid understanding of mental health that integrates oppression and the pain of ongoing traumas. It also removes the stigma of mental health and creates a safe space to talk about silenced topics and ongoing traumas. Finally, the multiple identities we all present in any given moment should be ingrained in the therapeutic process as well. Our entanglements are built upon who we are in that moment and our intra-actions as a result of who we frame ourselves to be. This has important implications in thinking about mental health and well-being within schools.

Educational Institutions

First and foremost, schools should be places that foster safety for all of its students. Realistically, colonizing policies and procedures marginalize and stigmatize immigrant youth, their families, and the community, which creates fear, inferiority, and mistrust. Students are most often marginalized as soon as they enter school buildings, and immediately experience oppressive and stereotypical circumstances, which lead to feelings of inferiority and may cause stress on these particular students. As such, there is little opportunity for Latina adolescents to explore and negotiate the

ambiguous nature of their lives within the context of education and schooling. Furthermore, counselors are in a position to begin thinking about how to work with immigrant Latinas and help them achieve academic and career success alongside a strong sense of well-being. To do so will require counselors to not only identify schools as oppressive and colonizing, but they must also work to systemically dismantle marginalizing policies, such as special education labels, parent engagement, and career counseling for immigrant and undocumented students. Indeed, counselors are situated in the schools to truly make a difference by (and think differently about) addressing these issues, as they should be working closely with teachers, administrators, families, and staff.

For example, counselors should make themselves aware of the communities in which they work and the Latino population that resides within school boundaries. It is important counselors avoid generalizations of the community and take the time to get to know the students and families for whom they have a duty to advocate. In order to best serve the students, counselors should be aware of families' immigration status as well as how and when they crossed the border, particularly to better understand the trauma the families may have gone through to get to the US. Counselors also need to understand the sacrifices made by the families for their children to get a good education, and thus are usually invested in academic achievement, but may express it differently. This will diminish the opportunity to further stereotype and marginalize. Professional development for counselors and educators is helpful as long as it comes from the Latino community who reside in the school district. This does not essentialize Latinos, and instead, gives insight to the experiences of the students and

families they work with on a daily basis. Finally, it is up to counselors to create safe spaces for Latinas (particularly) to explore their gendered experiences within the context of learning. These spaces can be very informal and even resemble counseling sessions. They could take form as lunch groups, after school activities (soccer, art club, music club, etc.), or any other ideas the girls have. Depending on the needs of the community, counselors expand these activities to include mother-daughter activities or activities that are not on school grounds.

If counselors are going to truly enact change for undocumented youth, they must be aware of and involved in state and federal policies regarding immigration policies. This became crucial to me when I was talking to the young woman from the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. She works for a law office that specializes in immigration policy and said that she sees adolescent youth come into her office after they receive Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Many adolescents think they have become citizens and don't realize it is a two-year visa to stay in the United States. Therefore, their decisions are misinformed and they often do not realize the consequences of their actions because they, and their parents, do not understand the laws behind the immigration policies. In general, schools should be a place that can offer information sessions as well as other supports for undocumented families in their communities.

Youth-led groups are also extremely powerful in building trust, creating safe spaces, and listening to the Latinas experiences at school, at home, and in the community. It also gives them a decolonizing agency that articulates both the "cultural wealth and the knowledge of how power works in everyday life" (Villenas,

2014, p. 221). Furthermore, activist work helps bridge Mexican and American cultures and fosters advocacy for immigration, health care, and educational rights that directly challenge current colonial and oppressive systems. They also encourage students to advocate for themselves on issues that have historically been traumatic and silenced. Again, counselors have the capacity to be positioned in schools where they are able to provide leadership and guide students and communities toward activism and change.

Finally, the hardest work that may befall counselors is the critical reflection they must constantly enact on themselves. Indeed, this is more than just reflection, but challenges their own biases and furthers collectivity over individuality. It is hard work and requires much more dedication than the responsibilities that are often given to counselors in terms of class scheduling and test administration. The intricate perspectives undocumented Latinas and Latino communities bring into schools are an integral piece of learning, knowing, and their well-being. For example, academic success is not enough for Latinas. Counselors must position themselves as entanglements between educational institutions, the community, local and federal immigrant policies, and the structural inequities that colonize, oppress, and traumatize. They must be aware of current policies, such as the Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The political climate of our country also permeates the walls of schools, and counselors need to critically acknowledge and address the impact of Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric on immigrant youth. Finally, Bemak and Chung (2008) position counselors as social justice advocates and organizational change

agents that not only support the needs of their students, but redefine their roles that challenge and address inequities in public schools.

At the end of this project, fostering further positioning, exploration, navigation, and understanding into the liminal spaces of Latina adolescents and the entanglements of mental health and schooling interrupts silence into embodied vocalities of becoming. Nonetheless, the silence must be broken on their terms, and with the understanding it will always be fluid, changing, and cyclical in "making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be (Anzaldua, 1987, pp. 94-95). Thus, the goal for now is to look for funding to continue this work through the Latino Health Organization. It our hope to continue our meetings once a month with the opportunity to include other Latina adolescents who are interested in participating. The girls say they have a lot of Latinas who they talked to and want to start meeting as well. We would also like to have more mother-daughter meetings and support a space where Latina mothers and daughters can talk about the ambiguity of negotiating multiple roles and multiple identities all within the context of their families. We have also suggested that if they are interested, they will have the opportunity to talk with Latina therapists about self-harm, sexual assault, and any other topics that may arise. We are also hopeful the girls are going to participate in the YLYS camp as junior mentors. They found the experience to be so beneficial for them that they would like to work with Latino youth so they have the same positive experience. This would also allow the girls to explore leadership and activist roles. Finally, we have made connections for the girls (at their request) to participate in the Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance. The Youth Alliance creates

opportunities for personal advocacy as well as support and encouragement in the traumas they have experienced.

Part of my personal journey became evident in terms of understanding affectual trauma (Berlant, 2010). This has been an important piece of my own onto-epistemological understanding as a result of this project, as a researcher, and as an educator. We have to know what speaks to us, ontologically, what drives us, what hinders, us, what silences us in order to find strength and commitment to work with students to help them understand who they are as well. Indeed, it is in the potentialities of the girls' lives and our mutual entanglements in this project that create an ethical and compassionate space to experience discomfort, but also embody "radical love" (Friere, 2010) in resistance to their journey, their undocumented status, and the trauma they have experienced both individually and collectively. As Barad states, "the world and its possibilities for becoming are re-made with each moment" (Barad, 2007, p. 396). And in each moment there is a responsibility and accountability in paying particular attention to "what matters and what is excluded from mattering (Barad, 2007, p. 394). There is "positivity in difference" (Braidotti, 2001, p. 1419), particularly in relations of difference (Barad, 2007) as an ethical call, or more aptly, an ethical becoming that invites new ways of thinking and that creates transformation in the girls' lives.

In many ways, an ethical becoming that embodies affective understandings, trauma, border-crossings, citizenship, and the spirit, is inexpressible and uncontainable in words. In this mangle, there is a limit to what writing can express in the complexities of experience in these girls' lives. Nonetheless, in all of our

differences, an inspirited sense of "responsibility and commitment to the process of decolonization through contestation . . . and more responsible forms of social and historical representations of the subaltern" (Urrieta, Jr., 2014, p. 114) further egalitarian assemblages of counseling, schooling, educational research, and the infinite potentialities in becoming that moves toward dismantling oppressions in the girls lives and focuses on the beauty and power in ambiguity.

APPENDIX

Humanist Qualitative Research Methodology and Post Qualitative, Post Humanist, New Material, New Empirical Inquiry *
February 24, 2015

Some Categories	Conventional Humanist Qualitative Research (interpretive, critical, positivist)	Post Qualitative, New Material, New Empirical, Post Human Inquiry
Approach	Social Science	Philosophy
Epistemology	Rationalist, empiricist, objectivist. Knowledge is produced by the Cartesian *cogito.* Distinction between epistemology and ontology.	Onto-epistemology. Epistemology is decentered.
Ontology	Realist, dualist.	Onto-epistemology. Transcendental empiricism (Deleuze & Guattari). A flattened ontology. No depth or height. Entanglement. Assemblage.
Human subject	Descartes' *cogito.* Stable, present, coherent, rational, conscious, knowing, intentional, agentive human that exists ahead of language and cultural practice with a unique, essential core that stays the same throughout space-time. Human/non-human, human/nature, human/matter, mind/body binaries operative.	The human is decentered. Pre-human. More-than-human. Post-human. Not-quite-human. Not only human. Always already entangled with everything else. No binaries. A folding. "Pre-individual singularities and non-personal individuations" (Deleuze).
Language	Meaningful. Representational. Phonocentric (focus on authentic, unique *voice).* Logocentric.	A mode of action. Non-representationalist. Minimum unit is not the word but the *assemblage* (Deleuze & Parnet).
Methodology	Cartesian "methodological solipsism" (Rorty). Research assumes the knowing subject and pre-	Post-methodology and methods. Thought does not need a method (Deleuze). Method is always out-of-

	existing research methodologies (qualitative, mixed methods), research designs (e.g., case study, grounded theory, ethnomethodology), methods of data collection (e.g., interviewing, observation) and methods of data analysis (e.g., thematic analysis, coding).	date and inadequate to the task at hand. Begin inquiry with theories and concepts that create different orientations for thinking and asking questions, not with pre-existing methodology, research designs, methods, and process.
Data	Words transcribed in interview transcripts and fieldnotes. Data preferably collected face-to-face in participants' natural settings. Images, existing documents.	Conventional concept *data* not thinkable in this image of thought. All is entangled from the beginning. *Data* does not have a separate existence from the *human*, so it cannot be *collected.*
Methods of Data Collection	Observations. Interviews.	Not thinkable in the entanglement of this image of thought.
Methods of Data Analysis	Thematic analysis. Grounded theory analysis. Coding.	Analysis might be thinking and writing or any other creative activity, though analysis cannot be described. Thought as diagrammatic (Deleuze).
Validity (e.g., truth)	Multiple methods, theories, & researchers. Extended time in the field. Peer debriefing. Thick description. Negative case analysis. Member checks. External audit. Clarification of researcher bias. Triangulation.	Not thinkable in this image of thought. Ethics.
Contributions to Literature	Often assumes incrementalism, the idea that knowledge steadily accumulates and contains gaps that need to be filled (e.g., the *building blocks* theory of knowledge).	Inquiry contributes to the literature but does not assume incrementalism.
Limitations	A positivist concept still used in interpretive and critical qualitative	Not thinkable in this image of thought.

	methodology.	

- Rouhollah Aghasaleh (Univ. of GA PhD candidate) wrote the first version of this chart.
- Elizabeth St. Pierre (UGA) worked on it next

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religious coping and spirituality to adjustment and psychological stress in urban early adolescents. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 12*(4), 369-383.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Alycia M. Elfreich

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Urban Education Studies
Indiana University School of Education, Indianapolis, IN (2016)
Dissertation Title: My life is in their hands: Latina adolescent border-crossings, becoming in the shadows, and mental health in schools
Chair: Dr. Chalmer Thompson

M.S. School Counseling**,** *Indiana University School of Education*, Indianapolis, IN (2013)

M.S. Secondary Education *Indiana University School of Education,* Indianapolis, IN (2006)
Concentration: Urban Education

B.S. Secondary Education (Social Studies) *Indiana University*, Bloomington, IN (2000)
Concentration: World History, Psychology, Sociology

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Curriculum and Instruction- Sociopolitical Perspectives of Urban Schools- Critical Perspectives in Urban Education- Equitable Educational Practices- Community-Based Learning- Critical Studies in Race, Gender, and Imperialism- Qualitative/Quantitative Research methods.

Urban Education Studies is an interdisciplinary and critical program that is grounded in the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, etc. and works to recognize the complexities of marginalized groups not only in educational institutions, but in society as a whole. My schooling and research focuses on feminist research and methodology that problematizes the dominant narrative and highlights the intricate lives of Latina adolescents from their epistemological and ontological perspectives.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

January 2014-present **Graduate Research Assistant**, Center for Urban and Multicultural Education, Dr. Samantha Paredes-Scribner, Director, School of Education, Indiana University--IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN

January 2012-Sept. 2012 **School Counselor,** Warren Central High School Indianapolis, IN

August 2011-Dec. 2011 **School Counseling Intern,** Warren Central High School,

	Indianapolis, IN
August 2002-July 2009	**School Social Studies Teacher**, Grades 6-8, Key Learning Community, Indianapolis Public Schools, Indianapolis, IN
August 2001-June 2002	**Elementary School Teacher**, Grades 4-5, Spencer Math and Science Academy, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL

LICENSURE and CERTIFICATION

Secondary Social Studies Teaching License, Indiana; School Counseling License, Indiana

PUBLICATIONS

**PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS*

Elfreich, A. (accepted, 2015). Inspiriting the proleptic: Spirituality in a postmodern curriculum to advance well-being in schools. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing.*

**Under Review*

Elfreich, A. & Helfenbein, R. (in review, 2015). Collaboration and advocacy: A community-university partnership and the well-being of children. *School-University Partnerships: The Journal of the National Association for Professional Development Schools.*

Elfreich, A. (in review, 2015). A critical perspective of underrepresented students in special education and the role of the urban school counselor. *Professional School Counseling.*

Elfreich, A. (in review, 2015). Relationships, transcendence, and love: A feminist spiritual pedagogy. *Feminist Teacher.*

Peck, L. & **Elfreich, A.** (in review, 2016). Advancing understanding. Graduate student Socialization through feminist praxis in qualitative research. *International Review of Qualitative Research.*

**In Preparation*

Elfreich, A. & Shaver, E. (2015). The hermeneutic circle: curriculum, interpretation, and the cultural politics of the mentally ill.

Elfreich, A. & Robbins, K**.** (2015). An embodied becoming-other: Material feminism, curriculum, and the mutually entangled spirit.

Elfreich, A. & Medina, M. (2015). Resilient Girls in a troubled setting: Capturing the spirited voices of Midwestern Latina adolescents.

Non Peer-Reviewed

Buckley, R. J., Wakefield, D., & **Elfreich, A**. (2014). *The distributed drug discovery program evaluation.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. (2015). *Comprehensive report 2013-2015 for the 12th-14th annual Indiana conference on cultural competency for behavioral healthcare.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. & Helfenbein, R. (2014). *Year-end report 2013-2014 Westfield youth child development and well-being initiative.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), Indianapolis, IN.

Robbins, R., **Elfreich, A.,** & Buckley, R. J. (2014). *Year-end report 2013-2014 for Woodrow Wilson Indiana teaching fellowship (WWITF) at Indiana University-Purdue Indianapolis.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich A., Scribner, S., Shaver, E. & Morgan Z. (2015). *Year-end report 2014-2015 Advancing Medically Underserved Student Training (A-MUST): Breaking Barriers Reflective Responses.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME), Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. & Shaver, E. (2015). *Comprehensive report 2009-2015 Robert Noyce Teaching Program.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME). Indianapolis, IN.

Stuckey, S., **Elfreich, A.** & Shaver, E. (2016). *Next generation 2.0 comprehensive report 2015-2016.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME). Indianapolis, IN.

Medina, M., & **Elfreich, A.** (2016). *Act Out Bullying and Teasing Program—Indianapolis Public Schools 2015-2016.* Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME). Indianapolis, IN.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Investigator. (PI Dr. Monica Medina). *Act Out Bullying Prevention Program.* Conducted observations, provided mixed-methods data analysis, completed IRB, co-wrote final report (2015-2016).

Investigator. (PI Dr. Samantha Paredes-Scribner). *Next Generation 2.0 Program-Leadership Development in Higher Education.* Conducted observations and wrote literature review (2015-present).

Investigator. (PI Dr. Samantha Paredes-Scribner). *Advancing Medically Underserved Student Training (A-MUST).* Provided qualitative data analysis of written module summaries, co-wrote literature review and co-wrote final report (2015-present).

Investigator. (PI. Dr. David Suzuki). *14th Annual Indiana Conference on Cultural Competency for Behavioral Healthcare.* Provided qualitative data analysis of survey data and wrote final report (2015).

Participant. (PI Dr. Jim Scheurich). *Indianapolis Children's Museum Evaluation of Impact in Gentrified Neighborhoods.* Participated in community meetings and recorded focus groups with the museum board of directors (2015).

Participant. (PI Dr. Samantha Paredes-Scribner). *Christel House After School Program Evaluation.* Conducted focus groups (2015).

Investigator. (PI Dr. Philip Scarpino). *Oral History/Curriculum Development for the Indiana Medical History Museum,* Developing curriculum and providing feedback to the museum for k-12 curriculum implementation. Funded by the Department of the Interior (2014-present).

Investigator. (PI Dr. Robert Helfenbein). *Westfield Well-Being Initiative.* Wrote literature review, annotated bibliography, completed IRB, conducted focus groups, provided qualitative data analysis, and wrote final report (2013-2014).

PRESENTATIONS

(Refereed)

Elfreich, A. & Robbins, K. (Accepted, 2016, April). *An embodied becoming-other: Material feminism. curriculum, and the mutually entangled spirit.* Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, (AERA) Washington, D.C.

Elfreich, A. (Accepted, 2016, April). *Inspiriting the proleptic: A feminist consideration of spirituality in a postmodern curriculum.* Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, (AERA) Washington, D.C.

Elfreich, A. & Medina, M. (Accepted, 2016, April). *Resilient girls in a troubled setting: capturing the spirited voices of Midwestern Latina adolescents.* Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, (AERA) Washington, D.C.

Elfreich, A. & Shaver, E. (2015, October). *The hermeneutic circle: curriculum, interpretation, and the cultural politics of the mentally ill.* Paper presented at the Bergamo Conference, Dayton, OH.

Elfreich, A. & Robbins, K. (2015, October). *An embodied becoming-other: Material feminism,*
curriculum, and the mutually entangled spirit. Paper presented at the Bergamo Conference, Dayton, OH.

Elfreich, A. & Ozdogan, Z. (2015, May). *The praxis of power and reflexivity in a feminist methodology.* Paper presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI).

Elfreich, A., and Helfenbein, R. (2015, April). *Collaboration and advocacy: A community-university partnership and the well-being of children.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Chicago, IL.

Elfreich, A., & Ozdogan, Z. (2015, April). *The possibilities in and out of feminist research as reflexive researchers.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, (AERA) Chicago, IL.

Elfreich, A. (2015, February). *A feminist consideration of spirituality in a postmodern curriculum.* Paper presented at the Louisiana State University (LSU) Curriculum Camp.

Elfreich, A. (2014, October). *Currere in the urban context.* Paper presented at the Bergamo Conference, Dayton Ohio.

Elfreich, A. (2014, October). *Inspiriting the proleptic: Spirituality in a postmodern curriculum to advance well-being in schools.* Spotlight session paper presented at the Bergamo Conference, Dayton, OH.

Elfreich, A., Helfenbein, R. (2014, September). *Advocating the well-being of children and families through a culturally responsive community-university partnership.* Paper presented at the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment, Chicago, IL.

Elfreich, A., Helfenbein, R. (2014, April). *Advocating the well-being of children and families through a culturally responsive community-university partnership.* Poster presented at the Solutions Center IUPUI Research Day, Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. & Currie, B. (2014, March). School Counselors as Participatory Action Researchers in Urban High Schools. Indiana School Counseling Association (ISCA); Valparaiso, Indiana.

Elfreich, A. & Currie, B. (2013, November). School Counselors as Participatory Action Researchers in Urban High Schools. Indiana School Counseling Association (ISCA); Indianapolis, IN.

Williams, N., Bhathena, C., **Elfreich, A.,** Phelps-Moultrie, J., Bonds, V., Clayton, T., & Currie, B. (2013, November). Urban Education Doctoral Student Critique Urban Educational Leadership Research. University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA); Indianapolis, Indiana.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Dennis, B. **Elfreich, A.,** Peck, L., & Ozdogan, Z. (2015, December, *Scheduled*). *Continuing feminist inquiry together: Where we are now and how we move forward.* Presentation given for the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) Colloquium.

Elfreich, A. (2015, October). *An introduction to preparing an IRB*. Presentation prepared for an advanced qualitative inquiry doctoral class at the IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. & Robbins, K. **(**2014, September). *The experience of two urban school teachers*. Presentation prepared for undergraduate Diversity and Learning in Education class.

Elfreich, A. & Currie, B. (2014, February). *School Counselors as Participatory Action Researchers in Urban High Schools.* Presentation given in the G575 Multicultural counseling Class Indianapolis, Indiana.

Kyser, T., **Elfreich, A**., Phelps-Moultrie, J., & Williams, N. (2013, October). *The New Jim Crow: A Discussion.* Presentation given at the KI Eco Center; Indianapolis, IN.

Elfreich, A. (2013, April). *An Introduction to Indianapolis Latino Resource Handbook.* Presentation given for the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) Colloquium, IUPUI, Indianapolis, Indiana.

TEACHING

Teaching Assignments

UNDERGRADUATE

M442	Social Studies Methods in Secondary Education

GRADUATE

G575	Multicultural Counseling
G522/G523	Counseling Theories and Lab

G550 School Counseling Internship

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

National

Student Reviewer. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE) (2014-present)

Student Advisory Council. Annual Bergamo Conference (2015-Present)

University

Conference Planner/Organizer. 14th Annual Indiana Conference on Cultural Competency for Behavioral Healthcare (2015)

Lecture Organizer/Planner. Annual Michael R. Cohen Lecture (2016)

School of Education

Graduate Assistant. Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME). Indiana University School of Education—Indianapolis (2014-present)

Adjunct Faculty. Indiana University School of Education—IUPUI (2014-present)

Community

Member. Parent/Community Outreach. Indianapolis Public Schools, School #60 (2014)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Member. American Educational Research Association (2013-present)